

Denmark – National agreement against sexual harassment

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On March 4 a tripartite agreement on how to address sexual harassment in the workplace was settled by the Danish social partners and the government.

The agreement contains a total of 16 initiatives on the matter, including higher fines to employers in cases of bad negligence, a strengthened effort towards young employees including the possibility of excluding companies from taking on apprentices in case of several cases of sexual harassment in the company and the inclusion of the employers responsibility to provide a working environment with no sexual harassment in the Danish Law of Equal Treatment.

With this agreement, victims of sexual harassment in the workplace will receive a compensation that is roughly 33 percent higher than the current level. Even though this in itself cannot eliminate the damage done to the individual nor the long term effects, the purpose of this is to send a clear message to the employers, that failure to address the issue of sexual harassment in the workplace effectively will have severe financial consequences for the company. Also, acknowledging the fact that the victims of sexual harassment often are young employees, apprentices and precarious workers, the age of the victim as well as whether or not the offender has been in superior position to the victim, will be taken into account when settling the level of compensation.

The trade union movement (FH) sees the deal as a significant step forward. Employers will be required by law to provide a safe working environment free of sexual harassment. Fines are sharply raised in major cases, and special attention and protection are given to young people, among others. A strengthened legal status will be given to students and apprentices.

Further points:

- Increased focus on sexual harassment in mapping of the work environment
- Obligation for workers to report on sexual harassment if they cannot solve it themselves
- Annual overviews from the national labour inspectorate on decisions on sexual harassment and bullying.
- Alliance established with relevant organisations. The government puts in 500,000 euros.

Edited by industriAll Europe