



Dated: 25th March, 2019

Morten Villumsen
Secretary Immigration and Integration Committee

Subject: Concerns over Bill L143 tightening Denmark's Permanent Residency Rules yet again.

The Danish Green Card Association (DGCA) and Voice for Justice Unfair PR Rules Denmark are two voluntary organizations representing and raising different issues concerning green card holders, work permit workers, students and other immigrants who are in thousands in Denmark.

Through this letter, the two organizations would like to convey their concerns about the Bill L143 proposed on 12th March, 2019 which is aimed at tightening the Permanent Residency Rules even more stricter. A recent research study by Aarhus University Law Professor Jens Vedsted-Hansen found that there has been 68 times change in immigration rules in last 15 years. This translate to a change after every 3 months. The proposed bill is the 3rd one in the parliament in last 3 years for tightening Permanent Residence (PR) rules. We believe that these constant and frequent changes have only created uncertainty among the highly qualified immigrants. These immigrants cannot concentrate on their lives, families, and jobs and as a result they either leave the country or live-up with a constant stress of being kicked off of the country due to changes in the rules.

Expats have just settled down with the recent stricter permanent residency rules after bill L87 of January 2016 and bill L154 of May 2017 were passed and applied retroactively. As a result hundreds of highly skilled professionals, students and other immigrants who have resided in Denmark for more than 5 years and fulfilled all requirements got rejection letters without a refund of their fee i.e. 5,500 DKK.

In a reply to one of our letters dated 24th February 2017, the honorable Immigration and Integration Minister Inger Støjberg stated that permanent residence in Denmark is a privilege and foreigners should ensure their ability and willingness to integrate into Danish society and those who make an effort will be rewarded. Now that its time for the reward after working hard in the last 4 years by fulfilling all the strict 4 requirements the proposed bill L143 is turning all the dreams to ruin.

The proposed bill L143 will blow the last hope of highly qualified professionals as it is aimed at abolishing the 4 years track to Permanent Residency. Expats who have lived up to the strict rules from last 4 years by fulfilling all the requirements i.e. 1. working full time for 4 years in last 4 and half years, 2. Passing Active Citizen test and/or working volunteer for one year, 3. Passing Danish language level 3 PD3, 4. earning over 290,000 DKK per year in last 2 years, will have to wait for another 4 years to apply for PR in case the bill is passed. It means that those who are able to apply for PR on 25th March, 2019 will no longer be eligible to apply except by 25th March, 2023.

While fully respecting the Danish democratic system and decisions made by the Danish parliament, we believe that Bill L143 if passed, would not only have devastating impacts on the lives of these highly qualified international professionals but also have adverse consequences on Danish economy. Danske Industri DI survey of over 460 Danish companies have revealed that 60% of the Danish companies are facing serious challenges to fill up their vacancies. This bill will result in foreign labour leaving Denmark as frequent changes and constantly tightening the requirements for permanent residency create a basic sense of uncertainty and lack of predictability. It not only makes it difficult to live a normal life but people who think they are on the right track towards getting permanent residency find that they face yet another new set of rules.

The proposed bill L143 will also violate the European Directive 2004/38/EC as Bill L143 includes that EU citizens residing in Denmark will have to live for 8 years before they are eligible to apply for PR. Article 16 of the EU Directive 2004/38/EC clearly states that the Union citizens who have resided legally for a continuous period of five years in the host member state shall have the right of permanent residence there.

The two organizations would be pleased if the bill is rejected at the first be-handling in the parliament as this will give a sense of confidence to these highly qualified professionals and speed-up the integration process into Danish society. It will encourage them to produce more value to the society and bring calm and certainty in their lives in Denmark.

In case the committee would like to hear us and present our case, we would be pleased to present our case to the Parliamentary Committee of Immigration and Integration.

Best Regards

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