

Rejecting migrants and refugees in Denmark:

do not pass law L-87!

***Copenhagen/ Brussels/ Paris, 27 January 2016* – the Danish parliament and government is about to adopt, today, 26 January, a very controversial law on the entry and sojourn of foreigners, which provides for confiscation of asylum seekers' valuables. EuroMed Rights, the European Association for the defense of Human Rights and the International Federation for Human Rights are appalled by the closure policy of the Danish authorities, which goes against the human rights of migrants.**

The draft law considerably weakens human rights standards. It provides for seizure of personal belongings, tightening of the rules for permanent residency and restricted access to family reunion to which processing fees of 7,000 DKK are applied (about 1,000 EUR).

This law has been officially presented as a disincentive for migrants and refugees to come to Denmark. It is part of a series of other measures adopted in the past few months, including advertisement campaigns in Lebanese newspapers misinforming about asylum law in Denmark, and the promotion of the use of detention for arriving and rejected asylum-seekers established by law L-62 adopted on 20 November 2015.

Since 2014, refugees facing indiscriminate violence but not individual persecutions are granted temporary protection for a year, i.e. are not recognized as statutory refugees. The majority of these temporary protection holders are lone women and unaccompanied minors. According to our organisations, women who live in war zones like Syria, where sexual violence is used as a weapon of war, should be granted refugee status. Furthermore, despite the frequent vulnerability of family members who remain in the country of origin or transit, the legal waiting time for lodging claims for family reunion for individuals with such temporary protection status has just been extended from 1 to 3 years.

Danish authorities thereby violate their international obligations in particular the right to private and family life protected by the European Convention on Human Rights and the principle of the best interest of the child inscribed in the International Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Our organisations are profoundly shocked by the confiscation measures provided to seize asylum-seekers' personal valuables, including wedding rings and other jewelry, to support the cost of their stay. We recall that Danish law already provides for the possibility to seize asylum-seekers' valuables over 10,000 DKK (about 1,500 EUR) upon their arrival in Denmark.

The current narrative and measures taken by the authorities reinforce the stigmatization of foreigners and exalts the xenophobia on the rise since the recent peak in popularity of the Danish Peoples Party at the general elections in June 2015.

As the Council of the EU is meeting today in Amsterdam, we are calling on Member States to utmost vigilance regarding this dangerous development. Europe must live up to its legal obligations according to international conventions as well as its duty to provide dignified reception and integration conditions by devising collective and effective solidarity and reception mechanisms, and not opt for unilateral and national restrictive measures that reject others.



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