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Report to ETUI (European Trade Union Institute) / [Torsten Müller](#) (senior researcher, ETUI), 11 March 2026

Sweden: the Minimum Wage Directive is not visible in the debate on collective bargaining issues

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Despite the intense opposition against the EU Directive on minimum wages, there has not been much public attention given to the issues covered by the Directive. Contributing to this is probably that Sweden is not obliged to develop an action plan to promote collective bargaining. That does not mean that challenges concerning collective bargaining are absent in Sweden. On the contrary, several unions take measures to reverse the trend of declining coverage of union workplace representation. Increasing absence of union workplace clubs is in the long term considered as a threat to [the Swedish collective bargaining model](#), which presupposes local negotiations to adapt the central (sectoral) agreements to the local conditions.

Have there, nonetheless, been some discussion about establishing an action plan on a voluntary basis to address some of the problems of the CB (Collective bargaining) system?

There has not been any public discussion about establishing an action plan on a voluntary basis. Neither did the reporting under Article 10 of the Directive that the [Swedish National Mediation Office](#) sent to the Commission at the end of September 2025 attract any attention.

Did the Directive trigger any other discussion in the area of CB?

The social partners in Sweden are unanimous in their position regarding the Minimum Wage Directive, and it is therefore natural that the Directive is not used to pursue political interests or to argue for reform proposals. At least while awaiting the ruling in the CJEU court case, there has been no discussion or debate about the content of the Directive from the social partners. The discussion related to the EU Minimum Wage Directive during 2025 has mostly been conducted in the academic world, with a [number of articles](#) dealing with the CJEU court case. In November, following the CJEU ruling, the social partners expressed their views in press releases and also in the [media](#). In summary, the [reactions](#) were strikingly [positive](#).

Furthermore, it has not been raised in Sweden so far that the directive's requirements and objective to promote collective bargaining can be used as an argument to limit the government's ability to take measures that risk impairing the social partners' ability to

conduct collective bargaining. By way of comparison, this argument was raised by trade unions in Finland in connection with the [Finnish implementation of the directive](#) (pp. 50–60). It remains to be seen whether such a discussion will arise in the event that political proposals are submitted that negatively affect social partners' freedom and ability to negotiate collective agreements.

During 2025, the [Council Recommendation on social dialogue](#) has been implemented in Sweden. The recommendation partly concerns the issues that could potentially be raised in a discussion on an action plan. The information on the implementation sent to the Commission has been prepared by the government together with a reference group with the social partners. In the summer of 2025, the trade union confederations LO, TCO and Saco sent a letter to the government, referring to the implementation process on the recommendation and criticized the government's procedures for consulting with the parties in other contexts. In some cases, only the employer side has been invited to expert groups in the legislative process. Although the criticism concerned policy areas other than the labour market, it is the Minister of Labour who has the overall responsibility for the relationship between the government and the labour market parties.

Another irritation point between the social partners and the government affecting the collective bargaining machinery, is that the government's funding for the tripartite labour court (*Arbetsdomstolen*, AD) is less than what it assesses it needs to be able to conduct its operations. To deal with this, the court has [suspended a substantial part of its activities](#) during November-December 2025 and January 2026. The social partners have protested as the important task of the labour court to interpret collective agreements is being [seriously damaged](#). In addition, it has major consequences for individuals whose cases have been suspended. Among those who have protested is the employers' organisation Swedish [Agency for Government Employers](#) (*Arbetsgivarverket*). From mid-January, negotiations in the court resumed and although there is no definite information about future budget supplements yet, the administrative head of the labour court was hopeful in an [interview](#) at the end of January.

