

*Brazil,
July 1st, 2021*

*Subject:
Study as a worthy
purpose for
foreigners residing
in "red countries"*

To: **THE
DANISH
PARLIAMENT**
FOLKETING
*Christiansborg
1240 Copenhagen K
Denmark*

DEAR MEMBER OF THE DANISH PARLIAMENT

It is with great humility and esteem that we write to you on behalf of Brazilian scholars and researchers admitted to Higher Education programmes in the Kingdom of Denmark for the upcoming semester, with classes starting in September. I respectfully address this letter to you to demonstrate our concern that we are at risk of losing our spots, as well as external funding or scholarships granted by third parties, due to the impossibility of entering Danish territory. Since April 21, Brazil has been classified on the list of "red countries" following the definitions of the national authorities, meaning that we can migrate only with a special worthy purpose – and studies are not considered 'worthy' in this case.

In the light of this situation, our group, whose choice to apply for universities in Denmark was based on the excellence of its educational system, feel duty-bound to protect the efforts made to guarantee our vacancies at these prestigious institutions. We understand that travel restrictions are a prevention measure and respect the absolute sovereignty and legitimacy of the Danish state in decision-making, thus we would appreciate it if you would consider our arguments and position.

We have been closely following Denmark's unequivocal efforts to face the Covid-19 pandemic, embracing actions that have led to the control of the situation and allowed the reopening of the country in the past month. We agree that the current context requires exceptional measures to prevent the spread of the SARS-CoV-2 virus and its variants. However, when entering Danish territory from Brazil, we take the pledge to follow all legal preventive measures that at a very early stage prevented the virus from spreading in the country and that are now indicated, such as presentation of a negative PCR test, submission to additional tests and carrying out a mandatory quarantine.

In a technical report released in March 2021 on the Guidance for COVID-19 quarantine and testing of travellers, the European Centre for Disease Control and Prevention argues that "at this stage of the pandemic, reducing and/or delaying the importation of viruses Variants is of the utmost importance in order to allow public health authorities to vaccinate the highest possible number of individuals at risk and healthcare workers". The ECDC concludes that in the absence of testing, the current evidence from modelling studies supports a quarantine period for travellers of 14 days upon arrival, which ensures that almost anyone infected upon arrival will not further transmit the virus at the place of arrival, assuming full compliance. Considering that, since April 20, 2020, Denmark launched a campaign of comprehensive testing, we would like you to reckon with the commitment on our part with all necessary control measures proven effective against the circulation of the coronavirus.

Since Denmark is a far-reaching international actor and contributes earnestly to the solution of global challenges through multilateral organisations, most noticeably the United Nations, the European Union (EU) and the North Atlantic Treaty, we believe that other global forces actions could be relevant. On April 27, the United States, Denmark's largest non-European trade partner, and largest overall export market, allowed the entry of Brazilian students with visas in the country who hold visas in categories F-1, M-1 (students) or I (press). According to the US government, these categories fall under the "National Interest Exemption" application, and travellers are required to take a viral test three days prior to departure. In comparison to the Danish system, under the "worthy purpose" of studies, only foreigners habitually residents in "orange countries" are allowed to enter Denmark. There are even more rules than the US requires, making the environment safer.

The "Study is a Worthy Purpose" movement mapped the situation of 28 Brazilian citizens residing in their homeland who are applying for long-term visas in Denmark - 14 people are Master's degree, Ph.D., and postdoc students; 9 exchange students and 5 have a work contract. We found that 67.8% must travel from July to the beginning of the school semester on September 1st. Out of the total, 50% have already started the process of obtaining the resident permit and are awaiting a response from the Danish immigration service. On the other hand, 28.6% have already received a residence permit, and 17.9% are yet to apply.

It is essential to mention that 59,3% of us have been granted housing and paid rent for the first month, meaning we have a Danish address where we can isolate. Another 3.7% needed to cancel the contract due to the impossibility of moving. Our group of students enrolled in Danish Universities and research centers is small, hence easily trackable by the authorities if necessary. Under all conditions, we believe that our entry into Denmark would pose a minor threat to the population and society.

Furthermore, we believe that partnerships for the development of Science, Technology, and Education are beneficial for Brazil, Denmark, and the EU. A proof of this understanding is the fact that our country is the second most awarded nation with EU-funded scholarships under the Erasmus Mundus programme in 2021. A total of 144 Brazilians have been granted partial or full waivers for different European universities, including Danish ones. We also believe in the right of education, under the protection of Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Finally, with immense respect, we ask you to analyse our pleas regarding Fraternal Law and international cooperation, and we hereby reassure our commitment to following all necessary prevention protocols, aiming to ensure the safety and health of the entire Danish population. We all hold the belief that now more than ever, education must be the basis for strengthening science and knowledge so that we can begin to rebuild and, together, start a post-Covid era.

Med venlig hilsen,

Study is a Worthy Purpose Movement

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