THE DANISH INSTITUTE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

SELECTED LIST OF THEMES ON ICERD

DENMARK 2020

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PREFACE

This report by the Danish Institute for Human Rights (DIHR) contains information to the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD). The report aims to assist the Committee in the preparation and adoption of the list of themes prior to submission of the 22nd to 24th periodic reports of Denmark regarding national implementation of the International Convention on The Elimination of All forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD).

THE DANISH INSTITUTE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

DIHR is the national human rights institution (NHRI) of Denmark. DIHR was established in 1987 and is regulated by act no. 553 of 18 June 2012 on the Institute for Human Rights – Denmark's National Human Rights Institution. DIHR is an independent, self-governing institution within the public administration and is established and functioning in accordance with the UN Paris Principles. DIHR is accredited as an A-status NHRI.

DIHR has since 2003 been the designated body for the promotion of equal treatment of all persons without discrimination on the grounds of racial or ethnic origin as set out in Article 13 of the EU Council Directive 2000/43/EC on Equal Treatment Irrespective of Race and Ethnic Origin. The mandate to deal with individual complaints on the ground of race and ethnic origin was transferred to the Board of Equal Treatment (Ligebehandlingsnævnet), which was established 1st January 2009. DIHR has retained its status as a specialized equality body, as well as its mandate to provide independent assistance to victims of discrimination.

DIHR monitors the human rights situation in Denmark and conducts academic research, analyses and reports on human rights issues. Moreover, DIHR writes public consultation memos in relation to new legislation and provides recommendations as to how human rights conventions can be implemented in Danish law. The monitoring work of DIHR relies greatly on surveys and statistics provided by DIHR and other organisations, including public authorities, universities and civil society organisations. In general, collaboration with key players and the inclusion of civil society is an important part of the work of DIHR.

CHAPTER 1

1 GENERAL OBLIGATIONS

1.1 INCORPORATION

In 2012 the Danish Government appointed an expert committee with the task of considering the possibility of incorporating a number of human rights treaties into Danish law, including the ICERD. The European Convention on Human Rights was, at the time when the expert committee set out its work, the only incorporated human rights convention in Denmark. The members of the committee consisted of independent experts and government representatives. The expert committee finalised its work in 2014.¹

A majority of the experts recommended incorporation of the ICERD and several other UN human rights conventions.² However, none of the Governments in power since 2012 have presented a bill on incorporation to Parliament. Today there are very few examples of the ICERD's provisions being either invoked before and/or applied by the Danish Courts. Between January 2001 to January 2014, only three published judgements from the Danish Courts contains an explicit reference to the ICERD. To DIHR's knowledge there are no available numbers regarding the period since 2014. Incorporation would strengthen citizens' rights, as well as increase attention and create greater awareness of the conventions among citizens, local and State authorities, as well as the judiciary.

Suggested inquiry:

- How many public judgements from Danish courts contains an explicit reference to ICERD today?
- Will the State Party take steps to incorporate ICERD into Danish law and ensure that the convention is applied in the Danish courts?

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CHAPTER 2

2 SPECIFIC RIGHTS

2.1 THE GOVERNMENT'S STRATEGY AGAINST PARALLEL SOCIETIES (ARTICLES 2, 3, 4 AND 5)

In 2018 it was decided to introduce a package of laws that the government referred to as the "ghetto-plan", which targeted social housing areas. Some of the policies contained in the package are described in the State Party's report. The package differentiates between the residential areas marked as "vulnerable areas" and "ghetto areas". "Ghetto areas" are defined by the same factors as the "vulnerable areas", but with the addition that more than 50 % of the residents of the area are immigrants or descendants of immigrants from a non-western country. The current Minister of Housing, Kaare Dybvad Bek, has commented on the use of the word "ghetto", denouncing it as derogatory and choosing not to use it. However, the term "ghetto" has not been removed from laws and regulations.