Sweden has a strong framework for collective bargaining and a high level of collective bargaining coverage, but there is still some discussion about what can be improved. The discussion often revolves around how to facilitate union presence in the workplace, especially in sectors with a low union density. A proposal that indirectly affects the possibility of collective bargaining that recurs in the Swedish debate is the possibility of making tax deductions for trade union membership fees. This possibility has been introduced and removed several times over the years. The last reform was implemented in 2018 and then removed after a year. From time to time, union representatives put forward the demand, often with the argument that employers are allowed to make deductions for their membership fees to the employers' organizations. Tax deduction (25%) for the fees to unemployment funds was introduced 1 July 2022 (for an overview of tax deductions for fees to unions and unemployment fund, see [Kjellberg 2026: 9](#)).

Another similar issue that could be considered in this context is the right of Regional Safety Representatives to access workplaces with collective agreements but without union

members. This was put forward by a previous government but voted down by parliament. However, none of these proposals have been raised in the context of the Minimum Wage Directive.

In view of the Directive's reporting requirements, have there been further discussions about how to measure collective bargaining?

The coverage rate for collective agreements has been stable between 88% and 90% for many years. The transition from the previous measure developed by professor Anders Kjellberg to the measure that the Swedish National Mediation Office now reports (based on the wage structure statistics 'Lönestrukturstatistiken') and which is used in the minimum wage reporting did not arouse any discussion. Given that the estimates with the two methods turned out to be almost identical, the interpretation is that the time series with data on collective agreement coverage is of high quality.

The new method does not currently allow for the possibility of reporting substitute and regular collective agreements separately. However, as far as we know, this is not a discussion that is being held by anyone other than those directly involved in the development of the measure.

Have there been other developments in the area of collective bargaining that are not related to the transposition of the AMWD that are worth mentioning?

Shrinking share of workplace union clubs and union representatives

A basic feature of the Swedish model of collective bargaining is the combination of centralization and decentralization. Collective agreements at sectoral (industry) level are implemented through workplace negotiations aimed at adapting the central agreements to the local conditions. Flexibility by local agreements applies to some legislation too, for example the [Working Hours Act](#). That is why the further weakening union representation at workplace level attracted growing attention in 2025 and 2026. In almost all unions, the share of members covered by workplace union representatives has declined for many years ([Kjellberg 2025a pp. 84-117](#)). Among blue-collar workers this development is associated with the sharp decline in union density, since 2006 by 19 percentage points: from 77% in 2006 to 58% in 2024. Fewer union members undermine the possibility to set up workplace union clubs and recruiting union representatives. Due to the declining union density, the share of workplace union representatives calculated on *employees*, unlike on union members, has shrunk even more.

In contrast, the expansion of Sweden's largest union, the private sector white-collar *Unionen*, (member of the white-collar union confederation TCO) has been so fast that the recruitment of workplace union representatives has not kept pace. The number of active union members

grew from 450,000 in 2012 to 625,000 in 2024 at the same time as the number of union workplace representatives declined from 33,300 to 30,500. [The target set up in 2022](#) is to reach [50,000 union representatives in 2027](#).

Some white-collar unions, *Unionen* and *Vision* (TCO), have succeeded in reversing this trend recently through big expensive campaigns, although *Unionen* hardly will reach its 2027 target. The white-collar union [DIK](#) (member of the white-collar union confederation Saco), organizing librarians and other information professionals, has announced that it will invest much in education and outreach activities to break the shrinking share of union representatives.

The weakened union workplace representation is most worrying in some blue-collar unions in the private service sector – particularly hospitality, cleaning and maintenance – where many jobs are temporary, part-time, and many workers are foreign-born and/or young. A gap has arisen between [the high collective agreement coverage](#) in these industries and the insufficient negotiation capacity of workplace unions when the central agreements shall be implemented at local level.

