



SOCIAL RIGHTS MONITOR 2020



COUNTRY MONITOR: DENMARK

Denmark remains a high performer in social protection. SOLIDAR's National Strategic Group (NSG) indicates this is due to high social spending, a progressive tax system and a longstanding tradition of involving civil society organisations in the legislation and policymaking processes. This has resulted in an overall positive performance above the EU average. Unemployment has been reduced over the long term, though it rose from 4.9% in 2019 to 5.8% in 2020. The gender employment gap is relatively narrow, at 7.2% in 2019. The risk of poverty and social exclusion is limited and was just 16.3% in 2019. And a high standard of living is guaranteed. Yet recent welfare forms and tax cuts are at odds with Denmark's track

record, leading to a rising concentration of wealth and a larger wage gap. This trend is especially worrying for the NSG because of the subsequent erosion of social justice, which has left low-income households with lower social protection. Despite some improvements in recent years, significant barriers persist for some groups to reach the country's high living standards: for migrants, this concerns access to the labour market and affordable housing, and for women, equal wages and work-life balance. With the new left-of-centre coalition government, the NSG hopes that the Covid-19 pandemic will not delay the promised new direction in key areas such as education, gender equality, housing and child welfare.

	2018	2019	EU-28 2019
Gini index ¹	27.8	27.5	30.7
Unemployment ²	5.1%	5.0%	6.3%
Gender Equality Index ³	77.4 (2019)	77.4 (2020)	67.9 (2020)
In-work poverty ⁴	6.1%	6.3%	9.2%
Housing Overcrowding ⁵	9.2%	10.0%	15.6%
CIVICUS Civic Space Monitor ⁶		OPEN	N/A

Selected indicators on the state of social rights

1 Eurostat (2020). Gini coefficient of equivalised disposable income http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?lang=en&dataset=ilc_di12

2 Eurostat (2020). Unemployment by sex and age: annual data: https://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=une_rt_a&lang=en

3 European Institute for Gender Equality (2020). Gender Equality Index <https://eige.europa.eu/gender-equality-index/2020/EE>

4 Eurostat (2020). In-work at-risk-of-poverty-rate <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/tespm070/default/table?lang=en>

5 Eurostat (2020). Overcrowding rate by age, sex and poverty status – total population https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/ilc_lvho05a/default/table?lang=en

6 CIVICUS (2020). Civic space monitor – Denmark <https://monitor.civicus.org/country/denmark/>

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES AND FAIR WORKING CONDITIONS

Denmark's track record on fighting inequalities has been recognised worldwide. Tax revenue as a share of GDP is higher than the European average at 45.9%,⁷ resulting from a progressive taxation system.⁸ This supports a high level of social spending and significant welfare transfers in comparison with other EU members and European neighbours. Denmark has therefore managed to reduce income inequality and maintain relatively low levels of unemployment and in-work poverty, as noted by SOLIDAR's Danish National Strategy Group (NSG), led by Nyt Europa. As a result, the country has ranked as the world's most committed towards equality in Oxfam and Development Finance International's Inequality Index,⁹ with a Gini coefficient of 28.7.¹⁰

Yet this trend has been called into question after a recent wave of welfare reforms under the pretext of boosting competitiveness and economic adjustment to globalisation.¹¹ The NSG draws attention to the introduction of a cash benefit ceiling and a reduction of support for the unemployed, people on long-term sick leave and students. Additional limitations on early retirement and flexible employment reported by the NSG have increased Denmark's

slight divergence from its reputation and from compliance with the Inequality SDGs.^{12 13} These measures, introduced from 2013 onwards, were preceded by income and real-estate tax reforms, which lowered the upper marginal rates for taxation. As a result, government expenditure as a percentage of GDP was reduced from 56.7% in 2010 to 50.9% in 2018,¹⁴ weakening the collective security system. With an increase in union-negotiated wage-security deals, the NSG indicates a possible evolution towards a two-tier labour market in terms of social security and equality of employment conditions.

