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# RUSSIA AND ITS REGION IN THE BALTIC REGION

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## IMMIGRATION POLICY AND INTEGRATION OF MIGRANTS IN THE KINGDOM OF DENMARK AT THE BEGINNING OF THE XXI CENTURY

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*Denmark upholds high standards of human rights as long as the interests of its citizens are concerned but erects barriers for migrants of a different cultural background who might threaten the security of the national community. The Danish tradition of liberalism, humanism and the welfare state coexists with one of Europe's most restrictive policies towards third-country immigrants. The article traces the evolution of management approaches to developing the immigration policy and integrating foreign cultural migrants in Denmark. It describes the value determinants of these changes. Using the neo-institutional methodology, the authors analyse the evolution of the value determinants of Denmark's immigration policy and look at the national norms and practices of integrating migrants from a different cultural background. A restrictive immigration policy became possible due to a consensus between the main political forces, the left Social Democratic Party and the right Liberal Party Venstre, both willing to keep in check electoral support for the radical right-wing parties (the effect of 'contagion from the right' in Maurice Duverger's terms). The object of Denmark's restrictive integration policy is migrants from a different cultural background (mainly from Muslim countries). The government takes systematic measures to restrict their access to the country. As to migrant integration, the focus has shifted to 'hard' assimilation of civic democratic values, benefits linked to employment, and deportation of migrants who have committed crimes.*

### **Keywords:**

immigration policy, Denmark, integration of migrants, refugees, political parties, securitisation of migration, identity

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According to many authoritative international ratings, the Kingdom of Denmark is a highly developed country, one of the top 10 countries globally in terms of political and socio-economic development. Denmark ranks 5<sup>th</sup> in 2020 in terms of security in the Global Peace Index which includes 23 qualitative and quantitative indicators assessing the attitudes, institutions and structures that contribute to the security of a society. It ranks high in the Gender Inequality Index (Gender Inequality Index) holding the 2<sup>nd</sup> place (2019). In the Freedom House ranking of the countries by people's access to political rights and civil liberties, it is in the 8<sup>th</sup> place (2020), and in the Human Development Index, it is in the 10<sup>th</sup> place (2020)<sup>1</sup>.

Like other developed countries in Europe, Denmark is attractive to immigrants. The share of refugees is constantly increasing. This prosperous country with a population of 5.8 million has been unique in the EU in its restrictive immigration policy towards migrants from other cultures for almost 20 years. Unlike Sweden and some other countries, Denmark did not choose multiculturalism as the basis of its migrant integration policy. Its course toward toughening the policy towards migrants from other cultures from the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century remains unchanged in the politics of both centre-left and centre-right governments. As of July 1, 2021, there were 825 thousand immigrants and their descendants in Denmark (14.1 % of the total population), of which 526.7 thousand come from non-Western countries (9 %), of which 286.7 (4.9 %) come from Muslim countries<sup>2</sup>. Since 2020, migrants from MENAPT countries (the Middle East and North Africa (MENA), Pakistan and Turkey, which includes countries with a predominantly Muslim population — Syria, Kuwait, Libya, Saudi Arabia, Lebanon, Somalia, Iraq, Qatar, Sudan, Bahrain, Djibouti, Jordan, Algeria, United Arab Emirates, Tunisia, Egypt, Morocco, Iran, Yemen, Mauritania and Oman, Afghanistan, Pakistan and Turkey. At the same time, countries with a predominantly non-Muslim population (Israel, Ethiopia, Eritrea) are not in the MENAPT list.

The article aims to compare the evolution of Denmark's managerial approaches to immigration policy and integration of migrants from different cultures, as well as the political determinants of changes in its immigration regulation. The motivation for choosing Denmark is the fact that the country is at the forefront of the pan-European trend to limit the migration of refugees, successfully combining the provision of opportunities for integration with the tightening of immigration control and requirements for migrants of other cultures.

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<sup>1</sup> Global Peace Index 2020, 2021, StatisticsTimes, available at: <http://statisticstimes.com/ranking/global-peace-index.php> (accessed 11.11.2021). Gender Inequality Index, 2021, *Human Development Reports*, available at: <http://hdr.undp.org/en/2020-report/download> (accessed 11.11.2021). *Human Development Reports*, 2021, available at: <http://www.hdr.undp.org/> (accessed 11.11.2021).

