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Employment rate

In 2014 the employment rate for women in Denmark was 69.8 per cent; for men it was 73.5 per cent. For both men and women the employment rate has increased slightly from 2013 to 2014. Both men and women with an immigrant background have a lower employment rate than persons of Danish origin. Immigrants from non-western countries have a lower employment rate for both men and women than persons with Danish origin and immigrants from western countries. Female immigrants from non-western countries have the lowest employment rate for immigrants. The employment rate for both immigrant men and women was lower in 2014 than in 2008. This may partly be because of increased immigration.

Employment rate by ancestry and gender, 2008-2014

		2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
		-- Per centage --						
Men	Total	78,3	73,9	73,5	73,6	73,1	73	73,5
	<i>Persons of Danish origin</i>	80	75,7	75,4	75,7	75,2	75,2	75,8
	<i>Immigrants</i>	63,8	58,8	58	58,5	58,2	58,7	59,2
	Immigrants from western countries	68,5	64,1	64,2	65,1	65,2	65,9	67,2
	Immigrants from non-western countries	61	55,5	54,1	54,1	53,4	53,6	53,4
	<i>Descendants</i>	66,1	59	56,7	55,5	54,4	54,2	55,2
	Descendants from non-western countries	64,5	56,8	54,8	53,6	52,6	52,5	53,4
Women	Total	73,7	71,6	70,7	70	69,5	69,5	69,8
	<i>Persons of Danish origin</i>	75,8	74	73,2	72,6	72,3	72,4	72,8
	<i>Immigrants</i>	54,9	52,3	51,1	50,6	49,8	49,9	50,4
	Immigrants from western countries	61,1	58,6	57,7	56,8	56,1	56,9	57,7
	Immigrants from non-western countries	51,5	48,7	47,2	46,8	45,9	45,5	45,6
	<i>Descendants</i>	65,2	60,2	57,8	55,5	54,2	54,1	54,3
	Descendants from non-western countries	63,8	58,4	55,7	53,6	52,1	52,2	52,4

Freedom of thought, conscience and religion

Regarding the separation of State and church, Article 18 states that everyone shall have the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion, and that no one shall be subject to coercion which would impair their freedom to profess to or adopt a religion or belief of their choice. It is the Ministry of Ecclesiastical Affairs' assessment, that this right does not prevent Denmark from having a state church (the Established Church), as long as no one is forced to be a member of the church or forced to be involved in its activities. It should be noted, that other countries also have a state church.

Regarding civil registration, as described in the sixth periodic report of Denmark from 2015, new legislation regarding digitization of processes concerning civil registration entered into force in 2013. As a result, all application processes are initiated on a public online self-service.

Applications are assessed by civil registrars in the Established Church. The registrars are handling the task of assessing the applications for civil registration as part of the central government and the task is carried out on a regular public basis and without religious content. The applicants do not have to be in direct contact with the Lutheran Evangelical Church or any religious activity. Therefore, it is the Ministry of Ecclesiastical Affairs' assessment that the system is not contrary to the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion in ICCPR article 18.

Human trafficking

<i>Section 262 a of the Danish Criminal Code – Prosecutions and convictions from 2012-2015</i>		
Year	Number of cases prosecuted	Number of convictions
2012	10	4
2013	14	3
2014	4	10
2015	29	8

Please note, that the statistics have been drawn from the polices' case file processing system (POLSAS) on 23 May 2016. The statistics are dynamic and they can as such change over time.

<i>Section 267 of the Danish Criminal Code – Prosecutions and convictions from 2012-2015</i>		
Year	Number of cases prosecuted	Number of convictions
2012	5	5
2013	0	0
2014	0	0
2015	1	1

The Danish Press Council (Pressenævnet)

Natural and legal persons who believe that they have been denounced by the media can also choose to lodge a complaint with the Danish Press Council (*Pressenævnet*) if they have got a cause of action. The Press Council is established pursuant to the Danish Media Liability Act and is an independent, public tribunal which decides upon complaints concerning the mass media.

