

Relocation agents make for a comfortable transition into Danish life



Annemette Krogh, founder of All Denmark Relocation

The practical challenges involved with relocating to another country are compounded by emotional and social pressures.

Annemette Krogh, founder of All Denmark Relocation, one of the leading relocation experts in Denmark, explains how to make the transition easier

WHERE do I vaccinate my dog? How do I secure a spot at the nursery school for my two-year-old? And where's the best place to get a cup of coffee in Østerbro? Do I need a visa, and what is a work permit? Finding solutions to

these practical problems has been the focus of Annemette Krogh's work since she founded All Denmark Relocation nearly ten years ago.

All Denmark Relocation's agents, who are founding members of the European Relocation Association, EuRa, are fluent in English, German, Dutch, and Danish (and Japanese, French, and Italian, too with the recent addition of Ms. Mareille Sundø to the team). The privately owned and independent company is certified to represent some of the largest relocation groups in the world.

Annemette recalls how she practically stumbled into the business after a friend showed her a foreign relocation agent's brochure. Within a few days, her life was starting down a new path. She quit her job, made changes in her private life, and met with her bank advisors within a few days. 'How much do you need?' was all they asked.

Relocation was still a foreign

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concept in Denmark in those days, recalls Annemette. 'Danes aren't used to getting good service. So we don't ask for it, and we don't expect it,' says Annemette. 'The whole mentality in Den-

mark is that you can handle things on your own, and you do things on your own.'

She set out on a personal crusade to convince HR departments that it pays to invest in relocation services for foreign employees and that relocation involved much more than a moving company: 'We are not a moving company. A moving company moves boxes. We move families,' says Annemette.

Switching comfortably between English and Danish, Annemette outlines the many practical services that All Denmark Relocation provides; from obtaining work and residence permits, and social security numbers (cpr-numbers), and showing new residents where to shop. Annemette and her team act as the advocate, watchdog, and police officers for clients, making sure they get settled.

In recent years, conditions have improved for newcomers in Denmark, admits Annemette. The country has become steadily more internationalised and creature comforts are widely available. Nevertheless, HR departments from major corporations are still taken by surprise when employees wind up with culture shock or become depressed because of their inability to acclimatise to daily life in Denmark.

Annemette takes it upon herself in these instances to become involved and help her clients

overcome the daily challenges of living in Denmark.

'For me, this isn't just a business until 5 p.m. If a client is unhappy with her health care worker, for example, I can't just let that go. That's just not good enough.'

The Copenhagen Post visited with Annemette and her team after new strict traffic rules had been implemented

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in Denmark. "All our clients, regardless of the length of time they have been here, have just received a full translation of the traffic rules" says Annemette and presented a copy. 'The new rules are so important that we simply had to furnish our clients with the information. It is a part of our on-going support, the 'post-arrival care' we offer,' she said.

Relocating to Denmark presents a number of stressful emotional factors, according to Annemette - especially after the moving boxes have been unpacked, the letters from back home have stopped coming, and when winter rolls in and the country's inhabitants retreat to their candlelit living rooms until mid-May.



Typically after the twelfth week, the question inevitably arises: now what?

Annemette's advice is simple: 'Join everything.' She takes it upon herself to involve the family and help them network, suggesting places of worship to attend, and social clubs and organisations to join. After a few months, families can pick and choose which groups appeal most to them.

Annemette finds that a number of male employees simply head to the corporate headquarters upon arriving and never look up from their desk until the day they leave: 'They don't know anything about Denmark when they leave. Sometimes it seems like they don't really register what

country they're in.'

She tries to encourage working husbands to become involved in the relocation process. To take a few days out of their busy schedules to be with the family during the relocation process. Whats three days out of three years to honour the family members who also make changes for the sake of his career? Those few days help to make a difference; it turns the relocation process into a family matter. 'People need to be happy about Denmark while they are here and when they leave the country. I think it would be a real shame if they have spent three years of their lives in this country and leave feeling 'what a waste'.'