



Industrial relations and social dialogue  
**Denmark: Developments in  
working life 2022**

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**Eurofound reference number:** WPEF23009

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## Introduction

The Danish Ministry of Finance estimates that there will be a slight slowdown in economic growth in 2023. Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is estimated to grow by 2.8% in 2022 and 0.8% in 2023. The Economic Council (DOR) forecasts an economic contraction of 0.2% in GDP in 2023. At the same time, employment remains at record levels (around 3 million) and is expected to fall only slightly in 2023. The DOR expects employment to fall by 61,000 in 2023. Unemployment is currently exceptionally low, but the DOR expects net unemployment to rise to 91,000 in 2023 and 110,000 in 2024 (The Ministry of Finance, 2022; Statistics Denmark, 2022; The Economic Council, 2022).

Inflation in Denmark reached the highest level in many years in 2022, mainly because of a considerable raise in energy and general consumer prices and therefore hit low-income households hard. However, the problem of gas supplies was not as high as in other European countries because only a small part of the gas came from Russia.

At the end of 2022, 29,239 Ukrainian refugees were living in Denmark under a special act, whereof 7,043 Ukrainian refugees were employed. The Ukrainians are primarily employed in the sectors of cleaning and operational service, hotels and restaurants or farming, forestry and fishing. To help refugees enter the labor market, the social partners have launched several initiatives, including campaigns to inform Ukrainians about their labour rights and job matching events between companies and Ukrainians.

During 2022, there were no sectoral collective bargaining in neither the public nor the private sector, and no important changes in the regulation of the Danish labour market took place. The next bargaining round in the private sector will take place in the beginning of 2023.

## Political context

One of the major events in the Danish political context in 2022 was the parliamentary election, which took place in October and November. Until October 2022, the Social Democratic Party constituted a single-party government with Mette Frederiksen as Prime Minister. The Social Democratic Party had been the government in power since 2019.

The Prime Minister, Mette Frederiksen, from the Social Democratic Party, was re-elected, but the government has changed from a centre-left government to a more centre/broad-based government consisting of the parties, the Social Democratic Party, the Liberals and the newly formed party, the Moderates. Together, they form a majority government, which is the first since 1994. Moreover, Denmark has not had a broad-based government since 1970. Therefore, the parliamentary election has been historical in several ways (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark, 2022).

The coalition negotiations on forming the new government were historically long (around 35 days) and have been the longest in more than 30 years. The prolonged coalition negotiations delayed the process and political decisions about aiding the citizens in Denmark were affected the most by the inflation. For example, more than 50 expert committees were hindered from proposing solutions because of the negotiations. Inflation has affected Denmark in different ways, and especially the energy prices and specific groceries have become more expensive. The Danish government has only provided some assistance, however, there have been no major demonstrations or objections to this.

Another major event in Denmark in 2022 was the refuge of Ukrainians. Particularly in March and April, thousands of Ukrainians took refuge in Denmark due to the Russian invasion of Ukraine (Hansen and Andersen, 2022). The big waves of refugees meant that Denmark had to open asylum centres to ensure enough available housing, and some Danes opened their homes to the refugees. Through an agreement between the government and the Local Government Denmark (Kommunernes Landsforening, KL), it was possible to provide housing to Ukrainians in different municipalities in Denmark (The Ministry of Immigration and Integration, 2022).

# Actors, institutions and processes

## Social partners

As in previous years, the Danish system of collective bargaining and its institutions and actors remains stable. No changes at any level took place during 2021 or 2022. The actors are still the same on both sides and collective bargaining processes and procedures are still almost unchanged since its beginning with the September Compromise in 1899.

The criterion for representativeness is mutual recognition between the organisations and consequently taking part in negotiating collective agreements – and this relationship has not changed either.

The membership of alternative unions is still increasing slightly, but they do not take place in determining collective bargaining rounds. As in previous years, the membership of unions of the Danish Confederation of Trade Unions (FH) showed a small decline (-1.5% to 1,287,901 members in 2022), whereas the membership of the academic unions under the Danish Confederation of Professional Associations (AC) have received more members during 2022 (+4% to 464,821). The decline of membership of the FH-unions is mainly because loss of members to the alternative organisations, an increased number of unorganised workers entering the labour market and a difficulty in organising young people (Arnholtz et. al., 2021).

The latest important merger took place in June 2020 under the employers' side when Danish Construction (Dansk Byggeri) joined the largest employer and business association in Denmark, Confederation of Danish Industry, DI, under the name DI Construction (DI Byggeri). The merger added a new sector, i.e., construction, to the main sectors of DI – manufacturing industry, transport and service.

