

(English version)

Question for written answer E-001442/19
to the Commission
João Pimenta Lopes (GUE/NGL)
(20 March 2019)

Subject: Situation of seasonal workers in Switzerland

I have learned of cases involving workers from Member States — and Portuguese workers in particular, who are the largest foreign community concerned — doing seasonal work in Switzerland, for example at tourist resorts, in which labour relations are totally unregulated and afford no protection and workers' accommodation and the transport taking them to their workplaces are incompatible with decent living conditions, bearing in mind also the upward price trend on the rental market. This situation is, in addition, creating unacceptable pressure on Swiss labour rights.

Does the Commission know of any cases in which workers from Member States employed in seasonal work in Switzerland have been affected by improper employment practices of this sort?

As regards the Institutional Framework Agreement between the European Union and the Swiss Confederation, will the Commission include any clause to ensure that seasonal workers from Member States can enjoy the same salary and labour protection as Swiss workers and be covered by support systems and safeguards?

Will the Commission, in conjunction with the Member States and their diplomatic representations, propose ways to prevent employment-related abuses and to inform and support the thousands of workers from Member States who each year bolster up Switzerland's seasonal labour force?

Answer given by Ms Thyssen on behalf of the European Commission
(7 June 2019)

The Commission is not aware of such cases of improper employment practices in relation to Union workers who undertake seasonal work in Switzerland.

Currently, the Free Movement of Persons Agreement ⁽¹⁾ concluded in 1999 governs the free movement of workers between the EU and Switzerland. Under Article 9 of Annex I to the Agreement, European Union workers have to be treated equally as national employed persons as regards conditions of employment and working conditions. The Institutional Framework Agreement, the text of which was agreed between negotiators in November 2018, does not bring specific provisions in relation to seasonal work.

The European Labour Authority ⁽²⁾, which shall soon start its activities, will support the Commission and Member States in the enforcement of EU rules on labour mobility with several instruments to prevent abuses. Its tasks include assessing risks of fraud and informing mobile workers about their rights when working in another EU Member State, a European Economic Area (EEA) country, or Switzerland.

⁽¹⁾ [https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:02002A0430\(01\)-20170101](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:02002A0430(01)-20170101)

⁽²⁾ http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_STATEMENT-19-844_en.htm