

Social Dialogue mapping

Description scheme for country overviews

SWEDEN

Sources:

1/ Eurofound Working Life Profiles <https://www.eurofound.europa.eu/country/sweden>

2/OSH WIKI https://oshwiki.eu/wiki/OSH_system_at_national_level_-_Sweden

3/ ESENER-2 <https://osha.europa.eu/en/surveys-and-statistics-osh/esener/2014>

Introduction on Social Dialogue in MS (1)

In Sweden, industrial relations are based on trust and mutual understanding and the tradition of a self-regulating system of collective agreements is firmly established. The government's legislative role is limited and there is no formal procedure for recognising employers' or employees' organisations. Instead, decisions regarding participating parties in bargaining processes are made through custom and practice.

Trade Unions (1)

- **About trade union representation**

Trade unions have a traditionally strong role in the Swedish labour market. The right to become a member of a trade union is regulated in the Codetermination Act. Since the 1938 Saltsjöbadsavtalet agreement, trade unions and employers have had the right to negotiate wages and working conditions in collective agreements.

- **Main trade union confederations and federations**

On the employee side, there are three main peak-level social partner organisations:

- The Swedish Trade Union Confederation (Landsorganisationen i Sverige, LO). LO is mostly associated with blue-collar workers.
- The Swedish Confederation of Professional Employees (Tjänstemännens Centralorganisation, TCO). TCO is mostly associated with white-collar workers.
- The Swedish Confederation of Professional Associations (Sveriges Akademikers Centralorganisation, SACO). SACO is mostly associated with university graduate employees.

Long name	Abbreviation	Members	Year	Involved in collective bargaining (*)
Swedish Trade Union Confederation	LO	1,465,510	2014	Yes, indirectly
Swedish Confederation of Professional Employees	TCO	1,318,090	2014	Yes, indirectly
Swedish Confederation of Professional Associations	SACO	652,966	2014	Yes, indirectly

Employers' organisations (1)

• Main Employers' organisations

On the employer side, there are three main organisations: one for the private sector and two for the public sector. The largest private employers' organisation is the Confederation of Swedish Enterprise (Svenskt Näringsliv), representing approximately 60,000 small, medium and large companies.

The Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions, SALAR (Sveriges Kommuner och Landsting, SKL) is the largest employers' organisation for the public sector, representing 290 municipalities and 20 county councils with over 1 million employees.

The Swedish Agency for Government Employers, SAGE (Arbetsgivarverket) is the membership organisation for government agencies. SAGE represents approximately 250 public authorities and agencies for the 250,000 government employees.

Most employers engaging in a collective agreement are members of an employers' organisation. If the employer wishes to engage in collective agreements without membership, there can be a voluntary extension (*hängavtal*).

Long name	Abbreviation	Members	Year	Involved in collective bargaining (*)
Confederation of Swedish Enterprise	SN	60,000 firms	2017	Yes, directly and indirectly
Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions	SALAR	290 municipalities and 20 county councils	2017	Yes, directly and indirectly
Swedish Agency for Government Employers	SAGE	250 public authorities	2017	Yes, indirectly

Social Dialogue on OSH (2)

• General Remarks on Social Dialogue on OSH

Sweden has a long tradition of social dialogue, a high level of union representation, and a generally high awareness of occupational health and safety^[19].

The existing main agreement (Saltsjöbadsavtalet) was negotiated in 1938 between the social partners and it gives the partners the right and responsibility to regulate pay and employment conditions. The social partners are often represented in advisory bodies or reference groups to government committees or enquiries. In Sweden, tripartite negotiations are rare because the social partners do not welcome the government or any other party intervening in collective bargaining. The idea of self-regulation through collective bargaining by the social partners is strong in Sweden.^[20]

When new provisions have been drafted, the draft version is circulated for comments to the labour market parties, industrial organisations, certain national authorities and others concerned. New provisions are adopted by the Work Environment Authority.^[21]

• National level

The Swedish Work Environment Authority, SWEA has had an established consultation procedure together with the social partners^[22]. These are:

1. **The Swedish Trade Union Confederation (Landsorganisationen, LO)** which works for the improvement of working life. LO negotiates with employers on conditions of pay and the work environment and also works to achieve a better future and better working life for its members, who for example include house painters, motor mechanics, restaurant employees, retail staff, nursing staff and factory workers^[23];
2. **The Swedish Confederation of Professional Employees (Tjänstemännens centralorganisation, TCO)** which represents salaried workers, e.g. engineers, teachers, police officers, secretarial staff, banking staff and nurse, belonging to various national federations. TCO pursues work for all, with job satisfaction and opportunities of development, with a good work environment, e.g. with computers meeting the requirements of good ergonomics and with income security in the event of illness or childbirth^[24];
3. **The Swedish Confederation of Professional Associations (Sveriges Akademikers Centralorganisation, SACO)** which is a confederation of 24 unions for professional personnel in both private and public sectors, all of whom have an academic education^[25];
4. **The Confederation of Swedish Enterprise (Svenskt Näringsliv)** which represents companies in private sector, both large and small, belonging to industrial and employers' associations^[26];
5. **The Swedish Agency for Government Employers (Arbetsgivarverket, SAGE)** which is the employers' association of national authorities and State-owned utilities. As such it is responsible for central negotiations with the unions and for the development and co-ordination of governmental employer policy^[27]
6. **Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions (Sveriges Kommuner och Landsting, SALAR)** which represents the governmental, professional and employer-related interests of municipalities and county councils^[28].

• Sectoral level

The sectoral dialogue has a long tradition in Sweden as well. For example, in 1942 the employees' union (LO)^[29] and the employers' union (SAF)^[30] made an agreement on general regulations for local organization of safety at work (Allmänna regler för den lokala säkerhetstjänstens organisation) that was effective until 1992. Today, there are many stipulations in different branches of business, which are commonly based on local agreements between employers and trade unions, and a stipulation of occupational health care for employees in the public sector.

The social dialogue in Sweden is well functioning at both the central and a local levels. This is in one hand a result of the trade unions extended coverage of Swedish work places, and on the other hand the result of the employers being well organised. Furthermore, the Employment (Co-determination in the workplace) Act ^[31](1976:580) supports a social dialogue, as it encourages trade unions to exert influence on the decision-making and regulations on the area covered by this act. This further enables and facilitates the presence and organisation of so-called "co-operation groups" (samverkansgrupper) in the work places.^[19]

- **Enterprise level**

According to the Work Environment Act ^[1]employers and employees shall co-operate to establish a good working environment.

Enterprises with 50 employees or more are obliged to have a safety committee, which consists of representatives of the employer and of the employees. A safety committee shall also be appointed at places of employment with smaller numbers of employees if the employees so require. ^[1]