



# Report/Perspective and Action Plan for gender equality

2022  
An abbreviated version



**Transportministeriet**



# Preface

Two steps forward, and one step back. In recent years, we have seen an increased pushback on hard-fought progress for gender equality around the world. The pushback ranges from the right to abortion and women's right to decide own over their bodies, to the fundamental rights of LGBT+ persons.

It is an eye opener for all of us, and underlines the importance of Denmark standing firmly for our values. We must defend the rights of women and girls. We must insist that all persons have equal opportunities to be who they are, and to love whom they want – regardless of where in the world they live.

For the Danish Government, gender equality is about making a concrete difference in the everyday lives of people. This requires that we work towards structural changes of our society. This is only possible through a widespread commitment throughout the Government and in close collaboration with the parties in parliament, the social partners, and civil society organizations.

The Government has taken important steps towards realising our political goals for gender equality.

The new consent-based rape provision in the Criminal Code is ground-breaking for gender equality in Denmark. We have strengthened the support and services for both victims and perpetrators of violence, for instance, through improving access to psychological care. Far too many people, primarily women, live in fear of their partners. Violence cannot in any form be accepted.

We have, together with the social partners and a broad majority of the Parliament, reached an agreement on the implementation of the EU directive on parental leave. Starting on the 2nd of August 2022, parental leave will be shared more equally between fathers and mothers. This will be of great benefit to both fathers, mothers, and not the least children. Furthermore, it will be a driving force towards gender equality in families and in the labour market.

The Government is concerned that the Danish labour market continues to be very gender-segregated. This is seen across many industries, sectors, and in relation to the recruitment of management. These inequalities lead to an inflexible labour market where we do not make use of all available skills and competences. Furthermore, this can explain a part of the persistent pay gap between men and women.

There is no single and simple solution to the gender-segregated labour market. This means that we must take action in a broad range of areas, which is what

the Government aims to do. We have already implemented a parental leave scheme for the self-employed, established a committee on wage structures, and proposed new legislation to support more women in management. Furthermore, we will work towards limiting a persons gender being the determining factor when choosing their education.

Through a new whistle-blower law, a strengthened hotline, and labour inspection, the Government has taken some important steps towards combatting sexual harassment. However, we are still far from reaching our goals. We will, in cooperation with the social partners, further strengthen these efforts through a new tripartite agreement on sexual harassment in the workplace. It is essential that we promote the necessary changes in workplace cultures. It is never all right to use positions of power to create a condescending, oppressing and sexist culture.

It is, sadly, not only abroad that we see violations of girls and women's most basic rights. We also experience this at home. Forces in some immigrant and religious communities limit the freedom of girls and women.

The position of the Government is clear. As a society, we must send a clear message and insist that our values apply to everyone in Denmark. The Government has therefore established a commission to strengthen the freedom and rights of immigrant girls and women.

The Government also intends to introduce a 37-hour work duty for, among others, many of the immigrant women who, today, are outside the labour market. They need to become a part of the Danish labour market and society. This will strengthen their possibility for employment and for achieving the freedom and independence that follows from making one's own money.

Much progress has been made towards achieving gender equality in Denmark since this government was formed. I am very proud of this. And we will continue this work. Everyone should be able to enjoy their rights and freedom and contribute to our society.

Happy reading,

Trine Bramsen

Minister for Gender Equality

# Background and vision for the gender equality strategy in Denmark

Gender equality is a prerequisite for democracy, prosperity, welfare, and social coherency, and is fundamental for the individual's opportunities for development. Gender equality is Goal 5 of the UN's 17 global goals for sustainable development. At the same time, it has to be mainstreamed into all the other Sustainable Development Goals. The SDGs form the framework for the Danish efforts towards gender equality in both national and international perspectives.

In the last 15 years, Denmark has ranked second in the EU's Gender Equality Index on national progress towards full gender equality. Nevertheless, structural and cultural barriers still prevail limiting women and men's opportunities in our society. We need long-term and structural changes to combat these barriers. This takes time, and will require a persistent and broad effort.

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

In order to fulfil 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:

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 freedom to live the life they want.

### Equal opportunities in education, work, and in the family

- Promote equal pay and equal opportunities in education and employment
- More leave and equal opportunities for fathers
- Promote gender mainstreaming in public authorities

### Freedom and equal rights for all

- Promote gender equality among immigrants and refugees
- Combat gender-based violence, and abuse
- Combat human trafficking

### Security, well-being, and equal opportunities for LGBT+ persons

- Ensure rights
- Increase well-being and equal opportunities

### Global gender equality efforts

- Promote women and girls' rights and opportunities globally
- Strong Danish involvement in international gender equality cooperation

## Equal opportunities in education, work, and in the family

In Denmark, all women, men, girls, and boys should have equal opportunities for self-realization. This is true in terms of education, work life, and in the family. Gender stereotypes must never limit the individual's opportunities or inhibit a flexible labour market.

