



NEWS REPORT

Date: 26 May 2014
Expert: Holtmaat, Rikki
Title: Action plan against labour market discrimination
Country: The Netherlands
Context
Issue at stake: Minister of Social Affairs and Employment publishes action plan against labour market discrimination
Age, disability, race/ethnic origin, sexual orientation
Ground of discrimination:
Source: Legislation/political development
Field: Employment

Content

Legislative / political developments: The Dutch Minister of Social Affairs and Employment, Mr Asscher (Labour Party), has repeatedly stated that the combat against discrimination on the labour market needs to be intensified. In November 2013, the cabinet requested one of the government's most important policy advisers, the Social and Economic Council of the Netherlands (SER, "Sociaal-Economische Raad") to propose measures against discrimination in the area of social and economic policies. The SER's advice included proposals to simplify the reporting of discrimination, but the advisory body did not suggest any far-reaching measures.

The Dutch government has now published its reaction to the SER's advice, incorporated into a comprehensive action plan against labour market discrimination, targeting discrimination on the grounds of age, disability, race/ethnic origin, sex and sexual orientation. The plan is not just a series of legislative proposals, but comprises dozens of measures, ranging from pre-existing government policies and already proposed legislative changes to new policy proposals. A follow-up will take place in 2015, when the Government will report on the progress made in implementing the action plan's measures, thus ensuring continuity and actual results. Remarkably, the action plan seems to be more ambitious than the SER's recommendations.

One important proposal is to include a non-discrimination clause in all government contracts with private companies. Such a contract compliance clause would enable the government body to terminate the contract in case of discrimination within the private company and to exclude these companies from public tenders. The action plan, moreover, proposes an active policy of naming and shaming companies found guilty of discrimination. In order to render it possible to publish inspection results, the Act on Working Conditions ("Arbeidsomstandighedenwet") will be changed.

Other measures include the police designing a tool to (centrally) register discrimination-related crime and an awareness-building campaign in the area of discrimination on the ground of age (foreseen for autumn 2014). Also, a mobile



phone application - Report Discrimination Now (“Meld discriminatie nu”) - has been launched to ease the reporting of discrimination.

Internet link source:

Parliamentary documents:

- *Kamerstukken II* 2013/14, 29544, 523.

This document may be found at <http://www.rijksoverheid.nl/documenten-en-publicaties/kamerstukken/2014/05/16/kamerbrief-actieplan-arbeidsmarktdiscriminatie-en-kabinetsreactie-ser-advies.html>