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EUROPEAN SOCIAL CHARTER

23rd National Report on the implementation of the European
Social Charter

submitted by

THE GOVERNMENT OF SWEDEN

Articles 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 20

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CYCLE 2026

EUROPEAN SOCIAL CHARTER
1st National Statutory Report on
the application of the Revised
European Social Charter
Group 1

submitted by

THE GOVERNMENT OF
SWEDEN

Articles 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 20

National statutory report

submitted by the Government of Sweden

in accordance with the decision of the Ministers' Deputies on the 27 September 2022 based on CM(2022)114-final.

In accordance with Part IV, Article 23 of the Revised European Social Charter, copies of this report have been communicated to

- Svenskt Näringsliv (Confederation of Swedish Enterprise)
- Sveriges Kommuner och Regioner, SKR (the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions)
- Arbetsgivarverket (Swedish Agency for Government Employers)
- Landsorganisationen i Sverige, LO (the Swedish Trade Union Confederation)
- Tjänstemännens Centralorganisation, TCO (the Swedish Confederation of Professional Employees)
- Sveriges Akademikers Centralorganisation, Saco (the Swedish Confederation of Professional Organisations)

Introductory remark

Sweden has a basic social legislation governing employment security, working hours, annual leave, the working environment and similar areas. In addition, the terms of employment in the Swedish labour market are primarily agreed by the social partners and regulated in collective agreements. To facilitate for the parties to take responsibility for these issues and to promote the conclusion of collective agreements, there are provisions governing how the parties should relate to each other. These provisions include statutory provisions on the right to organise and collective bargaining, the use of industrial action, dispute resolution, mediation etc.

The labour market regulation, i.e. collective agreements and legislation is universal and does not differentiate on grounds of origin and constitutes a framework that supports the model through provisions on i.a. association and negotiation rights and the right to take industrial action. This means that the legislation concerning for example working time and health and safety covers all workers employed in Sweden. Posted workers as well as migrant workers from third countries are all covered by the Working Hours Act and the Work Environmental Act.

The social partners have a significant autonomy to regulate specific conditions through collective agreements and the government stays neutral in disputes between the social partners. A prerequisite for a model in which wages and other employment conditions are determined through collective agreements is that the agreements cover a vast majority of the labour market. In 2024, 88 percent of the workers were covered by collective agreements. The collective bargaining coverage rate has remained essentially unchanged in Sweden for a very long time, despite restructuring of the labour market and the emergence of new industries. The coverage rate is maintained not least by a high level of employers' organisation affiliation.

For the system to work and to be widely accepted, there must be a high unionisation rate among the employees. As for Sweden, although the rate was higher in the early 2000s, it has stabilised for several years at a level which remains high by international standards for the labour market as a whole. Sweden has the second highest unionisation rate in the OECD. In 2024 the unionization rate was 66 %.

Also, and as general remark, it should be noted that according to the Swedish labour market model, the social partners (trade unions and employers' organisations) are responsible for wage formation. The Swedish model for wage formation has been shown to work very effectively. It creates favourable conditions for both employers and employees and in itself provides protection against unfairly low wages. The model means that the wage levels in collective agreements contribute to good wage conditions even for employees who are not covered by collective agreements. This is because collective agreements have a normative effect even for these employees. According to wage statistics, for a long time only approximately one percent of employees have had low wages (please see The Swedish National Mediation Office (Medlingsinstitutet, MI) [Kollektivavtalen och de lägsta lönerna](#), a report from MI, 2020).

Article 2 – The right to just conditions of work

Questions

Article 2§1 Reasonable daily and weekly working hours

a) Please provide information on occupations, if any, where weekly working hours can exceed 60 hours or more, by law, collective agreements or other means, including:

- **information on the exact number of weekly hours that persons in these**

occupations can work;

• information on any safeguards which exist in order to protect the health and safety of the worker, where workers work more than 60 hours.

Working time is regulated in the Working Hours Act (1982:673). The Working Hours Act applies to all activities where employees perform work on behalf of an employer (1 §). There are some exceptions where the act does not apply;

1. work performed under such conditions that supervision of how the work is organised cannot be deemed to be the employer's responsibility;
2. work performed by employees who, considering their duties and employment conditions, hold managerial or comparable positions, or by employees who, considering their duties, are entrusted with organising their own working time;
3. work performed in the employer's household;
4. work on board a ship; or
5. work within the scope of the Working Hours for Certain Road Transport Work Act (2005:395).

According to the Working Hours Act, the total working time per every seven day period may amount to an average of at most 48 hours during a reference period of at most four months (10 b §).

Exemptions from the Act in its entirety, or derogations Section 10b may be made through collective agreements concluded or approved by a central employee organisation. However, derogations from Section 10b may not involve a reference period exceeding twelve months. Furthermore, exemptions from the Working Hours Act in its entirety and derogations from Section 10b, may only be made if this does not entail that less favourable conditions shall apply for the employees than those prescribed by the European Union's Working Time Directive (2003/88). Such directive requires member states to guarantee an average working time for each seven days period for a maximum of 48 hours (Article 6).