As a result, Denmark has been experiencing a rise in inequality during the last 20 years. According to the Social Scoreboard, Denmark has remained in the upper middle performing group for income inequality, though it was one of the leaders before 2009.¹⁵ Incomes overall have risen 9%,¹⁶ but the NSG indicates that this growth has been far from beneficial for all, due to an increasing concentration of wealth and a larger wage gap. Since 2010, the wealthiest 10% in Denmark have seen their incomes rise by 18%, whereas incomes for the bottom 40% of earners have risen only 2%.¹⁷

7 European Commission (2020) Country Report Denmark 2020 <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52020SC0503&from=EN>

8 OECD Centre for Tax Policy and Administration (2019) Revenue Statistics 2019 – Denmark <https://www.oecd.org/tax/revenue-statistics-denmark.pdf>

9 Oxfam and Development Finance International (2018) The Commitment to Reducing Inequality Index 2018 <http://www.inequalityindex.com/>

10 World Bank (2020) GINI Index (World Bank estimate) – Denmark https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SI.POV.GINI?locations=DK&most_recent_value_desc=false

11 Ministry of Finance (2015) Answer to Finance Committee question no. 303 (General part) of 23 May 2014 asked at the request of Frank Aaen (EL) <https://www.ft.dk/samling/20131/almdel/fiu/spm/303/svar/1241012/1514636.pdf>

12 Statistics Denmark (2019) Sustainable Development Goals Data - Target 10.1: Reduce income inequalities <https://www.dst.dk/en/Statistik/Sdg/10-mindre-ulighed/delmaal-01/indikator-1>

13 Arbejderbevægelsens Erhvervsråd (2018) Child poverty in Denmark: The cash benefit ceiling increases the number of poor children throughout the country https://www.ae.dk/sites/www.ae.dk/files/dokumenter/analyse/ae_kontanthjaelpsloftet-oger-anallet-af-fattige-born-i-hele-landet.pdf

14 Eurostat (2020) General government expenditure by function <https://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/submitViewTableAction.do>

15 European Commission (2020) Social Scoreboard <https://composite-indicators.jrc.ec.europa.eu/social-scoreboard/profile>

16 Arbejderbevægelsens Erhvervsråd (2015) The richest get an ever-increasing share of the pie <https://www.ae.dk/artikler/de-rigeste-faar-en-stadig-stoerre-del-af-kagen>

17 Arbejderbevægelsens Erhvervsråd (2017) Income: The richest percent experience record high income growth https://www.ae.dk/sites/www.ae.dk/files/dokumenter/analyse/ae_den-rigeste-procent-oplever-rekordhoj-indkomstfremgang_.pdf

The disparities are even clearer for the top 1%, whose income before taxes has increased by 32% since 2010, as they reap the benefits of the abovementioned tax cuts, increases in pay and growth in the value of their fortunes.^{18 19}

Though the middle class has remained largely unaffected, inequality in Denmark is having an impact on people in lower income brackets, according to the NSG. There has been an increase in in-work poverty, from 4% in 2010 to 5.3% in 2019,²⁰ and a rise in short-term hiring and precariousness, especially amongst young people and in the entertainment and academic sectors.^{21 22} Lower-income groups have been left in a vulnerable position, with lower protection from social benefits these developments are eroding Denmark's longstanding sense of social justice

Nevertheless, the NSG reports that the new government has is interested in improving working conditions. Given a noted increase in workplace stress and growing fears over job security, a dialogue with unions has been established to provide stronger measures and funding to tackle issues related to the social environment at work. To reduce the socio-economic impact of Covid-19, Denmark mobilised DKK 127.7 billion in direct fiscal stimulus. Amongst other provisions, DKK 10 billion of that total was destined to cover income losses

for the self-employed, DKK 3.8 billion to make up for wages lost as a result of partial unemployment and DKK 200 million to provide sickness and unemployment benefits for vulnerable groups dependent on these schemes.²³