### Promoting equal pay and equal opportunities in education and employment

The Government is concerned that the Danish labour market continues to be very gender-segregated. Women typically work in the public sector, while men work in the private sector. More men than women occupy positions of management and choose to become entrepreneurs. Women and men are to a large degree segregated into, what can traditionally be perceived as, female and male sectors.

This segregation starts at an early age. In general, girls do better in school than boys. More boys than girls choose to attend a vocational education. Women are generally underrepresented in the areas of natural sciences, technology, engineering, and mathematics. Conversely, men are underrepresented in the humanities, care work, health, and pedagogy.

The segregation of the educational sector and the labour market constitutes a serious problem for society since it leaves us with an inflexible labour market. It can be difficult to find qualified labour in both the private and public sector, when it is only possible to recruit from half the population. This is the case within the health and childcare sectors, where there is a need for nurses and pedagogues. Likewise, we see a lack in qualified labour within the IT and technical sectors. On this backdrop, we risk deteriorating the public services and stunting economic growth.

At the same time, gender segregation in the labour market contribute to the disparities in wages and pensions that persist between women and men. This can limit the individual in taking advantage of their possibilities and pursuing their interests. Furthermore, more women than men experience unsafe education and work environments. During their education and in the work place, women are more likely to be subjected to sexual harassment than men. This is especially the case for women who are young, low paid, in internships, or precariously employed.

There is a continued need to promote gender balance in education and in the labour market, to pursue equal pay between women and men, and to reduce sexual harassment.

### More leave and equal opportunities for fathers

Many fathers would have liked to have taken a longer parental leave than they did. However, the development towards equal sharing of parental leave is progressing slowly. It is still primarily women, who stay home on the child's first sick day, and women who perform the majority of the housekeeping.

In the last five years, men have on average taken one more day of leave per year. Meanwhile, there is a large geographical disparity in who takes paternity leave. Fathers in Copenhagen take the longest leave, while fathers in West- and South Jutland take the shortest leave. In addition, it is primarily higher educated men who take leave.

Studies suggest that there is a long range of positive effects of fathers taking paternal leave and getting involved in their child's life. Early engagement benefits the child's development and well-being. It improves the father's health and relationship with the child. It reduces conflicts and the risk of separation in the family. In the case of divorce, it puts the father in a better position for achieving custody of and spending time with his child. Furthermore, studies suggest that sharing leave leads to more equality in the home.

We need to create better opportunities for men to use the parental leave schemes and increase equality in the families.

## Promoting the gender equality work of public authorities

In Denmark, we have a strong welfare system, which has a large impact on the citizens and employs a large amount of people. Public institutions therefore play a crucial role in promoting gender equality in providing public services and in providing a place of employment.

In order to promote public services, we must look at the differences in the behaviours and needs of women and men. For instance, some men are more at risk and live their lives in the margins of society. This is the case within areas such as homelessness and substance abuse. Conversely, women are more vulnerable towards developing poor psychological health.

The public sector can also contribute to alleviating the gender-segregated labour market. Women make up the majority of employees in the public sector, while they remain underrepresented in the managerial positions. Furthermore, women are overrepresented within the health care and educational sectors, while men are overrepresented within the Danish defence and police forces.

Public authorities need to continue promoting gender equality in the employment of public servants, and public authorities need to gender mainstream key public services.

## The Government will initiate the following activities: a shortened version

- Expert group on the significance of gender for learning and development in day care, public schools, and youth education
- National efforts in digital education of children and young people
- The establishment of a council on the well-being of children and young people
- Expert group on gender balance in higher education
- Promoting women in academia
- Maritime education for all
- Bill on gender equality in conscription
- Promoting women in management and on boards
- Promoting female entrepreneurs
- The committee on wage structure
- Implementation of the pay transparency directive in the European Union
- 2022 report on equal pay
- Tripartite discussions with the social partners on combatting sexual harassment in the work place
- The Alliance against Sexual Harassment
- Prevention of sexual harassment in the workplace
- Mapping the extent of unwanted sexual attention in the Danish workforce and in the Nordic countries
- Efforts against sexual harassment and sexism in the Danish Armed Forces and the Emergency Management Agency
- Equal sharing of parental leave
- Better rights for parents on leave, and the right to care for sick relatives
- Gender equality in the access to additional students' grants in connection with birth or adoption
- Campaign towards retaining vocationally trained women in the Armed Forces
- Focus on diversity in admission and teaching in The Danish Film School
- Studies of gender differences in academia and the consequences of divorce
- Diversity and inclusion at the Royal Theater
- Focus on women in the Royal Danish Navy
- Efforts against loneliness and loss of functions in elderly men
- Gender in disease surveillance, epidemiological research, and analyses of vaccination adherence

The full Danish version of the report is available on the Ministry of Transport's website, [trm.dk](http://trm.dk).

