

Tuesday 15 July, 2014

To CEDAW – Input to the List of Issues on CEDAW for Denmark

Ligestilling i forskning og uddannelse (Equality in research and higher education) is a newly formed association of University Graduates in Denmark working to promote gender equality in research and higher education.

We are concerned about the range of apparent obstacles there are for creating equal opportunities for men and women in Danish research and by the underrepresentation of women among faculty staff in Danish universities, despite the fact that women have made up the majority of university students for quite some time. In particular we are concerned by the evidence that Denmark lacks behind other comparable countries with respect to gender equality in research, and it seems that very little progress has been made.

We find that the public awareness of these matters is very limited, even within academia, and there is a general reluctance to discuss gender issues and bias in research and education in Denmark.

With point of departure in the highly relevant list of recommendations and observations made by CEDAW to the 7. Danish Periodic Report to CEDAW in 2009, we would like to draw the commission's attention to a number of follow up points that in our opinion need special attention. We will limit ourselves to Article 10, although this area of course has implications for other articles and vice versa.

We would be very pleased to elaborate on the points we list below, and provide additional material to CEDAW in due time before the 60. Session in February 2015.

List of issues

GENERAL:

How does the Danish Government work to raise public awareness about CEDAW in Denmark?

It is our experience that the convention is not very visible in general and furthermore, information about CEDAW, it's mainstreaming and implementation is difficult to find.

ARTICLE 10: THE EDUCATION SYSTEM AND GENDER IN GENERAL .

What is Denmark's strategy for gender mainstreaming in the field of research and higher education?

Interestingly, the field is not mentioned what so ever in the Governments strategy for Gender mainstreaming (the so called Ligestillingsvurdering), published February 2013. We find this particularly problematic since CEDAW raised serious concern in exactly this field in 2009.

What measures has Denmark applied – including temporary special measures – to increase the share of female professors and other high ranking positions in universities?

This is an obvious follow up question from the 7. report – to the best of our knowledge, no concrete actions specifically targeting this issue have been taken on a national level.

What are the special initiatives targeting women in access to research funding and what is their impact?

A programme to increase women's access to research funding – Female Research Leaders was launched by the Danish Council for independent research (DFF) in 2008, but in 2010 the programme was discontinued. It has been replaced by the current Sapere Aude programme, which do not target women what so ever, nor does it contain any gender specific instruments – despite some of the arguments that was put forward when the programme was decided upon. In 2013 a one-off call specifically aiming at young female researchers was launched in the YDUN programme, also by DFF. However, the amount allocated for the grants, will not even be able to compensate for the observed difference in success rates for men and women. At the same time, the success rates of women for funds in the strategic research pillar are extremely low in comparison to the success rates of men.

To what extend have Danish Universities developed and implemented gender equality policies, and what are the effects of the existing policies?

Not all Danish universities have defined specific and explicit gender equality policies.