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Submission from Denmark to the Day of General Discussion on “Children’s Rights and Alternative Care”

The reform ‘Children First’

In May 2021, the government together with a political majority presented the reform “Children First”. In the period 2022-2025 DKK 2 billion is allocated towards the reform and hereafter DKK 734 million per year when the reform is fully implemented.

The reform includes the development of a brand new Danish Child’s Act, which aims to ensure that children’s voices are heard and that their wishes and needs are given top priority. Both legislatively and in practice, children’s perspective should be a focus of attention in child protection – regardless of age. The new Danish Child’s Act will thus reflect a modern view of children that ensures that children are recognized in their own right. This includes that children receive more rights and more weight is given to these rights together with children’s voices in child protection casework.

The reform includes among others measures to ensure that help is provided early on and that the correct support measures are put in place to begin with. Early intervention is key in securing that support is provided to children before the issues develop further and before their childhood ends.

The reform also includes measures to ensure more stability and continuity for children placed in care. These measures aim to protect children against unnecessary changes in placements of alternative care, which are not in the best interest of the child.

Furthermore, the reform includes improvements to the protection of children from social control and extremism, including a proposal to establish “rights schools” in vulnerable housing areas with the purpose of ensuring that children know their rights, regardless of ethnic background.

Strengthening the quality of alternative care, the child protection casework and vulnerable children’s transition into adult life are also among the focal points of the reform.

