

Nordic Work Mobility and Labour Market

– for Professional Scientists





Naturviterne



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Foreword

The Nordics is one of the world's most integrated regions. The cooperation between Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden and the autonomous areas of the Faroe Islands, Greenland and Åland is political, economic, legal and cultural. It is based on geographical proximity but also on our shared history and common values in most areas of life. The Nordic model has led to the Nordics being one of the most innovative and competitive regions in the world.

Our unions share the view of the Nordic Council of Ministers that the Nordic countries have a long tradition of trust-based cooperation stemming from our common historical, cultural and geographical heritage and that our national societies are based on the same fundamental values, such as democracy, human rights and sustainability. Over the years, these positions of joint strength have been used to generate effective responses to a wide range of issues and provides benefits for the people of all the Nordic countries. For our unions a strong and coordinated Nordic cooperation is necessary to protect and promote our members needs and demands on the European and international level.

Ever since the Nordic passport union and the common Nordic labour market were introduced more than sixty years ago, Nordic citizens need neither passport nor a residence or a work permit to stay or work in another Nordic country. The Nordic cooperation has led to many more opportunities for professional scientist in the Nordics. Professional scientists work within production, research and development, quality and safety, environmental monitoring and nature management, consulting and teaching and much more. Many scientists contribute to innovation, wellbeing and a sustainable future. By having a joint labour market and a close cooperation, the Nordic countries are more effective in finding solutions for global challenges.

The members of our unions have reported that overall many things work very well when they move to, or work in, another Nordic country and that it is relatively uncomplicated to do so. However, obstacles to work mobility still exist and some of them have been identified in this report together with possible solutions.

Today we face many challenges such as globalisation, new forms of employment, digitalisation, structural changes in the labour market, decreasing rates of organisation, climate change, global migratory pressures and the side-effects of freedom of movement for enterprises and employees in Europe.

We need common Nordic policies and initiatives to meet these challenges. Two out of three Nordic citizens are of the opinion that the international development of recent years has made Nordic cooperation even more important. The Nordic model with its great degree of flexibility and swiftness in adapting to new circumstances is well suited to meet these challenges.

We share the conviction of the ministers for Nordic cooperation of the value of continuing to work closely together in the Nordics at a time when globalisation, tensions in the EU, resource consumption and economic crisis pose challenges to the Nordic welfare model and regional cooperation is growing in importance.

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Examine the marine environment, Bohuslän, Sweden.

Photo: Åsa Holmberg / Göteborgs Naturhistoriska Museum

Summary

The first part of the report gives a historic background on the Nordic cooperation with a emphasis on Nordic labour law, Nordic conventions and other agreements regulating working and living conditions in the Nordic region. More than 300 000 Nordic citizens live or work in another Nordic country.

The second part accounts for EU/EEA legislation that affects different aspects of labour law and social security law when moving between Nordic countries.

The third part provides practical information of the Nordic labour markets and a description for each country concerning employment, salary, social security and residence among other things.

The fourth part offers a checklist of relevant information when you plan to work abroad. This list summarises some of the most important matters to take into consideration.

The fifth part involves border obstacles and presents a non-exhaustive list of remaining obstacles for professional scientists that have been identified by our members, the Freedom of Movement Council and others, together with possible solutions to the problem.

The Nordics

Background

The Nordics, also known as the Nordic region, is an area in northern Europe that consists of the countries Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden and the autonomous areas of Åland, the Faroe Islands and Greenland. These five states and three autonomous territories are all separate members of the Nordic Council and the Nordic Council of Ministers. Today the Nordics is the world's most integrated region in many ways.¹

Our common history goes back a long time. In the Sagas of Icelanders, Íslendingasögur, the Norden or Nordlanden were identified as the areas in which Danish tongue, which we now call fornordiska or old Norse, was spoken. Those were Sweden, Norway, Denmark and Iceland. Finland and other areas became part of the Nordics later after becoming part of one of these countries for some time.

Today our countries belong to a Nordic language community, where one of the Nordic languages is spoken in them all and one of the three mainland Nordic languages plays a role in all the Nordic countries. The Nordic languages are Swedish, Danish, Norwegian, Faroese and Icelandic.² They all have a common origin in the Germanic language group. Finland is officially bilingual, and Swedish is taught already in primary school. Icelanders, Faroese and Greenlanders generally learn Danish. Knowledge of other Nordic languages than the mother tongue has deteriorated in recent times.

The Nordics were united under one crown in 1397 in the Kalmar union. This continued for a part of the middle ages until Sweden left the union in 1523. Norway continued as a part of Denmark until 1814 when Sweden and Denmark made a peace agreement in which Norway was to be a part of Sweden. Norway entered a forced union with Sweden which was dissolved in 1905. The islands in the Atlantic, which had originally been Norwegian, continued to belong to Denmark. Denmark gradually gave autonomy to its former countries Iceland, the Faroe Islands and Greenland. Iceland became independent from Denmark in 1944. Part of the population of the Faroe Islands and Greenland today strive for independence. If the Faroe Islands and Greenland would continue to be viewed as parts of the Nordics in the case of independence is uncertain.

Following the second world war there was a strong political will to deepen the Nordic cooperation. The Nordic countries, except Finland because of the FCMA treaty with USSR, pursued the idea of a Scandinavian defence union to ensure our mutual defence, but it did not come to fruition and Denmark, Norway and Iceland joined NATO while Sweden and Finland remained neutral.

The Nordic Council was founded in 1952 with the aim of increasing cooperation in the Nordic countries on cultural, political, legal and social issues. Foreign policy was excluded from the Nordic Council's discussions until the 1990s because of Finland's agreements with the Soviet Union.

¹ Nordic Council of Ministers (2017).

² Finnish is categorised as Uralic and is very different from the other languages.

The perhaps most notable progress in Nordic cooperation took place over 50 years ago and were the first projects that were implemented by the Nordic Council: the Nordic Passport Union and the Joint Nordic Labour Market, which were introduced in 1954.

Denmark, Norway, Portugal, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, Sweden and Austria formed the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) in 1960. EFTA countries were often called the “outer seven” since they did not belong to the European Economic Community (EEC), which later became the European Community EC and then the European Union (EU).

In the 1960s, attempts were made to create an economically closer cooperation between the Nordic countries, which was called Nordek or the Organisation for Nordic Economic Cooperation. This cooperation never came to fruition since Denmark’s and Finland’s interests differed too much. Finland had its relations with the Soviet Union to consider, while Denmark had an interest in another Western European cooperation, the European Economic Community. Denmark, Norway and Sweden tried to unsuccessfully form Skandek. In 1972, the Danes voted yes to EEC membership and left the EFTA. Despite the fact that some plans for cooperation failed, the Nordic countries still had closer relationships and more cooperation with each other than most other countries and regions.

The Nordic countries today have many coordinated laws and share a common and unique legal tradition. The Nordic countries have conducted active legislative cooperation since the late 1800s and this was formalized by the 1962 Helsinki Agreement. The level of ambition of legislative cooperation was highest regarding private law (civil law) and criminal law. Until the end of the 20th century, the Nordic legislative cooperation was characterized by large joint legislative projects that resulted in joint Nordic legislation in several areas such as contract law and copyright. Over the last 25-30 years, this collaboration has changed character and consists mainly of exchanging information and experiences between officials.

The Nordic cooperation was deepened in the 1970s with the creation of The Nordic Council of Ministers which is the official body for inter-governmental cooperation in the Nordics. The Nordic Investment Bank was also created as well as Nordplus for educational cooperation, and the Nordic Film- and TV-fund as well as the House of the Nordics in Iceland and the Faroe Islands.

After the end of the cold war the interest in Nordic cooperation was superseded by cooperation in the Baltic sea region and in the Barents region. Cooperation with other European countries became the focus and the formation of the European Union changed the political map entirely. Sweden, Denmark and Finland joined the EU while Norway did not. Iceland applied to become a member but withdrew their application. Greenland exited the European Community

in 1985, mainly because of disagreements regarding the Common Fisheries Policy, to become an OCT (overseas countries and territories) in the EU. The Faroe Islands are not part of the EU, as explicitly asserted by both Rome treaties, again mainly because of disagreements about the Common Fisheries Policy. Åland has a special status in the EU as an autonomic region in Finland. Today, the official Nordic cooperation has diminished in importance because of the role played by the European Union.

Norway and Iceland are part of the European Economic Area (EEA). Since the Nordic countries' entry into the EU and the EEA, the possibility of bilateral agreements between the countries has changed, due to the fact that the EU does not allow a member state to discriminate between a country's citizens compared to another country's citizens in the Union. This means in many cases that the rules that apply to a Swede in Denmark must also apply to a German in Denmark.³ So bilateral or pan-Nordic agreements between Nordic countries are harder to attain and can become costlier and less exclusive.

Economically and politically, the Nordic states are strongly interconnected. The countries are small open economies dependent on exports. Over 40 percent of the work force in the Nordic countries work in export companies.⁴ Other Nordic countries are among the largest trading partners and exports to the Nordic market is for many Nordic countries greater than to USA and China combined and of similar size to other EU exports. The Nordic countries are relatively small, but together they are important. The total area of the Nordic Region would form the 7th largest nation in the world, although uninhabitable icecaps and glaciers make up about half of this area. The Nordics is the 12th largest economy in the world, with a population that is growing faster than the EU average, a labour market that receives global praise and a welfare system that has proved resilient both in times of boom and bust.⁵

The Nordic peoples share many cultural norms and values. In the World Values Survey and in the Inglehart-Welzels cultural map of the world the Nordic countries belong to an approximate ethnic group that values personal freedom, individualism, democracy and a secular-rational social order clearly higher than fidelity to tradition, religion and state. Countries with the least cultural distance to the Nordics are the Netherlands, Germany and Switzerland.

Today's Nordic cooperation is politically, economically and culturally anchored and is an important factor in negotiations on the European and international level. Our countries seek a strong Nordic voice in the world and an in European and international forums. Nordic cooperation and coordination are often most necessary for employers, unions and politicians to achieve success.

In 2016, the prime ministers of the Nordic countries adopted the overarching objective of making the Nordic Region the most integrated region in the world.⁶ The Nordic community is working for a strong Nordic region in a strong Europe. Nordic cooperation will strengthen

³ NFS 2013.

⁴ Statistics Denmark (2017). Not including Iceland.

⁵ Grunfelder, Rispling & Norlén (2018).

⁶ Nordic Council of Ministers (2016).

Nordic and regional interests and values in a global environment. Common values between the countries contribute to strengthening the Nordic position as one of the world's most innovative and competitive regions and Nordic work mobility is increasing.

The number of border workers⁷ between Sweden and Denmark grew 60 percent in the ten year period between 2005 to 2015 and there are good indications that the number of border workers doubled between Sweden and Norway in the same period.⁸ Today more than 70 000⁹ people commute back and forth across a country border to another Nordic country for work.¹⁰

Table 1: Number of residents from other Nordic countries.

Living in:	Denmark	Finland	Iceland	Norway	Sweden	Sum
From: Denmark		763	914	22 806	33 449	57 932
Finland	2 966		123	6 450	53 810	63 349
Iceland	8 595	146		8 806	4 649	22 196
Norway	16 752	874	293		34 676	52 595
Sweden	15 696	8 018	366	43 963		68 043
Sum	44 009	9 801	1 696	82 025	126 584	264 115

Source: Eurostat 2018

In recent years about 50 000 people per year emigrate to another Nordic country.¹¹ Today more than 260 000 Nordic citizens live in another Nordic country, see table 1.

⁷ Also known as frontier workers.

⁸ Öresundsdatenbanken, Statistikdatenbank Västra Götalandsregionen and own calculations.

⁹ This figure is from 2014 and it is likely to be higher today. According to statistical bureaus in the Nordics, statistics concerning border work is limited and a current overview of the number of border workers across the Nordics does not exist.

¹⁰ Nordic Council of Ministers (2014) and SCB (2005).

¹¹ Nordic Council of Ministers (2014).

The Nordic Model

The Nordic countries are often used as positive examples in global debates on how to combine economic growth and social security. The Nordic countries have done so successfully for many decades, and the countries consistently place in the top of international rankings concerning economic competitiveness, employment, equality and quality of life. Our countries have the world's lowest poverty rates, best health and some of the world's lowest income differences. The Nordic model has led to prosperous and well-functioning societies. Economic growth in the countries is aided by a dynamic labour market which in turn requires strong, creative and constructive organisations that represent employees and employers.

The Nordic countries have many differences, but they share a common core of values, standards and solutions to societal problems that is often called the Nordic model of economy and social structure. The model is one of market economy combined with strong labour unions and a universalist welfare system and a relatively large public sector financed by taxes. There is a high degree of income redistribution, little social unrest and individual autonomy and social mobility is promoted. Strong civic basic security, social insurance and social safety nets are important as well as equal opportunities, a participatory democracy and gender equality. Infrastructures of different kinds are often well provided for and financed by taxes. There is a strong focus on education and education is mostly free. Public services and strong safety nets have facilitated high labour supply through publicly provided education, well-functioning health care and day care services for children.¹²

There is also a relatively high degree of active macroeconomic stabilisation policy in which the parties in the labour market are very much involved and which is further helped by automatic stabilisers to the economy because of the existence of social security systems such as unemployment benefits and similar that increase pay-outs quickly when there is an economic downturn.

Wages, rules and labour market policy are negotiated by the representatives of employees and employers and the role of the state is primarily to mediate. Many aspects of labour law are regulated in collective bargaining agreements or have its roots in such agreements.

Labour law legislation must only provide a framework for the social partners, who have the freedom to adapt the terms to what is necessary for the industry or at the individual company level. Collective agreements, which are legally binding for members and organisations, have a fundamental impact as a legal source on the labour market, but legislation has become more common.¹³

The Nordic model allows for quick reactions to changes in market demand and financial crises and allows the labour market to follow technological progress and to be one of the most

¹² Valkonen & Vihriälä (2014).

¹³ Nyström (2017).

educated and skills based in the world. We have been able to produce goods and services that are high up on the value chain with good margins and high demand on the international markets. Historically the Nordic model came into existence, in part, because our countries are small open economies who are heavily dependent on international markets. Outside competition during the rapid industrialization before the First World War when the economy was increasingly globalized was one important factor that led to a negotiation system jointly designed by the social partners.¹⁴

Over time we have developed a negotiating culture in the Nordic region between employers and employees founded on an understanding of the value of a well organised labour market and where the state and the legislator have a detached and supporting role. An organisation rate that is high by international comparisons both on the employee and employer side has underpinned both the legitimacy and the functioning of the model.¹⁵

This system is possible because of a high degree of unionisation amongst employees and employers alike.¹⁶ Negotiations and agreements take place both on central and local levels, and employees are represented on all levels of the corporations and in society. The result is a broad and deep, bottom-up, consensus between employer organisations and trade unions that the road to new jobs and better working conditions and profits is based on cooperation.²⁰

The degree of union organisation is high in an international comparison but has steadily declined during recent decades. Iceland is in top with 90 percent, Denmark, Finland and Sweden around 70 percent and Norway 55 percent. Some explanations to the decline in the degree of union organisation have been rising unemployment figures, deregulation of labour markets and cuts in the social security systems.¹⁷ Other hypothesis are that attitudes towards the union membership has shifted in step with a change in societal values from solidarity towards the group towards more of individual self-actualization and that people takes advantageous terms regulated in collective agreement for granted since the terms in collective agreements often applies on non-union members as well.¹⁸

The Convention Concerning a Common Nordic Labour Market of 1954 was made possible by the acceptance from the social partners which was imaginable because of the existence of a Nordic model. The common labour market has contributed over time to a harmonisation of labour law in the Nordic countries and a continued development of the Nordic model.

¹⁴ Dølvik (2007).

¹⁵ Nielson (2016).

¹⁶ Dølvik (2007).

¹⁷ Edström (2016).

¹⁸ Arbetsmarknadsekonomiska rådet (2018).

Influence of EU labour law

EU labour law has influenced the Nordic labour law to a great degree. The EU has carried out legislation in many areas of labour law, such as: equal treatment, employer's obligation to inform and consulting the employees, collective redundancies, employee rights in the event of transfers of undertakings, protection of employees in the event of employer insolvency and working hours.

EU law is superior to national law, which means that national law normally shall be set aside, when there is a conflict between EU law and national law. National courts must take into consideration relevant EU law including decisions from the European Court of Justice when interpreting national law.

Free Movement on Fair Terms

The Nordic unions have generally been positive to free trade and free movement in the Nordic region and elsewhere. The social partners have long recognised that our small open economies can benefit greatly from exports and free movement of employees. For the unions in the Nordics free movement of employees between the Nordic countries is important. It increases the number of job opportunities and the number of potential employers and dampens the effect of financial crises. In several countries the demography is such that the national labour market is, or will in time be, dependent on labour from abroad. But the labour coming from abroad must receive the same wages and working conditions as nationals.

From a union perspective a prerequisite for free trade and movement is that the terms for employees are not worsened, but on the contrary, that the terms are fair and that wages and working conditions improve over time because of trade and mobility. The economic growth must be shared by employers and employees. Professionals who are hurt by trade must be compensated, protected and helped in changing careers.

A basic principle is that our members must be able to move freely in the Nordics in order to study or work while having good social protections and conditions. Social dumping is not acceptable. Social dumping consists of not only foreign workers receiving lower wages than domestic workers for equivalent work. Social dumping also includes foreign workers having lower working conditions, for example in the form of stressful working hours, poorer working environment and a lack of introduction to the work that is necessary for the worker's safety at the workplace. Overall, these conditions greatly affect the employee's health and safety.¹⁹

Free movement and trade must be based on fair terms and all people who work in our countries must be treated equally and have the same rights, regardless of where they come from. The same domestic rules, working conditions and pay conditions shall apply to all. The integration of the Nordic labour markets and the opening of borders between the Nordic countries have worked well and been socially accepted because this has historically been the case.

¹⁹ NFS (2011).

Free movement within the European Union and the European Economic Area has not been as frictionless. There are many examples of social dumping especially when it comes to stationing of workers which has come to be put the Nordic mode under pressure. The Nordic principle of equal treatment as well as several national agreements on the labour market and rules for social protection have been superseded by EU in a number of ways. Some examples are the decisions of the EU Court on Laval-, Viking- and Rüffert.²⁰ There exists a need to create a greater understanding in the EU of why fair competition and fair working conditions are so important to our societies and how the Nordic model functions.

In order to maintain and safeguard the Nordic labour market model with our tradition of good cooperation between employers and employees, with a high degree of organisation and high employment, employees and business must be ensured equal conditions and a level playing field on fair terms. The labour market should be safe, sustainable, inclusive and flexible with good profits, good pay and good working conditions.

Nordic Conventions & International Agreements

The laws in the Nordic countries are similar in many respects. Partly because several of today's countries formed unions at different times in history, partly because a lot of legislation has been developed in parallel where neighbours have learned from each other's best practise. But also because of the need to resolve cross-border related issues efficiently, for example when it comes to marriage of citizens of different countries. Such cross-border issues and the peoples will to deepen the cooperation in the Nordics have been regulated in treaty's and other agreements, here we cover those of most importance to Nordic mobility and the functioning of the Nordic labour market. Despite these agreements there still exist border obstacles, read about these on page 133.

The Nordic Convention on Marriage

This convention from 1932 contains agreements on international civil law between the Nordic countries that cover aspects of marriage, adoption and guardianship. For example, the spouses could now agree on which country's law was to be applied on their matrimonial property and Nordic citizens were given the right to adopt from another Nordic country.

Nordic Conventions on Enforcement of Judgments

Two conventions from 1932 and 1977 govern mutual recognition and enforcement in the Nordic countries of judgments in civil and criminal matters.

The Nordic Convention on Inheritance, Testament and Estate Administration

Signed in 1934 this convention primarily deals with the situation of a Nordic citizen dying in another Nordic country which is not the country of residence. Regulations handle questions

²⁰ NFS (2011).

regarding e.g. which country's law is applicable, the debts of the deceased, estate administration, property division and the mutual recognition and enforcement of judgments on these matters.

The Nordic Passport Union

The passport union is based on two agreements signed in 1954 and 1957.²¹ The first makes it possible for Nordic citizens to travel within the Nordics without a passport (or other travel documents) and without residence permits.²² The other agreement ended passport controls at the intra-Nordic borders.²³ Later the Nordic countries also joined the Schengen Agreement.

Beginning in 2015 several Nordic countries have for periods of time reinstated border controls to other Nordic countries with reference to the "migrant crisis in Europe", "the security situation in Europe" and "threats to national security".

The Common Nordic Labour Market

The Common Nordic Labour Market was formed in 1954 (revised in 1982) by Denmark, Norway, Finland, and Sweden. Iceland was not originally a signatory but acted in accordance with the agreement. It is based on the view that it is a basic right for Nordic citizens to be able to freely live and work in all the Nordic countries. Mobility shall be able to happen under economically and socially secured conditions and the intention is to maintain full employment in each country. Including other things, the agreement regulates that:

- » No work permit is necessary for Nordic citizens.
- » Regulations on the labour market in each individual country must not put citizens in the other contracting countries in a worse position than the nation's own citizens. Nationals of a Nordic country who are employed in another Nordic country shall be treated in the same way as that country's own nationals when it comes to pay and other working conditions.
- » The public employment services in the countries shall cooperate and work towards greater Nordic work mobility.
- » The Nordic Council of Ministers shall regularly consult with the parties on the labour market (employers' associations and unions) regarding labour market and employment issues in the Nordics.

The Helsinki Treaty

The Helsinki Treaty from 1962 states that the Nordic countries must seek to preserve and develop cooperation in the legal, cultural, social and economic spheres, as well as in the areas of

²¹ Some countries or areas entered into the agreements at a later date.

²² "Protokoll angående befrielse för nordiska medborgare från att under uppehåll i annat nordiskt land än hemlandet innehava pass och uppehållstillstånd."

²³ "Den nordiska passkontrollöverenskommelsen."

infrastructure and environmental protection. It also covers the workings of the Nordic Council. Amongst much else it declares that:

- » In the drafting of laws and regulations in any of the Nordic countries, citizens of all the other Nordic countries shall be treated equally with the citizens of the country.
- » Becoming a citizen of another Nordic country should be facilitated.
- » The countries shall aim to attain the greatest possible uniformity in the field of private law.
- » They shall establish uniform rules relating to criminal offences and the penalties for such offences.
- » Educational provision in the schools of each of the Nordic countries shall include an appropriate measure of instruction in the languages, cultures and general social conditions of the other Nordic countries, including the Faeroe Islands, Greenland and the Åland Islands.
- » The Nordic countries shall maintain and extend the range of opportunities for students from other Nordic countries to pursue courses of study and sit examinations at its educational establishments. It should be possible for students to receive financial assistance from their home countries, irrespective of the country in which their studies are being pursued.
- » The Nordic countries should coordinate that part of the public education system that provides qualifications for certain occupations and professions. The qualifications provided by such education should, as far as possible, be recognised and accepted in all the Nordic countries. Requirements relating to supplementary education and training necessitated by national conditions may, however, be prescribed.
- » Cooperation in the field of research should be so organised that research grants and other resources are coordinated and used in the best possible way, including the establishment of joint institutions.
- » They shall seek to preserve and develop further the common Nordic labour market in accordance with the guidelines drawn up in previous agreements. Employment services and vocational guidance shall be coordinated. There shall be a free exchange of trainees. Efforts should be made to achieve a uniform application of national regulations concerning health and safety at work and similar matters.
- » The countries shall endeavour to ensure that the citizens of each Nordic country, when resident in another Nordic country, shall, as far as possible, enjoy the same social benefits as are provided for the citizens of the country of residence.
- » In matters of international trade policy, the parties shall endeavour, jointly and severally, to promote Nordic interests, and shall hold joint consultations to this end.

Nordic Convention on Social Security

The convention regulates the application of social security systems when employees, self-employed, or their family members move within the Nordics. It aims to increase mobility and social safety within the Nordics. Originally from 1981 it was expanded in 1985 to cover

unemployment and then revised in 1992 when the Nordic countries entered the EEA and later when entering the EU. Today it complements EU Regulation on the coordination of social security²⁴ and gives additional rights when moving between the Nordic countries.²⁵

Generally, the rules of the EU regulation apply to most cross-border situations between the Nordic countries. The Nordic convention complements the EU regulation by extending the regulation to people that fall outside of the scope of the regulation, namely those who are not nationals of an EEA country or persons that do not count as workers or self-employed according to the EU regulations. The convention also gives rights in addition to the regulation when moving between the Nordic countries. Some examples are:

- » A former employee or self-employed person of a Nordic country who within 5 years return to that country are entitled to receive unemployment benefits again if he or she is unemployed, without having to meet the requirements once again.
- » In cross-border situations, the countries shall cooperate. Meaning that a person who works and resides in two different Nordic countries, shall be entitled to work life rehabilitation in the country of residence. The competent institution in the country of residence shall consult the institution in the work country, and thereafter take necessary measures in accordance with that country's legislation.
- » The convention extends the rules in the regulation concerning third country nationals to Iceland and Norway, Greenland and the Faroe Islands.
- » The convention extends the rules in the regulation concerning third country nationals to Iceland and Norway, Greenland and the Faroe Islands.²⁶

The Nordic Convention on Work Environment

The convention from 1989 is based on the ideas that a good working environment is of fundamental importance to welfare in society and that it promotes productivity and societal development. The work to increase safe working conditions in every workplace is seen as important and the social partners (employers' organisations and unions) are seen to have a large influence on work environment policy. It aims, amongst other things, to promote progress towards ever better working environments in all the Nordic countries, to harmonise rules and to promote a common Nordic policy and coordination on the international arena. For example, it regulates that:

- » The work shall be planned, organised and conducted in such a way that risks to workers physical or psychological health are prevented.
- » When designing the work environment, the inclusion of both men and women to participate and flourish in the labour market shall be considered.
- » The employees shall have the right to refrain from work that constitutes an imminent and serious danger to life or health without being liable for compensation or other unlawful sanction.

²⁴ Regulation 883/2004.

²⁵ The Convention applies in all of the Nordics, including Greenland and the Faroe Islands.

²⁶ Article 1.

Agreement on National Registration

This 1989 agreement applies to residents of a Nordic country who intend to move to another Nordic country. Stays shorter than 6 months are not normally regarded as a move. Persons must within the correct time limit inform the competent authority in the new country of the move. If all is in order the person shall be registered as having residence and be awarded a personal identification number. A person is only to be registered in one country at a time and the agreement allows for cross-border exchange of information between competent authorities.

Agreement on a Common Nordic Labour Market for some Health Care Professionals and Veterinarians

The agreement signed in 1993 gives the right to professionals from a Nordic country who belong to a regulated profession mentioned in the agreement to exercise their profession in the other Nordic countries.²⁷ Some examples are: doctor, dentist, nurse, physiotherapist, biomedical analysts, radiographers, occupational therapist and veterinarians. Similar agreements exist regarding school teachers.

The Nordic Convention on Social Assistance and Social Services

This convention signed in 1994 applies to all persons residing in a Nordic country and to all Nordic citizens irrespective of country of residence. Amongst other things it gives the right to use any of the Nordic languages when corresponding with authorities in matters on social assistance and social services. Persons, as defined above, on a temporary stay in a country also have the right to social assistance and services. Furthermore, it gives the right to move between our countries and still be able to receive long-time care and treatment from the new country. Municipalities in the border areas are obligated to make it possible for handicapped and elderly persons to receive publicly funded transportation services for trips to municipalities across the border.

