

WORKSHOP IN COPENHAGEN – 23&24 MAY 2017

The workshop had 16 participants from the Nordic countries and industrial Europe, 5 of whom were women.

Key points:

- Collective bargaining is core business of trade unions and linked to social policies.
- Coordination of collective bargaining is important, not just for exchange of information, but also to avoid differences leading to pressure from employers.
- We need to set a common agenda all over Europe with European minimum standards.
- The main tendencies now are declining trade union densities, decentralisation of wage setting, dismantling of collective bargaining structures and less political support. The trendsetter model is challenged.
- The Nordic countries have national agreements in all sectors. There are no legal minimum wages, but extension mechanisms are used in Norway and Finland.
- Wage increases are moderate. Working time is not really on the collective bargaining agenda. Training and decent employment are priority issues.
- The degree of unionisation in Sweden, Denmark and Finland is still the highest in Europe.
- There is a clear link between union power and collective bargaining.
- White-collar workers are a rapidly growing group, also in terms of unions membership.
- The wage coordination rule gives basic guidance for collective bargaining, but in practice, other factors than inflation and productivity are taken into account.
- The two common demands of industrial Europe remain in place, but they are about to be forgotten. Training and decent employment are however high on the agenda.