INCLUSION OF MIGRANTS AND ASYLUM SEEKERS

The social and economic inclusion of migrants and asylum seekers has been improving since 2012, with positive developments in education, labour-market participation and acquisition of Danish-language skills.^{24 25} As of 2019, 92% of migrants who had arrived in Denmark up to the age of 12 had passed the year-9 examinations, and 64% had completed mandatory education.²⁶ The employment rate of migrants, asylum seekers and people of migrant background rose to 58% in 2018²⁷ and is slowly approaching the national average employment rate of 77.5%.²⁸ These improvements are the result of the Integration Programme, a three-to-five-year programme providing support services such as language classes, counselling and skills-development activities for future participation in the labour market.²⁹

Yet significant barriers still exist to full integration. Only 36% of migrants between the ages of 25 and 39 have completed higher education.³⁰

18 Arbejderbevægelsens Erhvervsråd (2017) 52 million DKK in tax relief has primarily gone to the richest <https://www.ae.dk/analyser/52-mia-kr-i-skattelettelser-er-primært-gaaet-til-de-rigeste>

19 Økonomisk Ugebrev Ledelse (2019) The highest paid CEO earns the annual salary of 200 employees in one year <https://ugebrev.dk/ledelse/ceo-med-hoejeste-loen-tjener-200-ansattes-aarsloen-paa-et-aar/>

20 EAPN (2018) Combatting In-Work Poverty: EAPN Compendium of Promising Practices https://www.eapn.eu/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/EAPN-CompendiumEAPN-V4_nobleed-00.pdf

21 Gleeup, Janne; Jakobsen, Anders; and Warring, Niels (2018) Experiences of precarious work among graduates in the Danish labour market <https://forskning.ruc.dk/en/publications/experiences-of-precarious-work-among-graduates-in-the-danish-labo>

22 Akademikerne (2020) The Working Environment of Academics: 2020 edition https://www.akademikerne.dk/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/ArbejdsmiljøC3%B8Rapport_2020_v3.pdf

23 Bruegel (2020) Bruegel Datasets: The fiscal Response to the Economic Fallout from the Coronavirus – Denmark <https://www.bruegel.org/publications/datasets/covid-national-dataset/#denmark>

24 European Commission (2020) Governance of Migrant Integration in Denmark <https://ec.europa.eu/migrant-integration/governance/denmark>

25 Det nationale integrationsbarometer (2020) Development report: The national integration barometer and key figures on refugees <https://integrationsbarometer.dk/udviklingsrapporter/hele-landet.html> (retrieved in 3/08/2020)

26 Ibid.

27 Ibid.

28 European Commission (2020) Country Report Denmark 2020 <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52020SC0503&from=EN>

29 European Commission (2020) Governance of Migrant Integration in Denmark <https://ec.europa.eu/migrant-integration/governance/denmark>

30 Det nationale integrationsbarometer (2020) Development report: The national integration barometer and key figures on refugees <https://integrationsbarometer.dk/udviklingsrapporter/hele-landet.html> (retrieved in 3/08/2020)

One in two migrants has reported language difficulties.³¹ Of those with an ethnic background, 48% have experienced discrimination, a rate that has been rising since 2012.³² These barriers to integration are even more evident in a labour market with a bias against non-Danish sounding names, as shown by research from the University of Copenhagen.³³ Women wearing headscarves have to apply to 60% more jobs to reach the interview stage than women without headscarves. The NSG notes that, in the absence of targeted active employment plans, migrants and their descendants are exposed to inequalities and discrimination more than other groups.