It is possible to lodge a complaint against newspapers, daily papers, weekly magazines, local papers, professional papers and other national, periodical publications which are published at least twice a year, Danmarks Radio (Danish Broadcasting Corporation), TV2, TV2's regional enterprises, undertakings authorized in Denmark to broadcast radio or television programmes as well as some electronic information systems, especially news agencies, telephone papers and talking papers which are registered with the Press Council.

The Press Council can rule in cases relating to whether the publication made is contrary to sound press ethics and whether a mass media shall be under an obligation to publish a reply.

The Press Council cannot impose a sentence on the mass media or assure the complainant financial compensation.

In cases concerning sound press ethics the Press Council can express its criticism. In cases about reply the Council may direct the editor of the mass media in question to publish a reply. In both types of cases the Council may direct the editor to publish the decision of the Council to an extent specified by the Council.

More information in English can be found at <http://www.pressenaevnet.dk/Information-in-English.aspx>

Alternatives to solitary confinement

In Denmark solitary confinement may in certain cases be used as a disciplinary punishment during incarceration (so-called disciplinary cell). Danish legislation allows for three types of disciplinary punishment: Caution, fine and disciplinary cell. The disciplinary punishment may be suspended on the condition that the inmate does not commit a criminal offence or another breach of discipline for a specific period of time.

Thus, placement in a disciplinary cell is the most severe type of disciplinary punishment and is only used in cases concerning certain more severe offences, such as escape, violence against other inmates or staff, smuggling of items into the institution and certain other violations involving a breach of the order or security of the institution. The duration of the placement in a disciplinary cell must be fixed in view of the nature and scope of the offence and cannot exceed 4 weeks. In practice, the vast majority of cases concerning disciplinary punishment result in a caution, a fine, or a suspended measure.

As regards minors, there is a strong focus on limiting the use of disciplinary cells. Thus, the Department of Prisons and Probation has instructed the institutions to exercise particular restraint in the use of disciplinary cells in cases concerning minors and to always consider whether a suspended measure would be sufficient to achieve the intended purpose. In the fall of 2015 a partnership was set up with the purpose of further limiting the use of disciplinary cell in cases concerning minors.

Application of the ICCPR in Danish national law

As stated in the sixth periodic report of Denmark the former Government appointed an expert committee *inter alia* to consider the positive and the negative implications of incorporating UN human rights treaties into Danish law, including the ICCPR.

The committee of experts in the human rights field delivered its report on several human rights aspects in 2014. Some members of the committee recommended that Denmark incorporated the conventions, while other members of the committee expressed concerns.

After a public consultation process, the former Government decided not to incorporate the UN Human Rights Conventions into Danish law, since such incorporation, according to the former Government, might entail a risk of a shift in the legislative powers conferred upon Parliament to the courts.

It was the opinion of the former Government that it is important to maintain the elected representatives' responsibility for compliance with our international obligations. In this regard, the present Government generally agrees with the former Government.

It should be noted that the UN Human Rights Conventions are relevant sources of law in Denmark. Although not incorporated into Danish law, the conventions can be and are indeed invoked before and applied by the Danish courts and other national authorities.

Concerning the 9 judgement mentioned in the sixth periodic report of Denmark the following can be observed:

1. U2002.1789H (21 May 2002) concerns a permit to commercial passenger transportation which were conditioned by Danish citizenship. The European Convention of Human Rights, the ICCPR and the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination were invoked. The Danish Supreme Court cited the contents of Article 1 of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination and referred to Article 26 of the ICCPR and found that the nationality requirement in the present case was not contrary to this.
2. U2002.2378Ø (27 June 2002) concerns a case where the owner of a vehicle did not wish to inform the police who had used his vehicle at a certain time. The defendant referred *inter alia* to Article 6 of the European Convention on Human Rights and Article 14 of the ICCPR. The High Court of Eastern Denmark found that the defendant was obliged to inform the police about who had used the vehicle and that the principles relied upon by the defendant could not lead to a different result.
3. U2002.2591Ø (30 August 2002) concerns membership of an organization for workers as a condition for the payment of social benefits as compensation for loss of income due to sickness or unemployment. The Danish Supreme Court stated that the content of the relevant provisions in the Danish Constitution, the European Convention on Human Rights and the relevant ILO- and UN-conventions, including the ICCPR, are substantially the same and found that none of the relevant provisions had been violated.
4. TfK2004.76Ø (5 November 2003) concerns a case where the owner of a vehicle did not wish to inform the police who had used his vehicle at a certain time. In its judgment concerning the interpretation of the principle of prohibition against self-incrimination the High Court of Eastern Denmark referred to Article 6 of the European Convention on Human Rights and Article 14 (3) (g) of the ICCPR
5. U2006.35V (26 May 2006) concerns the right to be present at court hearings in criminal cases. The High Court of Western Denmark found that it follows from the Danish Administration of Justice Act, the European Convention of Human Rights and the ICCPR that the defendant had a right to be present at his appeal case.
6. U2006.2083H (26 April 2006) concerns employments in the public sector with salary caps. The High Court of Eastern Denmark did not find *inter alia* that the arrangement was contrary to Denmark's international obligations, including article 4 of the European Convention of Human Rights and Article 8 (3) of the ICCPR. The Danish Supreme Court agreed with the High Court of Eastern Denmark and found that it was not contrary to the European Convention of Human Rights or other conventions that were invoked.
7. U2008.342H (5 November 2007) concerns birth registration administered by the Established Church (*Folkekirken*) and financial support from the State to the Established Church. The Dan-

ish Supreme Court found that the arrangement concerning birth registration was not contrary to Articles 8, 9 or 14 in conjunction with 8 or 9 of the European Convention of Human Rights and since it did not entail differential treatment it was furthermore not contrary to articles 2, 18 and 26 of the ICCPR. Concerning the financial support from the state the Danish Supreme Court found that it was not contrary to the European Convention of Human Rights or the ICCPR.

8. U2009.2307Ø (22 May 2009) concerns an agreement between parents about the name of their child. One of the parents referred to Article 8 of the ICCPR. The High Court of Eastern Denmark found that the agreement on the name of the child was not contrary to Article 8 of the ICCPR.

9. U2011.3083H (10 August 2011) concerns a rejection of family reunification. The European Convention of Human Rights, the ICCPR and the Convention on the Rights of the Child were invoked. The Danish Supreme Court found that neither the European Convention of Human Rights nor other international obligations were violated in the case.

It is correct that the Danish courts did not use the ICCPR to set aside Danish legislation. It should be noted in this regard that it is the opinion of Denmark that its national legislation is already in accordance with international human rights obligations, including the ICCPR.

Number of reopened cases before the Refugee Appeals Board in 2012, 2013, 2014 and 2015, including the number of reconsidered cases

When the Refugee Appeals Board has decided a case, the asylum-seeker may request the Board to reopen the asylum proceedings.

Under section 53(10) and (12) of the Aliens Act and rule 48 of the Rules of Procedure for the Refugee Appeals Board, the chairman of the relevant panel may determine the case if there is no reason to assume that the Board will change its decision, or if the conditions for being granted asylum must be deemed evidently to be met.

The chairman may also decide to reopen a case and remit it to the Danish Immigration Service relying on his powers as chairman.

The chairman may further decide 1) that the panel that previously decided the case is to decide on the issue of reopening either at a meeting or by deliberations in writing, 2) that the case is to be reopened and considered at a new hearing by the panel which previously decided the case with all parties to the case present, or 3) that the case is to be reopened and considered at a new hearing by a new panel.

If a basis is found for reopening a case, the deadline for departure will be suspended pending the reconsideration of the case. The Refugee Appeals Board will also assign counsel to represent the asylum-seeker.

According to the general principles of public administration, the Board must, on its own initiative, reopen cases of refused asylum-seekers who are about to be returned if essential new information comes to light which affects the basis on which the Board made its decision in those cases. In connection with the Board's deliberations in this respect, it may be necessary to obtain additional information with a view to deciding on the issue of reopening. In practice, the Refugee Appeals Board has assumed that, in such cases, the Board has the competence to decide to suspend forced returns until such additional information is available.

Regarding the reopening of cases following criticism from a UN Committee, please refer to the section further below.

In 2012, the Refugee Appeals Board decided on requests for reopening in 321 cases. The Board decided to reopen 65 of these cases. In 2012, the Board decided on 49 reopened cases. In 86 percent of the 49 cases, the Board decided to grant asylum.

