

**NOTES ON THE GOVERNMENT OF ICELAND'S
NINETEENTH AND TWENTIETH REPORT ON THE
IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONVENTION ON THE
ELIMINATION OF ALL FORMS OF RACIAL
DISCRIMINATION**

Submitted by the Icelandic Human Rights Centre to CERD in advance of the Committee's
consideration of Iceland's nineteenth and twentieth periodic report

2009



Hafnarstræti 20 - 101 Reykjavík - Iceland
Phone + 354 552 27 20 - Fax + 354 552 27 21
E-mail: info@humanrights.is



MANNRÉTTINDASKRIFSTOFA ÍSLANDS
ICELANDIC HUMAN RIGHTS CENTRE

CONTENTS

Introduction.....	3
Part I. Implementation of Articles 1-7 of the Convention	4
Article 1.....	4
Article 2.....	4
Article 5(b)	5
Article 5(b)-(e).....	5
Article 5(d)	8
Article 5(e)	8
Article 5 (f)	8
Article 7.....	8
Conclusion	9



MANNRÉTTINDASKRIFSTOFA ÍSLANDS
ICELANDIC HUMAN RIGHTS CENTRE

INTRODUCTION

Although the number of non-citizens and persons of immigrant origin residing in Iceland is small by European standards, recent years have seen a significant increase in foreigners moving to the country. The Icelandic population has changed from a largely homogeneous and mono-cultural one to a multicultural one in little more than a decade. On 1 January 2008, there were 21,434 foreign nationals resident in the country, representing about 6.8% of the total population of 313,376. By comparison, the proportions in 1996 and 2000 were 1.9% and 3.1%, respectively.

The influx of foreign nationals was precipitated by an economic boom fuelled by the expansion of the banking sector and a resulting property bubble. A large proportion of foreigners were employed by the construction sector, as well as cleaning and the service industries. As a consequence of the economic collapse of 2008, unemployment in Iceland has soared, with the construction sector particularly decimated. This has resulted in foreigners making up a disproportionate percentage of the unemployed. In their October 2009 figures, the Directorate of Labour reported that foreign nationals accounted for 15% of the unemployed. This however does not tell the whole story. Many foreigners work in Iceland on temporary work permits, with many continually renewing these permits. When these workers lose their jobs they are not entitled to unemployment benefits and are thus not reflected in the Directorate's figures.

As a result of the financial crisis, increased unemployment and foreign debt there is concern that anti-immigrant sentiment and nationalist tendencies are on the rise.

The Government's report provides an extensive overview of national legislative, judicial, administrative and other measures that are significant to the implementation of the Convention.

In recent years important steps have been taken by the Icelandic Government to improve the status of foreigners and people of immigrant origin in Iceland. Notably, the Althingi passed important amendments to the Act on Foreigners in June 2008, which include several provisions aimed at strengthening and clarifying the legislation. In general, the Icelandic Human Rights Centre welcomes these amendments although it considers changes introducing more onerous requirements for permanent residence permits uncalled for. This will be discussed below. The Centre also commends the Government for adopting, in 2007, a comprehensive policy on the integration of immigrants and action plan on the same issue adopted in 2008. Despite these laudable measures, several issues identified in the Government's report call for further elaboration and, in some cases, improvement.

A report from a recent study on discrimination in Iceland may be found in Addendum I.



MANNRÉTTINDASKRIFSTOFA ÍSLANDS
ICELANDIC HUMAN RIGHTS CENTRE

PART I. IMPLEMENTATION OF ARTICLES 1 -7 OF THE CONVENTION

ARTICLE 1

There is no definition of racial discrimination in Icelandic legislation. The substantive provisions of Convention have not been incorporated into domestic law, a part from Article 4, partially. It should be noted that the Icelandic Government has pledged to incorporate the Convention on the Rights of the Child into national law.

ARTICLE 2

ANTI-DISCRIMINATION LEGISLATION IN ICELAND

There is only minimal provision in Icelandic legislation for combating discrimination. A conference organised by the Icelandic Human Rights Centre and the Ministry for Social Affairs and Social Security in January 2009 illustrated this fact and it was the conclusion of participants that comprehensive equality legislation was sorely needed in Iceland.

Article 65 of the Icelandic Constitution sets out the principle of equality before the law, including protection against ethnic or racial discrimination. The principle of equality is implemented through a handful of national acts of law such as the Act on Administrative Procedure, No. 37/1993, the General Penal Code, The General Penal Code, No. 19/1940, the Primary School Act, No. 66/1995, the Rights of Patients Act, No. 74/1997 and the Postal Service Act, No. 19/2002.

In addition, Iceland is party to several international instruments containing non-discrimination provisions, such as the majority of the UN Conventions although Iceland has not signed or ratified the Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families. Preparation for the ratification of CRPD and its Protocol is underway. The Additional Protocol to the Convention on Cybercrime, concerning the criminalization of acts of a racist and xenophobic nature committed through computer systems has not been ratified. Protocol 12 to the ECHR has been signed but the Government has stated that ratification is not on the agenda until the scope of the Protocol has been clarified by the ECtHR.

In its 2005 Concluding Observations the Committee encouraged the Icelandic authorities to sign and ratify the Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons of 1954 and the Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness of 1961. The UNHCR has also strongly urged Iceland to become party to these Conventions. The Icelandic Human Rights Centre and the Icelandic Red Cross have also advocated for the ratification of the Conventions. The Centre is not aware of any concrete efforts towards ratification of these instruments.

Important also in relation to the provisions of CERD are the Racial Equality Directive 2000/43/EC and the Employment Equality Directive 2000/78/EC which have as of yet not been transposed into Icelandic law. In 2005 a Committee was established under the auspices of the Ministry for Social Affairs with the aim of addressing this issue. In 2009 the Committee published its findings, recommending the transposition of the Directives into domestic law. The Icelandic Human Rights Centre is not aware of any concrete steps taken by the authorities towards transposition.



MANNRÉTTINDASKRIFSTOFA ÍSLANDS
ICELANDIC HUMAN RIGHTS CENTRE

ARTICLE 3

The issue of apartheid or segregation is not pertinent in Iceland.