## Social dialogue bodies or frameworks

The framework of social dialogue has not changed either. There has been no introduction of new national, sectoral or company level institutions, no changes to the regulations governing the institutional set-up for social dialogue or changes to the conflict resolution frameworks. The social partners manage the Danish Labour Court and the number of cases taken to the labour Court - or managed in the obligatory out-of-court resolution before being taken to the court - remain stable. The system of participation and elections of employees at company level as set up in the Cooperation Agreement has not changed either.

## Other working life related institutions

No other working life institutions have emerged during 2022.

## Governmental responses to inflation

The Danish government has provided different initiatives in response to inflation. One of these initiatives is the winter aid package, which has the purpose to alleviate the increasing energy prices. The package is temporary and voluntary and includes freezing of some households' and companies' energy expenses for electricity, gas and district heating. Moreover, the electricity tax will also be reduced and a non-recurring increase in the child and youth benefit will be provided as well as subsidies for 'green heating'. The agreement is a helping hand to the many families, businesses and cultural associations struggling to pay the energy bill (The Ministry of Finance, 2022a).

Another initiative that the government agreed to provide in response to the inflation is an increase in the already existing 'heating cheque' as financial support to households with high heating bills.<sup>i</sup> As a third initiative, in September 2022, the Danish government decided to offer additional financial aid of DKK 5,000 to old-age pensioners who have been granted a supplementary pension benefit (also known as an 'elderly cheque') for 2022. This aid is provided due to the inflation to support Denmark's elderly citizens. According to the state agency Udbetaling Danmark, the additional financial aid is tax-free. The first part was paid as a fixed amount of DKK 2,500 at the end of September 2022, and the second part of the additional financial aid is paid with an additional DKK 2,500 from the 5 January 2023 (Udbetaling Danmark, 2023).

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<sup>i</sup> Eurofound (2022), [Extension of heat check subsidy for economically vulnerable groups - Eurofound EU PolicyWatch \(europa.eu\)](#), case DK-2022-7/2381 (measures in Denmark), War in Ukraine EU PolicyWatch, Dublin

# Collective bargaining and inflation

## How inflation features in wage negotiations

In Denmark, inflation is measured by the increase in consumer prices. This increase indicates the change in price from one year to the next. Inflation is expressed as a percentage of the previous year's prices. The price level for each year is measured by a price index, which for Denmark is measured by Statistics Denmark in FPI. The measure does not differ significantly from the EU HICP. Statistics Denmark send the Danish figures to HICP. However, since 2001, the only difference between the FPI and the HICP, according to Statistics Denmark, has been that owner-occupied housing is included as a component of the Consumer Price Index (CPI), but is not part of the HICP figure.

The inflation in 2022 is the highest in 40 years in Denmark. The EU-harmonised inflation in Denmark was 9.7% in November 2022, falling from 11.4% in October. In the same period, the average EU-harmonised inflation fell from 11.5% to 11.1% (Statistics Denmark, 2022a).

The social partners do take Inflation, the cost of living and the GDP deflator, i.e., significant economic variables, into consideration when negotiating/renewing a sectoral collective agreement.

However, collective agreements in Denmark do not include clauses on how to deal with inflation in particular. Nor do social partners usually resort to additional bargaining rounds with the aim to tackle or mitigate effects of extraordinary inflation. Changes in the economy is dealt with in the recurrent collective bargaining rounds that during the last decades have taken place with an interval of three years in both the private and the public sector. The interval of three years is chosen because it is reasonably simple to foresee the economic development during that period and thus negotiate wages according to the expectations of the possible changes in the economy in the period.

No collective bargaining took place in Denmark in 2022 and this means that the inflation occurred and took speed in the period of collective agreements in force 2020-2023 in the private sector, which is the pace-setting sector in Denmark. Thus, how to mitigate the inflation will be a dominant issue to negotiate in the coming negotiations in early 2023 (CB23). Furthermore, both parties may have an interest in a shorter collective bargaining period than the three years that have been standard in the last three rounds of collective bargaining. Despite forecasts that Denmark is heading into an economic downturn, there are also indications that Danish economy will remain strong in the future. Wage earners can also risk laying themselves too low in a three-year agreement period. Therefore, it may be beneficial to negotiate again after a shorter period. A one- or two-year agreement will therefore undoubtedly be part of the discussions at CB23.

