



An Roinn Gnóthaí Sóisialacha agus Teaghlaigh

Eisúint Nuachta

29th Dheireadh Fómhair 2009

Minister Hanafin signs Bilateral Agreement on Social Security with Japan

The Minister for Social & Family Affairs, Mary Hanafin T.D. and His Excellency Ambassador Toshinao Urabe of Japan today (*Thursday 29th October 2009*) signed a Bilateral Agreement on Social Security in Dublin.

Announcing the Agreement, Minister Hanafin said **“the main purpose of the Agreement is to protect the pension rights of migrant workers who move between the two countries. It does this by allowing social insurance contributions paid in one country to be counted towards certain benefits in the other country. The Agreement covers contributory State pensions, widows, guardians and invalidity pensions, and the equivalent payments in Japan.”**

The Agreement also provides that employees who are posted to work for their company in the other country for up to 5 years may continue to pay insurance contributions under their national social security system instead of becoming liable for contributions in the other country. This enhances Ireland’s attractiveness for Japanese companies to invest in business here, and will similarly facilitate Irish companies who wish to develop subsidiary enterprises in Japan.

Minister Mary Hanafin said: **“I am pleased to sign this Agreement on social security with Japan which is the second largest economy in the world. In the light of our shared interest in developing trade and investment, particularly in the new technologies, this agreement will enhance our friendship and co-operation. Both countries can benefit from economic partnerships and this social security agreement will ensure that workers who move from one country to the other will not lose out in terms of their pension rights.”**

It is estimated that there are about 1,500 Irish citizens employed in Japan and about 2,000 Japanese have been employed here. The Agreement will ensure the protection of the pension rights of these workers in the event of widowhood, old age or invalidity if they have periods of social insurance in both countries.

The Agreement has to be approved by Dáil Éireann and by the Japanese parliament. It is hoped to bring it into effect before the end of next year.