

**PRESIDENT IRATXE GARCÍA PÉREZ,
VICE-PRESIDENTS**

[Letter sent via email]

Brussels, 8th June 2021

**Dear President Iratxe García Pérez,
Dear Vice-Presidents,**

We are writing, as racial justice organisations working at the European Union level, to request the S&D group leadership to internally address the xenophobic and discriminatory policies proposed by the Danish Social Democrat Party.

We are extremely concerned by legislation and proposals that target asylum seekers and non-western residents. Citizens and residents are listed as 'non-western' if they or their parents originate from countries with a racialised non-white majority.

Recently, the Danish authorities declared Damascus a safe area to return for refugees who fled Syria during the civil war. The government has already started to revoke permits and is either placing people in detention camps or asking them to voluntarily go back to Syria. Currently, Danish politicians are also discussing transferring asylum seekers who arrive in Denmark to a non-European country where their cases will be processed with news outlets reporting that the Danish Integration Minister has already signed a preliminary agreement with Rwanda to strengthen the collaboration on issues pertaining to asylum seekers and migration.

These policies are in line with Prime Minister Frederiksen's vision for having zero asylum seekers which she has previously spoken about when she said, "We cannot promise zero asylum seekers, but we can set up that vision, as we did before the elections."

In 2018, the Danish parliament passed the 'ghetto policy' consisting of several laws which limited the freedoms of individuals living in neighbourhoods with a high percentage of non-western citizens and residents. According to the policy, a neighbourhood would be declared a 'ghetto' if more than 50% of the population are non-western residents and if two of the following four criteria were met: More than 40% of residents unemployed; more than 60% of 39-50-year-olds with no upper secondary education; crime rates three times higher than the national average or residents having a gross income 55% lower than the regional average.

If a neighbourhood is declared as a 'ghetto,' public housing associations are required to evict residents, demolish buildings or change the character of the properties to assist in changing the residential demographics of the so-called 'ghetto.' These neighbourhoods fall under "harshened penalty zones," meaning crimes committed in these neighbourhoods carry double legal penalties. In effect, the government has created a two-tier justice system, with one system for those committing crime in predominantly white neighbourhoods and another system with double penalties for those living in neighbourhoods with a high number of non-western residents.

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In March of this year, the government went further and proposed a new bill introducing even stricter rules to reduce non-western residents in particular neighbourhoods to less than 30% within 10 years. The Danish government proposed the law under its policy aim of "One Denmark without Parallel Societies – No Ghettos in 2030" although the word 'ghetto' was subsequently removed. With the new bill, the Danish government has narrowed its focus to measures targeting non-Western residents.

The Interior Minister, Kaare Dybvad Bek has said that many non-western residents in one area "increases the risk of an emergence of religious and cultural parallel societies." He also said that the government would fight the "anti-democratic values" that many immigrants from Muslim countries practice in Denmark.

The Danish government justifies its policies on the grounds that they prevent parallel societies. However, it is clear that the government's policies are driven by xenophobia and discrimination as the policies are aimed at limiting asylum seekers or focused on non-western residents.

The policies of the Danish Social Democrat Party directly contradict the values and policies that the S&D group claims to promote.

We, therefore, believe that the S&D group should urgently look into the situation in Denmark and hold an internal discussion on the policies of the Danish Social Democratic Party.

We also request the S&D leadership to meet with us and discuss the matters raised.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,