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IMPLEMENTATION OF THE INTERNATIONAL COVENANT ON ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL RIGHTS

Third periodic reports submitted by States parties under articles 16 and 17 of the Covenant in accordance with the programmes established by Economic and Social Council resolution 1988/4

Addendum

DENMARK* **

[12 August 1996]

* The second periodic report concerning rights covered by articles 6 to 9 (E/1984/7/Add.11) submitted by the Government of Denmark was considered by the Sessional Working Group of Governmental Experts on the implementation of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights at its 1984 session (see E/1984/WG.1/SR.17 and 21). The second periodic report concerning rights covered by articles 10 to 12 (E/1986/4/Add.16) was considered by the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights at its second session (see E/C.12/1988/SR.89) in 1988.

** The information submitted by Denmark in accordance with the guidelines concerning the initial part of reports of States parties is contained in the core document (HRI/CORE/1/Add.58).

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Paragraph 2 of the guidelines (measures to realize the right of everyone to enjoy the benefits of scientific progress)

380. The provisions of the Danish Constitution on civil rights also serve to safeguard the right of everyone to enjoy the benefits of scientific progress and its applications, and the diffusion of science. Paragraph 2 (a) of the guidelines (measures taken to ensure the application of scientific progress for the benefit of everyone)

381. In 1993 the Ministry of Research and Technology was formed with an overall responsibility for strengthening and coordinating Danish science and technology policy. In September 1994 the Ministry of Research and Technology was given the responsibility for information technology and telecommunication. One of the main objectives was to promote mobility and dissemination of research results by the use of information technology for the benefit of researchers and the general public.

382. Research and development is carried out by universities and other institutions of higher education, government research institutes and the Technological Service Network. This network includes the

technological service institutes under the Danish Academy of Technical Sciences.

383. Most ministries have research and development budgets, and most of them have their own councils or committees for allocating funds and advising ministers with respect to specific research and technology policies.

384. The approximately 30 governmental research institutes and 15 archives, libraries and museums conduct research and work in widely different areas of knowledge. In December 1995 a bill concerning the majority of the government research institutions was passed in the Folketing (Parliament) and another bill covering the archives libraries and museums was passed in March 1996. The purpose of these acts is to safeguard the independence of the research performed at these institutions, and the acts contain several tools for this purpose. Apart from giving the institutions greater freedom and independence, the Government requires or implies a number of actions in these acts, e.g. the institutions must perform independent and good quality research, they must make results public, and they must take on independent evaluations of the institutions at intervals. The acts also imply that the institutions must work for greater mobility among all the research institutions of the country, and the Government is at present renegotiating the present structure of employment in order to improve the conditions for all publicly employed researchers.

Paragraph 2 (b) of the guidelines (measures taken to promote the diffusion of information on scientific progress)

385. All universities and other institutions of higher education are supplied with government-funded, well-equipped research libraries.

386. Since its foundation in 1970 the Danish Committee for Scientific and Technical Information and Documentation (DANDOK) has been working as a consultative and coordinating body under the Ministry of Research. The main objective of this committee is to assess the situation, and to propose and contribute to the implementation of sensible and effective solutions to problems. In 1981, INFOSCAN was established as a permanent national consulting centre concerning on-line information services in the selection of and searching in databases. The centre also offers advice on equipment for telecommunication.

387. In order to make research and development knowledge available DANDOK has been responsible for reviews of the information sector in Denmark in 1987, 1988 and 1995. The intention is to give a coherent view of the structure of the specialized information field. Previously, the committee had published numbers of publications dealing with political as well as practical matters. In 1993 the Committee published its very wellreceived proposal for a Danish information policy, with special emphasis on the needs of the research and business community.

388. In late March 1994, the Danish Government appointed a committee on the “Information Society by the year 2000”. The committee was commissioned to draft a proposal for a comprehensive project the purpose of which was to tie public institutions and private companies together by means of modern information technology and to create new possibilities for citizens. The draft proposal should line up the

possibilities for Danes in a future information society, formulate an overall Danish policy for information technology and identify specific target areas for the next few years and, where necessary, identify the needs for legal reforms. In October 1994 the governmental committee submitted its report, “Info-Society 2000”. The Government will make an annual statement to the Folketing on the action to be taken in the following year.

389. In 1996, a new high-speed research network will be established. The network will be part of the Internet and will connect Danish universities and governmental research institutions. The network will also be accessible on regular commercial conditions to private companies carrying out research and development.

390. Numerous scientific magazines receive public financial support. The Government is also funding several non-governmental organizations that disseminate information of all kinds, including information on scientific progress.

391. In 1985, the Government established a Technology Assessment Board with many tasks: informing the general public and the Danish Parliament on new technology, disseminating the results of new technologies and assessing new technology including its possible effects on society. This institution is found to have had a great impact on the attitude to new technology in Danish society.

