

Factsheet Denmark



The Viking Age depicted on a tapestry by the artist Bjørn Nørgaard. Today, a millennium later, the Danes still retain their Viking spirit. They have conquered many of the world's export markets and their country has become one of the ten richest in the world.

APRIL 2009

DENMARK - AN OVERVIEW

Maps of the world can be drawn in several ways. Generally, area measurement is used and, represented in this way, the kingdom of Denmark - excluding the Faroe Islands and Greenland - with its 43,098 square kilometres is smaller than many of the individual states of the United States.

However, if measured by the share of the annual product spent on development assistance, Denmark is placed very high internationally. The same applies if the yardstick is the number of Danish police and military forces sent out on peacemaking and peacekeeping missions or the results in a sport such as men's and women's handball. Considered from these – albeit unusual – angles, the miniature state momentarily assumes superpower status.

The Danish model

Denmark is often called the Welfare State Denmark. Another expression often used is the Danish Model. What do they mean?

In a way, it all started in the world of poetry. The clergyman, author and politician N.F.S. Grundtvig (1783-1872) wrote in a song about Denmark that a country has progressed far when "few have too much and fewer too little". This is precisely the formula for the Danish welfare state. With the taxes as a tool, an equalisation of income is achieved so that everyone has the necessary material framework for living a reasonable life.

As a result, Denmark has less economic inequality than any other OECD country. Moreover, there is a fair amount to share, for Denmark has found a fine bal-



The Queen



The Royal couple



Prince Henrik



The Queen private



Kongeriget Danmark - The Kingdom of Denmark
 Form of government: Constitutional monarchy
 Area: 43,098 sq. km
 Population: 5.5m inhabitants
 Population density: Approx. 128 inhabitants per sq. km
 Average life expectancy: Men 76.0 years, women 80.5 years
 Capital: København (Copenhagen), 1,175,411 inhabitants in the metropolitan area
 Major cities: Århus (302,618), Odense (187,929), Aalborg (196,292)
 Language: Danish
 Religion: 82.1% belong to the National Lutheran Church
 GDP per capita: \$57,260 (2007)
 Currency: Danish krone (DKK)

ance between, on the one hand, private capitalism, which allows people with ideas and ambition to flourish freely and, on the other, a social safety net, which catches those who cannot keep up in the race of free enterprise.

The model means that a third of the taxes is paid back to the citizens as transfer income and that the public sector is so large that it accounts for 35.4% (2007) of all employees, 68.9% of whom are women. Nonetheless, there is no spirit of revolt against the tax burden in Denmark, although it was 48.9% in 2007 and thus one of the highest in the world.

The people notice that they are getting something for their money – in addition to the transfer income, also virtually free education and free medical and hospital services. Moreover, the ideological debate about whether the public sector should become smaller or larger in relation to the private sector has almost disappeared.

Nonetheless, the political parties fear that the tax burden may tempt the best people to seek jobs abroad. A lower tax pressure is also expected to produce more

labour at a time with shortage of manpower. As a result, a comprehensive tax reform was initiated in 2009.

Flexicurity – a magic formula

When foreigners speak about the Danish Model, they are often thinking mainly of the Danish labour market, which many see as having a magic formula. In itself, the situation is indeed curious. Workers and other employees in Denmark enjoy good wages and social benefits. Nonetheless, Danish companies in many industries are among the most competitive on the world market. How is that possible?

The answer contains several elements:

- Danish workers are among the most highly organised in the world – 75% belong to a union. As the employers are equally highly organised, the labour market enters into agreements without state involvement. It also disciplines itself through a specially developed labour law system. This ensures robust agreements, which moreover cover several years, and few working days are lost due to conflicts.
- A unique and crucial point is that Danish employers can dismiss employees at very short notice. This allows the companies to adjust to changing market trends without suffering losses. Moreover, entre-

preneurs are encouraged to try their luck, as they can easily get rid of employees if the project fails. If an idea is to be tested, Denmark is therefore the ideal place to do so, as the population also has purchasing power. The great mobility of labour is also demonstrated by the average length of service in a job in Denmark, which is just 4.8 years – the lowest in OECD. Those losing their jobs do not suffer either, as the state suddenly appear – now with unemployment benefit, which is not as much as wages, but enough to live on.

- Moreover, the unemployed have a good chance of finding another job quickly, as Denmark invests heavily in further education and retraining. The good retraining opportunities – probably the best in the world – also mean that industries which are short of labour or new industries do not have to wait a long time for the necessary workers.

- The unions are aware of Denmark's position as an export nation. Their wage demands on behalf of the members are reasonable, so as not to jeopardise the exceptional competitiveness of Danish goods.

- The employment rate for women is exceptionally high, perhaps the highest in the world: 73.7% in 2007 as against 79.8% for men. In other words, as a rule both husband and wife have full-time jobs in Denmark. This enriches the labour market with a lot of talent and initiative, which would otherwise have remained in the kitchen and nursery. The massive female employment has become possible through the equality of the sexes and the public childcare system which allows both parents to work a full working week of 37 hours without worrying about who will look after their children.

- Foreigners who find work in Denmark say that with this system it is possible to “be a complete person” and “make one's family life cohere”. Denmark is regarded as a good employer. Concepts such as flexitime are common. The great adaptability of the companies, without affect-

The borders on pages 2-19 show the Royal monograms, four Ministry logos and the coats-of-arms of Denmark's 98 municipalities.



The Crown Prince



The Crown Prince couple



The Crown Princess



Prince Christian



Denmark's monarchy is one of the oldest in the world – dating back to before the year 1000 – and at the same time has a secure future. How? That is demonstrated by the photo, which shows Crown Prince Frederik, b.1968, Crown Princess Mary, b.1972, and their children, Prince Christian, b.2005, and Princess Isabella, b. 2007. In other words, two generations of rulers are ready to take over. The monarchy is popular in Denmark. The reigning Queen, Margrethe II, b.1940, has won the hearts of the population with her artistic skills and open, yet dignified style. The Crown Prince, with an impressive academic and military background, is equally popular. During a four month sledge expedition round the north of Greenland, he achieved feats which few can emulate. Photo: Scanpix/Keld Navntoft.

ing the employees' social security, has been nicknamed flexicurity. Foreign delegations often visit the country to study the model.

Denmark's geography

Denmark is located in Northern Europe between the North Sea and the Baltic. Denmark also includes the Faroe Islands and Greenland in the North Atlantic.

The bulk of Denmark is the peninsula Jutland, which juts up from the European continent and has a border with Germany of just under 68 km. The rest of the country consists of 406 islands, 78 of which are inhabited. This gives Denmark a total coast line of 7,314 km, corresponding to a sixth of the globe's circumference.

The highest point is 170.68 m above

sea level. No one in Denmark is more than 50 km from the sea. The climate is temperate coastal climate, January and February are the coldest months with an average temperature of 0.0°C and August the warmest with an average temperature of 15.7°C.

The average wind force across the year is 7.6 m per second, which helps explain why Denmark is the world's largest exporter of wind turbines. 62% of the total area is cultivated, the highest percentage in Europe. 56% of the land is used for growing corn, 20% for grass, 4% for roots and 4% for seed.

From superpower to miniature state

The country has probably been periodically inhabited for more than 120,000



Prince Joachim



Prince Joachim and Princess Marie



Princess Marie



Princess Benedikte



In Roskilde – Denmark’s tenth largest city with 42,000 inhabitants, located 30 km west of Copenhagen – past and present intersect. Roskilde Cathedral from the 1170s (photo), which is the burial church of the Danish Royal House, was included in UNESCO’s World Cultural Heritage list in 1995. The city also placed itself on the world map with the 1971 launch of the Roskilde Festival, inspired by the Woodstock music festival in the USA. Since then, it has been held for four days every summer and attracted over 100,000 visitors in its best years. Furthermore, Roskilde inspired the authors Gustav Wied (1858-1914) and Lise Nørgaard, b. 1917. In his satirical novels, Gustav Wied revealed the misanthropy and depraved lifestyle of his contemporaries. The setting is the city of Gammelkøbing – a pseudonym for Roskilde. In the more recent TV series “Matador” (“Monopoly”), the main author Lise Nørgaard and the director Erik Balling (1924-2005) set an epic family saga about narrow bigotry and female emancipation in Roskilde – now under the alias Korsbæk. The 24 episodes of the series have been broadcast in several countries. Roskilde has also attracted international attention for a topical reason which the city could probably have done without – Roskilde Bank was the first Danish financial institution to fall victim to the international economic crisis due to over-optimistic loans and too generous bonus systems for its management. Photo: Roskilde Lejre Tourist Office.

years. The first certain proofs of human habitation date from around 12,500 BC. The Stone Age people among other things lived on oysters and the shells are still found in the so-called “køkkenmøddinger” (kitchen middens) – a Danish expression which has passed into other languages.