## Examples of recent responses

In the last months of 2022, the social partners presented their respective views on how to deal with inflation in relation to the renewal of the agreements in the private sector 2023. During November and December 2022, after several months of preparation, the social partners presented their topics and demands to be negotiated in January and February 2023. From the unions' side, the overriding theme this time is wage - which normally is part of a broader package, but this time standing almost alone in relation to other themes. This is of course due to inflation, the high-energy bills, and thus more extensive basic goods that have hit Danish employees and their private finances. The union's



demand will be a significant increase in real wages. The employers are aware of that and their efforts will be concentrated on keeping up with the forecasts of the development in the Danish economy that the employees will bring forward as argument for a wage increase. Their main argument will probably be to avoid a considerable wage price spiral and ensure the companies' competitiveness and thus arguing for a lower level than the unions' immediate demand for a rise in real wages. It is of course difficult to say where the general increases will land. The unions have pointed at a forecast from the Economic Council that a raise of 5.2% would not necessarily result in a wage price spiral. This estimation could easily be a focus point for negotiations (The Economic Council, 2022).

A discussed option for a pay rise is to pay lump sums as a kind of inflation patch. Such an amount has no lasting effect on wages, as the general rate and wage increases have. This means that a lump sum payment would not contribute to a wage spiral. The use of one-off supplements is well known in Germany but has never been used in Denmark.

The risk of conflict is significantly higher in CB23 than seen in many years due to the economic uncertainty and the question of what wage development will satisfy employees in a time of high inflation without harming Danish competitiveness. However, conflict is an integral part of the Danish collective bargaining model and as such should not to be seen as an anomaly. On the contrary, the threat of conflict is in itself a strong incentive to settle a compromise.

# Developments in working time

## Changes to legislation

There have been no changes in legislation on any aspect of working time duration.

## Bargaining outcomes

There were no collective bargaining taking place in Denmark during 2022. Furthermore, during the last decades changes in working time have not been among the outcomes of the collective bargaining rounds.

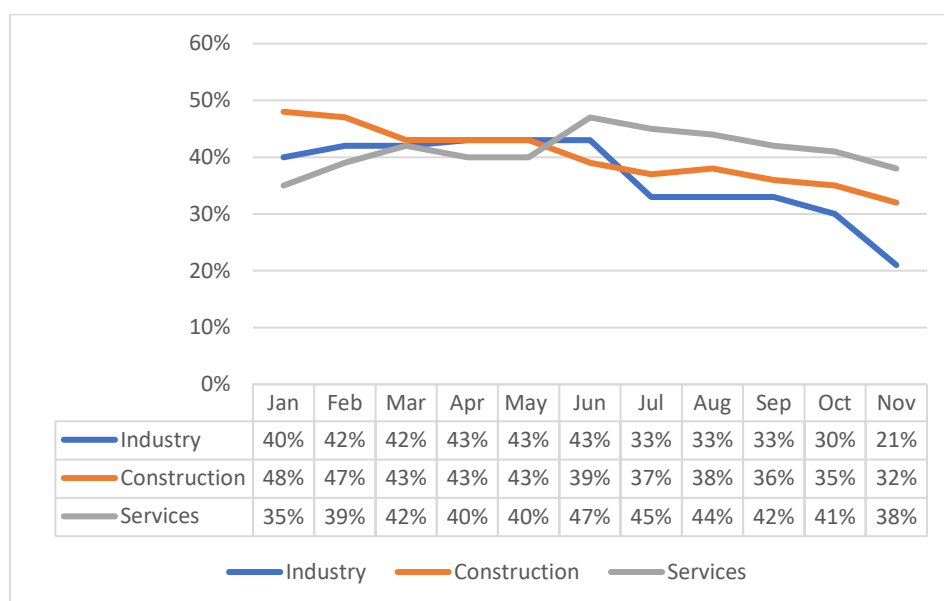
## Debates on duration and organisation

There have not been any debates about any aspects of working time duration. Working time duration, such as part-time, shift work, overtime and rest period and flexible arrangements, etc., is an integrated part of collective agreement in Denmark, and is seldom focus of debates outside the recurrent collective bargaining rounds.

## Labour market shortages and social partners

During the last six months of 2021, the level of labour shortages in the three main sectors of industry, construction and services increased significantly and this tendency continued into 2022. Labour shortages peaked in Construction in the first months of the year while the Service sector peaked in the summer but kept a high level during the last half of 2022. The still high level at the end of the year is due to continuing labour shortage in hotels and restaurants and cleaning. Industry peaked in May-June but then showed a notable fall in labour shortages during the year.

**Figure 1: Companies reporting labour shortages as a limitation of productivity 2022 (%)**



Source: Local Government Denmark (KL), key figures 2022; and own calculations.

An expected fall in employment during the first half of 2022 did not take place. On the contrary, in August, employment had increased for the 16th consecutive month and was at a historically high level. At the same time, unemployment remained low. According to the Confederation of Danish Employers, DA, industrial production continued to grow despite global uncertainties and rising commodity prices, and GDP pointed tentatively to an expansion in the second quarter of 2022. DA urged the government to present new reforms with short-term effects with the aim to mitigate a downturn in the production in the companies and this should be a ‘top-of-mind’ for the political parties during the coming campaign to general elections in October-November (DA, 2022). However, traditionally, presenting new reform proposals is not high on agenda of the government in office during the last year before the election.