<sup>2</sup> *Integrationsbarometeret*, 2021, available at: <https://integrationsbarometer.dk/tal-og-analyzer/INTEGRATION-STATUS-OG-UDVIKLING> (accessed 11.11.2021).

## **Literature review**

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The immigration policy of the Scandinavian countries is the focus of interest of many scientists who consider its various aspects. Their similar climate, culture, politics, labour market and social security systems, and close ties in the historical past, led to the application of a comparative approach [1–3]. Sweden has traditionally been the most liberal country for migrants, allowing cultural diversity [4; 5]. Danish immigration policy since the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, although focused on integration, has become restrictive [6]. Norway has occupied an intermediate position in terms of restrictions in immigration policy [7]. Compared to their studies of Sweden, Russian scientists have paid less attention to the immigration policy of Denmark. However, over the past year, the situation has begun to change [8–12].

The public discourse on immigration issues in Scandinavian countries is very different [7; 13]. The Danish media use the ‘threats’ frame more often when covering migration issues than the Swedish media that usually use the ‘victims’ frame. According to Madsen, the viewpoint of the Danish media has undergone drastic changes. In the 1970s, they saw migrants as a labour force necessary for the developing Danish industry, while from the late 1980s, they more often associated the topic of immigrants with crime, racism and social problems [14]. The migration crisis of 2015 exacerbated this discourse and became the subject of detailed scientific study [15–18].

The methodology is based on neo-institutionalism. This allows studying the evolution of immigration policy as a reaction of institutions to a change in the value bases for making political decisions when the challenges posed by foreign cultural migration have exacerbated the contradictions between international obligations in the field of human rights and the interests of the Danish nation. The authors also apply a constructivist approach to analyze the discourse of migration, as well as comparative, discourse and index approaches.

## **The Genesis of Political and Management Approaches to the Regulation of Migration**

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A labour shortage in Denmark in the 1960s and 1970s led to a boom in labour immigration from Turkey and Pakistan. The compact accommodation of workers with families and refugees from Chile and Southeast Asia, with a significant cultural gap between them and the Danes, launched the processes of ghettoization and the formation of segregated communities, which became the topic of political debate already in the 1980s. In the 1987 elections, the major political parties called for stopping the formation of such compact territorial concentrations of

immigrants. In the mid-1990s, a wave of refugees from the territory of the former Yugoslavia came. By that time, the leading political forces and society had realized that migrants from other cultures required not only the labour market adaptation and the language acquisition but also cultural and social integration. Denmark became one of the first EU countries to adopt a law on the integration of migrants.

The main characteristic of Danish immigration legislation is a differentiated approach, i.e. preferences for migrants of similar cultures and specific barriers for migrants from other cultures. According to Danish statistics, an immigrant is a person who has acquired citizenship (excluding those who have at least one Danish citizen parent born in Denmark). The statistics uses the concepts of “immigrant” and “descendant of an immigrant”, classifying them into migrants from Western and non-Western countries. The Aliens Act<sup>3</sup> states that citizens of Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden can enter Denmark without any residence or work permit. Standard rules apply to citizens of EU and Schengen countries.

In its first edition in 1983, the Danish Aliens Act was one of the most liberal laws on aliens in Europe in terms of the legal status of asylum seekers. “De facto” refugees (not included in the Geneva Convention of 1951) received the right to asylum (§ 7) and the right to family reunification (§ 9). This, as expected, led to an increase in the influx of humanitarian migrants in the 1990s. Later, there was a tightening of legislation with the grounds for family reunification limited and the number and size of benefits reduced.

Debates around the issues of migrant integration, refugee acceptance and citizenship were the main topics of the election campaigns in 1998, 2001 and 2005. Adaptation and integration of migrants are now an integral part of the national political agenda. Table 1 shows statistics on asylum seekers and persons granted refugee status.

