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| Wilders Plads 8K  DK-1403 Copenhagen K  Phone +45 3269 8888  Direct  +45 91 32 57 75  lgh@humanrights.dk  humanrights.dk  Doc. No. 18/01784-2 |
| 20 August 2018 |

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| Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)  Palais des Nations CH-1211 Geneva 10    E-mail: [registry@ohchr.org](mailto:registry@ohchr.org), cc: [couaffowafang@ohchr.org](mailto:couaffowafang@ohchr.org) |

Information request on child, early and forced marriage in humanitarian settings

By e-mail on the 23 July 2018, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights has requested input to a report on child, early and forced marriage in humanitarian settings under reference WRGS/COW/Res 35/16.

The Danish Institute for Human Rights – Denmark’s national human rights institution – has understood the request as concerning information on child, early and forced marriage in humanitarian settings in Denmark.

Humanitarian settings are defined in the Human Rights Council resolution 35/16 as including “humanitarian emergencies, situations of forced displacement, armed conflict and natural disaster.”

While the institute welcomes the initiative of the OHCHR and acknowledges the severity of human rights violations taking place in humanitarian settings worldwide, humanitarian settings as defined above are non-existing in Denmark.

The institute is of the impression that problems of child, early and forced marriage is generally limited in Denmark.

In 2017, there were in total 30,773 marriages in Denmark. The average age for first time marriage are 34.9 for men and 32.4 for women.[[1]](#footnote-1)

There is no official information available on the number of forced marriages in Denmark, but a department under the municipality of Copenhagen providing assistance and guidance in the area of forced marriages and other form of honour related violence and social control, [[2]](#footnote-2), received 22 enquires in 2016 on forced marriages out of 1.381 enquires relating to honour related violence and social control.[[3]](#footnote-3)

In 2017, an unlawful administrative measure separating persons under 18 years from their adult partner in the asylum system caused great controversy in the public debate leading to a change of practice.[[4]](#footnote-4)

In August 2017, the Danish parliament adopted national legislation prohibiting all forms of marriage for persons under 18 years.[[5]](#footnote-5) Accordingly, the Danish authorities will not recognize already established child or early marriages for foreigners taking residence in Denmark and only in exceptional cases issue dispensations from the prohibition.

All forms of forced marriage are prohibited and criminalized in the Danish Criminal Code with a maximum sanction of 2 years imprisonment.[[6]](#footnote-6)

Yours sincerely,

Lise Garkier Hendriksen

Chief Legal Adviser, Monitoring

1. Statistics Denmark, available in Danish at: <https://www.dst.dk/da/Statistik/emner/befolkning-og-valg/vielser-og-skilsmisser/vielser> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. For more information (in Danish), see: <https://etniskkonsulentteam.kk.dk/indhold/forside>. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Danish Institute for Human Rights, report on extreme social control (“Ekstrem social control”), available in Danish, at: <https://menneskeret.dk/sites/menneskeret.dk/files/media/dokumenter/udgivelser/ligebehandling_2017/social_kontrol_2017.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Denmark, Jyllands-Posten: Adskillelse af barnebrude stemplet som »ulovlig«, available in Danish, at: https://jyllands-posten.dk/indland/ECE9346685/adskillelse-af-barnebrude-stemplet-som-ulovlig/ [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Denmark, Law on Marriages section 2, (lov om ægteskabs indgåelse og opløsning § 2), available in Danish, at: <https://www.retsinformation.dk/Forms/r0710.aspx?id=197040> [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Denmark, Criminal Code, section 260, consolidated act no. 977 of 9 August 2017, available in Danish, at: <https://www.retsinformation.dk/Forms/r0710.aspx?id=192080> [↑](#footnote-ref-6)