

DENMARK

Key trends in 2023

- 🔍 Some CSOs defending fundamental rights face cuts in public funding while others face challenges with core funding
- 🔍 Increase in verbal, physical and online attacks on activists, organisations fighting for non-discrimination and the rights of religious, ethnic, gender and sexual minorities
- 🔍 Strict policies and harsh rhetoric from the highest political levels towards migrants, refugees and asylum seekers remain

Targeted recommendation:

- 🔍 Take urgent steps to protect excluded groups, in particular LGBTQI+ groups and ethnic and religious minorities from discrimination, hate speech, attacks, harassment and assaults online and offline to the highest standard.

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Summary

Civic space is rated as open in Denmark. Danish civil society is generally resilient and diverse, continuously fighting for the preservation and expansion of fundamental rights. However, many issues related to civil society funding and attacks, harassment and assaults of civic actors, human rights and environmental defenders and marginalised communities remain. There were no recommendations on civic space in the EU Commission's Rule of Law report 2023.

There are some concerns related to peaceful assembly as pro-Palestinian and climate activists experienced harsher measures by the police. Marginalised groups, particularly LGBTIQ+ and racialised communities, as well as CSOs and activists protecting and advocating for the rights of these groups, were increasingly targeted by verbal, physical and online attacks, assaults and harassment. These developments led to further polarisation in Danish society and a higher sense of threat and insecurity within the marginalised groups. Freedom of expression has been a hot topic in the public debate due to the public Qur'an burnings and led to the Parliament drawing up new legislation prohibiting the degradation of religious texts.

The recent Bill of Finance proposed by the current Danish majority government included unpredictable cuts in public funding for civil society resulting in an increasingly precarious situation for the sector. Civil society organisations working with human rights, minorities and marginalised groups have been specifically targeted by the lack of funding. Self-censorship and depoliticisation have been observed among civic actors, due to fear of funding cuts. The policy-making approach of the new majority government has also led to a decrease in public participation in the political processes as discussions are held and decisions are made internally without meaningful civil dialogue or consultation.