

## Sweden – Required level of provision for migrants from outside EU/EEA

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At the end of 2022, the Swedish Parliament approved a proposal for changed legislation regarding the required level of provision for migrant workers from outside the EU/EEA, originally put forward by the previous social democratic government (the centre-right government in Sweden assumed power in the autumn of 2022). Three smaller parties voted against the proposal.

In the current Swedish system, the required level of provision is on par with the minimum cost of living, as designated by the state's welfare system, at 13,000 SEK (€1,200) per month. This looks at the actual salary. If you work 50 per cent with a wage of 26,000 SEK per month, you meet the requirement. The new legislation changes the terminology from "minimum cost of living" to "good provision". The legislation does not stipulate the required level of provision but gives the incumbent government mandate to define what "good provision" is. The centre-right government has decided to define good provision as 80 per cent of the Swedish median wage, currently 27,360 SEK (€2,365). This is well above the minimum pay rates in many collective agreements in Sweden.

LO Sweden actually supported the principle but found that the wage rate was too low for workers to make a living. LO also advocated other models of income security for migrant workers. Trade unions have expressed surprise and deprecation that politicians by implementing a required level of provision, choose to disregard the successful social partner model that has greatly benefitted Sweden. Unionen argues that the correct level of pay for migrant workers is pay on par with what non-migrant workers in corresponding positions in the same sector earn, regulated by collective agreements.

It is the explicit ambition of the new government to attract so-called high-skilled migrant workers to Sweden. Whether this will be a success remains to be seen. It is nonetheless not dependent on this new regulation, as the vast majority of the high-skilled migrant workers are white-collars who already earn a monthly salary above 27,360 SEK.

The consequences are not easily predictable. An overwhelming majority of workers affected by the new required level of provision will be blue-collar migrants in restaurants, hotels, elderly care etc. Employers in these sectors have argued that they cannot fill their vacancies. Several media reports have portrayed migrant workers fearing they will have to leave Sweden after several years of stable employment.

An argument that proponents of the legislation, including the Sweden Democrats, put forward is that unemployed people born in Sweden will fill positions that are held by migrant workers. At the same time, the Swedish migration authorities have been tasked by the government to find methods for attracting high-skilled migrants.

Unionen has no plans to adapt their collective bargaining demands because of the recent political decisions.

**Edited by industriAll Europe.**