The Danes attracted international attention in the Viking Age from the late 8th to the mid 11th century, but not only positively. They were skilful shipwrights with a love of adventure. They travelled far, for instance to the Mediterranean. The Vikings acted as merchants, but equally often as marauders and invaders. For a short time in the 11th century, Denmark subjugated England.

From the 14th century, Denmark also ruled over Norway and parts of Sweden. At that time, Denmark stretched from Nordkapp to the Elbe. As a result of ill fortunes of war, arrogance and poor choice of allies, Denmark’s territory and population were heavily reduced over the period until 1658.

Many wars have been fought with Sweden in particular, but in the 19th century, it was the relationship with the southern neighbour Germany that led to wars.

After the last major war, the Second Schleswig War in 1864, the Danish territory was reduced by a third when Schleswig and Holstein were ceded to Germany. This led to a movement in Denmark with the motto “What is lost externally shall be regained internally”, which resulted in the cultivation of moorlands and the draining of bays and inlets for farming purposes. North-Schleswig returned to Denmark following a plebiscite in 1920.

The Occupation 1940-1945

During the Second World War, Denmark was occupied by Germany in 1940-1945. Forced by circumstances during the German “peaceful occupation”, King Christian X and the Danish government led by the Social Democrat Thorvald Stauning chose to collaborate with the occupying power. In this way, they hoped to create

the easiest conditions for the population.

In 1943, Germany intensified its demands on the collaboration. This formally collapsed, but in connivance with the politicians, Danish civil servants continued the collaboration during the Heads of Departments Government.

From 1943, the increasing popular resistance to the Germans created the basis for an underground movement. Denmark was the German-occupied country where the smallest number of Jews died: helped by, among others, the resistance movement, most of Denmark’s Jewish population managed to escape to the neutral Sweden.

The Danish Constitution

Originating in the chieftain rule of the Viking Age, the Danish Constitution was Absolute Monarchy, followed by Enlightened Absolutism 1660-1848. In 1848, the new King Frederik VII abolished Absolutism and the following year a free Constitution was codified.

However, democracy did not fully unfold until 1901, when the provision that a government must not have a majority in parliament against it was introduced.

The Royal House

Since then, the Royal family has, with great loyalty and subtlety, fulfilled the role of neutral mediating link between changing governments and as a dignified and popular, but entirely apolitical, uppermost superstructure on the Danish machinery of power.

The current monarch, Queen Margrethe II, b.1940, is the daughter of King Frederik IX (1899-1972) and Queen Ingrid (1910-2000). She is married to the French count Henri de Laborde de Monpezat, now Prince Henrik, b.1934. They have the sons Frederik, b.1968, who is the Crown Prince, and Joachim, b.1969.

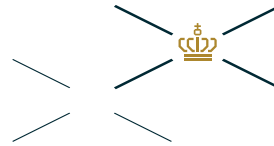
In 2004, Crown Prince Frederik married Australian-born Mary Elizabeth Donaldson, b.1972. In 2005, they had a son, Prince Christian, who in accordance with the Constitution will succeed his father



The Prime Minister's Office



The Ministry of Foreign Affairs



The Ministry of Defence



The Ministry of Culture

on the throne. In 2007, the couple had a daughter, Princess Isabella.

In 1995, Prince Joachim married Alexandra Manley, born in Hong Kong in 1964. They have the sons Prince Nikolai, b.1999, and Prince Felix, b.2002. The couple divorced in 2005. In 2007, Alexandra married a commoner and she now has the title Countess of Frederiksborg. In 2008, Prince Joachim married Marie Cavallier, born in France in 1976. In spring 2009, the couple had a son, whose name will be revealed at his christening.

The Queen was born a week after Denmark's occupation during the Second World War and already through the time of her birth became a bright spot for the population, just as the family, with the two sisters Princess Benedikte, b.1944, and Princess Anne Marie, b.1946, came to be seen as the model family par excellence. As queen since 1972, Margrethe has adopted

an open style and further increased the popularity of the monarchy with her informality, charm and artistic gifts.

As a creative artist, she has, among other things, created several chasubles and designed the ballet "Et folkesagn" ("A Folk Tale") at The Royal Theatre in Copenhagen and the ballets "Tommelise" ("Thumbelina"), "Fyrtøjet" ("The Tinderbox") and "Snedronningen" ("The Snow Queen") for the so-called peacock stage in the amusement park Tivoli.

The two princes have received demanding academic educations and military training. Images treasured by the Danes include the two Princes freefalling during their time in the air force and the Crown Prince on a four month sledge journey in the polar frost on Greenland.

The Danish population

Denmark has a population of 5,511,451

(1 January 2009), distributed on 2.5m households and the number is almost constant these days. Immigrants and their descendants now constitute 9.1% of a population which is otherwise very homogeneous and therefore highly coherent. The population density is high – 128 per sq. km.

"Estelle Mærsk" (photo) from the shipping company A.P. Møller-Mærsk – launched in 2006 – ploughs through one of the oceans. With its length of 397 metres, it and seven similar sisters constitute a fleet of the world's largest container ships. The ship is shown here as a symbol of the entrepreneurial spirit and good investment climate in Denmark. Like many other well-known Danish companies, such as Danfoss, Lego and Grundfos, A.P. Møller-Mærsk started on a tiny scale, but has long since reached world format and now the second generation has taken over with great skill. The Danish Government wants to develop Denmark into a leading entrepreneurial nation. Newcomers do not have to look abroad for role models.





Albertslund



Allerød



Assens



Ballerup



Billund



Bornholm



Brøndby

The language spoken is Danish. It has many vowels – including the special letters æ, ø and å – and many significant glottal stops, which make it difficult for foreigners to learn Danish. Although the distance from the west coast of Jutland to the capital in the east is less than 300 km, there is a distinct division into dialects with associated alleged character differences – from the taciturn Jutlanders in the west through the garrulous natives of Funen in the middle to the Zealanders in the east, whose broad and drawing dialect calls to mind the fat lands owned by their ancestors. The metropolitan population speaks a flat and rapid language, suggesting that here the pace is fast and people do not put up with anything.

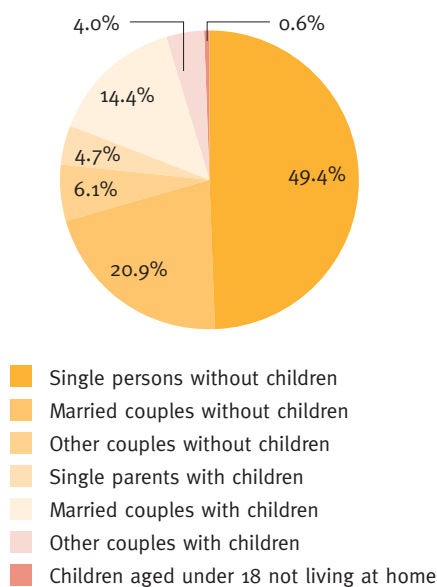
For every three marriages, there is a divorce. Thus, in 2007, there were 36.0 marriages per 1,000 unmarried men over 18 years of age and 12.0 divorces per 1,000 married men. Registered partnerships between same-sex persons have been allowed since 1987. In many respects, the arrangement has the same legal and financial implications as traditional marriages. In 2008, there were 601 registered partnerships. The free and respected position of women was among other things demonstrated by their getting the vote in 1915 and already in 1908 for local elections. The latest constitutional amendment in 1953 introduced female succession to the throne, although a prince will always precede his sister even if he is younger than her. Efforts are being made to remove this differential treatment by a referendum in 2009 and subsequent amendment of the Act of Succession.

