Report/Perspective and Action Plan 2021

Issued to the Danish Parliament (the Folketing) by the Minister for Equal Opportunities on the 25th of February 2020
Preface

Gender equality is a fundamental value in Denmark. For the Government, gender equality is about more justice and greater solidarity. Gender equality is a common struggle for real equal opportunities. Not just for the few, but for everyone.

Therefore, it makes good sense to have a close connection between policies for gender equality and policies on employment. This new combination of the Minister’s responsibilities makes it possible to solve some of the structural challenges that still exist in our society today. This includes, for example, the distribution of parental leave, equal pay, restrictions in the employment of women from ethnic minorities and thus their freedom, as well as sexual harassment.

In 2020, women across industries, sectors and organizations led a historic momentum to put an end to sexual harassment in the workplace. We must - and will - use that momentum to create a cultural change in the workplace and gain a broader focus on the challenges ahead. Strong, highly educated women, who voiced challenges with sexual harassment, shaped the #MeToo debate. However, the challenges does not only face these groups. Other employees – like waitresses, flight attendants and secretaries - are far more often exposed to sexual harassment and abuse in their everyday life. We need to bring this to light, and we must do something about it. The debate must not fall silent without concrete action. The Government will do its part.

In cooperation with the social partners, we will seek solutions that can create real changes in the workplace. Historically, we have seen that we must solve major societal challenges together. And we need to do that again. Although we have succeeded in creating one of the world’s most equal societies over the last 100 years, the debate on sexual harassment has shown us that we have not crossed the finish line yet.

Everyone must be part of the community and enjoy their rights in the Danish society. Therefore, it is utterly unacceptable that we have parallel societies in Denmark, where fundamental democratic rights are put out of play. The Government will not accept that imams, husbands or others subject women to medieval values. We must help the women who are in the midst of a struggle for their freedom, and we must fight negative social control.

Women and men must enjoy equal opportunities in education, family life and in the labor market. Men continue to take only approx. one-tenth of parental leave, though many would like to take more. Meanwhile, women remain under-represented in management, politics and research.

We need to create better opportunities for fathers to take more leave with their children. It will be positive for fathers, children and families, as well as for society as a whole. Here we can make an important structural difference.
The Government will also support the work done by companies and organizations in promoting women in management and on boards. It is not only about promoting women’s career opportunities; it is about including both women and men when decisions are made and when the future direction of the society is planned. Gender must never determine one’s opportunities whether in management, on the construction site or within families.

Lack of equal pay between women and men is still a challenge. It is not a simple problem and it cannot be solved with a snap. However, it deserves serious attention, and we need to look at ways to promote equal pay.

Gender equality is part of the foundation of our society and a prerequisite for the prosperity, welfare and cohesion that we all enjoy in Denmark today. We hence need a continuous focus on the various challenges that women and men face, respectively. It is through societal and structural changes in our society that we can create equal opportunities for all.

Happy reading.

Peter Hummelgaard
Minister for Gender Equality
Background and vision for the gender equality strategy in Denmark

Gender equality is one of the UN’s 17 global goals for sustainable development as well as a prerequisite in achieving progress across the SDGs - both nationally and internationally. Denmark, together with the other Nordic countries, is a leader in gender equality, but there are still barriers and structures that can limit women and men’s equal opportunities in the Danish society.

Transformation takes time and requires sustained and lasting efforts across a variety of areas. There is a need for many different actors to contribute - across the Parliament, Government, public authorities, the social partners, educational institutions, organizations, families and down to the individual.

This action plan forms the framework for the Government’s gender equality efforts in the coming year. The effort must support the Government’s overall vision:

The Government wants a society where women and men have equal opportunities, where no one experiences discrimination and where everyone regardless of their gender, sexual orientation or gender identity are equal and have their freedom to live the life they want.

In order to fulfill the Government’s vision, a number of objectives have been set within four focus areas, where concrete initiatives will be developed in the coming year.

VISION:

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Equal opportunities in education, work and family

It is a prerequisite for an equal society that women and men have equal opportunities in relation to education, parental leave, equal pay and career and in relation to family life.