According to the Working Hours Act an agreement is invalid in so far as it entails that less favourable conditions shall apply for the employees than those prescribed by the European Union's Working Time Directive (DIRECTIVE 2003/88/EC OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL of 4 November 2003 concerning certain aspects of the organisation of working time) .

b) Please provide information on the weekly working hours of seafarers.

Working time for seafarers on board Swedish ships is regulated in the Rest Time for Seafarers Act (lagen [1998:958] om vilotid för sjömän). The act applies to all activities where employees perform work on board a ship or in any other location (1 §). There are some exceptions where the act does not apply (2 §);

1. fishing vessels;
2. rescue vessels;
3. recreational craft;
4. work within the scope of the Working Hours in Inland Navigation Act [lagen (2016:960) om arbetstid vid inlandssjöfart].

According to the Rest Time for Seafarers Act the total working time per week may amount to an average of at most 48 hours during a reference period of twelve months (7 b §).

Further, seafarers have the right to daily rest of at least 10 hours and weekly rest of at least 77 hours (4 §). Exemptions from the sections 4 § and 7 b § may be made through collective agreements concluded or approved by a central employee organisation (3 §). Exemptions from the rules for weekly rest may at the most cover periods of two weeks with another two

weeks between periods of exemption. In any case daily rest may never be less than 10 hours and the weekly rest never less than 70 hours (3 a §).

c) Please provide information on how inactive on-call periods are treated in terms of work or rest time.

According to the Working Hours Act on-call time is time an employee is at the disposal of the employer at the place of work to carry out work activities as needed. The time during which an employee performs work on behalf of the employer is not considered on-call time. It is considered work time. If the employee is at the employer's disposal to report for work within a certain period of time but is not required to be at the workplace before being called in for duty, the time is not considered on-call time but standby time. Such standby time is not considered working time under Swedish law. If the standby duty is interrupted and the employee actively works, the active time is counted as working time. Whether the time actively worked is to be considered regular working hours, overtime or additional hours within the meaning of the Working Hours Act is determined by the employee's other duties during the reference period.

When calculating total working hours in accordance with the Working Hours Act, regular working hours, overtime and on-call time are included. On-call time is treated as regular working hours with regard to the Working Hours Act's protective rules on daily and weekly rest periods. This means that on-call time must be scheduled so that daily and weekly rest periods are maintained. When on-call time is interrupted, it means that the employee is actively working.

Based on the above, inactive on-call periods are treated as work time and is not considered rest time. Furthermore, working time is often regulated in collective agreements.

Article 3 – The right to safe and healthy working conditions

Questions

Article 3§1 Health and safety and the working environment

Please provide information on the content and implementation of national policies on psychosocial or new and emerging risks, including:

- **in the gig or platform economy;**
- **as regards telework;**
- **in jobs requiring intense attention or high performance;**
- **in jobs related to stress or traumatic situations at work;**
- **in jobs affected by climate change risks.**

The Government's work environment strategy 2021–2025 – “A good work environment for the future”, has psychosocial and new and emerging risks as a priority area. Some of the highlighted focus areas are digitalisation, cognitive work environment and psychosocial work environment, including abusive behaviour, harassment and bullying, threats and violence.

Since 2021 this is followed up by the Swedish Work Environment Authority (SWEA) through several activities, for instance:

- A three year-long national inspection campaign focusing on psychosocial work environment in the healthcare sector; both within hospitals, primary care and psychology. 273 workplaces were included and legal requirements were made in 74% of the inspections.
- During 2025 and 2026, an inspection activity will take place in home services, focusing on organizational and social factors, threats and violence and risks in connection with digital work environment. Both private and public employers will be targeted, and all municipalities in Sweden will be affected by this activity.

- Threats and violence have also been a focus area in the following ongoing or recently completed activities:
 - o an inspection campaign aimed at risks for young workers in the age-group 18-24,
 - o a two-year inspection activity focusing on staff's exposure to threats and violence within schools,
 - o a national inspection effort on municipal and private nursing homes, and
 - o an inspection activity focusing on employees within local or state authorities who carry out supervision, grant various permits or otherwise exercise authority.
- Sweden have followed up the EU-OSHA campaign 2023-2025 "Safe and healthy work in the digital age 2023-2025" with numerous national inspection- and communication activities under the following topics: Digital working methods, leadership in a digital working life, and the impact of technology on the work environment.