Gender Equality, Association Life and the Media

Denmark has still to experience a female Prime Minister. 38% of the members of the parliament, the Folketing, are women. Equal pay has to a considerable extent been achieved. Gender discrimination in job advertisements is prohibited. The public childcare system enhances women's opportunities to pursue a career

Family types

(January 2005)



Source: Statistics Denmark.

outside the home. Around 96.1% of all children aged 3-5 are looked after in day-care institutions.

82.1% of the Danes belong to the Lutheran National Church. Moreover, church and state – politics and religion – are strictly separated in Denmark. The second-largest religious group is the Muslims, who constitute about 5% of the population. There is no differential treatment in the education system. Muslim free schools receive public support in line with Danish schools.

Danes form associations whenever they spot a sensible or enjoyable reason for doing so. Every third Dane has attended at least one association meeting within the last month. Association life is also training in democracy.

The Danes are newspaper readers. In the past, every major provincial town had a newspaper for each of the four main parties. The introduction of television led to many newspaper closures, but there are still 36 daily newspapers and many district weeklies and trade papers.

A fresh threat to the traditional newspapers is the internet, where news is now reported almost as it is happening. This has made the newspapers themselves establish contact with their readers through the internet and at the same time restructure the printed editions to provide more opinion and background material. To achieve higher overall advertising revenue, the large newspaper groups also publish household or street distributed free papers.

There are several public and private radio and television stations, including a 24 hour news channel. On average, Danes watch television for 2 hours 33 minutes a day.

The personality of the Danes

Common to all Danes is their tendency to take the ups and downs of life with a touch of irony, often self-irony. Foreign spouses in mixed marriages often complain that they find it difficult to understand what their partners really mean because they tend to say the opposite of what they think, in keeping with the nature of irony.

The Danes' inalienable rights include freedom of worship and freedom of speech and writing. These rights are not only deeply rooted in the Danish minds, but also laid down in the Constitution. Freedom of speech and Danish humour in its crudest form collided with the Muslim world, when a cartoonist in September 2005 depicted the prophet Mohammed with a bomb in his turban in a Danish paper, thereby offending many Muslims all over the world. The result was riots and demonstrations in several countries. In retrospect, Minister for Foreign Affairs Per Stig Møller says: "We believe in respect between religions. Denmark respects Islam and of course does not wish to contribute to condemning or insulting either people or their religion. As we have said many times: It is the differences between cultures and religions that enrich the world". However, he did not add that Denmark will introduce restrictions to the freedom of speech.



Brønderslev



Dragør



Egedal



Esbjerg



Fanø



Favrskov



Faxe



Denmark is looking forward to hosting the UN Climate Summit in 2009. The country itself works hard to be a model within environmental care and transition to sustainable energy. Danish trade and industry are already extremely active on the world market with equipment for water purification, air filtration, etc. The Danish wind turbine industry is the largest in the world. 38,000 wind turbines from the company Vestas are installed in more than 62 countries. The installation of a wind turbine is completed every three hours 24 hours a day. In 2005, 5,000 lorries and around 40 container ships were required to transport wind turbine parts from Vestas to North America. The offshore wind farm at Horns Rev by Jutland's west coast (photo), owned and operated by the Swedish company Vattenfall with the Danish DONG Energy as co-owner, supplies 2% of Denmark's energy consumption.

Since the Mohammed crisis, Denmark has added a new dimension to its foreign policy, called Public Diplomacy. The intention is to make Danish attitudes and intentions known beyond narrow government circles. At the same time, Denmark is strengthening its links with G8, ASEAN, ASEM, The Arab League, The African Union and the Organization of American States.

The tone among Danes themselves is relaxed. Almost everyone is addressed by the informal "du". The formal "De" is rarely used and only when speaking to an older, distinguished person. In the schools, the pupils are on first-name terms with the teachers. With an open economy and great dependence on what is happening in the surrounding world, the Danes have benefited from their open and international attitude. Thus they consistently support maximum free trade in the world.

Over the years, there have also been traces of local insularity, snobbery and conformity. It was best not to be different. "The Ugly Duckling" of the fairytale writer Hans Christian Andersen (1805-1875) is given a hard time because it is unusual.

The Danish-Norwegian author Aksel Sandemose (1899-1965) invented the concept "Janteloven" ("The Jante Law")



Fredensborg



Fredericia



Frederiksberg



Frederikshavn



Frederikssund



Furesø



Faaborg
Midtfyn



Several Danish architects are world famous. Jørn Utzon's opera house in Sydney is included in new lists of the Seven Wonders of the World. Arne Jacobsen's college buildings in Oxford, England, are sensitively adapted to the historical environment. Henning Larsen – master of the new opera house in Copenhagen – has designed landmarks in many parts of the world. In addition to the Saudi-Arabian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which was built in Riyadh in 1984 (small photo), the company recently designed the Massar Children's Discovery Centre in Damascus, Syria (large photo), which is in the course of construction. Local culture is brilliantly reflected in the subtle shape of a Syrian rose – an artistic and highly sustainable design, which adds a fairytale element to the forthcoming adventure of discovery.

with the bigoted rules he felt dominated his birthplace, a provincial town in Jutland. The (fictitious) rules include: "Do not imagine you are anything special" and "Do not imagine you can teach us anything".

The "free town" of Christiania

Occasionally, there are clashes involving motorcycle clubs, autonomous groups and second generation immigrants. A conflict between young people in Copenhagen and the local authorities concerning the right of ownership of a youth centre also resulted in clashes. In such situations, the police avoid using water canon. Knives above a certain length and hoods have been prohibited





Gentofte



Gladsaxe



Glostrup



Greve



Gribskov



Guldborgsund



Haderslev

An area of Copenhagen, Christiania, has declared itself a “free town” and to a large extent observes its own laws and rules of conduct. The authorities have now turned a blind eye to the experiment for more than 25 years, although the police occasionally carry out raids in the area. The Council of Christiania has been in negotiations with Copenhagen Municipality for several years concerning normalisation of the conditions for the approx. 800 residents.

Denmark in words and figures

The gross domestic product per capita was \$57,260 in 2008, which places Denmark in the top fifth of the EU countries. In addition to the state-funded welfare and security, Danes are materially well-off – also in terms of their own means.

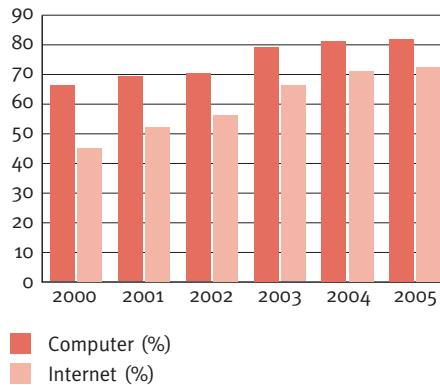
Out of 100 Danish households in 2008, 60 owned a house or flat, 80 a washing machine, 65 a dishwasher, 75 a microwave oven, 44 a flat screen television, 29 a video camera, 92 a CD-player, 84 a DVD-player, 88 a home computer, 95 a mobile telephone, 83 had internet access and 32 GPS navigation. There is also free internet access in all libraries.

Traditionally, Denmark has been placed high on international barometers of quality of life. The welfare system pushes it up. However, it is pulled down by the average life expectancy of 76.0 years for men and 80.5 for women, which is lower than in Denmark’s neighbouring countries. The experts attribute this to rich food, too little exercise (although many jog) and too much smoking. However, the health authorities act with campaigns on every front and in the past five years or so, the life expectancy has improved considerably.

Life in Denmark cannot be entirely unhealthy when the average height of the conscripts rose from 168.4 centimetres in 1896 to 180.6 centimetres in 2006.

Cancer is the main cause of death (29.1% of the men, 26.8% of the women). Heart diseases account for 19.9% and 18.2% respectively, accidents 3.7% and

Families’ access to computer and internet at home (2000-2005)



Source: Statistics Denmark.

2.6%. 1.7% of the men and 0.6% of the women commit suicide. The old myth of Denmark as a country with many suicides is greatly exaggerated.

In 2007, 20 persons died of aids-related illnesses. Some 250 drug-related deaths are registered annually. Abortion was legalised in 1973. In 2006, there were 15,053 legal abortions, corresponding to 12.2 per 1,000 women aged 15-45.

