

Denmark - Human Rights Scorecard ¹

Denmark, officially the Kingdom of Denmark, is a small country in Northern Europe. Its small population, service sector, and offshore oil production all contribute to a productive economy which supports a broad social safety net. Denmark enjoys high human rights indicators, an excellent public education system, and generally high quality of life. However, the refugee crisis that began in 2011 brought up questions about Denmark's openness to new immigration. It is not party to UNHCR refugee resettlement regulations. Nevertheless, Denmark has made immense progress in human rights and rule of law since World War II.

Official language: Danish, Faroese, Greenlandic

Ethnic groups: Danish 86.3% (Includes indigenous Inuit), Turkish 1.1%, other 12.6 %

Government: Unitary parliamentary constitutional monarchy

- Queen: Margrethe II
- Prime Minister: Lars Løkke Rasmussen

Death penalty: Abolitionist

Population: 5.8 Million

Life expectancy: 80.9 years

Under-5 mortality: 3.7 per 1000

Adult literacy: 99 percent



Section 1: Overall Development

The overall development of a country – considering education, health, income, and other factors – is a strong indicator of whether average citizens have a reasonable chance to enjoy social and economic well-being and mobility.

Human Development (UNDP Human Development Index (HDI)) ²



0.929 – Very High Human Development ³

According to the UNDP, Danes enjoyed a gross national income per capita of \$47,918, and could expect to have on average 19.1 years of schooling. Denmark performs well in these metrics. Other countries with comparable GNI per capita tend to have a similar HDI.

Section 2: Respect for the Integrity of the Person

Respect for the integrity of the individual is the most fundamental of human rights groupings. It guarantees protection of the person to ensure the right to life, and freedom from torture. It also prevents arbitrary detention, and disappearances, and ensures the right to a free and fair trial when accused.

Freedom from arbitrary or unlawful deprivation of life



Respected ⁴

Danish law strongly protects the right to life and there are no reports of executions of any kind.

Freedom from disappearance



Respected ⁵

There are no reports of disappearances in Denmark.

Freedom from torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment



Respected ⁶

Torture and cruel punishment are outlawed in Denmark and these laws are followed.

Freedom from arbitrary arrest or detention



Respected ⁷

Police make arrests according to the law and are required to allow arrested persons to consult with an attorney, notify next of kin and appear before a judge within 24 hours of arrest, though the law encourages pre-hearing detentions of 12 hours or fewer.

Freedom from denial of fair public trial



Respected⁸

The Danish judicial branch is independent and guarantees the right to a public trial with representation by an attorney. Attorneys are provided if the defendant cannot afford legal council.

Freedom from arbitrary interference with privacy, family, home or correspondence



Respected⁹

Such incursion is outlawed by the Danish constitution, and these laws are respected.

Section 3: Respect for Civil Liberties

Civil liberties are a basic category of internationally recognized human rights. They include the freedoms of expression, assembly, association, education, and religion. These are inalienable rights which should not be breached by government, and should ensure the rights of all, including women and minority groups.

Freedom of speech and press (*Reporters Without Borders Press Freedom Index*)¹⁰



Score: 10.36, Rank: 9 / 179 – Free¹¹

The Danish constitution guarantees the right to free speech and free press, and this is generally respected. The rankings dropped in 2017 due to the tragic and anomalous murder of journalist Kim Wall. However, press freedom remains very good in Denmark.

Freedom from academic censorship



Respected¹²

There were no cases of censorship or political decisions regarding university hiring based on political beliefs reported.

Freedom of peaceful assembly and association



Respected¹³

There are no reports of infringement on freedom of assembly, and collective bargaining is strong.

Freedom of religion



Respected¹⁴

The Evangelical Lutheran Church is the official church of Denmark, and 76% of the population are members. There have been some incidents of religious strife, but this was confined to individuals. On an institutional level, there is respect for freedom of religion.

Freedom of movement



Respected¹⁵

Danish law ensures freedom of movement and there was no evidence that this was disrespected.

Protection of refugees and stateless persons



Partially Respected¹⁶

Denmark is party to the Dublin regulations, and does not accept refugees who have travelled through a safe country. Children born in Denmark to non-citizens must apply for citizenship before their 21st birthdays, and stateless persons encounter difficulty getting citizenship and asylum.

Overall protection of civil liberties (*FreedomHouse Civil Liberties Index*)^{17 18}



1 / 7 – Free¹⁹

Civil liberties are guaranteed by the constitution, and these rights are generally respected.

