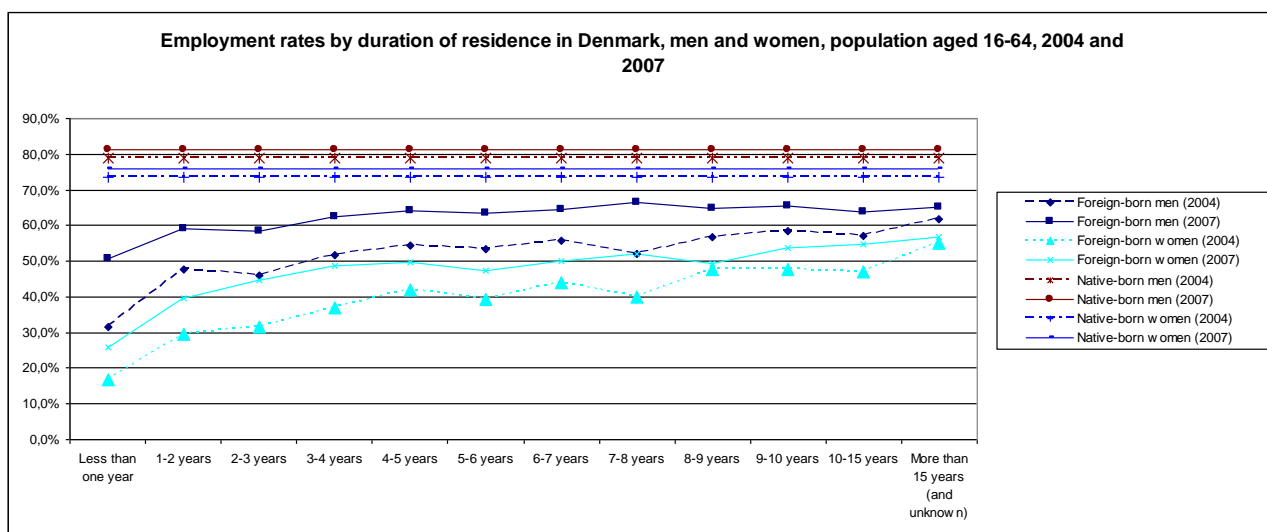


Update on integration-related developments in Denmark in 2007-2008

1. Employment-related developments

1.1 Recent outcomes

As shown in the figure below, the employment of immigrants is rising, both for recent arrivals and immigrants in general. This is partly due to the large number of employment initiatives taken over the last 5-7 years (described in Jobs for Immigrants vol. 1) but also because the labour market in Denmark is currently very tight.



1.2 Policy initiatives regarding international recruitment

The Danish Government and the Danish People's Party, the Danish Social Liberal Party and the Liberal Alliance on 28 February 2008 agreed upon a Job Plan that aims at increasing the labour supply in Denmark, both currently and in the longer run.

The agreement contains seven main initiatives, one of which focuses on promoting labour migration by means of easier access to Denmark for skilled workers. These initiatives were implemented on 1 of July 2008.

The measures concerning access to the Danish labour market are:

Expansion of the positive list: The Positive List will henceforth be regulated administratively through a continuous monitoring of the labour market. Positions in areas with labour shortages requiring skilled labour (e.g. IT) will be included in the Positive List. Foreigners who have a bachelors degree or who have pursued long training are included in the list.

Expanded Green Card System: On the basis of a points system, the expanded "Green Card" System gives foreigners the opportunity to both seek work and take on employment in Denmark. The period in which the worker can stay in Denmark is extended to three years.

Corporate Residence Permit: With a Corporate Residence Permit in Denmark, companies are given the opportunity to move employees with special skills or qualifications from their establishments abroad to Denmark periodically, through a facilitated procedure and without having the employee to request a residence and work permit each time this is done.

Easier access to Denmark: The minimum annual salary within the Job Card Scheme has been reduced from 450,000 to 375,000 Danish kroner.

Recruitment under the above two schemes must be at the usual pay and working conditions in Denmark.

Job change: The possibility to change jobs during a residence period in Denmark is to be made more flexible. Foreigners who have entered the country for employment purposes can start a new job before receiving a new residence and work permit.

Foreigners who have been granted a residence permit for employment under the positive list, or under the 375,000 kroner rule, may remain in Denmark for 6 months to seek new work after the expiry of a contract and/or involuntary unemployment.