Table 1

**Number of asylum seekers and persons granted refugee status in Denmark, 2011 – 2020 (pers.)**

Years	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Applied	3.806	6.184	7.557	14.792	21.316	5.717	3.500	3.559	2.716	1.015
Granted	2.249	2.583	3.889	6.104	10.849	7.493	2.750	1.652	1.783	601

Source: International Migration Denmark: Report to OECD, The Ministry of Immigration and Integration Denmark 2017–2020 (<https://uim.dk/publikationer/international-migration-denmark-2020>).

<sup>3</sup> Udlændingeloven, nr. 1022 af 2. oktober 2019, 2019, *Retsinformation*, available at: <https://www.retsinformation.dk/eli/lta/2020/1513> (accessed 11.11.2021).

Significant milestones in the institutionalization of Danish immigration policy occurred in 1999 (the law on the integration of migrants from different cultures came into force) and 2001 (the Ministry for Refugees, Immigrants and Integration was created — Ministeriet for flygtninge, indvandrere og integration). Until 2001, immigration and integration policy was the responsibility of eight ministries. Each of them had its area of responsibility. The Ministry of the Interior was responsible for integration, the Ministry of Justice for naturalization, the Ministry of Education for teaching Danish, the Ministry of Finance for engaging employers in the integration of migrants, the Ministry of Housing and Cities for segregation and resettlement, the Ministry of Social Affairs for social assistance to immigrants and refugees, the Ministry of Labour for adaptation for the labour market, and the Ministry of Business for immigrant business [19, p. 2]. Since 2001, the integration of migrants has become an independent area of immigration policy with its legislation, goals and objects of regulation.

The law on integration adopted by the government of the Social Democrats<sup>4</sup> states that it aims at the social adaptation of refugees and migrants through family reunification and does not apply to migrants from Scandinavian countries and the EU. According to it, the integration policy should promote the participation of migrants in society on an equal basis with citizens, the self-sufficiency of migrants, and the acceptance of the culture of Danish society. The integration of migrants provides for language training, vocational training for participation in the labour market, and benefits to migrants who cannot provide for themselves. Municipalities play an important role here. Once a refugee acquires a residence permit, the immigration service directs them to one of the municipalities, in contrast to Sweden, where the refugee has freedom of choice [20, p. 2563]. From this point on, the responsibility to develop and implement their integration programs passes to the municipalities. At the municipal level, there were Integration Councils, which included representatives of migrant associations, created.

The restrictive tendencies in legislation intensified in 1998 with the arrival of the far-right Danish People's Party (DNP) in the Folketing. They demanded a stricter immigration policy with a clear anti-Muslim bias. In 2001, an amendment to the Aliens Act abolished "de facto" refugee status introducing the "status of protection", which meant that individuals were not granted asylum unless it was proven that their lives were in danger in their home country. The length of stay in the country for foreigners to obtain an indefinite residence permit was increased from three to seven years.

According to the Danish researcher Lagaard, since 2001, anti-multiculturalism has de facto become the dominant ideology in Denmark [21, p. 172]. The reason is the debate around the "politics of values" initiated by the prime minister of the centre-right government Anders Fogh Rasmussen and focusing on immi-

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<sup>4</sup> Lov om integration af udlændinge i Danmark (integrationslov), 1998, *Retsinformation*, available at: <https://www.retsinformation.dk/eli/lta/1998/474> (accessed 11.11.2021).

gration and multiculturalism. The government advocated restrictive (“hard and fair”) immigration laws and condemnation of multiculturalism. Muslims have been at the centre of political discourse as a minority that is most difficult to integrate into Danish society. Muslim practices were often perceived as a cultural barrier to successful integration. Influenced by the DNP, the centre-right government focused on issues of national identity, including migrants’ knowledge of Danish history. In 2006, a guide to teaching history in elementary schools was introduced, followed by the introduction of a Danish citizenship test based on knowledge of Danish history in 2007. In 2009, the government supplemented the citizenship test with questions testing the knowledge of democracy.

Immigration laws were once again tightened in 2010, when the NPD demanded the abolition of voting rights for non-citizens, except those from the Scandinavian countries. In 1981, Denmark was one of the first countries in Europe to grant resident foreigners the right to participate in municipal and regional elections. In 2010, the minimum residence in the country for that increased from three to four years (only Danish citizens could participate in elections to the Folketing).

