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Norrbom Vinding

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# Communication on Progress 2020-2021

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# 1.0 Introduction

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6 October 2021

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 eleventh annual Communication on Progress, which covers July 2020 – September 2021, 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,



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 1,500 lawyers in over 58 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 joined 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.



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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

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**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. With the goal of gaining deeper insight into this issue, we gather information on employee satisfaction at the yearly staff development interviews conducted individually with all employees. Our summarized findings from these interviews are that our employees show a high degree of employee satisfaction. Our employees emphasize the following as reasons for their general level of satisfaction:

- Absence of social hierarchy which, among other things, is reflected in the mixed seating arrangement in the lunch room
  
- Social activities in terms of a biannual wine tasting event, Christmas party, summer party and annual seminar
  
- High quality office facilities including individual offices, lunch and IT equipment
  
- Easy access to influence at all levels and words quickly translate into action
  
- Mentorship for legal interns and junior associates by more experienced junior associates



### 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 PlanBørnefonden. PlanBørnefonden is a private Danish organisation, which helps 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.

" We greatly value our cooperation with Norrbom Vinding that have provided HR law assistance and support to us on a pro bono basis since 2012. It means a lot to PlanBørnefonden to have this partnership with Norrbom Vinding and their dedicated employees who are always ready to provide us with legal advice and thereby supporting our highest purpose - to make a difference for children's rights in some of the world's poorest countries"

Helle Vestergaard  
Head of HR  
PlanBørnefonden



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**Goals**

Internally: We strive to continuously receive positive feedback regarding employee satisfaction 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 and PlanBørnefonden. 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 continue to monitor employee satisfaction in connection with the staff development interviews and act swiftly on any concerns shown to exist among our employees in order to maintain our high degree of employee satisfaction.

Externally: We meet with Médecins Sans Frontières Denmark and PlanBørnefonden 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. During the last year, we have completed three internal teaching sessions on various relevant topics. All our employees choose to participate but our junior associates are obligated to participate. We 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.

Our legal interns perform a central function in the internal knowledge sharing process and are, among other things, in charge of our library. We offer them career mentoring and provide them with the opportunity to explore the tasks and life of associates. We encourage them to participate in our internal courses and mock trials. When writing their master thesis, the legal interns are provided with an individual office, access to our library and additional time off with pay.

Externally, we share our knowledge with clients and other stakeholders through our e-newsletter, breakfast briefings, seminars, training activities and other events and by organising industry and client seminars and courses and facilitating industry and client networks. Our bimonthly e-newsletter reaches more than 1,700 subscribers who receive summaries and headlines of the latest case law along with other legal developments. In order to continue our knowledge sharing efforts and activities during the COVID-19 pandemic, we have offered – and still offer – web-based courses and seminars free of charge. In 2020, we have arranged nine web-based seminars with more than 1000 attendants. As a result of the extensive and constantly changing regulation brought on by COVID-19, we have held seminars on topics such as health and safety measures, the Danish wage compensation scheme (“furloughing” scheme) and what employers should be aware of when employees are working remotely. This has also been a key topic in our e-newsletter. 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 subjects such as CSR, labour- and employment law and public employment law 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.

#### **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, equipment, health checks, training seminars, sports and social activities. Our lunch service is with a focus on health, and fresh fruit and vegetables are available all day. Almost all dairy products and fruit provided to our employees are organic. Furthermore, our canteen serves a vegetarian dish every 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 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.

The COVID-19 pandemic has made us give extra attention to our employees' mental and physical well-being, partly because many employees have been working from home, and partly because there has been an increased focus on health and safety measures.

In order to ensure our employees' mental well-being, and to maintain our firm's connection to as well as the connection between our employees, we have arranged a variety of web-based social activities. We have offered our employees to work from home, whenever convenient and/or necessary, and an individual office space to all employees working from the office. We have also provided our employees with the necessary safety equipment such as face masks and hand disinfectant.

