

The abolition of Great Prayer Day

In Denmark, the Great Prayer Day falls on the 4th Friday after Easter and has been a public holiday since 1686. On February 28, 2023, the Danish Parliament adopted the Act on the Consequences of the Abolition of Great Prayer Day as a Public Holiday (hereinafter “Great Prayer Day Act”). The purpose of the Great Prayer Day Act is to ensure that Great Prayer Day is considered a regular working day henceforth.

The act will enter into force on January 1, 2024.

CONSEQUENCES AND OBLIGATIONS FOR THE EMPLOYER

The abolition of Great Prayer Day as a public holiday means that employees’ annual working time will increase by one working day per year.

Employees receiving a fixed monthly salary, as well as those compensated based on other fixed periods, will be compensated for this additional working day. The employer is required to provide a “Great Prayer Day allowance” equivalent to 0.45 percent of the annual salary, corresponding to the standard value of a regular working day, as stipulated in Section 3 of the Great Prayer Day Act.

The employer has two options on how to pay out the allowance:

1. The allowance will be disbursed twice a year, concurrently with the salaries in May and August. (It is important to note that, in this scenario, they are obligated to provide a proportionate allowance upon the employee’s termination during the year.)
2. The allowance will be disbursed monthly, coinciding with the salary payment.

Employees, who are on maternity/paternity/parental leave according to the Danish Parental Leave Act retain the entitlement to the same Great Prayer Day allowance as if they had been actively working, also during absence without full or partly remuneration from the employer.

Hourly paid employees are not entitled to receive Great Prayer Day allowance from the employer. Hourly paid employees working on the now removed Great Prayer Day will only receive the agreed hourly wage for an ordinary working day along with supplements for overtime, etc.

The employer has an obligation to inform employees in writing about the changed salary and employment conditions resulting from the Great Prayer Day Act. This can be done through a written statement or as an addendum to the employment contract.

You are always welcome to contact NJORD if you need help to review and update employment contracts, HR policies, or if you have questions or need of assistance in connection with a specific case.



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