

Contribution by Denmark regarding the OHCHR call for “*information in relation to good practices, mitigating practices used as well as challenges faced by States to ensure effective enjoyment of human rights*” in relation to the COVID-19 crisis.

Denmark wishes to present the following information regarding experiences concerning human rights good practices in the response to the COVID-19 pandemic:

- **Freedom of assembly:** The pandemic has forced governments worldwide to impose restrictions on the right to assembly. However, the Danish Government has ensured that “opinion-shaping assemblies” have been exempted from the temporary restrictions on assembly, which are currently still in effect in Denmark. This means, that assemblies with a political or other opinionating purpose, such as demonstrations and political meetings, are not a part of the temporary legislation<sup>1</sup>.
- **Persons living in situation of homelessness:** Each municipality is in charge of ensuring access to safe accommodation for homeless persons. However, the creation of new shelters etc. requires the approval of the social welfare authorities. Given the extraordinary situation, the Ministry of Social Affairs and the Interior have encouraged the municipalities to contact relevant social welfare authorities to enhance approvals. The Government has provided additional funding to prolong the emergency accommodation scheme, which normally ensures accommodation for the homeless during the winter. In addition, additional funding in emergency support for organizations working with homeless persons has been provided. Moreover, the Government together with the parties in the Parliament has provided funding for emergency support to marginalized children and adults as well as persons with disabilities in this crisis. The funds are allocated to reduce challenges for marginalized persons under the current crisis and includes support to social activities at shelters. The initiatives are carried out in close collaboration with the organizations.
- **Social protection (Relief packages during COVID-19):** Since Denmark partially shut down on March 11<sup>th</sup> 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Danish Government has introduced a large number of relief packages intended to support Danish businesses and workers. An agreement has been reached between employer organizations, unions and the Danish government, providing businesses who face lay-offs due to the COVID-19 shutdown with salary compensation instead of personnel reductions. It is relevant to emphasize that social enterprises in Denmark are also considered eligible for compensation from relief packages. Furthermore, a relief package was enacted in April to support a broader spectrum of social organizations. The package included initiatives to secure continuous local public funding of social enterprises.
- **Vulnerable children:** Efforts for vulnerable children, including children subject to abuse is a so-called critical function, which has been maintained during the period of COVID-19 including during the lockdown. The municipalities must thus ensure that vulnerable children and young people who need help and support can continue to receive the necessary help. The Government and municipalities have been making efforts to find solutions so that all children and their families get through the corona crisis as well as possible. Among other things, it has been ensured that children with special socioemotional, pedagogical or treatment needs could stay in their day care or school. That includes children who experience problems at home to an extent that they

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<sup>1</sup> Danish legislative order (BEK 1213) of 17/08/2020

need a break from everyday life. Furthermore, the municipalities established emergency care throughout the country not just for the children whose parents have a critical societal function but also as an option for children in vulnerable positions. That includes children where there is a concern that the parents cannot attend to the children's daily needs e.g. due to violence or abuse by parents.

- **LGBTI communities:** The Danish Department of Gender Equality is in continuous dialogue with representatives of Danish LGBTI organizations, thus monitoring whether and/or how the COVID-19 pandemic has affected LGBTI communities. Cancellations of Pride activities have had an impact on the LGBTI communities in terms of loss of visibility and loss of community building activities. Furthermore, the dialogue has touched upon potential consequences for organization finances.

The above examples regarding state practice on human rights are based on previously submitted information by Denmark to the "*Joint questionnaire by Special Procedure mandate holders on Protecting human rights during and after the COVID-19*" (attached) where additional information can be found on a majority of the above bulletins.

Reference is also made to the following reports from the European Union Agency on Fundamental Rights on COVID19 and the impact on fundamental rights in the member states of the EU, including in Denmark:

- <https://fra.europa.eu/en/publication/2020/covid19-rights-impact-may-1>
- <https://fra.europa.eu/en/publication/2020/covid19-rights-impact-april-1>