The next stage in the evolution of immigration policy is associated with the centre-left government coming to power in 2011, as it decentralized the integration policy at the national level. The Ministry of Refugees, Immigrants and Integration was abolished, with its functions divided between the Ministry of Justice (immigration control, asylum and naturalization), the Ministry of Employment (integration of migrants and refugees), the Ministry of Children and Education (integration of children and youth) and Ministry of Social Affairs and Integration (leadership of the general integration policy). The need for decentralization was explained by the desire to exclude from management practice the dichotomy in relation to migrants based on the “we-them” principle, making the policy of migrant integration a part of the national social policy. The reform critics, on the contrary, saw shortcomings in the absence of a single body responsible for the final result of integration. The former three-year residency requirement for foreigners to participate in elections was also reinstated.

The 2013 amendment to the Integration Law required municipalities to invite all newly arrived refugees to sign a binding integration agreement and a declaration of integration and active citizenship. The integration agreement states the goals and stages of integration, along with tools and measures to achieve the goals. Municipalities must ensure that the agreement is respected and impose sanctions if it is violated (§ 19, 20). The sanctions, in particular, include restrictions on acquiring a permanent resident status and access to citizenship. In the declaration of integration and active citizenship, refugees must confirm their readiness to comply with Danish law, respect democratic principles, learn Danish, recognize gender equality, respect freedom of conscience and freedom



of speech, and refrain from terrorism. The integration agreement and the declaration of integration and active citizenship apply to refugees and members of their families and not to labour migrants and overseas students.

Thus, as a result of over 30 years of evolution of political and managerial approaches in immigration policy in Denmark migrants from non-Western countries have become the object of restrictive regulation, and priorities have shifted to limiting their influx into the country and integrating those who have already arrived. Currently, Danish law considers migrants seeking asylum to be exclusively temporary. The process of integration has acquired a reciprocal character, i.e. it suggests the efforts of both migrants and the host society, the self-sufficiency of migrants through the labour market and the assimilation of civic values by them through participation in the affairs of local communities at the municipal level.

### **Reaction to the migration crisis**

The migration crisis of 2015 was driven by a sharp increase in the influx of asylum seekers. Among the Scandinavian countries, the most significant influx of migrants was registered in Sweden (156 thousand people). In Norway and Denmark it was much lower (30 thousand and 21 thousand, respectively). Proportionately, Denmark also looks less affected by the influx of asylum seekers: 43 % compared to 2014 (3679 people per million population), Sweden — 108 % (16016 people per million population) and Norway — 179 % (5898 people per million population)<sup>5</sup>. Experts explain these values by the fact that even before the crisis, Denmark had the image of a country with a restrictive immigration policy, which scared away potential migrants. However, Denmark further tightened its measures against asylum seekers during the crisis. Sweden and Norway followed it in late 2015 — early 2016 by strengthening border controls and adopting legislative restrictions due to the overload on national social services.

Unlike other Scandinavian countries, Denmark did not have to change its immigration laws radically. Even against this background, the new changes in asylum laws were harsh. This drew criticism from the EU leadership, especially regarding the January 2016 amendment to the Aliens Act (bill no. 87<sup>6</sup>) that gave the police the right to confiscate the property of asylum seekers to cover the costs of their stay in Denmark. Under the amendment, asylum seekers entering the country with assets worth more than 10,000 crowns (about \$1,450) must help finance their stay in asylum centres and cover medical expenses. The period of access to family reunification of refugees increased from 1 year to 3 years, and for obtaining an indefinite residence permit to 6 years for all immigrants. Moreover,

<sup>5</sup> Eurostat, 2021, available at: <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/2995521/7203832/3-04032016-AP-EN.pdf/> (accessed 11.11.2021).

<sup>6</sup> L 87 Forslag til lov om ændring af udlændingeloven, 2015, *Forside / Folketinget*, available at: <https://www.ft.dk/samling/20151/lovforslag/L87/index.htm> (accessed 11.11.2021).



the parliament adopted these amendments by an overwhelming majority (81/27), which indicated a strong consensus between the main political parties over the goals and methods of immigration policy. Despite criticism from the UNHCR and the EU leadership over alleged violation of international legal norms, liberalization in immigration law did not follow. Denmark was not included in the Common European Asylum System (CEAS) created by the EU in 1999 to develop common standards and rules for the treatment of asylum seekers.

