**The unity of the Realm – The kingdom of Denmark**

The Faroe Islands and Greenland are parts of the Danish Realm. Due to their special status nationally, historically and geographically, these parts of the realm have an extensive type of self-government.

The Self-Government Arrangements transfer political competence and responsibility from the Danish political authorities to the Faroese and the Greenlandic political authorities. The Faroese and Greenlandic authorities administer the tasks taken over from the state, enact legislation in these specific fields and have the economic responsibility for solving these tasks. The Danish state provides an annual grant to the Faroese and the Greenlandic authorities.

The various cabinet ministers deal with matters concerning the Faroe Islands and Greenland that fall within their ministerial fields.

**Greenland**

Greenland’s Home Rule was established in 1979. In 2009 a self-government arrangement for Greenland replaced the Greenland Home Rule Arrangement.

Prior to the entry into force of the Self-Government Act, a guiding referendum was held in Greenland on 25 November 2008. Of the votes cast, 75.5 per cent were for and 23.6 per cent were against the introduction of self-government.

Together with the Danish Constitution, the Self-Government Act constitutes Greenland’s constitutional position in the Unity of the Realm. Two members of the Folketing (Danish Parliament) are elected in Greenland as it is specified in the Danish Constitution.

The Greenland Self-Government authorities comprise a democratically elected assembly – Inatsisartut (Greenland Parliament) – as well as an administration led by Naalakkersuisut (Greenland Government). The Self-Government Act does not contain specific rules and regulations regarding the composition, etc. of these bodies, but has left it up to the Self-Government authorities to lay down provisions in this regard. In the Self-Government Act, the Greenlandic terms for Parliament and Government are used.

In the preamble to the Self-Government Act, it is recognised that the people of Greenland are a people with right to self-determination under international law. Accordingly, the Act is based on an agreement between the Greenland Government and the Danish Government as equal partners.

The Self-Government Act provides for the Self-Government authorities to assume a number of new fields of responsibility. With the Self-Government Act, the Danish/Greenlandic relations regarding mineral resource activities in Greenland have radically changed. In November 2009 the Greenland Self-Government authorities have decided to take over responsibility for the mineral resource area on 1st January 2010, whereby the Self-Government authorities have assumed the right to utilise the mineral resources found in the subsoil.

Revenues from mineral resource activities in Greenland are to accrue to the Self-Government. Such revenues will have influence on the size of the Danish Government subsidy.

In respect of the Unity of the Realm and special provisions in the Danish Constitution, responsibility for the following fields may not be transferred: the Constitution; nationality; the Supreme Court; foreign, defence and security policy as well as exchange rate and monetary policy.

The Self-Government Act contains a provision regarding Greenland’s access to independence. The provision stipulates that if the people of Greenland take a decision in favour of independence, negotiations are to commence between the Danish Government and Naalakkersuisut regarding the introduction of independence for Greenland. An agreement between the Danish Government and Naalakkersuisut regarding the introduction of independence for Greenland is to be concluded with the consent of Inatsisartut and is to be endorsed by a referendum in Greenland. Furthermore, the agreement is to be concluded with the consent of the Folketing.

In the Self-Government Act, the Greenlandic language is recognised as the official language in Greenland. Danish may still be used in official matters, cf. Greenland Parliament Act on case handling procedures in public administration. The question of educational instruction in Danish is not governed by the Self-Government Act, but it is assumed that the Self-Government authorities must ensure provision of education in Danish and other relevant languages that would enable Greenlandic youth to pursue further education in Denmark and other countries.

**The Faroe Islands**

The Faroe Islands’ Home Rule was established in 1948. In 2005, a new self-government arrangement came into force in the Faroe Islands.

Together with the Danish Constitution, the Home Rule Act and The Takeover Act, constitutes the Faroe Islands’ constitutional position in the Unity of the Realm. Two members of the Folketing (Danish Parliament) are elected in the Faroe Islands as it is specified in the Danish Constitution.

The preamble to the Takeover Act states that the Act is based on an agreement between the Faroese Government and the Danish Government as equal partners.

Since its introduction in 1948, the Faroese Authorities have assumed legislative and administrative responsibility in a substantial number of fields that affect the daily lives of Faroese citizens, including public finances. These possibilities expanded significantly with the Takeover Act of 2005.

In respect of the Unity of the Realm and special provisions in the Danish Constitution, the Takeover Act provides the Faroese authorities to assume all fields of responsibility apart from the Constitution; nationality; the Supreme Court; foreign, defence and security policy; as well as exchange rate and monetary policy.

A principal objective of introducing Home Rule Government has been to facilitate the transfer of additional authority and thus responsibility to Faroese authorities in recognition of the special position of the Faroe Islands from national, historical and geographical points of view within the Kingdom of Denmark.

In the Home Rule Act, the Faroese language is recognised as the principal language in the Faroe Islands. However, Danish must be taught meticulously and well. Danish may be used in official matters just like Faroese.

**Kangerlussuaq**

(English: "Big Fjord" from Kalaallisut language), (Danish: Søndre Strømfjord), is a settlement in western Greenland in the Qeqqata municipality located at the head of the fjord of the same name (Danish: Søndre Strømfjord). It is Greenland's main air transport hub and the site of Greenland's largest commercial airport. The airport dates from American settlement during and after World War II, when the site was known as Bluie West-8 and then Sondrestrom Air Base. The Kangerlussuaq area is also home to Greenland's most diverse terrestrial fauna, including muskoxen, caribou, and gyrfalcons. The settlement's economy and population of 499 is almost entirely reliant on the airport and tourist industry.