Moreover, the Danish Government shifted its focus in 2019 from the integration of refugees to their return. Without replacing the existing integration programme, efforts are being redirected to develop refugees' ability to support themselves and return to their home countries, when conditions are safe.^{34 35}

GENDER EQUALITY

Denmark was second in the EU in the 2020 Gender Equality Index with a score of 77.5,³⁶ as a result of its gender-equality measures. The National Strategy Group (NSG) reports overall improvements since 2015. The gender gap in the employment rate now stands at 7.2%, much lower than the EU average of 11.4% in

2019,³⁷ positioning Denmark in the high-performance group on the Social Scoreboard.³⁸ Gender-segregated wages were outlawed for companies with under 35 employees, while those with 35 or more had to produce equal-pay statistics.³⁹ Municipalities have to guarantee affordable formal childcare to assure a greater work-life balance. However, the NSG raises concerns over the reduction in specific policies to further tackle gender inequalities. It indicates that improvements are still needed with regard to the type of participation in the workforce, the gender pay gap, and work-life balance.

The Danish labour market remains highly segregated, according to the NSG. Most women are employed in the public sector or traditionally feminised sectors.⁴⁰ This has a significant impact on wages due to the baseline salaries decision of 1969, which set lower pay rates in these sectors. The unadjusted pay gap stands at 14.5% and the adjusted gap at 7%.⁴¹ Furthermore, the NSG clarifies that legislation on equal-pay statistics, which already allows companies to freely choose how to implement such initiatives, leaves a lot of room for varying approaches. Inevitably, the diverging statistical methods make it harder to compare such data.

Despite performing above average in work-life balance,⁴² thanks largely to the provision of free formal childcare, Denmark still falls behind its Scandinavian countries in standards,

31 Det nationale integrationsbarometer (2020) Development report: The national integration barometer and key figures on refugees <https://integrationsbarometer.dk/udviklingsrapporter/hele-landet.html> (retrieved in 3/08/2020)

32 Ibid.

33 Dahl, Malte and Krog, Niels (2018) Experimental Evidence of Discrimination in the Labour Market: Intersections between Ethnicity, Gender and Socio-Economic Status <https://academic.oup.com/esr/article-abstract/34/4/402/5047111?redirectedFrom=fulltext>

34 European Commission (2020) Governance of Migrant Integration in Denmark <https://ec.europa.eu/migrant-integration/governance/denmark>

35 European Commission (2020) Country Report Denmark 2020 <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52020SC0503&from=EN>

36 European Institute for Gender Equality (2020) Gender Equality Index for Denmark for 2019 <https://eige.europa.eu/gender-equality-index/2019/DK>

37 European Commission (2020) Social Scoreboard <https://composite-indicators.jrc.ec.europa.eu/social-scoreboard/profile>

38 Ibid.

39 Ministry of Employment (2020) Gender-disaggregated wage statistics <https://www.bm.dk/arbejdsmraader/arbejdsvilkaar/ligestilling/koensopdelt-loenstatistik/>

40 VIVE (2019) Women's professionals are still low-wage earners <https://via.ritzau.dk/pressemeddelelse/kvindefag-er-stadig-lavtlonsfag?publisherId=13559123&releaselid=13583192>

41 VIVE (2018) Decrease in the pay gap between women and men <https://www.vive.dk/da/nyheder/2018/fald-i-loenforskellen-mellem-kvinder-og-maend/>

42 European Commission (2020) Country Report Denmark 2020 <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52020SC0503&from=EN>

as indicated by the NSG. On average, women in Denmark take 276.8 days of maternity leave⁴³ and spend 3 hours 28 minutes a day on housework,⁴⁴ whilst men only take 28.8 leave days⁴⁵ and spend 2 hours 34 minutes a day on housework.⁴⁶ Furthermore, the differences between maternity and paternity leave following childbirth are still considerable, with men only entitled to two weeks paid paternity leave, in comparison to 18 weeks maternity leave. In this context, the NSG is positive about the introduction of collective agreements in the private sector, which encourage up to eight paid weeks of parental leave, and it awaits the implementation of the recent EU work-life balance directive.

