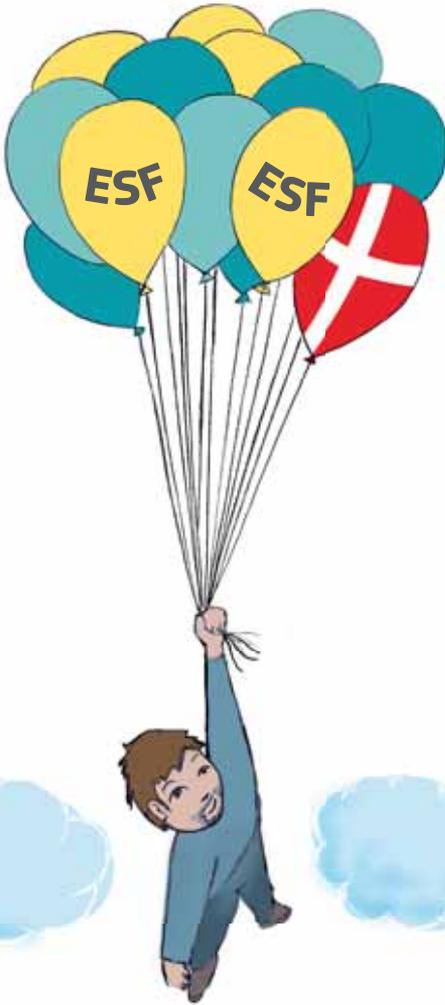




European
Commission



DENMARK

AND THE EUROPEAN SOCIAL FUND

Denmark is spending over EUR 500 million on its 'More and Better Jobs' ESF programme to equip more of its people with more and better skills. This is vital to nurture high living standards, improve competitiveness and ensure that an ageing population does not put future growth at risk. Danish ESF spending is also boosting the spirit of entrepreneurship and innovation among many social groups.

*Social
Europe*

DENMARK

INVESTING IN PEOPLE AND JOBS: THE OPPORTUNITIES FOR DENMARK

With ESF support, Denmark is investing in its people and workers to create job opportunities and help overcome some longer-term challenges. One such is an ageing population – meaning fewer workers to support more pensioners. Another is falling productivity – while labour costs rise – a real danger for Denmark’s small, open economy.

As the working population ages, giving people opportunities to stay in work longer – by investing in new skills – helps keep the cost of supporting future pensioners bearable for society. Expanding the pool of workers also contributes to the sustainability of the pension system. This can be done, for example, by removing obstacles to work for people with disabilities or members of immigrant groups who need help with language skills.

Investing more in people’s education and skills is vital if they are to improve their job prospects and help raise productivity among Danish enterprises. Although Denmark spends a lot on education, young Danes score poorly compared to the EU average. And drop-out rates are high – approaching 50% in vocational youth education.

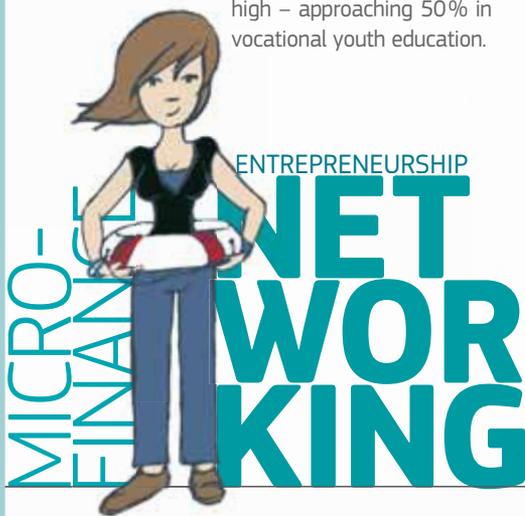
To meet these challenges, Denmark is using ESF funding to reach specific targets. An overall 80% employment rate is one – being tackled mainly by creating new jobs for people in the private sector, but also by reducing the number of jobless households. Giving people new skills helps them to get jobs and to integrate better into Danish society.