The Nordic Tax Treaty

In this 1996 treaty the Nordic countries aim to avoid double taxation on income and assets. An individual who resides in one country and has income or assets in another country may be liable to tax in both countries under the internal rules of these countries. The Nordic Tax Treaty has rules about which Nordic country can tax an income and how to avoid double taxation.

Some examples of income taxation rules:

- » Property income including income from farm- and forestry properties is to be taxed in the country where the property is located.
- » Business income is taxed in the country where its seat is located. Income from branches in the other country is to be taxed there as a main rule but it depends on the legal form.

²⁷ SÖ 1994:2 and SÖ 2001: 5.

- » Dividends are to be taxed in the country of residence of the recipient, but there are many exceptions.
- » Interest and royalty are to be taxed in the country of interest of the recipient, with some exceptions.
- » Self-employed persons shall be taxed in country of residence, with some exceptions.
- » Income from employment is to be taxed in the country of work, with some exceptions.
- » Income from board remuneration is to be taxed in the country where the company has its seat, with some exceptions.
- » Pension is to be taxed in country from where the payment originates.

The Cultural Agreement

Signed in 1971 the Cultural Agreement is based on an objective of enhancing and intensifying cooperation in the cultural sphere. The purpose of the agreement is to help increase the overall impact of national investment in education, research and other cultural activities, and ensure that the countries work together to develop the Nordic cultural community, e.g. by “promoting teaching in the other Nordic countries’ languages, cultures and social conditions [...]”.

The Nordic Language Convention

The Convention entered into force in 1987 after work by the Nordic Council. It is legally binding for all five Nordic countries. Under the Convention, citizens of the Nordic countries can when necessary use their native language when interacting with official bodies in other Nordic countries without being liable for any translation costs. The Convention covers health care, social security, tax, school, and employment authorities, the police and courts. The countries have committed themselves to providing services in various languages, but citizens have no absolute rights except for criminal and court matters. Civil servants in official institutions have often been unaware of the regulations on interpretation and translation and neglect to provide these services when requested.²⁸

Agreement on a Nordic Labour Market for Persons that Have Completed Qualifying Higher Education Encompassing At Least Three Years of Study

The Agreement on the Common Nordic Labour Market in 1954 did not remove those border obstacles that follow from the fact that countries have special requirements on education, licences or other requirements for some professions. Neither the obstacle that some professions by law could only be exercised by citizens. This agreement, which came into effect 1998, tries to solve those issues and it is based on the view that an increased mobility for these persons would increase economic and societal development in all Nordic countries and that publicly regulated educations in the countries are equivalent. The agreement regulates amongst other things that:

²⁸ Winsa (1999).

- » A person who has received the legal right to exercise a profession by completing an education (of at least three years), or by being member of a professional association, shall have the right to exercise that profession in all the other Nordic countries.
- » Professionals who have been educated in a country where the profession is not regulated, or have no education, shall have the right to have their professional qualifications recognised (at least if they have worked in the profession for three years, countries can choose to implement a time requirement up to three years).
- » Authorities must reply to any applications within four months.

Agreements on Citizenship

The Helsinki Treaty states that the Nordic countries “shall endeavour to facilitate the acquisition by citizens of one Nordic country of citizenship in another Nordic country”. It is complemented by an Agreement on the Implementation of Certain Regulations Regarding Citizenship²⁹ which came into effect in 2003 and the Agreement between Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden on citizenship which came into effect in 2012.³⁰

According to national legislation in the Nordics generally 2 years of residence is enough for Nordic citizens to apply for citizenship (other conditions apply). In Iceland 4 years of residence is necessary for Nordic citizens (other conditions apply). All Nordic countries allow for double citizenship except Norway who will allow it from 2020.

EU and EEA citizens do not need citizenship to vote in municipality elections so long as they have resided for some time. In national elections citizenship is needed.

The Declaration on Nordic Language Policy

The Language Declaration of 2006 defines priorities for each country’s national work on language policy, the declaration is not legally binding. It focuses on the following areas of language policy: teaching in Scandinavian languages as neighbouring languages and as foreign languages; parallel language use between English and the main Nordic languages; the multilingual society and multilingual citizens. It states that “Nordic language policy is based on all Nordic residents having the right to acquire an understanding of and skills in a Scandinavian language and an understanding of the other Scandinavian languages so that they can take part in the Nordic language community”.

²⁹ SÖ 2004:30.

³⁰ SÖ 2012:6.

Joint Nordic Declaration on Fair Competition and Fair Working Conditions

The Nordic Council of Ministers adopted a declaration in 2018 on fair competition and fair working conditions from a Nordic perspective.³¹ The ministers declared that:

The Nordic countries fully support and encourage free movement of workers and services while recognising and emphasising the need to prevent fraud and systematic abuse. Crossborder labour mobility is positive; it contributes to greater prosperity and better living standards. But this must not lead to a situation where companies compete on lower wages, poor working conditions or lapses in safety in the workplace. Competition between companies must instead be based on knowledge and skills.

Infringements and misuse of different rules and regulations can lead to serious risks for individuals. Unfair competition leads to negative consequences for companies and society. The Nordic countries have labelled these phenomena differently – social dumping, work-related crime, the grey economy – but the challenges are many times the same. On the EU level, the term undeclared work is often used. [...]

Measures to tackle unfair competition and unfair working conditions are mainly taken on a national level. Cross-border challenges, however, demand cross-border cooperation. We have a common responsibility for and interest in promoting fair competition and fair working conditions – both on the Nordic and the EU level. [...]

Recommendations on Professional Qualifications

The Nordic Council recommended in 2016 the Nordic Council of Ministers to initiate cross-border talks with social partners on a sector level with the aim of harmonised sector regulations in order to create a common Nordic labour market in every sector. Pilot projects within industry sectors and social- and health sectors were suggested. They also recommended a mapping of current national rules on recognition of professional qualifications in order to increase Nordic mobility.³²

The Nordic Council also recommended the Nordic governments to review their demands on, and their processing of, applications for recognition of qualifications in relation to other Nordic countries in order to facilitate and expedite such applications.³³

The Öresund Agreement

According to the Regulation on the coordination of social security systems³⁴ it is possible for the member states to make exceptions. Sweden and Denmark have reached such an agreement in the so called Öresundsöverenskommelsen. The agreement covers the situation where a person has his or her employer in one of the countries and works there at least 50 percent of the working

³¹ Nordic Council of Ministers (2018a).

³² Rek. 19/2016.

³³ Rek. 20/2016 Nordiska rådet.

³⁴ Regulation 883/2004, article 18.

time, while the rest of the time he or she works in the member state of residence. In these situations, the employer and the employee can together apply for dispensation from the regulation. See page 36 for more information on the Regulation on the coordination of social security systems.

International Labour Standards

International labour standards are legal instruments drawn up by the constituents of the International Labour Organisation (governments, employers and workers) that set out basic principles and rights at work.

The International Labour Organization (ILO) has adopted 189 International Conventions on labour law and working conditions since its establishment in 1919. Denmark, Norway and Sweden have been members of the ILO since its foundation in 1919. Finland joined in 1920, and Iceland in 1945. The Nordic countries have ratified and implemented many ILO Conventions to date.

Some examples are standards on vocational rehabilitation, labour statistics, asbestos, safety and health in construction, night work, part-time work, home-work and private employment agencies.



Photo: Johannes Jansson/norden.org

Related EU Legislation

EU legislation has a great impact on the labour markets in the Nordic countries and Nordic cross-border mobility. This is true also for Norway and Iceland who, while they are not members of the EU, are members of the EEA and their biggest trading partners are other European countries, so they tend to implement similar regulations.

Citizens of European Union member states are also European Union citizens and have the rights of free movement, settlement and employment across the EU. EEA citizens share these rights as well across the European Economic Area.

Over time the influence on our labour markets of EU legislation has increased by new directives and regulations as well as judgments from the European Court of Justice (EUCJ). The EU has carried out legislation in many areas of labour law, such as; equal treatment, employer's obligation to inform and consult the employees, collective redundancies, employee rights in the event of transfers of undertakings, protection of employees in the event of employer insolvency, and working time.

Most of the EU norms in the area of labour law derives from directives. Directives is a source of law that prescribe norms which the member states must incorporate in national law within a certain time limit. In a hierarchical order EU law is superior to national law, which means that national law normally shall be set aside, giving EU law superiority when there is a conflict between EU law and national law. Concerning directives, national courts must consider the directive and the EUCJ case law when interpreting national law.

Regulation of rules and working conditions in the labour market through collective agreements is uncommon outside the Nordics and the Nordic model is put under great pressure by the generally detailed legislation of the EU. The balance has been shifting from labour market agreements by the social partners to laws decided by governments and the EU. Some decisions by the European Court of Justice, e.g. *Laval un Partneri*³⁵, suggest that the fundamental right of workers to take collective action is subordinate to business freedom to establish and provide services.

Another difficulty is that the Nordic countries implement some EU directives differently. The differences in implementation can give rise to new border obstacles in the common Nordic labour market, read more about border obstacles on page 133.³⁶

³⁵ Case C-341/05.

³⁶ Kristiansen (2015).

Free Movement

Every citizen of an EU member state or an EEA³⁷ state is an EU/EEA citizen. The EU/EEA citizenship contains a right to move freely between member states as well as reside there.³⁸

The foundation of free movement is the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU)³⁹ and has been developed by EU secondary legislation and the case law of the Court of Justice. The free movement of persons was at the beginning aimed to cover the labour force, but has gradually expanded to partially include students, seniors, self-employed persons and EU/EEA citizens in general.⁴⁰

The right to move freely between EU/EEA is further developed in the citizens' rights directive.⁴¹ According to the directive, EU/EEA citizens have the right to enter and reside in another member state for three months. During this time the host state is forbidden to set up any conditions for entry other than the requirement to hold a valid identity card or passport. After the three-month period, the right of residence continues if any of the following conditions are met:

- » The person is employed or self-employed
- » The person has enough means to provide for him or herself and the family members and has a comprehensive health insurance cover in the host state. This in order not to burden the social security system.
- » The person is a student enrolled in a public or private educational establishment, accredited or financed by the host state, conducting studies or vocational training there. Students must also have a comprehensive health insurance and must be able to prove that he or she has enough means not to burden the social security system.

If a person seeks social assistance and does not meet the requirements, the right of residence may be recalled, however expulsion is not allowed to happen automatically, an assessment of the circumstances must be conducted in each individual case.⁴²

EU/EEA citizens, and their family members, are entitled to permanent residence in a member state after 5 years of continuous legal residence (other requirements also need to be fulfilled).

An EU/EEA citizen who becomes unemployed gets to retain the status of an employee or self-employed under one of the following conditions:

- » He or she is temporarily unable to work due to illness or an accident.
- » The unemployment is involuntary, after being employed for at least 1 year, and he or she has registered as job seeking within the employment agency.

³⁷ The European Economic Area was formed in 1994 in order to extend the free movement of EU to include the EFTA states Norway, Iceland and Lichtenstein.

³⁸ Article 20.2 TFEU.

³⁹ Articles 45 to 48.

⁴⁰ Nyström (2017).

⁴¹ Directive 2004/38/EC.

⁴² Derlén, Ingmanson & Lindholm (2015).

- » He or she has been subject to involuntary unemployment after finishing a time limited contract of less than a year or after having become involuntary unemployed during the first 12 months and has also registered as job-seeking at the employment agency.

Family members

Family members to EU/EEA citizens who meet the requirements also have a right of residency in the host state. Family members are defined as:

- » Husband or wife.
- » Registered partner.
- » Children under 21 years or children dependant on their parents for provision.
- » Depending direct relatives in the descending line of the union citizen or the partner.

Domestic partners do not count as family members according to the directive. However, the member states shall simplify residence also for domestic partners.

An EU/EEA citizens death or departure from the host state, shall not affect the right of residency for family members of another EU member state. Family members who are citizens of a country outside of the EU, must however have been residing in the host state for a year to have a right of residency.

Family members of an EU/EEA citizen have a right of residency⁴³ as long as they do not become an unreasonable burden to the social assistance system. Family members that have a right of residence, shall regardless of nationality, be able to take up an employment or be self-employed in that state.

Free movement of workers

The rules of free movement of workers applies when a citizen of a member state reaches an agreement to work for an employer situated in another member state.

The free movement of workers includes the right to move freely between member states for the purpose of working there, to stay in a member state for the purpose of being employed there and remain in a member state after being employed there.

The free movement of workers applies on all forms of employment.⁴⁴ However, certain rules apply to regulated professions, see page 32.

The free movement of workers is further developed in the regulation on the freedom of movement for workers within the Union⁴⁵. This regulation provides far-reaching rights for employees to receive equal treatment regarding labour rights as well as social and tax related matters.⁴⁶

⁴³ According to article 6.

⁴⁴ Källström & Malmberg (2016).

⁴⁵ Regulation 492/2011.

⁴⁶ Derlén, Ingmansson & Lindholm (2015).

Worth noting is that EU/EEA citizens who seek work in another state shall receive the same assistance from the employment agency as citizens of that state.

Additionally, the regulation lays down provisions that forbid the member states to uphold legislation which restricts other EU/EEA citizens from working there. National legislation must treat all EU/EEA citizens equally when it comes to working opportunities and working conditions, unless preferential treatment is objectively justified and proportionate.

As an EU/EEA citizen you are entitled to equal treatment regarding working and employment conditions. This means that you shall receive the same treatment as nationals of the state when it comes to e.g. dismissals, preferential rights to re-employment or determination of salary. Furthermore, as a worker, you are entitled to receive equal treatment with nationals of the state regarding social and tax-related advantages. Social advantages shall be interpreted very broadly, covering all social benefits and social assistance that national workers enjoy.⁴⁷ For example, this right might entitle you to student loans, minimum subsistence payments, fare reductions, or child benefits. Tax advantages includes tax deductions or tax relieves that national workers are entitled to. Your right to equal treatment includes both financial and non-financial benefits. Furthermore a migrating worker shall have equal access to vocational schools and re-training centres.⁴⁸ Member states are forbidden to charge migrating workers any fees that they do not charge their own citizens.⁴⁹ A migrating worker shall have the same access to trade unions and the same rights linked to the union membership. The worker is entitled to all the rights and benefits that nationals receives in matters of housing, including the ownership of an accommodation.

Notably, free movement of workers does not apply to employment in the public service⁵⁰. However, the scope of this article has been given a narrow interpretation by the European Court of Justice. The provision only aims at special employments within the public sector that require a special relationship of trust towards the government and includes exercise of public authority or protection of state interests.⁵¹

The family of workers

Children of a worker shall receive equal access to public schools, apprenticeship and vocational education if the child is residing in the host state. Further rights of family members are regulated in the citizens' rights directive.⁵²

⁴⁷ Case C-32/75 Christini & Case C-207/78 EVEN.

⁴⁸ This provision aims at education with a close connection to the labour market.

⁴⁹ Nyström (2017).

⁵⁰ See article 45.4 TFEU.

⁵¹ Case C-149/79 Commission vs Belgium, Case C-47/02 Anker.

⁵² Directive 2004/38/EC.

Job seekers

Job seekers have the right to reside in a member state for 3 months in accordance with the general rule in the free movement directive. However, if the person is actively seeking work and has a real chance of getting an employment, the right of residency is extended.⁵³ The right to equal treatment regarding social and tax related benefits does only apply to workers, not to job seekers.⁵⁴

Self-Employed Persons

Self-employed persons are also covered by rules of free movement. A self-employed person can choose to conduct business permanently or temporarily in another EU/EEA state.

If a self-employed person chooses to permanently conduct business in another member state, the rules of free movement for establishment applies. The free movement of establishment includes a right to start and conduct business permanently in another state on the same terms as citizens of that state.

The rules of free movement of services and establishment is further developed in the EU services directive⁵⁵. This directive was adopted in 2006 with the aim of facilitating a common service market paired with a high quality of services. If a provision in the directive conflicts with a provision in another source of EU law regarding access to, or exercise of, service activity, the other provision shall prevail. The directive concerning the posting of workers⁵⁶ and the directive on the recognition of professional qualifications⁵⁷ are two such examples.

Temporary posting of workers

Some categories of work are covered by special EU legislation: temporary posting of workers and regulated professions. Read about regulated professions on page 32.

If a person is temporarily posted by the employer to another country the rules of free movement of services applies, not the free movement of workers.⁵⁸ However, if the worker is an agency worker, the employee may, under special circumstances, be covered by the free movement of workers.⁵⁹

Workers that are temporarily posted in an EU/EEA state has access to work in that country, without having to apply for work- or residence permits.⁶⁰

⁵³ Case C-292/89 Antonissen.

⁵⁴ C-316/85 Lebon.

⁵⁵ Directive 2006/123/EC.

⁵⁶ Directive 96/71/EC.

⁵⁷ Directive 2005/36/EC.

⁵⁸ Case C-113/89 Rush Portuguesa.

⁵⁹ Case C-307/09 Vicoplus.

⁶⁰ Källström & Malmberg (2016).

The posting of workers is governed by the directive concerning the posting of workers in the framework of the provision of services⁶¹. The directive applies on businesses that are established in a member state and provides services to other EU/EEA states. The directive applies on three different situations:

- » when an employer is posting an employee on their own account, under their lead and directions with the purpose of providing services to a user recipient in another EU/EEA state.
- » When a business is posting an employee to another EU/EEA state, either to a workplace or a business that belongs to the same company.
- » When a staffing agency hire out workers to a business within the EU/EEA.

Required conditions for all three situations is that (1) there is an employment relationship between the posting company and the employer during the posting time, (2) there is an agreement between the posting business and the service receiver, (3) that the service receiver is the intended recipient of the services.

In situations where the directive applies, the employer must apply the minimum requirements set out in the law of the host country when it comes to fundamental working and employment conditions. The fundamental working- and employment conditions consist of the following:

- » Working time and rest periods.
- » Minimum of paid annual holidays.
- » Minimum salary.
- » Conditions for hiring-out of workers, especially through temporary employment undertakings.
- » Health, safety and hygiene at the workplace.
- » Protective measures regarding terms and conditions for employment of pregnant women, women that has just given birth, children and young people.
- » Equal treatment of men and women and other provisions of non-discrimination.

The directive opens up a possibility for the member states to allow collective agreements prescribing better terms than what is prescribed by law if the following requirements are met: (1) The collective agreement has been declared universally applicable⁶², (2) the collective agreement applies on all similar businesses within an industry, or has been concluded by the most representative workers- and employer organisations on the national level and is applied throughout the whole country, (3) the member state guarantees that the posted employees are equally treated.⁶³

⁶¹ Directive 96/71/EC.

⁶² Universally applicable means in this context that a collective agreement that must be observed by every business in the geographical area and in the profession or industry concerned.

⁶³ See articles 3.7, 3.8 and 3.10.

In the much controversial court case *Laval un Partneri*, the European Court of Justice declared that a member state cannot force the posting employer to apply rules in a collective agreement outside of the fundamental conditions listed above. The EUCJ also concluded that only the minimum standards according to a collective agreement can be forced upon the posting employer regarding these conditions. Furthermore, the EUCJ declared that if the employer can prove that the employer is bound by a collective agreement in the home country that meets the minimum requirements of the directive, the employer cannot be forced to apply another collective agreement. Lastly, member states without a system for universally applicable collective agreements, must in national law implement the possibility set out in the second paragraph of article 3.8, which allows generally applicable collective agreements applied in the industry, and collective agreements concluded by the most representative labour organisations and which applies throughout country.⁶⁴

Regulated Professions

The directive on the recognition of professional qualifications⁶⁵ provides for the rules on the recognition of professional qualifications of professionals who are fully qualified in one EU country and wish to practice their profession in another EU country. It aims to make it possible for employees and self-employed persons to exercise their profession, permanently or temporarily in another member state, without being denied by national regulations. A regulated profession is one with legal demands on qualifications to practice the profession acquired through, for example; an education regulated by law, aptitude test, or specific professional experience.⁶⁶

Professionals mentioned explicitly in the directive who have automatic recognition are nurses, midwives, doctors (general practitioners and specialists), dental practitioners, pharmacists, architects and veterinary surgeons but the directive applies in general to all regulated professions unless otherwise stated (such as sailors and others covered in special legislation), but then a recognition process is necessary. A non-exhaustive list of professions covered is available in the database of regulated professions.⁶⁷

If you are a physiotherapist, pharmacist or a nurse responsible for general care (or mountain guide or realtor) you may also apply for a European Professional Card (EPC). It is a digital certificate proving your professional qualifications. Today it exists for five professions, but it might be extended to other professions in the future.

It is up to the member state to choose to allow an EU citizen to practice a regulated profession with qualifications acquired in country outside of the EU/EEA. However, if the EU citizen has been practicing a regulated profession for a minimum of 3 years in any member state, whose authorities have accepted the qualifications, the qualifications must also be accepted by all other member states.

The directive separates between temporarily offering services and permanent establishment.

⁶⁴ Case C-341/05 *Laval un Partneri*.

⁶⁵ Directive 2005/36/EC as amended by 2013/55/EU.

⁶⁶ Examples of regulated professions are nurse, veterinarian, pharmacist, dietitian and dentist.

⁶⁷ The EU single market regulated professions database.

Temporary services

A member state that applies certain requirements on professional qualifications for a certain profession cannot deny a person the right to work under that title temporarily, even if the profession is not regulated in the member state where the person comes from. However, in these cases the person must be able to show that he or she has a least 1 year of working experience acquired in the last 10 years, or has undergone a regulated education.⁶⁸ The host state can demand that the person shall inform the authorities and provide them with a written declaration including details about any insurance cover or other means of personal or collective protection regarding professional liability. For regulated professions having implications for public health or safety, the host state may control the service providers professional qualifications. If there is a substantial difference between the persons qualifications and the qualifications that is required in the host state, the authorities must give the service provider a chance to verify that she or he has the qualifications or skills that is needed to perform the profession.

Permanent establishment

If a person permanently wants to practice a regulated profession in another member state there are three orders of recognition, a general order, an order of recognition of educational certificates, and one order for professional experience.

The general order applies to regulated professions that are not covered by automatic recognition. The member state shall in principle grant recognition to the professions covered by this order. If the host state regulates the profession, but the home state does not, the person must have acquired 1 year of working experience on a full-time basis, or for an equivalent duration on part-time basis if acquired during the last 10 years. However, this requirement shall not apply if the person has undergone a regulated education.⁶⁹ The person must be able to provide authorities in the host state with a competency certificate of formal qualifications issued by an authorized authority in another member state.⁷⁰

The host state can demand compensational measures, e.g. more education, if there is a substantial difference between the education that the person has acquired and what the member state demands. Such compensational measures must be proportionate.⁷¹

Recognition of professional experience

If certain business areas require certain competence and knowledge, automatic recognition shall occur if the person fulfils the requirements set in the associated article to the profession. Some of these business areas are construction, rubber, plastic and chemical industries.

⁶⁸ Directive 2013/55/EC, article 5.1.b.

⁶⁹ Art. 13.2 Directive 2013/55/EC.

⁷⁰ See art. 13.2 and art. 13.1-13.1. a. Directive 2013/55/EC.

⁷¹ Preamble 13 directive 2013/55/EC.

Recognition based on coordination of minimum requirements of education

This order contains an automatic recognition of evidence of formal qualifications to work as a doctor with basic training and specialist doctor, nurse responsible of general care, dentist and specialist dentist, veterinary, midwife, pharmacist and architect. For these occupations the directive stipulates minimum requirements for each education, regarding for example the length of the education.⁹⁸ Educational certificates that corresponds to the requirements set in the directive entitles the person automatic access to the regulated profession in all member states on the same terms as nationals of the host state.

Partial access to a regulated profession

It might be the case that a regulated profession in the host state has a larger scope of activities than what is the case in the home state. If the differences are so large that additional education or training is necessary, the host state shall generally grant partial access. To be granted partial access the following requirements must be met: (1) the person must be fully qualified for the activities for which partial access is sought, (2) the differences are so large between the full profession in the home state and the host state that compensational measures would require the person to complete the full programme of education in the host state to have access to the full regulated profession, (3) the activity sought can be separated from other activities of the profession. The competent authority may deny access if it is objectively justified by public interest if that objective is legitimate and proportionate. Partial access may not be obtained for professions covered by automatic recognition.

Regulated professions in the Nordics

The rules apply to both the EU and the EEA, which means that the directive applies in all Nordic countries. Each Nordic state has a national advisory centre responsible for providing information about regulated professions and the competent authority will process your application for registration or authorisation in accordance with the directive.

Nordic legislation on recognition of professional qualifications have existed long before the directive. Read more about the Agreement on a Common Nordic Labour Market for some Health Care Professionals and Veterinarians and the agreement on a Nordic Labour Market for Persons that have Completed Qualifying Higher Education encompassing at least three years of study on pages 21–22.

A profession may have legal qualification requirements in a country but not in others. In the Nordics there exists large differences on which, and how many, professions are regulated as well as the qualifications required for a certain profession:

Sweden

In Sweden there are approximately 121 regulated professions.⁷² The Swedish Council for Higher Education (UHR) is the Swedish national advisory centre that is responsible for providing information concerning regulated professions. However, different authorities are responsible for different occupational areas. See the chapter on Sweden for links to more information on recognition of qualifications.

Denmark

In Denmark there are approximately 177 regulated professions.⁷² If you wish to practice a regulated profession you need an authorisation by the competent authority. The Ministry of Higher Education (UFM) is the national advisory centre responsible for providing information. However, different authorities are responsible for different occupational areas. See the chapter on Denmark for links to more information on recognition of qualifications.

Norway

The Norwegian Agency for Quality Assurance in Education (NOKUT) is the national advisory centre that is responsible for providing information concerning regulated professions.⁷² However, different authorities are responsible for different occupational areas. There are approximately 184 regulated professions. See the chapter on Norway for links to more information on recognition of qualifications.

Finland

The Finnish National Agency for Education (Opetushallitus) is the national advisory centre that is responsible for providing information concerning regulated professions. However, different authorities are responsible for different occupational areas. There are approximately 143 regulated professions.⁷² See the chapter on Finland for links to more information on recognition of qualifications.

Iceland

In Iceland there are approximately 171 regulated professions. The Directorate of Education (Menntamálastofnun) is the national advisory centre that is responsible for providing information concerning regulated professions.⁷² However, different authorities are responsible for different occupational areas. See the chapter on Iceland for links to more information on recognition of qualifications.

⁷² EU regulated professions database.