At the end of the year, DA published a comprehensive reform programme aiming at mitigating labour shortages. The main points were to make it easier for the companies to hire foreign workforce, a later retirement age and getting/keeping more seniors into work and to tighten the access to unemployment benefits (DA, 2022a).

At the end of January 2022, as part of a Tripartite Agreement on labour shortages, the government agency, the Danish Agency for Labour Market and Recruitment (Styrelsen for Arbejdsmarked og

Rekruttering, STAR) launched two new application pools with the aim to help alleviate labour shortages. The two application pools focus on job placement in municipalities and unemployment insurance funds and on job-oriented activities for future graduates (STAR 2022a).

The Tripartite Agreement was concluded on 21 October 2021 between the government, the social partner confederations and the public employer in the municipalities, Local Government Denmark, KL (Ministry of Employment, 2021).

The agreement focuses on four key areas:

- Improved match between unemployed and companies
- Tightening up the rules on availability for unemployed
- Special efforts to get unemployed seniors into jobs
- Helping companies recruit European labour

In 2022 and 2023, DKK 15 million per year will be allocated to an application pool for strengthened job placement and business services in areas where there are labour shortages and where it is difficult to match unemployed people and businesses. Municipalities and unemployment funds can apply for the pool. The aim of the pool is to strengthen the focus on good job placement and to support the work of job centres and unemployment offices in handling job orders. Another DKK 4 million will be allocated annually in 2022 and 2023 to an application pool for job-oriented activities for future graduates. The pool can be applied for by unemployment funds, trade unions and job centres and can be used to organise activities for future graduates. The aim of the pool is to give graduates a greater focus on jobs in the final part of their education, and thus to get them either directly into a job or into a job more quickly after graduation (STAR, 2022a).

In March 2022, a mixed group of social partner confederations and organisations, KL and the senior citizens' interest organisation, the DaneAge Association (Ældre Sagen), wrote an open letter to the Minister of Employment reminding him that already in 2019 an established 'senior think tank' had recommended to establish a partnership for getting more seniors into jobs. Taken the acute labour shortage into consideration, the partnership behind the letter urged the minister to take action with a view to create such a partnership (DA, 2022b)

On 21 September 2022, the minister in a press release informed that in order to secure a continuous focus on the participation of 'seniors and experienced hands' on the labour market, the government wants to establish a partnership between the 'government, the social partners and central actors in the area of interest. Thus, an invitation has been sent to all central social partner organisations, KI and ministries and not the central interest organisations committed to the welfare of senior citizens. The partnership will support the participation of seniors in the labour market, among other things by actively contributing to ensuring a good framework for retaining seniors and bringing unemployed seniors more quickly back to work (Ministry of Employment, 2022e).

## Other important policy developments

### Labour market shortages

In regards to labour market shortages in Denmark, the government has introduced an agreement aiming to increase international recruitment to the labour force (the Ministry of Finance, 2022c). This is done by lowering the threshold for how much an international worker should be earning from DKK 448,000 to DKK 375,000. The agreement is in place for a limited period of three years starting from 1 December 2022. The scheme is established to support the Danish economy in the current economic situation and alleviate the labour market shortage in Danish firms. Among other things, more labour force is needed to complete an ambitious green transition. The contracting parties agreed not to introduce new residence permits as part of the temporary scheme if the gross unemployment exceeds 3.75 % or more than 15,000 persons utilized the scheme. With the introduction of the scheme, the so-called 'fast-track scheme' is expanded, meaning that the demands on the number of full-time employees that a firm must have to use the scheme are lowered from a minimum of 20 to a minimum of 10 full-time employees. Through this, more firms can access the fast-track scheme.