Maintaining employment longer in special situations/jobs: Under regular procedures, a foreigner who has been granted a temporary residence permit e.g. a refugee or a person having arrived for family reunification, has to leave the country if the permit is suspended or its extension denied. In some cases, the person can be granted a new permit. This applies if the foreigner has stable job-relationship of long duration (in practice two years). In the future, unskilled workers will also be included in the scheme.

1.3 Programme for immigrant women

Between 2007 - 2011, the Danish Government is implementing a program with 11 initiatives to strengthen the possibilities for immigrant women to work and to participate in education and/or activities of associations.

2. Promoting inclusion

2.1 Countering radicalisation

By early 2009, the Danish Government will present an action plan to prevent extremism and radicalism among young people. This action plan will include a number of initiatives that aim at strengthen citizenship, and at preventing extremism and radicalism.

Among the measures are efforts to combat discrimination, the creation of a platform for youngsters, and the expansion of existing role model programmes.

2.2. Strengthening equal treatment

The government has decided on a new comprehensive plan for a co-ordinated and targeted effort, including both ongoing and new initiatives, to fight discrimination based on race or ethnicity and to promote diversity, equal opportunity, and an open society with scope for diversity. The inter-ministerial working group is to come up with proposals based on the latest studies and the positive experiences gained in connection with the government's 2003 action plan to promote equality and diversity and to combat racism.

The government has also decided to establish a new complaints body, the Equal Treatment Tribunal, to which all forms of discrimination may be appealed. This is to be established on 1 January 2009.

2.3. Strengthening social cohesion

The social cohesion of Danish society depends on the participation of the citizens. In order to strengthen democratic cohesion, the Danish government focuses on equal rights and obligations to increase the number of responsible and participating citizens. Citizenship aims at strengthening the sense of belonging to society, as well as strengthening the confidence in institutions in the Danish society. This is done with a view of having equal opportunities for all citizens and strengthening the perception of shared democratic values.

The Danish government is focusing on democratic integration and ensuring that immigrants and their children should feel at home in Denmark. A working group for better integration under the Danish government is identifying indicators for measuring active citizenship, and to make suggestions about how it can be increased. The working group is expected to complete its activities in autumn 2009.

2.4. "Social citizenship" for foreign workers: Welcome package - integration offers for the whole family

Foreign workers and their families need more knowledge of and personal contact to the Danish society so that they can act and feel as a part of the society. This is crucial for companies to recruit and retain foreign workers.

Foreign workers - and their accompanying families - will henceforth be offered a family welcome package, which makes it easier to be a new citizen in Denmark. The worker and his family;

- will be offered information on Danish society,
- will be offered an introductory course on Danish society,
- will be offered information about local day-care and schools and
- can be attached to a host who will take care of their introduction to the local community and association activities.

The initiative is to be implemented in the period 2008-2009. The latter three initiatives are starting as a trial in selected municipalities.

2.5. Integration of the children of immigrants

Children of immigrants have a relatively high drop-out rate from secondary schools and thus face difficulties in obtaining subsequent employment. This entails a risk of marginalisation.

In the autumn of 2008, the government launched the following new initiatives:

- Establishment of an extended advisory unit for bilingual students in vocational education.
- Creation of a new advisory unit for bilingual pupils in primary schools.
- The involvement of parents of bilingual children in their children's schooling is to be strengthened through family courses and special learning courses.

The two advisory units have been newly established. Strengthened parental involvement, family courses and special learning courses are implemented on an experimental basis.

2.6. Immigration test

In the June 2006 welfare agreement between the Danish Government and the Danish People's Party regarding future immigration, it was agreed upon that foreigners applying for spousal reunification, as well as religious preachers applying for a residence permit, must pass an immigration test before receiving a residence permit in Denmark.

The immigration test includes a test of Danish language skills and a test regarding their knowledge of Danish society, of fundamental rights and democratic principles as well as of Danish norms and values. The preparation material consists of an educational film that describes Danish society, Danish democracy and Danish norms, and will include answers to the questions asked in the knowledge test. The film is expected to be produced in 18 foreign-language versions.

The Immigration test is expected to come into force at the beginning of 2010.

2.7. Tightening the requirements for naturalisation

On 23 September 2008, the Government and the Danish People's Party agreed to tighten the requirements for passing the citizenship test, as well as the Danish test. The agreement is to be implemented as soon as possible.