The "ghetto-package" contains several different pieces of legislation. One of them requires that the housing associations must reject to assign homes located in an area that has been categorized as a "ghetto-area" for the last four years to persons who are receiving the integration benefit⁸ – an unemployment benefit available to persons who have lived in Denmark less than 9 out of the last 10 years.⁹

Another part of the package are the new rules regulating primary schools with a high percentage of students from the "vulnerable areas". These schools will have a mandatory language test that will decide whether each student can proceed to the next grade. 10

The "ghetto package" also contains a requirement for children in the designated areas, who are at least 1 year of age, to attend mandatory day care 25 hours a week. The law allows families who can provide a sufficient learning environment to apply to educate their children at home. ¹¹ In that connection, it is taken into consideration whether the language mainly spoken in the household in question is Danish, which is preferred. ¹²

Furthermore, new laws contained in the package require that the social housing associations reduce the number of non-specialised housing to 40 % by 2030 in areas that have been categorized as "ghettos" for four years or more. As a consequence, up to 60 % of the homes in long-term "ghetto areas" can be demolished, divested from or transformed into more specific types of housing, which puts the current residents in these areas at a greater risk of losing their homes and having to relocate. This also contributes to diminishing the number of dwellings in social housing available to socially disadvantaged people and ethnic minorities.

Suggested inquiry:

- Will the Danish State Party take steps to remove the term "ghetto" as a way to describe an area of collective housing populated by a majority of residents with non-western background?
- What measures will the Danish State Party take to monitor the housing situation and the effects that the current demolitions, letting rules and restrictions in social housing will have on access to housing for residents with an ethnic minority background?
- What measures will be taken to monitor and measure whether mandatory day care, language tests in schools and the prohibition against offering homes to recipients of integration benefits¹⁴ in certain housing areas will disproportionately affect ethnic minorities to a degree that will constitute indirect discrimination?

2.2 HATE CRIMES MOTIVATED BY ETHNICITY (ARTICLE 4)

The recent annual report from the National Police on hate crimes shows that there were 449 registered cases of hate crime in 2018. Out of the 449 cases 260 were motivated by racism and 112 were religiously motivated. Furthermore, the Ministry of Justice has, for several years, annually published reports on the population's perception of being victims of violence. The motivation for this type of report is that a not insignificant part of the crimes that take place in Denmark are not reported to the police. This is known as hidden crime or the dark figure of crime. In relation to hate crimes motivated by racism there is

undoubtedly a significant dark figure which is also acknowledged by the National Police. ¹⁷

The latest victims' report showed that 7 % of victims of violence believe that the violence against them in all certainty was motivated by racism. That translates into between 3600 and 5000 persons between the age of 16 and 74 years old who annually experience racist motivated violence. This number differs significantly from the 449 cases registered by the police in which - as mentioned above - 260 were motivated by racism and 112 were religiously motivated.

The government has started working on developing a national action plan to combat anti-semitism. ¹⁹ An agreement with the Danish Jewish Society to work on such a plan has been in place since November 2019. ²⁰

Suggested inquiry:

- What measures are taken to combat racism and hate crimes?
- Will the Danish State Party adopt a national action plan to combat racism and hate crime?
- Will the Danish State Party adopt action plans to combat racism and hate crime targeted other specific ethnic or religious minorities, alongside the national action plan to combat anti-semitism?

2.3 ACCESS TO CITIZENSHIP FOR DISABLED PERSONS BORN AND/OR RAISED IN DENMARK (ARTICLE 5)

In Denmark, immigrants to the country, as well as persons born and/or raised in Denmark without a Danish citizenship, must live up to a long list of requirements to obtain citizenship. Pursuant to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Denmark is obligated to grant exemptions from citizenship requirements which applicants with a disability do not have the possibility of fulfilling due to their disability, including knowledge of the Danish language and Danish society.²¹

The exemption is granted by the Parliamentary Committee on Citizenship,²² and the decisions can differ between similar cases.²³ The practice of granting exemptions due to a disability has been significantly tightened and fewer exemptions are being granted than previously. The rejections went from 3% in 2014 to 26% in 2015 and 96% in 2017.²⁴

The procedure through which young persons, who are born and/or raised in Denmark, can obtain citizenship differs depending on their parents' country of origin. Persons with parents from Nordic countries can obtain Danish citizenship by declaration if they are between 18 and 23 years of age, have resided in Denmark for at least 10 years of which 5 must have been within the last 6 years and do not have a criminal record.²⁵ Persons who are born and/or raised in Denmark, but whose parents have immigrated from outside the Nordic countries can no longer obtain citizenship by declaration.²⁶ Instead, they must go through the same extensive procedures as new immigrants coming to Denmark. As a result, persons with a disability, who are born and/or raised in Denmark with parents from non-Nordic countries, can be in a significantly disadvantaged situation when compared to persons with parents from Nordic countries.