Paragraph 2 (c) and (d) of the guidelines (restrictions to prevent abuse)

392. Denmark is currently implementing a European Community directive on the protection of individuals with regard to the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data.

393. A complex system of legislation has been established to protect the environment and the general public from the negative effects of scientific inventions and toxic products. This legislation includes strict rules for genetic engineering.

394. The Danish Parliament has maintained its decision not to introduce nuclear energy until a safe solution has been found regarding radioactive waste. Research in this field is therefore related solely to solving the safety problems associated with nuclear energy and waste.

395. To safeguard the physical and psychological well-being of the individual, research on humans can only take place under specific conditions described in the Act on the Scientific-Ethical Committees. The projects must undergo examination and approval by one of the regional scientific-ethical committees established for that purpose. In the case that consensus cannot be attained the question can be directed to the Central Scientific-Ethical Committee. This committee also has a guiding function and sets down non-legislative codes of standards.

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Paragraph 4 of the guidelines (conservation, development and diffusion of science)

399. In order to promote the development and diffusion of science the Government has established research libraries at all universities and institutions of higher learning.

400. In 1988 DANDOK established a specific data bank (the DANDOK base) for information of special interest to the scientific community. The DANDOK base presents an overall picture of ongoing and published Danish research. At the beginning of 1996 the base contained more than 101,000 research references. The database is based on information from universities, institutions of higher education, governmental research institutes, research councils and other public institutions carrying out or financing research. The aim of the database is to give interested parties access to information about Danish research, regardless of subject matter or where the research is taking place.

401. The database contains three types of information:

(a) Published research, references to periodical articles, books, chapters in books, reports, conferences, etc.;

(b) Research projects, descriptions of ongoing or completed research studies (projects);

(c) Institute profiles, general descriptions of research carried out at an institution or institutes, laboratories or departments.

402. Access to the DANDOK database can be obtained directly via a modem or through a network. The base is also accessible on the World Wide Web.

Paragraph 5 (a) and (b) of the guidelines (respect for the freedom indispensable for scientific research)

403. Governmental research institutes are becoming increasingly independent from their respective ministries owing to the new legislation passed in December 1995 and March 1996. In some cases administrative responsibility is transferred from the respective ministry to the Ministry of Research.

404. Basic research is performed mainly at universities and institutions of higher learning. According to the University Act which governs these institutions, they have the right to decide how their appropriations will be used.

405. Denmark still has six independent national research councils. The members are all appointed in their personal capacity by the Minister for Research and are themselves normally active researchers. Grants from the national research councils account for only 6 per cent of the total funding of public sector research, but the funding is often decisive for new activities and it is often supplemented by the participating institutes. According to the latest OECD evaluation of Danish science and technology research in 1994, the national research councils have changed practice in recent years in that they concentrate

their funding in larger framework appropriations and they allow the grantees considerable freedom in spending the funds.

406. The Danish National Research Foundation was established in 1991 to improve basic research and create centres of excellence at the international level. It aims to enhance the development of Danish research by providing the best scientists with favourable opportunities for development by increasing internationalization and by contributing to improved education of researchers. Foundation grants are given largely as substantial and flexible grants to be used at the discretion of the recipients.

Paragraph 5 (c) of the guidelines (measures taken to support learned societies, academies of science, professional associations, etc.)

407. The Government is granting financial support to learned societies such as the Royal Danish Academy of Sciences and Letters, the Learned Society and others.

408. No difficulties have been identified in the degree of realization of the freedom to undertake scientific research.

Paragraph 6 of the guidelines (international contacts and cooperation)

409. The Danish Government is strongly encouraging international contact and cooperation in the scientific field and scientists participate regularly in international scientific conferences, seminars, symposia, etc. Government appropriations for supporting participation in international research cooperation have increased by 31 per cent from 1988 to 1994.

410. Denmark is a member of a number of organizations for research cooperation and takes part in research cooperation in the European Union and among the Nordic countries.

411. The Research Academy under the Ministry of Education provides fellowships for postgraduate studies for students who wish to take a full PhD degree abroad. The Academy is a focal point for Danish participation in international initiatives concerning research education. One of the important programmes is the Stimulation Programme, which is aimed at strengthening the internationalization, mobility and quality of Danish doctoral programmes by awarding grants for studies abroad and by inviting guest professors and scholars to participate in Danish doctoral programmes. Other programmes have internationalization as a goal such as the Fellowship Programme and the Interface Programme.

412. No specific factors and difficulties have affected the development of international cooperation in these fields.

Paragraph 7 of the guidelines (changes since previous report)

413. The changes have not affected the rights enshrined in article 15 negatively. Public research budgets are not being cut at present.