ARTICLE 5(B)

In 2006, as many as 40% of women staying at the Women's Shelter in Reykjavik were immigrants.¹ Immigrant women, victims of domestic violence, are a particularly vulnerable group. Formerly, if a foreign woman who had been granted a residence permit on grounds of marriage or cohabitation left her partner within three years of being granted the permit, she lost her residence rights. As a result, women are reported to have endured abusive relationships in order to avoid being deported. The Icelandic authorities claimed that they were aware of this situation and that in practice they renewed the residence permits of foreign women, victims of domestic violence. However, the women concerned were not necessarily aware of this practice and the letter of the law had a powerful deterrent effect in terms of women not leaving abusive relationships. Fortunately, this problem has been addressed by means of two amendments to the Act on Foreign Nationals. One, stipulating that women of immigrant origin will not be granted permits to stay based on marriage or co-habitation with 'known perpetrators' of violence against women and the other, setting out an exception for women leaving abusive relationships to apply for a different type of residence permits. The Icelandic Human Rights Centre welcomes these amendments but reiterates its view that more needs to be done to protect and assist women of immigrant origin and provide them with opportunities to learn the Icelandic language and to participate in society.

ARTICLE 5(B)-(E)

Refugees and asylum seekers

With the enactment of the Act on Foreign Nationals in 2002, provisions for granting of refugee or asylum status according to the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol were included for the first time in Icelandic law. However, until 2007-2008, the Icelandic authorities demonstrated extreme reluctance to grant protection to asylum seekers. During the period of 2005-2007 Iceland deported asylum seekers to Russia, Kazakhstan, Georgia, Afghanistan, Liberia, Romania, Albania, Bulgaria, Iran, Ukraine, Lithuania, Sudan, Croatia and Israel. If a person falls under the Dublin Regulation he or she will without exception be returned to the country responsible for examining the application under the Regulation. The Icelandic Human Rights Centre is of the opinion that humanitarian considerations should play a more significant role in the Icelandic asylum procedure even when the Dublin regulation applies. In 2008, three people were sent back to Greece under the Regulation, contrary to recommendations by human rights organisations and the UNHCR based on the adverse conditions and inadequate procedure asylum seekers face in the country. In the

¹



MANNRÉTTINDASKRIFSTOFA ÍSLANDS
ICELANDIC HUMAN RIGHTS CENTRE

case of a fourth man, the European Court of Human Rights issued interim measures, to halt the deportation of the asylum seeker, who was suffering from health problems, to Greece.

On a positive note, however, the year 2009 saw five people being granted refugee status; an additional ten received permits to stay on humanitarian grounds. This is a complete change in policy as previously only two people had been granted refugee status in Iceland. Furthermore, recent years have also seen regular reception of 'quota' refugees, most recently from Colombia and Palestine.

The 2008 amendments to Act on Foreigners significantly clarified the provisions on permits to stay on humanitarian grounds, these can now form the basis for permanent residency in Iceland which an important improvement for those in need of this type of permits. It should be noted, however, that although the law provides for granting permits on this basis, it is not clear enough what rights and duties this type of permit entails and on what grounds it can be granted, resulting in the Directorate of Immigration having a wide margin of appreciation in relation to the granting and revocation of permits of this nature. Furthermore, the provision on humanitarian grounds permits does not set out whether permit holders are allowed to work.

The Icelandic Human Rights Center has raised concern over the length and process the asylum procedure in Iceland, and until recently, the fact that no-one was granted refugee status. Recently, a Committee established under the auspices of the Ministry of Justice published a report on means to improve the asylum procedure in Iceland. The report is excellent although some of the Committees findings could be more progressive. As an example, the majority of the Committee rejects the notion of granting asylum seekers free legal assistance at all stages of their application, as recommended by the Icelandic Human Rights Centre, several other NGOs, the UNHCR and international monitoring bodies. Another issue of contention is the establishment of an independent judicial body to review the decisions of the Directorate of Immigration and/or the Ministry of Justice in cases concerning the rejection of asylum application or expulsion of asylum-seekers. The decisions of the Directorate of Immigration may only be appealed to the Ministry of Justice, whose decisions, in turn, are only subject to a limited court review on procedure rather than substance.

The rights of asylum seekers during the asylum process are not clear in the Act on Foreign Nationals. It is important that at least minimum standards of reception and the services asylum seekers are entitled to are laid down clearly in the law. Currently, the provision of language classes, training, education, work permits, etc., appears haphazard. Since 2004, those awaiting a decision in their asylum applications have been accommodated in Reykjanesbær, a small village 45 minutes from the Capital, close to the international airport. Here asylum seekers are provided with food, limited services and a small weekly stipend amounting to approx. 14 €. Asylum seekers have waited for years for a decision in their case with those going through the lengthier process complaining of the heavy toll months of idleness and uncertainty take on their mental well-being as the reception centre and Reykjanesbær offers limited job -, training - and leisure opportunities. Furthermore, all official bodies and services for foreigners in this part of the country are located in Reykjavik, resulting in inconveniences and as their stipend is approximately the equivalent of a return bus-ticket to Reykjavik, asylum seekers cannot visit the City often.



MANNRÉTTINDASKRIFSTOFA ÍSLANDS
ICELANDIC HUMAN RIGHTS CENTRE

Upon the request of a foreigner who has been finally denied asylum or a permit to stay, the Directorate of Immigration may, in cases when implementation of such decision is suspended, grant him or her, a provisional permit to stay until the decision is implemented. Each provisional permit can be granted for a period of up to one year and permits of this kind do not form a basis for the issue of a residency permit. In practice, temporary permits are generally granted for a period of six months. Asylum seekers who cannot be sent from the country, for one reason or another, receive this permit for extended periods, for six months at a time. The law does not set out the maximum number of provisional permits a person can get, so in practice a person could be in this provisional situation for many years. It would be reasonable, after a certain amount of time has passed, to provide persons with a more humane arrangement. As temporary work permits for foreigners are issued for a particular job (see above) employers are understandably reluctant to employ a person who might have to leave the country within a few months, the six month permits result in persons spending long periods idle, dependent on social security, with the accompanying mental anguish. The Centre is familiar with a case where a person has been living in the limbo of temporary permits for seven years.