In 2013, the Refugee Appeals Board decided on requests for reopening in 795 cases. The Board decided to reopen 190 of these cases. In 2013, the Board decided on 144 reopened cases. In 91 percent of the 144 cases, the Board decided to grant asylum.

In 2014, the Refugee Appeals Board decided on requests for reopening in 686 cases. The Board decided to reopen 63 of these cases. In 2014, the Board decided on 61 reopened cases. In 87 percent of the 61 cases, the Board decided to grant asylum.

In 2015, the Refugee Appeals Board decided on requests for reopening in 696 cases. The Board decided to reopen 94 of these cases. In 2015, the Board decided on 82 reopened cases. In 87 percent of the 82 cases, the Board decided to grant asylum.

Refugee Appeals Board – Proceedings in general

The Refugee Appeals Board in brief

The activities of the Refugee Appeals Board are based on the Aliens Act, according to which decisions of the Danish Immigration Service refusing asylum are automatically appealed to the Board. An appeal to the Board stays execution of the decision.

The Refugee Appeals Board is an independent, quasi-judicial body.

The Board is considered a court or tribunal within the meaning of Article 46 of the Council Directive on common procedures for granting and withdrawing international protection

(2013/32/EU). Article 46 deals with the right of asylum-seekers to have a decision taken in their case reviewed by a court or tribunal.

The Danish Immigration Service granted asylum under section 7 of the Aliens Act in 85 percent of all cases in 2015, and among the applications for asylum dismissed by the Danish Immigration Service, 21 percent of the asylum-seekers were subsequently granted asylum by the Refugee Appeals Board.

Proceedings before the Refugee Appeals Board

Decisions of the Refugee Appeals Board are based on an individual and specific assessment of the relevant case. The asylum-seeker's statements regarding his or her grounds for asylum are assessed in light of all relevant evidence, including what is known about conditions in his or her country of origin (background information). The Refugee Appeals Board sees to it that all facts of the case are brought out and decides on the examination of the asylum-seeker and witnesses and on the provision of other evidence.

Proceedings before the Refugee Appeals Board are oral and very similar to proceedings before the ordinary courts. In addition to the asylum-seeker and his or her counsel, the hearing is attended by an interpreter and a representative of the Danish Immigration Service. Normally, two hours have been scheduled for each hearing. The Board spends the time necessary to fully cover all aspects of the case, even when the consequence is that the two hours are exceeded. For complicated cases, the Board therefore usually doubles or triples the time scheduled for the hearing.

All statements made and all documents presented during the asylum proceedings so far are included in the case file of the Refugee Appeals Board. The members of the Refugee Appeals Board have therefore read and reviewed this information prior to the hearing, which means that the Board members are familiar with the material at the hearing. Naturally, the same applies to the information provided in counsel's brief.

At the hearing, the asylum-seeker is allowed to make a statement and answer questions. In this connection, the asylum-seeker may also provide information or present documents not previously included in the case file. Then counsel and the representative of the Danish Immigration Service are allowed to make closing speeches, whereupon the asylum-seeker can make a final statement.

Upon the Refugee Appeals Board's deliberation, a written decision is produced, recapitulating the facts of the case as well as the reasoning and decision of the Board.

The Refugee Appeals Board's decision is normally served on the asylum-seeker immediately after the Board hearing, and, at the same time, the chairman of the hearing will briefly explain the reasoning of the decision.

All decisions made by the Refugee Appeals Board are subsequently published in anonymised form on the Board's website. The only exceptions are cases in which it might be possible to identify the asylum-seeker despite the anonymization, for example because of press coverage. Accordingly, there is easy, clear and direct access to all relevant case-law of the Refugee Appeals Board.

Credibility assessment and assessment of evidence

If the asylum-seeker's statements appear coherent, likely and consistent, the Refugee Appeals Board will normally consider the statements as facts.

