



Women's rights

1.

CEDAW

The WCD (Women's Council in Denmark) strongly regrets the fact that the CEDAW is not incorporated into Danish legislation. The incorporation of CEDAW would be a signal to society in general and women in particular of a strong commitment to women's rights and gender equality.

2.

Unequal representation of women in decision making (CEDAW 7, 11)

In municipalities women only hold 32 % of the seats and only 14 of 98 mayors are women. In top management positions in the private sector and among researchers there are few women.

Recommendation: The Government should actively develop and support methods to change the gender imbalance in political life and at universities. The Government should adopt an act on equal representation of women and men in private sector boards.

3.

Trafficking in women (CEDAW 6)

Within the area of human rights and women trafficked into the sex-industry we would like to emphasise three areas which needs attention and action:

Identification of victims of trafficking.

Current situation: Too many potential victims of trafficking are held back by police and not escorted to a crisis centre while the process of identification is pending.

Recommendation: It is crucial that *all* potential victims of trafficking are treated as victims and not as criminals, which is not the situation for all in Denmark.

Reflection period.

Current situation: To obtain the full length (100 days) of reflection, victims of trafficking have to agree to cooperate on their own voluntary return.

Recommendation: All victims of trafficking *unconditionally* have the right to the full reflection period of 100 days and the services that comes with this – regardless of whether the victim dares/want to return to the country of origin or not.

Compensation to victims of trafficking.

Current situation: The issue of compensation for women victims of trafficking is not dealt with under the current Plan of Action (2007-2010). Only very few and small compensations have been given to victims.

Recommendation: A new Plan of Action has to deal with the issue of compensation, and make sure all relevant actors are familiar with the possibility to claim compensation.

Residence permit.

Current situation: Only very few trafficked women have succeeded in obtaining a residence permit.

Recommendation: It should be possible to receive a residence permit *on grounds of trafficking* in itself.



Prostitution/Demand side.

Current situation: Prostitution is seen as a social problem and no legislation is targeting the demand side of prostitution. Moreover, the Women's Council finds prostitution inconsistent with gender equality and our work towards a society based on equality.

Recommendation: As trafficking in women for prostitution and prostitution can not be separated legislation which prohibit the buying of sexual services should be put in place.

4,

Labour market (CEDAW 11)

Denmark is rated low in rankings of equal pay compared to other European countries, and the gender pay gap is widening. The Act on Equal Pay states that women and men should be paid equally for work of equal value, but the act seems not to be useful in this respect. A main problem is the distribution of parental leave. Mothers hold in average up to 90 % of the leave which affects women's wages and careers negatively.

There is no serious monitoring of the Act on Equal Pay.

There is paid little attention to the working conditions of migrant workers, i.e. women working as au pairs in private homes.

Ethnic minority women are not fully integrated into the labour market.

Recommendation:

The Government should secure that also minor and small companies are obliged to provide gender segregated wage statistics. Develop methods to measure work of equal value. Guarantee both parents the individual right to an equal part of the parental leave. Carry out a mapping of the working conditions of migrant workers in Denmark. Adjust integration programmes to the needs of ethnic minority women.

5.

Violence against women (CEDAW 12)

There is no specific act on gender based violence.

Foreign women who are exposed to violence by their spouse are in a specially vulnerable situation, as they risk losing their residence permission if they choose to leave the violent spouse. They are caught in a choice between violence or expulsion. The recently adapted point system (Act on Aliens) will surely not make it easier for these women to obtain an individual residential permit.

Men's violence against women reflects and strengthens unequal power relations between women and men. While the number of women exposed to partner violence is decreasing, we still see 28.000 women victims of partner violence each year.

It is generally believed that women with disabilities are victims of violence as often as other women. Of 40 shelters for battered women, however, only 8 are accessible. There is a huge imbalance in permanent relationships regarding women with disabilities. The women might be afraid leaving their partner because they depend heavily on practical and personal assistance from the partner.

Recommendations:



The Government should pay more attention to and allocate resources to a permanent primary prevention effort.

Provide foreign women who are exposed to partner violence with a personal residential permit.

Ensure that women with disabilities can get the necessary support, information and accessible refuges included.

The Women's Council in Denmark / Kvinderådet, Nov. 8, 2010