In the inspection activities, the importance of including the digital systems as part of the work environment which shall be systematically risk assessed in the same way as all other OSH risks has been highlighted, and requirements have been set that the employer shall examine and risk assess their digital systems based on both cognitive and technical aspects. The inspections show that many employers have a great interest in issues regarding the risks of digital working methods, and many companies inspected now have established routines for investigating and assessing their work environment risks in connection with digitalisation.
- Additional activities in the area of digitalization are:
 - o planning and implementation of internal training at SWEA on the impact of digitalization on the work environment.
 - o an inventory of OSH regulations and knowledge compilations on the impact of digitalization on the work environment, to ensure that the OSH regulations adequately handle work environment effects of digitalization.
 - o In 2025, the Inspectorate will start a new communication effort, ensuring that the impact of digitalization on the work environment is described on the website av.se, supporting our stakeholders in the preventive OSH work.

The above-mentioned work environment strategy is reaching the end of its period, hence considerations on continued appropriate work are ongoing.

Article 3§2 of the Revised Charter Health and safety regulations

a) Please provide information on:

• the measures taken to ensure that employers put in place arrangements to limit or discourage work outside normal working hours (including the right to disconnect);

The Swedish Work Environment Authority are responsible for the enforcement of the Working Hours Act and the Work Environmental Act. SWEA systematically checks compliance with the Working Hours Act in connection with its inspections.

The issue of the right to disconnect is not regulated by law in Sweden. However, there is legislation related to the issue, including the Working Hours Act, the Work Environmental Act and the Parental Leave Act. According to the Working Hours Act time is classified as either work time or rest time, there is no middle ground. To connect from home or elsewhere outside normal working hours is considered as working time, in which case, the rules on, for example a minimum rest period of eleven consecutive hours in any twenty-four-hour period (daily rest period) becomes relevant.

In the Working Hours Act there are also rules on overtime and how many hours of overtime an employer is entitled to require. Overtime is time exceeding normal working hours and on-call hours (Working Hours Act Section 7). The employer may order overtime if an unforeseen

need arises or if there are special reasons for doing so. Overtime may be taken up to a maximum of 48 hours per employee over four weeks or 50 hours per calendar month (Section 8). During a calendar year overtime may be taken for a maximum of 350 hours per employee (Section 8, 8 a).

The employer and an employee organisation may enter into collective agreement on other rules on overtime than according to the Working Hours Act. However, an employee may not work more than 48 hours on average per every four months period (Section 10 b).

• how the right not to be penalised or discriminated against for refusing to undertake work outside normal working hours is ensured.

In Sweden there is a comprehensive employment protection under law, for example the Employment Protection Act, and labour court practice. Employment protection is also found in collective agreements, for example regarding when disciplinary actions is permitted. Close to 90% of employees are covered by collective agreements. Therefore, the employee organisations act as guarantors that laws and collective agreements are complied with, for example by being able to take cases of breach of collective agreements or law to the labour court.

b) Please provide information on:

• the measures taken to ensure that self-employed workers, teleworkers and domestic workers are protected by occupational health and safety regulations;

Self-employed workers:

As a general rule, self-employed persons are not covered by the Work Environment Act. However, there are certain specific exceptions in Chapter 3, Section 5 of the Swedish Work Environment Act regarding handling of technical devices and substances that may cause ill health or accidents. Chapter 4, Section 10 of the Swedish Work Environment Act also authorize the Swedish Work Environment Authority to issue regulations on obligations for self-employed, a possibility that has been used to create a limited responsibility for self-employed in the building regulations¹.

Teleworkers:

Teleworkers are employed and therefore covered by the Work Environment Act and other OSH legislation, and the employer is responsible for ensuring that the work environment legislation is complied with. As teleworkers do not work at the workplace, the employer's opportunity to actually have knowledge and sufficient insight of the work environment of the teleworker is limited. However, a lot can be done to ensure good working conditions for remote work. SWEA presents guidance on their webpage av.se, for both employers and remote workers, specifically highlighting the need for employers to

- communicate with employees regarding their work environment and how they can organize the remote workplace in a good way
- ensure that employees have sufficient knowledge to be able to detect work environment problems,
- ensure that social contacts between employees are enabled,
- organize work to ensure that employees receive sufficient recovery,
- ensure that the lighting is sufficient and does not cause glare or flicker, and
- ensure that employees can work in comfortable working positions

¹ Chapter 5, Section 3 of the Swedish Work Environment Authority's regulations and general advice (AFS 2023:13) on risks in certain types of work

As part of the EU-OSHA campaign 2023-2025 “Safe and healthy work in the digital age 2023-2025”, SWEA has also carried out inspection activities focusing on risks with the systems, platforms, digital processes and working methods that have been created as part of the digitalisation on working life, including remote work. In 2024 the inspection focus area was leadership in a digital working life, and in 2023 the focus area for inspection was digital working methods.

Domestic workers:

Domestic workers are protected by the Act (1970:943) on working hours etc. in domestic work, which states in Section 8 that the Work Environment Act (1977:1160) applies to domestic work. The Swedish Work Environment Authority are responsible for the enforcement of the Work Environment Act as well as Sections, 2-4, 6 and 9 in the Domestic Workers Act, on working time.

