HK Privat and the interpretation platform Voocali.com enter into a collective agreement and freelance agreement

Voocali accepts the salaried employees' collective agreement concerning trade, knowledge and service entered into between HK Privat and Dansk Erhverv.

The collective agreement governs salary and employment terms for employees of the company. At the same time, Voocali and HK Privat conclude an agreement on terms regarding the freelance interpreters who find assignments through Voocali’s interpretation platform.

With the freelance agreement, the parties seek, within the framework of the Danish model, to create the required confidence so that freelance interpreters and user businesses can benefit from the new technology and the transparency that an open platform can contribute to the industry.

Voocali has been started based on the recognition that the interpretation industry is characterised by poor conditions for the freelance interpreters and broad dissatisfaction with the service supplied by a number of interpretation agencies, which has received repeated media attention. HK Privat recognises this observation.

With the platform, freelance interpreters obtain the possibility of profiling themselves and creating permanent customer relations with user businesses and institutions and thus stand out from the anonymity engendered by a conventional interpretation agency. The new technology facilitates the interpreter's and the user businesses' day-to-day work through a number of digital solutions. At the same time, a large part of the administrative work for which the interpretation agencies demand a price is automated. This is to the benefit of both the interpreters and the buyers of interpretation services.

The agreement ensures among other things:

- Free access to the platform for active and deactivated profiles
- A minimum hourly rate for all affiliated interpreters
- Guaranteed payment for assignments performed
- Guaranteed payment for assignments cancelled with less than 24 hours’ notice
- Transportation supplement for interpretation in person
- Reporting of B tax for freelancers without a CVR number
- Requirements of objective reason in case of exclusion from the platform
- Data portability so that the users may take user ratings with them
- No restrictions regarding the performance of assignments outside Voocali
In addition, the agreement contains a number of declarations of intent to work further in relation to establishing a pension scheme, further education contributions, enhanced tax reporting, rating appeals board etc.

If the accession collective agreement is non-terminable, the freelance agreement is a trial agreement running for a year and can be terminated by both parties. The parties agree to adjust the agreement on an ongoing basis seeing that Voocali is a brand new platform.

The parties realise that the development of new technology creates possibilities of new types of work, and with the intended platform solution for the concrete challenges in the interpretation sector, situations may occur where the conventional way to perceive the labour market does not necessarily include such possibilities. Further, a number of questions remain open in Danish legislation and case law, including how the criteria for the distinction between an employee and a self-employed trader are perceived in a three-lateral platform structure.

In this light, the parties have concluded an agreement that can be adjusted in line with any coming case law or new legislation with effect on the area.

The platform enables a business or an institution to use the software for their employed interpreters and makes it possible for a permanently employed interpreter to be shared by two employers, thereby reducing the risk of surplus capacity in case of permanent employment. Voocali and HK Privat share the view that institutions and businesses with a continuous need for an interpreter should employ the interpreter on a permanent basis. Thus, over time the platform can contribute to more permanent employment in the interpretation industry.

Initially, the platform will operate with a fixed price structure but will switch to a differentiated price structure as soon as possible, allowing the freelance interpreters set their hourly rates – but not under the agreed minimum price. This will take place as the concept matures in cooperation with the stakeholders. Voocali expects to start tests of a differentiated price structure in the first quarter with final implementation at the end of the third quarter 2019.

30 September 2018