### Employment status and contracts

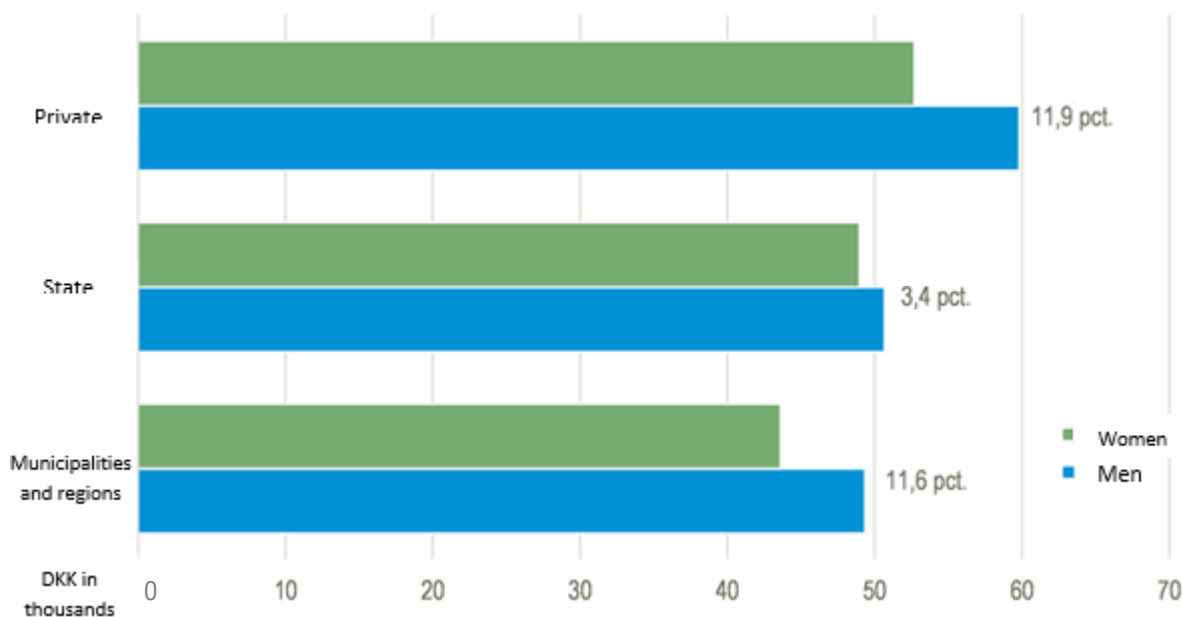
Some policies have been regulated concerning employment status and contracts in Denmark. In this relation, an update in the so-called 'job rotation benefit'<sup>ii</sup> was implemented in 2022. The job rotation scheme is, however, not a new measure in Denmark, but is still included in this section due to recent changes. The job rotation scheme's purpose is to address two main problems: the unemployment rate in Denmark and the need to upgrade the skills of employed people (CEDEFOP, undated). By enabling entry into a profession by supporting education, it is possible to recruit new staff members once the scheme is complete. According to CEDEFOP, the employer hires unemployed people temporarily, while permanent staff members receive further training and education. Furthermore, as part of the scheme, there is a so-called 'job-first' approach which means that the job centres give priority to sending the unemployed to a full-time job and not to part-time employment. In this way, the need for a more skilled workforce is addressed and attempted to solve. As mentioned, in 2022, there was an update to the scheme: "The job rotation benefit amounted to DKK 193.11 (€25.94) per hour for both private and public companies". Temporary job positions from 2021 and 2022 can now last up to 9 months, which has been implemented as an experimental scheme. The temporary workers are chosen among unemployed people with a minimum of 3 months of unemployment."

Another measure concerning employment status and contracts that has been regulated or changed is the work-sharing agreement.<sup>iii</sup> It is a measure where employers and employees agree on reducing working hours within a limited, low-demand period to avoid redundancies. The work-sharing agreement does not involve terminating the workers' employment contracts. However, the workers in the agreement are subject to a pay cut during the work-sharing period. To be part of the scheme, firms must be part of a collective agreement. In 2022, the work-sharing agreement was updated: "The original agreement on work-sharing was replaced by a new temporary tripartite agreement as a response to COVID-19. As from 1 April 2022, the temporary work sharing agreement which was established for the private sector as a response to the COVID-19 crisis, has ended."

## Gender pay gap

A measure concerning the gender pay-gap in Denmark is an EU directive that Denmark supports (The Ministry of Employment, 2022a). The directive concerns a binding agreement on salary transparency. The agreement was made by the European Council and the European Parliament. The goal of the directive is to ensure that the EU's principle of equal pay is adhered to and enforced in the EU, for example, by introducing common standards for salary transparency. In this way, employees can more easily maintain the right to equal pay. The figure below shows the newest statistics on the gender pay-gap in Denmark, the newest data available is from 2020.

**Figure 1: Monthly wage for men and women with a high level of qualifications by sector (2020).**



*Note: The term “gender pay-gap” is referring to the difference between men’s and women’s wage compared to men’s wage. The monthly wage is assessed by the standard calculation of monthly earnings. Wage earners with a high level of qualifications include, for example, doctors, engineers, teachers and university graduates. There will be big wage differences across the wage earners in this group. These differences have not been taken into account in the calculations. The data do not include students and young wage earners under the age of 18. Source: Statistics Denmark (2022b).*

As shown in the figure, there is still a significant wage gap in all sectors, with the smallest gap being for workers employed in the state (3.4%) and the largest gap is in the private sector (11.9%).