• whether temporary workers, interim workers and workers on fixed-term contracts enjoy the same standard of protection under health and safety regulations as workers on contracts with indefinite duration.

Temporary workers, interim workers and workers on fixed-term contracts:

The Work Environment Act does not make exceptions for temporary employees. However, if the worker is hired from another company, for instance a temporary-work agency, the responsibility is divided between the agency and the hiring company. The agency is the employer and bears the fundamental responsibility for the work environment and its employee, while the hiring company must identify and address the risks that arise in daily operations which affect the hired personnel.

Article 3§3 of Revised Charter Enforcement of health and safety health regulations

Please provide information on measures taken to ensure the supervision of implementation of health and safety regulations concerning vulnerable categories of workers such as:

- **domestic workers;**
- **digital platform workers;**
- **teleworkers;**
- **posted workers;**
- **workers employed through subcontracting;**
- **the self employed;**
- **workers exposed to environmental-related risks such as climate change and pollution.**

As a main principle, SWEA performs risk-based supervision of the OSH legislation. This means that sectors, industries and businesses where the risks are the greatest - long term or short term - are prioritised. The selection of objects for supervision are based on risk knowledge, for instance statistics on work-related illnesses and accidents, OSH research and local and overall risk knowledge. Supervision activities are rarely chosen from, or based on, different types of employment.

Teleworkers:

Please see above.

Posting of Workers:

SWEA is the national contact point for posting of workers to Sweden, according to the Posting of Workers Directive (96/71/EC). SWEA also cooperate with other contact authorities in other countries. The authority provides guidance on the Swedish legislation that apply for posted workers as well as collective agreements and contact information to national social

partners. Foreign employers must notify SWEA of postings to Sweden, and SWEA is responsible for the register of posted workers to Sweden.

Posted workers can in some cases be subject to situations involving work-related crime. SWEA coordinates joint supervisions/inspections carried out by 8 authorities to combat violations of regulations and crime in working life. The collaboration has been ongoing since 2018 on a specific government assignment. The authorities that collaborate are the Swedish Public Employment Service, SWEA, Swedish Economic Crime Authority, Social Insurance Agency, Gender Equality Authority, Migration Board, Police Authority, the Tax Agency and the Prosecution Authority. Cooperation between authorities and new opportunities to share information have created better tools to combat organized crime in working life and the criminal economy.

The number of joint government inspections increased 2024. They were mainly directed at industries at risk of workplace crime, such as restaurants, retail, car repair shops and the construction sector.

Digital platform workers:

In accordance with a government's assignment, a pilot project was carried out 2019-2022 in which SWEA inspected self-employed companies and digital platforms that provide work assignments. The purpose of the inspections was to build knowledge about the risks to which employees in these businesses are exposed, and to set requirements on the shortcomings that emerged during the inspections, as well as to examine how SWEA can use its authority to promote a satisfactory work environment in connection with different ways of organizing work.

SWEA required the inspected companies to investigate and risk assess the work environment as well as develop an action plan for the measures that were not implemented immediately. A total of 4 out of 13 cases ended up in a decision on injunction, 2 relating to platform companies and 2 relating to self-employed companies. The cases that concerned digital platforms were appealed and overturned by the General Administrative Court.

It could also be mentioned that there are collective agreements covering digital platform workers. Such a collective agreement covering certain food delivery workers was concluded in 2025.

Workers employed through subcontracting:

Several inspections have been carried out in later years in the building industry, which is an industry often characterized by many subcontractors. A two-part national campaign took place 2022-2025, focusing on systematic work environment work and safety culture in the building industry, including transport and storage.

Another national inspection campaign (2025-2026) is focusing on safety in road work, which is also a type of work where subcontracting regularly occurs.

Changes have been made to the regulations on design and building work environment coordination – basic obligations (AFS 2023:3), to clarify the responsibilities and tasks of developers, designers and construction work environment coordinators. SWEA also has comprehensive information regarding OSH in building work on their website [av.se](https://www.av.se). (the information is given on several languages).

Domestic workers and workers exposed to environmental-related risks such as climate change and pollution:

Supervision activities can be conducted as mandatory supervision, for instance after safety representatives stop the work in the event of an imminent danger (Work Environment Act)

(1977:1160) chapter 6 section 7), or if the safety representatives consider that measures need to be taken to achieve a satisfactory working environment (Work Environment Act (1977:1169) chapter 6 section 6a). SWEA has not carried out any specific general campaigns or planned inspection activities directed to domestic workers or workers exposed to environmental-related risks such as climate change and pollution. However, SWEA has each summer specific information campaigns in social media on OSH and heat.

Unplanned inspection activities can also be performed after notifications from employers in connection with fatal accidents, serious personal injury or events that could have led to serious personal injury and have occurred in connection with the work. These kinds of inspections may have taken place after for instance storms, floods or other specific occurrences related to extreme weather.

