

MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF DENMARK

# Factsheet Denmark

Documentation



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FEBRUARY 2006

## INTEGRATION IN DENMARK

### Immigrants and descendants in Denmark

The total number of immigrants and descendants in Denmark is 452,095, which is equivalent to 8.4% of the Danish population of 5.4 million. This information is based on register data from Statistics Denmark.

There is no register information on the number of Muslims in Denmark. Statistics Denmark estimated that there were approximately 120,000 Muslims in Denmark as of 1 January 1999, but has carried out no calculations since that time. Researchers estimate that there are currently some 210,000 Muslims in Denmark.

### High degree of tolerance

- In November 2003, the Government adopted an action plan for the promotion of equal treatment and diversity and to combat racism. The initiatives in this action plan are intended to ensure that there is room for diversity in Denmark and that we learn to benefit from it. The plan includes financial support for dialogue meetings on ethnic minority participation in political activities, and local events that focus on diversity.
- In 2003 and 2004, the Government passed legislation to provide protection against discrimination in Danish soci-

In 1999, Denmark was the first country in the world to introduce an Integration Act. The Act is intended to ensure that newly-arrived refugees and immigrants can make the most of their capacities on an equal footing with other citizens of Denmark.



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ety. This legislation has provided persons who feel that they are suffering discrimination with direct access to appeal to the Complaints Committee for Equal Ethnic Treatment.

- In March 2005, the European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia (EUMC) issued a report showing that Denmark is below the EU average in expressing resistance to multicultural society.
- In 1999, the European Values Study took place in 31 European countries and included information about attitudes towards ethnic minorities. Of these 31 European countries, the Danish population displays the fourth least xenophobic attitude towards having people of a different race, Jews, Muslims, immigrants and Romanians as neighbours.
- In 2005, the principal organisational body of Danish Trade Unions (Danish Confederation of Trade Unions, LO) initiated an interview survey of the Danish population concerning the view of working alongside ethnic colleagues in the workplace. 93% of the 1,008 respondents who work with one or more persons of a different ethnic background say that they have no problems in working with them.
- The analysis bureau Catinét Research monitors trends in integration in Denmark by means of six-monthly interviews with about 1,000 immigrants and descendants. In the first half-year report of 2005, 33% of immigrants and descendants interviewed answered that they experienced discrimination. This figure was 37% in the first half-year report of 2001. In addition, 66% of immigrants and descendants answered in 2005 (first half-year) that they feel well integrated into Danish society, which is an increase since 2001 (first half-year), when 53% felt well integrated.

### Rights of religious minorities

- Freedom of religion and non-discrimination are fundamental principles that are protected by the Constitution of Denmark. Section 67 of the Constitution protects the rights of citizens to be "... at liberty to form congregations for the worship of God in a manner according with their convictions, provided that nothing contrary to good

morals or public order shall be taught or done". Section 70 lays down that "no person shall by reason of his creed or descent be deprived of access to the full enjoyment of civic and political rights, nor shall he escape compliance with any common civic duty for such reasons".

- Islamic communities are free to establish mosques in Denmark according to Danish law. Such communities have therefore already established a large number of mosques, though the exact number is not known.
- Muslims living in Denmark are free to work as imams in the mosques by agreement with their religious communities. Foreigners may come to Denmark and act as imams for a period. The exact number of imams in Denmark is not known.
- Land has been provided in Copenhagen, Aarhus and Odense, among other places, where Muslim cemeteries have been established.
- As is the case with other parents, Muslim parental groups may found private schools under the private independent school legislation. These schools receive some 75% of their funding from public sources. The Danish Ministry of Education does not categorise private independent schools in terms of their ideological or religious basis and is therefore not in a position to state the number of Muslim schools or pupils. However, during the 2004/2005 academic year there were 21 private independent basic schools mainly or exclusively for bilingual pupils. This figure, however, includes private independent basic schools for pupils speaking languages such as English and German.

### Dialogue at all levels

- On 13 February 2006, the Prime Minister held a meeting with a network of Muslims in Denmark. The purpose of the meeting was to encourage dialogue with Muslims in Denmark on, among other things, integration and the current situation.
- On 3 February 2006, the Prime Minister and the Minister for Foreign Affairs held a meeting with the ambassadors to Denmark, at which they disseminated information about the current situation with regard to the interna-



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tional reactions to the publication of drawings of the Prophet Muhammad in the private newspaper *Jyllands-Posten*. The Ministers also reported on the Government's position and measures taken in that matter.