In the autumn 2025 the leading employers' association in the property and real estate industry, *Fastigo*, raised the problem with the growing absence of local union representatives. In November 2025 the journal of the Swedish Maintenance Union (*Fastighetsanställdas Förbund, Fastighets*) published the article "[The enterprises' alarm: 'There are no workplace union clubs to negotiate with'](#)". From having more than 200 workplace clubs in 2013, the union ten years later had fewer than 150. Only 29% of the members had a union club at their workplace in 2024. Both the independent employer association *Fastigo*, with roots in the cooperative housing movement, and the LO union *Fastighets* are seriously concerned about the future of the Swedish model. After concluding the *central* agreement in a bargaining round, the *Fastigo* member enterprises experience increasing difficulties to find union representatives for the *local* negotiations. Today many employers call their employer association, *Fastigo*, and ask how to establish union clubs in their enterprises. [The Hotel and Restaurant Workers' Union](#) (HRF) in 2025 reported an increased number of workplace union clubs after a decline from 85 clubs (in itself a weak representation) in 2011 to 51 in 2021.

The Swedish Maintenance Union (*Fastighets*) has appointed a committee for developing a new strategy to turn union density and workplace presence upwards. It will be presented in March 2026. The importance attached to this problem is evident when the union emphasizes that "[Without local organization, there is no national union](#)".

Mattias Dahl, vice president of the Confederation of Swedish Enterprise (*Svenskt Näringsliv, SN*) and responsible for collective bargaining issues, in a November 2025 interview emphasized that [many employers regret the trend towards declining union density and fewer local union representatives](#), which they think causes problems. Asked about the industries with the biggest problems, he exemplified with retail trade and restaurants, both distinguished by many small workplaces and high labour turnover. Interviewed during the negotiations for the 2022 basic agreement Mattias Dahl stressed that the long-term decline

of union density is a weak point that "can make the [labour market] parties less relevant" while referring to sectors with a very low union density, such as the hospitality industry. When asked about whether the Swedish labour market model still holds, he replied:

"Not fully. In some segments, union density is too low, where you cannot really say that we have a quite satisfactory model. The system is holding together, but it is creaking significantly." [our translation] ([Arbetet 2021-03-01](#)).

Collective agreements on co-determination 'light'

The weakened presence of union workplace representatives not only concerns the local implementation of central wage agreements but also the co-determination system. According to §19 of the Codetermination Act (*Medbestämmandelagen*, MBL), the employer must continuously keep trade unions with whom they have signed collective agreements informed about the development of the enterprise. The employers prefer to negotiate about wages and co-determination issues with their 'own' union representatives instead of a union *ombudsman* coming 'from outside', from the regional union branch, as the latter does not have as the same good knowledge about the local conditions. According to *Almega*¹, one of the largest employers' associations affiliated to the Confederation of Swedish Enterprise, "violations of the MBL are occurring 'like on a conveyer belt' at enterprises around Sweden" as "[there are no trade unions to negotiate with](#)" [our translation]. In such cases, the negotiations shall take place with the union's regional *ombudsmen*, but according to *Almega* the parties often fail to reach each other.

In the autumn 2024 the chief negotiator of *Almega* declared that the situation with fewer workplace clubs was "[unsustainable](#)". In the 2023 bargaining round *Almega* therefore demanded that the white-collar unions should accept reduced obligations to negotiate in co-determination issues at workplaces without union clubs. At such workplaces the employers would inform the employees directly and only in major issues be obliged to negotiate with a union *ombudsman*. The *Almega* association [TechSverige](#) wanted this procedure to be applied also at workplaces with union representation. The unions rejected what *Unionen* called '[MBL light](#)'. But times would change. In the 2025 bargaining round, *Unionen* (TCO), *Sveriges Ingenjörer* (the Association of Graduate Engineers, Saco) and *Akavia* (Saco) succeeded to get reduced working hours (one day extra per year) for which they had to [abstain 0.5 percentage point in wage increase](#) (to be deducted from the wage cost 'mark' set by social partners in manufacturing industry). In addition, they had to accept 'MBL light'. This time not only *TechSverige* (which in the autumn 2023 left *Almega*) but also [the Tech Alliance](#) (part of *Teknikföretagen* - the Technology Industries of Sweden) [signed such agreements](#). The *Tech Alliance* is one of the parties behind the norm-setting Industry Agreement. Two of the three agreements were signed by *TechSverige*, the IT and telecom agreements. *The Tech Alliance* signed the tech service agreement.