However, inconsistent statements made by the asylum-seeker about crucial parts of his or her grounds for seeking asylum may weaken the asylum-seeker's credibility. If the asylum-seeker's statement cannot be directly accepted, the assessment will always take into consideration whether the principle of the benefit of the doubt should be applied. When making this assessment, one of the circumstances that the Refugee Appeals Board will take into account is the asylum-seeker's explanation for the inconsistencies. In this connection, the Refugee Appeals Board will take into account the asylum-seeker's particular situation, such as cultural differences, age and health. To mention examples, particular consideration is shown to illiterates, victims of torture and persons who have been sexually abused. Moreover, when hearing asylum cases in which the asylum-seeker has referred to his or her sexuality or gender identity as his or her grounds for asylum, the Refugee Appeals Board is aware that, considering the circumstances, such asylum-seeker may be in a particularly vulnerable situation.

It follows from the UNHCR Handbook on Procedures and Criteria for Determining Refugee Status, paragraphs 206 to 219, that in certain situations it may be necessary due to the asylum-seeker's age or mental state to lay greater emphasis on objective circumstances than on the statements made by the asylum-seeker during the proceedings. If relevant in a particular case, the Refugee Appeals Board will assess the asylum-seeker's procedural capacity and generally be less demanding when it comes to the burden of proof in cases of minor asylum-seekers or asylum-seekers with a mental disorder or impairment. Finally, as previously mentioned, the Board will always, if in doubt about the asylum-seeker's credibility, assess to what extent the principle of the benefit of the doubt should be applied.

The assessment of evidence performed by the Refugee Appeals Board is free and therefore not governed by special rules of evidence. Evidence is assessed on the basis of an overall assessment of the asylum-seeker's statements and personal appearance at the Board hearing in conjunction with the other information in the case, including the Board's background material on the asylum-seeker's country of origin. In its adjudication of the case, the Board will seek to determine the facts on which its decision should be based.

Examination of asylum cases where Denmark has been criticized by UN Treaty Bodies

If the UN Committee has expressed criticism of a decision made by the Refugee Appeals Board, the Board reopens the case for reconsideration.

When reconsidering the case, the Refugee Appeals Board is comprised entirely of board members that have not previously decided the case.

In making the reconsideration, the Refugee Appeals Board takes into account the views adopted by the UN Committee.

All cases in which a UN Committee has expressed criticism of a decision made by the Refugee Appeals Board is thus reopened and reconsidered by the Board at an oral hearing. During these proceedings the Board will give full reconsideration to its previous assessment. This includes *inter alia* whether there is a real risk that the asylum-seeker will be exposed to the death penalty or subjected to torture or inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment in case of return to his or her country of origin.

The process of identifying torture victims among asylum seekers

The Danish Immigration Service

All asylum seekers are offered a medical screening when they arrive in Denmark. Asylum seekers with special needs (i.e. asylum seekers who have been subject to torture) shall be identified at the asylum centers for the implementation of the necessary measures. It is possible for the asylum seekers – anytime during the asylum process – to contact the healthcare staff if needed.

In cases where torture is invoked by the asylum seeker as a reason for asylum, the Danish Immigration Service may initiate an examination of the asylum seeker in order to determine whether he or she has been subject to torture.

The initiation of an examination depends on the circumstances in each case. In this regard, the Immigration Service takes into account the possible outcome of the case, the asylum seekers' explanation and credibility as well as general background information on the home country of the asylum seeker. Please note that the Danish Immigration Service follows the same practice as the Refugees Appeals Board on this matter.

The Refugees Appeals Board

The Refugee Appeals Board will always grant asylum if it considers it a fact that an asylum-seeker risks torture on return to his or her country of origin (unless one of the exclusion clauses is applicable).

Where torture is invoked as one of the grounds for asylum, the Refugee Appeals Board may sometimes find it necessary to obtain further details on such torture before determining the case. As part of the appeals procedure, the Board may for example order an examination of the asylum-seeker for signs of torture. Such decision will typically not be made until the Board hearing as the Board's assessment of the necessity of such examination often depends on the asylum-seeker's statement, including the asylum-seeker's credibility.

If the Refugee Appeals Board considers the asylum-seeker's grounds for asylum to be facts and the asylum-seeker currently risks torture or persecution on return, the Refugee Appeals Board will not order an examination for signs of torture.

If the Refugee Appeals Board considers it proved or possible that the asylum-seeker has previously been subjected to torture, but finds, upon a specific assessment of the asylum-seeker's situation, that there is no real risk of torture upon a return at the present time, the Board will normally not order an examination.

