

Minister for the Interior and Health

HE the Secretary General of the Council of Europe
F - 67075 Strasbourg Cedex
France

Copenhagen, 2007-03-27
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Sir,

1. When ratifying the European Outline Convention on Transfrontier Co-operation between Territorial Communities or Authorities and depositing its instrument of acceptance on 22 December 1981 Denmark made the following declaration concerning article 2 of the Convention:

“In Denmark the Convention only takes effect with regard to local and regional municipal authorities.”

2. This is to inform you that this declaration reflected the administrative structure in Denmark at the time of ratification, and that due to recent changes in the administrative structure in Denmark the declaration is no longer adequate.

In June 2005 the Danish Parliament passed the necessary bills implementing a structural reform of the public sector changing the administrative structure and the distribution of tasks between the levels of authority in Denmark. The structural reform came into effect on 1 January 2007.

The reform defines a new public sector where three levels of authority each have their own identity based on their different tasks.

The *state* is responsible for tasks which should be performed by an authority with a national perspective or tasks which cannot appropriately be placed at local or regional level.

The *municipalities* (“kommuner”) are the primary access point to the public sector for citizens. Consequently, the municipalities have taken over responsibility for many of the services which are presently provided by the counties. This process of decentralization has been made possible by the creation of larger and more sustainable municipalities. Thus, the former 271 municipalities are reduced to 98 – from an average of less than 20.000 inhabitants before the reform to more than 55.000 inhabitants.

The 13 *counties* (“amtskommuner”), which were regional municipal authorities, have been dissolved, and a completely new level of authority has been established – the five *regions*, each of them headed by a directly elected regional council.

The 5 regions ("regioner") are not successors of the counties. They are a new kind of public authority which differs from local authorities not only in their geographical scope but also in the composition of their tasks and in the ways in which the tasks are financed.

The 5 regions are responsible primarily for the health care system. In addition, the regions are responsible for some positively defined tasks, which most appropriately are solved at a regional level. This includes tasks related to regional development and growth and tasks related to specialized educational and social institutions.

3. In the light of the mentioned changes in the administrative structure in Denmark, and in accordance with article 2 of the Convention the Danish Government has decided with effect as from 1 January 2007 to withdraw the declaration from 1981 and make the following new declaration on the scope of the Convention in Denmark:

"In Denmark the Convention only takes effect with regard to municipalities ("kommuner") and regions ("regioner")."

Please accept, Sir, the assurances of my highest consideration.

Lars Løkke Rasmussen