Social Protection & Inclusion in the EU

Previously the social security systems of different member states could be roughly divided into the Bismarck-model, which covers the working population where benefits are connected to work activity, and the Beveridge-model (the Nordic model), in which benefits are connected to residence. Today however many of the EU social security systems contain parts of both models. Work based benefits are often constituted by, e.g. sickness benefits, income related pensions or occupational injury benefits. Examples of common residence-based benefits are child allowance, guarantee pensions and housing allowance. Work-based benefits is closely tied to a work activity and contributions to the welfare system, while residence-based benefits are built primarily on solidarity.⁷³

Social security and social benefits according to EU law

The foundation of the EU's authority in the field of social security is governed by article 48 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union. It states that the EU shall take measures in the field of social security which is necessary in order to facilitate the freedom of movement for workers. In EU social security law, there are two regulations of major importance. EU Regulation on freedom of movement for workers⁷⁴, and the Regulation on the coordination of social security systems.⁷⁵ The last one is intended to coordinate the EU/EEA states' social security systems as a way of boosting the free movement and avoiding conflicts between welfare systems in border-crossing situations.⁷⁶ It regulates applicable law in cross-border situations where more than one potential social security system is involved, for example when a person lives in one country and works in another country. The main rule, called the single state rule, stipulates that the country that has been designated by the regulation as the authorised country is solely responsible for offering benefits to a migrating person. The free movement of workers regulation governs the right of equal treatment for workers when it comes to working rights and social rights. The two regulations overlap each other in many ways. If rules in these regulations in some way are overlapping, the Regulation on the coordination of social security systems regulation has priority.⁷⁷

Regulation on the Coordination of Social Security

To enable free movement in practice it is essential to have a regulation which guarantees that earned benefits will not be forfeited when moving to another state. As a result, the EU has adopted this regulation⁷⁸, which coordinates the member states different social security systems in border-crossing situations.

⁷³ Holm (2017).

⁷⁴ Regulation 492/2011.

⁷⁵ Regulation 883/2004.

⁷⁶ Holm (2017).

⁷⁷ SOU 2017:5.

⁷⁸ Regulation 883/2004.

The regulation sets out a few fundamental principles regarding social security:

- » Equal treatment principle: a person covered by the regulation shall receive the same treatment as the country's own citizens when it comes to entitlements of benefits.
- » Equal treatment of benefits, income facts and events. This equality principle complements the general equal treatment principle. The host country must take insurance history into account, which means that the competent authorities shall consider income, facts or events from other member states when assessing a person's entitlement to benefits.
- » The aggregation principle: The person shall be able to aggregate insurance periods. This means that the person shall be able to accredit periods of insurance or employment from a member state when moving to another member state. These periods shall be accounted for when assessing an entitlement to a benefit and calculating it in the host state.
- » The exportability principle: The person is entitled to keep earned benefits paid out from authorities in a member state even though the person is not residing there at the time. This principle carries with it that already earned benefit amount is prohibited of being reduced, suspended, changed, confiscated or withdrawn due the fact that the person is no longer residing in the competent state.

The regulation only covers traditional areas of social security benefits:

- » Sickness benefits
- » Parental benefits
- » Invalidity benefits
- » Old-age benefits
- » Survivors benefits
- » Benefits in respect of accidents at work and occupational diseases
- » Death grants
- » Unemployment benefits
- » Pre-retirement benefits
- » Family benefits

The regulation is only a coordination regulation, which means that it is not intended to harmonize the member states different social security systems. Therefore, benefits will differ when a person is moving from one state to another.⁷⁹

⁷⁹ Paju (2016).

When does the regulation apply when moving?

Simplified, three questions can help determine if the regulation is applicable:

1. Has the person moved between EU/EEA member states?
 - » The person must have moved between EU/EEA member states, which means that the movement involves at least two countries within the EU/EEA territory.
 - » The EU regulation is incorporated in the EEA agreement since 2012, which means that Norway and Iceland also must apply the regulation.
2. Is the benefit regarded as a social security benefit?
 - » The benefit must be regulated in national law. For example, benefits in collective agreements are not covered by the regulation.⁸⁰
 - » Social assistance grants are not covered by the regulation.
 - » The member states must notify the European commission about benefits that are covered by the regulation. The benefits that gets reported gets included in the annex. If a benefit is stated in the annex it is manifestly a social benefit covered by the regulation. However, it may be regarded as a benefit even though it has not been reported and included in the regulation. It is not up to the state to judge whether a benefit according is covered by the regulation or not. Instead, it is the fundamental characteristics of the benefit that is decisive. To be regarded as a benefit according to the regulation it must (i) belong to one of the areas stated in article 3, (iii) it must be provided for by national law, (iii) It covers income loss when a person is unable to or should not work, (iv) entitlement to the benefit shall be based on objective requirements provided for by law without any individual needs assessment.⁸¹
3. Does the person fall into the person category covered by the regulation?
 - » The circle of people covered are citizens of a member state, stateless persons and refugees residing in a member state and who are or has been covered by the legislation of one or more member states.
 - » Family members or survivors of a person covered by the regulation.
 - » It is the member state that is regarded as the competent state that determines whether the person is eligible for social assistance or not.

⁸⁰ Paju (2016).

⁸¹ Social benefits according to the regulation must be separated from social assistance grants which are based on an individual needs assessment.

Applicable legislation for cross-border workers

The determination of applicable legislation for a cross-border worker, i.e. (also called frontier worker) someone who works in one country while residing in another, only means that the person is covered by the social security system in the competent state chosen by the regulation, it does not mean that the person qualifies for benefits. To be eligible for benefits, the person must meet the national requirements.⁸² Note that the provisions regarding applicable legislation is the general coordination rules that apply. These provisions are complemented by applicable legislation for each special category of benefits. If a special category has a different applicable legislation, that applies instead of the general principle. Hereafter, the term “insured” will be used when referring to social security coverage in this chapter.

Workers or self-employed persons are insured in the work state (*lex loci laboris*). But civil servants who are serving abroad stay insured in the state where the administration who employs the person belongs. Students and seniors can be described as non-gainfully occupied and shall be insured in the state of residence.

Special rules apply to temporary posted workers and self-employed persons. Temporary posted workers and self-employed person, can despite of the main principle of *lex loci laboris*, remain insured in the posting country. To be regarded as temporary posted certain requirements must be met: You must be employed in one state where the employer normally conducts business, you are posted to another state with the purpose of working there on the behalf of the employer, the posting period does not exceed 24 months, you are not posted in order to replace another posted employee.

The requirements for self-employed persons are the following: The business activity in the host state corresponds to the business activity in the home state, and the maximum time period is 24 months.

If you pursue an activity as employed or self-employed in two or more states, the degree of work conducted in each state determines which state that will be the competent state.

If you work in the country of residence and the degree of work there amounts to a substantial part i.e. at least 25 percent, the residence state shall be the competent state. If you do not carry out work amounting to a substantial part in the state of residence, different rules apply depending on the situation.

- » If you only have one employer, the competent state shall be the state where the registered office or place of business is situated through which you are employed.

⁸² The requirements must not be discriminating in a way that obstructs the free movement.

- » If you have two or more employers all situated in the same state, that state is the competent state.
- » If you have two or more employers in two different states, whereof one employer is situated in the state of residence, the other state is the competent state.
- » If you have two or more employers, whereof at least two of them are situated in different states outside of the state of residence, the competent state is the state of residence.

For self-employed persons that do not conduct business amounting to a substantial part in the state of residence, different rules apply depending on the situation. If the self-employed person works in two or more states and does not conduct business to a substantial part in the state of residence, the competent state is where the business has its centre of interest.⁸³

- » If you are self-employed in one state, but also habitually works as an employee, the competent state is the state in which you are employed.

If you are employed as a civil servant in one state and pursue an activity as an employee or self-employed in one or more other states, the competent state is the state where the administration is situated through which the you have your civil servant employment.

The rules of applicable law uphold a single state rule. A non-competent state has historically, according to this rule, been forbidden to hand out benefits due to the complications that can arise when applying two different social security systems at the same time. However, these exclusive rules did not guarantee benefits from the competent state since some benefits were dependent upon certain requirements that needed to be met, such as age or income level. The single state rule has led to people being left without benefits, even though the person would have been qualified for the same benefit in the state of residence.⁸⁴ In later times the EUCJ has expressed that there is a possibility for the non-competent state to offer benefits.⁸⁵ There are however still uncertainty whether the regulation could entail a duty for the non-authorized state to offer benefits.⁸⁶

Sickness benefits

Sickness benefits are benefits intended to cover income loss due to short-term and long-term sickness. The term sickness benefits have been given a wide interpretation by the European Court of Justice.⁸⁷ The regulation separates between sickness benefits in cash and benefits in kind. Cash benefits is money paid out to cover income loss due to sickness. Benefits in kind are benefits intended to make available or reimburse costs for medical care, products or services related to medical care, e.g. hospital treatment, reimbursement for medicine costs, a wheel chair, or a rehabilitation programme.

⁸³ The meaning of the term "centre of interest" is defined in article 14.9 of Regulation 987/2009. Note that an overall assessment shall be made.

⁸⁴ Case C-302/84 Ten Holder.

⁸⁵ Joined cases C-611/10 C-612/10 Hudzinski and Wawrzyniak.

⁸⁶ Holm (2017).

⁸⁷ SOU 2017:5.

Sickness benefits in cash can be exported to other states, which means that an insured person (including family members), who resides in a state other than the competent state, is entitled to receive payments from the competent state even though they do not reside there. The intention with benefits in kind is that they shall be issued on site when a need of care emerges. This means that insured persons and their family members can choose to receive benefits either in the competent state or the state of residence if the insured person lives and works in different states.

Sweden, Denmark and Finland are exempted from the obligation to give benefit in kind to family members of a cross-border worker⁸⁸.

Maternity and paternity benefits

These benefits are coordinated in the same way as sickness benefits. The main principle is that the competent state is responsible. Practically all EU-states have maternity and paternity benefits divided into one part that can be claimed before birth to cover income loss due to ceased occupational activity prior to the birth, and the other part that compensates income loss after the birth. There are no stated definition of maternity and paternity in the regulation, but the preamble specifies that this type of benefits are provided for during the first months of a newborn child's life.⁸⁹ It can be difficult to determine whether a maternity and paternity benefit (parental benefit) shall belong to this group or family benefits. This question has been tried by the Court of Justice in a case that concerned the Swedish parental benefits. The court regarded the benefit as a family benefit, rather than a maternity benefit. The arguments provided for by the court was that the benefit was indeed only addressed to the mother for 60 days prior to the birth, but for the remainder of days, which was by far the greater part, it was aimed at both parents equally. Another factor that suggested that the benefit was a family benefit was that the benefit could be calculated on both parents' salaries, not only the mothers.⁹⁰ However, Sweden has after this once again reported the parental benefits as a maternity benefit to the European commission. The other Nordic countries has reported their parental benefits as maternity and paternity benefits as well.⁹¹

Benefits related to accidents at work and occupational diseases

These benefits could be in kind⁹² or in cash. The insured person is entitled to receive benefits in kind in the competent state as well as the state of residence. If a person, who has been subject to a work accident, resides in or visits another member state than the competent state, that person is entitled to receive special benefits in kind⁹³ from the state of residence at the expense

⁸⁸ Also known as frontier worker.

⁸⁹ Paju (2016).

⁹⁰ Case C-275/96 Kuusijärvi.

⁹¹ MISOC comparison table on maternity and paternity benefits reported by the Nordic states. However, no information was found on Iceland.

⁹² In kind refers to goods, services, and transactions not involving money or not measured in monetary terms.

⁹³ Special benefits in kind shall be understood as specialist care connected to work accidents in the state, for example medical rehabilitation. Cf. Paju (2016) and SOU 2017:5.

of the competent state. Regarding benefits in cash, such benefits can be exported. A work accident or occupational disease may be of a kind that makes it is hard to determine when it occurred. If the insured person has been exposed to the same risk in several member states, the last state in which the conditions were met is responsible.

Death grants

When the insured person or their family member dies, and they reside in a member state other than the competent state, then the competent state shall pay out death grants under its legislation. Special rules apply to the death of a pensioner and their family members.

Invalidity benefits

Entitlement to this category of benefits, and the possibility to account for previous insurance periods, depends on the insurance system in the countries where you have been insured.

Old-age and survivors' pension

These include old-age pension, basic pension, guarantee pensions etc. According to the implementation regulation⁹⁴ the claimant shall submit a claim to the last competent state (usually the work state), which then must coordinate the pension and involve the other states where the claimant has earned pension. All states where you have earned pensions shall, under their respective legislation, calculate and pay out their part in relation to the time work in the state. An obstacle that the regulation takes into consideration is the fact that different states have different qualification periods that must be met. This problem is solved through the fundamental principle of aggregation of insurance periods. This rule enables the insured person to accredit earned pensions from all states involved, even though the state may have legislation which have certain qualification requirements e.g. a minimum insurance time or residence time.⁹⁵

Unemployment benefits

Citizens who have moved between member states, or who work and live in different member states, are protected if they become unemployed.

When a migrant worker becomes unemployed the member state in which he or she worked (and lived in) is the competent state. When applying for benefits institutions must take into account also periods of insurance completed in other EU countries, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway or Switzerland, if this is necessary to his or her entitlement to the benefits.

For frontier workers the rules are a little different. Frontier workers are defined as workers who resides in a member state and commute daily to another member state to work. They return home daily, or at least once a week. For them the state of residency is the competent state. However, as a complementing measure, the insured person may register at the unemployment agency in the state of work as well, nevertheless, it is the state of residency that is responsible

⁹⁴ Regulation 987/2009.

⁹⁵ There are exceptions in art.51.

for paying unemployment benefits. But in the case of partial unemployment, the country where he or she works is responsible for potential unemployment benefits.

The competent state for workers who reside in one state and work in another but return to the member state of residence state less than once a week is the state whose legislation the insured person was last subject to.

A wholly unemployed person who satisfies the conditions of the legislation of the competent member state for entitlement to benefits, and who goes to another member state in order to seek work there, shall retain his or her entitlement to unemployment benefits in cash. It is possible to keep the unemployment benefits for 3 months while seeking work in another member state if certain requirements are met.⁹⁶

The Nordic Convention on Social Security has a 5-year rule which states that if you have worked and been insured in another Nordic country, and you return within 5 years to your Nordic home country you can join your unemployment fund again without having to meet any requirements of eligibility once again. However, the application on renewed membership must be submitted within 8 weeks from when the insurance in the former state expired.

Family benefits

What is regarded as family benefits differ substantially between the states.⁹⁷ The definition of family benefits according to the regulation is all benefits in kind or in cash intended to meet family expenses, excluding advances for maintenance payments, and special child birth and adoption allowances. The definition is to be interpreted widely, covering numerous different family situations.⁹⁸ The basic idea with family benefits, according to the regulation, is that such benefits are targeted to the needs of a family as a whole. If a benefit is only aimed at individual family members, the benefit is not regarded as a family benefit. Example of benefits regarded as family benefits could be e.g. child allowance, child home care allowance, or maintenance benefits. Family benefits are exportable.

If the insured person is employed or self-employed, the state of work is responsible for providing the benefits. In the event that both parents are entitled to benefits in different states, special anti-overlapping priority rules apply. If the benefit is based on different grounds (e.g. work and residence) the following rule applies:

- » If a parent works in one country and the other parent lives with their children in another country, the state of work is responsible for providing the benefit.
- » If the parents instead are entitled to benefits on the same ground in different states, the following priority rules applies:
- » If both parents are employed or self-employed in different countries, the country

⁹⁶ The unemployed person shall be registered at the unemployment office as well as being available for work in the competent state for at least 4 weeks after the unemployment, and the registration at the unemployment office must be done within 7 days after going to the new state.

⁹⁷ Paju (2016).

⁹⁸ Case C-245/94 Hoever & Zachow.

where the children live is responsible for providing the benefit. If none of the parents work in the children's state of residence, the state with the most generous benefit is responsible.

- » If the right is based on a pension in both countries, the country where the children live is responsible for the benefit. Otherwise it will be the country where you have been insured or have resided the longest.
- » If the right to benefits is based on residence in both countries, the country where the children live is responsible.

If both parents are entitled to benefits in different countries, and the non-competent state has a more generous benefit, the parents are entitled to an additional amount equal to the difference between the two amounts. However, this does not apply to parental benefits in the Nordic countries.

The Öresund Agreement

In accordance with article 16 of the Regulation on the Coordination of Social Security Systems it is possible for the member states to make exceptions from articles 11-15. Sweden and Denmark have reached such an agreement in the so called Öresundsöverenskommelsen. The agreement covers the situation where a person has his or her employer in one of the countries and works there at least 50 percent of the working time, while the rest of the time he or she works in the member state of residence. In these situations, the employer and the employee can together apply for dispensation from the Regulation on the coordination of social security systems.

This gives worker a better opportunity to stay insured in the employment state while working at a distance from the country of residence. The agreement also applies to the situation where a person has a paid commission of trust. The agreement does not apply if the person has employers in both Sweden and Denmark.

Equal treatment regarding social benefits

As previously mentioned, social benefits can as a rule only be of two kinds, residence-based or work-based. Residence-based benefits are characterized by the fact that a person resides in that country in order to be eligible for the benefit, and work-based benefits need some form of work activity to be eligible for the benefit. Residency-based benefits have been an issue in relation to the free movement within the EU, since it from an EU perspective, is problematic to exclude frontier workers from taking part of benefits that requires residence. Such exclusion would likely lead to EU/EEA citizens being discouraged of using the free movement. This problem is partially solved through the Regulation on the coordination of social security systems. However, the coordination regulation only covers social security benefits. Other social benefits are covered by the Regulation on freedom of movement for workers within the Union.⁹⁹

⁹⁹ Regulation 492/2011 and to a limited extent, directive 2004/38/EC. See Derlén, Ingmansson & Lindholm (2015).

Definitions of social benefits

Social benefits in the regulation on freedom of movement for workers cover a wider range of benefits than social security benefits as defined in regulation the coordination regulation. However, the coordination regulation applies to more situations and people since the freedom of movement regulation only cover workers.

According to the European Court of Justice, social benefits shall, in the context of the regulation, be interpreted as all benefits, whether or not linked to a contract of employment, paid out to national workers in their capacity of employees or due to the fact that they reside in that state under the condition that an extension of such benefits to workers of other states will help facilitate the free movement within the union.¹⁰⁰

Access to social benefits and equal treatment

All migrating workers shall be entitled to the same social and tax advantages as nationals of the state.¹⁰¹ Also the persons family members are covered by the equal treatment principle. According to article 10 of the regulation, the children of a national who works in another state is entitled to equal treatment concerning the right to general education, apprenticeship and vocational training courses in the state. This article includes a right for the child to have access to student grants in the host state.

In contrast to the Regulation on the coordination of social security systems, there are no explicit provision concerning exportability of benefits. However, you might be entitled to export benefits to another state when the worker is a frontier worker. For example, children of workers covered by the regulation has by the EUCJ case law been entitled to student grants from the work state even though the children resided in another state. However, the member states are allowed to apply a requirement (e.g. residency) for a certain benefit even though it might have a negative effect on workers from other states if such a requirement is objectively justified and proportionate. Also note that the principle of aggregation does not apply to the Regulation on freedom of movement for workers within the EU/EEA.¹⁰²

¹⁰⁰ Case C-207/78 Even.

¹⁰¹ Case C-32/75 Cristini.

¹⁰² SOU 2017:5.



Measurements of cod in Kapisillit, Greenland.

Photo: Kitta Witting/norden.org

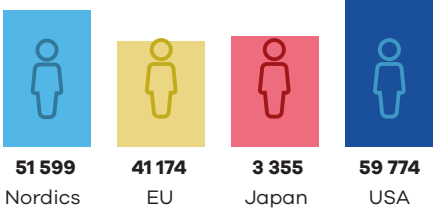
The Nordic Labour Market

This chapter contains an overview of the functioning of the labour markets, legal structures, and social security systems in the Nordic countries. As well as links to further information on moving and working in the Nordics when coming from another Nordic country or a third country.

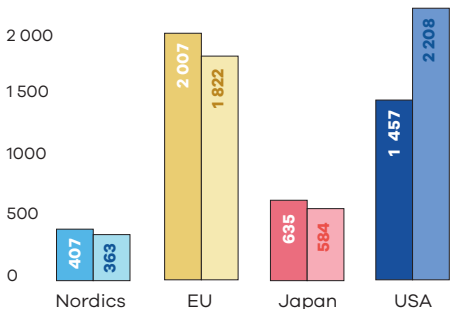
Economic growth Percent (2017)



BNP Per Person PPP, USD

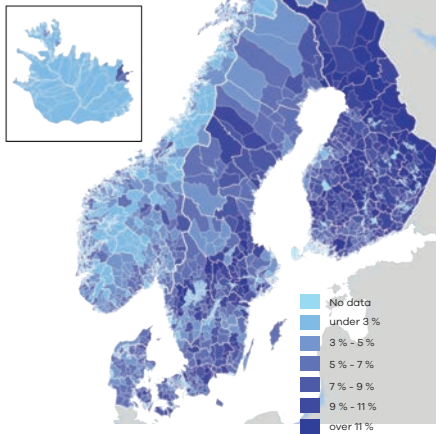


Export / import Billions USD (2017)



Source: Nordic Statistics 2018

Unemployment



Source: NordMap

Nordic facts

- » We have one of the most extensive and oldest regional political partnerships in the world.
- » We are the 11th largest economy in the world.
- » We have an open labor market that for over 60 years has enabled Nordic citizens to work throughout the Nordic region.
- » We are among the most educated populations in the world and invest heavily in collaborating on research both internally in the Nordic countries and with international partners
- » We are at the top of many international measurements of openness, trust, freedom of expression, environment and happiness.

More resources for moving and working in the Nordics

Moving & working in the Nordics	Info Norden	Info Norden is the information service of the Nordic Council of Ministers.
	Öresund Direkt	Between Denmark and Sweden.
	Grensetjänsten	Between Norway and Sweden.
	Nordkallotens gränstjänst	Between Norway, Finland, Denmark and Sweden.
Tax information	Nordisk eTax	Taxes, but also residence, tax card and social security.
Social protection information	MISSOC	Mutual Information System on Social Protection.
Moving & working in Europe	EU rules on moving & working	EU rules and information.
	EU on social rights	Rights country by country.
	Your Europe Advice	Your Europe Advice is an EU advice service for the public.
	SOLVIT	SOLVIT reminds the authorities in question what your EU rights are and works with them to solve your problem.
	EU pet passport	For dogs, cats and ferrets.
Professional qualifications	Europapass	Make your skills and qualifications clearly and easily understood in Europe.
	European Professional Card	
	Regulated Professions database	
Health insurance	European Health Insurance Card	
Job listings & support	EURES	The European Job Mobility Portal.
	Your first Eures job	Helps 18-35-year olds in EU and EFTA/EEA to find a job or traineeship.
	Reactivate	Helps over 35 years old EU citizens to find a job, traineeship or apprenticeship.

Job listings	Nature	International science jobs.
	Science Careers	International science jobs.
	Impactpool	International science jobs and others.
	Nordjobb	Nordic summer job exchange programme.
Association for Nordic Cooperation	Foreningerne Nordens förbund	
European federations	Eurocadres	
	The European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC)	
	UNI Europa	
Council of Nordic Trade Unions	Nordens Fackliga Samorganisation	

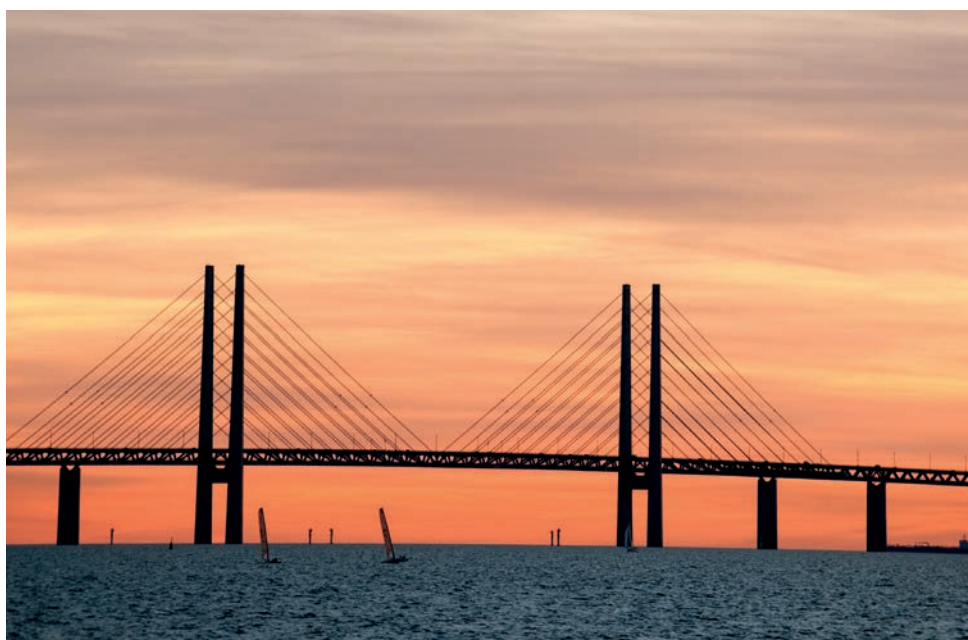


Photo: Johannes Jansson/norden.org



Finland

Lakes and forests characterize the Finnish landscape. Finland is also known for their mobile phones, design and Moomins.

Small facts:

Capital: Helsinki
Population: 5 520 535 (2018)
BNP per capita: €40 920 (2017)
Area: 338 430 km²
Highest point: Halti/Háldičohkku – 1 324 metres
Coastline: 6 308 km
Forest: 227 690 km²
Largest lake: Saimaa – 1 377 km²
National Day: December 6th (Independence Day, December 6, 1917)
Government: Republic
Parliament: Finnish: Eduskunta, Swedish: Riksdag (200 seats)
Membership in the EU: January 1, 1995
Membership in Nato: No
Currency: Euro
Official languages: Finnish, Swedish, Sámi
Official site: www.finland.fi





Collective agreements

Finland's labour market system is based on working life legislation and cooperation between employers' and employees' organisations both centrally and at the local level. The labour market system is characterized by a high degree of organization among both employers and employees and the collective agreeing of terms and conditions of employment. Employers' and employees' organisations enter into public and private collective agreements that specify terms and conditions of employment in more detail than the law. Most collective agreements include deviations from Finnish employment legislation and include several options to deviate from the rules on collective agreement through agreements that are specific to the company or the workplace. Because of the labour peace obligation, industrial action against the terms and conditions laid down in collective agreements is forbidden during the collective agreement period.

A collective agreement may be confirmed as generally binding by the Board for the Ratification of Validity of Collective Agreements and they also are binding in their respective sectors on unaffiliated employers, i.e. employers that do not belong to an employers' organisation. Any clause in an employment contract that violates the corresponding provision in a generally binding collective agreement is null and void. In Finland there are close to 160 generally binding collective agreements.

'Local agreements' are getting more popular and it means that the employer and employees may enter into an agreement concerning certain terms and conditions of employment. Collective agreements may impose restrictions on local agreements; proper procedure must be ensured before concluding a local agreement.

In addition to collective agreements, the central labour market organisations may agree on other matters concerning working life. How such agreements should be complied with alongside collective agreements is specified in each collective agreement.

Employment protection

The employer needs objectively justified reasons to be able to terminate employment. The employer can terminate employment on the grounds of individual reasons¹⁰³ or redundancy.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰³ Individual reasons relate to the conduct, performance or suitability of an individual employee.

¹⁰⁴ Redundancy, also called collective grounds, relate to financial reasons, production-related reasons, or due to restructuring.

Regardless of whether the dismissal is due to redundancy or individual reasons, the employer must normally assess if it is possible to relocate the employee to another vacant position. If there is a vacant position, which the person is qualified for, the employer is forbidden to terminate employment. The employee shall be relocated to that position. If an employee has been employed for more than 5 years and the employer regularly employs more than 30 people, the employer is normally obligated to offer an employee, who is subject to a dismissal due to redundancy, the opportunity to participate in employer-funded coaching or training with the purpose of helping that person find new employment.