Section 4: Respect for Political Rights

Political rights ensure all members of society are able to influence the political process. The assessment of political rights includes an examination of the electoral process and the selection of representatives, the political empowerment of the general public, the tolerance of dissent, the accountability of government, etc.

Overall protection of political rights (*FreedomHouse Political Rights Index*)²⁰



1 / 7 – Free²¹

Free and fair elections are held regularly, dissent is tolerated, the government is accountable and measures are taken to discipline officials who abuse their power.

Section 5: Corruption and Lack of Transparency in Government

The civil, political, economic and social rights exercised within a country are often modulated by the degree of transparency and freedom from corruption. Various international metrics assess transparency and corruption, including the OECD anti-bribery convention, the Bribe Payers Index, and the Open Budget Index.

Transparency and freedom from corruption (*Transparency International Corruption Perceptions Index*)²²



Score: 88%, Rank: 1/ 180 – Some corruption²³

The Danish public sector is generally very strong in its integrity and anti-corruption measures. However, some problems persist in the private sector, with some corruption evading discovery by Denmark's robust corruption detection systems.

Section 6: Governmental Response to Criticism

This section deals specifically with the response heads of state have to civil society or international human rights reports.

Governmental attitudes vis-à-vis independent investigations of alleged human rights violations



Respected²⁴

NGOs and human rights groups operate freely in the country with no reported problems.

Section 7: Discrimination and Societal Abuses

Legal and social discriminatory practices related to sex, race, creed or sexual orientation, are violations of human rights. Countries with strong civil liberty traditions should have a fair legal system that ensures the rule of law, allows free economic activity, and ensures equality of opportunity for all.

Endangered Minorities (*Peoples Under Threat – Minority Rights Group International*)²⁵



No threat listed – Limited dangers to minorities²⁶

According to Minorities Rights Group International, Denmark does not have any minorities which face an immediate threat of violence.

Rights of women (*World Economic Forum Gender Gap Index*)²⁷



Score: .778/1 Rank: 13 / 142 – Mostly equal rights²⁸

Danish law mandates equality of the sexes and equal work for equal pay. These are largely enforced.

Rights of Children (*KidsRights Index Overall Score*)²⁹



Score: .891/1, Rank: 11 / 165 – Protected³⁰

Educational and health outcomes for Danish children are generally excellent. Children grow up safe, though official legal protections are somewhat weak.

Rights of persons with disabilities



Respected³¹

Individuals with disabilities are protected under Danish law, and their rights are generally respected. Some children with special needs must be relocated from Greenland to Denmark because of unequal distribution of resources.

Rights of national/racial/ethnic minorities (e.g. discrimination, Islamophobia, anti-Semitism etc.)



Respected³²

The Jewish community reported no trouble with discrimination or outstanding reparations claims. There are concerns about rising xenophobia and problems with accepting immigrants, but there is still no evidence of widespread discrimination.

Freedom from abuse and discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity



Respected^{33 34}

Denmark has robust protections for queer people and recognizes gay marriage and adoption.

Section 7: Workers' Rights

Workers' rights are a group of legal rights relating to labour relations between workers and their employers. At their core are things like the ability to negotiate pay, benefits, terms of employment, and safe working conditions. These rights often devolve from the right to unionize and access to collective bargaining.

Rights to freedom of association and to collective bargaining



Respected³⁵

The law allows for independent organization and full collective bargaining rights for unions.

Freedom from forced or compulsory labour



Respected³⁶

Denmark has strict laws regarding compulsory labor and they are enforced.

Freedom from forced labour for children, and a minimum age of employment



Respected³⁷

There are minimum ages for different types of labour, starting at 13 for some light part-time jobs, 15 for most part-time jobs, and 18 for anything potentially hazardous. These are enforced.

Right to acceptable conditions of work



Respected³⁸

Danish law imposes prison time on employers with unsafe work conditions. There is no legal minimum wage, but unions collectively negotiate an hourly minimum wage of about \$21/hour and the work week is around 37.5 hours. Overtime cannot be forced.

Right to employment



3.8% - Very low unemployment³⁹

Unemployment in Denmark is currently very low.