Article 4 – The right to fair remuneration

Questions

Article 4§3 Right of men and women to equal pay for work of equal value

a) Please indicate whether the notion of equal work and work of equal value is defined in domestic law or case law.

According to the Discrimination Act (2008:567) all employers are obliged to perform pay surveys (chapter 3 section 8), in order to discover, remedy and prevent unfair gender differences in pay and other terms of employment. According to chapter 3 section 9 the employer is to assess whether existing pay differences are directly or indirectly associated with gender. The analysis is to refer in particular to differences between

- women and men performing work that is to be regarded as equal,
- groups of employees performing work that is or is generally considered to be dominated by women and groups of employees performing work that is to be regarded as of equal value to such work but is not or is not generally considered to be dominated by women, and
- groups of employees performing work that is or is generally considered to be dominated by women and groups of employees performing work that is not or is generally not considered to be dominated by women but that gives higher pay despite the requirements of the work being regarded as lesser.

The Equality Ombudsman is to supervise compliance with the Discrimination Act.

Also, the social partners are responsible for upholding the respect for the equal-pay-for-equal-work principle and for respecting statutory provisions aimed at preventing wage setting that is discriminatory on grounds such as gender or that constitutes unfair treatment of, for example, parents on parental leave.

b) Please provide information on the job classification and remuneration systems that reflect the equal pay principle, including in the private sector.

In the Swedish labour market, wage formation, including lowest pay rates and various types of remuneration, are matters to be negotiated between the social partners and regulated in collective agreements between them. There is no legislation on wages and the state do not interfere in the wage setting. However, there is some mandatory legislation which has an impact on wage setting. The legislation consists of statutory provisions aimed at preventing wage setting which is discriminatory on grounds such as gender or constitutes unfair treatment of, for example, parents on parental leave.

All central collective agreements include rules on how wages are to be set in individual companies and organisations, both for new employees and during ongoing employment.

These rules and principles regard the objectivity of wage setting (wages in relation to responsibility, performance, etc.) and also equal treatment, non-discrimination, etc.

c) Please provide information on existing measures to bring about measurable progress in reducing the gender pay gap within a reasonable time. Please provide statistical trends on the gender pay gap.

Employers are to document the work on pay surveys. This documentation includes an account of the pay adjustments and other measures that need to be taken to rectify pay differences that are directly or indirectly associated with gender and a cost estimate and a time plan based on the goal of implementing the necessary pay adjustments as soon as possible and within at most three years (Discrimination Act Chapter 3 section 13-14).

The average gender pay gap was 10.2 percent in 2024, an increase of 0.2 percentage points compared to the previous year. In a longer-term perspective, the gender pay gap has decreased by 6.1 percentage points between 2005 and 2024, but in recent years the decrease has stopped. However, the annual changes measured during the period 2019-2024 have been marginal and are not statistically significant. The standard-weighted gender pay gap, taking into account differences in age, education, sector, occupation and working hours, amounted to 4.6 percent in 2024. The single most important variable explaining the gender pay gap is occupation. Occupational segregation can be measured in the form of Statistics Sweden's segregation index, which has a value between 0 (completely equal gender distribution) and 100 (all employed women and men work in completely different occupations). Between 2005 and 2024, the index has decreased from 57.9 to 49.6, which means that the labour market has gradually become less gender segregated during these years.

Article 5 – The right to organise

Article 6 – The right to bargain collectively

Questions

Article 5 Right to organise

a) Please indicate what measures have been taken to encourage or strengthen the positive freedom of association of workers, particularly in sectors which traditionally have a low rate of unionisation or in new sectors (e.g., the gig economy).

Please see below, Article 6§1a, on the constitutional protected freedom of association and the right to strike.

In Sweden, all workers have the right to form and to join a trade union. Please, see also answer related to Article 6§1. Trade unions and employers' organisations are responsible for wage formation, and they also take responsibility for ensuring that the bargaining system functions well, e.g. by actively working to maintain a high degree of organisation.

Trade unions work actively to organise workers, and they adapt their work to the challenges faced in each industry. For example, they adapt their recruitment efforts to reach out to potential members who do not have a physical workplace or who need information about the trade union in languages other than Swedish.

b) Please describe the legal criteria used to determine the recognition of employers' organisations for the purposes of engaging in social dialogue and collective bargaining.

According to the Act (1976:580) on Co-determination in the Workplace, an employer organisation is defined as an association of employers which, according to its statutes, shall safeguard the interests of employers in relation to the employees'. No other legal criteria are used to determine whether an employers' organisation can be recognised for the purpose of engaging in social dialogue and collective bargaining. Nor are there any legal provisions regulating the areas in which different employers' organisations may operate.

In Sweden, the degree of organisation among employers, measured as the proportion of employees working for employers who are members of employers' organisations, is 90 per cent (2024). There are approximately 50 employers' organisations. Two of these are in the public sector, the rest are in the private sector. In the private sector, a significant majority of employer organisations are coordinated by the Confederation of Swedish Enterprise.

c) Please describe the legal criteria used to determine the recognition and representativeness of trade unions for the purposes of engaging in social dialogue and collective bargaining.

