



News from the Danish Parliamentary Ombudsman

Far too long processing times in authorisation applications from foreign national doctors

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When a foreign national medical doctor from a country outside the EU/EEA applies for authorisation to work in Denmark, it takes approximately three years from when the Danish Patient Safety Authority receives the application until the Authority carries out an assessment of whether the doctor's medical training is suited to be tested in practice. The assessment itself generally only takes from two to five days. This is evident from an investigation carried out by the Parliamentary Ombudsman.

The investigation also shows that the waiting time for the Authority's assessment of the medical training has risen since 2018, from approximately ten months to approximately three years.

'That is far too long. Not least when you consider that the cases are in reality lying idle for pretty much the whole of this period and that the cases are normally uncomplicated and quick to process,' says Parliamentary Ombudsman Niels Fenger.

The Ombudsman started his investigation in June 2021 on the basis of articles in the national newspaper 'Jyllands-Posten' and the replies from the Ministry of Health (now Ministry of the Interior and Health) to several questions raised in Parliament.

According to the Danish Patient Safety Authority, the rise in processing times is due to the marked increase in the number of applications, and because approximately 1.5 full-time positions has been allocated to the work. This has created an imbalance between the number of staff and the growing number of cases. On 30 June 2021, there were 1,224 applications awaiting the Authority's assessment.

The Ministry of Health has informed the Parliamentary Ombudsman that the Ministry and the Danish Patient Safety Authority have started analysing how to optimise the process of assessing authorisation applications with a view to shortening the waiting time and improving the process for the applicants. At the same time, a total of DKK 23.1 million has been allocated in the 2022 Annual Budget covering 2022 and 2023 to bring down the backlog of applications from health personnel from third countries.

In the beginning of 2024, the Ombudsman will again ask the Danish Patient Safety Authority for information on the Authority's case processing times with a view to following up on the efficacy of the measures implemented in 2022 and 2023.

Read [the Ombudsman's statement](#) (in Danish only).

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FACTS

The authorisation case process consists of two parts. First, the Danish Patient Safety Authority must assess whether the applicants' medical training is suited for testing in practice. Then, the applicants must pass various tests etc. and carry through an employment for adaptation and training purposes before the Authority can make a final decision in the case.

The authorisation programmes finalised by the Danish Patient Safety Authority in the period from 1 January 2020 until 30 June 2021 had an average case processing time of 5 years and 4 months.

The average processing time for the first part of an authorisation case with the Danish Patient Safety Authority was approximately 31 months in August 2021 when the Authority gave its statement to the Ombudsman. In February 2022, it has risen to approximately 36 months.