

DIOCESE IN EUROPE

THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND

The Bishop in Europe:
The Right Reverend Dr. Robert Innes



27 January 2021

Ms Mette Frederiksen
Prime Minister
Kingdom of Denmark

Ms Joy Mogensen
Minister for Ecclesiastical Affairs
Kingdom of Denmark

sent by email : stm@stm.dk

min@kum.dk

Dear Prime Minister, Dear Minister

Freedom of Expression for Religious Organisations in Denmark

I write to express my concerns regarding consideration by the authorities in Denmark that religious organisations may be required by law to translate public addresses and sermons preached during services of worship into Danish.

As the Anglican Bishop in Europe, I take a close interest in the ministry of our Church in Denmark. Our Anglican Church, St Alban's <https://www.st-albans.dk/> is a thriving chaplaincy among the 300 congregations across the 42 countries of the Diocese in Europe. The mission and activities of the Church demonstrate our commitment to worship in the setting of Danish society and national life, and we are in full communion with the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Denmark through the Porvoo Communion of Churches which has consolidated a close link with the Bishop of Copenhagen, and enabled a priest of the Danish Folk Church to be authorised to serve in St Alban's.

We count a significant number of Danish congregants and others who have made their lives in Denmark, and who are Danish speaking. Our presence reflects the centuries long history between our two Kingdoms and monarchies. We strive to live out the Christian message in the Gospel language which speaks of love, peace and reconciliation among all peoples. I therefore share all the concerns that have been expressed by fellow Christian Church leaders in Denmark and our European Church family. I hope that the Danish Government will pause to reflect on the potential implications of such proposals to require the translation of sermons preached at church services into Danish. I believe this overly restrictive step would constitute a limitation on freedom of expression that I know is prized in Denmark, as one of the world's oldest democracies. The Anglican Church in Denmark would be open to discussing enhanced, structured and regular dialogue with the Danish authorities on all our activities to assist with oversight of

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religious organisations in Denmark. Equally, we should be glad, for example, to voluntarily produce more Anglican church materials in Danish, should this offer further demonstration of the strength of our commitment to Danish national and cultural life.

I hope you will give these matters careful consideration and look forward to your reply. I am copying this letter to the Chair and Vice-chair of the Ecclesiastical Affairs Committee of the Folketing, and to the Anglican Chaplain at St Alban's Copenhagen including Aarhus, The Reverend Smitha Prasadam.

Yours sincerely,

+ Robert Gibraltar in Europe

+Robert Gibraltar in Europe

Copy:

Ms Julie Skovsby, Chair, Folketing Committee on Ecclesiastical Affairs
Ms Louise Schack Elholm, Vice-Chair, Folketing Committee on Ecclesiastical Affairs
The Reverend Smitha Prasadam

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