¹ A hybrid human rights and freedoms model, leveraging both legal principles and intuitive classifications, has been used for this human rights assessment. The CJPME Foundation has sought to integrate as many independent sources and metrics into its summary analysis as possible. In many cases, for qualitative material pertaining to the respect for a particular right in a country, the CJPME Foundation has drawn on material from Human Rights Watch and the US State Department country reports. Human Rights Watch (HRW) publishes a World Report which assesses the respect for human rights in each country. HRW uses a methodology of local reporting and interviewing, combined with research and analysis to assess the level of respect of human rights. The U.S State Department keeps an updated publication on the state of human rights internationally. Their system of research and accountability draws from the research of official US State Department officials, as well as local civil-society and international human rights organizations.

² The UN Development Program HDI was created to emphasize that people and their capabilities should be the ultimate criteria for assessing the development of a country, not economic growth alone. The HDI can also be used to question national policy choices, asking how two countries with the same level of GNI per capita can end up with different human development outcomes. These contrasts can stimulate debate about government policy priorities. The Human Development Index (HDI) is a summary measure of average achievement in key dimensions of human development: a long and healthy life, being knowledgeable and have a decent standard of living. Accessed Jan. 8, 2017 <http://hdr.undp.org/en/composite/HDI>

³ "Table 1: Human Development Index and its components, Denmark" UNDP, based on 2018 or the most recent year available. Accessed Feb. 8, 2019. <http://hdr.undp.org/en/composite/HDI>.

⁴ "Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2017 Denmark." U.S Department of State. Accessed February 8th, 2019.

<http://www.state.gov/i/drl/rls/hrrpt/humanrightsreport/#wrapper>.

⁵ Ibid. U.S Department of State. For purposes of the present analysis, a "disappearance" is different than simple arbitrary detention because a "disappearance" is considered permanent.

⁶ Ibid. U.S Department of State.

⁷ Ibid. U.S Department of State.

⁸ Ibid. U.S Department of State.

⁹ Ibid. U.S Department of State.

¹⁰ The Press Freedom Index published by Reporters Without Borders ranks the level of freedom of information in 180 countries. This is determined through the polling of local NGOs and freedom of expression civil society organizations across the globe. This index is also determined by local correspondents and follow-up work done on reports of infringement to press freedom where ever it takes place. Their methodology looks at six different indicators: 1) Media pluralism, 2) Media

independence, 3) Media atmosphere and self-censorship, 4) the Law around media, 5) Media transparency, and 6) Media infrastructure. The score from these six indicators is combined with a rating for the violence against journalists in the country to create an overall score. The CJPME Foundation classifies the Press Freedom Index as follows: 0 – 14.99 (16 countries), Largely free, diverse and independent; 15 – 24.99 (37 countries), Mostly free, diverse and independent; 25 – 29.99 (31 countries), Partially free, diverse and independent; 30 – 39.99 (39 countries), Partially controlled, limited or intimidated; 40 & higher (57 countries), Highly controlled, limited or intimidated.

¹¹ "World Press Freedom Index." Reporters Without Borders: For Freedom of Information. Accessed February 8, 2019. <https://rsf.org/en/ranking>.

¹² "Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2017 Denmark." U.S Department of State. Accessed February 8, 2019.

<http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/hrrpt/humanrightsreport/#wrapper>.

¹³ "Denmark." World Report 2018: Denmark". Accessed February 8, 2019. <https://www.hrw.org/europe/central-asia>.

¹⁴ "Denmark." International Religious Freedom Report for 2017". Accessed February 8, 2019. <http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/irf/religiousfreedom/index.htm#wrapper>.

¹⁵ "Denmark." World Report 2018: Denmark. Accessed February 8, 2019. <https://www.hrw.org/europe/central-asia>.

¹⁶ "Denmark." World Report 2018: Denmark. Accessed February 8, 2019. <https://www.hrw.org/europe/central-asia>.

¹⁷ Freedom House is an internationally recognized NGO based in the U.S which documents and rates the quality of democratic practice in a given country. Freedom House splits its grading system between the two areas of civil and political rights in a country. On each scale, the Freedom House rating is 1-2.5 (free), 3-5.5 (partly free) and 6-7 (not free).

¹⁸ Freedom House's Civil Liberties index measures things such as a) freedom of expression and belief, b) associational and organizational rights, c) the rule of law, and d) personal autonomy and individual rights. Freedom House rates countries as 1-2.5 (free), 3-5.5 (partly free) and 6-7 (not free). Accessed Feb. 8, 2019.

<https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/freedom-world-2019>

¹⁹ "Denmark." Freedom in the World 2018: Denmark". Accessed February 8, 2019. <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2018/denmark>.