According to these three tech industry agreements, enterprises with at most 50 employees and without union representation will apply a simplified co-determination procedure ([the](#)

¹ Presenting itself as "[Sweden's Leading Employers' Organisation in the Service Sector](#)".

[Tech agreement Unionen/Sveriges Ingenjörer – Teknikföretagen 2025-2027](#), pp 55-58). The employers had demanded this procedure to be applied in *all* enterprises irrespective of the number of employees. According to [the chief negotiator of Unionen](#), the agreement might encourage the employees to join unions and establish workplace clubs, but admits that the new procedure also might be an incentive for employers to prevent union members from engaging themselves in union activities.

An employer argument for reduced union co-determination is that it would [facilitate recruitment of tech enterprises](#) to employers' associations. The former *Almega* association *TechSverige* has relatively many members without collective agreements. Many tech enterprises prefer short decision paths with minimized union involvement. In several cases it has received great attention when big tech enterprises have a [negative attitude to enter co-determination negotiations](#) with white-collar *Unionen* despite that MBL is imperative.

Reduced co-determination and reduced working hours

As we have seen, since long a high priority for the tech sector was to reduce the unions' right to co-determination. As weakened co-determination could not be calculated in terms of wage costs, this exchange partly took place 'outside' the mark. As we have seen, to get reduced working hours the unions within the tech sector had to abstain 0.5 percentage point of the space for wage increases in the 'mark', which for the period April 2025 – March 2027 was specified to 6.4%, divided into 3.4% in the first year and 3.0% in the second. In addition, the unions within the tech sector had to accept 'MBL light'.

Since the mid-1990s, the system for reduced working-time within the bargaining areas covered by the Technology Industries (*Teknikföretagen*) consists of individual 'time banks' for blue-collar and white-collar workers, where the individual worker can choose between payment in cash, reduced working-time or to finance the loss of income in case of change to part-time work during a period before retirement or a combination between these options.

The tech industries, who organize consulting firms in a wide sense, did not accept such a solution for reduced working hours in the 2025 bargaining round. Instead, the result was an extra day off per year for which the unions had to abstain 0.5 percentage point wage increase and in addition accept reduced co-determination (MBL light).

Problems with labour law requirements in public procurements

As we have seen, a growing number of enterprises affiliated to employers' associations are worried about the weakened prospects to implement centrally negotiated collective agreements in their enterprise due to a shrinking coverage of union clubs and union representatives at workplace level. Another problem with the implementation of central agreements is connected to public procurements. Government agencies, including local authorities and regions, often do not control that suppliers fulfil the requirements demanded on labour conditions either the suppliers have collective agreements or not. Fraudulent enterprises sometimes use collective agreements as a façade to appear serious but without actually applying the agreements. Since 2017, public authorities are by law obliged to set labour law requirements in certain procurements. According to a [report from the Swedish](#)

[National Audit Office \(Riksrevisionen\)](#) in September 2025, the law has not been implemented in practice. As a consequence, the authorities may contribute to wage dumping and poor working conditions at their suppliers. Just one third of the audited procurements in “risk industries”, as construction and cleaning, contain “labour law conditions” about wage, vacation and working time in accordance with collective agreements and labour law. In Sweden legislated and collective agreed labour conditions are collectively referred to as “labour law conditions” (*arbetsrättsliga villkor*). In short, the authorities often do not demand labour law conditions in case of public procurements, and if so, they usually do not follow up and control that such requirements are fulfilled.