# Freedom and equal rights for all

In Denmark, gender equality must extend to everyone regardless whether they are girls or boys, women or men. Violence, abuse, and social control should not limit the individual's opportunities and freedom to live the life they desire.

## Promoting equality amongst immigrants and refugees

Gender equality is a fundamental right in Denmark and applies to everyone regardless, if they just arrived in the country, or have lived here for a longer time, and regardless of their cultural or religious background or traditions.

We have seen a positive trend towards more women of ethnic minority descent obtaining an education. However, we also experience a drop in women's employment and education rates when they marry a partner of non-Western descent. Too many ethnic minority women are out of work and on passive employment benefits. Especially immigrant women from the Middle East and North Africa have high rates of long-term unemployment.

This means they do not interact with the Danish society, norms, and values, and that they are not making their own money and achieving the freedom that this brings. Negative social control and antiquated gender norms can prevent people from participating in society and lead the lives that they want to. Many young people, and especially women, of minority ethnic descent experience that they cannot freely choose their friends, partner, or spouse. This can in extreme cases lead to honour related conflicts where the young person needs help to get away from their family.

All of society must speak out against negative social control, and we must insist that everyone should contribute to the labour market and that equality applies to everyone in Denmark.

## Combat gender-based violence, and abuse

Violence and abuse is completely unacceptable in Denmark. It has major consequences for both the individual and society. Both women and men are subjected to violence from their partner, but women are disproportionately affected by partner violence, sexual assault, and stalking.

Women are more exposed to both physical and psychological violence from their partner. They are furthermore more likely to be subjected to repeated life-threatening violence such as attempted suffocation or violence with weapons. On average,

one woman in Denmark is killed by her partner or ex-partner every month. Four times as many women as men are victims of partner homicide.

Some women and men flee this violence and seek refuge at a shelter. More than half of the women at the shelters have been exposed to violence for more than 3 years. About half of the women have children with the perpetrators. The number of women and children in the shelters has barely changed in the last 30 years. However, we are also seeing a positive development in recent years wherein increasingly more women choose not to return to their violent partner after a stay at a shelter.

There is a need to continuously strengthen the efforts for preventing partner violence and combatting various forms of gender-based violence.

## Combat human trafficking

Human trafficking is a global problem. Cynical culprits exploit people in vulnerable positions and violate their fundamental rights.

Human trafficking takes place in many different sectors and industries. For example, women are trafficked for prostitution, many men are forced into dangerous and exploitative labour, while minors are trafficked for crime. Women, who are trafficked for prostitution, continue to make up the largest group of the victims of human trafficking in Denmark. Almost three quarters of the total number of victims are women. They mainly come from Nigeria and Thailand. Human trafficking is a serious violation of the individual's human dignity and their right to decide over their own body and life. This is true regardless of how the trafficking takes place.

It requires a comprehensive focus on the entire spectrum, if we are to prevent trafficking and help the victims who suffer from it.

There is a need to strengthen the efforts towards people who are victims of human trafficking. This means prosecuting the traffickers and preventing people in Denmark from living and working in unacceptable conditions.



## The Government will initiate the following activities: a shortened version

- The Commission on the Forgotten Struggle for Women's Rights
- New requirements for dealing with negative social control and efforts for getting more immigrant women in employment
- Support for minority ethnic women exposed to negative social control and violence
- Schools focusing on teaching rights to children with minority background in vulnerable housing areas
- Early intervention for victims of violence and perpetrators of partner violence
- Strengthened help for perpetrators and families that fall victims of violence
- Psychological support for men exposed to violence in intimate relationships
- Studies of the extent of violence and violence in intimate relationships
- Strengthened support for victims of stalking
- New action plan to combat human trafficking
- Strengthened efforts against human trafficking and human trafficking
- Focus on human trafficking through the use of pro forma marriages
- Prevention of prostitution-like relationships among young people
- Grant to the Women's Council Denmark

The full Danish version of the report is available on the Ministry of Transport's website, [trm.dk](http://trm.dk).

# Security, well-being, and equal opportunities for LGBT+ persons

In Denmark, everyone must have equal rights and opportunities regardless of their gender, sexual orientation, and gender identity. Everyone is entitled to being who they are, without having to fear prejudice, homophobia, or transphobia.