In 1967, the ban on written pornography was lifted and in 1969, Denmark was the first country in the world to legalise picture pornography.

The Danish Realm

Denmark has never been a major colonial power, but it had small tropical colonies in Africa, Asia and the West Indies. Denmark was the first country in Europe to prohibit slave trading in 1793 (with effect from 1803), but that cannot explain away Denmark’s active participation in the human transport until then or the existence of slavery in the Danish West Indies until 1848.

In the North Atlantic, Denmark has ruled over Iceland, which withdrew from the union with Denmark in 1944.

The Faroe Islands and Greenland, the world’s largest island, are still part of the Danish Realm. There has been home rule

on the Faroe Islands since 1948 and in Greenland since 1979. Neither territory is a member of the EU.

Both have two seats in the Folketing. The Faroe Islands are considering full independence from Denmark, to which the Danish Government has responded that Denmark would then phase out its economic support of the Islands over a shorter term than the Faroese wish.

An agreement in 2009 expands Greenland’s home rule and guarantees it the first DKK 75 million earned from raw materials in the subsoil. Any further income from this source will be shared equally with the Danish Exchequer.

The political system

Until 1953, Denmark had a bicameral system. After the abolition of the Lands-ting, the Folketing remains. The voting age is 18. The election period is four years, but the Prime Minister may call an election at any time. If the Folketing passes a vote of no confidence in the government, it must resign or call an election.

Elections are by proportional representation. 135 seats are allocated on a constituency basis, which ensures an even distribution across the country, with a small advantage to sparsely populated areas. 40 supplementary seats ensure that parties with perhaps more dispersed support also have a chance of being elected. If a party cannot obtain 2% of the votes, it will not be represented in the Folketing. This minimum percentage is low in an international context. For the last 20 years, the turn-out has varied between 82% and 88%.

Since 1909, no party has had an absolute majority. That is why the legislation is compromise-led and centre-seeking, which has given Danish politics the name “collaborative democracy”. Since 1955, the Folketing has after every election nominated an Ombudsman, who may criticise the administration by the central and since 1998 also the local authorities.

Around 200 new acts are passed every



Halsnæs



Hedensted



Helsingør



Herlev



Herning



Hillerød



Hjørring

The Folketing after the general election in 2007

	% of the votes	Seats
The Social Democrats	25.5	45
The Social-Liberal Party	5.1	9
The Conservative People's Party	13.5	18
The Socialist People's Party	6.0	11
The Danish People's Party	10.5	23
The Christian Democratic Party	0.9	0
Denmark's Liberal Party	26.3	46
New Alliance	2.8	5
The Unity List	2.2	4

In addition, two members are elected on Greenland and two on the Faroe Islands. The turn-out was 86.6%.

Since the election, there has been some transfers between parties and New Alliance has changed its name to Liberal Alliance.

year. The developments within for instance IT, traffic and hospital techniques necessitate larger administrative units in local politics and in 2007, Denmark's 271 municipalities were consolidated into 98 larger municipalities, while the 13 counties have been replaced with 5 regions. In addition, the 54 police districts have been merged into 12 and the 82 city court districts into 24.

There have been both single-party and coalition governments.

Centre-right governments

At the general election in November 2001, the parliamentary majority shifted towards centre-right, as a new coalition government consisting of Venstre (Denmark's Liberal Party) and Det Konservative Folkeparti (The Conservative People's Party) gained a majority with the support of the anti-immigration party Dansk Folkeparti (The Danish People's Party). At the general elections in February 2005 and November 2007, this constellation was given a clear mandate to continue.

These centre-right governments were led by Anders Fogh Rasmussen, b.1953 (Liberal), until he was appointed General Secretary of NATO at the beginning of

April 2009 and was succeeded by his party colleague Lars Løkke Rasmussen, b.1964. The new leader of the government has not announced any immediate changes to the policy led. A change might consist in greater citizens' choice between related public services. The Government also includes: Lene Espersen, b.1965 (Conservative), as Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Economic and Business Affairs, Per Stig Møller, b.1942 (Conservative), as Minister for Foreign Affairs, Søren Gade, b.1963 (Liberal), as Minister for Defence, Claus Hjort Frederiksen, b. 1947 (Liberal), as Minister for Finance and Ulla Tørnæs, b.1962 (Liberal), as Minister for Development Cooperation. The Government has 19 Ministers.

The present political situation

The Government and Folketing are not leaning back comfortably to admire the robust welfare state they have created. They are aware that action is needed to protect the welfare at a time when the demographic development will result in more and more elderly people with fewer and fewer working age people to support them.

In addition, Denmark has fully accepted globalisation as the new condition of life and working principle for the nations of the world. The reforms to protect the welfare state are therefore in quick succession followed by initiatives to turn Denmark into a leading growth, knowledge and enterprise society, which also aims to be a world leader in relation to green growth.

On this background, it seems natural that Denmark was chosen by the UN as the venue of the 2009 Climate Summit, which is intended to extend the groundbreaking Kyoto Agreement of 1997.

The reforms described below support each other, for instance the labour supply to finance the welfare state is increased through tax reforms that reduce the tax on labour in favour of green taxes aimed at reducing exhaust gas emissions. The green taxes also promote the development

of new energy technologies, which may prove to be profitable exports.

Let us take an overview of the many ongoing reforms:

- Global green leadership: Since 1980, the Danish economy has grown by approximately 80%, while energy consumption has remained almost constant and CO₂ emissions have been reduced. Many countries have achieved increases in their energy and CO₂ efficiencies, but the Danish increase is one of the highest in the OECD area and Denmark is today among the top ten industrialised countries in the world in terms of producing wealth with minimum emission of greenhouse gases. The Danish government continues this policy with new building regulations further emphasising the importance of energy-efficient buildings, a long-term energy deal that paves the way for new investments in large offshore wind turbine facilities and an ambitious plan for making farming in Denmark even more sustainable.
- Denmark already produces far more wind energy per capita than any other country in the world and wind energy accounts for almost 20% of Danish electricity. Danish industry is the world leader in terms of wind energy, which also constitutes a major source of income and jobs. The Danish government remains committed to green growth, using cleaner technologies as a way of fighting climate change as well as of creating sustainable and long-term growth.
- Tax reform: When it came to power in 2001, the Anders Fogh Rasmussen Government introduced a tax stop, which has been in force ever since. A comprehensive redistribution between tax types has now been initiated. Heavier taxation of energy consumption and the removal of various tax allowances make it possible to reduce income tax, which until now could take DKK 0.63 of the last earned krone. From now on, 70% of all Danish income-earners will only be taxed at 42%. The reform is expected to increase the labour supply by the equivalent



Holbæk



Holstebro



Horsens



Hvidovre



Høje-Taastrup



Hørsholm



Ikast-Brande

What other capital has a popular oasis at the foot of its town hall tower, where people of all ages and families with children can enjoy a lavish display of flowers, catering at all prices, free graceful pantomime performances, concerts with the biggest names in the world, gentle fair-ground attractions for children and terrifying rides in the world's highest rollercoaster for the brave? This is Tivoli – the Copenhagen fairytale garden (photo). At the moment, Copenhagen is making its mark as a developing regional European business centre and as a charming, well-functioning landing stage for not only cruises, but also many kinds of events. In 2009, Copenhagen will host World Outgames, the International Olympic Committee and the UN Climate Summit.

of almost 20,000 full-time jobs. It will be accompanied by several initiatives to kick-start the economy to get Denmark out of the stagnation of the recession. The initiatives include early release of pension capital and state grants to private individuals wanting to refurbish their houses.

- **Welfare reform:** Efforts are also being made to increase the labour supply by changing certain elements of the welfare policy. From 2019, the early retirement age will be raised from 60 to 62. Over the years 2020-2024, retirement age will increase from 65 to 67 and then continue to increase concurrently with the average age. Efforts are being made to strengthen the integration of immigrants and their descendants in the workforce. A green card system is aimed at attracting useful labour from abroad and all kinds of experts, from business people through researchers to football players, are offered tax relief. They have to be capable of earning a monthly salary of at least DKK 70,000 and can then choose between paying 25% income tax for three years or 33% for five years. Students are encouraged to finish their studies more quickly.

