

6 April 2006

Revision of the Agreement concerning access to the Danish labour market for citizens of the East European EU countries

On the 5th of April 2006 the Liberal Party, the Conservative Party, the Social Democrats, the Socialist People's Party, and the Social Liberal Party concluded a political agreement that will liberalise the Danish transitional arrangement for migrant workers from the East European EU countries further.

While Denmark will continue to have a transitional arrangement in order to ensure proper pay and working conditions, it will now become even easier to employ workers from the East European EU countries. The Danish authorities will also take steps to help enterprises recruit foreign workers to sectors that experience a shortage of labour.

In the next three-year period the parties to the Agreement will discuss the possibilities of gradually phasing out the transitional arrangement.

Objectives of the Agreement

- It should become easier to recruit labour from the East European EU Member States for job vacancies on the Danish labour market.
- It should also in the future be ensured that employment takes place on pay and working conditions that are laid down by collective agreements or that are otherwise ordinary on the Danish labour market.
- The Danish labour market must be prepared to cope with a future situation without any transitional arrangement. The aim is to gradually phase out the transitional arrangement over the coming three-year period.

New initiatives in the Agreement

1. Easier access for East European workers

Enterprises covered by a collective agreement may, in the future, obtain prior approval for employment of citizens from the East European EU Member States. This means that they will then no longer have to apply for a work permit for each individual worker they wish to employ.

The political parties behind the Agreement will consider whether it will be possible in a longer perspective to extend this arrangement to include enterprises that are not covered by any collective agreement.

Workers from the East European EU Member States may, in the future, be employed also in part-time jobs with a working time of at least 30 hours per week. Students from these countries will, in the future, have the same right to work as students from other EU Member States.

A worker may continue to work during the time an application for a prolongation of the work permit is being dealt with by the authorities.

It will, in the future, be possible to employ lorry drivers and other workers from the East European EU Member States who are residing abroad. Documentation must be provided showing that the wage is covered by a collective agreement or otherwise is in accordance with what is ordinary for the work concerned.

Specific targets will be set for the time it takes to deal with and decide cases concerning labour from the East European EU Member States. Efforts are made to constantly reduce the time it takes to make a decision in these cases.

2. Gradual phasing-out of the transitional scheme

The parties to the Agreement will on a current basis assess whether the transitional arrangement can be made even more flexible, for instance by abolishing the requirement for a work permit in sectors with bottleneck problems.

3. Recruitment of foreign labour

The labour market authorities will strengthen the cooperation with the social partners concerning recruitment of labour from the other EU Member States to jobs in sectors with shortages of Danish labour.

4. Prevention of illegal work

A number of initiatives will be taken in order to prevent illegal work. Special attention will be given to preventing illegal work involving lorry drivers.

The National Working Environment Authority will ensure a quick reaction in respect to foreign enterprises violating the legislation on safety and health at work.

Special measures in relation to problems with safety and health in the building and construction sector will be discussed by the parties behind the Agreement.

5. Monitoring of the labour market

The National Employment Council will at least once a year be requested to assess the development on the labour market in the light of the enlargement of the European Union.

A general analysis will be carried of the challenges facing the Danish labour market in the light of the phasing out of the transitional arrangement.