## Ensure rights

These years, the rights of lesbians, gays, bisexuals and transgender persons are under pressure. In an international perspective, Denmark therefore remains adamant that the right to be who you are, and love, who you want, should never be disregarded or moderated by cultural or religious concerns.

However, LGBT+ persons in Denmark also experience that they cannot be who they are. Some are subject to violence because they are homosexual or transgender. Hate crimes leave physical and mental scars on the individual, but can also cause fear and insecurity among other homosexual and transgender persons.

Over the past ten years, the number of rainbow families has doubled and the typical rainbow family has become larger. Many rainbow families consists of up to four parents.

There is a need for continued action in combatting violence, discrimination and harassment against LGBT+ persons both internationally and nationally. Furthermore, we need to take into account the unique conditions that exist when LGBT+ persons form families.

## Increasing well-being and equal opportunities

Although Denmark generally embrace diversity, too many LGBT+ persons have a low level of well-being. Particularly transgender persons are vulnerable. Many experience that they cannot be open about their sexual orientation or gender identity.

This is true among young people, where a survey shows that school students with an LGBTQ+ identity experience poor well-being compared to other students. Amongst other things, it relates to loneliness, self-harm, bullying, homophobic and transphobic insults, and lack security. Especially young people with a minority ethnic background are at risk of being subjected to negative social control and honour-related conflict from their family.

We will continue working towards a culture without homophobia and transphobia, where the individual can be themselves, whether it be in the workplace, in education, sports, or in society at large.

## The Government will initiate the following activities: a shortened version

- Strengthen efforts against hate crimes
- Allowing parental leave to be shared between up to four parents
- Improved family rights for LGBT+ persons
- Obtaining a new social security number for transgender persons
- Establishment of a crisis centre for LGBT+ persons with ethnic minority background
- New LGBT+ action plan
- Funding of LGBT+ organizations
- New teaching material on LGBT+ students for primary schools and youth education
- Strengthened guidance and advice on family and health law
- Better health professional support concerning gender identity issues
- Increased well-being for LGBT+ persons in sports associations
- Study of the living conditions of LGBT+ persons
- Assessment of the possibility of a ban on conversion therapy for minors
- Study of the living conditions and quality of life for LGBT+ persons in the Nordic countries with an emphasis on the elderly

The full Danish version of the report is available on the Ministry of Transport's website, [trm.dk](http://trm.dk).

## Global gender equality efforts

Denmark has a long and strong tradition of fighting for women and girls' rights and equal opportunities globally. These efforts are a key priority in the development cooperation and in the international forums where Denmark actively works to raise the bar globally.

### Promoting women and girls' rights and opportunities globally

COVID-19 has increased inequalities between women and men in many parts of the world. This is especially the case in the poorest countries where women have been disproportionately affected by the pandemic. They have experienced serious consequences in relation to gender-based violence, maternal mortality, child marriages, female genital mutilation, and girls' education.

As one of the few countries in the past 40 years, Denmark has consistently met the UN target to spend a minimum of 0.7 percent of GDP in official development assistance. In times of crisis as these, there is a need for a continued strong Danish commitment throughout the development cooperation and through humanitarian efforts to support women and girls.

Gender equality and the rights of women and girls is part of the UN's 17 Sustainable Development Goals. It also constitutes a crosscutting priority in the Danish development cooperation, where the Danish development assistance functions as a lever for the global work in promoting equality and the rights of women and girls.

### Strong Danish involvement in international gender equality cooperation

Denmark continuously contribute to the international cooperation on promoting gender equality and women and girls' rights and opportunities. Recent progress is facing increased resistance from a number of countries and various counter-movements. It has become difficult to make progress on gender equality and in certain areas rights have been rolled back. This pushback can be seen in relation to education, the right to a life free from violence, and applies to free and safe abortion. Women and girls' right to decide over their own bodies, and decide if and when they want children is entirely crucial for the individual.

Denmark will intensify its efforts in promoting gender equality and the rights of women and girls in the relevant international forums such as the Nordic Council of Ministers, the Council of Europe, the EU, and the UN. Denmark must defend and maintain the rights that have been secured over decades through proactive efforts, and continued knowledge sharing in collaboration with like-minded countries.

## The Government will initiate the following activities: a shortened version

- Implementation of UN Security Council Resolutions on Women, Peace and Security
- New development policy strategy
- Danish presidency of the Call to Action on Protection from Gender Based Violence in emergencies
- Danish leadership of the SRHR Action Coalition
- UN's Commission on the Status of Women
- Cooperation on gender equality in the EU
- Conference on gender equality in work and education
- Study of mental well-being among young men in the Nordic countries
- Gender equality co-operation in the Nordic Council of Ministers

The full Danish version of the report is available on the Ministry of Transport's website, [trm.dk](http://trm.dk).