

**Question for written answer E-006316/2018  
to the Commission**  
Rule 130  
**Dominique Martin (ENF)**

Subject: National preference for employment in Singapore

In Singapore, companies must seek prior approval from the National Ministry of Manpower in order to employ foreigners, including from certain North Asian 'source' countries<sup>1</sup>. A sector-specific quota limits the number of foreigners that may be employed in relation to the number of local citizens already employed, and a penalty is applied depending on the proportion of foreigners. For example, in services, the maximum proportion is 8 % foreigners without qualifications<sup>2</sup> and 15 % foreigners with medium qualifications<sup>3</sup>, and the maximum penalty is EUR 408<sup>4</sup> per month per foreigner employed.

Foreign workers may work only in the occupation and for the employer indicated on their work permit. They must carry this permit with them at all times and any public official may check it.

It should be noted that a foreign worker may not marry without the approval of the Ministry<sup>5</sup>.

Singapore's average gross domestic product (GDP), which was at the same level as Portugal in 1990 with USD 11 800 per capita<sup>6</sup>, significantly exceeded that of France (USD 43 551 per capita) and Sweden (USD 51 264 per capita) in 2017, reaching USD 90 531 per capita<sup>7</sup>.

Why does the Commission not follow the example of Singapore and apply such an employment preference?

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<sup>1</sup> Malaysia, China, Hong Kong, Macao, South Korea and Taiwan are privileged in industry. In some other sectors (e.g. construction), workers may also come from other 'non-traditional' Asian countries (e.g. India, Thailand); <https://www.mom.gov.sg/passes-and-permits/work-permit-for-foreign-worker/sector-specific-rules>

<sup>2</sup> PRC Work Permit.

<sup>3</sup> Work Permit S, salary above SGD 2 200, or EUR 1 384.

<sup>4</sup> SGD 800 or EUR 408; <https://www.mom.gov.sg/passes-and-permits/work-permit-for-foreign-worker/sector-specific-rules/services-sector-requirements#quota-and-levy>

<sup>5</sup> A foreign worker 'cannot get pregnant or deliver a child in Singapore during the validity of [their] Work Permit unless [they] are already married to a Singapore Citizen or Permanent Resident with the approval of the [Ministry of Manpower]. This applies even after [their] Work Permit has expired, been cancelled or revoked'; <https://www.mom.gov.sg/~media/mom/documents/statistics-publications/a-guide-for-foreign-workers-english-malay.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> French GDP USD 21 795 per capita in 1990

<sup>7</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_countries\\_by\\_GDP\\_\(PPP\)\\_per\\_capita](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_countries_by_GDP_(PPP)_per_capita)