The problem with unfair employment and working conditions is aggravated by the frequent use of long chains of subcontractors. This is a growing problem not only in public procurements but also [elsewhere](#). When the issue was raised in the EU Parliament the debate was closely followed in Sweden. While the [Swedish employers](#) oppose restrictions on the length of subcontractor chains, the Social Democrats and trade unions are in favour. The Norwegian 2017 legislation on public procurements allow [at most two subcontractor vertical levels](#) in the construction and cleaning industries. This was used as a model when the [Uppsala Region](#) in its public procurements recently decided to apply a similar restriction, which was applauded by the Swedish Building Workers’ Union but not by [the Confederation of Swedish Enterprise](#).

Big enterprises in new industries resist collective agreements, but very few new collective agreements through industrial action

Some relatively big enterprises in new industries, often foreign-owned, resist collective agreements, for example the Swedish Spotify (1,400 employees in Stockholm), the French-owned gaming company [Massive Entertainment](#) (700 employees in Malmö) and the American Tesla where about 70 mechanics [strike](#) since 27 October 2023. Each year about 8,000 – 10,000 unorganized enterprises obtain collective agreements by joining employers’ associations and another 2,000 – 4,000 by signing substitute agreements (*hängavtal*) with national trade unions (*fackförbund*), which means that the central agreement in the industry shall be applied ([Kjellberg 2025b table H:7](#)). Very few new collective agreements come about through industrial action, just about 2-10 per year. In 2025 the Food Workers’ Union (LO) was [the only union](#) to give notice of strike towards enterprises without collective agreements. There are no precise statistics on the number of employees covered by substitute agreements, but the large majority of them is in small enterprises. In 2021 about 6% of the private sector employees were covered by such agreements ([Kjellberg 2023 table 9](#)). In Sweden, the wide right to industrial action to get enterprises join employers’ associations or sign substitute agreements can be described as the functional equivalent to the extension of collective agreements in other countries. That illustrates the preference of Swedish self-regulation to state regulation, where the latter dominates for example the French system of industrial relations. Blue-collar unions more frequently than white-collar unions are [prepared to take industrial action to force employers to sign collective agreements](#). That partly explains why the coverage of collective agreements is higher among blue-collar

workers than among white-collar workers: in the private sector 89% and 75% respectively (2024).

Figureless agreements in decline

The share of employees covered by so-called figureless collective agreements more than halved between 2023 and 2025, from 26% to 11% of all employees with collective agreements, among public sector white-collar workers from 81% to 23%. The turning point took place in the 2024 bargaining round when several white-collar unions in the municipal sector changed wage model from figureless agreements (wage model 1 in the classification system of the Swedish National Mediation Office) to agreements with a local wage frame (wage pot) but still without an individual guarantee (wage model 4). Among them were the unions of teachers (Saco), nurses (TCO) and medical doctors (Saco), which together with other unions co-operate within [OFR](#) (*Offentliganställdas Förhandlingsråd*, Public Employees' Negotiation Council). The counterpart is SKR (*Sveriges kommuner och regioner*; Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions, SALAR) and Sobona (an employers' association for municipal companies). The movement away from figureless agreements was confirmed in the 2025 bargaining round.

The reason for the changed union strategy was the poor outcome during the years of high inflation and real wage decline in 2022 and 2023, when the nominal private sector wages on average increased much more than those in the municipal sector: in 2022 2.9% and 2.2% respectively, in 2023 4.0% and 3.2% respectively ([Kjellberg 2025b](#) table F:1). In 2023 there was even a negative wage drift (minus 0.3 percentage points) in the municipal sector. Due to the worsened financial situation, the municipal employers in the local negotiations following upon the central figureless agreements in many cases took the opportunity conceding wage increases lower than the cost mark (also called the industry norm). Figureless agreements at central level mean that wage increases are negotiated at local level, in theory without an obligation that wages will be raised at all even if the cost mark is supposed to be applied. In 2024 too, did municipal sector wages increase less than private sector wages: by 3.7% and 4.2% respectively. The municipal figureless agreements expired at the end of March 2024.

Another change in recent years is that most individual employees since 2024 have some form of guaranteed wage increase.