Additionally, a new regulation regarding the parental leave in Denmark came into effect in 2022. One of the intentions of the regulation is to reduce the gender pay-gap by ensuring that both parents in heterosexual couples distribute the parental leave more equally, preventing the father from returning fast to the job market while the mother stays at home with the baby while her career stands still. The regulation is elaborated in the section “work-life balance” below.

## Health and safety

A regulation on safety in the Danish labour market concerns the working environment (the Ministry of Employment, 2022c). In 2022, the government agreed to renew the expiring working environment agreement from 2019. Therefore, in the new 2023 budget proposal made in 2022, the government intends to future-proof the working environment measures and strengthen action against social

dumping and work-related crime. It is also the goal to prevent occupational injuries and fatal accidents by granting money to the Danish Working Environment Authority to increase supervision at Danish workplaces. The government earmarked a total of DKK 1.3 billion in the period 2023-2026. Simultaneously, the government also wants to create more stability around the economic frameworks by prioritising that from 2027 and onwards, around DKK 200 million will go to creating a more stable economic framework yearly.

## Work–life balance

One regulation of the parental leave policies occurred in 2022 with a new law for ‘earmarked’ parental leave (The Ministry of Employment, 2022b). The law was enforced based on the political agreement on the implementation of an EU directive, requiring member states to earmark nine weeks of statutory parental leave for fathers. The goal is to promote equality between men and women in the labour market and in the family by encouraging a more equal division of the leave between the parents by assigning earmarked leave. With the new regulations, each parent is assigned 24 weeks of parental leave. Before, the parents had 48 weeks of leave in total of which 14 weeks were earmarked for the mother, two weeks for the father and the remaining 32 weeks could be shared freely between the parents. For wage earners, the new law is assigning each parent in a heterosexual relationship 11 weeks, including parental benefits, of non-transferable parental leave after their child is born. This means that one parent cannot transfer any of the ‘earmarked’ leave to the other. That is, if the parents do not use the full 11 weeks, they eventually lapse. Consequently, the new law could help reduce the gender pay-gap, now that the father cannot work instead of the mother and therefore might not get promoted and get raises while the mother “lacks behind” when she returns to the labour market. Therefore, this regulation both promotes equality and a better work-life balance.

## Lifelong learning and skills development

The Danish government formed a so-called ‘Reform Commission’ in 2020 to propose reforms during 2022, primarily focusing on three parts: ‘New ways to the longest education’, ‘life-long learning for those with the least education’ and ‘easier ways to run businesses (the Ministry of Finance, 2022d). The Reform Commission proposes 12 different recommendations for obtaining life-long learning for those with the least education. It is stated that a common feature of all the recommendations is that they aim to make it cheaper, easier and faster to update one’s competencies throughout life. The 12 recommendations are: a new digital overview of further education, new practice for the evaluation of competencies, a new ‘practice journeyman scheme’ (‘praksissvendeordning’), a coherent education process, more flexibility for adults in vocational education, an overview of credits in vocational educations from ‘AMU-courses’ (adult vocational training), virtual acceptance at FVU (preparatory adult training), a national strategy for digital teaching material, a free boost of fundamental competencies at AVU (general adult education), focused FVU for persons without Danish as their native language, strengthening of educational and teacher-competencies at AMU and increased use of on-the-job education (Reformkommissionen, 2022).

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<sup>ii</sup> Eurofound (2022), [Job rotation](#), DK-2010-52/2481 (measures in Denmark), COVID-19 and Restructuring Support Instrument, EU PolicyWatch, Dublin

<sup>iii</sup> Eurofound (2022), [Work-sharing](#), DK-2020-51/2461 (measures in Denmark), EU PolicyWatch, Dublin

