Country Profile

Denmark is a part of Scandinavia and a member of the European Union. The total area is 43,000 square kilometres, not including the Faroe Islands and Greenland. The population covers around 5,3 million people with a density of 123 persons per square kilometre. About 85% of Denmark's population lives in the cities and towns.

Denmark in Europe

The European Union covers 15 member countries with a total area of about 3,2 million square kilometres and about 375 million inhabitants. The average population density is 117 persons per square kilometre.

Denmark is low-lying country, its highest point rising 175 metres above the sea. Approximately 10% of the country is used for urban zones and transport installations, 67% is agricultural land, 12% is forests, and the rest is semi-natural areas such as hearths, lakes and streams.

Denmark consists of Jylland, a peninsula, the two major islands Zealand and Funen, and an archipelago of around 400 islands of which around 80 are inhabited. The total coastline stretches 7,300 kilometres.

The gross domestic product per capita is around 251,000 DKK (2001) equivalent to 33,000 USD. Agriculture and other primary production accounts for around 5 %, industry and construction 25%, private services 50%, and the public sector around 20%.

Denmark is constitutional monarchy governed by a representative democracy organised on three levels: at the national level there is a parliament with legislative power and ministries responsible for certain fields; at the regional level there are 14 county councils responsible for regional matters such as hospitals, upper secondary schools, major roads, rural planning and administration; at the local level there are 275 municipal councils responsible for all local public functions. On average a municipality has around 20,000 inhabitants.

The local authorities administer more than 50% of the total public expenditure. More than half of the local government expenditure is financed through local income taxes. The municipal taxes range from 14 to 22 % and the county taxes from 9 to 11%.

The total number of residential units are about 2,5 million. About 60% are owner occupied and 40 % are leased. About half of the leased units are private tenant housing, the other half is non-profit housing.

Copenhagen is the capital. Greater Copenhagen has 1,7 million inhabitants, one third of the Danish population. The next four largest cities are Århus (population 275,000), Odense (180,000), Aalborg (160,000) and Esbjerg (85,000).

Wonderful Copenhagen

The capital of Copenhagen was founded around 1000 years ago. The medieval urban structure of the inner city is still present. The city is dominated by the old renaissance towers rather than down town high raise buildings.

Hillerod is a typical provincial town near Frederiksborg Castle.

Rural zone regulations protect the old villages and attractive landscapes.

The Land Administration System

The National Survey and Cadastre Denmark is responsible for geodetic and small-scale topographic surveys and mapping, nautical charting, and for maintaining and updating the cadastral register and maps. Cadastral work, or surveying for legal purposes, in Denmark is the monopoly of licensed surveyors in private practice. There are about 100 surveying firms employing about 300 surveyors in total.

The present cadastre was set up 150 years ago and covers the total of about 1,5 million properties in Denmark. It consists of a parcel register, a register of control points, and an archive of the legal survey measurements and the cadastral maps, originally in a scale of 1:4000. The cadastre is updated daily. Both the register and the maps are computerised and the cadastral information is available on the Web.

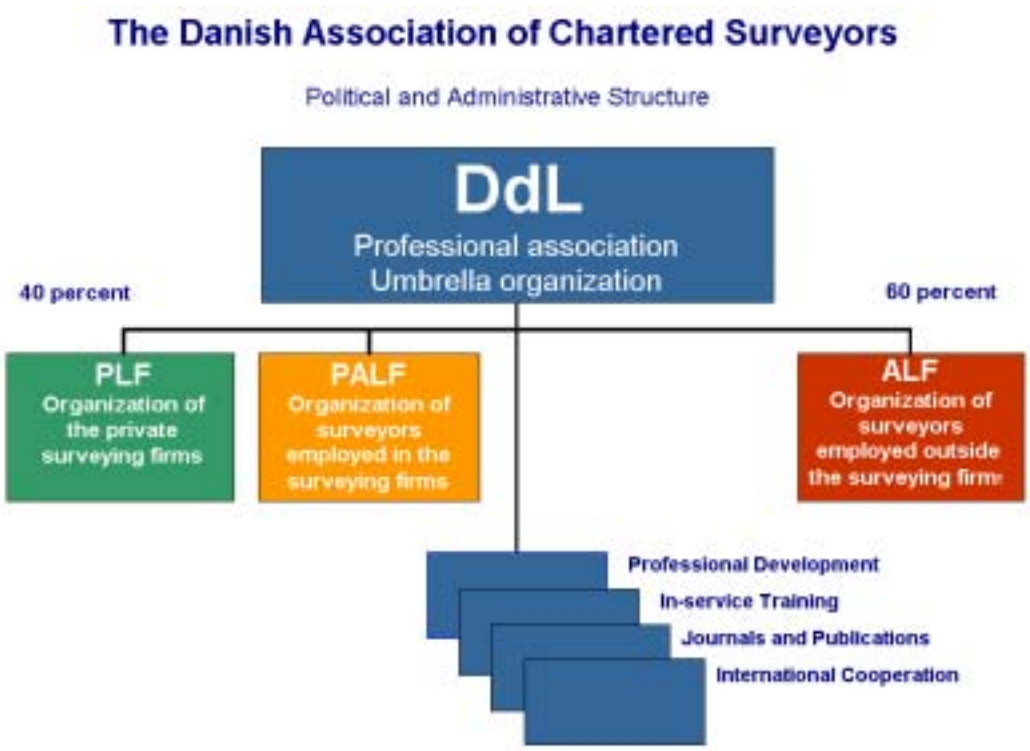
Legal rights to land such as ownership, mortgage and easements are recorded in the Land Book at the local district courts. The Land Book is based on the cadastral identification of the land parcels. The Land Book is computerised and the information is available on-line.

In Denmark all national registers of property data have been computerised. The registers are formed into a network of systems to accommodate the use of digital mapping and to facilitate land-use management. The National Survey and Cadastre is responsible for the coordination.

Land-use is controlled through comprehensive spatial planning. The regional (county) and local (municipal) authorities must each establish, adopt and revise comprehensive structure planning and a set of land-use regulations, totally covering their respective areas. The structural plans are implemented by providing detailed local plans with binding effects on the landowners. Public participation is ensured in all planning procedures.

The surveying profession

Professional surveyors in Denmark have a university degree, M.Sc. in Surveying, Planning and Land Management. Their professional fields of activity are surveying and large scale mapping, cadastral tasks, spatial information management, land-use management, and spatial planning.

In 2002 there are about 900 active surveyors in Denmark. In total the number is about 1200 including pensioned members, student members, etc. Just about all surveyors are members of the Danish Association of Chartered Surveyors. About half of the active surveyors (40%) are employed in private practices concerned with cadastral work, mapping, engineering surveys, and consulting on legal land-use issues. The other half are employed by ministries and national agencies, counties and municipalities (45%) with tasks such as spatial information management, land-use management and spatial planning; or by other private companies such as engineering firms etc. (15%) with work areas such as engineering surveys, mapping, IT-development, and spatial planning.

The surveying profession in Denmark is organised under The Danish Association of Chartered Surveyors (DdL) in three main groupings: the private licensed surveyors being the owners of the private surveying firms, the surveyors employed in the private surveying firms, and, finally, the surveyors employed in the public sector or in the private sector outside the private surveying firms. The organisational structure is shown in the diagram below.