Reducing the gender-segregated labor market and promote equal pay

Danish women and men are educated as never before, but there are still big differences in which education or field of study they choose. This has an impact on the strong gender segregation that characterizes the Danish labor market, and this may explain a large part of the lack of equal pay.

In vocational education, the vast majority of students is enrolled in a field of study where their own gender is dominant. Men continue to choose an education within technology, construction or transport, while women primarily choose care work, health and pedagogy.

Men make up two-thirds of employees in the private sector and less than a third in the public sector. Women make up just under a quarter of university professors in Denmark, even though they make up more than half of the graduates. Women make up just under a fifth of the board members in private companies, and approx. one third of the members of the municipal councils.

This indicates, that companies and society as a whole are missing out on skilled labor, as well as new perspectives and ideas to solve the complex challenges that the world faces both now and in the years to come. Furthermore, this can have consequences for individuals’ opportunity to utilize their talent, just as the gender segregation impacts the differences in salaries and pension savings that still persist between women and men.

There is a need to continue working to ensure that everyone has real equal opportunities in education and in the labor market - regardless of gender.

Facts:

- 9 out of 10 students in vocational schools are enrolled in an education where one gender makes up more than 60 pct. of the students. Three out of four students have the same gender as the majority in their education.

- In 2019, women accounted for 19 pct. of Danish board members and 15 percent of the members of the Executive Boards.

- Approx. 4 percent of Danish 18-64-year-old women are new entrepreneurs. This is less than half of the OECD countries’ average of 9.2 pct.

- In the most recent local elections in 2017, women accounted for 32.9 pct. of the elected candidates and 14 out of 98 mayors are women.

- In 2018, women accounted for 56 pct. of graduates, 50 pct. of the PhD students and 23 pct. of the university-employed professors.

- 85 pct. of the pay gap between men and women can be attributed to an unbal-
anced distribution of characteristics between the two genders, including in particular that the labor market is gender-segregated. The gender segregation leads to pay differences because there are systematic differences between the pay in female- and male-dominated jobs, and because men are placed higher in the job hierarchy than women.

- In 2019, 60-69-year-old men’s pension wealth was 22 pct. larger than that of women, corresponding to approx. 340,000 kr.

### Combatting sexual harassment in the work place and in education

Sexual harassment is prohibited on as well as outside the labor market, and there are a number of tools within employment law that provide the possibility to take action against the abuser in cases of sexual harassment. Yet, sexual harassment continue to take place across industries, workplaces and relations.

Studies show that low-wage earners experience sexual harassment seven times as often as high-wage earners. Particularly young women, young people in internships and temporary staff are at risk. Nearly one in four female apprentices has experienced sexual harassment from a superior or powerful person at the workplace, who has tried to force them into sex. Studies suggest that not everyone knows whom to turn to if they experience sexual harassment. In addition, some victims have experienced a lack of consequences for the person or persons who committed the abuse. There is a need for increased focus on strengthened prevention, detection and consequences in cases of sexual harassment in the labor market and in educational institutions.

The Government will support a cultural change in the workplaces and educational institutions in order to make it safe and secure to go to work and go to class.

### Facts:

- Sexual harassment in Danish workplaces has increased from 2.8 pct. in 2012 to 3.6 pct. in 2018.

- 10.5 pct. of young female employees between the ages of 18 and 24 have been subjected to sexual harassment compared to 5.2 pct. of the men in the same age group.

- Approx. 77,000 employees were subjected to sexual harassment in 2018. The 10 pct. with lowest income experience 7 times as much sexual harassment as the 10 pct. with the highest income. Nearly half of the victims are 34 years old or under.

- 7.7 pct. of women and 5.4 pct. of men have experienced sexual harassment from a superior or powerful person at the workplace, who has tried to force them to sex. Half are 18-29 years old.

- 23 pct. of surveyed female apprentices have experienced being pressured into sex by a superior or powerful person in the workplace.

- 51 pct. of female students in the hotel and restaurant industry and 30 pct. of males have been subjected to unwanted sexual approaches or violations in their internships.

- 40 pct. of students in the hotel and restaurant industry do not know whom to turn to if they want help and support if they have experiences with sexual harassment.
More parental leave and equal opportunities for fathers

Although there has been a small increase in recent years in how much parental leave fathers on average spend with their children, Danish men take only about one tenth of the total leave. Fathers in Copenhagen take about twice as much parental leave as fathers in West Jutland. At the same time, more than half of the parents agree that fathers in Denmark take too little leave with their child, and every third father takes less leave than he actually wanted.

