

# The right to come and go

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- translated into English from Danish by Kristian Katholm Olsen

*Why does the majority of the Danish population accept what should be labelled as immoral? That there are two types of World citizens: Those who can travel freely around and those who run into obstacles when they move?*

Yet again we have been witnesses to a grotesque case where the Danish authorities have tried to prevent a human being, who is not born in Denmark, from permanently settling down and live and work here. We are even so far-fetched that it appears from the news media that the universities must use some of the scientists' resources trying to help foreign colleagues with the residence permit. A professor is quoted that Denmark is about to squander its international competitive research environment.

With varying intervals a case pops up, where a bureaucrat finds an excuse to deny a fellow human being access to live in our land flowing with milk and honey. After that we get the case illuminated from all sides a couple of days or weeks. Dominant and less dominant politicians and debaters turn their thumbs upwards or downwards as it was a gladiator battle in Ancient Rome. In the middle of the whole fuss one of the key figures feels pressed to – in a more or less humble voice – to say something like: “You don't decide for yourself whom you fall in love with.”

Here it is implicit that the key figures ask for an apology. But it should be the bureaucrats and the small-minded politicians and debaters who were ashamed. And it is difficult to have room for getting further perspectives into the debate about the very appropriate in preventing other people in coming and going as they please.

Well, should talented scientists and other competent persons with origins in the warm parts of the Earth not stay there to render much needed support to the development of the poor countries? Has their not regularly been discussions about the so called brain draining, the term used to describe that educated people from the South use their talents in the northern countries?

According to the World Bank the foreign aid to the South from the North is through the last many years approximately the third of the amount that people from the South staying in the North send home to their lands of origin, the so called remittances. Thus, you cannot conclude that it is a help to development if the people in the poor countries stay in these countries. It is rather a help to development if they emigrate. Other good arguments for the freedom of movement are to be found in e. g. <http://www.avisafortheworld.org/en/index.html> which my mother network, Emmaus International, is responsible for.

The European countries and not at least Denmark are stuck on an idea that every single country gets a better economy by using great sums on guarding borders, preventing people in coming in and throwing a lot of those out who have come in at the same time as an army of paper pushers make sure that the inhospitality is covered legally and administratively.

At any rate it is not a productive work to limit people's movement in a modern world where communication, pollution, capital, and a lot of other phenomena know less and less about borders.

Back in history there have always been widespread migrations, and they have contributed to economic, social and cultural development of the populations both in the societies which sent people away and the societies which accepted people.

In those cases where societies have isolated themselves from the World and no longer have accepted a mix of people, there has been a decline both economically and socially, and the society has slid towards xenophobia, withdrawnness and totalitarian tendencies.

Domestically in the European Union the free movement between rich and less rich countries is a success, which has strengthened Europe without causing massive emigrations towards the more prosperous nations of the union. It is the financial speculation and the absence of collectively accepted regulation which currently brings danger to the European countries, not the free movement.

Still: Every time the paper pushers want to split a family, the debate circulates around the threatened person and whether he should get permission to stay. The debate is rarely or never about the very morally questionable about the fact, that some people on this planet can move almost everywhere while others do not have this freedom.

There clearly is a long way to a situation where we Danes take a serious grapple with our withdrawnness and pettiness.