

STATELESSNESS IN DENMARK

FACTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

1. Statelessness in Denmark mainly occurs in the migratory context. By the end of 2024, Denmark had a stateless population of 8,566 individuals, of which 408 were born in Denmark.
2. Danish legislation does not currently contain a definition of a stateless person. **UNHCR recommends that Denmark incorporate, within its national legislation, the binding definition of a stateless person as set out in Article 1 of the 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons**, in order to strengthen the interpretation and application of the definition in law and in practice.
3. Statelessness can be established through various administrative procedures in Denmark. However, there is no centralized, dedicated statelessness determination procedure. With the EU Pact Screening Regulation set to apply from 12 June 2026, screening authorities must conduct a vulnerability check that includes identifying persons who may be stateless. **UNHCR recommends that Denmark develop the existing statelessness registration procedure into a dedicated statelessness determination procedure, operationally linked to the Screening Regulation vulnerability check with an appropriate referral mechanism, so that stateless people are protected from expulsion and documented pending determination.**
4. The Danish Aliens Act does not contain any provisions regarding the core set of rights, enshrined in the 1954 Convention and other international human rights instruments, to which lawfully staying stateless persons are entitled. **UNHCR recommends that Denmark introduce these core rights into legislation, both for applicants and persons recognized as stateless.**
5. Stateless persons in Denmark are not able to regularize their immigration status solely based on their being stateless. Moreover, stateless persons, by definition, lack a country to which they can be returned in a durable manner. Granting a specific residence permit is therefore especially important in view of the rule change effective 1 January 2025 entirely removing the possibility for foreigners to obtain a residence permit based on deportation obstacles. **UNHCR therefore recommends that Denmark grant a specific residence permit with a related set of core rights to persons recognized as stateless.**
6. Denmark acceded to the 1954 Convention in 1956 with reservations to Article 24(1), Article 24(3) and Article 31. **UNHCR recommends that Denmark withdraw these reservations.**
7. Since 2014, Denmark has granted Danish nationality to 2,221 stateless people residing in the country. In light of the strict general criteria for acquiring Danish citizenship and increased citizenship application fees in 2025, **UNHCR recommends that Denmark make provision for facilitation of naturalization for stateless persons born outside Denmark**. An exemption from the language and citizen tests for especially vulnerable and illiterate stateless persons would be particularly important.
8. By the end of 2024, there were 1,471 children (0 - 17 years) without nationality in Denmark (of which 371 children were born in Denmark). **UNHCR recommends that Denmark, as the best and safest way of avoiding childhood statelessness, automatically grant nationality to all children born stateless in Denmark**. This would be in line with the two Statelessness Conventions and the Convention on the Rights of the Child. UNHCR also recommends undertaking an analysis of the circumstances behind the high number of children with no nationality in Denmark and to change the requirement of "lawful residence" to "habitual residence" for children applying for nationality.
9. Currently, 25 countries do not allow women the right to pass their nationality to their children on an equal basis with men. Children born in Denmark to mothers who are nationals of one of these countries, and whose fathers are stateless or unknown, are sometimes registered as having the same nationality as their mothers. UNHCR welcomes the recent steps taken by the Danish authorities to provide foreign parents with information at the time of birth, including guidance on residence and citizenship procedures and that children born stateless in Denmark may acquire Danish citizenship under more lenient rules. To further ensure that children who may be unable to acquire their parents' nationality are promptly identified, **UNHCR encourages Denmark to strengthen procedures at the civil registration stage and provide civil registry officials with additional guidance on how to flag cases where a child may be at risk of statelessness.**
10. Stateless persons may apply for Danish nationality under existing procedures, but all naturalization decisions must be approved through an individual bill passed by Parliament, on the recommendation of the Parliamentary Naturalization Committee, as stipulated in the Constitution. This political process lacks effective judicial review. **UNHCR recommends that Denmark reform the naturalization process to replace or modify the current parliamentary procedure with an administrative procedure, subject to effective judicial oversight.**

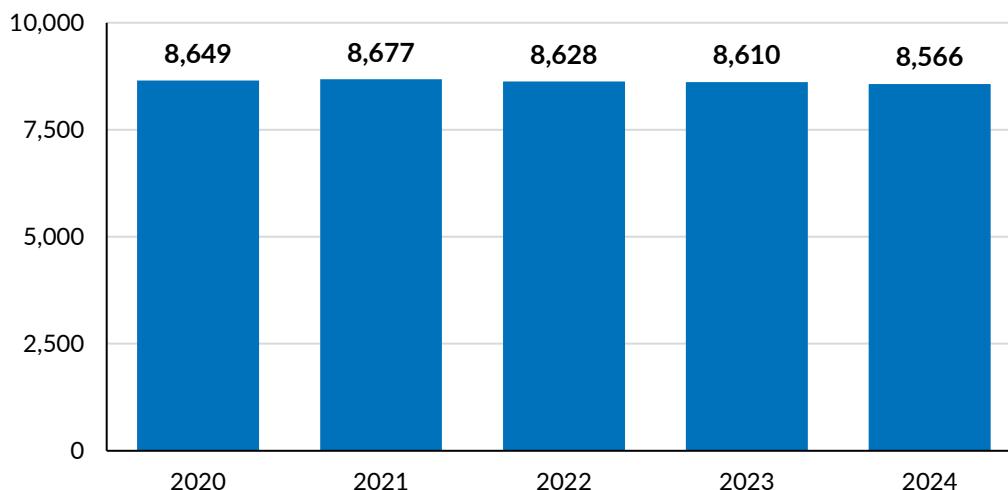
10 FACTS with recommendations from UNHCR

STATISTICAL TRENDS: 2020 – 2024¹

¹ In UNHCR's reporting, the category "Stateless" excludes individuals whose nationality is recorded as "Not stated" in data reported by the Danish Immigration Service and Statistics Denmark.