EDUCATION

GOOD PRACTICE

Through the allocation of DKK 500 million in 2020 directly to municipalities to pay for day-care institutions, Denmark is ensuring that the staff-to-child ratio increases by employing a minimum of 1,050 full-time educators, pedagogical assistants and pedagogical assistants. This is expected to raise the quality of early-childhood education and to break the dependency of educational performance on the income of children's parents.⁴⁷

Given increases in the early-leaver rate from 7.5% in 2016 to 9.9% in 2019 and the NEET (not in education, employment or training) rate from 6.7% in 2016 to 7.7% in 2019,^{48 49} the NSG welcomes the measures introduced by the Mette Frederiksen government to curb these trends. Acknowledging the PISA test results, a 2019 agreement⁵⁰ promises to increase the number of educators, ease entrance requirements related to age and other factors and eliminate testing at elementary-school level. Furthermore, the new government removed both a plan for a 2% annual cut to the higher-education budget and Denmark's ban on the pursuit of simultaneous degrees. These measures are intended to halve the NEET rate by 2030,⁵¹ and the NSG hopes that they will improve student support, reduce the pressure on students and break the link between educational performance and parental income.⁵²

Despite this shift in direction, the NSG raises some concerns. One is whether the funding lost by universities over the last few years will be reintroduced into the higher education system. Another is the economic impact of the pandemic, which the NSG hopes does not affect the promises made on education goals.

43 University of Copenhagen (2018) It costs women 20 percent of the salary to have children https://nyheder.ku.dk/alle_nyheder/2018/03/det-koster-kvinder-20-procent-paa-loennen-at-faa-boern

44 ROCKWOOL Foundation (2018) More free time for Danes in the period from 2008 to 2018 https://www.rockwoolfonden.dk/app/uploads/2018/11/RFN-NYT-November-2018_Hvordan-bruger-danskerne-tiden.pdf

45 University of Copenhagen (2018) It costs women 20 percent of the salary to have children https://nyheder.ku.dk/alle_nyheder/2018/03/det-koster-kvinder-20-procent-paa-loennen-at-faa-boern

46 ROCKWOOL Foundation (2018) More free time for Danes in the period from 2008 to 2018 https://www.rockwoolfonden.dk/app/uploads/2018/11/RFN-NYT-November-2018_Hvordan-bruger-danskerne-tiden.pdf

47 Ministry of Children and Education (2020) Political agreement on the implementation of DKK 500 million for more educational staff <https://www.uvm.dk/aktuelt/nyheder/uvm/2020/feb/200217-politisk-aftale-om-udmontning-af-500-mio-kr-til-mere-paedagogisk-personale>

48 European Commission (2020) Social Scoreboard <https://composite-indicators.jrc.ec.europa.eu/social-scoreboard/profile>

49 Ibid.

50 Altinget (2019) Political understanding between the Social Democrats, the Radical Left, the Socialist People's Party and the Unity List: A fair direction for Denmark https://www.altinget.dk/misc/Retf%C3%A6rdig%20retning%20for%20Danmark_2019-06-25_ENDELIG.pdf

51 Ministry of Education and Research (2019) Press Release: Savings on education are removed and the education ceiling is abolished <https://ufm.dk/aktuelt/pressemeddelelser/2019/besparelser-pa-uddannelser-fjernes-og-uddannelsesloftet-afskaffes>

52 Ibid.

SOCIAL PROTECTION AND INCLUSION

There is widespread agreement on the positive impact of the social protection and active labour policies that are provided by the high level of social security in Denmark, the National Strategy Group (NSG) indicates. This is reflected in Denmark's overall performance on the Social Scoreboard, where it often ranks amongst the highest EU member states.⁵³ The AROPE (at risk of poverty or social exclusion) rate is 16.3%, significantly below the EU average.⁵⁴ The impact of social transfers remains high, reducing the risk of poverty by around 47%, which makes Denmark as one of Europe's best-performing countries.⁵⁵

Yet, according to a more nuanced view, the reduction of social support in recent years is having a toll on Denmark's performance in social protection. Despite the AROPE rate being relatively stable in the last few years, it remains above its 2008 level.⁵⁶ The NSG is also concerned with the increase in child poverty. As an example, the introduction of the cash benefit ceiling in 2016 was by itself responsible for a 25% rise in the number of one-year-old children below the poverty line, from 48,300⁵⁷ to 64,500 in 2017.⁵⁸ This prompted the new social democratic government to create a commission to develop a targeted policy to alleviate child poverty.⁵⁹