An employee who has been dismissed due to redundancy has a preferential right to be re-employed if the following requirements are met: (1) the dismissal was not based on individual reasons; (2) less than 9 months have passed since the termination; (3) the employer needs additional labour for the same or similar tasks as those performed by the employee and (4) the employee is seeking work through the Employment- and Economic Development Office.

Practical tips

- » **Membership in a union** or professional association can help you with information and contacts.
- » **Unions can help** you customise your application letter and cv to national and sector customs if you become a member or guest member.
- » **Detailed information about** wages for different professions and counselling on wage negotiations, benefits and other rights are provided to members and guest members.
- » **As a member** you can and should send the contract to the union for a review before you sign.
- » **Make sure you** get a written employment contract to avoid conflicts.
- » **You should always** be able to go through the contract with the union.
- » **You should never** sign a contract that you do not understand.
- » **As a member you** can get legal assistance if there is a conflict concerning your employment or other matters related to employment relationships.
- » **When you need** assistance contact Loimu or Agronomiliitto.
- » **See the checklist** for working abroad on page 128.

Temporary employment

The main principle is that fixed-term employment runs until the end of the contract period, unless it has been agreed that employment may be terminated during the contract period, with a notice period. Even though it might not be agreed upon in the individual employment contract, the possibility of a pre-determination might be agreed upon in a collective agreement that applies to one's employment.

Temporary employment may only be used if there is a justified reason for it; for example, if the work is of a temporary nature (e.g. seasonal), or the position is a temporary replacement. However, if a person has been unemployed and seeking jobs for the last 12 consecutive months, an employer may offer fixed-term employment for up to 12 months without having a justified reason for it. If there is a justified reason for the fixed term, there is no upper limits for how long the employer may offer fixed-term employments.

In Finland it is possible to offer a probationary period when entering fixed-term employment. The maximum limit is 6 months if the employment exceeds 12 months. If the employment is for less than 1 year, the probationary period may not exceed 50 percent of the duration.

Indefinite employment

A contract until further notice is the main rule, which means that employment shall be regarded as indefinite employment if nothing else has been agreed.

Notice time depends on the length of employment. If it has been less than 5 years, notice time is 14 days. After 5 years, notice time is 1 month. If the employer wants to terminate the employment, other notice periods apply, varying between 14 days to 6 months depending on the length of employment.

Indefinite employment could be initiated with probationary employment. Probationary employment is allowed for up to 6 months. The employee is, however, entitled to get an extension of the probationary period if the employee has been absent due to work incapacity or parental leave. During the probationary period, employment can be terminated by either party, without a notice time. During the probationary period, the employee does not have any employment protection. This means that the employer does not need an objectively justified reason for terminating employment. However, the dismissal may not be discriminatory or otherwise inappropriate. If the probationary employment is not terminated within the 6-month period, it automatically becomes indefinite employment.

Note that there may be another notice period stated in a collective agreement or the working contract.

Employment contract

An employment contract must include at least the following information:

1. Names and addresses of the employer and the employee (identities of the parties).
2. The location of the work place.
3. A short description of the main work duties.

4. The commencement date of employment.
5. The expected duration of and the basis for the fixed term employment.
6. If there is a probationary period, the duration of that period.
7. A determination of the yearly amount of vacation days.
8. Notice periods for the employee and employer.
9. The agreed salary, any supplements and other remunerations.
10. Agreed regular working hours.
11. Information concerning any collective agreement that regulate employment.

Salary

In Finland, the law does not define a minimum wage. The criteria for determining wages, such as minimum wages and their components, the method of calculating the salary to be paid, and the criteria for placing an employee in different grades are usually determined by the collective agreement.

In many sectors in Finland, there is a general binding collective agreement. As a rule, there are no wage regulations in collective agreements for senior salaried employees in the private sector, so the salary is based on the salary request made by the jobseeker and the salary negotiations with the employer. Managers' pay authorisations in organisations vary and one should know who decides on salary increases. In addition to salary, you also agree on other terms of employment in the employment contract.

A posted worker must be paid at least the wage specified in the general contract. The terms and conditions of employment for temporary workers posted abroad to Finland are determined by the same conditions as for domestic temporary workers.

The wage often includes several parts: one part related to skills and educational background requirements of the job, a second part related to personal performance in the job and a third part related to the company's result as a bonus to employees.

The medium salary among specialists in Finland was 3 994 € per month in 2017 according to Tilastokeskus. Average salary in 2018 within Agronomiliitto members is 4 847 € per month and for Loimu members 4 090 € per month.

Union services

Both unions for professional scientists, Agronomiliitto and Loimu, offer salary guidance and a tool for calculating a possible salary request or comparing a current salary to others working in similar conditions. As well as CV and application letter commenting services and can help members preparing for a job interview.

Agronomiliitto and Loimu also provide legal advice on work contracts, employment, pay and personal career development. The associations offer information on the labour market as well as tools for making improvements. Job centre services are provided on the association's website with advice available on career issues and job seeking (in Finnish). By participating in the

MentorNetwork, you will be able to expand your personal network and learn more about work life or pass on your own knowledge to a new generation of experts.

How to behave in the interview

Preparing for an interview is important, especially information search about the job and about the employer. You should arrive well ahead of time to the interview - don't be late. Try to act as naturally as possible and show your personality. You should also be prepared for any applied tests or questions that test your skills. Group interviews are also possible. In the interview, both parties - the employer and the applicant - will be evaluating the possible match. The recruitment processes vary depending on whether it is done by a small company or a large, professional recruiter or a random recruitment manager. During the process, it is important not to be provocative in any way.

How to negotiate salary

The opportunity for salary negotiations opens when you apply for a new job, change your job, or feel left behind in the payroll. An employer rarely presents a salary negotiation, but you should discuss it regularly. Wages are often discussed within a development discussion or in a separate salary discussion. For example, a suitable time for a wage discussion may be before the start of the next budget round. Prepare carefully with the list of all the results and achievements you have accomplished since the last discussion. Also make notes from the discussion on the same list and return to those arguments in a suitable situation. Search for information about salaries in your job and branch and be prepared for arguments stated by the employer.

Work culture

In Finnish work culture, it is important to adhere to the things that have been agreed upon. When something has been decided together, the employees and employer assume that everyone will do what has been decided.

Observing timetables is also important in Finland. You must arrive at work promptly at the agreed-upon time. When the agreement is 8:00, this means exactly 8:00, not 8:10. Being late is impolite because other people must wait for the one who is late. If you know that you will be late for work, tell your supervisor about it.

Many workplaces have adopted flexible working hours which means that you can come to work, for example, between 7:00 – 9:00 and leave between 15:00 – 17:00. If a workplace uses flexible working hours, employees themselves have to make sure that they work for the length of time that has been agreed upon.

Finns usually speak bluntly, and it is not considered impolite in Finland. Saying what you mean is also normal in working life. For example, if you do not have enough time to complete a task, it is best to say so to your supervisor. At meetings, the usual procedure is to get straight to the point after greeting everybody.

In Finnish working culture, the form of address is very informal. At most workplaces, all employees address each other using first names regardless of their position.

Working time

Working time is defined as the time spent on the actual job and the time the employee must be available to the employer at the workplace. The commute or daily breaks are usually not counted as working time. According to the general rule in the Working Time Act, regular working hours are up to 8 hours per day and 40 hours per week. However, in many collective agreements the regular working hours are 37.5 hours a week. In certain areas, such as security and healthcare, working time must be able to be arranged so that there can be more than 8 hours of work at a time. In this case, the working time period can be applied, with a maximum working time of 120 hours for a 3-week period or 80 hours for 2-weeks.

The regular working hours may also be arranged so that the average are 40 hours a week during a reference period of no more than 52 weeks. The employee and employer may agree to extend the maximum working day to 9 hours if the average of 40 hours per week is not exceeded during a 4-week reference period.

Working hours may also be arranged as period-based work. This is allowed in certain sectors.

However, working time is not applicable to certain categories (except for reduced working time under § 15 of the Act, e.g. for care leave and early retirement), such as fishing, reindeer and forest management and for leading positions.

Other limits of the regular working time may be regulated in a collective agreement. Collective agreements usually provide shorter time limits than what is provided for by law. An ordinary agreement is that the regular working hours shall amount to 37.5 hours a week.

Overtime

Overtime work is defined as work hours which exceeds the limit of the agreed regular weekly working hours. Overtime work always requires the consent of the employee. This consent must be specifically obtained for each occasion. However, an employee may give his or her consent for a specific short period of time if this is necessary for the task.

Additional work is work carried out on the initiative of the employer in addition to the working time agreed - this is not regarded as overtime work. Additional work may only be commissioned with the consent of the employee, unless additional work is agreed in the employment contract. In this case, however, the employee is entitled to refuse additional work on the holidays listed on the roster for a justified personal reason. The additional work must be paid at least equal to the salary paid during the agreed working hours.

The maximum amount of overtime that may be performed is 138 hours during a 4-month reference period. Furthermore, overtime is restricted to a maximum of 250 hours per calendar year. However, this limit may be exceeded with an additional 80 hours if agreed locally. Other limits or reference periods may be agreed by the employer and a shop steward. If a shop steward has not been elected, the workplace personnel may agree on additional overtime work. Still, the employee's consent must be obtained. The employee is entitled to a consecutive weekly rest period of 35 hours and a daily rest period of 11 hours. The employer and the shop steward, an elected representative or another personnel representative may agree on a temporary reduction of the rest periods with the employee's consent.

The overtime is paid in the form of increased salary according to what is defined in the working hours or collective agreement. The additional work must be paid at least equal to the salary paid during the agreed working hours. The employee must also give separate consent to work each time.

Overtime pay shall be higher than the regular pay. During the first 2 hours of overtime, the employee shall be given at least 50 percent more pay. Overtime exceeding 2 hours, as well as work on Sundays shall be compensated with 100 percent additional pay. Working hours exceeding the weekly regular working hours are subject to a 50 percent increase in salary. The employer and the employee may also agree that overtime shall be taken out as time with pay instead as salary.

An employer or an association of employers that operates throughout the country, and a similar employee association, may deviate from working time by agreeing on regular working hours in a collective agreement. Even so, however, regular working hours may be up to 40 hours per week on average for a maximum of 52 weeks.

Part-time work

The employment may be part-time based on a contract or unilateral decision of the employer. The employee is also entitled to part-time work under certain circumstances. One of the most common situations is partial care leave. In addition, the employer must strive to arrange for a part-time pension if the employee so wishes.

An employer can only change part-time employment based on financial and productive layoffs, i.e. when the job available is reduced and the employee can no longer be offered full-time employment. Part-time employment is then possible following the notice period.

Vacation

The Annual Holiday Act ensures an employee, who has been employed for at least one vacation year, 2.5 vacation days for every month where the employee have had at least 14 workdays or 35 working hours. If the employee does not reach these levels or has been employed for less than one vacation year, the employee accrues 2 vacation days each month.

The holiday qualifying year when the days are earned is between 1 April and 31 March and holiday season is between 2 May and 30 September. In the period between 2 May-30 September, the employee is normally entitled to a consecutive 24-day vacation period. The rest of the holidays (winter holiday) must as well be granted as an uninterrupted period. However, if the work is of a nature that requires continuity, the holiday period may be divided into parts. In these cases, the employee must at least obtain one uninterrupted vacation period of 12 days. Note that only weekdays are counted as vacation days. The Annual Holiday Act defines weekdays as Monday-Saturdays. Church holidays, Independence Day, Christmas Eve, Midsummer Eve, Easter Eve and the First of May are also counted as Sunday.

Employees have the right to receive at least their average salary during annual leave. In collective agreements there are rules about extra holiday pay. If the employer pays extra holiday pay, the amount is directly determined by the employee's salary. It is about 50 percent of the monthly salary (or 11.5 percent of yearly wages).

A collective agreement may, among other things, entitle the employee to more vacation days, prescribe another calculation of vacation pay, or provide other vacation periods.

Parental leave

Parents are entitled to family leave and various benefits from Kela in conjunction with the birth of a child.

During the pregnancy, a mother is entitled to take maternity leave 30-50 working days or about 5-8 weeks before expected due date. Maternity allowance is paid for 105 working days, i.e., for about 4 months. Fathers can take paternity leave after the birth of their child. Paternity leave can last up to 54 working days or about 9 weeks. During this period, both parents can stay at home at the same time for up to 18 working days. Paternity leave can only be used until the child turns 2 years old. After the maternity leave, either the mother or the father can go on parental leave.

The employer must be notified of the employee's intention to take maternity leave, paternity leave, parental leave or child-care leave at least 2 months prior to the start of the intended leave. For leaves no longer than 12 working days, the employer must be notified one month before the leave.

The parental leave begins after the maternity leave. The child will be about 3 months old at this time. Parents can agree between themselves how to use the parental leave entitlement. During the parental leave, Kela pays parental allowance for 158 working days (a little over half a year). Only one parent can be on parental leave at a time. Parental leave can be divided into two periods per parent. The parental leave usually ends when the child is 9 months old. After that period the parents may place the baby in child care or the parents may go on child care leave, which means that the parents look after the child at home. Child care leave can be utilized until the child turns 3 years old. To be eligible for child care leave the parent must have worked for the employer for at least 6 months during the past year. Child care leave may be taken out part-time.

Parental benefits

Maternity benefit, paternity benefit and parental benefit are calculated in the same way. The benefit is based on earnings confirmed for tax purposes. The higher the income, the higher the benefit will be. For example, if one's yearly income amounts to approximately 12 000 €, the benefit will be roughly 28 € per day. If yearly income is 60 000 €, it will be approximately 117 € per day.

During the child care leave one can get care allowance. This benefit is not income related. The care amounts to approximately 338 € per month until the child turns 3. An extra amount will be paid out for each additional child. A special care supplement is paid out if the family income is below a certain level.

The employer has no obligation to pay the employee while on a leave. However, some collective agreements obligate the employer to pay the employee during the leave.

Child benefits

There are many ways of arranging day care for the child after the period of parental allowance. Child care benefits paid by Kela are (1) child home care allowance, (2) private day care allowance, (3) flexible care allowance and (4) partial care allowance.

You can be granted child home care allowance or private day care allowance if the child is not in municipal day care. Flexible or partial care allowance can be granted if your working hours are 30 hours per week, maximum, and the other entitlement criteria for the benefit are met. Child care allowances are not paid for periods shorter than one month. The allowance period does not have to start from the beginning of the month. The minimum allowance period includes the periods of child care allowances of both parents.

Kela also pays a general child benefit for children under 17 years of age who live in Finland. You can get the child benefit from the beginning of the month following childbirth.

Sickness

If an employee falls ill or has an accident, they have a right to stay home from work. The employer is responsible for paying the employee's salary during the sick leave. If the employment has existed for more than a month before an employee falls ill, the employee will receive full salary for 10 days. If the employee is unable to return to work after these 10 days, the employee can apply for sickness allowance (*sairauspäiväraha*) from Kela, if the employee is covered by Finnish social security.

To be eligible for the earning related sickness benefit the employee must have worked for at least 3 months prior to the sickness. If the employee has not been working for 3 months, or if annual income is less than 1 453 €, he or she will get the basic amount. Full sickness can be granted for a maximum of 300 working days (including Saturdays). The benefit is calculated on the taxed income of the previous tax period. The benefit has no income ceiling. For incomes up to 30 962 €, the benefit amounts to 70 percent of normal salary. For incomes that exceeds this amount the percentage decreases.

The general rule is that sickness is not a valid reason for termination of employment. If the medical prognosis is that the employee will be able to go back to work within the employer's business, the employer is generally forbidden to terminate the employment. If the sickness causes a continuous reduction of work capacity for a long period so substantial that the employee is not able to perform work of importance to the employer, the sickness can be a valid reason for terminating the contract. However, even in these cases possibilities to regain working capacity by medical and work-life rehabilitation must be ruled out. Furthermore, the employer must normally investigate if it is possible to make modifications to the work tasks, in order to avoid a dismissal.

An employee may get partial sickness allowance which is to help persons who are unfit for work to remain in work and to return to full-time work. Returning to work on a part-time basis is a voluntary arrangement requiring the consent of both the employer and the employee. It must not put at risk the employee's health or recovery. The work schedule must be reduced to 40-60 percent of what it was. The partial sickness allowance is payable for a maximum of 120 working

days. After the maximum is reached, it can be paid on account of the same illness only if the claimant has in the meantime been fit for work for at least one year. Persons returning to work after having been paid partial sickness allowance for the maximum period can get an additional 50 days of partial sickness allowance once they have been in work for a consecutive period of more than 30 days.

Sickness allowance is usually available for up to 60 working days if based on medical certificate A. Following the 60 days, payment can continue only if the recipient can present a medical certificate B or other statement about the incapacity for work. Sickness allowance is payable for a maximum of 300 working days (about one year).

Rehabilitation

Once an employee has been paid sickness allowance for 150 days, the employee gets a letter from Kela informing them about various rehabilitation options. If rehabilitation could be relevant for the employee, he or she may apply to Kela or the pension provider for rehabilitation. A medical certificate form B is needed to apply.

The health care system

The Finnish health care system is based on the public health services that every resident has the right to. According to the Finnish Constitution, public authorities must ensure adequate social and health services for everyone. Municipalities and joint municipal authorities are responsible for organizing public health services. The municipality can arrange the services by producing them themselves or together with another municipality. The municipality may also acquire services from a private company or organization. Public health care services are financed by tax revenue and customer fees for services. Changes in the social and health care services are being discussed and there might be a reform in the future.

Occupational health care is governed by the relevant legislation and Occupational Safety Act. In practice, this means that an employer who is required to comply with the Occupational Safety Act is obliged to provide occupational health services to their employees, no matter of the size of the employer.

Unemployment

If you become unemployed or if your studies have ended but you don't have a job, you should immediately register as an unemployed jobseeker in accordance with the instructions of the employment and economic development services (TE Services). After that you can receive unemployment benefits from the unemployment fund or from Kela if you are actively seeking jobs and is available for job training if offered.

Unemployment benefits can be paid to unemployed jobseekers between 17 and 64 years of age who are resident in Finland and who (1) are fit for work, (2) are available to the labour market, (3) look for a full-time job and (4) are in need of financial assistance.

If you are a full-time student or self-employed person, you cannot be granted an unemployment benefit.

However, full-time studies can be supported through an unemployment benefit in the case of self-motivated studies which have been agreed on in the employment plan.

A person who is self-employed on a part-time basis can be paid unemployment benefits if they are prepared to take a full-time job in compliance with the requirements set out by the TE Services.

Further, jobseekers who are 25 years of age or over can study for a short period of up to six months without losing their right to unemployment benefits. The studies must provide them with vocational skills or support self-employment. TE Services investigates whether these conditions are met.

If you meet the requirement applicable to employees or self-employed persons, you are entitled to basic unemployment allowance. If you are not entitled to basic unemployment allowance, you may be entitled to labour market subsidy.

If you are a member of an unemployment fund for instance through a trade union, you can apply for the much higher earnings-related unemployment allowance from the unemployment fund. The unemployment funds are often tied to the labour unions. To be entitled to earnings-related unemployment benefits you must have been a member of the fund for a minimum amount of time, and you must also meet the work requirement, meaning that you must have worked for at least 26 weeks during a reference period of 28 months.¹⁰⁵ The benefit is calculated on your earnings and can be paid out for a maximum of 400 days. However, if you have worked less than 3 years you can only get the benefit for a maximum of 300 days. In order to claim earnings-related allowance, you must register as a job seeker with a TE Office as soon as you become unemployed. It is not possible to register retroactively.

If you are not entitled to earnings-related unemployment allowance, you can apply for basic unemployment allowance or labour market subsidy from Kela. The basic amount can be paid out for a maximum of 400 days, or 300 days if you have been employed for less than 3 years. The maximum basic amount is 32,40 € per day. If you have children, you get an increased amount depending on the number of children. To qualify for the basic amount you must meet the work requirement, which is met if you (a) have worked for at least 26 weeks during a 28 month reference period, (b) you have worked at least 18 hours per week, and (c) your income has been set in accordance with an collective agreement or exceeds 1 189 € per month. You may also be entitled to a supplementary amount, which can be paid for up to 200 days if you participate in activities agreed with the TE Office. The supplementary amount is 4,74 € per day. The labour market subsidy is means-tested, which means that the amount of the benefit is affected by your income as well as by your parents' income if you live with them in the same household.

¹⁰⁵ The reference period can be extended for reasons such as: full-time studies, child-care, or sickness.

Pension

Finland has two pension systems which complement each other:

- » Earnings-related pension is earned by your paid work and entrepreneurial activities. It is the responsibility of an employer to take out a retirement pension insurance policy for all their employees and to pay the insurance premiums. An entrepreneur takes care of their own insurance premiums.
- » National pensions and guarantee pensions are meant for those pensioners who have no earnings-related pension or whose pension is very small.

Both pension systems include old-age pension and disability pension. You will be eligible to receive a national pension once you have turned 65. The age at which you can receive earnings-related pension depends on your year of birth. Check your pension age in your pension record or with your pension institution. A person who is incapable of work may receive disability pension before their old-age pension begins.

A pensioner can also work, if he or she so chooses to do. If you are on old-age pension, your earned income will not influence the amount of pension you receive.

Earnings-related pension

Employers and employees finance earnings-related pension cover together. The employer collects their employees' contribution from their pay and renders this and their own share of the insurance fee to the pension institution. Authorised pension providers, pension funds and foundations take care of earnings-related pensions.

The amount of earnings-related pension depends on how long you have worked and how high your salary has been. In 2017 a new pension reform came into force. According to the new reform, pensions are accrued with 1.5 percent of your gross annual earnings, or 1.7 percent if you are between the ages 53-62 during the transition period from 2017-2025.

The retirement age differs between different age groups. If you were born 1954 or earlier, you can retire at age 63. The retirement age increases for people born in 1955 or later with 3 months per year. The age limit for pension deposits is 68 for people born before 1957. For people born after 1957-1961 the age limit is 69. For people born 1962 and later, the age limit is 70.

Earnings-related pension companies, pension funds and pension foundations manage earnings-related pensions. The Finnish Centre for Pensions (ETK) takes care of issues related to pension security in a centralised manner.

National pension and guarantee pension

You can apply for the national pension if you have not accumulated earnings-related pension or if it is very small. The amount of the national pension is affected by how long you have lived or worked in Finland. In addition to this, your family situation and other continuous pension income affect the amount of national pension paid. Kela handles national pensions and guarantee pensions.

You can apply for national pension and guarantee pension if you are covered by Finnish social security and have resided in Finland for at least 3 years since you turned 16. The time you have lived in another EU or EEC country may also be partially considered.

Guarantee pension provides pensioners with minimum livelihood. The amount of guarantee pension you will receive is the difference between the other pensions you might receive and the full guarantee pension. If the sum total of your other pensions is more than the full guarantee pension, you are not eligible for guarantee pension.

In some cases, you can also receive a national pension before turning 65. More information on early national pension and additional days related to national pension can be obtained from Kela.

Social security in Finland

Finland has a welfare and social security system designed to guarantee dignity and decent living conditions. Core to the system are social insurance (e.g. pensions, sickness and unemployment benefits, workers' compensation), welfare (e.g. family aid, child-care services, services for the disabled), and a comprehensive health system. The grounds for social benefits are defined by legislation.

Finnish social security is divided into residence-based social security and employment-based, earnings-related social security. Residence-based social security is financed by tax and administered by Kela, the Social Insurance Institution of Finland. Earnings-based social security is financed by contributions to private insurance companies and pension funds and administered by the Finnish Centre for Pensions. Eligibility for most social security is based on permanent residence; the benefits can be claimed only by those who live in Finland.

You are regarded as a permanent resident of Finland if your home is in Finland and you spend most of your time there. Either of the following factors indicate a permanent residency (1) you have a work agreement in Finland for at least 2 years, (2) you are married to or in another type of close family relationship with a person who lives in Finland permanently or (3) you have been a Finnish resident and return to live in Finland again.

Migrating workers

For employees and students arriving in Finland there has until recently been a 4-month rule, meaning that the person must have worked in Finland for at least 4 months to be covered by the social security system. As of April 2019, the 4-month rule will be abolished, and instead an earnings-related rule will come into effect. According to the rule, the migrating person must earn at least 696.60 € per month (2019), regardless of the duration of the employment or number of working hours.

EU, EEA and Nordic social security rights

Social security benefits may have certain qualification requirements. As an EU or EEA citizen you are covered by the EU regulation 883/2004, and as a Nordic citizen you are also covered by the Nordic convention on social security as described on page 19. In accordance with these

regulations you may be able to account for qualification time within the Nordics, EU or the EEA. This means that you can account for insurance or employment time in another Nordic country when applying for e.g. unemployment benefits in Finland. Note that the qualification times or requirements to be eligible for a certain benefit may differ between the countries.

You have more rights and protection when moving to Finland from another Nordic country in some matters, for example regarding work-life rehabilitation.

Your family members are also covered by the Finnish social security system if you work in Finland and your family lives there. However, the situation might be different if you are a border worker¹⁰⁶ and you work in Finland but you and your family live in another country. Make sure to know what rules apply to you.

Residence

When coming to Finland from outside the EU for more than 90 days, a residence permit must be applied. When planning to work, a residence permit may be needed even if the stay will be shorter than 90 days. Residence permit needs to be applied personally and it cannot be applied for a spouse or employee for example.

A Nordic citizen who moves to Finland, must register their Finnish residency at the Local Register Office (Maistraatti). He or she must personally visit the Local Register Office. The registration must be made one week after the move at the latest. For registration, an official identity card indicating citizenship, or a valid passport is needed.

When a Nordic citizen registers at the Local Register Office, he or she can obtain a Finnish personal identity number (henkilötunnus) at the same time. A personal identity number makes it easier when dealing with authorities, the bank or your employer.

A citizen of an EU Member State, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway or Switzerland, does not need a residence permit in Finland, but they must register their residence in Finland.

If the first residence permit is going to expire but one wants to stay in Finland, one must apply for an extended permit or a permanent residence permit in good time.

Citizenship

A child of a Finnish citizen receives Finnish citizenship through his or her parents (the parentage principle). However, Finnish citizenship does not automatically pass on to a child who is born to a Finnish father abroad and out of wedlock.

The Finnish Immigration Service may grant Finnish citizenship by declaration or by application. For an applicant, the declaration procedure is a faster and more inexpensive way to become a citizen. Finnish citizenship may be obtained by declaration by being (1) a Nordic citizen;

¹⁰⁶ Also known as frontier worker.

(2) a former Finnish citizen; (3) a child born to a Finnish man abroad and out of wedlock; (4) adoption and (5) having lived in Finland a long time and be aged 18-22 years.

If you do not belong to any of these groups, you may get citizenship by application (this process is called 'naturalisation'). In order to get a positive decision on your application, you must fulfil the requirements for naturalisation (1) established identity; (2) sufficient language skills; (3) sufficient period of residence; (4) integrity; (5) means of support and (6) fulfilled payment obligations.

Finland accepts multiple citizenships. In other words, a Finnish citizen may also be a citizen of some other country. Even if a Finnish citizen has more than one citizenship, the Finnish authorities will consider him/her to be a Finnish citizen both in Finland and abroad. However, the authorities of other countries may not necessarily consider him/her to be a Finnish citizen because not every country acknowledges multiple citizenship in the same way.