Finally, it should be noted that the Act on Foreign National still contains, in Article 45, a provision which excludes those foreigners who present a danger to national security from the protection against being returned to places where they would face the risk of serious human rights violations. It is the view of the Icelandic Human Rights Centre, that this provision is in breach of the Iceland's human rights obligations under, *inter alia*, the ECHR, as the European Court of Human Rights ruled in the *Saadi* case that a person at a real risk of torture in the receiving state cannot be returned, no matter how "undesirable or dangerous" he or she is.

Trafficking in human beings, especially women for sexual exploitation

There are indications that Iceland is now a destination country for sex-trafficking. A victim of trafficking recently sought help with the authorities and there is anecdotal evidence that some foreign women working in strip clubs are victims of trafficking. There are stories of women arriving in the country to work in a strip club having their passports and return tickets taken from them and being forced to work off their debt before being able to leave the club. In a magazine interview, one of Iceland's most prominent strip club owners admitted that he restricts his dancers' freedom of movement to some extent when they are off duty. Furthermore, there is evidence of prostitution in connection with these clubs. Fortunately, a new Act on Restaurants, Accommodation and Entertainment Facilities, No. 86/2007 entered into force on 1 July 2007. The Act bans all forms of nude shows in restaurants and clubs but exceptions can be made if the establishment in question receives positive assessments from specified authorities. This has led to a significant decrease in the number of strip-clubs operating in the country and as the purchase of sexual services became punishable under a new provision in the Penal Code in 2009, this will surely contribute to curbing the demand for trafficked women for sexual exploitation.

The Icelandic Human Rights Centre and the women's movement in Iceland have advocated for the provision of victim and witness protection for survivors of human trafficking in domestic legislation for many years. Several draft laws setting out victim- and witness protection for victims of trafficking have been presented to the Althingi but none have been adopted.



MANNRÉTTINDASKRIFSTOFA ÍSLANDS
ICELANDIC HUMAN RIGHTS CENTRE

ARTICLE 5(D)

In its Concluding Observations of 2005 the Committee recommended that Iceland reconsider the 24 year age requirement for residence permits based marriage as then set out in Article 13 of the Act on Foreigners, No. 96/2002. The purported aim of this requirement was to combat forced- and sham marriages. The Icelandic Human Rights Centre welcomes the amendments adopted in 2008 which removed the 24 year requirement. The Centre, finds however, the new paragraph stipulating an investigation of all couples where one spouse is 24 years of age or younger overly onerous, raising questions in relation to the prohibition of discrimination, the right to marriage and respect for private and family life. An investigation should only take place if there is reason to believe that marriage or registered partnership has not been entered into willingly by both partners.

ARTICLE 5(E)

The Icelandic Human Rights Centre welcomes amendments to the Act on Foreign Nationals, No. 96/2002, from 2008 which aim to remedy the problematic situation of recently arrived immigrants on temporary family residence permits reaching 18 years of age who are then required to fulfil the financial self-reliance requirement for regular residence permits. The amendments seek to ensure that young immigrant persons who have joined their family can continue to reside in Iceland under student residence permits. The first time the student permits are issued, 50% of courses shall be completed successfully; this is a welcome change to the legislation.

ARTICLE 5 (F)

Incidents of refusal of access to public spaces and harassment are still reported, despite Article 180 of the Penal Code No. 19/1940, which provides that denying a person service, or access to any public area or place intended for general public use, on account of that person's colour, race or ethnic origin, is punishable by fines or imprisonment for up to six years. According to the authorities, no complaints have been received on account of refusal of access under Article 180 and there has yet to be a single criminal conviction under this Article. **The Icelandic Human Rights Centre recommends that police, business owners and staff in the hospitality industry receive anti-discrimination training and be made aware that denial of services on the grounds of race or origin is a criminal offence. Furthermore, the Centre strongly supports the Committee's recommendation of 2005 on the reversal of the burden of proof.**

ARTICLE 7

The establishment of the Multicultural and Information Centre (MCI) is a positive step to ensure that immigrants in Iceland know their rights and can participate actively in Icelandic society. However, the Intercultural Centre in Reykjavík has been closed in December 2009 and its future is uncertain. The Centre carried out a number of activities of great importance for the immigrant community in Iceland, some of which it appears that the MCI cannot take over. While the loss of language courses and translation services would be a blow, these functions could potentially be taken over by other bodies. The Intercultural Centre's legal services, general advice and counselling for immigrants are however



MANNRÉTTINDASKRIFSTOFA ÍSLANDS
ICELANDIC HUMAN RIGHTS CENTRE

sorely missed; **it is imperative that this aspect of the Centre's functions be continued in one form or another as no other non-governmental body currently has the necessary expertise and experience to provide these services.**

In its Concluding Observations of 2005 the CERD Committee noted that direct funding to the Icelandic Human Rights Centre had been cut and that funds previously earmarked for the Centre had been reallocated to human rights projects instead. The cut in funding gravely affected the capacity of the Centre to fulfil its functions but generous support from other NGOs, the City of Reykjavik, Labour Unions, corporate funds and project specific funding from the European Commission kept it going until public funding was reinstated in 2008 and 2009 with 10 M allocated to the Centre in the national budget. The Centre also concluded an agreement with the Ministry for Foreign Affairs for 2008-2010 to carry out certain projects for an annual grant of 4 M. Public funding is now more important than ever as due to the economic recession corporate and private foundations have all but disappeared. The 10 M allocation is a mere minimum to keep the Centre running.

The Committee notes, in its Concluding Observations of 2005, the absence of a NHRI in accordance with the Paris Principles. The Icelandic Human Rights Centre has effectively carried out the majority of the functions of a NHRI for many years and has and its structure and activities comply with the Principles. The Centre has informed that it is prepared to formally take on the role of a NHRI in the event of the formal establishment of an Icelandic NHRI, for which it has advocated for many years.

CONCLUSION

In general, there still appears to be an underlying tendency to view persons of immigrant origin as an economic resource rather than as full members of Icelandic society, who are entitled to the corresponding rights. Despite recent efforts to address issues of racism and discrimination, gaps still remain in legislative protection. Limited research concerning the situation of persons of immigrant origin and issues regarding discrimination and racism has been undertaken. Although there have been important legislative improvements since the last report, the loss of frontline institutions in recent months are regrettable, particularly in light of the economic situation.



MANNRÉTTINDASKRIFSTOFA ÍSLANDS
ICELANDIC HUMAN RIGHTS CENTRE

Discrimination in Iceland. Survey carried out for the Icelandic Human Rights Centre and the Ministry of Social Affairs and Social Security compared to Special Eurobarometer 317

Supported by the Progress-Programme of the Commission of the European Union.