There is plenty of affordable housing in Denmark. The growth in prices slowed in 2019 to 2.4% over the previous year, following a number of years when rises were above the EU average.⁶⁰ Despite this, the European Commission's 2020 country report⁶¹ indicates that Denmark still has the EU's second highest share of income dedicated to housing, an average of 28.1%. This situation raises several alarms for the capital region, in particular a potential deterrence effect on living in Copenhagen despite the increasing employment opportunities there. Concerns have been raised over potential limitations on job mobility.⁶² Given these developments in the housing market, the NSG awaits the government's plans to combat rent increases.

Access to free healthcare is guaranteed in Denmark, and it is supported by the highest government health expenditure in the EU relative to the size of the economy, at 8.3% of GDP.⁶³ The public healthcare system's good performance is reflected in low levels of unmet needs and out-of-pocket expenditure, which are both below the EU average.⁶⁴ Nevertheless, the NSG and Oxfam Ibis point out existing inequalities in access to essential care: people with lower levels of education and income sometimes have difficulties in navigating the healthcare

53 European Commission (2020) Social Scoreboard <https://composite-indicators.jrc.ec.europa.eu/social-scoreboard/profile>

54 Ibid.

55 Ibid.

56 European Commission (2020) Country Report Denmark 2020 <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52020SC0503&from=EN>

57 https://www.ae.dk/sites/www.ae.dk/files/dokumenter/analyse/ae_kontanthjaelpsloftet-oger-antallet-af-fattige-born-i-hele-landet.pdf

58 Arbejderbevægelsens Erhvervsråd (2018) The cash benefit ceiling is increasing the number of poor children across the country https://www.ae.dk/sites/www.ae.dk/files/dokumenter/analyse/ae_sorgeligrekord-der-har-aldrig-vaeret-flere-fattige-born.pdf

59 Ministry of Employment (2019) Agreement on a new temporary child allowance https://bm.dk/media/10660/aftaletekst_boer-netilskud.pdf

60 European Commission (2020) Country Report Denmark 2020 <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52020SC0503&from=EN>

61 Ibid.

62 Ibid.

63 Eurostat (2020) General Government expenditure by Function (COFOG) <https://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/submitView-TableAction.do>

64 European Commission (2020) Social Scoreboard <https://composite-indicators.jrc.ec.europa.eu/social-scoreboard/profile>

system.⁶⁵ This has an impact on future personal health prospects: 36% of people with only a primary-school education indicate concerns over whether they will reach the retirement age in good health.⁶⁶ In the context of demographic developments that are raising the demand for quality healthcare, the NSG indicates the need to further health funding to reduce inequality.

The NSG presents the case for particular focus on migrants' social protection, due to their unequal access to such support, as reported by Oxfam Ibis in their Inequality Report.⁶⁷ A particular concern for the NSG is the proposal

for the Ghetto-pakke, a controversial plan to demolish and refurbish vulnerable housing areas by 2030, which was launched by the previous, conservative, government in 2018.⁶⁸ This will have an impact on the availability of affordable housing for migrants, and the NSG considers the plan racist, because inhabitants' ethnicity is a factor for deciding the areas in which buildings should be torndown. Migrants are facing further barriers in access to healthcare: after the reintroduction of interpretation fees in 2018, migrants with limited language skills face higher costs to meet their healthcare needs.⁶⁹

CIVIC SPACE

Civic space in Denmark is considered as open by CIVICUS.⁷⁰ Freedom of speech, association and assembly are secured by the constitution, and the exercise of these has not been restricted in recent years. Reporters Without Borders ranks Denmark as third in terms of press freedom and freedom of expression in its 2020 World Press Freedom Index.⁷¹ Despite the introduction of Covid-19 preventive measures and an initial ban on public gatherings of more than 10 people, freedom of assembly is respected albeit with minor limitations on attendance. This was seen when the Black Lives Matter protests were organised in June.⁷² Furthermore, the National Strategy Group reports that the parliament's Freedom of Speech

Commission plans to clarify the use of free speech in the workplace and provide guidelines on upholding these rights.