- In his New Year speech on 1 January 2006, the Prime Minister condemned any expression, action or indication that attempts to demonise groups of people on the basis of their religion or ethnic background. The Prime Minister stressed that each of us has a special responsibility to exercise freedom of speech in such a way as not to kindle hatred and shatter the sense of fellowship that is one of Denmark's most characteristic features.
- On 28 November 2005, the Minister for Integration held a dialogue meeting with women from the Islamic Religious Community in Denmark, the agenda of which was increased dialogue, bridge-building and integration, with special focus on Muslim women.
- On 28 September 2005, the Minister for Integration held a meeting with a number of Islamic religious communities to discuss the religious leisure-time education on the Koran and Islam offered by the religious communities to children and adolescents. The purpose of this was to promote dialogue, integration and equality.
- On 20 September 2005, the Prime Minister held a dialogue meeting with a number of Muslim representatives – leaders of associations, politicians and imams. The meeting took its point of departure in last summer's terrorist bombings in London and other terrorist actions. At the meeting there was general agreement that such extreme actions, committed by radical minority groups, must be condemned and opposed.
- On 7 September 2005, the Minister for Integration made a speech at a peace symposium organised by the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community in Denmark. The Minister's speech strongly emphasised religious tolerance through democratic values.
- On 18 April 2005, a dialogue meeting was held between the Minister for Integration and a number of imams at the Department of Cross-Cultural and Regional Studies of the University of Copenhagen. The meeting discussed

the role of the imams as mentors capable of underpinning the integration process and democratic values.

- Each quarter, the Minister for Integration holds a meeting with the Council for Ethnic Minorities, the purpose of which is to advise the Minister in matters of significance to refugees and immigrants. The 14 members of the Council are refugees or immigrants. The Council called for a sense of composure in the case of the Muhammad drawings in its press release on 1 February 2006.
  - During spring 2006, the Minister for Integration will participate in a series of activities designed to bring about dialogue on integration, which will include meeting young people from the ethnic minorities and immigrant women to hear about their experience of integration in practice. The Minister will also meet representatives of the local authorities and enterprises charged with contributing to the success of integration.
- A comprehensive integration initiative – and better integration**
- In 1999, Denmark was the first country in the world to introduce an Integration Act. The Act is intended to ensure that newly-arrived refugees and immigrants can make the most of their capacities on an equal footing with other citizens of Denmark. All refugees and immigrants are therefore offered free teaching of Danish for three years. Refugees and immigrants are also offered employment-promoting options such as qualification improvement and work experience. These integration options are tailored to the needs of the individual refugee or immigrant. The local authorities may obtain advice and guidance on how to organise the integration activities from the Ministry of Integration.
  - It is the aim of the Government that 25,000 more immigrants and descendants should be employed by 2010. In May 2005, the Government therefore launched the integration plan "A New Chance for Everyone", which has now been approved by a majority of the Danish Parliament. "A New Chance for Everyone" comprises initiatives concerned with such matters as local efforts towards integration, education and employment.
  - The Government is supporting a broad range of integra-



## Integration in Denmark

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tion-promoting activities, which are being implemented under both public and private auspices. As an example may be mentioned the campaign "All Young People Needed", which is intended to motivate ethnic youth to engage in and complete a relevant education, partly by using role models.

Progress towards integration is being made in several areas:

- Between 2001 and 2004, employment rose by about 15,000 among immigrants and descendants originating from non-Western countries. This figure is based on register data from Statistics Denmark. An interview survey carried out by the *Institut for Konjunktur-Analyse* shows that 76% of the private enterprises which have employed "new Danes" have positive experiences. The equivalent figure for public workplaces is 79%.

- The proportion of immigrants and descendants originating from non-Western countries that has completed a Danish qualifying education has increased between 2001 and 2004, and young ethnics are now more often engaged in upper secondary education or further education than before. This information is based on register data from Statistics Denmark.
- An interview survey carried out by the analysis bureau Catinét Research shows that more immigrants and descendants have Danish friends. In the first half-year report of 2001, 39% of about 1,000 immigrants and descendants interviewed had mainly Danish friends or just as many Danish friends as friends with a foreign background. Four years later this proportion had increased to 54%.

*Ministry of Refugee,  
Immigration and Integration Affairs*



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