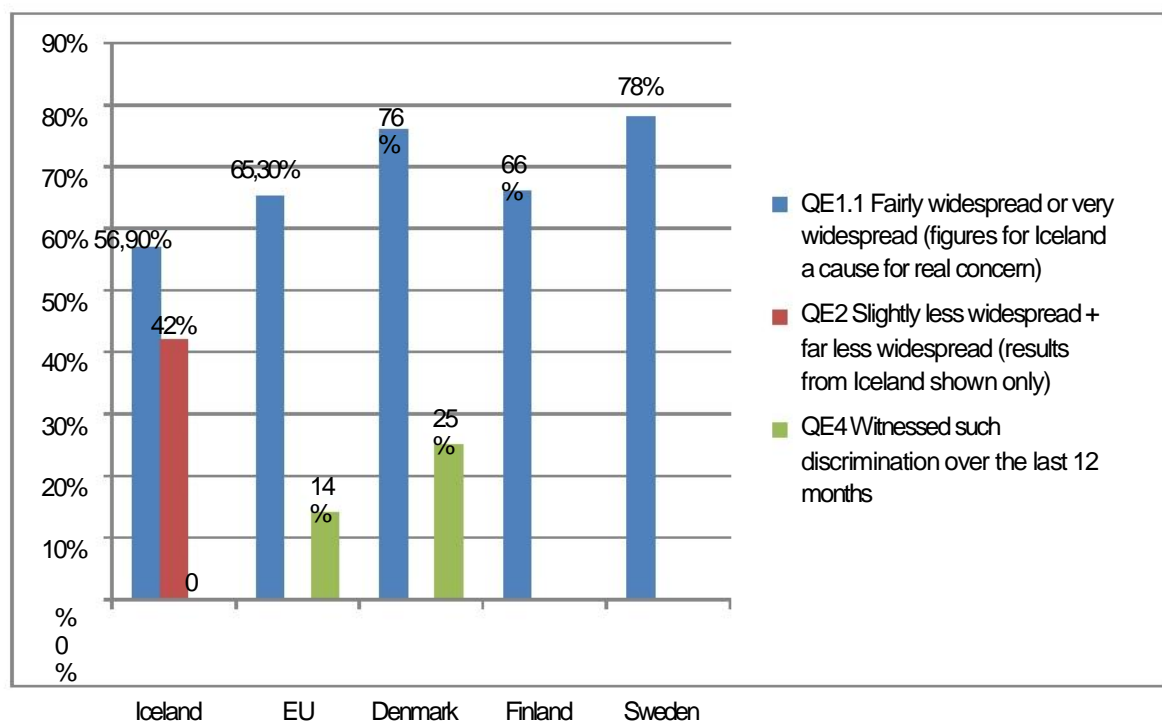
Table 1 Discrimination on grounds of ethnic origin (p.60)

QE1.1 For each of the following types of discrimination, could you please tell me whether, in your opinion, it is very widespread, fairly widespread, fairly rare or very rare in (OUR COUNTRY)? (p.61)

QE2 If you compare the situation with 5 years ago, would you say that the following the above types of discrimination are more common or less common in (OUR COUNTRY)? (p.66)

QE4 In the past 12 months, have you witnessed someone being discriminated against or harassed on the basis of one or more of the following grounds? YES (p.25)

Over all, respondents felt that discrimination and abuse in general had either remained consistent or decreased over the last 5 years, with the notable exception of discrimination or abuse based on ethnic origin, which half of the respondents felt had increased.





MANNRÉTTINDASKRIFSTOFA ÍSLANDS
ICELANDIC HUMAN RIGHTS CENTRE

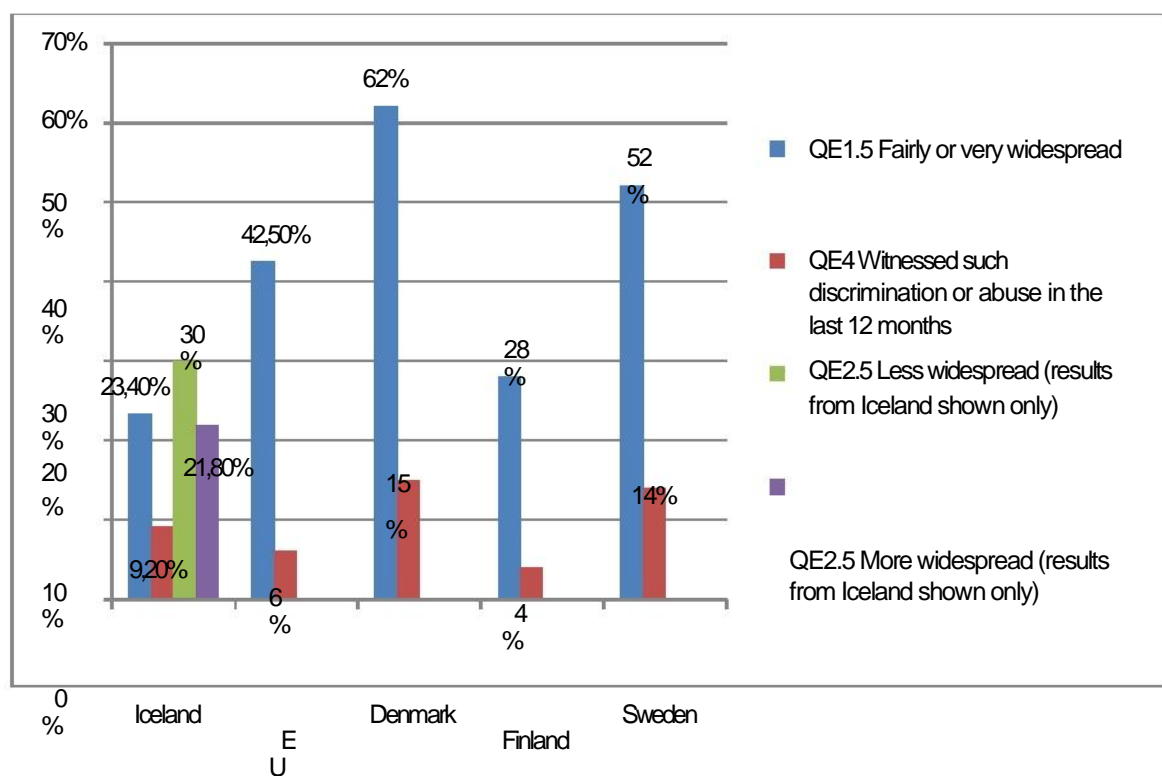
Table 2 Discrimination on grounds of religion or belief (p.99)