There is a tendency for mothers to be perceived as the primary caregiver for the children in the family, and that the leave therefore in principle belongs to her. It is a perception that can be prevalent both in the workplace and in the individual family. It can hence be a challenge for the many fathers who want to take a bigger part in the family life or to take more leave with their children. As a result, men’s opportunities to participate in family life and parenthood on an equal footing with women can be limited and the women’s long leave can be an impediment for their careers and the sharing of care tasks. Fathers’ use of parental leave is good for both fathers, children and families.

Efforts will be made to promote better opportunities for fathers to take more leave, participate in family life and take part in their child’s everyday life.

Facts

• Fathers who became parents in 2018 took almost 3 days more leave than fathers who became parents in 2015.

• Fathers who became parents in 2018 took an average of 32.5 days of leave, while mothers took 281.9 days.

• Fathers in Copenhagen take the longest leave with an average of 46.4 days, while fathers in West Jutland take the shortest leave with an average of 23.7 days.

• 53 pct. of parents agree that fathers in Denmark take too little parental leave with their child.

• 32 pct. of fathers and 22 percent of mothers respond that they would have liked to have taken more leave than they did.

• 35 pct. of the fathers and 47 pct. of the mothers are to a low or very low degree in favor of the introduction of a two-month earmarked maternity leave scheme for fathers.

Promoting the work of public authorities on gender equality

Public authorities play an important role in promoting gender equality. When the public sector takes into consideration that women and men may have different needs, resources and behaviors, it contributes to promoting gender equality and equal opportunities in the area of human resources and in core services.

Women make up the majority of public employees, but only around every third of top managers is a woman. At the same
time, only approx. one in ten employees in nurseries or kindergartens is male, and the Armed Forces remains male-dominated, although there has been an increase in female conscripts in recent years.

It may also be necessary to take into account differences in women and men’s behaviors and preferences in public offers or efforts. For example, men have a shorter life expectancy on average than women, and at the same time consult their general practitioner or health care system far less. This is especially true for unskilled men. Men are generally overrepresented in traffic accidents, while women are overrepresented when it comes to accidents specifically with electric bicycles.

Public authorities must work continuously to promote gender equality and include a gender perspective in staff and in core services.

**Facts**

- Women make up an average of 34 pct. of managers at top management level in the public sector, 32 pct. in the municipalities and 27 pct. in the regions.
- The proportion of conscripted women has increased from 17.1 pct. from 2017 to 2020 to 22.2 pct. (excl. the Danish Emergency Management Agency).
- In 2019, men accounted for 10.9 pct. of those employed in nurseries and 12.8 pct. in kindergartens.
- In 2019, the average life expectancy for women was 83.2 years, while 79.3 years for men.
- In 2019, 40-49-year-old men had an average of 4.5 visits to the doctor per year, while the figure for women was 7.8.
- In 2019, almost eight out of ten people killed in traffic were men. From 2017-2019, 6 out of 10 injured or killed electric cyclists were women.
The Government will initiate the following activities: a shortened version

- Gender equality in day care and primary schools
- Measures to strengthen the subject ‘health and sexual education and family’ in primary schools
- Analysis of the skill gap between boys and girls through primary school until secondary education
- Alliance to promote gender equality in vocational education and training
- Promoting women in management and boards
- Women in research
- Female entrepreneurs
- Negotiations on the forthcoming wage transparency measure introduced by the European Commission
- Tripartite discussions with the social partners on sexual harassment
- Prevention of sexual harassment in the workplace
- Prevention of sexual harassment in education
- Implementation of EUs work-life balance directive.
- Equal access to the child and youth benefits
- Social inequality in health and illness
- Inclusion and diversity in the field of defense
- Prevention and management of sexist behavior in the area of the Armed Forces
- Policy against bullying and harassment in the police
- Economic boost of KVINFO’s knowledge center
- Gender balance in cinema
- Focus on gender differences in modes of transport and safety
Freedom and equal rights for all

Everyone has the right to feel secure. No one should be exposed to or fear harassment, violence or abuse. The freedom, decisions and rights of the individual must never be limited by negative social control and stereotypical notions of honor.