The Danish government further restricted access to social benefits for newly arrived migrants. A change in September 2015 introduced a new integration allowance (*integrationsydelse*), replacing social assistance for people who have been out of the country for at least seven of the past eight years. Payments to other recipients would reduce if the total amount of benefits (social assistance plus housing and child benefits) exceeded the amount determined by the government. To be entitled to integration allowance or social assistance such migrants had to be refugees or persons who arrived through family reunification and had to work at least 225 hours a year (25 days, including Sundays, a month). Families of migrants and refugees with children now had an income below 50 % of the average national income [22]. There was a guide on integration education (*integrationsuddannelsesydselsen*, IGU) introduced. It is a two-year program for newly arrived refugees and those reunited with their families. They are assigned to municipalities where their qualifications correspond to the demand in the labour market and where they study Danish. In 2020, 37 % of refugees aged 21–64 and their reunited family members with three years of residence in Denmark had a paid job<sup>7</sup>. The most serious problem in the labour participation of migrants in the workforce is the low demand for migrant labour (as of May 2020, only 56 % of male migrants and 49 % of female migrants of non-Western origin were employed<sup>8</sup>).

In 2018, the centre-right government banned the wearing of the veil. The law obliges migrants living in the ghetto to send their children to civic education. From January 2019, the naturalization ceremony must be accompanied by a handshake for new citizens, regardless of gender. According to experts, the innovation is aimed at conservative Muslims.

In February 2019, the Danish parliament passed a bill (L 140<sup>9</sup>) shifting the focus from integration to repatriation, including for those without a permanent residence status, and refugees under the UN quota. In 2019, the Danish government announced the Lindholm Island project to accommodate rejected asylum seekers who were convicted of crimes and served their sentences but cannot be deported for various reasons.

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<sup>7</sup> Hvor mange er i arbejde? 2021, *Det nationale integrationsbarometer — Integrationsbarometer*, available at: <https://integrationsbarometer.dk/aktuelt/7> (accessed 11.11.2021).

<sup>8</sup> Beskæftigelse, 2021, *Det nationale integrationsbarometer — Integrationsbarometer*, available at: <https://integrationsbarometer.dk/tal-og-analyser/beskaeftigelse> (accessed 11.11.2021).

<sup>9</sup> L 140, 2021, *Forside / Folketinget*, available at: <https://www.ft.dk/samling/20181/lov-forslag/1140/index.htm> (accessed 11.11.2021).

The International Migrant Integration Index ( MIPEX)<sup>10</sup> in 2020 ranked Denmark (48 points, 32<sup>nd</sup> place) in the third group of countries (four in total) providing temporary integration<sup>11</sup>. Immigrants in these countries enjoy fundamental rights and opportunities but face barriers to a long-term residence because they are not considered potential citizens. At the same time, Sweden (86 points) is in the top 5 countries whose governments perceive migrants as potential citizens. Norway is in 14<sup>th</sup> place (69 points).

### **Political discourse around immigration**

Researchers believe that the analysis of the relationship between the discourse of migration problems and the development of immigration policy helps to understand changes in the regulation of migrant integration. The reaction to the refugee crisis in the Scandinavian countries took the path of tightening the requirements for asylum seekers, but these decisions were based on differing motivations of political forces. Sweden and Norway initially proceeded from humanitarian obligations and a readiness to accept refugees. According to Hagelund from the University of Oslo, unlike the political establishment of other Scandinavian countries, Denmark did not need to legitimize a stricter immigration policy based on the communicative discourse of the public, since it already had significant public support [23]. A study of media discourse in the Scandinavian press conducted by scientists from the SCANPUB project during the immigration crisis of 2015–2016 showed strong fluctuations in attitudes towards asylum seekers. The media perceived the situation with refugees in the Scandinavian countries during the crisis first as a humanitarian tragedy, then as a kind of “invasion” [24, p. 352].

