The Federal Republic Halts Foreign Labor Recruitment in the Wake of the Oil Crisis (June 13, 1974)

Abstract

In response to OPEC's decision to drastically increase oil prices, the federal government halted guest worker recruitment in order to prevent unemployment among foreign workers, which threatened to burden the welfare system.

Source

The Ban on Recruitment Remains in Place
Measures to Combat Illegal Foreign Employment Are Heightened

In its answer to a Minor Interpellation [*Kleine Anfrage*] by a member of the Bundestag, the Labor Ministry explained that, given the situation on the labor market, the federal government does not consider it justifiable to lift the foreign worker recruitment ban again. The ban is intended to help make jobs more secure.

According to the ministry, without this ban, the labor market would have developed in an even less favorable direction. Additionally, a particular problem would have arisen: higher unemployment among foreigners in the Federal Republic. The recruitment ban is also intended to help keep the employment of foreigners within socially tenable bounds. These efforts, the ministry said, should not be jeopardized by an uncontrolled increase in the employment of foreigners.

The government acknowledges that individual companies and economic sectors are facing difficulties as a result of the recruitment ban. First, however, attempts must be made to fill available positions with unemployed Germans. On the other hand, the government also states clearly that no legally employed foreign worker should be forced to return to his country of origin.

Measures against the illegal employment of foreigners have intensified. Anyone placing or employing foreign workers without a work permit is now subject to a prison sentence of up to three years, instead of the previous one-year sentence, and a fine of DM 50,000, instead of the previous DM 10,000.

"As a rule," after the first year, residence permits are extended twice for a period of two years each. After five years, an unlimited residence permit should be issued. "As a rule," after eight years of residency, people in this group should receive an "especially secure legal residence status." The interior ministers of the federal states [*Länder*] will address this issue at their next conference.

Source: Kurt Steves, "Anwerbestopp bleibt bestehen," *Die Welt,* June 13, 1974.

Translation: Allison Brown

Recommended Citation: The Federal Republic Halts Foreign Labor Recruitment in the Wake of the Oil Crisis (June 13, 1974), published in: German History in Documents and Images, <https://germanhistorydocs.org/en/two-germanies-1961-1989/ghdi:document-848> [November 12, 2026].