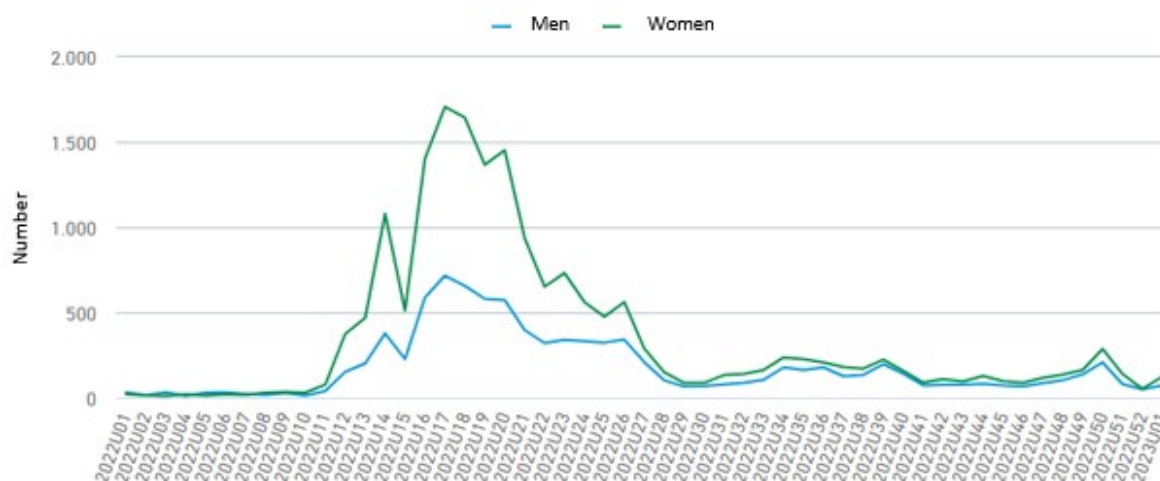
## Working life of Ukrainian refugees

On 1 July 2022, 38,632 Ukrainians lived in Denmark. The Ukrainians in Denmark are a majority of women (62%). In total, 35,147 are immigrants, while 3,485 are descendants, 2,352 have Danish citizenship (Statistics Denmark, 2022c). At the end of 2022, 29,239 refugees from the Ukraine were living in Denmark under a special act, passed by the Parliament 16 March 2002, which allow them to stay in Denmark and to work when they feel ready to do so.

The special act applies to both Ukrainian citizens and people with other citizenships who had been granted refugee status in the Ukraine per the 24th of February 2022 (Retsinformation, 2022). There is, however, no public data available concerning how many of the non-Ukrainian immigrants who held refugee status in the Ukraine and are thus covered by the special act. The employment data refers to all the refugees who have been granted a temporary residence permit under the special act, regardless of citizenship (STAR, 2022).

Out of these, 7,043 refugees from the Ukraine were employed. These workers are primarily employed in the sectors of cleaning and operational service, hotels and restaurants or farming, forestry and fishing (STAR, 2022). At the same time, 8,892 refugees from the Ukraine under the special act, were categorised as SHO-beneficiaries, which means that they receive wither self-support-, departure- or transitional benefits from the government. Out of these, 6,392 refugees from the Ukrainewere cleared ready to work (Retsinformation, 2022).

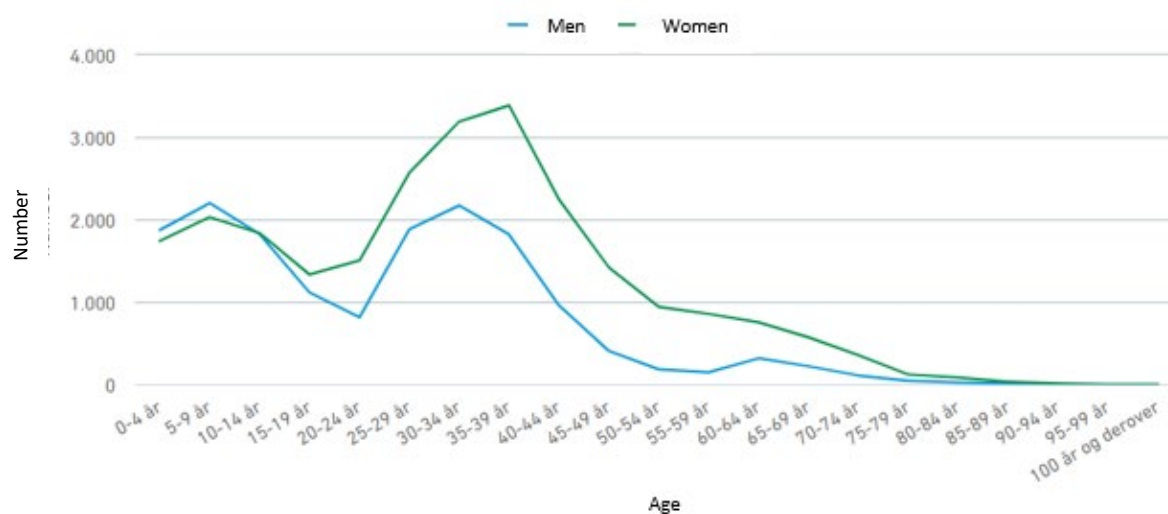
**Figure 2: Number of people with Ukrainian citizenship migrating to Denmark**



*Note: Updated weekly, for example, 2023U01 = year 2023, week 1. In week 1 of January 2023, the number of Ukrainians in migrating to Denmark was 198 (73 men and 125 women).*

*Source: Statistics Denmark (2022)*



**Figure 3: Age distribution of persons with Ukrainian ethnic origin living in Denmark**

Note: The age distribution ranges from 0 years old to 100 years and above. The data is updated in December 2022. Source: Statistics Denmark (2022).