Suggested inquiry:

- Will the Danish State Party take measures to change the regulation on naturalization to clarify which requirements must be fulfilled for an applicant with a disability to be exempted from citizenship requirements?
- Will the Danish State Party provide information on how it will ensure that young non-Nordic persons born and raised in Denmark who have a disability are not subjected to double discrimination on the grounds of ethnicity and disability when applying for citizenship?

2.4 CHILDREN OF NON-WESTERN ETHNIC MINORITIES LIVING IN POVERTY (ARTICLES 2 AND 5)

In recent years there has been a significant increase in the number of children living in poverty in Denmark. By the end of 2018 there were 64,500 children in

Denmark living in families with an income lower than Statistics Denmark's indicator for relative poverty.²⁷ Children with an ethnic minority background are affected the most, since children of non-western ethnic minorities make up 56 % of all children living in poverty in Denmark.²⁸ The integration benefit,²⁹ originally introduced in September 2015, is the primary reason for this ethnic disproportion in child poverty. The benefit is for persons who have not lived in Denmark for at least nine of the past ten years.³⁰ Consequently, the primary recipients of the benefit are refugees or immigrants who have recently arrived in Denmark. In total 98 % of persons on this benefit have an ethnic minority background. Families with more than one child do not receive a greater benefit than families with one child, despite higher costs of living. As a result, the more children a family has, the more strained their financial situation is.³¹

A commission has been formed to make recommendations on reforming the current system of unemployment benefits. The Commission is scheduled to make their recommendations in a year, and until 2021, families with children can receive a small extra benefit.³²

Suggested inquiry:

 How will it be ensured that children of non-western immigrants are not disproportionately living in poverty after the reform of the unemployment benefit system?

2.5 INTERPRETATION IN THE PUBLIC HEALTH SECTOR (ARTICLES 2 AND 5)

Full and accurate doctor-patient communication is of crucial importance to enable the doctor to give the correct diagnosis and to ensure that the patient receives the right treatment. Interpreter services are essential in consultation situations in which a patient and doctor would otherwise not be able to understand each other because of the patient's poor Danish language skills.

In 2018, the Danish government introduced an interpreter charge on interpreter services in the health sector aimed at persons who have resided in Denmark for more than 3 years. Consequently, the charge poses a barrier to equal access to

physical and mental health for persons with an ethnic minority background with insufficient knowledge of Danish and a strained financial situation.³³

The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural rights addressed this subject in the concluding observations on the sixth periodic report of Denmark from 2019. It was recommended that the Danish State Party ensures that refugees have adequate access to healthcare services, amongst other by providing free interpreter services or reimbursement of transportation costs as needed.³⁴

Suggested inquiry:

- What measures are taken to ensure that persons with an ethnic minority background have adequate access to public health and medical care?
- Will the government repeal legislation that warrants interpreter charges in the health sector?

2.7 INTERPRETATION SERVICES (ARTICLES 2 AND 5)

A number of studies have shown that access to qualified and properly trained interpreters in refugee and migrant languages is limited in the health care system and legal system. Inadequate interpreter services in minority languages is a general problem in situations where the citizens interact with public institutions in Denmark. The interpreters available often lack linguistic and/or interpretation skills and professionalism.³⁵ Danish lawyers and judges have described the problems they have encountered with interpreter assistance in the legal system. Some have indicated that incorrect or inadequate interpreter assistance has challenged the right to due process.³⁶

Correct and accurate interpretation is an important precondition for a well-functioning legal system and equal access to justice. The quality of the interpreter service that is provided by the Danish authorities is not yet at the adequate level needed to ensure that persons in need of interpreter assistance is treated fairly.

As part of the Danish Finance Act of 2018, the government decided to establish a certification scheme of foreign language interpreters in the healthcare system. However, the certification scheme was not accompanied by the establishment of a public interpreter education aimed at the most common refugee and migrant languages, or a requirement that public institutions employ certified and educated interpreters when available. Furthermore, the certification scheme, agreed upon in the Finance Act, is a voluntary scheme for the institutions in the health care system.³⁷

Suggested inquiry:

- Will the Danish State Party establish a public education programme for interpreters, aimed specifically at the most important refugee and migrant languages?
- What measures are taken to ensure an adequate quality of interpretation in institutions under the Ministry of Justice and the courts?

2.8 ETHNIC PROFILING (ARTICLES 2 AND 5)

Figures from Statistics Denmark show that persons with a non-Danish ethnic background are more likely to be charged and arrested for a crime they have not committed. In 2014 there was a 65-70 % higher risk of being charged without a conviction if you were an immigrant or a descendant of a non-Western immigrant. Immigrants or descendants of immigrants with a non-Western background also had an 86-88 % higher risk than persons of Danish ethnic origin of being arrested without subsequently being convicted. 38

At the moment, there are no guidelines or measures addressing discriminatory ethnic profiling within law enforcement in Denmark.