What were the key issues in the recent bargaining rounds? And why?

[The 2025 collective bargaining round](#) was unusually extensive. The entire labour market, both private and public sectors, was included. As much as [549 agreements at industry level were renegotiated](#). Compensation for overtime for part-time workers and reduced working hours were two key issues. Unlike the two previous collective bargaining rounds, which mainly dealt with wages, the social partners made many changes to general terms and conditions in this bargaining round.

In the agreements concluded by the constellation Unions within industry (*Facken inom industrin*), there was a low-wage initiative. The model means that the actual lowest monthly salary used in calculating the wage pool is SEK 29,100 during 2025. 2026, the level will be increased. The unions affiliated to the blue-collar confederation LO also

included the low-wage initiative in their demands but also had an alternative model with a focus on the lowest wages.

Working time reduction

In the 2025 bargaining round, reduced working hours was demanded by a large number of unions. Over time, various models for reducing working hours have been introduced into collective agreements in large parts of the labour market. However, not all parts of the labour market have been covered (missing mainly in the private service sector), which led to a discussion that reduced working hours should be a general welfare reform. In August 2024 a Social Democratic working group launched working-hour reduction as a possible policy reform ahead of the party's congress. This was not appreciated by employers who argued that the working-hour issue should be up to the social partners to decide. Both the Technology Industries of Sweden (*Teknikföretagen*) and The Swedish Association of Industrial Employers (*Industriarbetsgivarna*) perceived the idea as a threat to introduce legislation and threatened in turn to [tear up the working-time reductions](#) achieved in the previous bargaining rounds.

In accordance with the Swedish labour market model, the position of both the blue-collar LO (the Confederation of Swedish Trade Unions) and in the end also the Social Democratic congress in May 2025, declared that the issue *in the first place* should be regulated through collective agreements and only secondarily through legislation. But by then, the agreements of the manufacturing industry were already finalized. In a total of 66 agreements in the private sector, the parties reached agreements on additional provisions for reduced working hours. Most of these were white-collar agreements, it's apparent that blue-collar agreement negotiators are awaiting the large bargaining round in 2027 for further negotiations on [reduced working hours](#).

Systems for reducing working hours were introduced in more collective agreements. Especially in the private service sector, where there was previously no system for reduced working hours. Common for these agreements are that the provisions for reduced working hours (most frequent in white-collar agreements), and the extra provisions for occupational pension, reduced the space for wage increases. For employers, an important issue was that reduced working hours should be regulated in collective agreements, not by the lawmaker.

Discussions about reduced working hours have continued even after the 2025 bargaining round. During the autumn, LO proposed negotiations on a general working hours reduction directly with the Confederation of Swedish Enterprise (SN). However, they responded that they want to stick to the traditional order with [negotiations at industry level](#). By that, increased wage costs caused by reduced working-time in the next bargaining round would be handled within the industry norm, the 'mark', and consequently reduce the space for wage increases as [the mark covers all kinds of wage costs](#). At a press conference in early February 2026, a united LO put forward demands for a general reduction in working hours for all industries. - The LO board has now agreed to reduce working hours through negotiations. But we see it as obvious that politics

must be prepared to support an agreement between the parties on shorter weekly working hours, [says LO chairman Johan Lindholm](#). [our translation]

Part-time workers' compensation for overtime work

The reason why the issue became important in the collective bargaining round is the development of case law concerning the [EU Directive \(97/81/EC\)](#) on part-time work. According to the directive, part-time workers may not be treated less favourably than comparable full-time workers solely because they work part-time, unless there are objective reasons.