Largest 20 employers per union

Agronomiliitto		Loimu	
Luonnonvarakeskus (Luke) - Natural Resources Institute Finland	1 300	Helsingin yliopisto - University of Helsinki	8 000
Helsingin yliopisto - University of Helsinki	8 000	Luonnonvarakeskus (Luke) - National Resources Institute Finland	1 300
Ruokavirasto - Finnish Food Authority	1 000	Turun yliopisto - University of Turku	3 400
ProAgria - Rural Advisory Services	700	Suomen Ympäristökeskus SYKE - Finnish Environment Institute	600
Valio Oy - Food Industry (dairy)	3 200	Ilmatieteen laitos - Finnish Meteorological Institute	700
Fazer - Food Industry	13 200	Itä-Suomen yliopisto UEF - University of Eastern Finland	2 500
Maa- ja metsätalousministeriö - Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry of Finland	12 300	Orion Oyj - pharma industry	2 200
ELY-keskus - The Centres for Economic Development, Transport and the Environment (ELY Centres)	2 500	Geologian tutkimuskeskus GTK - Geological Survey of Finland	400
K-ryhmä/Kesko-konserni- K-Group/Kesko Corporation (commerce and retailing)	12 300	Metsähallitus - state-owned land and water areas responsibly enterprise	1 200
OP-ryhmä - OP Financial Group	11 800	Oulun yliopisto - University of Oulu	2 800
Maa- ja Metsätaloustuottajain Keskusliitto MTK ry - The Central Union of Agricultural Producers and Forest Owners (TK)	100	Jyväskylän yliopisto - University of Jyväskylä	2 400
DLA Danish Agro Group (agribusinesses)	4 400	Teknologian tutkimuskeskus VTT Oy - technological innovation and research	2 200
S-ryhmä - S Group (retail and service sector)	38 000	Tampereen korkeakoulu yhteisö - Tampere Universities	4 200
Helsingin kaupunki - City of Helsinki	37 000	Suomen metsäkeskus - Finnish Forest Center	550
HUS - Helsinki University Hospital	24 300	Terveystieteiden tutkimuskeskus THL - National Institute for Health and Welfare	900
Atria Oyj - Food Industry	4 400	Stora Enso Oyj - forest industry	2 900
HKScan Oyj - Food Industry	7 300	Ramboll Finland Oy - consulting	1 900
Terveystieteiden tutkimuskeskus THL - National Institute for Health and Welfare	900	HUSLAB - university hospital laboratory	1 600
Faba - cattle breeders help	300	Wallac Oy - life science industry	600
Pirkanmaan sairaanhoitopiirin kuntayhtymä - Tampere University Hospital	7 000	Thermo Fisher Scientific Oy - life science industry	800

Note: Ranked by number of members. The numbers in the table are the total number of employees in the organisation.

More information on moving and working

Job listings		
	TE- Palvelut	Public Employment Service
	Agronomiliitto	Union
	Loimu	Union
	Oikotie	Private Service
	Monster	Private Service
	Valtiolle.fi	Public sector jobs (state)
	Kuntarekry	Public sector jobs (municipality)
	Academic Work	Jobs for students/recent graduates
	Aarresaari	Jobs for students/recent graduates
Public authorities		
Labour Court	Labour Court	
Public Employment Service	TE Services	
Work Environment Authority	Työsuojeluhallinto	
Finnish Companies Registration Office	Patentti- ja rekisterihallitus	
Ministry of the Environment	Ympäristöhallinto	
The Ombudsman for Equality	Tasa-arvovaltuutettu	
Estate Agents Inspectorate	Kiinteistövälittäjien valvonta	
Social Insurance Agency	KELA/FPA	
Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry of Finland	Maa- ja metsätalousministeriö	
Migration Agency	Maahanmuuttovirasto	
Environmental Protection Agency	Ympäristöhallinto	
Pensions Agency	Eläketurvakeskus	
Police	Poliisi	
Tax agency	Vero	
National Agency for Education	Opetushallitus	
The National Board of Health and Welfare	Terveystieteiden tutkimuskeskus	
Customs Service	Tulli	
Forest Agency	Metsähallitus	

Unions		
The Finnish Association of Academic Agronomists	Agronomiliitto	
The Union of Professionals in Natural, Environmental and Forestry Sciences	Loimu	
The Confederation of Unions for Professional and Managerial Staff in Finland	Akava	
Unemployment funds		
Unemployment fund	ERKO	Agronomiliitto and Loimu members unemployment fund
Federation of unemployment insurance funds	TYJ	
Recognition of qualifications		
Evaluation of foreign qualifications	Finnish National Agency for Education (OPH)	
List of regulated professions	Finnish National Agency for Education (OPH)	
List of professions	Ammattinetti	
Teacher certification	Finnish National Agency for Education (OPH)	
Healthcare professions	Valvira	
Application for professional license	The National Supervisory Authority for Welfare and Health	
Europapass	Europass	
Working in Finland		
	Finnish Public Employment Service, TE-Palvelut	TE Services
	Working in Finland	
	Maahanmuuttovirasto	Immigration office
	Guide to work in Finland	
Learning the language		
	Finnishcourses	
	Kesäyliopisto	
	Language services	
	Suomi seura	

General country information		
	InfoFinland	
	Finland Abroad	
Tourist boards	Visit Finland	
Finnish Institute of International Affairs FIIA	FIIA	
Official website of Finland	Suomi.fi	
Work abroad		
ETK	Working abroad	
TYJ	Unemployment and working abroad	
Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Finland	Ministry of Foreign Affairs	Job opportunities abroad
Work abroad in a regulated profession	Regulated professions	
Other resources		
Drivers license	Ajokortti-info	



Denmark

Denmark is the smallest of the five countries in the Nordic region. Denmark is the world's least corrupt country. Denmark is also known for their simple and functional design, pølse and legoland.



Small facts:

Capital: Copenhagen
Population: 5 785 864 (2018)
BNP per capita: €51 117 (2017)
Area: 43 561 km²
Highest point: Yding Skovhøj – 172,5 m
Coastline: 7 314 km
Forest and plantings: 5 294 km²
Largest lake: Arresø – 39,5 km²
National Day: June 5, (Constitution day, June 5, 1849)
Government: Constitutional monarchy
Parliament: Folketinget (179 seats)
Membership in the EU: January 1, 1973
Membership in Nato: April 4, 1949
Currency: Danish Crown (DKK)
Official language: Danish
Official site: www.denmark.dk



Collective agreements

The Danish way of negotiating collective agreements is based on voluntary agreements between employers and employees. This means that the state rarely interferes. A pillar of the Danish way is the employees' right to strike and the employers' right to lockout and boycott. This way of ordered conflict, as opposed to more fierce conflicts, serves as a cheaper option for both parties. The idea is that this creates stable labour market conditions which has also been the case in practice.

The collective agreements in Denmark specify the working conditions and terms. If there is no collective agreement at the company or sector level, then the employer is required by law to fulfil certain basic requirements. However, these are very basic, and Denmark has for example no laws governing minimum wage so without a collective agreement there is no minimum wage.

Collective agreements govern all relevant aspects of work life including salary, pay during maternity leave, vacation, sickness and so on. During collective agreement negotiations all these factors can be changed. However, they can never be set to a lower level than the minimum requirements in Danish law, so collective agreements will set terms that are equally as good or better than these.

Some collective agreements cover one sector only, other covers the members of several unions and the same rules then apply cross sector such as vacation, absence related to family and so on.

Employment protection

In Denmark there are no employment protection act. Generally, this means that the employer can terminate an employment without objectively justified reasons. This stems from the Danish flexicurity model, which makes it easier to dismiss employees, but in return the unemployment and social security systems are more generous. However, you may be covered by special legislation or a collective agreement that set up requirements of objectively justified reasons.

In Denmark there is a law called the Employees and Salaried Employees' Legal Relationship (Funktionærloven). It applies to fixed-term employments as well as employments until further notice. To be covered by Funktionærloven you must be a salaried employee working at least 8 hours per week. The work must also fall under one of the following categories; (a) commercial and office workers, (b) clinical or technical work that aren't of non-craft or factory nature, (c)

work consisting of supervision or management on behalf of the employers account, or persons whose work is a mixture of (b) or (c). Categories that falls outside of the scope are, among others, civil servants under the state or municipalities and educational work. Funktionærloven contains notice periods that apply to both the employer and employee. The notice period varies between 1-6 months depending on how long the employee has been employed.

As mentioned earlier, the flexicurity model means that the employer is not required to have objectively justified reasons for dismissals, unless provided for in certain legislation or a collective agreement. Funktionærloven and certain collective agreements set forth demands of objectively justified reasons when the employee gets dismissed by the employer. Objectively justified reasons can be referred to redundancies or personal reasons. Redundancies are almost always valid reasons for dismissal, whilst for dismissals due to personal reasons the demands are set higher. Unlike Swedish, Norwegian and Finnish law, the employer generally has no obligation to replace the employee a vacant position opens. Dismissals in the public sector must be based on objectivity according to public law.

Employment contract

The working contract must contain matters of major importance for the employment.

The contract shall at least contain:

1. Name and address of employer and employee.
2. The location of the workplace.
3. The job title and a short specification of the work duties.
4. Employment commencement date.
5. Expected duration of the employment, if not a permanent employment.
6. Employee rights regarding holidays, including information whether salary will be earned during the vacation.
7. Information on the employee's and employer's terms of notice.
8. The agreed salary to which the employee is entitled at the start of the employment relationship, and allowances or other forms of remuneration that are not included in the salary, e.g. pension contributions, lodging or meals. Information on the intervals of salary payments must also be included.
9. The normal daily or weekly working hours.
10. Information of which collective agreements or other agreements regulating the employment and working conditions. If the collective agreement or other agreements in question has been concluded by parties outside of the company, these parties must be identified in the contract.

Salary

Danish employees receive, on average, the highest salaries in the European Union. Employees in Denmark earn on average 260 Danish kroner (DKK) per hour of work equal to approximately 42 000 Danish kroner per month (2017), or 5 600 €. ¹⁴⁹

The highest salaries are found in leader positions and in the age group 45 – 49. On average the salary in the private sector is 7,5 percent higher than in the public sector. However, the employees with the lowest salary in the public sector generally have higher salaries than the lowest paid in the private sector. This means that there is a higher variation in salaries in the private sector. There are however notable exceptions to this.

Around 7 percent of Danish employees rank as having low salaries, close to the European average but much higher than other Nordic countries such as the 2 percent in Sweden.¹⁰⁷ As mentioned earlier, Denmark has no minimum wage and minimum wages are regulated in collective agreements, but all employees are not covered by these.

Work culture

Work culture varies between companies but tends to be very flexible with possibilities of working from your home and/or working late or early depending on your personal wishes. This depends on the specific job positions and the tasks it entails.

Punctuality is respected in Denmark in the sense that you show up on the specific agreed time for meetings and appointments. It is generally expected and stated in job positions that you are supposed to respect deadlines and agreements internally and externally.

It is a custom that colleagues share lunch together and occasionally breakfast. Denmark is also internationally known for having cake at work once a week or for birthdays.

Working time

In Denmark there are no general working hours act, which means that there are no universal rules concerning ordinary working time. However, according to common practice, the ordinary working time is 37 hours per week. Although it is possible to agree on longer weekly working hours. The ordinary working time must be stated in the working contract.

There are however upper limits concerning working time that must be observed. According to the Act on Implementation of Parts of the Working Time Directive, the total working time is not allowed to exceed 48 hours during a 4-month period (the 48-hour rule). Furthermore, according to the Working Environment Act, the worker shall in principle also get 11 hours of comprehensive rest during every 24-hour period, as well as a 24-hour comprehensive rest period every week.

¹⁴⁹ Statistics Denmark.

Overtime

There is no law that limits overtime work. Overtime work can be ordered so long as it respects the 48-hour rule as well as weekly- and daily rest periods.

There is no general right to overtime compensation. However, if you are employed for a certain number of hours you normally can demand your ordinary salary for every hour that exceed the contractual working hours. Collective agreements that regulate overtime often states that overtime work shall be compensated with additional compensation. If no collective agreement applies to your employment, you must regulate the additional compensation in your employment contract.

Normally the employee must work overtime if the employer orders it. This main rule can normally only be ignored if the employee is prevented to work the extra hours due to an urgent matter or the overtime work violates rules prescribed in law. Examples can be that the employee can't find a baby sitter or the overtime work collides with the law regulated resting periods.

Practical tips

- » **Membership in a union** or professional association can help you with information and contacts.
- » **Unions can help** you customise your application letter and cv to national and sector customs if you become a member or guest member.
- » **Detailed information about** wages for different professions and counselling on wage negotiations, benefits and other rights are provided to members and guest members.
- » **As a member** you can and should send the contract to the union for a review before you sign.
- » **Make sure you** get a written employment contract to avoid conflicts.
- » **You should always** be able to go through the contract with the union.
- » **You should never** sign a contract that you do not understand.
- » **As a member you** can get legal assistance if there is a conflict concerning your employment or other matters related to employment relationships.
- » **When you need** assistance contact JA.
- » **See the checklist** for working abroad on page 128.

Vacation

According to the Danish Vacation Act, every worker has the right to (at least) 5 weeks annual vacation. Up to 1 additional vacation week is often contractually agreed for salaried employees. A vacation week comprises 5 days, which totals 25 vacation days. The employee is entitled to a comprehensive leave of at least 15 vacation days during the period 1 May–30 September. To be entitled to vacation with pay the person must have been employed during the previous year. An employee earns paid vacation during the qualifying year, which follows the calendar year (1 Jan– 31 Dec). Earned vacation days can be taken out during the vacation year, which runs between 1 May – 30 April the following year. If an employee has not been employed during the whole qualifying year, the amount of paid vacation days will be reduced. The employee accrues approximately 2 vacation days for each month employed. The amount of vacation days earned each month varies with the contractual amount of vacation days. The employee is entitled to choose if he or she goes on a vacation leave utilizing vacation days that has not been earned.¹⁰⁸

The employee can be entitled to more vacation days according to a collective agreement or if it is agreed upon in the individual employment contract.

Parental leave

Parental benefits, barseldagspenge, gets paid out based out if you have a connection to the labour market through employment or self-employment. The parental benefits are based on your previous income. The authority Udbetalning Danmark decides if you are entitled to barseldagspenge. If you are employed you must meet the following conditions: (1) you must be employed at the latest the day before or on the first day of your parental leave, (2) you must have been working for at least 160 hours during the past 4 months before the leave, (3) You must have been working at least 40 hours a month during the last 3 of 4 months.

Economic reimbursement

The benefit gets calculated as a sum per week. The maximum amount paid out is 4 300 DKK (575 €) per week (2018). The amount depends on whether you also receive salary from your employer. If you receive salary, your employer will receive the benefit instead.

The length of the parental leave

If both parents work in Denmark, they are entitled to a total of 52 weeks parental leave with benefits. The mother is entitled to a four week leave with benefits before the child's birth (pregnancy leave). These four weeks cannot be transferred to the other parent after the birth.

¹⁰⁸ Note that a new Holiday Act will come into force on 1 September 2020. The new act allows the employee to take out paid vacation in the same year it has been accrued, which means that the employee will be entitled to take out paid vacation during the first year of employment. Under the new act paid vacation will be earned between 1 September – 31 August (qualifying year). The vacation year, which is the period when the person can take out earned vacation, will be the same as the qualifying year, plus an additional 4 months. The vacation year will therefore amount to a total of 16 months.

After the birth, the mother has a right to 14 weeks leave. The co-parent has a right to 2 weeks leave in connection with the birth of the child (paternity leave). Thereafter the parents can share up to 32 weeks of parental leave with parental benefits. If the parents take out less than the full amount every week, they can prolong the parental leave with benefits with 8 or 14 weeks. This does not need the employer's approval. Note that both parents may go on a 32 weeks parental leave each (a total of 64 weeks). The benefit however will only be paid out for 32 weeks.

The parents can go back to work with up to 32 weeks of parental leave saved for later. The parental leave can only be saved until the child turns 9.

Self-employed

To be eligible for parental benefits as self-employed, you must have worked for the last month and for at least 6 months within the last year before going on parental leave. You must also have been working for at least half of your ordinary working hours for at least 6 months during the last 12-month period.

Sickness

The right to receive salary from your employer during your sick leave depends on your employment, whether there is a collective agreement and for how long you are sick. Salaried employees, which are covered by Funktionærloven are entitled to receive full salary payments for a limited period of sickness absence. If you're not a salaried employee, the right to sick pay depends on your employment contract or a collective agreement, if there are any that applies on your employment. If you are not covered by any special rules, the employer must pay sick pay during your first 30 days of sickness, given that you have been working for at least 74 hours during the past 8 weeks before the sickness. The sick pay amount is equal to your normal salary.

After the 30 days the municipality pays sickness benefit if you meet one of the following conditions:

- » You have been working for at least 240 hours during the previous 6-month period. 5 of these months you must have worked at least 40 hours per month
- » You should have been entitled to unemployment benefit or a corresponding benefit if your sickness would not have occurred.
- » You have completed a programme of vocational training lasting at least 18 months.
- » You are a trainee in a paid work placement as a part of your education.
- » You have a "fleksjob".¹⁰⁹

The maximum benefit amount that can be paid out is 4 300 DKK per week. If you work part-time the maximum hourly rate is approximately 116 DKK per hour (2018). The sickness benefit is tax liable in the same way as regular income.

¹⁰⁹ Fleksjob is a danish labour politic initiative to create job opportunities for people that are unable to have a regular work due to sickness.

During a period of shorter sickness, you are normally protected from being dismissed by your employer. However, according to Funktionærloven there are a 120-day rule stating that you can be dismissed with a months' notice if you have received salary during sickness for more than 120 days within a 12-month period. For the 120-day rule to apply, it must be stated in your employment contract.

Self-employed

If you are self-employed, the local authority pays your benefit. To receive the benefit, the following requirements must be met:

- » You have undertaken self-employment activity to a substantial extent for at least 6 months during a 12-month reference period, including the last month preceding the absence.
- » You have worked at least half-time (normally 18.5 hours a week).

Unemployment

To be eligible for the benefit you must have had an income of at least 228 348 DKK (30 560 €) during the previous 3-year period. The maximum amount you can get is 18 633 DKK (2 500 €) per month (2018). If you work part time you must have earned at least 152 232 DKK during the previous 3-year period to be eligible for the benefit. The maximum amount paid out for part time work is 12 422 (2018).

To qualify for the benefit the following requirements must be met:

- » You have been a member of an unemployment fund for at least 1 year.
- » You have registered at Jobcentret, which is the public employment agency.
- » Certain requirements of availability are met.

Self-employed

As a self-employed you need to prove that you have had self-employment to a substantial extent for at least 52 weeks during the last 3 years.

Pension

The Danish pension system can roughly be divided into public pension (consisting of several parts), occupational pensions and individual pension. Your retirement age depends on when you were born. Today the retirement age varies between 65 and 68 years of age.

Danish public pension, which is paid by the state, is considerably less than in the other Nordic countries. It is also quite uncommon that Danish employers pays occupational pension. In Denmark it is therefore much more common that the person has their own pension insurance.

All people that work in Denmark earns public pension. The amount is based on how long you have been living or working in Denmark. For every year that you have been working in Denmark you earn 1/40 part of the public pension. If your income is below a certain limit, or if you are in a difficult economic situation, you may also get a supplementary amount.

If you have occupational pension through your work, the pension deposits are normally paid by your employer and yourself through your salary. A common construction is that the employer pays 2/3 and the employee pays 1/3 parts of the premium, often varying between a total of 10-18 percent of the employee's salary. Far from all employers is covered by occupational pension. To be entitled to occupational pension there must be ruled by a collective agreement or your working agreement.

Efterløn

In Denmark there is a certain type of pension called efterløn. It gets paid out to people aged 60-65 who wants to stop working completely or partially. To be eligible for efterløn you must have been a member of an unemployment fund for at least 1 year, to which you have payed in efterlønsbidrag, i.e. contributions.

Social security

The Danish social security system is financed mostly through taxes, but also, to a lesser extent, by contributions. A large proportion is paid by Danish employees, which means that working taxes are quite high in comparison to other countries.

The Danish welfare system is commonly described as the most generous in the world. The main principle is that all citizens shall have equal rights to social security, regardless of the person's ability to contribute to the welfare, through for example work. As a result, many of the services and benefits are in many respects equal and available to all.

EU, EEA and Nordic social security rights

Social security benefits may have certain qualification requirements. As an EU or EEA citizen you are covered by the EU regulation 883/2004, and as a Nordic citizen you are also covered by the Nordic convention on social security as described on page 19. In accordance with these regulations you may be able to account for qualification time within the Nordics, EU or the EEA. This means that you can account for insurance or employment time in another Nordic country when applying for e.g. unemployment benefits in Denmark. Note that the qualification times or requirements to be eligible for a certain benefit may differ between the countries.

You have more rights and protection when moving to Denmark from another Nordic country in some matters, for example work-life rehabilitation.

Your family members are also covered by the Danish social security system if you work in Denmark and your family lives there. However, the situation might be different if you are a border worker and you work in Denmark but you and your family live in another country. Make sure to know what rules apply to you.

Largest 20 employers per union

JA	
Københavns kommune - Copenhagen municipality	40 000
Aarhus kommune - Aarhus municipality	30 000
Novo – Biotech and medicine	17 000
Københavns Universitet - Copenhagen university	10 000
Aarhus Universitet - Aarhus university	8 000
Cowi – Technical consultancy	6 250
Chr. Hansen – Chr. Hansen (Biotech, medicine and enzymes)	3 150
Rambøll – Rambøll (Technical consultancy)	3 000
Landbrugsstyrelsen - Danish agri and food agency	1 200
DLF frø - DLF seeds	850
Naturstyrelsen - Danish nature agency	700
Atkins – Atkins (Technical and environmental consultancy)	500
Orbicon – Orbicon (Technical and environmental consultancy)	500
Miljøstyrelsen - Danish environmental agency	400
Miljø- og Fødevareministeriet - Ministry of food and environment	200
VKST – VKST (agricultural consultancy)	150
Centrovic - Centrovic (agricultural consultancy)	150
Agrovi – Agrovi (agricultural consultancy)	70
Økologisk landsforening - Organic union (organic organization)	60
Landbrug & Fødevarer/SEGES – Agri and food organization	1 000

Note: Ranked by number of members. The numbers in the table are the total number of employees in the organisation.

More information on moving and working

Job listings		
	Jobnet	Job website used by the public sector and one of the most widely used job search sites.
	Fagforeningen JA	Union
	Jobbindex	Private provider
	Job i staten	Public sector jobs
	Studiejob	Students/recent graduates
Public authorities		
Labour Court	Arbejdsretten	Court of work and service. Serve in conflicts between employers and their organisations and the employees.
Public Employment Service	Jobnet	
Work Environment Authority	Beskæftigelsesministeriet	
Danish Companies Registration Office	Indberet	
National Board of Housing, Building and Planning	Borger	A very useful website when coming to Denmark concerning practical issues.
The Equality Ombudsman	Institut for Menneskerettigheder	
Trafikstyrelsen	Trafik, bygge og boligstyrelsen	
Social Insurance Agency	Socialstyrelsen	
The Board of Agriculture	Ministry of food and environment	
Migration Agency	Udlændingestyrelsen	
Environmental Protection Agency	Miljøstyrelsen	
Pensions Agency	Borger.dk	
Police	Politiet	
Tax agency	Skatteministeriet	
National Agency for Education	Undervisningsministeriet	
The National Board of Health and Welfare	Socialstyrelsen	

Customs Service	Skat	
Forest Agency	Naturstyrelsen	
Unions		
Danish Association of Professional Scientists	Fagforeningen JA	
Unemployment funds		
	A-kassernes samvirke	Registering for unemployment funding, etc.
	AKA	
Recognition of qualifications		
Evaluation of foreign qualifications	Uddannelses og forskningsministeriet	Ministry of education and research.
Application for professional license	Socialstyrelsen	
Working in Denmark		
	www.jobnet.dk	
	Working in Denmark	
Learning the language		
Intensive course for academics	Copenhagen Language Center De Danske Sprogcentre Lær Dansk IA Sprog Studieskolen	
Danish for immigrants	Udlændinge- og integrationsministeriet	
General country information		
	Nordic Co-operation	
Danish embassies	Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark	
Tourist boards	Visit Denmark	
Official website of Denmark	Denmark.dk	
Regeringskansliet	Regeringen	
Other resources		
Drivers license	Færdselsstyrelsen	
Personal identity number & ID card	Borger.dk	
Association for Danes abroad	Danes worldwide	



Iceland

The volcanic island Iceland is located in the northern part of the Atlantic. Iceland is known for its fishing industry, hot springs and dramatic nature and that there are no mosquitoes on Iceland.



Small facts:

Capital: Reykjavík
Population: 357 050 (2018)
BNP per capita: €63 707 (2017)
Area: 102 775 km²
Highest point: Hvannadalshnúkur – 2 110 m
Coastline: 6 088 km
Ice cover and glaciers: 10 500 km²
Largest lake: Thingvallavatn – 82 km²
National Day: 17th of June (Independence Day, 1944)
Government: Republic
Parliament: Alltinget eller Alþingi (63 seats)
Membership in the EU: No
Membership in Nato: Since April 4, 1949
Currency: Icelandic króna (ISK)
Official languages: Icelandic
Official site: www.iceland.is



Collective agreements

In Iceland there are two types of labour markets, the public and the private market. There is one general law¹¹⁰ for the private market and another special law¹¹¹ for the public market (the government as an employer and the municipalities). In accordance with these laws unions negotiate about rights and obligations in collective agreements on behalf of their members and by mutual signing collective agreement are binding between parties and have higher legal status than law, given that such agreements do not give lesser rights or benefits than provisions of applicable laws.

On the private market unions of BHM¹¹² (Icelandic Confederation of University Graduates) cooperate in negotiations regarding collective agreements. The collective agreement is about rights and duties, but not about salary. The BHM's members unions negotiate about collective agreement with SA¹¹³ (Confederation of Icelandic Enterprise). This contract has no termination date and is valid until parties make a new collective agreement.

On the public market each union negotiates separately with the government (as an employer), the City of Reykjavík and another collective agreement with other municipalities in Iceland (Icelandic Association of Local Authorities). These collective agreements have termination dates.

The system for the government (as an employer) is divided in collective agreement and institutional agreement with each institute (based on the collective agreement), called Stofnanasamningar. Each union makes an agreement with each institute where our members work and negotiate about salaries. These agreements (stofnanasamningar) should be renewed at least within two years period. But overall pay rises for the total public market (government and municipalities as employer) are negotiated in the applicable collective agreement.

The union also negotiates with several smaller entities about collective agreement, all collective agreements for members of FÍN are available on the website.¹¹⁴

¹¹⁰ Lög 80/1936.

¹¹¹ Lög 94/1986.

¹¹² Icelandic Confederation of University Graduates(BHM).

¹¹³ Confederation of Icelandic Enterprise (SA).

¹¹⁴ Collective agreements: <http://www.fin.is/kaup-og-kjor/samningar/kjarasamningar/>

Many companies are not part of SA (Confederation of Icelandic Enterprise). There are several entities that do not have collective agreement with the union and therefore provisions of the employment contracts are more extensive.

