

Tripartite agreement on the continuation of the integrative vocational training programme (IGU)

Work and self-support are crucial to living in Denmark. It is therefore also absolutely vital to maintain the focus on supporting an increase in the employment rate of newly arrived refugees and immigrants for the benefit of integration and thereby for their own benefit and for the benefit of the Danish society.

The IGU programme which was introduced in 2016 as a pilot scheme on the basis of a tripartite agreement with the social partners is an important element in facilitating the access of refugees and persons reunited with a family member to the labour market. The programme has subsequently been continued with a new tripartite agreement which expires on 30 June 2022. The programme was most recently amended by an agreement of 21 December 2020 between the government and the social partners, among other things with an extension of the target group and increased training.

Since the introduction of the IGU programme, it has been intended as a stepping stone to employment on general labour market conditions. With the extension of the IGU programme in 2020, the aim was to give more people the opportunity to use it. However, COVID-19 restrictions and the decline in asylum seekers have undoubtedly led to a reduction in the intake of persons for the IGU programme in the past year. As opposed to what has previously been the case, there are more women than men who embark on an IGU programme. This indicates that the scheme can ease the otherwise difficult path to ordinary employment for both men and women. It therefore also continues to be important to support this development so that more refugees and immigrants find employment.

During the period from 2016 to 2021, a total of 2,742 agreements on IGU programmes were registered. It is estimated that almost 1 in 10 persons from the IGU target group have entered an agreement to participate in an IGU programme.

On this basis, the government and the social partners have agreed to continue the current IGU programme, including the language-mate scheme (*sprogmakker*), for a further 1½ years within the current framework until 1 January 2024.

The parties have also agreed that foreigners between the ages of 18 and 39 who have a residence permit under the Danish Act on Temporary Residence Permit for Persons who have assisted Danish Authorities, etc. in Afghanistan (*lov om midlertidig opholdstilladelse til personer, der i Afghanistan har bistået danske myndigheder m.v.*) must be covered by the Act on the Integrative Vocational Training Programme (IGU) (*lov om integrationsgrunduddannelse*).

The parties have further agreed that in connection with the continuation of the IGU programme, a targeted information effort must be maintained so that more persons will benefit from the IGU programme.

Finally, the government and the social partners have agreed that a continuation of the IGU programme can be viewed in combination with proposed or future reform measures. The parties therefore also agree to renegotiate the IGU programme in accordance with the recommendations of the Reform Commission with a view to strengthening the programme and the transition from IGU to employment or training. This is expected to take place as soon as possible following the publication of the Commission's recommendations and no later than during the first half of 2023.

The government will seek the support of the parties in Parliament to continue the IGU programme and ensure its funding as soon as possible.