

10 February, 2016

Dear CMW and CRC colleagues,

Please accept this as a submission to The Committee on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families (CMW) and the Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC)'s decision to develop a Joint General Comment (JGC) on the human rights of children in the context of international migration.

I hope you find these perspectives of interest to inform the drafting process:

I am working on a Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Denmark) funded project under the FACE scheme ("Fund for Academic Cooperation and Exchange between Denmark and the Arab World") on a Multifaceted Integration Strategy for Syrian Refugee Children in Denmark.

Below you will find some of my overall opinions when it comes to integration and what I think are important focus points when dealing with refugees living in exile in Denmark:

- In cases where only a 1 year residence permit is given, the uncertainty for the refugee increases. It is mentally stressful not knowing your future perspectives and it doesn't aid the integration process.
- I believe that immigration authorities should be more proactive in ensuring the refugee's specific needs, when they are being placed in the various municipalities. Things to be aware of are, for example, whether the refugee has social networks, family ties, and job opportunities in a given municipality.
- Both the social and the professional integration in the labor market must be a priority, as they are interdependent.
- Today there is a big difference between the integration efforts in the municipalities and because of that I believe there is a need for a more uniform process when refugees are placed in the municipalities. It is important that less experienced municipalities can obtain knowledge from the more experienced ones.
- The health screening in the municipalities need to be implemented within the time frame of three months. This is important to uncover any trauma or other health challenges, as these can be crucial to how the integration program must be structured.
- I think that all refugees in Denmark must have access to voluntary networks and relations. This can provide an increased knowledge and understanding of the Danish norms, values and unwritten laws, as well as practical help and support to daily tasks and challenges. Contact with the volunteer may also contribute to a better everyday understanding of Danish language for each refugee.

- I believe that a close relationship between the municipalities and civil society is very important. This collaboration, as important as it is, should respect the different roles of these actors as well as their individual strengths and weaknesses.

And some specific opinions about unaccompanied minors:

- The immigration authorities should give priority to municipalities that have gained experience or expertise in receiving unaccompanied minors. Red Cross for instance experiences great diversity of services offered to unaccompanied minors depending on the municipalities receiving them.
- Unaccompanied minors should as far as possible get accommodation near other unaccompanied minors, preferably in housing programs that have specialized expertise with the target group. This is to ensure a feeling of security and to avoid isolation.
- Unaccompanied minors should live centrally with easy access to education, sporting clubs, and cultural life.
- When an unaccompanied minor arrives in Denmark, he or she is entitled to a guardian. A guardian is responsible for ensuring the child's interests and should be a person with whom the child trusts and who is independent of authorities.

These were the most important overall points. Red Cross has a more detailed paper (in Danish though) outlining everything if the above is of interest.

Thank you in advance for this opportunity!

Yours sincerely,

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Recent publications/projects:

Carlsberg Foundation project: Jan – Dec 2016: The Struggle of State-Building in Palestine: Exploring “Stateless – Society Relations in the West Bank

FACE project inception workshop: February 2016: Developing a Multifaceted Integration Strategy for Syrian Refugee Children in Denmark

“EU-Hamas Actors in a State of Permanent Liminality”, forthcoming in the Journal of International Relations and Development (with Polly Pallister-Wilkins)

“The European Neighbourhood Policy and Islamist Actors in the Southern Neighbourhood”, forthcoming in the Routledge Handbook on the ENP, section on: Perspectives and the future of the ENP (with Sarah Wolff)

Book review of The Human Right to Dominate by Nicola Perugini and Neve Gordon, forthcoming in Law and Society Review

Europe’s Israel Palestine Policy Desperately Needs a shake up!

The Politics of Foreign Aid in the Arab World: The Impact of the Arab Uprisings

How we are permanently destroying Gaza 24 December 2014

Personal Reflections on Gaza visit October 2014

Gaza Ceasefire August 2014

The EU’s Interpretation of the “Arab Uprisings”

Co-Editor of Mediterranean Politics from 1st September, 2014. Visit the journal’s web pages

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