In the collective agreement on the public market unions negotiate about for example: pay table, pay rise, working hours, coffee break, overtime, shift work, compensation paid in December and June, vacation days, paid travel cost, working environment, insurance (disability/death), working clothes and tools, retraining, study leave, payments from employer into funds of BHM, what is included in the agreement for institutes (stofnanasamningar), sickness days, parental leave, special pension payment (individual savings) and resignation.

In the collective agreement on the private market the unions negotiate about working hours, coffee break, overtime, vacation days, paid travel cost, insurance (disability/death), working clothes and tools, payments from employer into funds of BHM, sickness days, parental leave, special pension payment (individual savings) and resignation.

The collective agreement is about the minimum right for the employee and employee and employer can always negotiate about better rights or salary in job agreement, but never lower than collective agreement.

Employment protection

Because of the different laws for the labour market not for every employee have the same rights.

In the private market the minimum resignation right (notice period) is stated in the collective agreement or in the job agreement. The notice period in the collective agreement is one week the first three months of work, one month notice after three months of work, three months' notice after six months of work and if you have been working longer than 10 years or have reached an age of 55 the notice time is longer, depending on which collective agreement applies. When an employer wants to terminate the employment, the employer must send the employee a written notice with or without an explanation to the termination. The employee is then entitled to a meeting with the employer to talk about the termination. The employee can ask the employer for a written document about the resignation. If the employer refuses, the employee can ask for another meeting with the employer, bringing along an union representative.

The public market is different from the private market. The employer must have objective grounds to terminate an employment. If the employee has breached the law in a very serious way the employer can take action right away and terminate the employment. If the employee has not performed the work duties properly then the employer must give the employee a chance to improve. But if that does not happen the employer can terminate the employment. If the employer closes down a work station or department due to economic reasons and employer need to lay off staff, the employer can send the employee a notice letter.

In the public market the employer is not allowed to give temporary employments for more than two years. After two years the job needs to be advertised as a permanent employment. If the temporary job agreement is not renewed and the employer still works, the employment automatically turns into permanent employment.

Employment contract

Based on the collective agreement every employer and employee need a working contract regulating the employment. The individual contract can include better rights than the collective agreement.

In general, each employment contract shall include the following terms or references to a collective agreement regulating such terms:

- » The employer and employee's social security number
- » Workplace and address of employer
- » Title, position, nature and type of work – a job description
- » The start date of the employment
- » Period of employment, if temporary
- » Vacation rights
- » Termination notice
- » Salaries and other remuneration
- » Duration of the workday or workweek
- » Pension fund and payments to selective funds
- » References to the applicable collective agreement

Salary

On the private market there is no minimum wage and you take care of the negotiation of your salary by yourself except if you work as a natural scientist covered by a collective agreement, then you cannot be paid lower than 336 510 ISK (2 440 €) per month (2019). In the government sector no one is to be paid less than 417 409 ISK (3 030 €) per month.

An individual that stays in Iceland for less than six months in a twelve-month period, has limited tax liability in Iceland. This means that he or she must pay tax on income received in Iceland although he or she still is tax liable in another country. Taxable income includes, for example cash payments, wages, fees, sickness allowance and benefits in kind. He or she is allowed the same deductions for expenses as residents, i.e. the mandatory payments to pensions insurances funds 4 percent of total employment income and in addition voluntary pension insurance premiums of up to 4 percent of total employment income.

Academics in a union belonging to a union in BHM had a median yearly income of 8.8 million ISK (65 000 €).

Work culture

Icelanders are normally helpful and friendly but can sometimes come across as being a bit withdrawn and can also be relatively direct in the way they communicate. Straight talk, punctuality, accountability and honesty are values that hold great value in Iceland and therefore one should not overpromise or set expectations that are unlikely to be fulfilled. Icelanders also value friendships and instead of just sticking to business it is normal that pleasure and business are interwoven.

Things do not have to be written down on paper for them to be binding. Icelanders place a high value on keeping their word, in fact an oral agreement is binding according to the law of Iceland.

Working time

The regular working time is 40 hours per week, according to Icelandic law.¹¹⁵ By law unions and employers can negotiate about fewer working hours. In the collective agreement of FÍN the regular working time is 40 hours per week.

Overtime

If an employer wants the employee to work overtime the employer needs to pay overtime compensation in accordance with the collective agreement.

On the private market the employment contract often contains a fixed amount of overtime work that can be ordered.

According to the law of rights and duties of employees of the government¹¹⁶ a governmental authority or institute can demand that the employee work overtime. The employee is obligated to comply, but the amount of overtime may not exceed an additional 20 percent to the ordinary weekly working hours.

The amount of overtime work is limited by the law governing rest periods.¹¹⁷ The employee must get at least 11 hours rest per each 24-hour period. This means that the daily working hours shall not be scheduled for more than 13 hours unless it has been negotiated differently in the collective agreement for special cases, for example changes at shift work. Furthermore, every employee is entitled to at least one day off during each calendar week or two days of each fortnight.

When it comes to overtime pay, the employer shall pay the employee for all overtime work according to the collective agreements or what have been negotiated in the employment contract. Usually the employee can negotiate with the employer to be compensated through more vacation days instead of money.

Vacation

In Iceland you are entitled to take vacation days (without payment) according to the law.¹¹⁸ You earn vacation days with pay for each working day. By law everyone earns at least 2 vacation days for each month of work, 24 days in total. Collective agreements entitle the employee to more vacation days than what is provided for by law. The employee can also be entitled to more days if that is agreed upon by the employee and the employer. Between 24-30 vacation days are stan-

¹¹⁵ Lög 88/1971.

¹¹⁶ Lög 70/1996.

¹¹⁷ Lög 46/1980.

¹¹⁸ Lög 30/1987.

dard, but some have more. Employees earn vacation days during the qualifying year, which runs from 1st of May to 31st of April and are entitled to use those days during the following vacation period, which runs from 1st of May to 15th of September. If an employee has not earned paid vacation, the employee is still entitled to 24 vacation days without payment.

The employee has the right to demand for at least 14 vacation days during the vacation period.

Parental leave

There is a law in Iceland governing parental leave, maternity leave and paternity leave when a child is born, adopted or are taking in long-term fostering.¹¹⁹ The law specifies the rights of parents who are active on the labour market to go on maternity/paternity leave and parental leave. It applies to parents who are employed or self-employed, unemployed as well as parents attending full-time educational programmes. The purpose of this law is to ensure a child's well-being and access to both parents, and also to enable both women and men to reconcile work and family life.

The parent shall notify the employer in writing at least 8 weeks in advance if he/she wants to go on maternity leave, paternity leave or parental leave.

Each parent has an independent entitlement of a 3-month leave (90 days) in connection with the birth. In addition to this, the parents are entitled to an additional 3 months (90 days), which they can divide between themselves as they wish. If there is only one parent, the parent is entitled to 9 month leave (270 days). For multiple children parents get an extra 3 months (90 days). Stillbirth or miscarriage after 18 weeks of pregnancy leads to a 2-month period (60 days) of joint entitlement and after 22 week of pregnancy a 3-month period.

Economic support

Employees who have worked at least 25 percent of full-time each month for six consecutive months prior to the birth, adoption or fostering are entitled to paid parental leave support of up to 80 percent of the total wages. The reimbursement is based on wages accrued during a continuous twelve-month period ending six months prior to the birth, adoption or fostering. The monthly amount cannot exceed 600 000 ISK (2019). Full time students for at least six months are entitled to get a monthly grant from the Fæðingarorlofssjóður (parental leave fund) at maximum of 177 893 ISK (65 000 €).

Persons who are unemployed or work less than 25 percent are entitled to a monthly grant of 77 624 ISK.

If the mother gets sick when pregnant, she can apply for extension of the maternity leave for maximum of two months.

¹¹⁹ Lög 95/2000.

The right to go on maternity or paternity leave expires after 24 months after birth, adoption or long-term fostering. After this, each parent is entitled to go on an unpaid parental leave for up to 4 months. The parental leave must be used before the child reach the eight years old.

It is not permitted to dismiss an employee due to the fact that she or he has used their right to go on maternity/paternity leave or parental leave. The same also applies to pregnant women, and women who have recently given birth. The main principle is that employment relations between an employee and employer shall remain unchanged during the maternity/paternity leave and parental leave. The employee shall be entitled to return her or his job upon the completion of maternity/paternity leave or parental leave. Should this not be possible, the employee shall be entitled to a comparable position with the employer according to the employment contract.

Payment from the funds of BHM

A parent which is a member of a union within BHM is entitled to a grant for each child from the fund of BHM. If employed in the private market the amount is 100 000 ISK (725 €) and in the public sector 250 000 ISK¹²⁰ (1 810 €) per month (2019).

Sickness

The general rule is that sickness is not a valid reason for dismissing an employee. The employee is obligated to provide the employer with a doctors' note if the employer asks for it.

If an employee gets sick the employee is entitled to payment for sickness days based on the collective agreement or the work agreement. Based on collective agreements in the private sector the employee is entitled to receive payments when getting sick. The first year of employment the employee is entitled to receive salary for 2 sick days each month, after 1 year of employment the employee is entitled to receive 2 months full salary during a 12-month period, after 5 years of employment the employee is entitled to 4 months full salary and after 10 years of employment the employee is entitled to 6 months full salary. If the employee is still sick when the sickness days are finished, the employee is entitled to receive payments from the sickness fund of the unions within BHM. The maximum payment you can receive from them is 75 percent of total salary up to 9 months.

Based on collective agreements in the public sector the employee is entitled to payments when he or she gets sick. During the first 3 months of employment the employee is entitled to receive payments for 14 days each 12-month period, after 3 months of employment the employee is entitled to 35 days, after 6 month of employment the employee is entitled to 119 days, after 1 year of employment the employee is entitled to 133 days, after 7 years of employment the employee is entitled to 175 days, after 12 years of employment the employee is entitled to 273 days and after 18 years of employment the employee is entitled to 360 days.

¹²⁰ Styrktarsjóður BHM.

For the first week of sickness any the employee the same total salary employee would have received if she or he would have been working. From the second week employees gets the average weekly salary over the last 12 months. All days are counted, working days, weekends and holidays. When the right of sickness days is exhausted the employee can apply for sickness benefits from the Public Relief Fund of the unions in BHM. Maximum payment is 400 462 ISK each month for a maximum of 8 months.

Furthermore, the employee can apply for sickness benefits from Sjúkratryggingar Íslands (Icelandic Health Insurance) if the employee is incapable of working than 21 days and do not receive any salary from the employer. If the sickness leads to a to a permanent work inability the employee can apply for disability benefits from a pension fund.

Health and safety

There is a law in Iceland that covers working conditions, health, hygiene and safety at work. This law applies to all sectors of land-based employment, where one or more individual is employed.¹²¹ The objective of the law is to:

- » Ensure a safe and healthy working environment for all, that corresponds to the social and technical development of the society.
- » Ensure that workplaces are capable of handling problems concerning health and safety, meeting requirements set out in existing laws and regulations, and following instructions and consultation provided for by the Administration of Occupational Safety and Health.

The employer is responsible for the work environment and safety at the workplace.

In Iceland there is an institution called VIRK (Vocational Rehabilitation Fund) which is a private foundation of which all major unions and employers are members of.¹²² VIRK's mission is to develop, integrate and monitor services in the field of vocational rehabilitation. The purpose of VIRK's services is to help people return to work after an illness or injury, providing them with expert advice and services in the field of vocational rehabilitation. VIRK operates in close cooperation with unions, employers, various service providers in vocational rehabilitation and welfare agencies. Vocational rehabilitation counsellors work on behalf of VIRK and are situated together with the unions across the country. VIRK services are free of charge.

Studies have demonstrated that prolonged absence from the labour market may pose a greater threat to the health and quality of life than many life-threatening diseases. Participation in the labour market has generally a positive effect on both the physical and mental health - including those who struggle with various health problems. Most people who have received VIRK's services have had a very successful vocational rehabilitation and are now active on the labour market. VIRK's customer surveys have demonstrated that their participants are very satisfied with the services they received, believing it to have significantly increased both their quality of life and their work capacity.

¹²¹ Lög 46/1980.

¹²² Vocational Rehabilitation Fund, VIRK.

Unemployment

Every employee aged 18-70 is entitled to unemployment benefits by law¹²³ provided that they meet the following conditions:

- » are in active job search,
- » are residing in Iceland,
- » have the right to engage in work in Iceland without restrictions,
- » has been a salaried employee during a pay period,
- » submits a certificate from a former employer or a certificate from a school if the person studies,
- » has been seeking a job for a continuous period of three working days after the application for unemployment benefit was received by the Directorate of Labour.

To be regarded as an employee, the person must work at least 25 percent of normal working hours on paid jobs each month and for which the insurance fee is paid for the job in accordance with the Act on Social Security Tax. An employee is considered fully insured after having worked continuously over the last 12 months before applying for unemployment benefits at the Directorate of Labour.

An employee who has worked for less than 12 months but longer than 3 months during the previous 12-month period before applying for unemployment benefits is considered to be proportionally insured in accordance with the length of the employment period.

The applicant's entitlement to benefits will never exceed the employment rate during the vesting period or the percentage of work he or she is willing to engage in. If the employee has not been in the same employment ratio for the entire vesting period, the average working ratio shall be calculated at that time.

Studies that the employee has been engaged in at least six months in the last 12 months before applying for unemployment benefits qualifies for thirteen weeks of full-time work, provided that he or she can verify that studies are completed and that he or she has worked for at least 3 months during the vesting period. A certificate from the school in question shall be accompanied by an application for unemployment benefit stating that the employee has completed the studies. This authorization can only increase the employee's insurance ratio once in each benefit period. It is permissible to take into account work that has been done during the course of calculating the employee's unemployment insurance, but then the study is not considered to be his or her work contribution.

Self employed

If an employee has also been a self-employed person in the last twelve months before applying for unemployment benefit, all periods of work shall be taken into account when deciding the unemployment insurance.

¹²³ Lög 54/2006.

Migrant workers

If a person who is looking for a job search in Iceland and applies for unemployment benefit, can receive a certification that he or she has been covered by the unemployment insurance in another EEA state. This certificate is called a U1 certificate through which you can accredit insurance time in other EU/EEA states when calculating the unemployment benefits in Iceland.

A student who moves to Iceland from another EU/EEA state and becomes unemployed while being entitled to unemployment benefits in another EEA country can use a U2 certificate to keep his or her unemployment benefits for up to three months, while looking for work in Iceland.

Amounts

The amount of basic unemployment benefits is calculated in proportion to the right to benefits (2019):

- » 279 720 ISK per month based on 100 percent benefit.
- » 209 790 ISK per month based on 75 percent benefit.
- » 139 860 ISK per month based on 50 percent benefit.
- » 69 930 ISK per month based on 25 percent benefit (the minimum).
- » An additional amount of 11 189 ISK is paid, per month for each child in the family under the age of 18.

Payment from the funds of the union FÍN

Members of the union FÍN can apply for a grant from FÍN if they become unemployed. The total grant for a year is 200 000 ISK.

Pension

All employees and those engaged in business operations or independent activities are entitled and obliged to secure pension rights through membership of pension funds the age of 16 to the age of 70.¹²⁴

The pension entitlement premium is determined by special legislation, collective bargaining agreements, employment contracts and other similar means.

Collective pension fund

Membership in a pension fund and the division of contribution to it from employee and employer respectively is determined in collective agreements that determine the minimum terms in the profession in question, or special legislation if applicable. See some examples in table 2 below. If a collective agreement does not apply to the relevant area of activity or if

¹²⁴ Lög 129/1997.

employment-related terms of employment are not based on a collective agreement, the person concerned chooses a pension fund as the rules of individual funds allow. Membership of a pension fund shall be stated in a written employment contract.

Table 2 Contributions to pension funds

Contribution	LSR-A division	LSR-B division	LSS A-division	LSS-V division	General labour market
Employee	4% of salary	4% of salary	4% of salary	4% of salary	4% of salary
Employer	11,5% of salary	8% of salary	12% of salary	8% or 11,5% of salary	10% of salary
Total	15,5% of salary	12% of salary	16% of salary	12% or 15,5% of salary	14% of salary

Benefits of paying to a pension fund are (1) you receive pension for the rest of your life after retirement, (2) you are entitled to invalidity benefits and child support if you lose your ability to work, (3) a spouse can get child support if a paying member dies and (4) it is possible to get pension fund loans.

Practical tips

- » **Membership in a union** or professional association can help you with information and contacts.
- » **Unions can help** you customise your application letter and cv to national and sector customs if you become a member or guest member.
- » **Detailed information about** wages for different professions and counselling on wage negotiations, benefits and other rights are provided to members and guest members.
- » **As a member** you can and should send the contract to the union for a review before you sign.
- » **Make sure you** get a written employment contract to avoid conflicts.
- » **You should always** be able to go through the contract with the union.
- » **You should never** sign a contract that you do not understand.
- » **As a member you** can get legal assistance if there is a conflict concerning your employment or other matters related to employment relationships.
- » **When you need** assistance contact FÍN (Félag íslenskra náttúrufræðinga).
- » **See the checklist** for working abroad on page 128.

Additional retirement account

In some collective agreements there are provisions of 2 percent of additional contributions from the employer to an additional retirement account given that employee contribution is at least 2 percent (can be up to 4 percent). The employee can choose which additional retirement account holder to pay contributions to, such as banks, pension funds, savings banks, securities firm or life insurance firms.

Residence

A foreigner from a country outside of the European Economic Area and/or EFTA, who plans to stay in Iceland for more than three months, must have a valid residence permit. There are a number of categories of residence permits including e.g. work, studies, au pair, and family reunification.

Citizens from EEA and EFTA countries do not need a special residence permit to stay in Iceland but must register with Registers Iceland (Þjóðskrá Íslands). Family members of an EEA and/or EFTA citizen who is a third country national need to apply for a residence permit at the Icelandic Directorate of Immigration (Útlendingastofnun).

In order to get a permanent residence permit it is mandatory that the applicant has resided in Iceland continuously for 4 years amongst other requirements.

Citizenship

A foreign citizen who has been domiciled in Iceland for a certain period of time and fulfils the requirements of the Icelandic Nationality Act (No. 100/1952) can submit an application for Icelandic citizenship. For example general applicants shall have been resident in Iceland for seven years. For citizens of other Nordic countries, however, the requirement is only four years.

The applicant shall have demonstrated his identity satisfactorily and must be capable of working and have a good reputation, which he or she must demonstrate by submitting testimonials from two Icelandic citizens of good standing, and must pass a test in Icelandic, amongst other requirements.

Largest 20 employers per union

FÍN	
Landspítali - The National University Hospital of Iceland	120
Hafrannsóknastofnun Rannsókna- og ráðgjafarstofnun hafs og vatna – Marine & Freshwater Research Institute	150
Veðurstofa Íslands – Iceland Met Office	160
Reykjavíkurborg – Municipality of Reykjavík	9 000
Háskóli Íslands – University of Iceland	1 600
Mátis ehf	120
Alvotek hf	300
Íslenskar orkurannsóknir – Iceland Geosurvey	90
Umhverfisstofnun – The Environment Agency of Iceland	120
Landbúnaðarháskóli Íslands - The Agricultural University of Iceland	90
Raunvísindastofnun Háskólans – The Science Institute	160
Íslensk erfðagreining ehf. – deCODE genetics	280
Skógrækt ríkisins – Icelandic Forest Service	70
Actavis Group PTC ehf. - TEVA	300
Ráðgjafarmiðst landbúnaðar ehf - The Icelandic Agricultural Advisory Centre	50
Landgræðsla ríkisins - The Soil Conservation Service of Iceland	60
Náttúrufraeðistofnun Íslands – Icelandic Institute of Natural History	60
Matvælastofnun – Icelandic Food and Veterinary Authority	90
Orkuveita Reykjavíkur – Reykjavík Energy	180
ORF Liftækni hf. – ORF Genetics	60

Note: Ranked by number of members. The numbers in the table are the total number of employees in the organisation.

More information on moving and working

Job listings		
	Job Is	
	Glassdoor	
	Guide to Iceland	
	Directorate of Labour	
Public authorities		
Labour Court	Heradsdomstolar	
Public Employment Service/ Public Labour Office	Directorate of Labour	
Work Environment Authority	Vinnueftirlit	
Company Registration Office	Government of Iceland	
National Board of Housing, Building and Planning	Home and houses	
National Board of Housing, Building and Planning	Invest in Iceland	
The Equality Ombudsman	Government of Iceland	
Estate Agents Inspectorate	Fastighetsmäklarinspektionen	
Social Insurance Agency	Tryggingastofnun	
The Board of Agriculture	Government of Iceland	
Migration Agency	Fjölmenningarsetur	
Environmental Protection Agency	Umhverfisstofnun	
Pensions Agency	Government of Iceland	
Police	Lögreglan	
Tax agency	RSK	
National Agency for Education	Government of Iceland	
The National Board of Health and Welfare	Government of Iceland	
Customs Service	Directorate of Customs	
Forest Agency	Skogur	
Unions		
Icelandic Confederation of Professional Associations	Icelandic Confederation of Labour	
	Bandalag háskólamanna	

Unemployment funds		
Unemployment fund	Unemployment benefits	
	Fjölmenningssetur	
	Nordic Co-operation	
	Euraxess	
	Directorate of Labour	
Recognition of qualifications		
Evaluation of foreign qualifications	Government of Iceland	
List of regulated professions	Enic Naric	
	European Commission	
Teacher certification	Government of Iceland	
Healthcare professions	Directorate of Health	
Application for professional license	Directorate of Health	For healthcare practitioners.
	Mast	For professions within animal health and welfare.
Europapass	European Youth Portal	
Working in Iceland		
	Guide to Iceland	
	Prospects	
Learning the language		
List of Icelandic courses at universities	Icelandic Online	
General country information		
Several authorities	Inspired by Iceland	Iceland from A to Ö.
Icelandic embassies	Embassypages	Information about embassies of Iceland.
Tourist boards	The Icelandic Tourist aboard	Iceland's official website for tourism and travel information.
Icelandic Institute	Gateway to Iceland	Official site of Iceland.
Government	Government of Iceland	
Other resources		
Drivers license	Drivers license	
Personal identity number & ID card	ID numbers	
Association for Nordic Cooperation	Norden	



Reykjavik, Iceland.



Norway

Norway's nature is dramatic with large mountain areas. Norway is known for its oil and gas assets, for its northern lights and for being the happiest people on earth.

Small facts:

Capital: Oslo

Population: 5 323 933 (2018)

BNP per capita: €67 631 (2017)

Area: 385 207 km²

Highest point: Galdhøpiggen – 2 469 metres

Coastline: 28 953 km

Ice cover and glaciers: 2 790 km²

Largest lake: Mjøsa – 365 km²

National Day: May 17 (The constitution was approved in 1814)

Government: Constitutional monarchy

Parliament: Stortinget (169 seats)

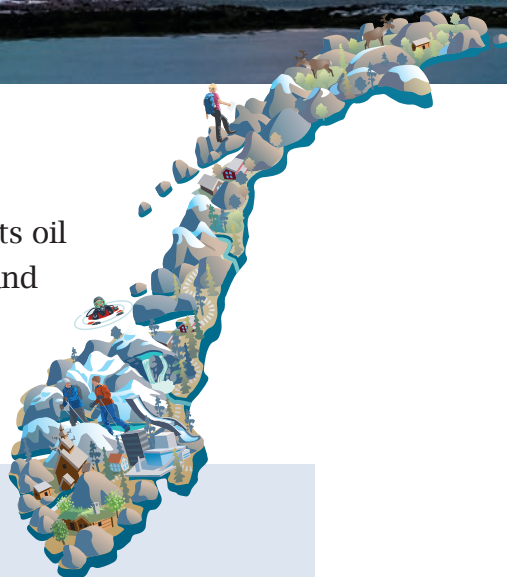
Membership in the EU: No

Membership in Nato: Since August 24, 1949

Currency: Norwegian krone

Official languages: Norwegian, Sámi

Official site: www.norge.no





Collective agreements

In Norway, trade unions have much greater influence than in many other countries. The trade union federations enter into national collective agreements with the employers. A collective agreement is an agreement between an employer's federation and a trade union federation concerning pay and working conditions. The pay and working conditions are usually better in workplaces that are bound by collective agreements than in most companies that are not. The size of your salary and other benefits depends on the term

In Norway we have what are called Hovedavtalen or the basic Agreement, is also called "the constitution of the working life". There are several hovedavtaler. The most important ones are the one between the government and the four main labour organizations for the employees in the public sector and the one between LO (the biggest labour organization) and NHO (The confederation of Norwegian Enterprise), Norway's largest organization for employers. It's unfortunately not translated into English, but Naturviterne can of course help you if you have questions related to this.

Employment protection

The employer must have objectively justified grounds to terminate an employment. The employer can terminate the employment due to redundancies or personal reasons. Normally, the employer must examine whether it is possible to relocate the employee to an available position within the employer's business. If there are an available position, which the employee is qualified for, the employee shall be relocated instead of dismissed.

In an international comparison, the employment protection in Norway is quite high for fixed-term employments. Fixed term-employments are much harder regulated in Norway, compared to e.g. Sweden or Denmark. However, when it comes to dismissals of indefinite employments, the employment protection is quite low for both dismissals due to redundancies as well as for dismissals referred to personal reasons. When dismissing employees due to redundancy, the employer can select quite freely which employees to keep. However, the selection must be objectively justifiable. As opposed to Sweden, the length of service, "seniority", is not a criterion provided for by law when determining the selection.¹²⁵ In Norway the employer must

¹²⁵ However, the basic agreement between the main social partners states that seniority shall be applied.

consider individual concerns and social circumstances. When an employee has been terminated due to redundancies the employee may have a preferential right to a new employment within the employer's business. To be eligible for preferential right the person must have been employed for at least 12 months during the last 2 years and must possess the qualifications needed for the position. The preferential right applies from the date on which the notice is given and is valid for one year after the notice period has been completed.

Fixed-term employments

Temporary employments are allowed under certain conditions, for example when the work is of a temporary nature, the work constitutes trainee work, or when the position is a temporary replacement. Furthermore, there are a general 12-month employment, which does not require a specific reason for the time limitation.

The main principle is that a fixed-term employment runs throughout the whole contract period. However, the parties may agree that the employment could be terminated during the contract period. The possibility of pre-termination of a temporary employment may also be agreed upon in a collective agreement together with notice periods that shall apply for that event.

Indefinite employment

Permanent, or indefinite, employment is the norm. Indefinite employments can be terminated with a notice time. According to the Working Environment Act the notice time is 1 month, unless otherwise agreed in a collective agreement or the working contract. The employee may be entitled to a longer notice time than 1 month depending on employment time and age.

Permanent employments could be initiated with a probationary employment. Probationary employments are allowed for up to 6 months but could be extended under special circumstances. During the probationary employment, the employee may be dismissed on the grounds that the employee lacks suitability for the work, or lack of proficiency or reliability. During a probationary employment, the period of notice is 14 days. If the probationary employment is not terminated within the 6-month period, it automatically becomes a permanent employment.

Note that there may be another notice period stated in a collective agreement or the working contract.