## Employment and working conditions

The primary obstacles Ukrainian refugees face when looking for work are language barriers, no driving license and war trauma. Many Ukrainians do not speak either Danish or English, which makes it hard for them to communicate with employers (Nisgaard, 2022). For many Ukrainians, the war has affected them a lot and as a result hereof has caused trauma for some people, which affects their motivation and abilities to look for a job. Furthermore, some Ukrainians do not have a driving license either, which makes it harder for them to find transport facilities to work. If they do have a driving license, they might not own a car, which is also an obstacle. The Danish Chamber of Commerce states that the language barriers and additional administrative burdens in relation to the employment of Ukrainian refugees can have a negative influence on the number of employed Ukrainians (Nisgaard, 2022).

## Social partner initiatives to support Ukrainian refugees

To inform Ukrainian refugees regarding labour rights, some campaigns have been launched such as Jobguideukraine.dk. On the website, it is possible to access knowledge about Danish trade unions, pay and employment conditions and working rights in Denmark. The website also has easily accessible information in both Ukrainian and English about how the Danish labour market works in short, such as the usual amount of working hours a week, what should be on the contract, wage conditions and other relevant considerations (jobiukraine.dk, undated).

There have been some job matching events throughout 2022 in different parts of Denmark. The first job-matching event was on the 19 May. In collaboration with the Danish municipalities, the eight Regional Labour Councils (RAR) and the Danish Agency for Labour Market and Recruitment (STAR) openly invited to some matching events within the framework of the 'Partnership for Ukrainians in employment'. The intention was to help companies and Ukrainian refugees find each other and create a good match. At the events, there was a focus on teaching refugees how they communicate their competencies in a CV, among other things, at the Danish website for job seekers and

employers in Denmark. All job seekers could participate, but the events were primarily meant for Ukrainian refugees (the Ministry of Employment, 2022d).

The promotion of start-ups for Ukrainian refugees has been provided to some degree. The initiative 'WeStart Ukraine' was initiated by Danish Entrepreneurs and Google Success Online in order to support Ukrainian entrepreneurs (Innovationsfonden, 2022). The Danish Business Authority, 'Vækstfonden' and the Innovation Fund Denmark support the initiative. 'WeStart Ukraine' is a 6-week programme for Ukrainian female entrepreneurs, providing support, motivation and competencies to help them rebuild their lives by starting a new business and maybe in the long term rebuild some of Ukraine's business industry and social cohesion when the war is over. Through the initiative, 60 Ukrainian refugees will receive training, one-to-one feedback, mentoring and networking (Innovationsfonden, 2022).

## Commentary and outlook

One of the major events in the Danish political context in 2022 was the parliamentary election, which took place in October and November. The Prime Minister from the Social Democratic Party was re-elected, however the government has shifted from a centre-left government to a more centre/broad-based government consisting of the parties, the Social Democratic Party, the Liberals and the newly formed party, the Moderates. Together, they form a majority government, which is the first since 1994 with a similar basis of parties 'across the centre'.

There was no collective bargaining in Denmark in 2022, neither in the private nor the public sector. The social partners do not normally negotiate wage development outside the bargaining rounds. Thus, wage development to mitigate the effects of the increasing inflation will be one of the main subjects in the coming collective bargaining in the pace-setting private sector during the first months of 2023. At the end of 2022, the unions presented a catalogue of demands for the negotiations with the employers. Not surprisingly, a significant wage increase was a top issue. A discussed option for a pay rise is to pay lump sums as a kind of inflation patch. This model is practised in Germany but has never been used before by the social partners in Denmark. The advantage is that a lump sum would not affect the wage price spiral. Furthermore, the uncertain economic developments the next years can make the normal three-year agreement period seem too long. It is difficult to predict the influence of a fixed wage increase on the economy of the companies and the households.

The average harmonised inflation of Denmark in 2022 was 8.51% against 8.29% of EU. Even if Denmark was not dependent of Russian gas, the energy prices increased significantly and the government introduced a 'winter aid package' with the aim to mitigate the effects of the extraordinary high prices on heating and electricity on the households and the companies. The combination of high energy prices and high prices on basic consumer goods made it in particular difficult for low age households.

In March 2022, the Danish Parliament passed a special bill allowing Ukrainian refugees to stay in Denmark without first engaging in the formal procedures for entering Denmark. At the same time, the local authorities and the social partners took initiatives to make it easy for the Ukrainians to obtain a job on normal Danish conditions. At the end of 2022, 29,239 Ukrainian refugees were living in Denmark under the special act, whereof 7,043 Ukrainian refugees were in employment.

Labour shortage continued the high levels from 2021 and affecting most sectors in the private as well as local government sectors. Similarly, a high level of employment did not change.

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WPEF23009

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