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Norrbom Vinding

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# Communication on Progress 2016-17

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# Contents

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1.0	Introduction	Page 3
-----	--------------	--------

---

2.0	About Norrbom Vinding	Page 4
-----	-----------------------	--------

---

3.0	Our approach to the Ten Principles	Page 7
-----	---------------------------------------	--------

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4.0	Future initiatives	Page 23
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# 1.0 Introduction

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11 August 2017

To our stakeholders:

On behalf of Norrbom Vinding, I am pleased to reaffirm our support of the Ten Principles of the United Nations Global Compact in the areas of Human Rights, Labour, Environment and Anti-Corruption.

In our seventh annual Communication on Progress, which covers June 2016 – June 2017, we describe our actions to integrate the Global Compact and its principles into our business strategy, culture and daily operations. We also commit to sharing this information with our stakeholders using our primary channels of communication.

While modelled on the Ten Global Compact Principles, this report also describes our pro bono partnerships. This is because a large part of our CSR activities are based on a firm conviction that we can best fulfil our corporate social responsibility by doing what we do best – providing legal advice.



Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'J. Vinding', written over a faint blue line.

Jørgen Vinding, Managing Partner

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## 2.0 About Norrbom Vinding

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### **Our values:**

#### **Respect, integrity and quality**

We are committed to our responsibility as a provider of top-quality legal services, as an employer and as a corporate citizen

#### **Unity, teamwork and caring for each other**

We are all for one, one for all and we work together to deliver the best legal solutions to our clients

#### **Motivation, passion and fun**

To deliver on the above values, we strongly believe that our employees must be motivated and passionate and enjoy their work so that clients and other stakeholders will enjoy working with us

Norrbom Vinding is a medium-sized Danish law firm specialising in management labour and employment law. We have the largest labour and employment practice in Denmark – and in Scandinavia as well. Our unique expertise in labour and employment law builds on more than 30 years’ experience, and our client base is a mix of national and international companies and organisations.

Norrbom Vinding is the Danish member of Ius Laboris, a global alliance of leading labour, employment and pensions law firms that provides companies employing an international workforce with first-class legal advice and support on all human resources issues. On a global basis, Ius Laboris counts more than 1,400 lawyers in 52 countries – all of whom are HR law experts.



Although Norrbom Vinding is under no statutory requirement in Denmark to report on CSR, we recognise our responsibility to promote good corporate citizenship. We work systematically to increase awareness of our responsibility not only as a firm but also as individuals. And as a leading labour and employment law firm, we recognise our responsibility as an employer for the well-being of our employees and for communicating and thus promoting our standards in this area to our stakeholders. By way of example, our corporate presentation contains information about our involvement in the UN Global Compact, as do our brochures and leaflets on legal subjects.

Read more at [www.norrbomvinding.com](http://www.norrbomvinding.com).

Additionally, we have decided to join the Association of Danish Law Firms’ codex (“advokatKODEKS”) which is a tool for law firms to improve and focus on, for instance, CSR in the Danish law firm industry.

Furthermore, we are looking into the possibility of a partnership with “The World’s Best News” to see how we can contribute to their overall purpose of informing the public that the UN Global Goals for Sustainable Development are achievable and thus worth aspiring to.





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## 3.0 Our approach to the Ten Principles

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We have approached the Ten Principles in a context that makes sense for us as a law firm.

### 3.1 Human rights

#### Human Rights:

##### Principle 1

Businesses should support and respect the protection of internationally proclaimed human rights

##### Principle 2

Businesses should make sure that they are not complicit in human rights abuses



### 3.1.1

#### **Employee satisfaction**

We respect the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and uphold individual freedom of expression and opinion. Internally, this basic principle is upheld by regular meetings between management and individual employee groups as well as bi-weekly office meetings. These meetings provide a useful forum for exchange of opinions, and employees and partners alike are encouraged to bring up any matter they would like to discuss.

Employee engagement is a priority and necessity for us. In 2010, we therefore conducted our first employee satisfaction survey, which showed a relatively high employee satisfaction (4.14 on a 0-5 point scale). In 2011, the survey showed an increase in employee satisfaction to a level of 4.25 and the 2012 survey showed yet another clear improvement, 4.38.

In 2013, we decided to expand the scope of the survey and then conduct it every two years instead. Now the survey also includes a cultural analysis based on one-on-one psychologist interviews of 1-2 hours each with all employees about our culture, values and leadership. As the interviews are confidential, the psychologist's findings serve as bona fide input from our employees. Like the first such satisfaction and cultural survey in 2013, the 2015 survey showed that we are a firm which lives its values to a rare degree. A very close link was found between the atmosphere at work, our values and the ground rules, making it easy to understand and navigate the organisation – also for new employees, which is probably due to our rigorous recruitment procedures which include interviews with psychologists and management to ensure that the candidates will be able to live our values and have the mind-set of a specialist lawyer. While there is a clear professional hierarchy, there is an absence of social hierarchy – one of the reasons why we were found to bring our values to life every day. However, the survey also showed a widespread desire for more feedback, and we have therefore implemented various procedures to ensure greater feedback. The next survey is due to be conducted later this year.



