



THE PRIME MINISTER

Copenhagen, 31 OCT 2005

Organisation of the Islamic Conference  
The Secretary General

Dear Prof. Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu

Thank you very much for your letter of 15 October 2005.

The Danish society is based on respect for the freedom of expression, on religious tolerance and on equal standards for all religions. The freedom of expression is the very foundation of the Danish democracy. The freedom of expression has a wide scope and the Danish government has no means of influencing the press. However, Danish legislation prohibits acts or expressions of a blasphemous or discriminatory nature. The offended party may bring such acts or expressions to court, and it is for the courts to decide in individual cases.

I share your view that dialogue between cultures and religions needs to be based on mutual respect and understanding. There is indeed room for increasing mutual understanding between different cultures and religions.

In this regard, I have personally taken the initiative to enter into a dialogue with representatives from the Muslim communities in Denmark.

Furthermore, I would like to see the dialogue between Denmark and the Muslim world strengthened. Indeed, one of the principal objectives of the initiative "Partnership for Progress and Reform", launched by the Danish Government in 2003, is to stimulate the dialogue between Denmark, the EU and countries in North Africa and the Middle East. The initiative explicitly aims to engage a broad spectrum of Danish institutions and organisations in partnerships with their sister organisations in the Arab world and Iran. The Partnership will in this way nurture institutional and personal friendships among our societies and increase mutual understanding of the values on which we base our societies.

Yours sincerely,

Anders Fogh Rasmussen