In 2017, the European Public Opinion Service Eurobarometer conducted a unique study on the attitudes of Europeans towards the integration of immigrants from non-Western countries<sup>12</sup>. The proportion of those who agree that the integration of immigrants is successful at the national and local levels in Denmark (70 %) is higher than in Sweden (46 %) and the EU (54 %). At the same time, most Danes surveyed (73 %) believe that immigrants exacerbate the problem of crime (Swedes — 61 %; EU residents — 55 %). At the same time, 39 % of Europeans, 23 % of Danes and only 12 % of Swedes agree that immigrants take away jobs from citizens. The respondents in all EU countries (62 %) consider it essential for the integration that immigrants participate in the social security system by paying taxes, while the share of the Scandinavian respondents agreeing

<sup>10</sup> MIPEX 2020, *Migrant Integration Policy Index*, available at: <https://www.mipex.eu/key-findings> (accessed 11.11.2021).

<sup>11</sup> “Temporary Integration” 2021, *Migrant Integration Policy Index*, available at: <https://www.mipex.eu/denmark> (accessed 11.11.2021).

<sup>12</sup> Special Eurobarometer 469. Integration of immigrants in the European Union. Fieldwork October 2017, 2018, 271 p., *European Migration Law*, available at: <http://www.europeanmigrationlaw.eu/documents/EuroBarometer-IntegrationOfMigrantsintheEU.pdf> (accessed 11.11.2021).

with this is noticeably higher: Danes — 81 % and Swedes — 78 %. It is noteworthy that among the respondents from 28 EU countries, 50 % from Denmark and 58 % from Sweden believe that the government is making insufficient efforts to integrate migrants. Denmark also leads among the EU countries whose citizens believe that the media portray migrants in a negative light (59 % of Danes, 36 % of Europeans).

Discussion of attacks by migrant men on women in Cologne (on New Year's Eve 2016) and waves of terrorist attacks in Europe catalyzed the process of securitization of foreign cultural migration. Danish political discourse associates immigration with crime and security. The former Minister of Immigration and Integration of Denmark Stoyberg (2015–2019), pointed to a significant excess of the proportion of migrants and their descendants from non-Western countries among convicted criminals (255 % compared to native Danes)<sup>13</sup>. She also noted the social danger of the crimes committed (street shootings, violent crimes committed by gangs). For instance, the Black Army, a group of Somali immigrants, forced the homeless in Fallsomos to give cash benefits and sell drugs intimidating them by beatings, cutting off fingers, and killings, including government officials. According to Stoyberg, gangs of immigrants from African countries are a destabilizing factor due to their unprecedented readiness for violence and demonstrative unwillingness to integrate. Resocialization programs do not work for them; the only way out is their deportation.

The negative discourse around migrants from non-Western (primarily Muslim) countries is politically articulated and influences decision-making. In 2019, a large-scale statistical study revealed a significant excess of the national crime index (taken as 100) by second-generation immigrants from Lebanon (373), Somalia (313), Syria (287), Pakistan (276), Morocco (265), Iraq (229) and Turkey (247)<sup>14</sup>. A significant excess of the national crime index indicates a low integration potential of people from these countries. As already noted, in November 2020, the Danish Ministry of Immigration and Integration introduced a new classification of migrants (ethnic minorities), singling out non-Western migrants origin from North Africa and the Middle East, taking into account a higher crime rate and a lower employment rate<sup>15</sup>.

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<sup>13</sup> Immigrant gangs plague Denmark, and the only solution is deportation: former immigration minister, 2020, *Remix News*, available at: <https://rmx.news/article/commentary/immigrant-gangs-plague-denmark-and-the-only-solutin-is-deportation-former-immigration-minister> (accessed 11.11.2021).

<sup>14</sup> Indvandrere i Danmark 2020, 2020, *Danmarks Statistik*, Udgivet af Danmarks statistik. December 2020, p. 108, available at: <https://www.dst.dk/Site/Dst/Udgivelser/GetPubFile.aspx?id=29447&sid=indv2020> (accessed 11.11.2021).