### 3.1.2

#### **Pro bono partnerships**

Externally, a tangible expression of our support to fundamental human rights is our partnership with the Danish chapter of **Médecins Sans Frontières** (Doctors Without Borders). Médecins Sans Frontières is an independent international medical humanitarian organisation that delivers emergency aid in more than 70 countries to people affected by armed conflict, epidemics, natural or man-made disasters, or exclusion from health care. Our support takes the form of pro bono work as well as general and tailor-made training courses in HR law and related areas.

”Médecins Sans Frontières exists to save lives by providing medical aid where it is needed most – in armed conflicts, epidemics, famines and natural disasters. All these situations call for a rapid response with committed, specialised medical and logistical help supported by a professional administrative organisation. With its dedicated effort and invaluable HR law services, Norrbom Vinding has enabled us to focus all of our energy on what we are here for: delivering independent humanitarian aid to those populations in greatest need. On behalf of MSF, thank you. Thank you very much.”

Monica Folch  
HR Director  
Médecins Sans Frontières (Doctors Without Borders)



We have also continued our support for **BØRNEfonden**. BØRNEfonden is a private Danish organisation, which helps over 57,000 sponsor children and their families and communities in some of the world's poorest countries. In practice, we provided pro bono assistance in the form of a general restructure of their contractual framework and are now providing ongoing assistance with HR matters, training courses in HR law and contracts, review of individual contracts, etc.

“BØRNEfonden has forged a partnership with Norrbom Vinding to benefit from its labour and employment expertise. BØRNEfonden is an independent development organisation funded by private sponsorships and business partnerships and today assists more than 65,000 children, their families and local communities for a brighter future. The partnership with Norrbom Vinding reflects its commitment to global corporate social responsibility. As a result of our partnership, BØRNEfonden is able to free up resources to provide an even greater number of children in developing countries with an education and a safer and healthier upbringing. We are very happy with our partnership with Norrbom Vinding; it has meant a great deal to BØRNEfonden.”

Bolette Christensen  
CEO  
BØRNEfonden



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In 2013, we added another pro bono partnership to our portfolio – **the Red Cross**. More specifically, we set up a very successful hotline for the Danish branch of the Red Cross and we are now providing them with regular employment law training to upgrade their HR law skills. We are currently in the process of discussing the framework for further assistance.



RØDE KORS

In addition, we continuously support other good causes financially such as families of cancer children and Mothers' Help (Mødrehjælpen), and we regularly donate funds to international disaster relief projects. We are still considering how to focus our efforts more effectively.

#### **Goals**

Internally, we wish to continuously achieve high scores in our employee satisfaction and cultural surveys, as this is key to attracting and retaining the best talent.

Externally, we wish to develop and cement our partnership with Médecins Sans Frontières Denmark, BØRNEfonden and the Danish branch of the Red Cross. In addition, we wish to keep exploring the boundaries of such pro bono partnerships in Denmark and internationally, and to find new ways to add value to their organisation to our mutual benefit.

#### **How do we monitor and evaluate performance?**

Internally: We will continue to conduct an employee satisfaction and cultural survey at two-year intervals and act swiftly on any concerns shown by the survey to exist among our employees in order to maintain our high satisfaction scores. In addition, we are already in the process of implementing systems to ensure that our employees get more feedback as requested in the surveys.

Externally: We meet with Médecins Sans Frontières Denmark, BØRNEfonden and the Danish branch of the Red Cross each year to discuss our partnership.

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## **3.2 Labour (employee rights)**

### **Labour:**

#### **Principle 3**

Businesses should uphold the freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining

#### **Principle 4**

Businesses should uphold the elimination of all forms of forced and compulsory labour

#### **Principle 5**

Businesses should uphold the effective abolition of child labour

#### **Principle 6**

Businesses should uphold the elimination of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation

### 3.2.1

#### **Knowledge**

In a knowledge-driven business and industry like ours, knowledge sharing is crucial.

Internally, we have a centralised knowledge acquisition and management function and we hold knowledge sharing meetings and provide training activities for all employees and for individual employee groups. Due to a minor organisational change in 2014, we now also have sub-speciality groups to provide a smaller forum and thus greater speaking time. In addition, we believe it is very important to provide our employees with state-of-the-art technology to enable them to perform at their best.

