

The Swedish social partners involvement in the European Semester

Sandra Bergendorff, Employer organisation, SALAR

The Swedish labour market - characteristics

- **Strong role of social partners on the labour market**
- **Collective agreements an important instrument**
 - to set wages (no statutory minimum wage, no extension of collective agreements)
 - to set working conditions
 - with possibility to deviate from labour law
- **Strong support for the model from government, employers and trade unions.**
- **Few days - in international comparison - lost in strikes**

Social partners in the European Semester

- **History of close involvement of social partners** in the national implementation of EU growth and employment policies.
- **With Europe 2020 strategy**– a more institutionalised framework for dialogue was jointly agreed.
- Social partner involvement in the semester – **a political priority.**

'EU-sakråd' (Thematic Consultation Forums on EU Affairs)

The Government established a reference group (representatives of ministers and central social partners - civil servant level) at least three times a year

Spring meeting on the NRP

When: February / March (when the country report for Sweden is published and in connection with the work on NRP).

Summer meeting on the recommendations

When: May / June (in conjunction with COM proposed country-specific recommendations).

Autumn meeting on implementation

When: November. (Following the presentation of Swedish Budget proposal in the Riksdag (Swedish parliament) and in close proximity to COM's presentation of the annual growth review).

EU Consultation at Political Level (EU Council)

Prime Minister invites the central party organizations at the chairman level to the EU Council twice a year. EU councils will serve as a recurring forum for dialogue on current issues on the EU agenda.

Sweden's national reform programme 2019

Download:

<https://www.government.se/reports/2019/05/swedens-national-reform-programme-2019/>

Sweden's national reform programme for 2019 is mainly based on the measures and reform ambitions proposed by the Government in the Spring Fiscal Policy Bill for 2019 and the Spring Amending Budget.

It also reflects the policy priority areas in the Commission's Annual Growth Survey, as endorsed by the European Council on 21–22 March 2019.

- Delivering high-quality investment focusing particularly on investment gaps in research and innovation, education and infrastructure.
- Focusing on reforms that increase productivity growth, inclusiveness and institutional quality.
- Ensuring macro-financial stability and sound public finances.

An appendix to this year's programme also presents material received from social partners, regional and local actors and civil society organisations. The Government has not taken a position on this material.

Examples of social partner involvement in European Semester

- **A jointly agreed and institutionalised process of consultation throughout the semester.**
- **In line with NRP guidance – substantial contribution from social partners to Swedish NRP for several years.**
- **Consultation meeting ahead of every EPSCO council meeting.**
- **Local and regional support**, contribution received from the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions (SALAR), as the representative of the local and regional levels, giving an account of examples of work being conducted in accordance with the strategy's guidelines and targets.

Some concluding remarks...

The social dialogue – a way to move forward

- ❖ Basis for social dialogue is the national level, foremost local and workplace level
- ❖ Results at EU level depends on well functioning social dialogue at national level
- ❖ A tool to cope with change - Contribute to solving problems - Deliver results

How do we get there and what is the way forward?

- Mutual trust
- Confidence in our own capacity to deal with difficult matters in social dialogue
- Time and long term commitment to the process of social dialogue

Some final words on social dialogue from the social summit in Gothenburg

“Collective bargaining is at the heart of the Swedish labour market. We have a high level of organization for trade unions and employers’ associations. **The social dialogue is built on mutual trust, it is allowed to take time, and the social partners have the capacity and autonomy to conduct negotiations independent from the state.** * ”

Lena Micko, former President of SALAR, 2017, on behalf of the Swedish Social Partners

* This was also the strong joint message and commitment on social dialogue and the necessary conditions for it from CEEP, BusinessEurope/SMEUnited and ETUC together with the Swedish Social Partners at the social summit.