*“Towards
80% in work”*

Another target is to raise skills and job prospects, in particular for young people. For example, better identification of at-risk pupils so as to reduce school drop-out rates, or nurturing an entrepreneurial spirit among students helps them benefit from better jobs, and helps boost the success of Danish companies.

ESF spending in Denmark

Each Member State manages its ESF funding according to the particular challenges it faces. For 2007-2013, Denmark is receiving EUR 254 million of ESF funds. With national co-funding, this brings the total ESF spending on jobs to EUR 509 million. ESF activities are implemented through one Operational Programme called ‘More and Better Jobs’; and spending is shared between two priorities ‘A qualified workforce’ and ‘Expansion of the workforce’.



DENMARK'S ESF PRIORITIES

Better workers for better jobs

Denmark is using ESF funding to improve skills – of those with jobs, and those without. Projects are offering people training opportunities, improving SME managers' skills, reinforcing innovation to create new products and services, and giving workers the modern technical skills they need to improve productivity – like training in modern IT-based production systems. An example is the 'Knowledge Pilot' project in the Sjælland region which gave job opportunities to highly skilled experts to go into SMEs and implement new and innovative business procedures.

*“More chances
for more people”*

Through such projects, people across Denmark are getting the training and experience they need to become highly skilled workers who can fill better jobs and help raise the country's competitiveness. Among these participants, almost half are women, and around a third are young people, in particular those who need the extra qualifications. And of the unemployed participants – already one in five have found work.

More workers for more jobs

ESF funding is combating Denmark's growing shortage of workers – a sign of an ageing population. Projects are removing the obstacles to work faced by people such as older workers, immigrants who lack language skills, and women with childcare responsibilities. ESF spending is helping them get a job, benefit from work and take part in Denmark's future growth in many ways. For example, through projects that encourage more flexible working conditions for mothers with children, that adapt workplaces and working practices for people with disabilities; and offer training and language courses to immigrants. Projects like these are helping many more people get into work and get on in work. As well as benefiting the participants, these projects are also increasing the size of the workforce.

ESF projects are also encouraging entrepreneurs and innovative start-up companies through funding business consulting and regional networks. For example, the 'Future Factory South Funen' project is using workshops, mentoring and networking to boost the number of entrepreneurs in the region by 20%. Other projects are helping workers in businesses and education institutions to make better use of IT technologies – for teaching, lifelong learning and in-house training. Denmark has also earmarked EUR 25 million of ESF funding to provide loans to people starting their own businesses – helping them grow and create more jobs.

THE ESF IN DENMARK: SOME EXAMPLES

Entrepreneurship in Denmark

Releasing the entrepreneurial spirit of immigrant groups can have a large impact on expanding the Danish workforce, yet SMEs owned by immigrants fail more often than those of ethnic Danes. The 'Entrepreneurship in Denmark' project has identified the information, financial and cultural barriers immigrant entrepreneurs face, and is taking action to overcome them and improve their sustainability. Guiding them to the right consultant, offering networking opportunities and mentoring are among the project's activities, which have been well received both by immigrant business people and by several Danish municipalities seeking to boost entrepreneurship and employment in this group. www.entrepreneurshipindenmark.dk

Holding fast to young people

The 'Hold Fast' project is playing a major role in encouraging young Danes to stay on at school and get the qualifications they need for a good job. It is implementing an integrated approach that focuses on identifying those most at risk of dropping out. The aim is to help these young people participate fully in working life – studies show that one-quarter of drop-outs are without jobs at the age of 28, even in times of full employment. The project picks up on at-risk pupils in the summer gap between elementary and secondary school education. Using introductory courses and mentoring, it lets them try out and get the feel of what awaits them when secondary school starts – thus overcoming doubts and building self-confidence.



Do you want to...?

- ...learn more about the ESF in Denmark?
- ...understand better how the ESF works?
- ...see video clips on projects from across the EU?

Then visit the ESF website:

<http://ec.europa.eu/esf/denmark>

TRAINING
NEW JOBS
SKILLS INNOVATION