

Agreement on the Procedures Concerning Pregnancy among Vietnamese Women Laborers in the GDR (July 21, 1987)

Abstract

This memorandum of understanding was drafted to reaffirm and clarify aspects of a bilateral 1980 state treaty, particularly issues surrounding pregnancy among Vietnamese contract workers in the GDR. It was signed on January 26, 1987, by the two states' ministers of labor.

Source

The common goal of the Labor Cooperation documented in these pages is as follows: Vietnamese workers are employed and trained in GDR firms for a specific time frame. The concomitant obligations place heavy demands on both sides as well as on the Vietnamese workers themselves. Pregnancy and motherhood change the personal situation of the affected female workers so profoundly that they are subsequently no longer able to realize the demands of temporary employment and training.

The representatives of the operational firms as well as the work group leaders are responsible for discussing the use of prophylactics with Vietnamese workers and informing them that pregnancy and motherhood are incompatible with the terms of their contract. Vietnamese women – like women in the GDR – have the right (in accordance with the agreement between the ministers of health in both countries) to terminate their pregnancies cost-free.

Vietnamese women who do not avail themselves of contraception or abortion must report at a predetermined time for their premature return to Vietnam, upon being cleared by a doctor to travel. In the case of a refusal to leave the country, the embassy of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam in the GDR will take immediate, necessary steps toward the execution of the deportation order and will be responsible for all costs incurred in the process.

In special circumstances, when the personal, social situation of the Vietnamese woman in question justifies a delivery in the GDR, the permanent secretary for labor and wages of the GDR, in consultation with the embassy of the SRV in the GDR, can approve the prolonged residence of mother and child until both are able to travel.

The Vietnamese government will inform new delegations of the provisions of this agreement and will notify the women in these delegations of the prerequisites to their employment.

Source of the original German text: Vereinbarung über die Verfahrensweise bei Schwangerschaft vietnamesischer werktätiger Frauen in der DDR (Ost-Berlin, 21. Juli 1987), in Deniz Göktürk, David Gramling, Anton Kaes und Andreas Langenohl, Hrsg., *Transit Deutschland. Debatten zu Nation und Migration*, München: Konstanz University Press, 2011, pp. 118-119.

Source of English translation: Deniz Göktürk, David Gramling, and Anton Kaes, eds., *Germany in Transit. Nation and Migration 1955-2005*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007, p. 88.

Translation: Tes Howell

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