



The use of Prison Labour – in Denmark

The use of manpower in prisons can be an aspect of forced labour and, consequently, Global Compact members must be aware of potential issues.

The pivotal factor is that the work must be carried out on a voluntary basis and that the working conditions must meet the rules of imprisoned manpower.

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DEVI A/S in Vejle, Denmark, has been cooperating with the State Prison Møgelkær for more than ten years about the sub-supply of light assembly work. The extent of the cooperation differed from year to year and amounted to approx. 240,000 DKK in 2008.

In 2008 Danfoss paid the prison a visit, interviewing both the staff and the inmates. Both parties marked the importance of offering meaningful jobs and, so, the jobs that companies offer are important.

All work carried out in Danish prisons is under supervision of the Danish Working Environment Authority, which consists of labour and management. This is to make sure that the work is not anti-competitive. Part of the inmates' salary is paid by DEVI, amounting to the Danish minimum wage for unskilled workers.

Every Danish prison has a duty to occupy the inmates and the inmates in the State Prison Møgelkær can choose between receiving an education, treatment or employment. The inmates are paid a weekly sum of approx. 500 DKK.

This work was originally contracted out to the prison, because it was too expensive to carry out at DEVI, far higher than the minimum wage. So, the alternative to having work done in the prison would be to relocate it to Poland or China.

The use of imprisoned manpower in Denmark takes place within the scope of UN's rules of inmate manpower, so Danfos does not violate the principles of Global Compact.