<sup>15</sup> Denmark: New statistics category for migrants from Muslim countries, 2020, *European Commission*, available at: <https://ec.europa.eu/migrant-integration/news/denmark-new-statistics-category-for-migrants-from-muslim-countries> (accessed 11.11.2021).

## **The Right Parties and the Political Agenda for Immigration**

In the 21 century, immigration control and integration of migrants is a sensitive political issue during election debates. In the 2015 elections, the DPP doubled its share of the vote and became the second largest party in the parliament. By campaigning on an anti-migration agenda, the party has gained support outside the big cities, where economic growth has been slow, and state aid has been cut. After these elections, the DPP provided strong support to the centre-right minority government led by Prime Minister Lars Lokke Rasmussen, although it was not part of the government. For the traditional parties in Denmark, this created the effect of a “latent” conquest of voters: members of the ruling Venstre party (Prime Minister Rasmussen, Minister of Immigration and Integration Stoyberg) influenced the increase in electoral support for their party.

Denmark, like Sweden, confirms the general trend of the growing popularity of right-wing parties in the EU [25, p. 183]. Until the 1980s, right-wing radicals in European countries were stigmatized as marginalized and did not enjoy success in elections. The gradual increase in electoral support from 1 % in the second half of the 1980s to 15.4 % in 2018<sup>16</sup> has caused changes in the electoral preferences of voters in Europe, as they are responding to the erosion of national identity and other consequences of liberal immigration policies. In liberal democracies, there is a mixture of political and ideological positions of parties and movements, which can be explained by the effect of institutional isomorphism [26, p. 36]. In political science, a similar concept is used — the “contagion effect” introduced by Duverger. Modern researchers point to the “contagion effect” arising from the electoral success of right-wing radical parties (far-right contagion) [27, p. 417]. Established parties hijack the political agenda articulated by the leaders of right-wing parties.

The results of the 2019 parliamentary elections were surprising: the DPP was defeated (8.7 % of the vote instead of 21.1 % in 2015). The situation, at first glance, is strange. The central theme of the election campaign was immigration, and it is the main point of the DNP program. However, the beneficiaries were the Social Democratic Party (25.9 %) and the Venstre (23.4 %). The main reasons for the failure of the DPP are the “hijacking of the agenda” of the restrictive immigration policy by the Rasmussen government, leading to the sharp reduction in the influx of refugees. There was also a clear shift to the right of the Social Democrats who had supported anti-immigration laws in the Folketing in the previous four years voting with the government in more than 90 % of cases [28]. Characterizing the results of the 2019 parliamentary elections, Pleavako noted: “...Both the centre-right parties and the DPP, and now the Social Demo-

<sup>16</sup> *Timbro Authoritarian Populism Index 2019*, 2019, available at: <https://populismindex.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/TAP2019C.pdf> (accessed 11.11.2021).

crats, associate the salvation of the welfare state with a restrictive policy towards immigrants and refugees because they are seen as illegal consumers of social benefits” [ 29, p. 45].

On June 3, 2021, the Danish Parliament (Folketing) passed a law allowing the deportation of asylum seekers to countries outside of Europe, ignoring calls from NGOs and the United Nations to repeal the legislation. The bill was introduced by the Social Democratic government led by Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen (70 deputies voted “for” and 24 “against”). “If you apply for asylum in Denmark, you know that you will be sent back to a country outside of Europe, and therefore, we hope that people will stop seeking asylum in Denmark,” said government spokesman Rasmus Stocklund quoted by the Reuters news agency<sup>17</sup>. Asylum cases will be handled in a third country, and the applicant could potentially be granted protection in that country. In May 2021, Denmark signed a migration agreement with Rwanda, leading to speculation that it intends to open a centre there. Human rights groups fear there is now a risk that countries hosting more refugees will also pull out.

Thus, in Denmark, the main political forces have arrived at a consensus over the goals and methods of immigration policy. National security interests take precedence over humanitarian obligations, which manifests in the maximum possible restriction of immigrants’ access to the provisions of the welfare state.