Employment contract

The employment contract must at least contain information on:

1. Names and addresses of the employer and the employee (identity of the parties).
2. The location of the work place.
3. A short description of the work duties, or the employee's title, post or category of work.
4. The commencement date of the employment.
5. The expected duration of the employment if the employment is temporary, and the basis for the temporary employment
6. Any provisions relating to a probationary period.

7. The employee's entitlement to vacation and vacation pay, and the rules for fixing of dates for holidays.
8. Notice periods for the employee and employer.
9. The agreed salary, any supplements and other remunerations that are not part of the salary, e.g. pension contributions, supplements for meals and lodging. Information on the method of payment and payment intervals must be included.
10. Agreed weekly or daily working hours.
11. Length of breaks.
12. Agreements applicable to the employment concerning a special working hour arrangement.
13. Information concerning any collective agreement that regulate the employment.

Salary

There is no general minimum wage in Norway. Wages are subject to agreement between the employer and the employee as part of the written employment contract. Although there is no general minimum wage in Norway, minimum rates of pay have been introduced in certain sectors, for academic professions this is not be a problem.

Employees who hold a residence permit in order to work for an employer in Norway shall have pay and working conditions in accordance with the conditions of the residence permit. This applies regardless of whether you work in a sector where there is a minimum wage.

The mean salary in 2018 for members of Naturviterne was 623 000 NOK (63 400 €). In the private sector the mean is 655 000 (66 600 €) while there was approximately 610 000 (62 000 €) in the public sector.

Work culture

The Norwegian work culture is known by its flat structure and empowered staff. For a foreigner it may be difficult to distinguish the boss from the rest of the employees, but for people from the other Nordic countries it should be okay. Decision-making is often by consensus. There is a high degree of autonomy in both what employees do and how they do it, and there is generally a high level of trust that everyone contributes to the common goals and objectives. Dress code is informal in most businesses, but as in other countries – there are still some places where a suit is what is wanted, but you seldom see a tie these days.

Norwegians are often motivated by personal development, a good working environment and friendly colleagues, rather than financial rewards. Employees are to a large extent expected to work for the common good, and to a lesser extent for personal fame and fortune. However, you will still find work cultures where personal achievement is valued, especially in sales and financial services.

A characteristic of Norwegian professional life is the important work/life balance. There is a general notion that people work to live rather than live to work. Norwegian lifestyle focuses on

family values, sports and outdoor life. Norwegians have a close relation to nature, and many families have cabins close to the coast or in the mountains.

Children are highly valued in society and this also influences work culture. It is acceptable for families with young children to leave work early to pick up their children from kindergarten.

Working time

The prescribed limits of ordinary working time are 9 hours per 24 hours, or 40 hours per week. An alternative arrangement is permitted, through which the working time is calculated as a fixed average over a certain period, meaning that the employee may work more during some period and less during others. The average ordinary working time must however be within the limits of the contractual ordinary working hours during a defined reference period. The alternative arrangement must be agreed upon in a collective agreement or the working contract. In some cases, the Labour Inspection Authority may grant the alternative arrangement without such an agreement.

Employees in leading or in particularly independent positions may be excepted from the working time regulation. The employer shall keep an account of all employee's working hours

Some groups of employees are entitled to reduced working time according to the Working Environment Act. These groups are employees over 62 years old, employees with health issues, social reasons, or other important welfare reasons. The precondition for work time reduction is that the reason must be properly documented, and that the reduction does not cause a major inconvenience for the employer's business. As a result of the reduction in working time, the salary will decrease correspondingly.

Overtime

Time worked in excess of the ordinary working hours is regarded as overtime. Overtime work is only permitted in exceptional situations when there is a time-limited need for excess work.

Overtime may be ordered for up to 10 hours a week, 25 hours per 4 consecutive weeks or 200 hours per calendar year. However, daily- and weekly rest periods must be observed, which means that the employee shall enjoy at least 11 continuous hours of daily rest and 35 continuous hours of weekly rest. The total working time may not exceed 48 hours per week during a reference period of 8 weeks. Within certain limits, it is possible for the social partners to conclude a collective agreement on extended overtime limits and shortened rest periods.

During overtime work, the employee is entitled to a supplement of at least 40 percent of the agreed hourly pay. The supplement may be higher in a collective agreement. Leaders and staff in independent positions may be exempted from the right to the overtime supplement.

Vacation

According to the Norwegian Holiday Act each employee is entitled to 25 vacation days per year. In practice the annual vacation will amount to 4 weeks and 1 day since Saturdays count as a work day. Employees aged 60 or older is entitled to one additional vacation week per year. If you start your employment after 30 October, you are only entitled to 6 vacation days.

The employer is entitled to receive 3 continuous weeks of vacation during the main holiday period 1 June – 30 September. The employee is entitled to take the remainder of the holiday as one continuous period.

The law separates between the right to vacation and the right to paid vacation. To get paid vacation, the vacation days must be earned during the qualifying year. According to the Holiday Act the holiday year follows the calendar year. The qualifying year is the preceding calendar year. If you haven't earned all your paid vacation, you are still entitled to 25 vacation days, even though not all of them will be paid. The holiday pay consists of 10.2 percent of the wages paid during the qualifying year. The percentage depends on how many vacation days you have.

It is common that employers' practice 5-week vacations instead of the 4 weeks and 1 day which Norwegian law provides.

Sick during your holiday

If you are sick during the holiday, you may claim a corresponding number of days off later in the year. Such a claim must be supported by a medical certificate and be submitted as soon as possible after returning to work.

Parental leave

In connection to a child's birth both parents are entitled to a full time leave until the child is 12 months old. In addition, each parent is entitled to an additional parental leave of up to 12 months each. This leave is not dependant on whether parental benefits get paid out or not. The employee is normally entitled to go on a part time leave. The part time leave must be taken within a time frame of three years.

If the mother is unable to work during the pregnancy due to a possible risk of harm to the baby, the mother is entitled to pregnancy benefits. Both parents are entitled to a two week leave in connection to the child's birth.

Beyond the parental leave connected to the child's birth, parents are entitled to a combined three years of unpaid leave to care for a child, called family care leave. Family care leave can be used until the child turns 12 and can be used simultaneously by both parents. Pensions continues to get paid during this kind of leave. However, family care leave does not entitle the employee to a part time leave or a leave shorter than 6 months and may lead to a reduction of sickness benefits.

Parental benefits

An employee who has been working for at least six out of the last ten months prior to the birth of a child is entitled to parental benefits for 43 weeks (full rate) or 53 weeks (reduced daily rate). The parental benefit will not cover salaries exceeding six times the National insurance basic amount.¹²⁶ The parental benefit is based on your income at the start of the leave.

¹²⁶ 2018 the limit was yearly incomes of 574 800 NOK.

The benefit period is a maximum of 49 weeks with 100 percent coverage, or 59 weeks with 80 percent coverage. 15 respectively 19 weeks of the parental leave is reserved for each parent, depending on coverage. With 100 percent coverage the quota for paternity and maternity leave is 15 weeks each. With 80 percent coverage the quota is 19 weeks each.

Self-employed

The parental benefits will be calculated based on your average pensionable income during the past 3 years. The levels are the same as it is for employees.

Sickness

If you get sick you must notify the employer as soon as possible. Employees are normally entitled to self-declared sick leave, which means that you do not have to present a doctor's certificate to the employer. The main rule is that self-declared sick leave may be utilized for up to three calendar days at a time. If the sickness goes on longer than three calendar days, you must be able to provide your employer with a doctor's certificate. Self-declared sick leave can be used for up to four times over a 12-month period. To qualify for self-declared sick leave, you must have been employed for at least two months. However, the conditions may differ.

Practical tips

- » **Membership in a union** or professional association can help you with information and contacts.
- » **Unions can help** you customise your application letter and cv to national and sector customs if you become a member or guest member.
- » **Detailed information about** wages for different professions and counselling on wage negotiations, benefits and other rights are provided to members and guest members.
- » **As a member** you can and should send the contract to the union for a review before you sign.
- » **Make sure you** get a written employment contract to avoid conflicts.
- » **You should always** be able to go through the contract with the union.
- » **You should never** sign a contract that you do not understand.
- » **As a member you** can get legal assistance if there is a conflict concerning your employment or other matters related to employment relationships.
- » **When you need** assistance contact contact Naturviterne.
- » **See the checklist** for working abroad on page 128.

If the sickness continues for a longer period than what is allowed by the self-declaration, you must receive a doctor's certificate to be able to continue your sick absence. The employer must adjust your working tasks if necessary and must follow you up during your sick leave.

The general rule is that sickness is not an objectively justifiable reason for terminating an employment. In the event of an illness or an accident the employer is forbidden to terminate the employment due to reasons connected to the illness or accident during the first 12 months.

Sickness benefit

To be eligible for sickness benefit you must have been employed for at least four weeks before the sick leave begins. The benefit gets paid for a maximum of 52 weeks. Furthermore, the illness must be documented either by a self-declaration or by a sick leave certificate from your doctor. You are entitled to the benefit from your first day of absence. The employer pays the sickness benefit for the first 16 days. From day 17 the social insurance agency (NAV), takes over the payments.

The sickness benefit is based on your average income during the last three calendar months preceding the absence. Overtime pay is not included. You may get sickness benefit equivalent to full wages up to six times the National insurance basic amount. The benefit does not cover salary shares that exceeds that amount. If you're on a part time sick leave, your benefit will correspond to the absence.

The benefit will normally expire after 12 months of sick leave. If you are not able to work after 12 months, it is possible to receive other benefits, such as; rehabilitation benefits or disability benefits.

Self-employed

If you are self-employed you are entitled to sickness benefits on your 17th day of sickness absence. The benefit amounts to approximately 75 percent of your income.

Unemployment

To be eligible for unemployment benefits you must register as job-seeking at the unemployment agency NAV. You should register at NAV the first day of unemployment, and you shall submit your unemployment benefit application within 4 weeks. If you get severance pay from your former employer, the general rule is that you do not get the benefit during the period for which the severance pay applies.

To be entitled to unemployment benefits you must meet the main requirements:

- » Your working hours is reduced to at least 50 percent.
- » You have had a minimum work income of at least 1.5 times the National Insurance basic amount during the last year, or at least 3 times the basic amount during the previous three calendar years.
- » You are actively seeking jobs.
- » You are a legal resident of Norway.

If you have been granted the benefit you will not receive payment for the first three days, called the waiting period. However, if you are to blame for losing your employment, meaning that you do not have a reasonable cause, you will get suspended from the benefit for at least 12 weeks.

The full benefit amounts to approximately 62.5 percent of your previously earned income (2019). The benefit is tax liable.

The length of the time period with benefit depends on your earned income. If your income exceeds 2 times the national insurance basic amount you may receive the benefit up to 104 weeks. If your income is less than 2 times the national insurance basic amount you may receive the benefit up to 52 weeks.

Pensions

The pension system in Norway consists of a public pension system, a mandatory occupational pension system and a personal saving arrangement system. The public pension consists of several parts, such as: basic pension, guarantee pension, supplementary pension and income-related pension.

You are entitled to public pension from the National Insurance Scheme (Folketrygden) if you are over 16 years old and have lived or worked in Norway for at least three years. The pension gets paid out from age of 67. In some cases, you may start withdrawing your pension at age 62. The longer you wait until withdrawing your pension, the bigger your pension will become. To receive full public pension, you must have lived or worked in Norway for at least 40 years. The public pension gets earned between the ages of 16 – 67. If you haven't been actively participating in working life, it might be possible to receive a basic pension. There are no special regulations for self-employed, students or cross border workers. The pension varies between different age groups. The size of the pension depends on how many years you have worked and how much you have earned during your working years. The public pension system underwent a big reform in 2011. As a result, different age groups have different earnings. Contact NAV to find out what applies to you.

The income-related pension reflects your income over your lifetime. 18.1 percent of your yearly income, up to 7.1 National Insurance Basic Amounts¹²⁷ gets deposited to your pension account. For example; sickness benefits, unemployment benefits, disability benefits also count as pensionable income.

Occupational pension is mandatory since 2006. The employer must deposit at least 2 percent of the employee's income to a defined contribution plan up to the limit of 12 National Insurance basic amounts. If there is a collective agreement, the amounts that get deposited are often bigger.

Self employed

If you are self-employed you may get tax deductions on the amount that you deposit into an occupational pension scheme.

¹²⁷ 2019 the limit is 680 180 NOK.

Social security in Norway

Access to social security in Norway is connected either to residency or employment. You are normally regarded as a member of the National Insurance Scheme if you have legally resided in Norway for at least 12 months. If you work here, your employer is responsible for registering your membership in the National insurance Scheme.

Some entitlements are dependent on how long you have been a member of the national insurance scheme, or whether you are covered by a social security agreement.

If you meet the requirements these are some of the benefits that you may claim:

- » Child benefits
- » Pregnancy benefits
- » Parental benefits
- » Sickness benefits
- » Attendance allowance
- » Disability benefits
- » Housing allowance

EU, EEA and Nordic social security rights

Social security benefits may have certain qualification requirements. As an EU or EEA citizen you are covered by the EU regulation 883/2004, and as a Nordic citizen you are also covered by the Nordic convention on social security as described on page 19. In accordance with these regulations you may be able to account for qualification time within the Nordics, EU or the EEA. This means that you can account for insurance or employment time in another Nordic country when applying for e.g. unemployment benefits in Norway. Note that the qualification times or requirements to be eligible for a certain benefit may differ between the countries

You have more rights and protection when moving to Norway from another Nordic country in some matters, for example work-life rehabilitation.

Your family members are also covered by the Norwegian social security system if you work in Norway and your family lives there. However, the situation might be different if you are a border worker and you work in Norway but you and your family live in another country. Make sure to know what rules apply to you.

Largest 20 employers per union

Naturviterne	
Miljødirektoratet – Norwegian Environment Agency	700
Norsk Landbruksrådgiving – Norwegian agricultural advisory	300
Statens Vegvesen – The norwegian Public Roads Administration	6 500
Tine – Tine (Diary)	5 500
Mattilsynet – The norwegian safe authority	300
Norsk institutt for bioøkonomi (NIBIO) – Norwegian Institute of bioeconomy research	700
Fylkesmannen i Innlandet – The county governor in Innlandet	300
Universitetet i Oslo – The University in Oslo	6 200
Fylkesmannen i Oslo og Viken – The county governor in Oslo and Viken	600
Norges Bondelag – Norwegian Farmers association	100
Oslo kommune – Oslo Municipality	50 000
Fylkesmannen i Trøndelag – The county governor in trøndelag	300
NTNU (Norwegian University of Science and Technology)	7 400
Fylkesmannen i Troms og Finnmark – The county governor in Troms and Finnmark	200
Felleskjøpet Agri SA – A Norwegian agricultural cooperative	3 700
Landbruksdirektoratet – Norwegian agriculture agency	200
Trøndelag fylkeskommune – Trøndelag County Council	4 500
Viken Skog SA – A forestry Cooperation for forest owners	100
NMBU (Norwegian University of Life Science)	1 500
Universitetet i Bergen – The university of Bergen	4 300

Note: Ranked by number of members. The numbers in the table are the total number of employees in the organisation

More information on moving and working

Job listings		
	NAV	Public Employment Service
	Naturviterne	Job listings, union
	Jobsafari	Job listings, private provider
	Sverige Norge	Between Sweden and Norway. Public sector jobs.
	Jobbnorge	
Job listings, students/recent graduates	Academic work	
	Jobbspranget	Internships for foreign academics
Public authorities		
Labour Court	Arbeidsretten	
Public Employment Service	NAV	
Work Environment Authority	Arbeidstilsynet	
Norwegian Companies Registration Office	Brønnøysundregistrene	
National Board of Housing, Building and Planning	Government.no	
The Equality Ombudsman	Likestillings- og diskrimineringsombudet	
Social Insurance Agency	NAV	
The Board of Agriculture	Landbruksdirektoratet	
Migration Agency	UDI	
Environmental Protection Agency	Miljødirektoratet	
Pensions Agency	Norsk Pensjon	
Police	Politi	
Tax agency	Skatteetaten	
National Agency for Education	Utdanningsdirektoratet	
The National Board of Health and Welfare	NAV	
Customs Service	Tolldirektoratet	
Forest Agency	Government.no	

Unions		
Norwegians Association of Professional Scientists	Naturviterne	
Norwegians Confederation of Professional Associations	Akademikerne	
Unemployment funds		
Unemployment fund	NAV	
Federation of unemployment insurance funds	NAV	
Unemployment transition fund	Trygghetsstiftelsen	Government employees.
	Omstillningsfonden	Municipality employees.
	TRR	Private sector employees.
Recognition of qualifications		
Evaluation of foreign qualifications	Nokut	Recognition of foreign qualifications.
List of professions	Nokut	
Teacher certification	Utdanningsdirektoratet	
Healthcare professions	Helsedirektoratet	
Application for professional license	Helsedirektoratet	For healthcare practitioners.
	Landbruksdirektoratet	For professions within animal health and welfare.
Europapass	Europapass	
Working in Norway		
	NAV	Collection of information from several public authorities and agencies.
	Ny i Norge	
Learning the language		
List of norwegianww courses at universities	University of Oslo	
General country information		
Several authorities	Ny i Norge	Information about Norway for asylum seekers and people who have recently been granted a residence permit.

Norwegians embassies	Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs	Information about visits, move, work or study in Norway.
Tourist boards	Visit Norway	Norways's official website for tourism and travel information.
Norwegian Institute	Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs	Information about visits, move, work or study in Norway.
Regeringskansliet	Regjeringen	
Work abroad in a regulated profession	Universitets- og høyskolerådet	
Other resources		
Drivers license	Statens vegvesen	
Personal identity number & ID card	The Norwegian Tax Administration	
Association for Nordic Cooperation	Föreningen Norden	
Association for Norwegians abroad	ANSA	



The largest country in the Nordic region is also the one with the most inhabitants. Sweden is known for its quality cars, for its music export and there are about 400 000 moose walking around in the Swedish forests.



Small facts:

Capital: Stockholm
Population: 10 182 291 (2018)
BNP per capita: €47 574 (2017)
Area: 450 295 km²
Highest point: Kebnekaise – 2 106 m
Coastline: 11 530 km
Ice cover and glaciers: 283 km²
Largest lake: Vänern 5 648 km²
National Day: June 6
Government: Constitutional monarchy
Parliament: Riksdagen (349 seats)
Membership in the EU: Since January 1, 1995
Membership in Nato: No
Currency: Svensk krona (SEK)
Official languages: Swedish
Official site: www.sweden.se



Collective agreements

Collective agreements can be concluded on different levels. There are central agreements, which covers a certain industry or sector. Central agreements are concluded between employee and employers' organisations and sets out general employment and working terms which can deviate from the law, or complement the law, based on the prerequisites that characterises the industry. At the company level it is also common with local agreements which complements the central agreements, adapting the terms to what best suits the local conditions. Local agreements are concluded between the local union and the employer.

Collective agreements are binding for the organisations that have signed the agreements and their members. This means that both individual members as well as their organisations can invoke the rules of the collective agreements in front of a court and claim damages in the event of contract breaches. The matter of which categories of employees that are covered by the agreement is determined through an interpretation of the agreement, foremost through a determination of what the social partners mutual intention was when the agreement was concluded. Collective agreements only apply to employees, which means that self-employed persons or hired staff are not covered by the collective agreement.

It is quite common that employers are bound by separate agreements for blue-collar workers and white-collar workers. It is also common that several unions have signed the same agreement at the local or central level, sometimes with minor differences in terms.

Collective agreements regulate many areas of labour law. For the employee the most beneficial aspects of a collective agreement usually are that the agreement obligates the employer to provide the employees with necessary work insurances, paying additional reimbursement to the employee when on parental leave or sick leave, as well as making regular deposits to an occupational pension fund with advantageous fees.

Employment protection

The employer must have objective grounds in order to terminate an employment. A termination can be referred to redundancy or personal reasons. When the reason for dismissal is referred to redundancy¹²⁸, the employment protection is not especially strong in an international

¹²⁸ Simplified, redundancy involves all business-related reasons that is objectively acceptable, which cannot be referred to an employee personally.

comparison. When it comes to dismissal due to personal reasons¹²⁹ the employment protection is quite strong in comparison to other countries within the OECD.¹³⁰

Regardless of whether the dismissal is based on redundancy or personal reasons, the general rule is that employer must reposition the employee if there are an available position that the employee is qualified for.

An employee who has been dismissed due to redundancy has a preferential right to re-employment if the following requirements are met: (1) The employee must have been employed within the employer's business for at least 1 year during the last three years, (2) the vacant position in question is a regular position, (3) the employment must be located to the employee's former work place, (4) the employee must possess the necessary qualifications needed. The preferential right is valid during the notice time and continues for 9 months after the employment has been terminated. Note that the employee must early on announce that he or she wants to make use of the preferential right.

Indefinite employments

The employer can terminate the employment with a notice period of at least 1 month. If the employer terminates the contract the notice period varies depending on how long you have been employed within the employer's business.

An indefinite employment can begin with a probationary employment of a maximum of 6 months. During the probationary employment you do not have any employment protection. If the employer wants to terminate a probationary employment, the notice time is 2 weeks. If the contract does not get terminated within the probational period, the employment automatically turns into an indefinite employment. The notice time may be longer if agreed in the working contract or in a collective agreement.

Fixed-term employments

The main principle is that fixed term contracts is non-terminable and runs throughout the whole contract period. However, you can agree in the working contract that the employment should be able to terminate with a notice period. If there are a collective agreement, the collective agreement can regulate if fixed-term employments should be terminable or not, and what notice time that should apply for that event.

¹²⁹ Personal reasons are all reasons that can be referred to the persons suitability as an employee. Dismissal due to personal reasons can be based on, for example; sickness, misconduct, or deficient working ability.

¹³⁰ OECD (2013) and Källström & Malmberg (2016).

Employment contract

The working contract must contain matters of major importance for the employment relationship. According to the Swedish Employment Protection Act, the contract shall at least contain:

1. The names and addresses of the employer and employee, the commencement date of the employment and the location of the workplace.
2. A short specification or description of the employee's duties, employment position or title.
3. Information on whether the employment is for a fixed or indefinite term or whether it is probationary employment.
 - a. with respect to an indefinite-term employment: the periods of notice applicable.
 - b. with respect to fixed-term employment: the final date of employment or the conditions governing its termination, and what form of fixed-term employment the employment refers to.
 - c. with respect to probationary employment: the length of the probationary period.
4. The salary, other employment benefits and the intervals at which the salary is to be paid.
5. The length of the employee's paid annual leave and the length of the employee's normal working day or working week.
6. The collective bargaining agreement applicable, if there are any.

Salary

In Sweden, there is no law regulated minimum wage. However, in collective agreements that cover blue collar workers, minimum wages occur quite frequently. Collective agreements that covers salaried employees do not regulate minimum wages. However, central collective agreements covering salaried employees almost always defines basic wage criteria's which shall be applied when determining the salary level. The criteria stipulated in central collective agreements are often further concretized in a local collective agreement or a policy in companies bound by the central agreement. If there are no collective agreement, the company usually has a policy with wage criteria similar to those in collective agreements.

The median salary level for the whole population in Sweden is 30 000 SEK (2 770 €). For Naturvetarnas members the median salary level is 38 300 (3 540 €) (2018). In the private sector the median salary for Naturvetarnas members is 42 700 SEK (2018), in the municipality and county sector, 35 075 SEK (2018), and in the public sector, included universities and college sector, 37 500 SEK (2018).

How to behave in the interview

Preparing for an interview is important, especially when searching for information about the job and the employer. Study the job ad carefully and try to connect your competence, background and experience to what the employer seeks. Prepare several questions for the interview about the job, the workplace and the employment and working conditions. This shows that you are interested, and it might also give you important information about the workplace and whether the job is suitable for you. You should arrive well ahead to the interview, don't be late. You might be subjected to different tests intended to measure your skills or suitability for the job.

How to negotiate your salary

The opportunity for salary negotiations opens when you apply for a new job, change your work tasks, or if a non-reasonable wage gap has occurred between you and your colleagues. When you go to a job interview you should base your arguments on your competence, experience skills, personal qualities, and suitability for the work in question. Try to sell yourself, focus on all the positive things that you can offer if you get the job.

If you work in a company that has a collective agreement you are most certainly entitled to a yearly salary review, including a salary talk. The salary talk should focus on your performance and goal achievements during the previous year. For example, if you have taken on a big responsibility, or if you have to a large degree contributed to the company development you should have a good chance of receiving a high salary increase in relation to others in your company which haven't reached the goals set or have performed poorly. Prepare carefully with the list of all the results and achievements you have accomplished since the last salary review. Also, take notes during the salary talk. Even if your workplace does not have a collective agreement, companies often offer salary revisions anyways.

Work culture

For salaried workers it is common that you yourself have a large responsibility for planning and executing your work. Own initiatives, a big drive to develop processes or products, availability and helpfulness and cooperation are key factors that many employers reward. However, many Swedes work too much overtime and take on too much responsibility. Therefore, we strongly recommend that you set boundaries for yourself regarding the amount of work, but also when it comes to availability outside of normal working hours.

Punctuality is important in Sweden, especially when you have an agreed-upon time with a customer, but it is also important to respect time tables in relation to your supervisor or a colleague. If you have a life situation that makes it hard for you to be in time or meet a deadline, discuss this with your supervisor at an early stage.

Many workplaces have adopted flexible working hours which means that you can come to work, for example, between 7 and 9 and leave between 15 and 17. If a workplace uses flexible working hours, employees themselves have to make sure that they work for the length of time that has been agreed upon.

Working time

The regular working time shall not exceed 40 hours per week, according to the Swedish Working Hours Act. If an unexpected event occurs, the employer is normally allowed to order the employee to work overtime.

The Working Hours Act allows far-reaching deviations through collective agreements. However, such deviations are not allowed to result in less favourable conditions than what is prescribed by EU's working time directive, Directive 2003/88/EG. Many collective agreements have similar rules and limits regarding ordinary working time and overtime when comparing to corresponding rules prescribed in the working hours act.

Normally, the employer has the right to both temporarily or permanently change the distribution of the working time, as long as the change is within the limits of the Working Time Act or a collective agreement. However, the employer is forbidden to totally change the working hours, if it goes against what is customary with respect to the type of work, and what is common practice within the employer's business and the industry.

Overtime

The working time act allows the employer to take out 50 hours general overtime per month per employee, with a maximum limit of 200 hours per year. If there are certain reasons for it and the situation can not be solved in another way, extra overtime in excess of the general overtime, may be ordered with up to 50 hours per month or 150 hours extra per employee per year.¹³¹ The total working time may not exceed an average of 48 hours per week during a reference period of 4 months. In collective agreements this 48-hour rule may have a reference period of up to 12 months.

Normally, the employer has a right to single handily order overtime work without any consent from the employee. However, if the employee is unable to work overtime, due to a difficult private life situation, the employer must normally take this into consideration.

The right to overtime compensation is often regulated in the collective agreement or the individual working contract. However, salaried workers may have negotiated away overtime compensation for a few extra vacation days and/or higher salary. If there are no agreement regarding the right to overtime compensation, the employee normally is entitled to economic compensation. The size of the economic compensation is determined by what is customary in the industry, with consideration to the compensation levels prescribed by the nearest pertinent collective agreement.

In collective agreements there is often a possibility to take out compensation either as money or compensational leave. However, if there are no agreement regulating the matter, neither the employer nor the employee can demand that overtime shall be compensated through compensational leave instead of economic compensation.

