

Right to work and access to the labour market

Input from Global Seniors, Denmark

The Danish legislation is clear on prohibiting discrimination on the labour market based on age.

The "Law about prohibition against discriminatory treatment on the Labour market" says:

" In this law Discriminatory treatment is understood as any direct or indirect discriminatory treatment based on race, colour of skin, religion or faith, political opinion, gender/sexual orientation, **age**, handicap or national. Social or ethnicity"

Cases on ageism can be tried at the "Board of Equal treatment/non-discrimination" and the board has in several cases decided that ageism at the labour market has taken place in specific, actual cases.

In spite of the legislation several investigating specific actions have documented that ageism is prevalent on the Danish labour market, both when it comes to job advertisements, to employment, to terminating jobs and to firing employees.

- Many job advertisements – not least on social media – discriminate on age, using formulations such as "phone salespersons in the age of 18-28", but also by targeting adverts specifically to young people is age discrimination.¹
- Age discrimination when hiring people is also common. A survey of the praxis of 854 enterprises shows that 26% of the 854 enterprises considered age when recruiting staff.²
- In a survey of 3.300 civil servants every 3rd Person agrees fully or partly, that it is more difficult for seniors than for younger applicants to be recruited for the job.³
- A survey conducted by YouGov for DaneAge concludes that, more than every 4th Person above the age of 60, leaving the labour market, does so because they feel/are being forced.⁴

Age discrimination on the labour market is a general threat against the living conditions of older people and not least in a time when the number of older people is growing and the retirement age increasing.⁵

A lack of flexible and suitable senior jobs at the labour market in the transition period from work to retirement in Denmark hampers the solution of ageism. Neither the legislation nor the types of jobs are designed for more flexible, differentiated and individual needs for withdrawal, such as the development invites for.

It is the responsibility of the government and the parties of the labour market to ensure a coherence between the legislation regulating labour market and pensions. However, legislation cannot stand alone, it needs to be supplemented by campaigns that focus on ageism on the labour market.

During a period when labour force is scarce it is essential to benefit from the resources of the older people. Since the employers are responsible for recruitment and dismissal we encourage them to retain the current seniors and employ unemployed seniors -

Recommendations

Global Seniors:

- find it pertinent to have a focus on discrimination of older persons on the labour market and that older persons are protected nationally and internationally
- encourage systematic investigations on discrimination based on age
- encourages the Danish Government to act on the recommendations in the report from the “Think Tank for a longer and a good work life”
- recommend that the ILO in their cooperation with governments, employers and employees prioritise an effort against ageism
- recommend that older people (within their capacities) are offered jobs suited for seniors
- recommend that older worn out people are secured a smooth transition to a pension

¹ DR P1 orientering 2018, Ledegaard og Skjerning.

² Ballisager for Business Danmark, Rekrutteringsanalyse 2016

³ Undersøgelse for hovedorganisationen FTF, 2018

⁴ YouGov for DaneAge, 2013

⁵ The retirement age in Denmark is 65,5 years in 2019 and the age is gradually increased according to the average increase in life expectancy.