### **Policies on the integration of migrants at the municipal level**

Municipalities are active participants in migrant integration; their policies, especially those of large municipalities, have many innovations. For example, Aarhus, the second-largest city, was the first to start formulating an integration policy (1996), three years earlier than it appeared at the national level. Later the municipality of Aarhus made independent efforts to create an expert and analytical centre, study the British experience, and develop integration programs. The former mayor of Aarhus Simonsen was appointed Minister of the Interior in 1997 and initiated the adoption of the Integration Law [30, p. 328]. The main goal of the integration policy is to ensure social cohesion by achieving equality of rights, duties, and opportunities for participation in the city’s life for representatives of ethnic and cultural minorities. Civic participation is promoted through formal and informal networks, forums for dialogue between the municipality and migrants, meetings and hearings, the participation of immigrants in the development and implementation of integration policies. The integration policy defines goals and outcomes in four target areas: social citizenship, anti-discrimination, education, employment and housing.

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<sup>17</sup> Denmark asylum: Law passed to allow offshore asylum centres, 2021, BBC news, 03.06.2021, available at: <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-57343572> (accessed 11.11.2021).

Another example is the policy of the municipal authorities of Copenhagen towards migrants, which, according to experts, includes the principles of multiculturalism, although, as mentioned above, it was criticized in Denmark. Copenhagen's authorities define two aspects of the integration policy: 1) the solution of social problems in such areas as education, employment, health care and urban planning; 2) civic engagement, combating discrimination, participation in associations and ensuring the safety of the city.

To measure the results of integration policy, Copenhagen was the first to introduce (2006) such an instrument as the "integration barometer" with indicators of employment, education, language skills, civic engagement, discrimination, self-determination and gender equality, ghetto areas, crime.

Danish municipalities have considerable freedom and independence in managing integration policies and adapting them in different directions. This is facilitated by the election of the governing bodies at the regional (district) and municipal levels. The Law on Local Self-Government (2010) expanded the powers of municipalities in solving the problems of the local community. The central government develops the overall policy framework implemented at the local level. The state provides social benefits, but almost all social benefits are carried out by municipal governments, in particular, the payment of benefits and programs to help refugees and immigrants. Municipalities also use EU funding for their programs, for example, URBACT (Urban Action)<sup>18</sup>. The European Urban Development Program, financed by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), Norway and Switzerland, supports the development and implementation of concepts, including social inclusion and employment promotion (8 municipalities participate). Since 2016, the city of Aarhus has been participating in the program, having developed its own concept of active citizenship.

## **Findings**

The immigration policy of Denmark, regularly criticized by the leadership of the European Union and several member states for violations of international norms in the field of human rights and asylum, has only strengthened its restrictive vector over the past two decades. The consensus between major political parties provided a right-wing anti-immigration agenda that helped the Social Democrats and Venstra maintain their dominant position and defeat the DPP in the 2019 parliamentary elections.

The Danish response to multiculturalism has been overwhelmingly negative. The Government saw the immigration from third countries contributing to the erosion of national identity as a problem, right-wing radicals — as a threat, not a

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<sup>18</sup> *URBACT i Danmark*, 2021, available at: <https://urbact.eu/urbact-i-danmark> (accessed 11.11.2021).

resource. In the media and public opinion, migrants from different cultures were increasingly seen as a burden for the right-wing radical agenda of a “welfare state for their own people” and were stigmatized. Such a discourse is firmly rooted in Denmark legitimizing the persistence of the policy of tightening immigration policy regardless of the change of government. The policy of integration of migrants from different cultures where restrictions are combined with the assimilation of civic values through migrants’ participation in the affairs of the local community became a response to the threats of erosion of Danish identity. Great importance is attached to the employment of refugees. Denmark has developed a multi-level management in migrant integration, in which municipalities have significant autonomy.

Denmark, being among the first in the European Union to adopt a law on the integration of migrants, is at the forefront of European liberal democracies in terms of revising its views on obligations to accept refugees. The new approach is that asylum is granted outside the EU so that people are protected in close proximity to conflicts, as is the case with opening a refugee centre in Rwanda. Denmark’s migrant integration policy is pragmatic, based on the interests of the host society, focused on migrants from Western countries with a high integration potential and providing opportunities for those migrants from other cultures who are trying to become full-fledged citizens of a developed democratic state and contribute to its well-being.

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