

## Vision 2015

### Summary – An Image of our Future

This summary paints an image of our future, of the Faroes in 2015. The main strokes are the proposed goals for the foundation stones, which each make up their own sector of society in Vision 2015. The autonomy foundation stone is distinct and therefore stands alone.

The strokes are broad and general and do not go into details, which are set out in each foundation stone. Rather, the summary is an overview of how we plan for society to improve, so that by 2015 the Faroes will be a highly developed society in all aspects; ranked among the world's foremost nations.

### The Faroes by 2015

Quality education and training at every level ensure lifelong learning for the Faroese. This is the basis of our labour market and competitiveness – hence our economy. In close cooperation with our neighbours as well as other countries the standards of our higher educations are at an international level in 2015.

The University of the Faroe Islands is a diverse institution with a broad scope, stimulating exchanges and educational cooperation. All academic fields of study are gathered here. The university has become a strong image both in the islands and overseas.

An articulated educational counselling system comprising the whole educational system – including professional and vocational training – ensures that continuing to train and study throughout a long working life is now common.

Public schools focus on every individual pupil's needs, establishing excellent conditions for them to develop their abilities from day one at school. Schools are grouped under regional administrations around the country and contribute to ensuring coherence and cohesion from kindergarten to adult education. Virtually all students continue on to upper secondary school and 75% of the Faroese youth is undertaking higher education – short or long term – both at home and abroad.

By 2015 standards are high among children and young people in key subjects such as reading, mathematics, natural sciences and foreign languages, especially English.

Lifelong learning not only applies to students, but to teachers and school administrators as well. Target-oriented capacity building enables them to meet the great challenges society poses.

## **Research Generates Innovation**

By 2015 the Faroes are an integral part of the global knowledge society and have become a pillar in the quest for increased welfare and well-being.

Research is a driving force of society. Faroese research particularly focuses on fields we are well positioned to lead – such as producing food from the ocean. But we also carry out research in genetic engineering, culture, communication technology and other areas.

Our highly educated population settles at home and society supports and encourages the drive to create. Creativity kindles innovation, thus research achievements are developed into goods, services and new branches of trade reaching far beyond our borders.

Research is organized in a sound structure. Faroese researchers graduate from the Faroese University as well as universities abroad. A high-calibre research environment and a research hub with all the necessary technical equipment encourage Faroese and foreign scientists to travel to the Faroes to do research.

## **Hub of Ideas**

As a hub for entrepreneurs the Faroes of 2015 are the obvious choice when trying out new ideas and establishing new enterprises. We do not begrudge others reaching far and making a profit, for by now we know that the freer the reins and greater the possibilities for each individual, the further society develops. Entrepreneurs are the prerequisite for innovation and therefore of crucial importance for continuous progress. This is why in 2015 conditions are right for entrepreneurs to concentrate on their ideas and dedicate their energy to developing them into new branches of trade.

Trade and industry have been strengthened by highly educated people who promote innovation and entrepreneurship. A flexible labour market and an efficient, competitive capital market have ensured a flourishing culture of entrepreneurship: daring, wanting and seizing opportunities to innovate.

The spirit of entrepreneurship is instilled in students from childhood. Developing ideas and knowing how to innovate are inherent in education. Creativity is stimulated through projects, thematic days, games and contests.

Centres for entrepreneurship have been established around the country bringing together entrepreneurs seeking advice on how to implement their ideas. This creative environment inspires and promotes networking and cooperation. By 2015 it is both simple and easy to obtain advice and understand the laws and regulations governing the sector. Furthermore, it has become financially encouraging and less risky to be an entrepreneur. Through a broad selection of funding opportunities, in

which seed – and venture investors play an important role, there is access to both daring - and patient financing.

The Faroes are a widely known trade mark, a brand. Faroe Island Enterprise is the leading institution advising entrepreneurs with global ambitions; it also supports international marketing of Faroese goods and services. The public sector strongly emphasizes promoting business and supports budding trades that produce ground-breaking goods and services and seek new markets.

### **One World**

Highly-educated Faroe islanders choose to return home to forge their career and high-tech firms are established here because we prioritize creativity, education and professional development.

Information technology is the axis of our economic and cultural competitiveness, therefore the whole Faroese population now has access to the internet.

Education is no longer a matter of which opportunities exist in the local area, now all schools are on the internet. It is possible to study at home as well as abroad and combine an education from a wide selection of subjects with highly qualified Faroese and foreign teachers and lecturers.

### **One City**

By 2015 travelling to and from the Faroes is quick and easy, as is travelling within the Faroes.

Transport infrastructure has been developed in accordance with a comprehensive plan laying out the Faroe Islands as a single city. Main arteries link the different areas of the country so it is quick and easy for Faroese citizens to travel between the outlying districts and the central area. Therefore it is perfectly feasible to live in one part of the country while working and take advantage of services and facilities offered in another area.

As for access to jobs, services and facilities, living conditions in the Faroes resemble those in large European cities. Travelling between the Faroes and other countries is like travelling from one big European city to another.

### **A Single Labour Market**

By 2015 the systems of transport, childcare and housing make the Faroes a single continuous labour market. Readjustment is swift, it is easy for job seekers to offer their work and easy for employers to hire the right workforce.

Job satisfaction is highly prioritized at work and therefore absences due to sickness have declined drastically. Lifelong learning and capacity building systems are key aspects in the continuous development of the

labour market, which embraces all – from unskilled labourers to top executives.