QE1.5 For each of the following types of the discrimination, could you please tell me whether, in your opinion, it is very widespread, fairly widespread, fairly rare or very rare in (OUR COUNTRY)? (p.100)

QE2.5 If you compare the situation with 5 years ago, would you say that the following types of discrimination are more common or less common in (OUR COUNTRY)? (p.104)

QE4 In the past 12 months, have you witnessed someone being discriminated against or harassed on the basis of one or more of the following grounds? YES (p.25)

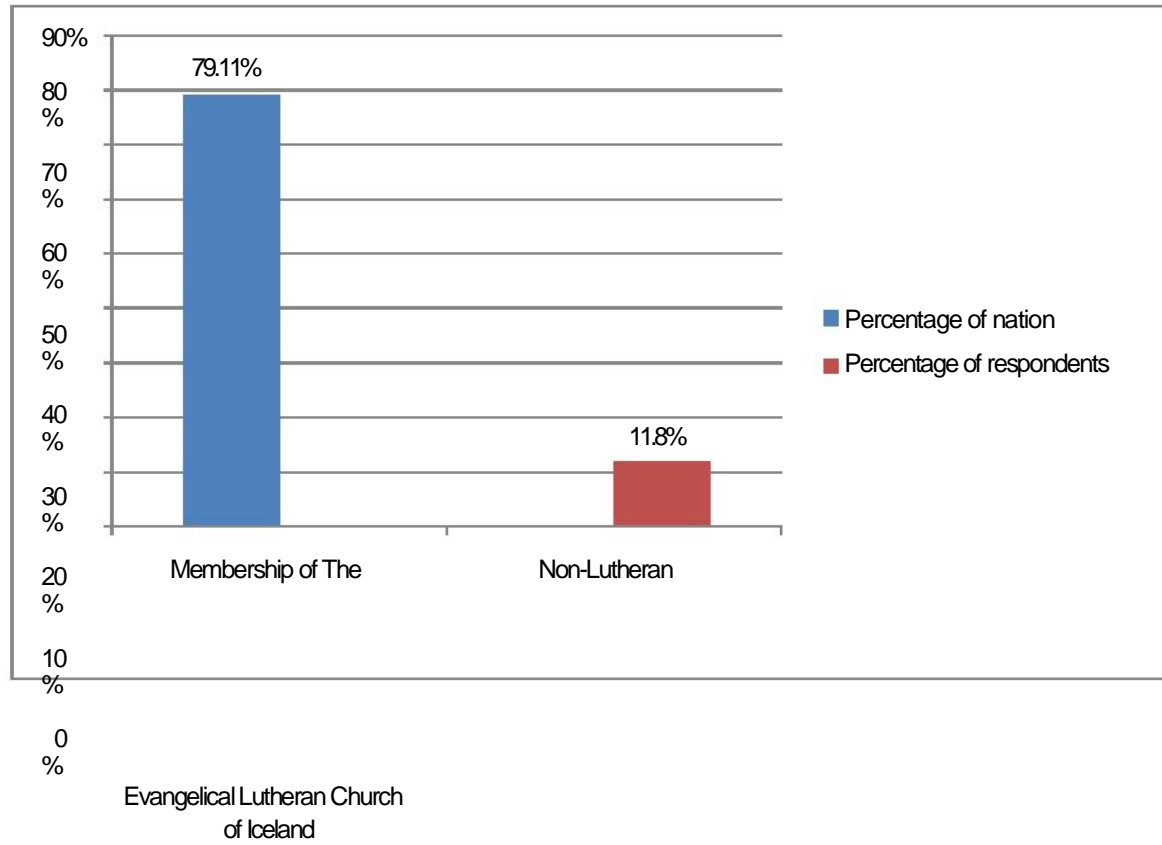
Icelandic results are likely affected by religious affiliation. See statistics in Table 3, below.





MANNRÉTTINDASKRIFSTOFA ÍSLANDS
ICELANDIC HUMAN RIGHTS CENTRE

Table 3 Religious affiliations of Icelandic respondents





MANNRÉTTINDASKRIFSTOFA ÍSLANDS
ICELANDIC HUMAN RIGHTS CENTRE

Table 4 Discrimination on grounds of disability (p.78)

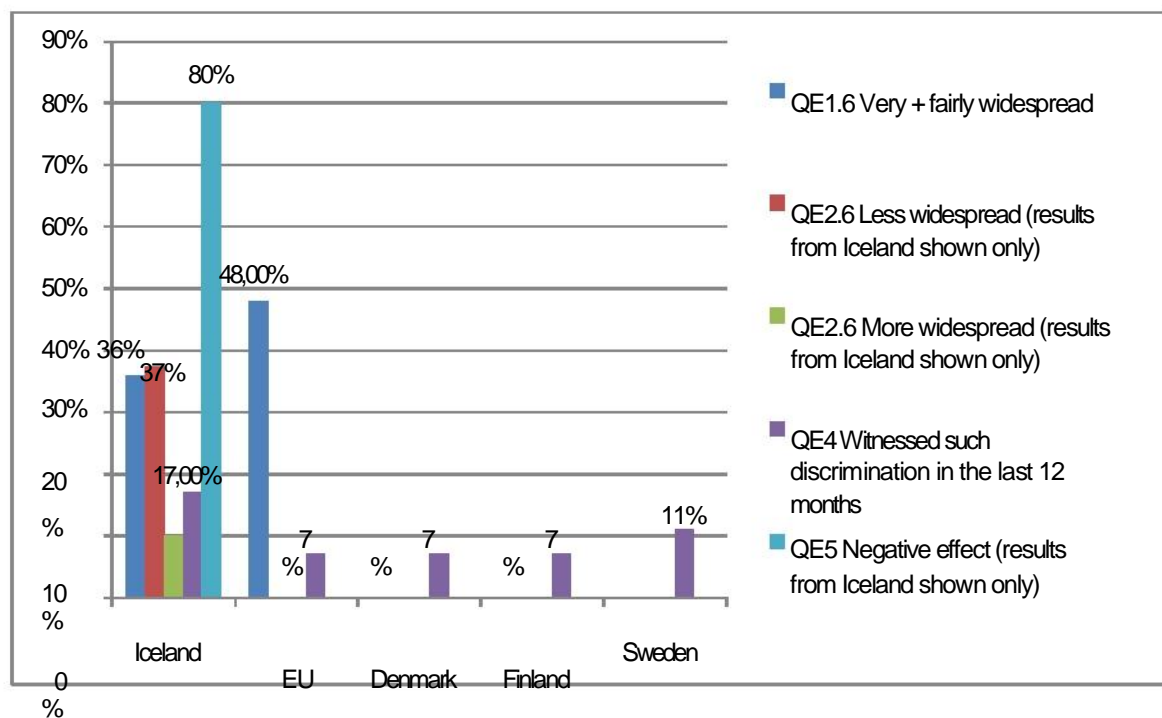
QE1.6 For each of the following types of discrimination, could you please tell me whether, in your opinion, it is very widespread, fairly widespread, fairly rare or very rare in (OUR COUNTRY)? (p.79)