According to the Employment (Co-determination in the Workplace) Act (1976:580), a trade union is defined as an association of employees which, according to its statutes, shall safeguard the interests of employees in relation to the employer. No other legal criteria are used to determine whether a trade union can be recognised for the purpose of engaging in social dialogue and collective bargaining. Nor are there any legal provisions regulating the areas in which different trade unions may operate.

There are about 50 trade unions. Almost all of them are part of one of the three confederations: LO (the Swedish Trade Union Confederation), TCO (the Swedish Confederation of Professional Employees) or Saco (the Swedish Confederation of Professional Organisations).

d) Please provide information:

• on the status and prerogatives of minority trade unions;

In Sweden, trade unions have equal status and prerogatives, irrespective of their size.

If an employer is bound by two collective agreements that apply to the same category of work, the general rule is that the wages and terms of employment in the collective agreement signed first take precedence over those in the collective agreement signed later.

The existence of a collective agreement, irrespective of the order in which it was signed, entitles the trade union to certain rights, i.a. a specific right to information and an enhanced negotiation right under the Employment (Co-determination in the Workplace) Act (1976:580). The trade union is also entitled to appoint a union representative in accordance with The Trade Union Representatives (Status at the Workplace) Act (1974:358).

The right to take industrial action is protected by the constitution and can only be restricted by law or agreement. All trade unions, irrespective of their size, are equally entitled to the right to strike.

An industrial action taken to enforce demands that are already covered by a collective agreement with the employer must meet certain criteria to be lawful. The industrial action must be decided in a proper manner by the trade union and have the purpose of concluding a collective agreement. Furthermore, the demands must have been negotiated before the industrial action takes place. It is also required that the trade union does not demand that the employer apply the collective agreement that the union seeks to achieve in a way that supersedes the employer's existing collective agreement.

• on the existence of alternative representation structures at enterprise-level, such as elected worker representatives.

In Sweden, workers are represented by trade unions. There are no known examples of alternative representation structures at enterprise-level.

Article 6§1 Joint consultation

a) Please state what measures are taken by the Government to promote joint consultation.

The Swedish labour market is characterised by strong, independent and responsible organisations, both on the employer and employee sides. The strong position of these organisations and their ability to take industrial action are central to the functioning of the labour market. Peace obligation between the parties prevails only once a collective agreement has been reached. The strong position of the parties contributes to the solutions they agree on in collective agreements being well balanced and sustainable, and to the interests of both workers and employers being safeguarded. It can be said that, through their position in the labour market, the social partners already have a strong capacity to conduct collective bargaining on wage setting.

Legislation in Sweden promotes collective bargaining. Almost all labour laws are designed so that the parties can waive or override them in collective agreements and thus adapt the rules to the conditions in each industry. This arrangement gives social partners considerable scope for agreement and is very important for the Swedish labour market model to function well. The provisions of the Employment (Co-determination in the Workplace) Act (1976:580) as a whole promote collective bargaining. Of particular importance in this context are the provisions on collective agreements, the right to negotiate, the right of association, the peace obligation and sanctions. The provisions of the Trade Union Representatives (Status at the Workplace) Act (1974:358) provide strong protection for trade union representatives and therefore also contribute to the promotion of collective bargaining. The Constitution also contains provisions that contribute to the promotion of collective bargaining. Of fundamental importance to the labour market model is the freedom to associate with others for general or specific purposes, which is protected in the Constitution by chap 2 in the Instrument of Government (1947:152). Furthermore, the right to strike is fundamental to the proper functioning of the collective agreement system. The right to industrial action in the labour market is also protected in the Constitution.

In order to strengthen the conditions for effective wage formation, facilitate negotiations and prevent labour disputes, [the Swedish National Mediation Office](#) was established in its current form in 2000. It is a government agency tasked with promoting well-functioning wage formation, mediate in labour disputes and be responsible for official wage statistics.

b) Please describe what issues of mutual interest have been the subject of joint consultation during the past five years, what agreements have been adopted as a result of such discussions and how these agreements have been implemented.

The social partners are consistently and constantly working to further develop collective agreements in line with developments in society.

A prominent example is the 2022 collective agreement on skills development, transition and employment protection that were concluded by the private sector social partners at confederation level as a result of national cross-sectoral negotiations. At the same time [new legislation underpinning the reform](#), (please see link) in line with what the social partners had demanded, was adopted by the Swedish Parliament.

In short, the agreement contains three parts. Firstly, more flexible rules for companies to retain the right skills in the event of redundancies. Secondly, increased employability for all workers through enhanced opportunities for skills development and retraining. Thirdly, greater employment protection for workers in atypical employment, such as part-time and fixed-term contracts. The new legislation included a new public transition study aid aimed at employees who are established in the labour market. The transition study aid can also be complemented with a collectively agreed financial study aid. The transition study aid can be used for shorter and longer courses to develop skills, both while in employment and in between jobs. The new legislation entered into force 1 October 2022.