Where the Refugee Appeals Board considers an asylum-seeker to fall within section 7 of the Aliens Act, provided that his or her statements, including those relating to torture, are true, but the Board finds that the correctness of the statements is subject to some uncertainty, the Board may decide to adjourn the proceedings pending an examination of the asylum-seeker for signs of torture, which may be able to support the asylum-seeker's statements. If the examination for signs of torture concludes that the injury sustained by the asylum-seeker may have been inflicted by torture, this may have an impact on the Board's assessment of the credibility of the asylum-seeker's statements in general because individuals who have previously been subjected to torture cannot always be expected to give an account of the facts of the case in the same way as individuals who have not been subjected to torture and because the Board applies the principle of the benefit of the doubt. The Board does not expect that it is possible to determine the reason for any torture suffered by means of an examination for signs of torture as that is obviously impossible. Nor is it always possible to clarify through an examination for signs of torture whether the injury sustained by the asylum-seeker was caused by torture or by an incident like a fight, an assault, an accident or an act of war. In this kind of cases in which the asylum-seeker's statement gives rise to doubt, an examination for signs of torture may, however, lend that much support to his or her statement that the asylum-seeker is granted asylum as a consequence of the benefit of the doubt.

If the asylum-seeker claims to have been subjected to torture for circumstances that still exist and consequently risks being tortured again on his or her return, the Refugee Appeals Board normally will not order an examination for signs of torture where the asylum-seeker has lacked

credibility throughout the proceedings and the Board therefore has to reject in its entirety the asylum-seeker's statement on torture or on the circumstances giving rise to torture.^{1 2}

The physical examination for signs of torture is performed at the Department of Forensic Medicine and comprises a detailed examination of the asylum-seeker that will make it possible to assess whether any objective findings can be characterised to reflect physical torture. In addition, an examination is often made at the Department of Forensic Psychiatry, which subsequently issues a medical certificate for psychiatric assessment. Moreover, other examinations may be made by other medical specialists. The Department of Forensic Medicine then makes a conclusion based on the examinations, and this conclusion is included in the aggregate basis for the Refugee Appeals Board's decision.

If other medical information is available, including medical certificates from the Amnesty International Danish Medical Group, such information is also included in the basis for the decision on the application for asylum. It depends entirely on the circumstances of the specific case whether an examination for signs of torture is ordered.

The fact that an asylum-seeker has been subjected to torture may have an impact on the assessment of evidence made by the Refugee Appeals Board because individuals who have previously been subjected to torture cannot always be expected to give an account of the facts of the case in the same way as individuals who have not been subjected to torture.

Child-brides

The Committee has asked, whether it is correct that couples are being separated during the processing of their asylum application. The Ministry of Immigration, Integration and Housing can inform the Committee of the following:

¹ Concerning the significance of the asylum-seeker's credibility relative to the significance of medical information, reference is made to the decision adopted by the Committee against Torture on 12 November 2003 in *Milo Otman v. Denmark* (communication No. 209/2002), paras 6.4 to 6.6, in which the complainant's statements on torture and the medical information provided on this were set aside due to the complainant's general lack of credibility. In this decision, the Committee referred to paragraph 8 of its General Comment No. 1, pursuant to which questions about the credibility of a complainant, and the presence of relevant factual inconsistencies in his claim, are pertinent to the Committee's deliberations as to whether the complainant would be in danger of being tortured upon return. Reference is also made to the decision adopted by the Committee against Torture on 14 May 2014 in *Nicmeddin Alp v. Denmark* (communication No. 466/2011) in which the Committee noted that the State party's authorities thoroughly evaluated all the evidence presented by the complainant, found the complainant to lack credibility and did not consider it necessary to order a medical examination.

² Furthermore, reference is made to the judgment delivered by the European Court of Human Rights on 20 March 1991 in *Cruz Varas and Others v. Sweden* (application No. 15576/89), paras 77 to 82. In that case, the first applicant had produced medical evidence in support of his claim. In the assessment as to whether his expulsion had exposed him to a real risk of inhuman treatment, the Court emphasised that the applicant's lack of credibility and the fact that the final decision to expel the applicant was taken after thorough examination of his case by the national authorities. In that light, the Court found that, despite the medical evidence submitted, substantial grounds had not been shown for believing that the first applicant's expulsion would expose him to a real risk of being subjected to inhuman or degrading treatment on his return to his country of origin.