QE2.6 If you compare the situation with 5 years ago, would you say that the following types of discrimination are more common or less common in (OUR COUNTRY)? (p.82)

QE4 In the past 12 months, have you witnessed someone being discriminated against or harassed on the basis of one or more of the following grounds? YES (p.25)

QE5 In (OUR COUNTRY), when a company wants to hire someone and has the choice between two candidates with equal skills and qualifications, which of the following criteria may, in your opinion, put one candidate at a disadvantage? (p.43)

Criteria: The candidate's looks, dress sense or presentations; the candidate's age; the candidate's skin colour or ethnic origin; a **disability**; the candidate's general physical appearance (size, weight, face, etc); the candidate's way of speaking, his or her accent; the expression of religious belief (for example, wearing a visible religious symbol; the candidate's gender; the candidate's sexual orientation (for example, being gay or lesbian); whether the candidate is a smoker or not; the candidate's name; the candidate's address.





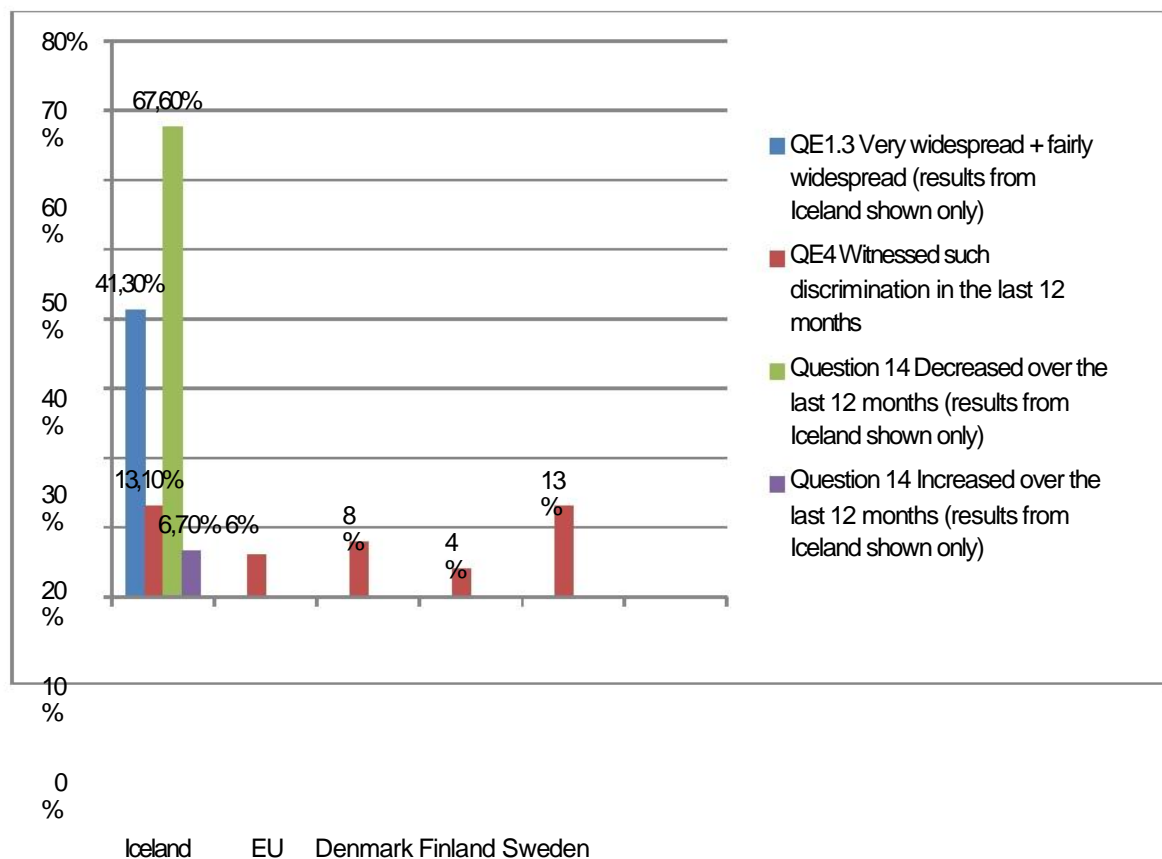
MANNRÉTTINDASKRIFSTOFA ÍSLANDS
ICELANDIC HUMAN RIGHTS CENTRE

Table 5 Discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation (p.85)

QE1.3 For each of the following types of discrimination, could you please tell me whether, in your opinion, it is very widespread, fairly widespread, fairly rare or very rare in (OUR COUNTRY)? (p.86)

QE4 In the past 12 months, have you witnessed someone being discriminated against or harassed on the basis of one or more of the following grounds? YES (p.25)

Question 14 Do you think that discrimination or harassment on grounds of sexual orientation has increased or decreased over the last 12 months? (From Icelandic survey, p.24)