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. At our annual seminar in 2021, the themes were the importance of teamwork and communication followed by an afternoon of physical teambuilding activities.

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. When the race was cancelled due to COVID-19 restrictions in 2020, we arranged our own Norrbom Vinding race, respecting the rules on social distancing and gatherings. Fortunately, in 2021 we were once again able to join the official DHL relay race. Furthermore, our employees can join the office running club for a short run before or after work. A large number of our employees also cycle to and from work.

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.

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**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. Currently most of our junior associates are women.

**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.



	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Employees											
People											
Total:	50	46	48	46	47	49	46	43	39	39	41
Women	31	30	33	29	27	28	28	24	23	26	28
Men	19	16	15	17	20	21	18	19	16	13	13
Partners:	9	8	7	7	7	7	6	7	7	8	9
Women	4	4	3	3	3	3	2	2	2	3	3
Men	5	4	4	4	4	4	4	5	5	5	6
Work-life balance											
Employees working reduced Hours	15	15	18	19	20	20	19	18	16	17	19
Employees who can work from Home	37	35	33	32	33	33	34	32	29	28	33
Sickness absence											
Sickness absence per employee (days)	2.5	1.8	1.8	2.1	1.9	1.9	2.1	1.82	2.1	0.8	0.6
Absence due to child's 1st day of sickness (days)	0.4	0.3	0.2	0.2	0.19	0.19	0.18	0.27	0.2	0.2	0.2

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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. During the last year, we have implemented 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.

### 3.3.2

#### Environment

We have already made 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. We have also installed sparkling water taps and we currently provide our employees with the opportunity to use glass bottles instead of recyclable plastic water bottles. Furthermore, all water bottles in our meeting facilities are refillable and made of glass, and the water served is tap water. In 2019, our use of recyclable plastic water bottles was phased out; however, due to the extra hygiene and safety precautions as a result of COVID-19, we have reintroduced recyclable plastic water bottles, but they are only used to the extent necessary.

In addition, we have reduced our consumption of paper and printing supplies significantly over the past years.

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

When it comes to company merchandise, we have a firm principle of only having items that we genuinely need and deem practically relevant produced, e.g. sportswear and mule/tote bags. In such case, we focus on appropriate materials, classic design that does not cater to trends (ensuring longevity) as well as suppliers that are committed to providing environmentally friendly and ethically produced products.

At Norrbom Vinding we have always given priority to reusing our waste products, for example by sorting metals, paper, woods, electronics and hard plastics with the purpose of transforming our waste into new resources. In 2020, we were planning to expand this operation by having our biodegradable waste sorted and converted into biomass to be recycled for various purposes, such as energy utilization and compost production. However, this has been temporarily postponed due to COVID-19 restrictions and because the majority of our employees have worked full-time or part-time from home, thereby not producing any significant biodegradable waste at the office premises. When possible, we will look further into having our biodegradable waste recycled.

We are currently considering other measures to further reduce our carbon footprint and general impact on the environment. In 2018, we completed a rebuilding and expansion of our premises. In that process, we were focused on choosing sustainable solutions in the construction process. One of our focus areas was to increase our use of LED lighting instead of using conventional lighting, as LED lighting is both energy efficient and friendly to the environment. We are now considering the possibilities of increasing our use of LED even more.

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**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

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.

Since 2017, Partner Elsebeth Aaes-Jørgensen has been a member of the Commission of Inquiry on the Danish tax authorities (formerly SKAT) appointed by the Danish Ministry of Justice. Furthermore, we facilitate whistleblower schemes for employers, ensuring – in a simple and effective manner – quick filing and handling of reports.

#### **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 the remainder of 2021 and 2022, we will:**

- continue to have extra focus on our employees' physical and mental well-being to ensure that they are fit and motivated to perform at their best
- continue to monitor employee satisfaction at the yearly staff development interviews
- explore the possibilities of how to fulfil our social responsibility in other ways
- focus constantly on our environmental impact to keep up awareness