
Denmark: Council of Churches opposed to obligation to translate homilies and sermons into Danish. “Violation of the tradition of freedom and diversity”

The Danish Council of Churches has decided to make public a letter that was sent to Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen last October. The letter is about a government’s draft law that could introduce the obligation for homilies and sermons delivered in other languages to be translated into Danish. “We see that under this law the different denominations of the Church of Denmark”, namely “the Catholic, Orthodox and Anglican Churches, the German and French Reformed Churches, and also a wide range of free churches and migrant communities”, will be “placed under suspicion”. According to the representatives of the 16 denominations that make up the Council, not only is the proposal “a violation of the Danish tradition of freedom and diversity, which is our pride”, but it is also “against the Lutheran tradition, which always emphasizes the importance of the mother tongue”. The proposed law “will not create more openness, but more control and unnecessary work for the single preacher”, and will “give rise to distrust of people who, by their diversity, make a contribution to the Danish society”. The letter also notes that the translation requirement will be an economic burden for small religious communities. It highlights that Danish faith communities around the world “contribute to society” and are not “parallel societies, simply because they preach or speak in a language other than the language of the country they live in”. “The Council has now decided to make the letter public”, the secretary of the Council of Churches, Mads Christoffersen, told SIR news agency, “as a contribution to the ongoing debate on the draft law that the government is expected to debate in February”.

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