MANNRÉTTINDASKRIFSTOFA ÍSLANDS
ICELANDIC HUMAN RIGHTS CENTRE

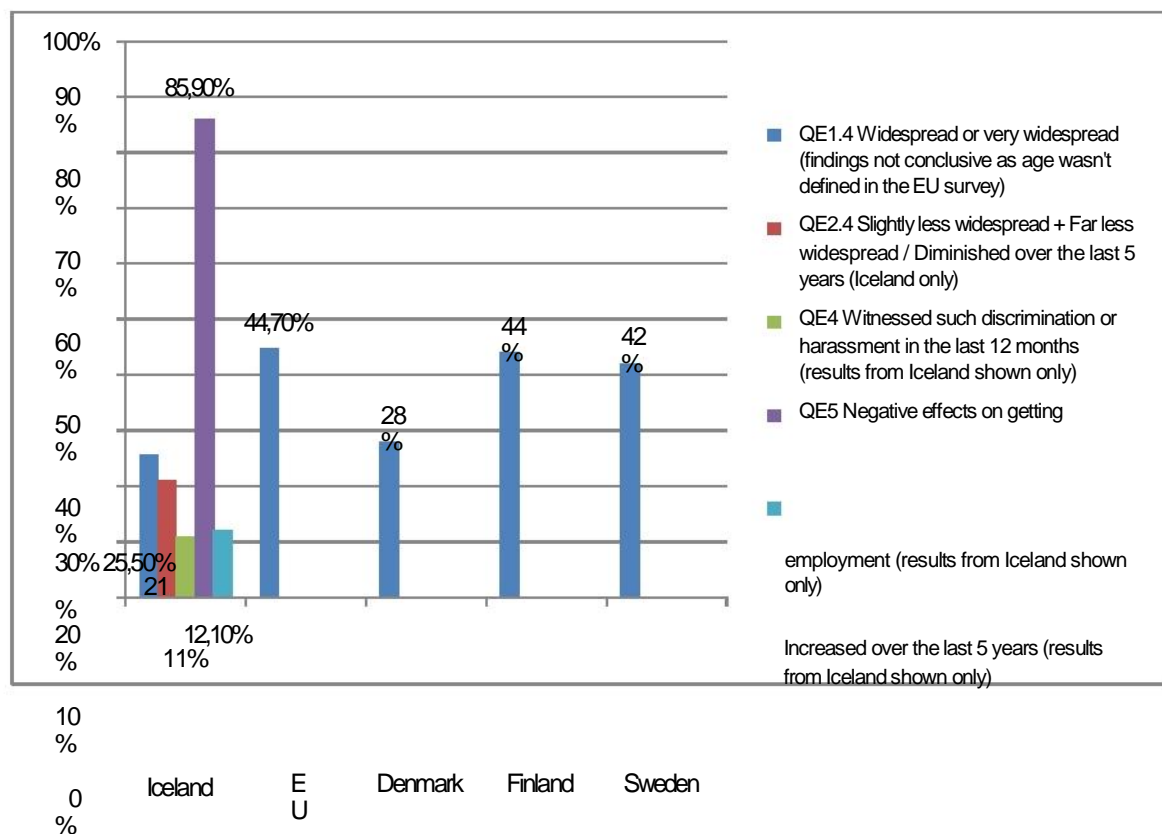
Table 6a Discrimination on grounds of age (over sixty, in Iceland, results not comparable) (p.71)

QE1.4 For each of the following discriminations, could you please tell me whether, in your opinion, it is very widespread, fairly widespread, fairly rare or very rare in (OUR COUNTRY)? (p.72)

QE2.4 If you compare the situation with 5 years ago, would you say that the following types of discrimination are more common or less common in (OUR COUNTRY)? (p.74)

QE4 In the past 12 months, have you witnessed someone being discriminated against or harassed on the basis of one or more of the following grounds? YES (p.25)

QE5 In (OUR COUNTRY), when a company wants to hire someone and has the choice between two candidates with equal skills and qualifications, which of the following criteria may, in your opinion, put one candidate at a disadvantage? (p.43)