Similarly, we provide most of our employees with regular language training – Danish as well as English – to enhance and develop their communication and language skills. We also run mock trials in-house to hone our younger employees’ practical litigation skills.

Externally, we share our knowledge with clients and other stakeholders through our e-newsletters, breakfast briefings, seminars, training activities and other events and by organising industry and client seminars and courses and facilitating industry and client networks. At a peer-to-peer level, we participate in national and international lawyers’ associations, serve on various committees under the professional bodies of the legal industry etc., including the Danish Employment Lawyers and the Association of Danish Law Firms. Furthermore, we share our knowledge by contributing to international legal publications such as the European Employment Law Cases and the great variety of guides and publications issued by Ius Laboris on HR law matters. In addition, we are pleased to teach in a great number of contexts, including at universities and business schools, and to act as external examiners. For several years, our lawyers have been teaching the subject CSR at the University of Copenhagen, and we have several lawyers allocated to teaching activities because of our firm commitment to knowledge sharing.

We have also scaled up our efforts with regard to client networks based on our strong belief that such networks make good sense commercially as well as from a CSR perspective.

We expect to continue with these activities in the future.

#### **Goals**

We wish to continue our knowledge sharing activities and are continuously considering how to expand them.

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**How do we monitor and evaluate performance?**

We compare knowledge sharing data (intellectual capital statements, training activities, courses and seminars) on a regular basis, and we also maintain statistics about our e-newsletter and events.

**3.2.2**

**Health**

Health and working environment are two sides of the same story – both of them affect employees' well-being and also their motivation. Two of our primary focus areas are therefore always working environment and employee well-being. Our constant focus on these issues is reflected in the relatively low sickness absence of our employees.

Some of the initiatives we have put in place to promote and protect our employees' physical well-being include ergonomic work place assessments, ergonomic chairs and equipment as well as massages, health checks, training seminars, sports and social activities. Our lunch service is partly organic with a focus on health, and fresh organic fruit and vegetables are available all day.

As for our employees' mental well-being, we offer our employees the opportunity to work from home (except office services) and part-time, we conduct employee satisfaction surveys and hold employee development reviews, while also keeping a constant focus on work-life balance, workplace consultation and continuing professional and personal development and training. We are convinced that this will contribute to preventing and reducing the risk of stress, whether work-induced or for other reasons.

Health being an ever present, if not growing, issue in our industry, we continuously hold health-related seminars and courses to support our general employee health programme. In the past couple of years, we have focused on mental health in particular and on how to stress down and transition from working under great pressure to gradually slowing down. The themes of our annual seminar in 2016 were happiness at work and cooperation, followed by an afternoon of physical activity involving a high ropes climbing course in an outdoor climbing park.



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To facilitate a healthy and sporty lifestyle for our employees, we provide them with free running gear and well-equipped shower facilities. Our location at the harbour front makes for very nice running routes, and we are regular participants in the DHL relay race, which is the world's largest of its kind. A large number of our employees also cycle to and from work. Recently, we made an agreement with a training centre located close to our premises offering all our employees a discount on the usual fee for training sessions.

As another way of ensuring our employees' physical well-being, we host a flu vaccine clinic in the workplace each year to make it easy for our employees to get vaccinated. The flu vaccine is optional and we cover any costs for our employees.

**Goals**

We wish to continue our employee health programme for the benefit of our employees' physical and mental well-being. In the coming years, we will focus more on physical health and teamwork, and we will carry on with our courses in personal and professional development. Going forward, we will focus even more on the importance of a healthy lifestyle and healthy eating habits to continue to contribute to beating the weight statistics.

**How do we monitor and evaluate performance?**

We regularly ask our employees to give their opinion about the activities on offer. We also compare sickness absence figures from one year to another to monitor employee health.

**3.2.3**

**Equal opportunities**

We are committed to providing equal opportunities in recruitment, training, promotion and all other aspects of employment.

**Goals**

We wish to maintain our gender balance more or less as is.

**How do we monitor and evaluate performance?**

We measure our performance in this field by maintaining employee statistics.