On the 10th of February 2016, the Minister of Immigration, Integration and Housing issued new directions regarding housing of underage spouses and partners in the asylum system. The new directions do *not* concern asylum seeking couples where both partners are above the age of 18, which is the age of majority in Denmark.

According to the new directions, underage spouses and partners shall – as a starting point – be housed separately from their spouse or partner in the asylum system. The housing directions aim, namely, to better ensure that the housing in the asylum system does not contribute to maintaining a minor in a forced marriage or relationship and to prevent infringements of the rules on the age of consent and illegal coercion.

An individual assessment must always be carried out. The housing decision is made by the Danish Immigration Service, and the parties must be consulted before the final housing decision is made. The assessment shall, *inter alia*, take into consideration: the age of the parties, the age difference, if there is an element of coercion, if the couple has children together, and if there are special circumstances, for instance disease.

The directions shall be administered in compliance with Denmark's international obligations, including the right to respect for family life under the European Convention of Human Rights and the ICCPR and the child's best interest under the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

In all cases where Denmark's international obligations require that exception shall be made, the spouses or partners shall be housed together. Moreover – in cases where the partners are housed separately – they must be housed relatively near each other and have access to frequent visits (normally the transportation is paid by the state).

The parties may ask to have their case reassessed at any time. Moreover – if the housing in the asylum system due to exceptional circumstances is not of shorter duration – the authorities must frequently reassess the housing decision of their own motion (*ex officio*).

The Danish Parliamentary Ombudsman has recently taken up the case for consideration.

Medical examination of asylum seekers since 2009

The Danish Immigration Service

Due to the basis of the registration in the Danish Immigration Service's electronic system, it is not possible to determine the number of cases where the Immigration Service has launched torture investigations.

It is not possible to provide statistics on the number of cases where a medical screening has been initiated due to the deadline of the question.

The Refugees Appeals Board

In 2013, the Refugee Appeals Board decided to order an examination of the asylum-seeker for signs of torture in 6 cases. In 2014, this was the case in 1 case and in 2015, the Board decided to order an examination in 2 cases. In 2016, the Refugee Appeals Board has so far decided to order an examination of the asylum-seeker for signs of torture in 3 cases.

It is unfortunately not possible to provide statistics of the number of cases where the Refugees Appeals Board has ordered an examination for signs of torture before 2013.

Human rights education of police officers and prison guards

As part of the education as police officer, the Danish Police Academy provides a number of specific courses which involves various aspects of ICCPR and other human rights obligations. From the very start of the training as police officer there is great focus on the specific duties and obligations connected to the task as police officer. Furthermore the Academy has a close cooperation with the Danish Institute for Human Rights.

As part of the education as prison guard, the Danish Prison and Probation Service provides a specific course in "Ethics and Professionalism", which involves various aspects of ICCPR and other human rights obligations.

Aspects of human rights and ICCPR also form part of other courses, particularly courses focusing on the Danish Prison and Probation Service's Programme of Principles.

Faroe Islands

Legal provisions prohibiting discrimination in the labour market

The Danish Act prohibiting discrimination on the labour market does not apply to the Faroe Islands. There is no specific anti-discrimination Act on the labour market. However, some of these items are covered by other pieces of legislation. These include the Faroese Gender Parity Act in which it is stated that employers are not permitted to differentiate or discriminate on the

basis of gender. Furthermore, according to the Aliens Act, foreigners will only receive residence and work permit if their employer can guarantee them the same pay and working conditions that apply to local residents on the labour market.

Status of the proposal regarding same-sex marriage

In April 2016 the Faroese Parliament approved a proposal on amending the Marriage Law allowing civil same-sex marriages. As the legislation regarding marriage in the Faroes still is under Danish authority, the proposal cannot come into force until the Danish authorities have amended the relevant Danish legislation. The matter is of high priority and there currently is a process of putting this piece of legislation into force by Royal Decree.