Suggested inquiry:

- When will the National Police develop national guidelines aimed at preventing ethnic profiling?
- Will the Danish State Party ensure a general prohibition on discrimination, including ethnic profiling, under the Police Act?

2.9 ADMINISTRATIVE DETENTION OF FOREIGNERS (ARTICLE 5)

In January 2020 the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CPT) expressed concerns after their visit to Denmark in April 2019.³⁹ One of the concerns regarded the foreigners who live at Ellebæk Centre for foreigners.

The foreigners who live at 'Ellebæk' are not criminals serving a sentence but are administratively detained in accordance with the Danish Aliens Act. Administrative detention can take place on several grounds. One of these grounds is when rejected asylum seekers refuse to cooperate with the police on their return. This type of detention at 'Ellebæk' is considered by the Danish authorities to be a motivational factor which will motivate them to return. According to the Danish Aliens Act, the administrative detention of rejected asylum seekers should only be enacted and continued if the detention is considered necessary.⁴⁰

CPT considers the material conditions and the regime in which migrants and rejected asylum seekers are detained unacceptable, including in relation to Ellebæk. ⁴¹ In this regard the CPT calls upon the Danish authorities to, "launch a major refurbishment programme at both establishment or take them out of service or replace them with facilities appropriate for the administrative detention of migrants." within three months. ⁴²

CPT also observed that the staff at 'Ellebæk' has used inappropriate language towards the foreigners detained at 'Ellebæk'.⁴³

Suggested inquiry:

 Will the Danish State Party address the concerns from CPT as suggested, and take measures within the three-month period to align with the recommendation?

CHAPTER 3

3 GREENLAND

Greenland is a self-governed part of the Kingdom of Denmark. Denmark's ratification of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (1971) applies to Greenland with no reservations. DIHR is the national human rights institution for Greenland and works in close cooperation with the Human Rights Council of Greenland to promote and protect human rights in Greenland.⁴⁴

3 GENERAL OBLIGATIONS

3.1 INCORPORATION OF THE ICERD IN GREENLAND

Just as in Denmark, the European Convention on Human Rights is the only international human rights convention incorporated into Greenlandic law, thus making it a part of Greenlandic legislation.⁴⁵ However, the core UN human rights conventions, as is also the case in Denmark, have not been incorporated into Greenlandic law.

During the Universal Periodic Review of Denmark in May 2011, a recommendation made to Denmark was to incorporate into domestic law international human rights conventions to which Denmark is party. In 2014 the majority of the members of the Danish government appointed an expert committee, which recommended the incorporation of the ICERD. 46

Suggested inquiry:

 What specific measures by Greenlandic authorities and by Danish authorities acting in Greenland under Danish law are planned to strengthen the respect, as well as enhance the promotion and protection of the rights enshrined in the convention?

3.2 LACK OF KNOWLEDGE AND ANALYSIS

Knowledge and analyses on the rights under the convention is crucial in order to promote non-discrimination and equal treatment of all persons in Greenland irrespective of race, nationality or ethnic origin.

There is little evidence and few research studies on discrimination on the grounds of ethnicity, race etc. in Greenland. For instance, there is a lack of knowledge on the extent of hate speech based on race/ethnicity/language on social media and in other social arenas. There is also a lack of available information on whether the use of different dialects of Greenlandic might create challenges and an increased risk of discrimination or marginalization. Another perspective, which is not thoroughly researched, is the working conditions for migrant workers in the service industries.

Suggested inquiry:

- What measures are taken to strengthen knowledge and analyses on discrimination on the grounds of race, nationality, ethnic origin, language etc.?
- What measures are taken to strengthen knowledge and analyses on hate speech based on race/ethnicity/language on social media and in other social arenas?
- What measures are taken to research the working conditions for migrant workers in the service industries?

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http://justitsministeriet.dk/sites/default/files/media/Pressemed delelser/pdf/2014/Betaenkning_1546.pdf.

³ Bill no. 38 of 22 November 2018 on the Act regarding amendments to the act on social housing with more, the act on renting social housing and the act on rental housing (Lovforslag L 38 af 22. november 2018 om ændring af lov om almene boliger m.v., lov om leje af almene boliger og lov om leje). Available in Danish at:

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https://www.retsinformation.dk/Forms/R0710.aspx?id=205151.