It has up until the 2025 bargaining round been fairly common for Swedish part-time workers who work beyond their regular working hours to receive lower compensation than a full-time worker who works overtime would receive. In light of two rulings from the European Court of Justice concerning German part-time pilots and care assistants, the issue of compensation for part-time workers who work more than their regular working hours came up in the negotiations. One argument raised in the LO coordination was that the same compensation for overtime regardless of working hours would increase the proportion of full-time jobs. In a very large proportion of the agreements, the negotiating parties agreed to replace all work beyond regular working hours with the same compensation as overtime work for full-time employees. This was the most common conflict issue in the 2025 bargaining round. It dominated more than every second of the 18 mediations done by the Swedish National Mediation Office. Overall, 83% of employees with collective agreements were covered by changed rules regarding part-time workers' rights to compensation for work beyond regular working hours. ([Annual 2025 report of the Swedish National Mediation Office](#), p. 29, p. 52). None of the disputes resulted in industrial action.

What are the key issues pursued by trade unions in recent bargaining rounds? And why?

The dominating theme of the 2025 bargaining round was working hours, and this was reflected in the key issues demanded by the unions.

The Swedish Unions within Industry (*Facken inom industrin*) negotiate the wage cost mark and their agreements usually have a major influence on other areas. Their demands were a cost mark at 4.2% (one year), a low wage initiative plus an individual guarantee (where applicable) at SEK 850/month. In addition to this, they demanded additional provision for reduced working hours and part-time pension, increased overtime compensation for part time workers (see above), and the right to vacation for recently employed. Within LO (blue collar workers), the unions also demanded an inquiry on reduced working hours. As in the previous bargaining round, many white-collar unions in OFR (Public Employees' Negotiation Council) demanded numerical salary increases (see above).

The negotiations in the 2025 bargaining round ended in two-year agreements based on a total cost mark at 6.4%, distributed on 3.4% in 2025 and 3.0% in 2026 ([Annual 2025 report, pp. 20, 26](#)).

What are the main problems unions encountered in recent bargaining rounds?

In the 2025 bargaining round 15 notices of industrial action were given by the unions in sectoral collective bargaining (*förbundsförhandlingar*) ([Kjellberg 2025, table H:3](#)). Only in one case did conflict break out, and that was between the independent Port Workers' Union and the employer organisation Ports of Sweden. The Swedish National Mediation Office appointed mediators in three other negotiations, but no notices of conflict occurred in these cases. Working hour issues were involved in most of the 18 mediations done by the Mediation Office. All white-collar unions that gave notices on industrial action to get reduced working hours were successful. Notices were given by them to five employers' associations in the *Almega* Group (private services) and one to Swedish Commerce (*Svensk Handel*).

In the 2025 bargaining round, it was not the value of the agreements or the level of the cost mark that was in focus. but rather it was the issue of how the new rules on compensation for overtime for part-time workers should be financed and the issue of reduced working hours that were complicating factors.

The 2025 bargaining round again demonstrated the low frequency of labour conflicts distinguishing the Swedish labour market model. The number of lost working days during bargaining rounds is extremely low in Sweden. The total annual average of lost conflict days during the period 2014-2023 was 38,000 in Denmark, 203,000 in Finland, 91,000 in Norway and 3,300 in Sweden ([Ljunglöf, Fransson & Kjellberg 2024: 37](#)). In 2024 the Swedish number of working days lost through industrial action increased to about 45,700 days, above all due to a nurses' strike (about 32,600 lost days) and the continued Tesla strike (almost 12,800 lost days).

The bargaining round of 2025 covered almost the entire labour market. Of the 21,507 lost working days, more than three fourth (16,320) were caused by the Tesla conflict. All the 5,176 working days lost in central negotiations can be entirely attributed to the failed strike of the independent Port Workers' Union to get a collective agreement of their own. The Transport Workers' Union (LO) has the port agreement. The new agreement signed by the Port Workers' Union is a copy of that agreement. In all, only four strikes occurred in 2025: the port workers' strike, the continued Tesla strike (started in October 2023) and two short strikes of the Food Workers' Union to get collective agreements with unorganized employers (11 days lost). The Tesla strike and the food workers' strikes were not part of the bargaining round but were strikes against unorganized companies.

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