Promoting equality among immigrants and refugees

It is fundamental for the Danish society that everyone takes an active part in and contributes to the community. Many immigrants contribute, takes an education and go to work. However, there are still ethnic minority communities where, in particular, too many women do not participate in the labour market and experience pressure to remain unavailable for the labor market.

Gender equality must apply to everyone in Denmark, regardless of background, culture and traditions. Everyone must be able to live the life he or she wants and make his or her own choices - regardless of gender. However, there are still parallel societies in Denmark where gender equality is not recognized and where individual rights and freedoms are limited. Where the family decides who to be friends with, who to marry, or whether to have a boyfriend. Where women do not have the right to get divorced, and therefore are detained in marriages against their will.

There is a need to increase the amount of, in particular, immigrant women on the labor market, so that they encounter Danish norms and values, earn their own money and get the freedom and independence it provides. Additionally, there is a need for active efforts to combat negative social control.

Facts

• 15 pct. of non-Western descendants may not or do not think they are allowed by their family to have a boyfriend or girlfriend. The same applies to 5 pct. of non-Western immigrants and 2 pct. of Danish descent.

• 81 pct. of immigrants and 84 pct. of descendants of non-Western origin feel that their family generally allows them to freely choose their friends. The same applies to 96 pct. with Danish origin.

• 77 pct. of non-Western immigrants completely agree that men and women should have the same opportunity to get divorced. This applies to 87 pct. of non-Western descendants and 95 pct. of Danish origin.

• 88 pct. of non-Western immigrants completely agree that men and women should have the same opportunity to have a job. This applies to 92 pct. of non-Western descendants and 96 pct. of Danish origin.

• 51 pct. men and 43 pct. of women between the age of 16-64 originating from the MENAP countries and Turkey were employed in the third quarter of 2020. Among persons of Danish origin, the corresponding proportion was respectively 74 pct. and 73 pct.
Combating gender-based violence, abuse and human trafficking

Human trafficking, acts of violence, abuse or offensive behavior are unacceptable. It has major consequences for the individual and for society. Everyone has the right to feel safe and to have control over his or her own body and life. That is fundamental.

Women are more often than men exposed to stalking and to physical and psychological partner violence. At the same time, violence against women is often more severe. However, men are also exposed to violence from a partner, but for them it can be more difficult to seek and get help. Far more women than men are victims of rape or attempted rape. Young women in particular are at risk. This also applies when the violations are digital. In comparison with their peers, far more young women have at least once experienced having their nude photos shared without their consent.

Both women and men are trafficked. It is a violation of their fundamental human rights and a gross abuse of the individual when a person is exploited and trafficked by criminal perpetrators. Women are trafficked primarily for prostitution, and it is increasingly done online. At the same time, several men in recent years have been trafficked for forced labor in Denmark.

There is a need to continue efforts against physical and psychological violence in close relations, to follow up on the legislation on a consent-based rape provision and to promote digital education among children and young people.

The Government will decide on future activities against human trafficking when the current action plan expires.

Facts

- Approx. 11,400 women are annually subjected to rape or attempted rape. Just about four out of ten perpetrators are a current or former partner.
- In 2019, around 54,000 people were exposed to other forms of sexual abuse than rape. Almost 80 pct. were women.
- In 2019, 2,164 women stayed at a women’s shelter, half of whom (1,073) were immigrants or descendants.
- Within a one-year period, 1.6 pct. of women and 0.8 pct. of men have been exposed to physical partner violence, and 3.9 pct. of women and 1.2 pct. of men have been subjected to psychological partner violence.
- Within a one-year period, 2.4 pct. of women and 1.7 pct. of men been subjected to stalking.
- In upper secondary education, the proportion of young people who within the past year have shared an intimate picture of others without their consent has fallen from 6.1 pct. to 1.8 pct. from 2017 to 2020. 0.6 pct. of girls and 3.3 pct. of boys who have shared such pictures.
- In 2020, Danish authorities identified 77 victims of trafficking. 55 were women, 21 were men and one was transgender.
The Government will initiate the following activities: a shortened version:

- More ethnic minority women in employment
- Strengthen the participation of ethnic minority women and men in society
- Strengthened efforts against negative social control
- A consent-based rape provision in the Criminal Code
- National campaign and education on rape and consent
- Extension of ‘Lev Uden Vold’, hotline for rape victims and focus on violence in close relationships
- Strengthened effort against stalking
- Establishment of additional places in women’s shelters
- An experiment with psychological help for men exposed to violence in close relations
- More knowledge about gender-based violence
- Children’s and young people’s digital life and education
- Nordic conference on the Manosphere – misogynistic internet communities for your men
- Exit package for people in prostitution
- Analysis and future efforts against human trafficking
Security, well-being and equal opportunities for LGBTI persons

Compared to other countries, Denmark does well when it comes to rights, security and well-being for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) persons. However, there is still room for improvement. The Danish society must be inclusive for all. Moreover, everyone must be met equally and with respect.

Strengthening rights

Everyone has the right to protection against discrimination, and to enjoy the right of respect for private and family life. Although Denmark is among the European countries that has come the farthest when it comes to the legal position of LGBTI persons, there are still areas that can be strengthened.

Within the last year, almost every third Danish LGBTI person has experienced discrimination or harassment. Every year, far too many are exposed to a violence, which the victim experience as motivated by the fact that they are gay or transgender. Transgender people are a particularly vulnerable group, and a majority of transgender persons has experienced discrimination because of their gender identity.

It must be clear to all that it is illegal to discriminate homosexual and bisexual, transgender and intersex persons - regardless of whether it is in the workplace or in society in general. The Government wants to strengthen the legislation to make it clear, that the Danish society must be inclusive.

Facts

• 1,500-2,500 persons are annually exposed to violence, which, in the victims’ opinion, is motivated, by homophobia or transphobia.

• 27 pct. of surveyed LGBT-persons have within the past year avoided certain places because of their LGBT identity, among other things due to fear of exclamations, harassment and physical violence.

• 57 pct. of gay men and 37 pct. of gay women have experienced being bullied or harassed because of their sexual orientation.

• 60 pct. of trans women and 63 pct. of trans men have experienced being bullied or harassed because of their gender identity.

• 31 pct. of Danish LGBTI persons have within the last year experienced discrimination due to their LGBTI identity.

• 20 pct. of Danish LGBTI persons have been exposed to physical or sexual violence within the last five years.

Increasing well-being and equal opportunities

Everyone has the right to unfold himself or herself and to take part in society. Fear of homophobia and transphobia can be a barrier for LGBTI persons’ ability to live a free and secure life.

Half of LGBT persons avoid holding their partner’s hand in public, and one in four avoid telling colleagues about the gender identity of their partner. One in four
LGBT persons has dressed differently in public than they normally would have chosen, and one in two gay and bisexual persons has found it uncomfortable to stay in a locker room because of their sexual orientation. For transgender people, it is 8 out of 10.

Loneliness is far more prevalent among LGBT persons than in the general population, and almost half feel excluded from the social community when they play sports. Everyone should be able to go to work, school, play sports and walk on the street without being afraid of having to hide who they are.

There is a need to continue the work on creating open-minded, open and inclusive environments in workplaces, educational institutions and in sports clubs, so that everyone has equal opportunities and is treated with respect.

**Facts**

- 24 pct. of LGBT persons are not open about their sexuality towards their boss, while towards colleagues it applies to 27 pct.
- 49 pct. LGBT persons have within the past year omitted to hold their partner’s hand in public, and 53 pct. have omitted to hug, caress or kiss their partner in public.
- Loneliness is 5-6 times more prevalent among LGBT persons (28 pct.) than among the general population.
- Half of the homosexual and bisexual persons surveyed have found it uncomfortable to stay in a locker room in connection with sports due to their sexual orientation. For transgender people, it is 83 percent.
- 47 pct. of responding LBGTI + persons feel to some extent, to a lesser extent or not at all included in the social community when they play sports.
The Government will initiate the following activities: a shortened version:

• Strengthened legislation against discrimination and hate crimes
• Initiatives to strengthen efforts against hate crimes
• Bills concerning transgender children to legally change gender and concerning LGBTI persons parenting possibilities
• Strengthened efforts for LGBTI-persons with ethnic background.
• Strengthening of the NGO; LGBT+ Denmark
• Campaign on openness and inclusion of LGBTI persons in the labor market
• Study of conversion therapy
• More knowledge about LGBTI persons living conditions and well-being
• Improving the conditions of LGBTI persons in sport associations
• Inspiration and guidance material on LGBTI students for primary and secondary education
• Evaluation of the rules on double donation
• Establishment of a knowledge center on transgender issues
• Counseling for transgender children and adults
• Strengthened health efforts targeting LGBTI persons
• Information material for nursing and activity staff regarding elderly LGBTI persons
Gender equality and rights globally

Internationally, Denmark works to promote gender equality, the rights of women and girls and ensure the rights of LGBTI persons through a strong focus in the Danish development policy and humanitarian strategy and as an active advocate in the international cooperation forums.

Promoting the rights and opportunities of women and girls globally

In recent years, the gender equality agenda has been challenged by stagnation and backlash and in far too many countries, women and girls are being restrained from being able to participate in society on an equal footing with men and boys. Women and children are also particularly vulnerable in humanitarian crises and conflict situations, which can reinforce gender inequalities.

For women and girls, the risk of violence and harmful practices, such as female genital mutilation and child marriage, as well as maternal mortality, increase during conflicts and crises. COVID-19 has had such grave health and socio-economic consequences for women and girls in developing countries, particularly in relation to sexual and gender-based violence, that the UN Secretary-General has labelled it a shadow pandemic.

The work for gender equality and the rights of women and girls is at the heart of international cooperation, and it is both a recurring theme and an individual sub-goal of the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals. The Danish development policy and humanitarian strategy is used as a lever to promote gender equality and women’s and girls’ rights globally.

The Danish development policy will continue to have a strong focus on the promotion of women and girl’s rights and that our humanitarian partners will ensure a focus on women and girl’s protection, equality and rights.

Strong Danish commitment to international gender equality work

Efforts to promote gender equality for women and men as well as LGBTI persons are high on the agenda in forums such as the EU, the Council of Europe and the Nordic Council of Ministers. There is a broad consensus on strengthening the active participation of women and men in all spheres and exchanging methods and solutions that can create real equality for all, regardless of gender, sexual orientation and gender identity.

However, some countries are increasingly critical of gender equality efforts not just globally but also within in Europe. It is questioned what gender equality entails and what outcomes should be pursued. This makes it more difficult to negotiate and launch joint initiatives that promote gender equality and the rights of LGBTI persons. Denmark must stand tall, when other countries fall short to promote or even oppose gender equality.
There is a need to maintain and defend the fundamental values and achievements and continue to work to ensure progress for gender equality for women and men as well as LGBTI persons in all relevant fora.

Facts

• Over the past 25 years, the proportion of 20-24-year-old women worldwide who got married before the age of 18 has fallen from 25 pct. to 21 pct., while the proportion of women who got married before the age of 15 has fallen from 7 percent to 5 pct.

• 28 pct. of 20-24-year-old women in Sub-Saharan Africa have given birth to a child before the age of 18. Among the poorest women, it is 41 pct.

• Worldwide, 18 pct. of 15-49-year-old women, who have been in a relationship, have been subjected to physical or sexual violence from a partner within the past year.

• It is estimated, that unsafe abortions are to blame for 8-11 pct. of all maternal deaths worldwide.

• Worldwide, women perform three times as much unpaid care and domestic work as men.

• 68 countries have legislation criminalizing sexual intercourse between people of the same sex, and 11 of these countries have the death penalty.
The Government will initiate the following activities: a shortened version

• Danish dialogue with the United Nations’ Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women
• United Nations’ Commission on the Status of Women
• UN - Generation Equality Forum in Paris (GEF)
• Gender mainstreaming in Nordic cooperation
• Danish leadership of SRHR Action Coalition to the UN GEF
• Danish SRHR (sexual and reproductive health and rights) plan
• New Danish action plan for women, peace and security
• Call to Action on protection from Gender based Violence (GBV in emergencies)
• Strengthened Nordic cooperation on LGBTI issues
• EU Commissions’ LGBTIQ strategy