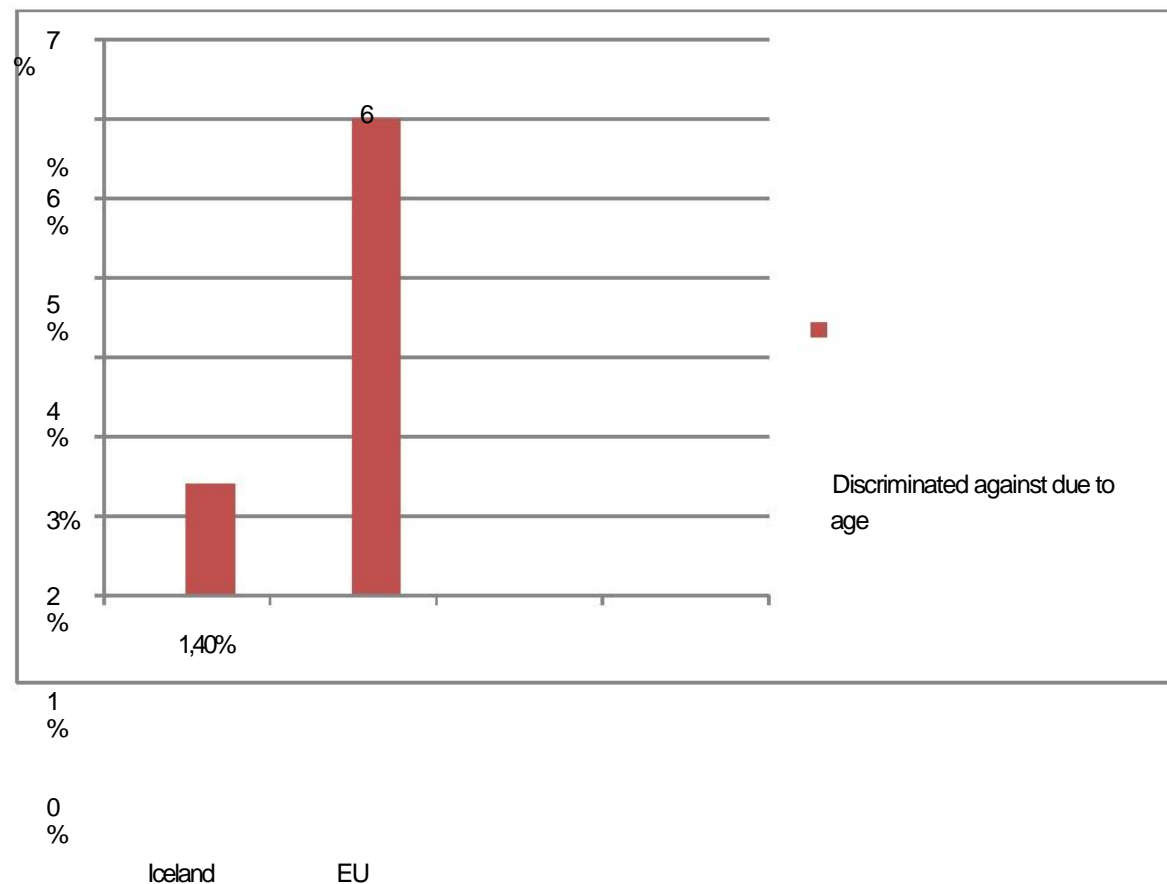


MANNRÉTTINDASKRIFSTOFA ÍSLANDS
ICELANDIC HUMAN RIGHTS CENTRE

Table 6b Discrimination on grounds of age (over sixty) (p.22)

QE3 In the past 12 months have you personally felt discriminated against or harrassed on the basis of one or more of the following grounds? YES (p.22-23)

Respondents were asked about their own experiences over the last 12 months in terms of discrimination. The figures are not comparable as EU figures are for all ages, but in Iceland only for the elderly.



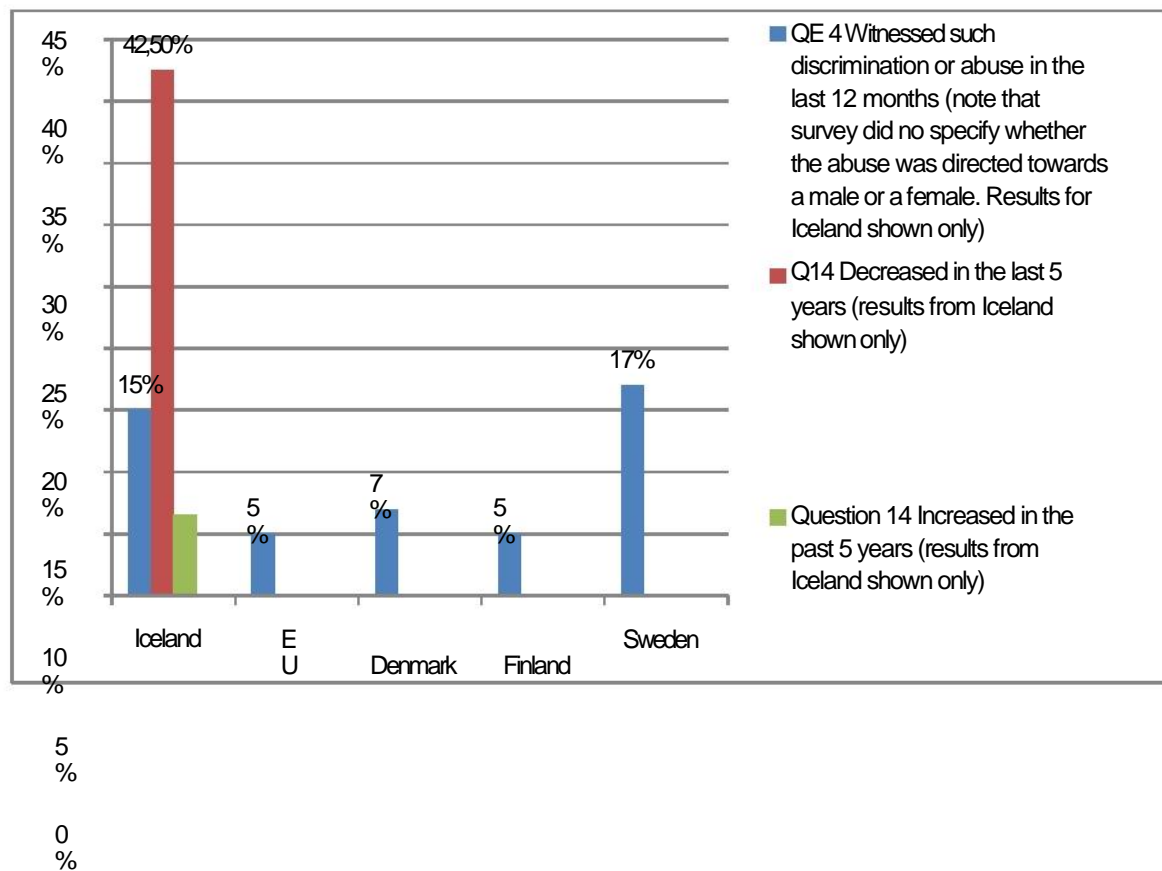


MANNRÉTTINDASKRIFSTOFA ÍSLANDS
ICELANDIC HUMAN RIGHTS CENTRE

Table 7 Discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation (p.85)

QE4 In the past 12 months, have you witnessed someone being discriminated against or harassed on the basis of one or more of the following grounds? **YES** (p.25)

Question 14 Do you think that discrimination or harassment on grounds of sexual orientation has increased or decreased over the last 12 months? (From Icelandic survey, p.24)





MANNRÉTTINDASKRIFSTOFA ÍSLANDS ICELANDIC HUMAN RIGHTS CENTRE

Table 8 Views about equal opportunities in employment - focus on candidate's age, skin colour or ethnic origin, disability, general physical appearance (size, weight, face, etc), gender and sexual orientation (p.44)

QE5 In (OUR COUNTRY), when a company wants to hire someone and has the choice between two candidates with equal skills and qualifications, which of the following criteria may, in your opinion, put a candidate at a disadvantage?

Criteria: The candidate's looks, dress sense or presentations; **the candidate's age**; **the candidate's skin colour or ethnic origin**; **a disability**; **the candidate's general physical appearance (size, weight, face, etc)**; the candidate's way of speaking, his or her accent; the expression of religious belief (for example, wearing a visible religious symbol; **the candidate's gender**; **the candidate's sexual orientation (for example, being gay or lesbian)**; whether the candidate is a smoker or not; the candidate's name; the candidate's address.

In Iceland, an additional criteria to consider was proficiency in the Icelandic language.