- **Infrastructure reform:** Considerable public investments will remove bottlenecks in both road and train transport. Increasing queue formation on the roads costs working hours and road tolls are being considered.



- **Labour market reform:** Although the flexicurity model has great advantages – and is often studied by other countries – it is not beyond criticism. Among other things, a reduction of the current four year unemployment benefit period is being considered

The reform programme is implemented on the basis of a national economy which is one of the strongest in Europe. Denmark for instance fully complies with the EU requirements in relation to economic health in the countries that wish to be part of the economic union, i.e. conditions applying to inflation rate,

interest rate, public debt and currency stability. As a striking example, Denmark had foreign debts every year from World War II until 2006, but has been debt-free since then.

Due to this robust background, Denmark has found it easier than some other countries to withstand the impact of the international financial crisis. An attempt by international speculators to provoke a Danish devaluation was thus very quickly rebuffed by the Danish National Bank.

Of course Denmark, with its extensive exports, will also be hit by the recession. The gross domestic product growth of



Ishøj



Jammerbugt



Kalundborg



Kerteminde



Kolding



København



Køge



0.5% in 2008 is expected to change to a decline of 1.4% in 2009 and an increase of 0.6% in 2010. Increased unemployment is also on its way, but Denmark's starting point was an unemployment rate of just 2.8% - the lowest in Europe. Another European minimum record is inflation at just 2% a year.

An environmentally aware country

Here are some details of the country chosen by the UN to host the Climate Summit in December 2009:

Already before the decision to make Denmark a green pioneer, the Danes demonstrated their environmental awareness. The water consumption has been reduced by almost 10% over 30 years. Cars run on unleaded petrol. An agreement concerning Denmark as a pilot country for electric cars is ready. An electric car can run 160 km on a battery and a network of battery exchange stations

will be established from 2011. More than 6% of the arable land is farmed biodynamically. 66% of all waste is recycled. Environmental awareness is on the increase and is now also used for public relations purposes. The amusement park Tivoli in Copenhagen has thus announced that all its energy supply – for rollercoasters, merry-go-rounds, concert hall, etc. – will come from one of the marine wind turbines being erected in Copenhagen as landmarks for the UN Climate Summit. The Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Fisheries monitors all food shops and restaurants. The customer is informed of the result by smileys – with five levels from elite to unacceptable. Denmark is also a clean country in other respects. In corruptibility lists, Denmark almost always appears as snowy white. Animal welfare is also given a high priority. Unit trusts increasingly avoid investing in companies with a questionable working envi-

Århus in Jutland is the second-largest city in Denmark. Of course there is some rivalry with the capital, Copenhagen. However, the citizens of Århus can temper their jealousy with the knowledge that many of the highest positions in the capital and in Danish politics are held by people from Jutland. Århus itself is bubbling with initiative as a city of business and culture. An annual festival week, launched in 1965, has developed into a European cultural event with dance, theatre, exhibitions, concerts, etc. Every year, it focuses on a special theme, in 2007 movement in time and space. The photo shows the Town Hall designed by the architects Arne Jacobsen and Erik Møller, which will be illuminated in red when a red route trails through the city during the festival week.

ronment, child labour, etc. A state institution has sold its shares in a tobacco producing company.

Denmark and the world

During the history of Denmark, the image of the Danes has changed completely. The barbaric Viking has been replaced by the Danish UN soldier with a child on his arm in Kosovo or Eritrea.

The war against terrorism, peacekeeping, dissemination of democracy and support of developing countries are among the objectives given top priority in Danish foreign policy.

Among other things, this is achieved through membership of the UN (Denmark was a co-founder in 1945), NATO (since 1949), the Nordic Council (since 1952) and the EEC/EU (since 1973). In the European Commission, the Danish member, Mariann Fischer Boel, is Commissioner for Agriculture.

Danish participation in international actions

Measured by population, Denmark has sent out more soldiers and policemen than any other country in the world – over 87,000 between 1948 and 2007 – to undertake peacemaking, peacekeeping and humanitarian tasks for the UN, NATO and OSCE and as EU monitors.

So far, Denmark has reserved its posi-



Langeland



Lejre



Lemvig



Lolland



Lyngby-Taarbæk



Læsø



Mariagerfjord

tion with regard to participation in the EU's military task force. Naturally, this is not a result of cowardice, but the general deliberations about the extent of Denmark's participation in EU.

By contrast, Danish troops are very active when Denmark itself is involved or goes into action as a member of NATO. Already in 1999, Danish fighter planes took part in NATO's Kosovo action. After the terrorist attack in the US on 11 September 2001, Denmark spontaneously and unconditionally supported the international reaction. From day one, Danish troops took part in the initially US-led and now NATO-led action in Afghanistan against the Taleban and Al Qaeda, and the presence was stepped up in 2007.

In Iraq, Danish troops participated in the action against Saddam Hussain's rule and the subsequent effort to prevent a civil war. In Afghanistan, the Danish troops are stationed in the particularly war-torn Helmand province, which has claimed so many

victims that Denmark is the country with the greatest loss of life measured by population.

The development is reminiscent of Shakespeare's play "Hamlet", which is of course set in the Danish castle at Elsinore. Initially the Danish prince Hamlet hesitates for a long time, but when it comes to the crunch, he acts decisively.

The Danish development assistance

Denmark contributes large amounts to developing countries and has for many years complied with the UN request that a developed country should give at least 0.7% of its gross domestic product as development assistance. Moreover, Denmark abstains from demanding full export opportunities for the assistance. Thus almost half the money is handed over to the UN and similar organisations for administration.

Through its own direct development assistance, which goes for instance to 16 selected programme cooperation countries

(ten in Africa, four in Asia and two in Latin America), Denmark seeks to benefit the poor, the women and the environment of the recipient country.

The former random aid projects have been superseded by a sector policy, so that

The 750 Danish soldiers currently stationed at the front in the war-torn Helmand province in Afghanistan are very exposed (photo) and have suffered considerable losses. The Danish peace effort extends to the whole world, with participation of all the armed forces. The army has thus had units in the Balkans, Iraq and now Afghanistan. The air force is targeting Al Qaeda and the Taleban in Afghanistan and patrols exposed NATO borders. The navy was already involved in the first Gulf War with the corvette Olfert Fischer. Danish navy personnel have chased pirates in Somali waters and others are leading the UN minesweeper unit. Denmark also sent a fully equipped military hospital to Afghanistan in 2009 and both the armed forces and the police are very active as instructors of local personnel in countries fighting internal terrorism. Photo: Forsvarets Mediecenter.





Middelfart



Morsø



Norddjurs



Nordfyn



Nyborg



Næstved



Odder

Referenda about the EU

		Yes, %	No, %
1972	Denmark's EC membership	63.3	36.7
1986	The Single European Act (consultative referendum)	56.2	43.8
1992	The Maastricht Treaty	49.3	50.7
1993	The Edinburgh Agreement	56.7	43.3
1998	The Amsterdam Treaty	55.1	44.9
2000	Denmark's participation in the Single European Currency, the euro	46.8	53.2

support is given not to a single school, but the country's entire education system or agriculture or fishing, etc. Recognising that any well-intentioned assistance effort can be overthrown by wars, corruption, etc., Denmark now imposes certain political conditions on its assistance. At the same time, the Government has initiated a close scrutiny of ongoing development and environmental projects in the third world to establish whether money is being wasted through corruption or the Danish assistance used against its purpose by dictatorships. Here too, the small country has thus abandoned its customary reticence.

In addition, help is offered towards converting authoritarian regimes to democracy, for instance with the drafting of a new constitution and training in election technique. Development aid is increasingly focused on Africa and an Africa Commission with international top people, chaired by the Prime Minister, has been established. The main aim is to strengthen Africa's private sector so that the continent's countries can increase their opportunities and wealth by their own efforts.

Denmark has also established a rehabilitation centre for victims of torture, which has been given advisory status in the UN Economic and Social Council.

Denmark and the EU

Since joining the EEC/EU in 1973 after a referendum where 63.3% voted in favour of membership, Denmark has worked for transparency in the EU decision-making, the inclusion of environmental concerns in all decisions, the creation of more jobs

in Europe and the opening up of the EU to, among others, Central and Eastern Europe so that it does not become "a club for the rich".