Furthermore an inclusive labour market yields increased profit for society, because all hands work together – also those with different abilities who were previously not given many opportunities on the labour market.

### **Our Image Abroad**

By 2015 the Faroes are an exciting and unique hub in the North Atlantic; a small nation where people and ocean are one. The Faroes have embassies around the world in countries like Russia, USA and Switzerland, with whom we have active cultural and business cooperation.

Thus the Faroes have a clear and visible image in the international community; we are part of the European domestic market and active in European development plans for culture, education and research. Furthermore we are an active member of the WTO and other international organizations.

### **Culture – a Competitive Advantage**

By 2015 the ability and drive to create will be among the most highly demanded qualities on the labour market. Frontiers are no longer decisive, because the entire world is a common frame of consciousness, and art on an international level is a natural part of the cultural activities offered.

Considering that culture and art now account for a notable portion of our GDP, and that art is an integral part of our educational system, the Faroe Islands are highly competitive in this sector.

Mentanarráð Føroya (Faroese Board of Culture) provides a framework for cooperation and networking and offers thorough advice on cultural policy for the Faroese Parliament and the Faroese Government. The Faroese National Museum preserves our cultural heritage and the National Theatre nourishes Faroese dramatic art and music. Children and young people have the opportunity to attend art school and sports school, while sports and fitness centres throughout the country encourage us all to be active and thus strengthen public health.

### **The Environment – a Competitive Advantage**

By 2015 the Faroes will be known as a responsible country, which actively works for a clean environment – at home as well as abroad. The Faroes participate directly in international environmental efforts to preserve nature, the oceanic environment and biological diversity – with deeds, not just words. Both the public and private sector consider the environment in their plans, and all polluting companies have environmental protection systems. Climate gas emissions have been

cut considerably over the last few years, and several alternative energy sources have been introduced on the market.

The environmental administration is strong and therefore has the energy and possibilities to enforce any environmental agreements, which the Faroese Parliament has passed. Furthermore the administration monitors pollution as well as the status of different plant and animal species implementing protective measure when required. Periodic environmental studies and statistics ensure that this work is meticulous and objective.

The environment, like many other spheres of society, is integrated into education, and by 2015 most schools and kindergartens have earned the title "green schools". The slogan is: "An environmentally conscious population is an environmentally conscious nation". That is why raising awareness in schools and among the general public is an important aspect of environmental conservation.

### **Self-reliant Industry**

Resource-based industries, such as fishery, fish-farming, oil and agriculture, render a good, stable profit provided they operate within the framework of sustainability. An overarching aspect of this is joint public and commercial research concerning the utilization of existing resources as well as the development of new methods of production. Research has become a natural part of all industries.

The fishing industry, which so far has been limited by varying restrictions, such as the size of vessels and geographic locations of fish factories, has become as autonomous as possible in regulating its own affairs. However, the authorities are still responsible for managing general fishing pressure and protecting fish stocks.

Fishing permits are sold on an organized market, where the State is the vendor and those who obtain the right to exploit our natural resources are charged a reasonable fee for this right. While the fishing permits yield a satisfactory income for the Treasury, the system also ensures that the most competitive companies are always granted the fishing permits, thus securing a productive industry stimulating development.

Fish-farming and agriculture are organized into large efficient units with high production capacity.

### **Sound Social Structure**

The Faroes are founded on an open and viable market economy consolidated in the welfare state. Citizens are close to decision-making and accountability and all public affairs are resolved in such a manner that they generate the greatest possible value for society.

By 2015 there will be no state enterprises and all business subsidy schemes have been abandoned, except for those few proven to generate added value for society. Thus conditions are the same for all

citizens and industries, resulting in a highly productive, efficient and competitive business life.

The central administration is now based at a single location where a broad spectre of professional skills have been gathered, thus ensuring that the knowledge basis is solid and effective. Furthermore the country has been grouped into seven municipal units, which along with good coordination and well organized communication offer the citizens more for less. The system of equal financial distribution renders the seven municipal units approximately equally financial solid and hence strong enough to attend to their core duties.

Goal and performance oriented management leads to systematic administration of public sector activities. Openness and insight enable citizens to assess whether public institutions attend to their duties and reach established goals.

### **Citizens in Focus**

In order to ensure easy and swift public access to health-, public- and educational services they have all been grouped into district service centres.

Faroese citizens' well-being is the axis of all political campaigns. This is why a welfare council has been established to monitor implemented welfare policy. In addition there is a child- and youth council securing children and young people grow up and develop under the best of circumstances.

There is room for each individual to develop his or her own skills, and all citizens have the opportunity to contribute to the best of their ability and are as economically independent as feasible. This is possible because now we focus on what individuals are capable of, not what they are incapable of as has been the case so far. Furthermore the new eldercare legislation ensures our senior citizens' rights and that they maintain a reasonable good standard of living throughout life with a safe pension.

By 2015 health promotion and disease prevention have become a fundamental aspect of healthcare –imbedded in our customs, because safety and public information are prioritized, for example as an inherent part of our children's education all the way from kindergarten. Health and social issues are being researched and we participate in Nordic and EU research cooperation. This gives us, amongst other things, thorough insight into the correlation between lifestyle and health. On the whole, the citizen of 2015 takes full advantage of our highly developed health service.

This is an overview of our society in the future. Vision 2015 foresees a society that has progressed changed and improved in all areas – therefore the Faroes are ranked among the foremost of nations.