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
<b>Employees</b>								
<b>People</b>								
Total:	49	50	46	48	46	47	49	46
Women	29	31	30	33	29	27	28	28
Men	20	19	16	15	17	20	21	18
Partners:	8	9	8	7	7	7	7	6
Women	4	4	4	3	3	3	3	2
Men	4	5	4	4	4	4	4	4
<b>Work-life balance</b>								
Employees working reduced hours	15	15	15	18	19	20	20	19
Employees who can work from home	35	37	35	33	32	33	33	34
<b>Sickness absence</b>								
Sickness absence per employee (days)	3.9	2.5	1.8	1.8	2.1	1.9	1.9	2.1
Absence due to child's 1st day of sickness (days)	0.2	0.4	0.3	0.2	0.2	0.19	0.19	0.18
<b>Employee satisfaction survey</b>								
Result on a scale from 0-5 (excluding partners)	-*	4.14	4.25	4.38	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

\* The first survey was conducted in 2010





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### **3.3 Environment**

#### **Environment:**

##### **Principle 7**

Businesses should support a precautionary approach to environmental challenges

##### **Principle 8**

Businesses should undertake initiatives to promote greater environmental responsibility

##### **Principle 9**

Businesses should encourage the development and diffusion of environmentally friendly technologies

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The environmental impact of law firms and our scope for reducing it may be less large-scale than in other industries. Even so, there is a lot that can be done.

### **3.3.1**

#### **IT**

We are committed to green IT. Over the past years, we have implemented green IT solutions to reduce power draw and CO2 emissions such as energy efficient computer screens, thin clients, server virtualisation, data life cycle management, IP telephony and videoconferencing in addition to being more selective as to which events we want to travel to participate in. In addition, the possibility of working from home means reduced CO2 emissions. In 2014 we replaced our physical servers with the newest and most energy efficient technologies. We completed the optimisation of our data storage facilities including the installation of a new SAN storage on SSD technologies, which has led to less power usage and thus less CO2. We have consolidated our backup storage and we have further replaced our UPS systems with the newest technology in this area, thus minimising power usage and CO2. In the coming months, we will be implementing new thin clients that are compliant with the “Green Energy” certification.

All IT waste which does not contain data is sorted and recycled. The equipment is placed in a special container and then picked up by a dedicated IT waste management company for sorting at special IT recycling facilities.

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### 3.3.2

#### **Environment**

We have already taken measures to make our lighting environment more sustainable and installed boiling water taps and water coolers in all kitchens to save water and ensure a more effective energy use. In addition, we have reduced our consumption of paper and printing supplies significantly over the past years. Our partly-organic lunch service also helps towards a sustainable environment.

Our cleaning service provider uses mostly allergy-tested and eco-friendly products, and our dry cleaners use eco-friendly products and methods, where possible.

We are currently considering other measures to further reduce our carbon footprint and general impact on the environment. For one thing, we are exploring the possibilities of transitioning from recyclable water bottles to retap water bottles or other and more environmentally sustainable alternatives.

Currently, we are rebuilding and expanding our premises and we are focused on choosing sustainable solutions in the construction process. One of our focus areas is to increase our use of LED lighting instead of using conventional lighting, as LED lighting is both energy efficient and friendly to the environment.

#### **Goals**

We wish to continue reducing our carbon footprint and minimising our impact on the environment in general. Going forward, we will consider the possibilities of increasing our efforts in this area.

#### **How do we monitor and evaluate performance?**

We have a constant focus on this issue and remind ourselves that we have a moral obligation in this regard.



## **3.4            Anti-corruption**

### **Anti-corruption:**

#### **Principle 10**

Businesses should work against corruption in all its forms, including extortion and bribery

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Transparency International works globally and locally to achieve its vision of a corruption-free world. According to its Corruption Perceptions Index, Denmark is perceived as the least corrupt country in the world.

As a Danish law firm, we are bound by the Code of Conduct issued by the Danish Bar and Law Society, the Danish Administration of Justice Act's provisions on lawyers and the Danish Anti-Money Laundering Act. This means, among other things, that we are required to keep confidential all information we receive from clients and to avoid conflicts of interest. As a result of our areas of speciality, we do not receive large money transfers from clients, but even so we have an anti-money laundering policy.

Our decision to provide additional training to our staff in anti-corruption practices and conflicts of interest has been implemented and well received.

In 2013, the Danish Bar and Law Society carried out a random audit of our compliance with the rules on money-laundering, continuing professional development and conflicts of interest – an audit that we passed with flying colours.

**Goals**

We are committed to steering clear of anything that might give rise to ethical or legal concern in this area. As a precautionary measure, we are providing our employees with additional training in prevention of money-laundering and conflicts of interest.

**How do we monitor and evaluate performance?**

We continue to comply with the rules we are bound by and continue to carry out our thorough scrutiny of prospective clients to see if there is reason for any concern in this area. We have also begun to quiz our lawyers to confirm that they have in-depth knowledge of the rules.

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# 4.0 Future initiatives

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**In 2017 and 2018, we will:**

- continue our intensive focus on our employees' physical and mental well-being to ensure that they are fit and motivated to perform at their best
- continue to conduct our employee satisfaction and cultural survey at 2-year intervals
- explore the possibilities of how to fulfil our social responsibility in other ways
- focus constantly on our environmental impact to keep up awareness