Above all, Denmark from the beginning advocated that the Baltic countries should be allowed to join the EU as soon as possible. In the EU, Denmark has likewise championed that the 20% of the Union's energy consumption must come from renewable sources by 2020 – a target adopted in March 2007. Denmark has signed the Schengen Agreement, which came into force in 2001 and allows completely free passage between a number of European countries.

The Danish reservations in relation to the EU

The Danish population has always regarded the EU as an excellent forum for economic cooperation, but has only reluctantly accepted political integration.

As a result, the Maastricht Treaty of 1992 with its chapters on increased integration was only accepted at a Danish referendum in 1993, after the so-called Edinburgh Agreement had allowed Denmark to take a step back from the cooperation in four areas.

This manifested itself in reservations on the final phase of the European Economic and Monetary Union (EMU) and the euro, the defence political cooperation, an extension of the legal cooperation and union citizenship.

In 2000, a referendum was held to test if the population was prepared to abandon one of the reservations – the change

from krone to euro. The answer was no by 53.2% of the votes.

On the other hand, many Danes now regard the defence reservation as absurd. They find it inconsistent that their country participates in the war against terrorism or peacekeeping actions when UN-led or NATO-led, but not if the uniform happens to say EU.

The present Government will work towards the removal of the four Danish reservations, but will not call a referendum on the issue until it is almost certain that the Danes will say yes.

In 2008, Denmark was the tenth EU country to ratify the Lisbon Treaty. The Treaty includes elements of the Danish flexicurity model, which among other things makes it easy for employers to fire people, who are then maintained by a social safety net while waiting for another job.

A political majority is opposed to uncontrolled immigration and experience a conflict between this attitude and the EU rules concerning free mobility of labour.

Denmark and the euro

Despite the rejection of the euro, many Danish companies are prepared to trade in euros if their trade partner so wishes. Many shops also accept euros and prices are often displayed both in kroner and euros. The voters did not reject the euro in 2000 because they feared that Denmark could not meet the standards of economic health required of a Euroland member. On the contrary, Denmark has for many years been better qualified than many of the current members.

The stable economy is primarily attributed to Denmark's change in 1982 from frequent devaluations to a fixed exchange rate policy. This tied the krone rate to the German mark. Now it is tied to the euro with a central rate of 7.46038 and an allowable fluctuation of 2.25% on either side. As one of its first actions, the Anders Fogh Rasmussen Government I in November 2001 confirmed its determination to plan economic policy, etc. so that



Odense



Odsherred



Randers



Rebild



Ringkøbing-Skjern



Ringsted



Roskilde

the fixed exchange rate policy can continue.

Given its position outside the EMU and the euro, Denmark can no longer expect the same support as before from EU-partners in cases of assaults on the krone exchange rate by international speculators. That is why Denmark has to lead an economic policy which is even healthier and more stable than if it had joined Euroland.

Trade, industry and exports

From the mid 1960s, industrial exports exceeded agricultural exports. A thousand-year old farming and fishing country was thus rapidly changing into a fully developed industrial nation, where airplanes, cars and heavy weapons are among the very few items not produced. However, farming has by no means ceased. It still feeds 15 million people, corresponding to

for instance the total populations of London and Tokyo.

The rapid industrial development may seem baffling, as Denmark's only natural resources worth mentioning are oil and natural gas and these were only discovered recently, in the 1960s. However, the Danes have managed to extend the natural resources concept. Instead, milk, sugar beets, eggs and meat from the farms were used as natural resources.

They became the basis of a production of powdered milk, sugar, cakes, tinned meat, etc.

Large-scale beer and aquavit production was likewise based on agricultural raw materials. For the processing, machines were needed, so the Danes also started producing – and exporting - these.

The export goods needed transporta-

tion. This started a shipbuilding industry. The ships needed painting, so a paint and varnish industry developed. The goods needed to be kept cold during transport. This created a refrigeration industry. And so on and so forth.

Seen from outside, this colossal industrial growth and constant ramification into new types of production may appear random, but in fact there was – as shown above – a strong, logical, inner coherence.

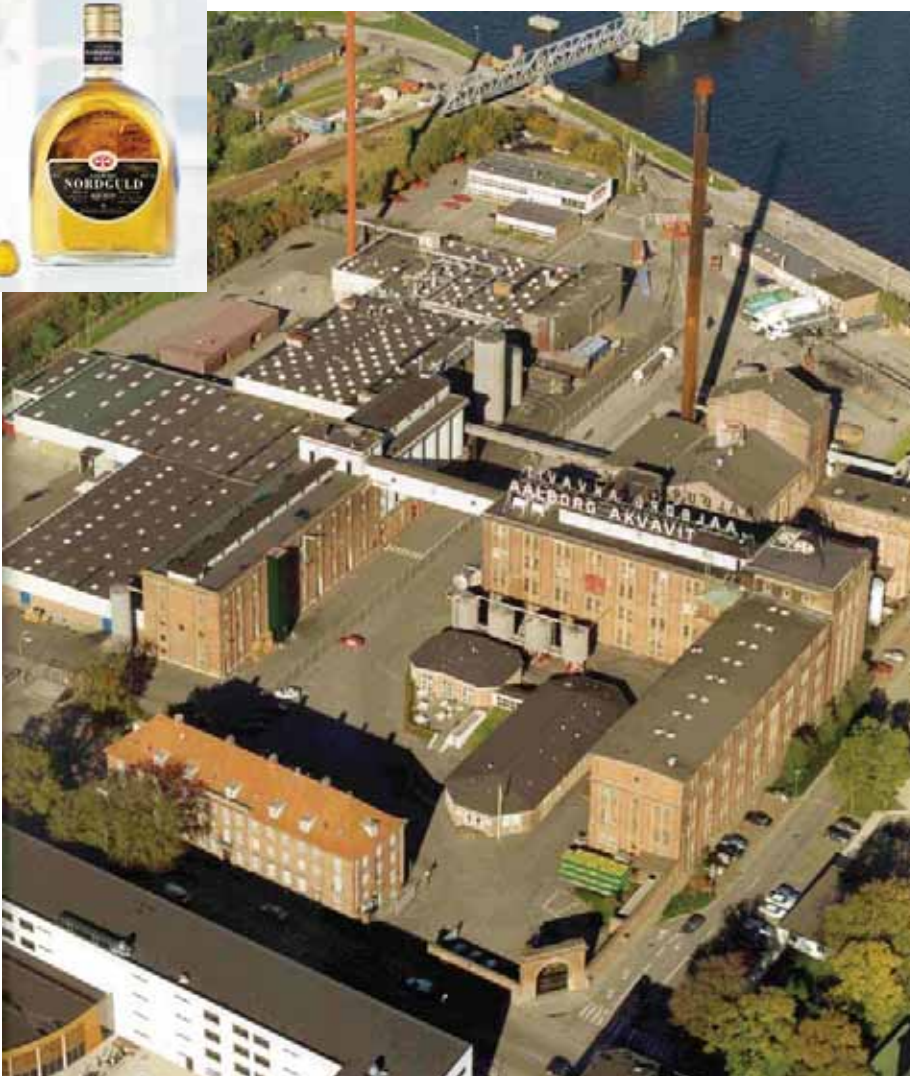
Danish export companies

International market leaders among Danish companies include firms producing pharmaceutical products (such as insulin and psychopharmaca), medical equipment, enzymes for food production, detergents and bio-ethanol to replace petrol, cement-making machines, wind turbines, pumps, thermostats, skylights and other glass elements for building purposes, water purification equipment, hearing aids, toys (including toy bricks), draught beer fittings and much more.

The transformation into a post-industrial information society is already far advanced. Proofs of this include a large software export and the fact that service provision (public as well as private) has become by far the largest occupation, employing 35.4% of all workers.

An export branch that is becoming increasingly visible in the balance of pay-

Although Denmark is relatively small, there are significant linguistic and mental differences between the regions. Aalborg in North Jutland is the fourth-largest city in the country. It has its own special atmosphere of industrial culture, robust attitude to life and party spirits until late at night. Industrially, the city is the home of, among others, a world famous aquavit company (large photo), which regularly launches new brands, e.g. in 2007 "Aalborg Nordguld" (small photo). The city also boasts an internationally known production of so-called Portland cement (named after the colour of sandstone from Southern England), which has protected the surfaces of buildings, bridges and ports all over the world from even the worst weather and most powerful waves.