Nearly the entire labour market is now covered by such collective agreements, including both the private and public sector.

c) Please state if there has been any joint consultation on matters related to (i) the digital transition, or (ii) the green transition.

See above about the agreements on skills development, transition and employment protection.

Article 6§2 Collective bargaining

a) Please provide information on how collective bargaining is coordinated between and across different bargaining levels including information on:

- **the operation of factors such as erga omnes clauses and other mechanisms for the extension of collective agreements;**
- **the operation of the favourability principle and the extent to which local/workplace agreements may derogate from legislation or collective agreements agreed at a higher level.**

Collective bargaining on wages and working conditions is conducted at the national level by employers' organisations and trade unions. The collective bargaining results in national collective agreements for each industry or sub-industry, referred to as central collective agreements.

Sweden does not have any mechanism for the extension of collective agreements. However, an employer who has signed a collective agreement is generally obliged, as a consequence of a long established practise of the Labour Court, to apply the provisions of the collective agreement in relation to the trade union that signed the agreement, regardless of whether the individual worker at the workplace is a member of the trade union or not.

Local/workplace agreements supplement central collective agreements. The social partners decide whether provisions in their central collective agreements can be derogated in local-level agreements. The central collective agreements vary greatly in terms of the possibility of derogations.

It is possible to waive or override large parts of the Swedish labour law legislation through provisions in central collective agreements and sometimes also in local/workplace agreements. However, to waive or override legislation in local/workplace agreement the employer must always have a central collective agreement, and applicable minimum provisions of EU-law must be respected.

b) Please provide information on the obstacles hindering collective bargaining at all levels and in all sectors of the economy (e. g. decentralisation of collective bargaining).

Please see above, Article 6§1a.

There has not been a decentralisation of collective bargaining or an increase in the discretion afforded to employers at the expense of collective bargaining. There has long been significant coordination among the employers' organisations and among the trade unions on issues relating to wages and working conditions. There is also a significant consensus among the social partners on the wage-setting role of the internationally competitive sector.

c) Please provide specific details on:

- **the measures taken or planned in order address those obstacles;**
- **the timelines adopted in relation to those measures;**
- **the outcomes achieved/expected in terms of those measures.**

N/A

d) Please provide information on the measures taken or planned to guarantee the right to collective bargaining of (i) economically dependent (self-employed) persons showing some similar features to workers and (ii) self-employed workers.

The right of individuals to associate with others for general or specific purposes is enshrined in Chapter 2, Article 1.5 of The Instrument of Government (1974:152). This includes forming or becoming a member of an organisation as an employer or employee. This right is further specified in the Act (1976:580) on Co-determination in the Workplace. This right is universal and does not differentiate regarding employment status (self-employed, employed etc.) or sector within which the person is economically active.

Article 6§4 Collective action

a) Please indicate:

- **the sectors in which the right to strike is prohibited;**
- **those sectors for which there are restrictions on the right to strike;**
- **sectors for which there is a requirement of a minimum service to be maintained.**

Please give details about the relevant rules concerning the above and their application in practice, including relevant case law.

The right to take industrial action is protected by the constitution, please see above, Article 6§1a, and can only be restricted by law or agreement. There is no law that prohibits the right to strike in certain sectors.

However, many of the main agreements at confederation level contain rules on when industrial action is to be considered a 'threat to society' and therefore unlawful. The question of whether industrial action poses a 'threat to society' is usually decided by a committee composed of social partners' representatives with no governmental representation.

Also, the social partners at confederation level have agreed on some exceptions from the right to collective action. The Government sector have agreed that some civil servants in charge of certain functions, i.e. vital societal functions & critical infrastructure, and at certain agencies does not have the right to strike, such as the Labour Court and the Government Offices. The main agreements also regulate what is considered to be 'protective work' and which may therefore be carried out despite an ongoing conflict.

b) Please indicate whether it is possible to prohibit a strike by seeking injunctive or other relief from the courts or other competent body (administrative body or arbitration body). If affirmative, please provide information on the scope and number of decisions in the last 12 months.

The Labour court in Sweden can declare a strike to be unlawful. In the last 12 months, the court has issued four injunctions in relation to two different industrial actions taken by The Swedish Dockworkers Union. To be noted, according to the Labour Court's annual report for 2024 (with figures also from 2022 and 2023), industrial action cases received accounted for one percent or less during the period. As a general information, Sweden has very few lost working days due to strike each year and disputes on the labour market are resolved through negotiation between the social partners in the first instance which also explains the low number of strikes.

The first industrial action was a political strike/blockade during a time when the trade union was bound by a collective agreement with the employer. In short summary, the court in the second injunction concluded that the political industrial action was lawful because it was brief and temporary (AD 2025 nr 2 and 3).