With a longstanding tradition of social dialogue, Denmark often involves civil society organisations formally and informally in the legislative and policymaking processes. The NSG reports that these practices occur with politicians from all parties and on subjects such as education, the labour market and gender equality. Yet, it voices some concerns regarding the trend to limit consultation processes. The NSG requests that this trend be reversed in order to maintain democratic standards and guarantee equality of participation for all social partners.

65 Danish Health Council (2017) Danish Health: The National Health Profile 2017 <https://www.sst.dk/da/udgivelser/2018/~media/73EADC242CDB46BD8ABF9DE895A6132C.ashx>

66 ActionAid Denmark (2019) Inequality in Denmark: An overall appeal for the Sustainable Development Goal # 10 on how we together can reduce inequality in Denmark <https://www.ms.dk/sites/default/files/filarkiv/sdg-rapport2019.pdf>

67 Oxfam Ibis (2020) Oxfam Inequality Report 2020 <https://oxfamibis.dk/oxfams-ulighedsrapport-2020/>

68 DR (2018) OVERVIEW How the government wants to eradicate the 12-year-old ghettos <https://www.dr.dk/nyheder/politik/overblik-saadan-vil-regeringen-udrydde-ghettoerne-paa-12-aar>

69 Danish Nurses' Council (2019) Elderly and sick immigrants are lost in the system <https://dsr.dk/sygeplejersken/arkiv/sy-nr-2019-3/aeldre-og-syge-indvandrere-bliver-tabt-i-systemet>

70 CIVICUS (2020) Denmark <https://monitor.civicus.org/country/denmark/>

71 Reporter Without Borders (2020) 2020 World Press Freedom Index <https://rsf.org/en/2020-world-press-freedom-index-entering-decisive-decade-journalism-exacerbated-coronavirus>

72 CIVICUS (2020) Denmark <https://monitor.civicus.org/country/denmark/>

COMPARISON WITH THE COUNTRY SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS

The European Commission's 2020 Country Specific Recommendations for Denmark⁷³ are mostly concerned with the measures to mitigate the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, and they also carry out a brief follow-up on the 2019 recommendations. The Commission approved of the extraordinary plans introduced since March, as these are in line with the EU guidelines on the coordinated response to the pandemic. The recommendations were positive over the provision of temporary wage compensation and support for those most affected by the health crisis. Recommendations to build the resilience of the healthcare system by increasing the availability of healthcare

personnel and critical medical products are in line with the National Strategy Group's (NSG) request for additional funding to future-proof the system. Similarly, there seems to be room for agreement between the Commission recommendations to increase investment in the digital education infrastructure and the NSG's indications of the need for further education support. However, the overall approach of the Commission's country specific recommendations retains the premise that fiscal sustainability must be a priority.⁷⁴ Rising inequality and its social consequences are still not addressed, despite concerns over these raised by the NSG.

73 European Commission (2020) 2020 European Semester: Country Specific Recommendation – Denmark <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52020DC0504&from=EN>

74 Ibid.

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RESPONSIBLE EDITOR:

Mikael Leyi

AUTHOR:

Miguel Hernandez Littlewood

COORDINATION OF PUBLICATION:

Carlos Roldán Mejías, Violeta Meotto,
Jedde Hollewijn, Julie Martinaud

COPY EDITING:

Sebastian Moffett

GRAPHIC DESIGN:

Maximilian Fischer

CONTRIBUTIONS FROM:

Nyt Europa



solidar



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For more info www.solidar.org

Avenue des Arts, 50
1000 Brussels - Belgium
+32 2 500 10 20
www.solidar.org
@SOLIDAR_EU



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