Rudersdal



Rødovre



Samsø



Silkeborg



Skanderborg



Skive



Slagelse

While other countries may base their hot meals on rice or pasta, Denmark favours potatoes. As the Danes travel extensively, for instance on package holidays, they bring back ideas from foreign cuisines, so Danish food is now markedly international. However, open sandwiches (photo) remain a traditional staple, mostly enjoyed at lunchtime. They consist of a slice of buttered rye bread with various toppings, often pickled herring on the first slice, followed by elaborate structures of for instance egg and shrimps and to finish usually cheese. Most people eat hot dinners. Traditional dishes are lamb at Easter, rice pudding and roast goose on Christmas Eve and boiled cod on New Year's Eve. The most traditional hot dinner consists of roast pork with red cabbage, followed by stewed fruit with cream. Danes enjoy challenging foreign visitors to pronounce the name of an example of this dish (made with redcurrants): "rødgrød med fløde". Most fail. The successful ones are admitted to a warm fellowship. Photo: J. Buusman.

ment is culture, including films such as the groundbreaking so-called Dogme films, bestseller books such as Peter Høeg's "Frøken Smillas fornemmelse for sne" ("Miss Smilla's Feeling for Snow") and music successes such as the percussion duo Safri Duo and the pop duo Junior Senior.

The genesis of Danish companies

Danish companies have their own genesis. They have often sprung from a good idea or a small invention, which the inventor starts producing using his own savings. In this way, industry has become dispersed all over the country.

If the inventor is in luck and has found a niche in the world market which has not previously been intensively cultivated by others, the small workshop in the village or provincial town can grow into an international corporation. This has been the development so far for companies such as Danfoss (thermostats), Grundfos (pumps) and Lego (toys).

Denmark actively participates in globalisation. The flexicurity model, which ensures that dismissal and change of job is no disaster for the Danish worker, has created a positive attitude in the population towards globalisation and its frequent job



relocation to other countries. Many Danish firms buy foreign companies and foreign investors are welcomed in Denmark, where the low company tax (28%) is among the attractive factors. In 2008, Danish companies had 4,148 subsidiaries abroad. Conversely, foreign companies had established 3,066 subsidiaries in Denmark with a total of 228,000 employees (2003). The industrial development benefits from the excellent Danish infrastructure. As an island country, Denmark has needed to build bridges between the regions. The engineers have created aesthetic master-

works such as the Farø and Great Belt bridges and Danish bridge-builders are now in demand for instance in the Far East.

A bridge-tunnel link between Denmark and Sweden at Copenhagen and Malmö was opened in 2000. This is creating a regional force field, which will be particularly attractive to pharmaceutical companies from many countries. The name Medicin Valley is already being used.

From adscription to cooperative movement

Nonetheless, the full explanation of how



Solrød



Sorø



Stevns



Struer



Svendborg



Syddjurs



Sønderborg

the farming and fishing country Denmark has turned into a fully developed industrial nation without the help of natural resources perhaps still eludes us? The last part of the explanation is the high quality of the Danish workforce combined with the above-mentioned flexicurity model on the labour market.

In the 18th century, the Danes were a cowed people. The farm workers were serfs and not allowed to move from the landowner's property. For fear of evil powers and the dark of night, the farms were placed in a protected cluster, far from the fields.

Through farsighted political efforts during Absolutism, adscription was abolished and the peasants liberated in 1788. This created a type of free farmer who dared to place his farm at the point of production. The same free-born attitude spread to the workers in the towns when industrialisation emerged.

The spiritual liberation was given added impetus by N.E.S. Grundtvig. He was the father of further education for young people, especially from the country – the so-called folk high schools, the first of which opened in 1844 – where the young learned to value and use the spoken word and freedom of thought.

Self-aware as they now were, they became able farmers, who also respected their neighbours, so that they could join together in groups on a cooperative basis around production, breeding and export with equal voting rights for all irrespective of the size of their land or herd.

The folk high school concept and the cooperative movement have both been imitated in many countries and are among the offers to countries receiving Danish development assistance.

The labour market

Apart from what has been said above about the flexicurity model, the following points are worth noting:

Danish workers are mainly organised according to industry, rarely religion.

Denmark opposes abuse of children,

which sometimes occurs in connection with child labour in developing countries, but in fact many children in Denmark work, as 26% of the 7-14 year old have spare time jobs. However, this is entirely on their own initiative, in order to earn money for fashionable clothes, mobile phones, CDs, etc.

Some of the latest collective bargaining decisions have been an increase of the annual holiday entitlement from five to six weeks at some workplaces, an increased proportion of the wages set aside for pensions and increased access to further education. In the new agreements in 2007, many industries introduced three weeks' paternity leave on full pay. Women already have four weeks' pregnancy leave and 20 weeks' maternity leave.

Education

School attendance is not compulsory in Denmark, but nine years of education are. As a result, 13% of the children are taught outside the state school system in private independent schools, which may receive up to 70% government subsidy.

The elementary and lower secondary school is comprehensive, i.e. the children are not divided on the basis of ability or social background.

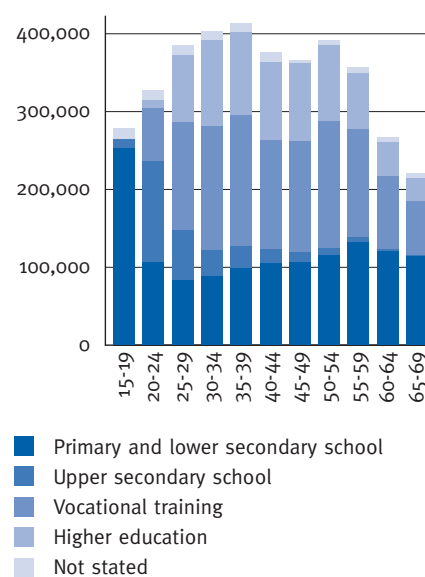
The average percentage of bilingual children, especially children from immigrant families, is 8.2%, but in some boroughs in large cities it can reach a third.

Formerly, pupils wanting to continue in upper secondary school had to be vouched for by the school they were leaving. This changed in 2001 – now the pupils decide themselves.

For the cultural area, a catalogue – the so-called canon – has been created of important Danish works through the ages within literature, painting, music, architecture, etc. It is not compulsory, for instance for school children, to know all the works, but the list is intended to guide and inspire both young and old. The official cultural canon has since been supplemented with more or less authorised

Highest completed education

(2004)



Source: Statistics Denmark.

canon publications for literature, history, democracy and design.

The 24 volumes and 160,000 articles of the national encyclopaedia – “Encyklopædien” – is now available free on the internet under the title “Den Store Danske” (“The Big Danish”). Interested parties are welcome to contribute updates on an ongoing basis.

Almost all education is a free benefit as part of the welfare system. From the age of 18, young people receiving education may obtain public support, the so-called State Educational Grant SU (Statens Uddannelsesstøtte), of up to DKK 2,574 per month for young people living at home and 5,177 for those who have left home, so that no one is precluded from further education because of social or economic status.

As part of the efforts to increase the workforce, the state educational grant will be adapted to encourage quicker completion of studies.

Local authorities and political educational associations offer extensive evening education opportunities for adults.



Thisted



Tønder



Tårnby



Vallensbæk



Varde



Vejen



Vejle

Is there a yardstick called international fame by square kilometre? If such a method of assessment exists, the island of Funen in the middle of Denmark belongs to the elite. With its 2,985 square kilometres and main city of Odense – the third-largest in the country – it is the birthplace of no less than two internationally famous figures, the fairytale writer Hans Christian Andersen and the composer Carl Nielsen. Odense has museums for both – the photo shows the Hans Christian Andersen Museum opposite the outdoor restaurant. However, the city is not complacently sunning itself in its fame. It is bursting with culture and activity, most recently a resourceful television station. Photo: BAM/Heine Pedersen.

The social system

The social system acts as a fine-meshed safety net under the Dane from birth to death. The many individual benefits include maternity and parent leave, which the parents may choose to share. It is regarded as an advantage – both for the individual and the exchequer – if people weakened by illness or age remain in their own homes as long as possible. Here, elderly people can receive home help from the local authority. If that is not sufficient, they are offered protected housing or nursing home accommodation.