²⁰ See footnote about the Freedom House organization above. The Freedom House Political Rights assessment looks at a) the electoral process, b) political pluralism and participation, and c) the functioning of government. Accessed Feb. 8, 2019 <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/freedom-world-2019>

²¹ "Denmark." Freedom in the World 2018: Denmark". Accessed February 8, 2019. <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2018/denmark>.

²² Transparency International (TI) publishes a "Corruption Perceptions Index" annually, which is based on independent research and polling. The main categories of corruption are broken down within the index to provide particulars on issues including things such as perceptions of corruption, control of corruption, and financial secrecy. A country receives a score on 100; the higher the score, the less corrupt the society. The CJPME foundation has classified them into categories as follows: 80-100 (11 countries): Very limited corruption; 60-79 (27 countries): Limited corruption; 40-59 (41 countries): Some corruption; 20-39 (80 countries): Highly corrupt; 0-19 (15 countries): Extremely corrupt

²³ "Denmark." Corruption by Country. Accessed February 8, 2019. <https://knowledgehub.transparency.org/helpdesk/denmark-overview-of-corruption-and-anti-corruption>

²⁴ "Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2017 Denmark." U.S Department of State. January 1, 2013. Accessed November 23, 2014.

<http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/hrrpt/humanrightsreport/#wrapper>.

²⁵ The Peoples under Threat assessment by Minority Rights Group International highlights countries most at risk of genocide and mass killing. The ranking is created by compiling data on the known antecedents to genocide or mass political killing. Accessed Feb. 8, 2019 <http://peoplesunderthreat.org/>.

²⁶ "Denmark." Peoples under Threat, Minority Rights Group International. 2017, or most recent data. Accessed Feb. 8, 2019. <http://peoplesunderthreat.org/>.

²⁷ This metric is based on the World Economic Forum's Gender Gap Index. 0.00 denotes inequality between the sexes, and 1.00 denotes fully equality between the sexes. This index looks at four subdomains: economic participation and opportunity; educational attainment; health and survival; and political empowerment. Each country is given a percentage score; the higher the percentage, the better the protections. The CJPME Foundation classed the percentages as follows: 80-100% (5 countries): Almost equal rights; 70-79% (60 countries): Somewhat unequal rights; 0-69% (77 countries): Very unequal rights

²⁸ "Denmark." World Economic Forum. January 1, 2018. Accessed February 8, 2019. http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_GGGR_2018.pdf

²⁹ This metric is based on the KidsRights Index Overall Score. This index has five subdomains: life expectancy and maternal mortality; health; education; protection; and child rights environment. Each country is given a percentage score; the higher the percentage, the better the protections. KidsRights classes the countries according to these percentages, and the CJPME Foundation has given each class a term as follows: 70-100% (77 countries): Protected; 60-70% (29 countries): Somewhat protected; 45-50% (33 countries): Slightly vulnerable; 30-45% (12 countries): Highly vulnerable; Lower than 30% (11 countries): Extremely vulnerable

³⁰ "The KidsRights Index: Overall Ranking." The KidsRights Index. Accessed February 8, 2019. <http://www.kidsrightsindex.org/>

³¹ "Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2017 Denmark." U.S Department of State. Accessed February 8, 2019.

<http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/hrrpt/humanrightsreport/#wrapper>.

³² Ibid. U.S Department of State.

³³ "ILGA World Map." International Lesbian Gay and Intersex Association. Accessed February 8, 2019. <http://ilga.org/>. See also Ibid. U.S Department of State.

³⁴ ILGA, the International, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association, was founded in 1978 on the principle of highlighting state sponsored homophobia where it exists around the world. ILGA annually publishes a map with an accompanying report on sexual and gender based harassment, which focuses on both the legal and non-legal acts of state sponsored discrimination.

³⁵ "Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2017 Denmark." U.S Department of State. Accessed February 8, 2019.

<http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/hrrpt/humanrightsreport/#wrapper>.

³⁶ Ibid. U.S Department of State.

³⁷ Ibid. U.S Department of State.

³⁸ Ibid. U.S Department of State. See also a well-done Wikipedia comparison of wage, income and work week metrics across countries at

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_minimum_wages_by_country

³⁹ "Denmark Unemployment Trends" Trading Economics. Accessed February 8, 2019. <https://tradingeconomics.com/denmark/unemployment-rate>