⁹ Consolidation act no. 981 of 23 September 2018 on law on an active social policy (Lovbekendtgørelse nr. 981 af 23. September 2019, om aktiv socialpolitik), section 11. Available in Danish at: https://www.retsinformation.dk/Forms/R0710.aspx?id=209997 #K4. The "integration benefit" is now called the "self-supportand home journey benefit" or "the transition benefit", see act no. 74 of 27 February 2019 on amendments to the act on foreigners, the act on integration, the act on repatriation and other laws (Lov nr. 174 af 27. februar 2019 om ændring af udlændingeloven, integrationsloven, repatrieringsloven og forskellige andre love). Available in Danish at:

https://www.retsinformation.dk/Forms/R0710.aspx?id=207366.

¹⁰ Act no. 278 of 26 March 2019 regarding amendments to the act on the primary schools, the act on free schools and the act on private primary schools with more, the act on social services and the act on children- and youth benefits (Lov nr. 278 af 26. marts 2019 om ændring af lov om folkeskolen, lov om friskoler og private grundskoler m.v., lov om social service og lov om en børne- og ungeydelse). Available in Danish at:

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¹¹ Act no. 1529 of 18 December 2018 regarding amendments to the act on daycare offers and the act on children- and youth benefits (Lov nr. 1529 af 18. december 2018 om ændring af dagtilbudsloven og lov om en børne- og ungeydelse), section 1, nr. 3. Available in Danish at:

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¹³ Consolidation act no. 119 of 1 February 2019 on social housing (Almenboligloven), section 168 a, subsection 1. Available in Danish at:

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- ¹⁵ The National Police (Rigspolitiet), "Hadforbrydelser i 2018 rigspolitiets årsrapport vedrørende hadforbrydelser", October 2019, p. 1. Available in Danish here.
- ¹⁶ Ministry of Justice, University of Copenhagen, The Crime Prevention Council, The National Police (Justitsministeriet, Københavns Universitet, Det Kriminalpræventive råd, Rigspolitiet), "Udsathed for vold og andre former for kriminalitet, Offerundersøgelserne 2005-2017", December 2018. Available in Danish here.
- ¹⁷ The National Police (Rigspolitiet), "Hadforbrydelser i 2018 rigspolitiets årsrapport vedrørende hadforbrydelser", October 2019, p. 25. Available in Danish here.
- ¹⁸ Ministry of Justice, University of Copenhagen, The Crime Prevention Council, The National Police (Justitsministeriet, Københavns Universitet, Det Kriminalpræventive råd, Rigspolitiet), "Udsathed for vold og andre former for kriminalitet, Offerundersøgelserne 2005-2017", December 2018, p. 76. Available in Danish here.
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2018 om naturalisation), section 24, subsection 4. Available in Danish at:

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https://www.ft.dk/samling/20161/almdel/ifu/spm/80/svar/1437268/1809246/index.htm.

²⁵ Consolidation Act no. 1029 of 10 July 2018 on naturalization (Indfødsretsloven), section 3. Available in Danish at: https://www.retsinformation.dk/Forms/r0710.aspx?id=202609.

²⁶ Act no. 110 of 8 February 2016 regarding the annulment of the access for young people born and raised in Denmark to citizenship through declaration (Lov nr. 110 af 8. februar 2016 om ophævelse af erklæringsadgangen for unge født og opvokset i Danmark). Available in Danish at:

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²⁹ The "integration benefit" is now called the "self-support- and home journey benefit" or "the transition benefit", see act no. 74 of 27 February 2019 on amendments to the act on foreigners, the act on integration, the act on repatriation and other laws (Lov nr. 174 af 27. februar 2019 om ændring af udlændingeloven, integrationsloven, repatrieringsloven og forskellige andre love). Available in Danish at:

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³⁰ Consolidation act no. 981 of 23 September 2018 on an active social policy (Lovbekendtgørelse nr. 981 af 23. September 2019, om aktiv socialpolitik), § 11. Available in Danish at:

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³¹ The Danish Institute for Human Rights (Institut for Menneskerettigheder), "Familier på integrationsydelse", 2018. Available in Danish at:

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⁴⁰ Consolidation Act no. 1022 of 2 October 2019, referred as The Danish Aliens Act (Lovbekendtgørelse nr. 1022 af 2. oktober 2019 om udlændingeloven), section 36, subsection 6, available in Danish at:

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