While Inuit hunters certainly visited Kangerlussuaq, there appears never to have been a settlement at the location.

Kangerlussuaq was founded at the east end of Kangerlussuaq fjord as Bluie West-8 on 7 October 1941, under the supervision of Colonel Bernt Balchen of the United States Army Air Forces (USAAF). Following the fall of Denmark to Germany in World War II, US forces assumed security for Greenland, building several bases including Bluie West-1 to the south in Narsarsuaq and Bluie West-8 at the Kangerlussuaq fjord.

The base briefly came under Danish control in 1950, but following mounting concerns about the Cold War threat, a new agreement saw the United States reopen Bluie West-8 under the name of Sondrestrom Air Base on 27 April 1951.

It served as one of the Distant Early Warning Line bases and a supply station for similar early warning facilities. Following the fall of the Soviet Union, the usefulness of the base was greatly diminished and the last U.S. Air Force personnel left the base on 30 September 1992. The base subsequently came under Greenlandic Home Rule and was renamed using the Kalaallisut dialect of the West Greenland Inuit.

This site and Bluie West-1 in Narsarsuaq remain Greenland's best-equipped airports. Almost all of the permanent structures in the town were built during the American occupation of the site.

**Qeqqata Municipality and Sisimiut**

Qeqqata (Greenlandic: Qeqqata Kommunia, "Center") is a new municipality in western Greenland, operational from 1 January 2009. The municipality was named after its location in central-western part of the country. Its population is 9,620 as of January 2013. The administrative center of the municipality is in Sisimiut (formerly called Holsteinsborg). It consists of the previously unincorporated area of Kangerlussuaq, as well as two former municipalities of western Greenland.

**Sisimiut**

Sisimiut, formerly Holsteinsborg, is the capital and largest city of the Qeqqata municipality, and the second-largest city in Greenland.[Note 1] It is located in central-western Greenland, on the coast of Davis Strait, approximately 320 km (200 mi) north of Nuuk.

Sisimiut is located approximately 320 km (200 mi) north of Nuuk, and 75 km (47 mi) north of the Arctic Circle,[14] on the eastern shores of Davis Strait, perched on a series of rocky outcrops at the western end of a large peninsula bounded from the north by the Kangerluarsuk Tulleq fjord and from the south by the wide Amerloq Fjord.

Although now a place-name, Sisimiut literally means "the people at the fox burrows". The site has been inhabited for the last 4,500 years, first by the Inuit peoples of the Saqqaq culture, Dorset culture, and then the Thule people, whose descendants form the majority of the current population. Artifacts from the early settlement era can be found throughout the region, favored in the past for its plentiful fauna, particularly the marine mammals providing subsistence for the early hunting societies. The population of modern Greenlanders in Sisimiut is a mix of the Inuit and Danish peoples, who first settled in the area in the 1720s, under the leadership of the Danish missionary, Hans Egede.

Today, Sisimiut is the largest business center north of the national capital of Nuuk and is one of the fastest growing cities in Greenland. Fishing is the principal industry in Sisimiut, although the town has a growing industrial base. KNI and its subsidiary Pilersuisoq, a state-owned chain of all-purpose general stores in Greenland, have their base in Sisimiut. Architecturally, Sisimiut is a mix of traditional, single-family houses, and communal housing, with apartment blocks raised in the 1960s during a period of town expansion in Greenland. Sisimiut is still expanding, with the area north of the port, on the shore of the small Kangerluarsunnguaq Bay reserved for a modern suburb-style housing slated for construction in the 2010s. Several professional and general schools are based in Sisimiut, providing education to the inhabitants of the city and to those from smaller settlements in the region. The new Taseralik Culture Center is the second cultural center to be established in Greenland, after Katuaq in Nuuk.

The city has its own bus line, and is the northernmost year-round ice-free port in the country, a shipping base for western and northwestern Greenland. Supply ships head from the commercial port towards smaller settlements in more remote regions of Uummannaq Fjord, Upernavik Archipelago, and as far as Qaanaaq in northern Greenland. The town airport is served by Air Greenland, providing connections to other towns on the western coast of Greenland, and through Kangerlussuaq Airport, to Europe.

Sisimiut in the 20th century saw industrialization, through the construction of a shipping port, and a fish processing factory of Royal Greenland in 1924, the first such factory in Greenland Fishing remains the primary occupation of Sisimiut inhabitants, with the town becoming the leading center of shrimping and shrimp processing. Until 2008 Sisimiut had been the administrative center of Sisimiut Municipality, which was then incorporated into the new Qeqqata Municipality on 1 January 2009, with Sisimiut retaining its status as the administrative center of the new unit, consisting also of the former Maniitsoq Municipality and the previously unincorporated area of Kangerlussuaq. The municipal council, seated in the town hall and headed by Mayor Malik Berthelsen, consists of 13 members, including the mayor and his deputies, and representatives of the four primary political parties of Greenland: Siumut, Atassut, Democrats and Inuit Ataqatigiit.