Figure 1

Stateless population in Denmark



Note:

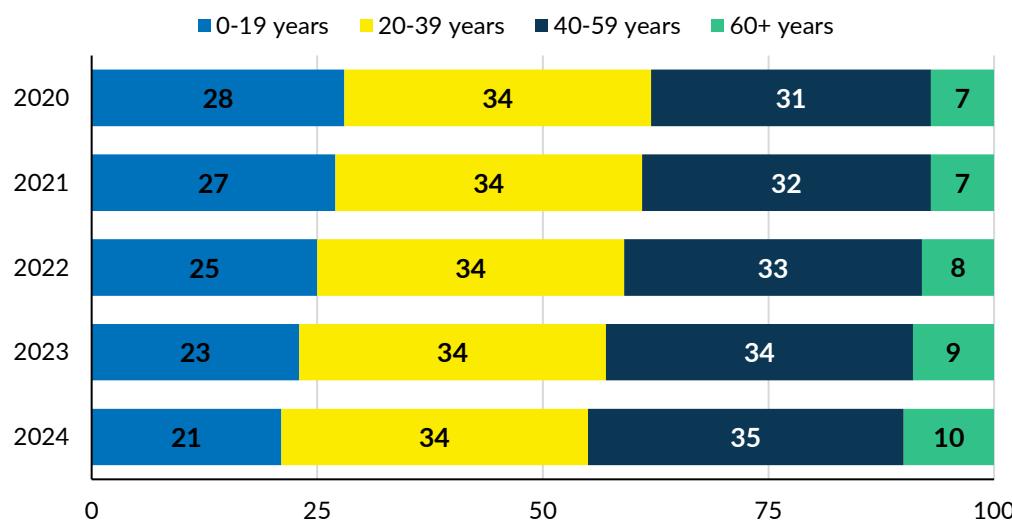
Data for 2020 -2024 is based on combined figures from the Danish Immigration Service and Statistics Denmark to include asylum-seekers.

Sources:

- UNHCR Global Trends reports
- Statistics Denmark
- Danish Immigration Service

Figure 2

Stateless population in Denmark by age (percentage)



Note:

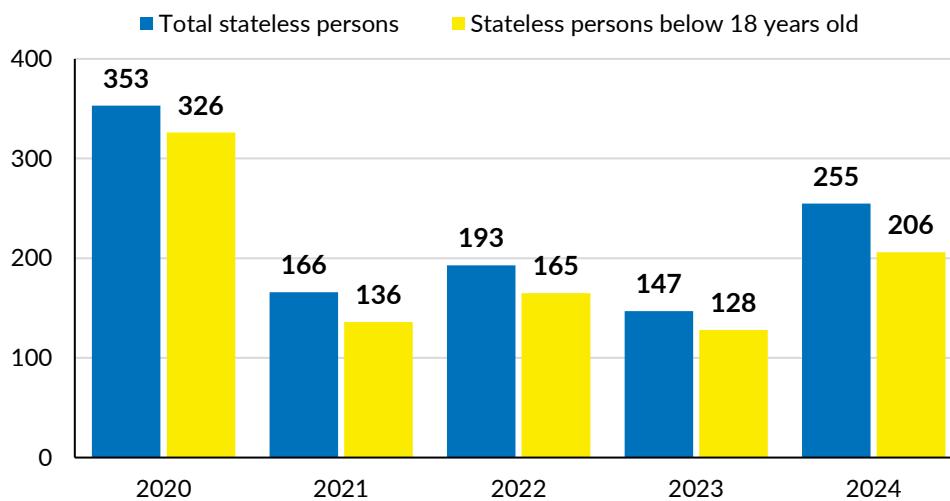
Stateless asylum-seekers are excluded from the chart due to lack of information on the demographic composition of the group.

Sources:

- Statistics Denmark

Figure 3

Stateless persons in Denmark who have acquired citizenship



Note:

In Denmark, the number of stateless persons acquiring citizenship has remained relatively stable since 2021, with a marked increase again in 2024, particularly among children.

Source:

- Statistics Denmark

Global Alliance to End Statelessness

Building on the progress of UNHCR's #IBelong Campaign (2014-2024), UNHCR and States, civil society, stateless-led organizations, international organizations, and academia launched the [Global Alliance to End Statelessness](#), a new multi-stakeholder initiative that seeks to accelerate action on pledges to resolve statelessness.

Read more about the Global Alliance to End Statelessness at: statelessnessalliance.org/