

Denmark to have world's highest retirement age

26th May 2025



Higher rates of longevity are pushing up ages of retirement. In line with this, the Danish government has just announced it will raise the retirement age for its citizens from 67 to 70 by the year 2040. In so doing, Denmark's workers will have the world's

longest wait before they can retire. Denmark said the new law was necessary to keep pace with increasing life expectancy. However, Jesper Rasmussen, a trade union leader in Denmark, expressed his consternation at the government's move. He said: "Denmark has a healthy economy and yet the EU's highest retirement age". He added: "A higher retirement age means that [workers will] lose their right to a dignified senior life."

There is a precedent for the retirement age being 70. The world's first case was in Germany in 1881. It set the age at 70, before reducing it to 65 in 1916. Many countries followed suit and incorporated their own ages for workers to retire with a state pension. The USA first adopted a retirement age in 1935. It was set at 65. The USA Today website reported that in America, the retirement age was also steadily creeping up. It wrote: "The upward trend is slow, but striking. In 1994, the average man worked to age 61, while the typical woman clocked out at 59. Americans are living longer, and working longer." China has also announced an increase, to be rolled out over the next 15 years.

Sources: bbc.com / barrons.com / wikipedia.org / usatoday.com

Writing

The retirement age should be 60 for everyone. Discuss.

Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

longevity / retirement / workers / life expectancy / trade union / healthy / economy / precedent / state pension / creep up / trend / the typical woman / working longer

True / False

- 1) People in Denmark will have to retire when they are 70 from 2030. T / F
- 2) Only two countries will have a higher retirement age than Denmark. T / F
- 3) Denmark's new law is because people are living longer. T / F
- 4) A trade union leader said Denmark had too unhealthy an economy. T / F
- 5) Germany was the first country to have a retirement age of 70. T / F
- 6) The USA started retirement ages in 1935. T / F
- 7) In the USA, women clock out from work at the age of 59. T / F
- 8) China is set to lower the retirement age over the next 15 years. T / F

Synonym Match

(The words in **bold** are from the news article.)

- | | |
|-------------------------|-------------------|
| 1. retirement | a. previous case |
| 2. citizens | b. essential |
| 3. necessary | c. decided on |
| 4. consternation | d. subjects |
| 5. senior | e. established |
| 6. precedent | f. constantly |
| 7. adopted | g. giving up work |
| 8. set | h. started |
| 9. steadily | i. alarm |
| 10. rolled out | j. older |

Discussion – Student A

- a) What do you think of retirement?
- b) What's the best age at which to retire?
- c) When would you like to retire?
- d) Is increased life expectancy good for the world?
- e) What will you do when you are retired?
- f) Does a higher retirement age mean a less dignified senior life?
- g) Should people be able to work after retirement age?
- h) What advice do you have for people who are retired?

Phrase Match

- | | |
|---|--------------------------------|
| 1. Higher rates of longevity are pushing | a. at the government's move |
| 2. it will raise the retirement age for its | b. creeping up |
| 3. the new law was necessary to keep | c. to a dignified senior life |
| 4. expressed his consternation | d. out at 59 |
| 5. workers will lose their right | e. pace |
| 6. The world's first | f. suit |
| 7. Many countries followed | g. up ages of retirement |
| 8. the retirement age was also steadily | h. over the next 15 years |
| 9. the typical woman clocked | i. case was in Germany in 1881 |
| 10. rolled out | j. citizens from 67 to 70 |

Discussion – Student B

- What do you think about what you read?
- How can retirees contribute to society?
- What do you think of retirement homes?
- Should early retirement be a human right?
- How would you feel about working until you are 80?
- In what way might retirement be the best years of our lives?
- What do you think of state pensions?
- What questions would you like to ask a retired person?

Spelling

- Higher rates of tgoelnviy
- the Danish ynnrmoegte
- the retirement age for its inzesitc
- keep pace with increasing life execancytp
- expressed his totncnnoaesri
- lose their right to a ifdgndiei senior life
- There is a edrpnteec for the retirement age
- arcneoiorcpt their own ages
- retire with a state piesonn
- lyatdise creeping up
- the playcit woman
- China has also naueonncd an increase

Answers – Synonym Match

1. g	2. d	3. b	4. i	5. j
6. a	7. c	8. e	9. f	10. h

Comprehension Questions

Listen to / read the news article. Answer these questions.
(Answers are on p. 27 of the 27-page PDF.)

1.	What does the article say is pushing up ages of retirement?
2.	By when will Denmark's new retirement age come into effect?
3.	Who is Jesper Rasmussen?
4.	What did Jesper Rasmussen say was healthy about Denmark?
5.	What did Jesper Rasmussen say workers had a right to?
6.	When did Germany set a retirement age of 70?
7.	When did the USA introduce its first retirement age?
8.	What is happening to the retirement age in the USA?
9.	At what age does the typical American woman retire?
10.	Which country will increase its retirement age over the next 15 years?

Speaking – Retirement

Rank these with your partner. Put the best things about retirement at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- | | |
|------------------|-------------------------|
| • A simpler life | • Time to sleep |
| • No work | • More time to exercise |
| • Less stress | • Hobby time |
| • New hobbies | • Travel |

Answers – True False

1 F	2 F	3 T	4 F	5 T	6 T	7 F	8 F
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Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.