

France: Social partners strive to protect senior workers

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French trade unions have newly signed a national inter-sectoral agreement on employment of experienced workers. The agreement makes it compulsory, every three years, to negotiate on the work of older people at the level of the industry and in companies with at least 300 employees.

Access to progressive retirement, which allows part-time work and partly retirement, will be possible from the age of 60, once the worker has contributed at least 37.5 years. The age of 60 is 4 years before the statutory retirement age since the highly contested 2023 reform.

The employer will have to justify refusals in writing. The employees will also be able to contribute to their retirement at full rate, with the agreement of the employer, to improve the level of their pension.

Workers will be given contracts for valorisation of experience, intended for jobseekers over 60 years of age (57 years by the industry agreement). This contract may be terminated by the employer once the worker has reached the statutory retirement age. Contrary to what the employers were asking for, it will not allow exemptions from social security contributions.

CGT was the only representative union in France not to sign this agreement, after an internal consultation. The agreement brings some improvements, but it mainly benefits employers, to the detriment of senior employees. The improved access to gradual retirement, will, according to the CGT, be at the discretion of the employers. They would also benefit from exemptions from the specific employer contribution of 30% on the amount of the retirement compensation.

Edited by industriAll Europe.