In the other cases, the main question was whether the trade union had demanded that the employer apply the collective agreement the union sought to achieve in a way that superseded the employer's existing collective agreement. See above under Article 5 question d). In both injunctions, the court ruled that the strike was lawful (AD 2025 nr 35 and 45).

Article 20 – Right to equal opportunities between women and men

Questions

a) Please provide information on the measures taken to promote greater participation of women in the labour market and to reduce gender segregation (horizontal and vertical). Please provide information/statistical data showing the impact of such measures and the progress achieved in terms of tackling gender segregation and improving women's participation in a wider range of jobs and occupations.

All employers in consultation with the employees and their representatives, are to work on active measures on prevention and promotion aimed at preventing discrimination and serving in other ways to promote equal rights and opportunities regardless of gender. According to the Discrimination Act chapter 3 section 7 employers are to promote gender balance in different types of work, among different categories of employees and in management positions by means of education and training, skills development and other appropriate measures. The Equality Ombudsman is to supervise compliance with the Discrimination Act.

b) Please provide information on:

- measures designed to promote an effective parity in the representation of women and men in decision-making positions in both the public and private sectors;***
- the implementation of those measures;***
- progress achieved in terms of ensuring effective parity in the representation of women and men in decision-making positions in both the public and private sectors.***

The Swedish government promotes and uses a gender mainstreaming strategy. Also, government agencies are required to integrate gender equality into their core operations. The Government make use of its appointment powers to ensure balanced gender representation in public administration and state-owned enterprises. The Government has also, every year, targeted funding for initiatives that support women's organizations. For the budget year 2026, 48 million SEK has been provided for this purpose.

The Swedish Gender Equality Agency tracks yearly the progress on six gender equality sub-goals, including equal power and influence.

The following numbers shows representation of women and men in decision-making positions in both the public and private sectors (2025) (for more information, please see also table below).

Public sector

Parliament: 46% women after the 2022 election.

Government Offices: Near parity achieved due to active appointment policies.

Municipal Level: Women make up ~40% of council members; executive boards still male-dominated.

Private Sector

Women remain underrepresented in:

Senior management 29,2%

Corporate boards Private Sector 36,5% (all listed companies; over 40% in large-cap firm)

c) Please provide statistical data on the proportion of women on management boards of the largest publicly listed companies, and on management positions in public institutions.

Share of Women and Men in Different Types of Leadership Positions (%)

Position	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Regional Managers	W: 74 / M: 26	W: 74 / M: 26	W: 74 / M: 26	W: 74 / M: 26	W: 74 / M: 26	W: 74 / M: 26	—
Municipal Managers	W: 71 / M: 29	W: 71 / M: 29	W: 72 / M: 28	W: 72 / M: 28	W: 72 / M: 28	W: 73 / M: 27	—
Chairpersons of Boards & Oversight Councils (State Agencies)	W: 52 / M: 48	—	W: 52 / M: 48	—	W: 49 / M: 51	—	—
Board Members & Oversight Councils (State Agencies)	W: 51 / M: 49	—	W: 51 / M: 49	—	W: 51 / M: 49	—	—
Managers in Government Agencies	W: 50 / M: 50	W: 50 / M: 50	W: 51 / M: 49	W: 51 / M: 49	W: 52 / M: 48	W: 48 / M: 52	—
CEO, State-Owned Companies	W: 42 / M: 58	W: 49 / M: 51	W: 49 / M: 51	W: 50 / M: 50	W: 50 / M: 50	W: 49 / M: 51	—
Board Members, State-Owned Companies	W: 47 / M: 53	W: 48 / M: 52	W: 47 / M: 53	W: 48 / M: 52	W: 50 / M: 50	W: 49 / M: 51	W: 50 / M: 50
Chairpersons, State-Owned Companies	W: 54 / M: 46	W: 51 / M: 49	W: 51 / M: 49	W: 49 / M: 51	W: 45 / M: 55	W: 45 / M: 55	W: 46 / M: 54
Board Members, Listed Companies	W: 34 / M: 66	W: 34 / M: 66	W: 34 / M: 66	W: 35 / M: 65	W: 36 / M: 64	W: 36 / M: 64	W: 37 / M: 63
Managers in Private Sector	W: 33 / M: 67	W: 33 / M: 67	W: 34 / M: 66	W: 34 / M: 66	W: 35 / M: 65	W: 35 / M: 65	—
CEO, Listed Companies	W: 9 / M: 91	W: 10 / M: 90	W: 13 / M: 87	W: 12 / M: 88	W: 12 / M: 88	W: 12 / M: 88	W: 11 / M: 89
Chairpersons, Listed Companies	W: 10 / M: 90	W: 9 / M: 91	W: 9 / M: 91	W: 8 / M: 92	W: 9 / M: 91	W: 9 / M: 91	W: 9 / M: 91