The welfare system does not escape criticism. Hospital hygiene has been criticised and improved. Treatment guarantees have been issued for life-threatening illnesses such as cancer and heart disease, but nonetheless waiting lists do occur. Patients who cannot be treated in the public hospital system in Denmark within the guaranteed time-limit of ideally one month are now offered treatment at a private hospital or at a hospital abroad at the public expense. From 2011, the arrival of an ambulance or helicopter can be expected within 15 minutes in the case of acute illness or an accident.

Science

The Danes have made their contribution to solving the mysteries of the universe, nature and the human body.

As examples may be mentioned that



Ole Rømer (1644-1710) calculated the speed of light, that Niels Stensen (1638-1686), among other things, founded geology as a science and made important anatomical discoveries, that H.C. Ørsted (1777-1851) discovered electro-magnetism and that Niels Bohr (1885-1962) was one of the theorists who had a decisive influence on quantum mechanics and among other things made the development of nuclear weapons and the exploitation of nuclear power possible.

Thomas Bartholin (1616-1680) discovered the human lymphatic vessels and Niels Finsen (1860-1904) proved that rays of light have a healing effect on skin diseases. In addition, Henrik Dam (1895-1976) discovered vitamin K and Johannes Fibiger (1867-1928) demonstrated that cancer can be caused by external factors, such as contact with tar products.

Literature

The Danish-Norwegian comedy writer and philosopher Ludvig Holberg (1684-1754) is often described as Denmark's counterpart to France's Molière. He introduced the European Enlightenment in

Denmark and his plays with their jovial-ironic exposure of prejudices and conceit are still performed today on both Danish and foreign stages.

The fairytale writer Hans Christian Andersen (1805-1875) probably remains the best-known Dane in the world. It is well-deserved that one of the characters who sprang from his imagination, the Little Mermaid, has also become the symbol of the Danish capital, Copenhagen. Cast in bronze, she gracefully receives visitors to the city from her wet stone in Copenhagen harbour. In 2005, the bicentenary of his birth was celebrated all over the world.

The philosopher Søren Kierkegaard (1813-1855) sowed the seeds of Existentialism and is being read more and more.

Danish Nobel Prize winners include the author Johannes V. Jensen (1873-1950), whose book "Kongens fald" ("The Fall of the King") in 2000 was chosen by the population as the best Danish 20th century novel.

Karen Blixen's (1885-1962) memoirs of Africa became an international success, both as a novel and a major film.

Contemporary names such as Klaus



Vesthimmerland



Viborg



Vordingborg



Ærø



Aabenraa



Aalborg



Århus

Rifbjerg, b.1931, and Peter Høeg, b.1957, also stand out.

Music, film and ballet

The composer Carl Nielsen (1865-1931) is becoming increasingly popular in concert halls all over the world. So is the recently discovered Rued Langgaard (1893-1952).

In the world of jazz, the violinist Svend Asmussen, b.1916, belongs to the world elite and the double bass player Niels-Henning Ørsted Pedersen (1946-2005) was in great demand internationally.

The pianist Victor Borge (1909-2000) was a much-loved entertainer all over the world. His philosophy of life was that a smile reduces the distance between people.

Danish cinema had a golden age during

the silent film period, among others with Carl Th. Dreyer's (1889-1968) film about the passion and death of Joan of Arc.

In this new millennium, the spotlight is again sweeping over Danish cinema, with several directors winning Oscars and Golden Palms, including Bille August, b.1948, and a new generation of directors headed by Lars von Trier, b.1956, charging ahead with their so-called Dogme films.

Danish actors are receiving offers from Hollywood. Iben Hjejle, b.1971, appeared in "High Fidelity" and "Dreaming of Julia". Viggo Mortensen, b.1958, among other things played Aragon in "Lord of the Rings", and Mads Mikkelsen, b.1965, is the villain in the James Bond film "Casino Royale".

Another Danish strength is television

Copenhagen's status as a city of culture is ever-expanding. In 2008, the Danish Broadcasting Corporation inaugurated a new concert hall (photo) designed by the French architect Jean Nouvel. The auditorium, with its unique acoustic, has attracted international stars from day one. The concert hall is part of a new trinity with The Royal Theatre's Opera and new playhouse, which are only a few years old. The last two were designed by Danish architects and are spectacularly situated opposite each other at either side of Copenhagen harbour. Copenhagen also offers mass audience entertainment. Thus both Madonna and Bruce Springsteen have appeared at the sports and event centre Parken. Famous international stars visiting Denmark do not only go to Copenhagen. In regional cities such as Århus, Horsens and Herning, considerable stage facilities have been exploited by, among others, Leonard Cohen, Elton John, Jimmi Hendrix, Pink Floyd – and Bill Clinton. Photo: Bjarne Bergius Hermansen.



Denmark – an overview

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drama series. They have won Denmark Emmy Awards for series such as “Nikolaj og Julie” (“Nikolaj and Julie”), “Rejseholdet” (“The Flying Squad”), “Ørnen” (“The Eagle”) and “Unge Andersen” (“Young Andersen”).

Danish humour flourishes in film series such as “Olsen Banden” (“The Olsen Gang”) and television series such as “Matador” (“Monopoly”), which have many viewers also outside Denmark as do many Danish films for children.

Within ballet, August Bournonville (1805-1879) as ballet master at The Royal Theatre raised Danish ballet to an international standing that has not faded.

Visual arts

Danish painters from the first half of the 19th century, the so-called Golden Age, are experiencing an international renaissance. Over the years, painters have often joined together regionally. Groups such as the Skagen Painters and the Funen Painters now have their own, well-attended museums. Asger Jorn (1914-1973) co-founded the international COBRA group (named after Copenhagen, Bruxelles and Amsterdam).

Major contemporary names include Bjørn Nørgaard, b.1947, who, among other things, has designed tapestries featuring the history of Denmark as a birthday present for Queen Margrethe, and Per Kirkeby, b.1938.

The sculptor Bertel Thorvaldsen (1770-1844) preferred to work in Rome, where his marble statues are seen for instance in St Peter's.

Design, applied art and architecture

The Danes are world famous for applied art and design within a broad spectrum of fashion, furnishing fabrics, furniture, silverware, porcelain and jewellery.

The silversmith Georg Jensen (1866-1935) created magnificent hollowware and cutlery.

The architect Poul Henningsen (1894-1967) explored the effects of light and

designed lamps which are outstanding in terms of lighting technique and aesthetics.

Jacob Jensen, b.1926, designs radios and televisions, telephones, cars, etc., and some of his works have been exhibited at the Museum of Modern Art in New York.

The multimedia artist Olafur Eliasson, b.1967, who among other things is a master of lighting, is represented in collections all over the world.

The Lego toy bricks familiarise the Danes with appealing design already in the nursery.

Together with deeply quality-conscious craftsmen, furniture designers such as Hans J. Wegner (1914-2007) have made Danish furniture synonymous with sophisticated design and comfort. Thousands of international customers include the UN Security Council.

The sense of design also benefits less obvious products such as industrial machinery, public signage and much else.

Danish architects make their mark outside their native country as well. Jørn Utzon, (1918-2008), designed Sydney Opera House, Johan Otto von Spreckelsen (1929-1987) the Grande Arche in Paris, Arne Jacobsen (1902-1971) St Catherine's College in Oxford and Henning Larsen, b.1925, the Foreign Ministry in Riyadh.

Another architectural masterpiece by Henning Larsen is the new opera house on the waterfront in Copenhagen, which was sponsored by the shipping magnate Mærsk McKinney-Møller.

The firm of architects 3XN Arkitekter has designed the highly acclaimed new Danish embassy in Berlin and an entire quarter in Copenhagen for UN institutions.

Sports

The Danish national sport is football and Danish players are often to be found in the line-up of great European clubs, such as AC Milan, Chelsea, Inter, etc.

Other strong Danish disciplines, for instance at the Olympics, include women's handball, yachting, rowing, swimming, cycling and badminton.

With Ulrik Wilbek as national coach, Denmark has won international handball championship medals, first for women and later for men.

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