Vacation

According to the Swedish Vacation Act every employee who has an employment that exceeds three months is entitled to 25 vacation days per year. Some collective agreements entitle the employee to more vacation days than what is prescribed by law. The employee can also be entitled to more vacation days if agreed upon by the employer and the employee.

The law separates between the right to vacation and the right to paid vacation. To get paid vacation, the vacation days must be earned. According to the law the vacation days gets earned between 1 of April to 31 of Mars (qualifying year). The same period directly following the qualifying year is called the vacation year. It is during the vacation year you get paid vacation. If you

¹³¹ For part time employees, only 200 hours overtime per employee per year can be ordered. No extra overtime can be ordered other than emergency overtime.

have not earned all your paid vacation, you are still entitled to 25 vacation days, even though not all of them will be paid. However, if you begin your employment after 31st of August you are only entitled to 5 vacation days during that vacation year.

If your employment is covered by a collective agreement other time periods for the qualifying year and the vacation year may apply.

Every employee is normally entitled to four continuous vacation weeks during the summer period June–August. Even though it is very unusual, this period might be longer according to some collective agreements.

Parental leave

Every employee has entitled to go on parental leave, regardless of employment form. The mother has the right to go on parental leave at least 7 weeks before the estimated time of birth and 7 weeks after the birth. 2 out of these 14 weeks are mandatory. The father is entitled to go on a leave for up to 10 working days in connection to the birth of the child. During these days the father can receive “temporary parental benefits”, which are separate from the parental benefits quota.

If the mother is unable to work during the pregnancy due to risks in the working environment, the mother shall be repositioned. If a repositioning is not possible, the mother can receive pregnancy benefits.

You are entitled to full leave, with or without parental benefits until the child is 18 months old. After the child has turned 18 months old, you must take out parental benefits from the Swedish Social Insurance Agency (Försäkringskassan) to be entitled to go on a full parental leave. However, after the child’s first birthday you must take out parental benefits in order to protect your SGI¹³².

The right to part time leave without parental benefit

You have a right to part time leave, up to 25 percent of the normal employment rate until the child turns 8 years old or is older than 8 but hasn’t finished the first school year.

The right to part time leave with parental benefit

During a period when you get parental benefits with 12.5, 25, 50 or 75 percent, you are entitled to a corresponding parental leave.

Notification period

The main principle is that employee has the right to choose how he or she wants to allocate the parental leave. However, the employee must normally notify the employer 2 months ahead of the parental leave, or another time period if prescribed in a collective agreement.

¹³² Sjukpenninggrundande inkomst or “SGI” is an amount calculated by Försäkringskassan which is based on your salary and determines how much money you will get from Försäkringskassan while on a sick leave or parental leave.

The parental benefit

The parents get a total 480 days of parental benefit which they themselves choose how to distribute between each other, except from 90 days each which are reserved for each parent.

The parental benefit amounts to approximately 80 percent of the salary for 390 days if the parents take out full parental benefit, 7 days a week.¹³³ Day 390-480, the benefit is 180 SEK per day regardless of income.

If you are covered by the Swedish social security system but have no income you get 7 500 SEK per month. The same amount normally gets paid to students. In some cases, a person can get the parental benefit based on a former salary if the person for example is studying or is unemployed.

Self-employed

The benefit level is the same if you are self-employed.

Practical tips

- » **Membership in a union** or professional association can help you with information and contacts.
- » **Unions can help** you customise your application letter and cv to national and sector customs if you become a member or guest member.
- » **Detailed information about** wages for different professions and counselling on wage negotiations, benefits and other rights are provided to members and guest members.
- » **As a member** you can and should send the contract to the union for a review before you sign.
- » **Make sure you** get a written employment contract to avoid conflicts.
- » **You should always** be able to go through the contract with the union.
- » **You should never** sign a contract that you do not understand.
- » **As a member you** can get legal assistance if there is a conflict concerning your employment or other matters related to employment relationships.
- » **When you need** assistance contact Naturvetarna.
- » **See the checklist** for working abroad on page 128.

¹³³ The parental benefit does not cover salary shares that exceeds approximately 37 900 SEK per month.

Sickness

If you get sick the employer is responsible for rehabilitation so that you can return to work as soon as possible. The general rule is that sickness is not a valid reason for terminating the employment. Given that the medical prognosis is that you will be able to go back to work within the employer's business, the employer is forbidden to terminate the employment. If the prognosis is that the sickness causes a continuous reduction of the work capacity being so substantial that you are not able to perform work of importance, the sickness can be a valid reason for terminating the contract. However, even in these cases possibilities to regain working capacity by medical and work-life rehabilitation must be ruled out.

Sickness benefits

From day 1-14 the employer pays 80 percent of your ordinary salary. From day 15 Försäkringskassan pays sickness benefits, which amounts to approximately 80 percent of the salary, up to the maximum level of approximately 31 000 SEK (2 870€) per month (2019).

The sickness benefit is time limited and can be paid out during a maximum of 349 days within a 450-day frame period. After 364 days you may get prolonged sickness benefit if you still lack working ability in relation to the labour market in general. During this period the benefit is reduced by 25 %, consisting of approximately 55 percent of the ordinary salary. The prolonged sickness benefits normally get payed out for a total of 550 days. If the person has a very serious sickness, the person can be allowed continued benefits. These are without any time limits and the level is the same as the normal level, 80 percent.

Unemployment

To be eligible for unemployment benefits you must be registered as job-seeking at the Swedish Unemployment Agency (Arbetsförmedlingen). This means that you must be available for suitable employment offers.

To receive income-based unemployment benefits you must have worked prior to the unemployment. The main rule is that you must have worked for at least 6 months during the past year, with a minimum of 80 hours per calendar month. The benefit is based on the income during the previous 12-month period prior to the unemployment. If you have been a member of an unemployment fund (A-kassa) for at least 12 months, the maximum reimbursement you can get is 910 SEK 5 days a week. You can receive the maximum reimbursement for 100 days. After 100 days the maximum reimbursement decreases to 760 SEK 5 days a week.

Some periods are skippable up to five years back in time, which means that you can get the unemployment benefit determined on a period that lies more than 12 months back in time. Examples of skippable time are; sickness absence, parental leave, or full-time studies if certain requirements are met.

If you are not a member of an unemployment fund, or hasn't been a member for 12 months, you can apply for basic reimbursement. The maximum amount for basic reimbursement is approximately 7 300 SEK per month.

The reimbursement from the unemployment fund is tax liable and pension qualifying.

Income insurance

Today, most Swedish unions has an income insurance included in the membership. The income insurance gives an additional economical compensation during the unemployment. The income insurance complements the unemployment benefit giving you up to 80 percent of your ordinary salary. The income insurance often has a qualification time of 12 months, which means that you must have been a member of the union for at least 12 months to be eligible for the insurance.

The unions offer different levels on their income insurances. The basic insurance level usually is between 100 – 200 reimbursement days, and the maximum income level covered is somewhere between 50 000 – 120 000 SEK. Most unions also offer an additional insurance. The additional insurance gives you an additional number of compensation days and cover higher incomes.

Readjustment agreements

To further help and support employees that get dismissed due to redundancies, there are readjustment agreements in all sectors of the labour market. The purpose with these agreements is to prevent long unemployment periods and to provide the person with economic support during a transitional period. The economic support gets paid out if you meet certain requirements. The economic support is similar to the income insurance and gets paid out as a complement to the unemployment benefit during a limited time period. Furthermore, the agreements are connected to foundations that offer the person different measures, such as career guidance talks, with the aim to help the person find a new job.

In the public sector, as well as the municipality and county sector, every employer is covered by the agreement. In the private sector the employer must have a collective agreement as well as being a member of an employer organisation.

Pension

Every person who has worked or resided in Sweden earns public pension. The public pension is based on the persons tax-liable income. Income such as; salary, sickness benefits, unemployment benefits, and parental benefit are pension qualifying. Annually, 18,5 percent of your income, up 7,5 income-related base amounts¹³⁴ get deposited to the persons public pension account. If your income is low or if you have no income at all, you may be entitled to guarantee pension.

Since the public pension tends to get low, it is of great importance that the person gets occupational pension. Occupational pension is guaranteed if your employment is covered by a collective agreement. The collective agreements obligate the employer to deposit a certain percentage of the salary to a pension fund. In the public sector, as well as the municipality & county sector, every employee is covered by a collective agreement, which means that the person gets regular deposits to his/her occupational pension fund. In the private sector however, the employee is entitled to occupational pension if the company has a collective agreement.

¹³⁴ In 2019 the limit is 483 000 SEK.

If there are no collective agreement the employee must have the right to occupational pension included as a term in the employment contract. Today, many employers in private sector that doesn't have a collective agreement offers occupational pension for their employees through company policies. However, policies are in most cases not binding for the employer and can be changed from one time to the other. Even though many of these employers deposit the corresponding amounts that employers covered by collective agreements pays, terms of the pension fund are often more beneficial for the employee if the employer is covered by a collective agreement.

In Sweden there is no fixed retirement age. At the earliest you can start withdrawing your pension the month you turn 61. The normal retirement age is 65. However, you are entitled to work until age 67. The public pension gets earned for as long as you work. Occupational pension, however, may stop earlier if not agreed otherwise. In the private sector that limit is 65. In the municipality and county council sector the limit is 67 or for as long as you work depending on when you are born. In the government sector the limit is 65 or 67 depending on when you were born.

Social security in Sweden

The Swedish social security system is financed through taxes and contributions. To be covered by the Swedish social security system you must either be working in Sweden or formally reside in Sweden. The social insurance agency responsible for benefits is Försäkringskassan. Pension is administered by the Swedish Pension Agency (Pensionsmyndigheten).

The benefits can be divided into residence-based benefits and working-based benefits.

Working based benefits

To be eligible for the working-based benefits one must be working or conduct business activity on the Swedish labour market. This means that you must have been employed, a contractor or self-employed. The working-based benefits are earning-related, which means that the size of the benefit depends on the size of your income.

A list of working based benefits in Sweden:

- » pregnancy benefit
- » parental benefit at the sickness benefit level and basic level
- » temporary parental benefit
- » income-based old age pension
- » sickness benefit
- » rehabilitation and rehabilitation allowance
- » occupational injury compensation
- » income-related sickness or activity compensation
- » benefit for care of closely related persons
- » child pension
- » adjustment pension
- » widow's pension

Settlement based benefits

When you have been living in Sweden for more than one year, you are usually insured for settlement-based benefits. Settlement-based benefits include:

- » parental benefit at the minimum level and basic level
- » child allowance
- » extended child allowance
- » adoption allowance if you adopt a child who does not live in Sweden or is not a Swedish citizen
- » maintenance support
- » housing benefits
- » special housing supplement for pensioners
- » old age pension in the form of guarantee pension
- » income support for the elderly
- » special pension supplement to old age pension for long-term care of a sick or disabled child
- » attendance allowance
- » disability allowance and childcare allowance
- » car allowance
- » rehabilitation and special allowance for rehabilitation
- » national dental care subsidy
- » compensation under reciprocal health care arrangement across Scandinavia
- » sickness benefit in special cases
- » sickness or activity compensation in the form of guarantee benefit if you for example work in Norway
- » widow's pension and adjustment pension in the form of guarantee pension
- » survivor's support

EU, EEA and Nordic social security rights

Social security benefits may have certain qualification requirements. As an EU or EEA citizen you are covered by the EU regulation 883/2004, and as a Nordic citizen you are also covered by the Nordic convention on social security as described on page 19. In accordance with these regulations you may be able to account for qualification time within the Nordics, EU or the EEA. This means that you can account for insurance or employment time in another Nordic country when applying for e.g. unemployment benefits in Sweden. Note that the qualification times or requirements to be eligible for a certain benefit may differ between the countries.

You have more rights and protection when moving to Sweden from another Nordic country in some matters, for example work-life rehabilitation.

Your family members are also covered by the Swedish social security system if you work in Norway and your family lives there. However, the situation might be different if you are a cross-border worker¹³⁵ and you work in Sweden but you and your family live in another country. Make sure to know what rules apply to you.

Largest 20 employers per union

Naturvetarna	
Karolinska Institutet – Karolinska medical university	5 400
Sveriges lantbruksuniversitet - Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences	3 000
AstraZeneca AB - Research-based biopharmaceutical company	6 700
Uppsala universitet – Uppsala University	7 100
Västra Götalandsregionen – Region of west of Götaland	48 900
Lunds universitet – Lund University	7 600
Region Stockholm – Region of Stockholm	43 100
Region Skåne – Region of Skåne	34 900
Stockholms universitet – Stockholm University	5 500
Göteborgs universitet – Gothenburg University	6 400
Skogsstyrelsen – Swedish Forest Agency	800
Region Uppsala – Region of Uppsala	11 900
Länsstyrelsen Västra Götalands Län – County government west Götaland	700
Jordbruksverket – Agriculture Department	1 500
Umeå universitet – Umeå University	4 100
Region Östergötland – Region of Östergötland	13 300
Polismyndigheten – The Police	29 600
SMHI – the Swedish Meteorological and Hydrological Institute	600
Stockholms stad – City of Stockholm	48 500
Länsstyrelsen Skåne Län – County government of Skåne	500

Note: Ranked by number of members. The numbers in the table are the total number of employees in the organisation.

¹³⁵ Also known as frontier worker.

More information on moving and working

Job listings		
	Arbetsförmedlingen	Public Employment Service
	Naturvetarna	Union
	Jobbsafari	Private provider
	Sverige-Norge	Between Sweden and Norway.
Job listings, public sector jobs	Offentliga jobb	
Job listings, students/recent graduates	Academic Work	
Internships for foreign academics	Jobbsprånget	Fast track to working life in Sweden through an internship for academics.
Public authorities		
Labour Court	Arbetsdomstolen	
Public Employment Service	Arbetsförmedlingen	
Work Environment Authority	Arbetsmiljöverket	
Swedish Companies Registration Office	Bolagsverket	
National Board of Housing, Building and Planning	Boverket	
The Equality Ombudsman	Diskriminerings-ombudsmannen	
Estate Agents Inspectorate	Fastighetsmäklarinspektionen	
Social Insurance Agency	Försäkringskassan	
The Board of Agriculture	Jordbruksverket	
Migration Agency	Migrationsverket	
Environmental Protection Agency	Naturvårdsverket	
Pensions Agency	Pensionsmyndigheten	
Police	Polismyndigheten	
Tax agency	Skatteverket	
National Agency for Education	Skolverket	
The National Board of Health and Welfare	Socialstyrelsen	
Customs Service	Tullverket	
Forest Agency	Skogsstyrelsen	

Unions		
Swedish Association of Professional Scientists	Naturvetarna	
Swedish Confederation of Professional Associations	SACO	
Unemployment funds		
	AEA	For academics.
	Alfa-kassan	
	GS	
	SLE	
Federation of unemployment insurance funds	Sveriges A-kassor	
Unemployment transition fund	TSN	Government employees.
	Omställningsfonden	Municipality employees.
Unemployment transition fund	TRR	Private sector employees.
Recognition of qualifications		
Evaluation of foreign qualifications	The Swedish Council for Higher Education (UHR)	Recognition of foreign qualifications.
List of regulated professions	UHR	
	Verksam.se	
List of professions	Yrkesguiden	Contains facts and information about training and education for 316 professions.
Teacher certification	The Swedish National Agency for Education	Pre-school teacher and teacher are regulated professions in Sweden. The Swedish National Agency for Education is the competent authority for issuing certification for these professions.
Healthcare professions	The National Board of Health and Welfare	The National Board of Health and Welfare assesses and issues certification and licences for the 21 different regulated healthcare professions.
Application for professional license	The National Board of Health and Welfare	For healthcare practitioners.
	The Swedish Board of Agriculture	For professions within animal health and welfare.

Working in Sweden		
	Jobskills	Jobskills is a service for people who are new in Sweden and for employers who want to find new competence.
	Working in Sweden	Collection of information from several public authorities and agencies.
	The short cut	Labour market training programme academics new to Sweden.
Learning the language		
List of Swedish courses at universities	Studera.nu	
Intensive course for academics	SIFA	In Stockholm.
Swedish för immigrants	SFI	National free Swedish language courses.
General country information		
Several authorities	Information Sverige	Information about Sweden for asylum seekers and people who have recently been granted a residence permit.
Swedish embassies	Sweden Abroad	Information about visits, move, work or study in Sweden.
Tourist boards	Visit Sweden	Sweden's official website for tourism and travel information.
Swedish Institute	Sweden.se	Official site of Sweden.
Work abroad		
PTK	Arbeta utomlands	Facts, tips and advice on working abroad.
Akademikernas A-kassa	AEA	Information about working in the EU.
Akademikernas A-kassa	AEA	Information about working outside the EU.
Regeringskansliet	Regeringskansliet	Jobs in international organisations.
Work abroad in a regulated profession	UHR	
Other resources		
Drivers license	Transportstyrelsen	
Personal identity number & ID card	Skatteverket	
Association for Nordic Cooperation	Föreningen Norden	
Association for Swedes abroad	Föreningen Svenskar i världen	



Checklist for Working Abroad

Looking for a job

In the previous chapter on the Nordic labour market you can find practical information on where to find jobs in the Nordic countries. Although the Nordic countries are similar, our expectation of how it is to live and work in another country may not always match reality. Our cultures do differ and especially the work culture which the report discusses briefly in each country chapter. It can be a wise choice to spend time in the country before the decision to move. At least educate yourself on the culture and work culture in the country.

If you are member of a union or professional association, they are often part of international networks and may be help you when it comes to information and contacts.

1. Educate yourself on the basics of the country's culture and work culture.
2. Use the network of you union and professional association.

Applying for a job

When you apply for a job in another country it is good to know how the application should be designed, it differs from country to country. Many unions offer the service of looking at your cv and application letter and give constructive feedback on what to include when approaching a specific employer. One basic rule is that you should always, if possible, write your application in the same language as the job advertisement was written in. It is not unusual to overestimate one's language skills so consider having it proofread. It can also be very useful depending on the country to have translations of grades, certificates, recommendations and so on.

3. Design your application, for example cv and cover letter to local customs.
4. Use the services of the local union.
5. Consider having your documents proofread.

Employment contract

Earlier in this report you can find country specific information on employment protection, salaries and employment contracts in the Nordic countries. In our countries the local union can look over the contract to make sure it is a good one before you sign. It is recommended that you send in the contract to the union before committing.

6. Do not sign anything that you do not fully understand the consequences of.
7. Consider having the local union counsel you on the agreement.
8. Make sure you have a legally binding and signed contract before taking major decisions.
9. Make sure the employment contract contains all relevant information and agreements that you have made.

At least the following sections should be included when writing an employment contract with a foreign employer:

- » Parties (employees, employers)
- » Workplace
- » Service title and brief description of the area of responsibility
- » Employment period, when it starts and - if the service is time-limited - when it ends
- » Any collective agreement or laws applicable to the employment
- » Insurance (accident, illness and pension)
- » Notice period
- » Salary (level, pay-out rate and currency)
- » Working hours
- » Vacation right
- » Compensation for holidays, sick leave and parental leave
- » Other benefits: residence, school for the children, and more

When it comes to negotiating of salary and other benefits information can be found elsewhere in this report, but these change over time and it can be very useful to have more detailed information on for example wage levels specific to your profession, competence and the job in question. Local unions have this information for members and guest members.

10. Contact the local union for counselling on wages, benefits and other rights.

Preparations

Before leaving or beginning cross border work there are some important questions that you should have the answer to. Many of which we have covered earlier in this report.

11. Find the answers to what happens if:
 - a. You become unemployed?
 - b. You need to be on parental leave?
 - c. You become sick or have an accident?
 - d. Your partner or child becomes sick or have an accident?
 - e. You need to end the employment prematurely?
12. How is your pension affected?
13. In which country should you pay which taxes?

14. Will my child be able to get child care or school placement and at what cost?

To find out what applies you need to contact national and foreign authorities and other bodies. At the minimum contact the tax authorities in both countries as well as the agency or organisation responsible for unemployment insurance. It is recommended to contact the National Insurance Agency and your own insurance company. Written replies from authorities are preferred.

The main principle is that the person working in the EU or in an EEA country is covered by the social security system of the working country, with a few exceptions. See page 36 for more information on coordination of social security. So, when it comes to unemployment insurance for example you should participate in an unemployment insurance in the country in which you work. The rules are complicated and there are often very specific deadlines and procedures to follow with negative consequences if there is a problem, make sure you know the rules.

If you have children of school age, you need to find out how the schools work. If the local schools are not an option, it may be necessary to raise the issue with your prospective employer. The fees to international schools are high and if you can get the employer to bear the costs a lot has been won. The same goes for child care.



Photo: Scanpix / Norden.org

Income insurance and other insurance

As mentioned in the previous chapter in some countries the unions offer income insurance. If you start working abroad when you have income insurance, you should check the current rules if you are covered abroad and when you return. If you are moving to a country with income insurance, you should check if you can get coverage.

Other insurances, which is often offered by unions or included in union membership, such as e.g. child, life, accident and health insurance apply within Europe and the rest of the world under certain conditions. You should always contact the insurers before deciding on the new job.

15. Make sure you know if you are covered or not by relevant insurances such as e.g. income, child, life, accident, health, residence, and traffic insurance.
16. Apply for a national health insurance card if applicable. A European Health Insurance Card is also good to have.

Union membership

It is wise to join a union in the new country or use guest membership in your own union. As a member you are welcome to contact us to get individual advice and support from our member counselling and career service although naturally services differ between unions. You can amongst other things often receive information and advice on the labour market, salary, terms of employment, how to find a job that suits you, applications, resumes and job interviews. Unions negotiate wages or can help you negotiate yours along with other terms of employment. Many unions offer legal advice and representation when it comes to your employment or work place negotiations. And unions protect members professional interest and work towards better living and working conditions.

The Nordic labour markets are regulated through collective agreements that are concluded between employer and employee organisations. Compared with most other countries, there is not much binding legislation in the field of labour law. This makes it extra important to be a member of a union.

You will also get access to the network of other members and professional associations. Many unions offer courses, seminars and networking events.

If you are a member of one of our unions, you can be a guest member in another and get help when looking for a job and working in another Nordic country. Read more about our guest membership on our homepages.

17. Join a union as a member or guest member.

Apply for residence, work permit, visa and recognition of skills

If you, as a citizen, move or change country of work within the Nordics, or within the EEA, or within the EU (if you have a right of residence i.e. if you work, study or have sufficient means to support yourself) then visa as well as residence- and work permits are not necessary.

18. Apply for residence permit, work permit and visa, if necessary.

Some professions have legal requirements on the qualifications needed to perform work. Which professions differ between countries, but some examples of commonly regulated professions are pharmacist, land surveyor, veterinarians, medical physicist, biomedical analyst and dietician. To be authorised to practise the profession one must apply for national recognition of skills.

19. Apply for recognition of professional qualifications, if necessary.

Other things to consider

When contacting authorities and sometimes private companies is often very beneficial and often necessary to have a national identification number. Try to get this as soon as possible, in many cases you must already be a resident of the country and have accommodations provided for. Of great use is also an e-legitimation and bank-id that is accepted in the country. Some are accepted across borders but not very many at this time. When contacting foreign authorities and moving it is important that your form of identification from your home country is valid in your host country, not all accept driver licences for example, and that it is valid for a necessary amount of time. A bank account in the country of work is often necessary.

20. Save important documents in their original. Copies are many times not accepted.
21. Make sure you have valid documentation from your home country to prove your identity and that these and your passport is not about to expire.
- 22.. Apply for a national id-number and ID card.
23. Open a bank account in the country. Check if your bank has a so-called collaborative bank in your target country.
24. Get e-legitimation and/or bank-ID.
25. Get a written lease and arrange for electricity, gas and water if necessary.
26. Bring important documents that might be needed such as those concerning insurance, ownership of property, last tax decisions, vaccinations, sickness and dental care, certificate of health, drivers' licence, marriage certificate, birth certificate, divorce papers, custody or adoption papers.
27. Consider having a proxy in your country of origin.
28. If you plan to drive in the new country, and maybe import your car, check which rules apply to you to be able to do so.
29. If you move with a pet check which rules apply and consider getting the EU pet passport.
30. If you are not fluent in the language see if you can find courses suitable for you.
31. Notify the relevant authority that you are moving away and forward your mail to your new address.



Obstacles to Work Mobility in the Nordics

Despite the long-standing goal both within the Nordic cooperation and the European Union to remove all obstacles to movement for work and self-employment, many remain. And several obstacles are added each year due to for example different implementations of EU directives in the Nordic countries, national legislation of different kinds, to little cooperation between legislators or authorities and a decreasing knowledge of the Helsinki Treaty and other Nordic agreements. Also, several of the border obstacles in this report are due to EU regulations covering the whole of the EU and EEA.

The Nordic countries are committed to removing remaining obstacles and preventing new ones and in the last decades many important obstacles have been eliminated. This work is mainly coordinated by the Nordic Council and the Nordic Council of Ministers and has been intensified in the last decade. Within the Council a special politically appointed body, The Freedom of Movement Council, was set up in 2014 by the Nordic governments to promote freedom of movement in the Nordic region for people and companies. At least 14 barriers to freedom of movement in the Nordic Region were removed by the Councils work in 2018, notably several problems with unemployment insurance have been solved for cross-border commuters.¹³⁶

This chapter presents a non-exhaustive list of remaining obstacles for professional scientists that have been identified by our members, The Freedom of Movement Council and others, together with possible solutions to the problem.

Obstacle 1 The fathers right to compensation when becoming a parent

In Denmark, Finland, Iceland and Sweden, the mother and the father earn the right to parental allowance independently of each other. In Norway this is not the case. If only the father has earned the right to parental allowance in Norway but not the mother, then he can only get the allowance if the mother is working or studying in Norway. If the genders are reversed this is not the case. So, for a couple where the father is working in Norway, but the mother is working in another Nordic country before the birth - then the father has no right to parental allowance (fedrekvote).

¹³⁶ Nordic Council of Ministers (2018b).

Suggested solution: A change in Norwegian law is needed. The easiest change would be to equalize the rules concerning the father to those concerning the mother. Another way to go is to make the right to parental allowance independent of the other parent.

Obstacle 2 Loss of parental allowance when taking a job in another country

When a mother or father takes a part time or full-time job in another Nordic country, they no longer receive parental allowance from the home country according to the principal that a person should be insured in the country of work (except in some special cases in Finland). However, when returning home, the right to the earlier amount of parental allowance is lost and the parent only qualifies for the minimum amount.

Suggested solution: Changes in all national legislations. One way to seek a change is through the Nordic Council of Ministers.

Obstacle 3 The definition of family varies in the Nordic countries

There are different definitions of what constitutes a family in the Nordic countries. This can lead to rejections or delays when it comes to child support amongst other benefits when for example the biological parents have separated and live in different Nordic countries. For instance, Finland and Norway have a definition where a separated parent is no longer part of the family when applying EU-regulations covering some family benefits.

From an EU perspective the definition of family is up to the member states and this definition is to be used when granting benefits according to EU- regulations.¹³⁷

Suggested solution: A single Nordic legal definition of a family or a single EU-definition of a family. This would entail legal changes in several Nordic countries or changes to EU-regulations and most likely cultural changes when it comes to the view of what a family is.

Obstacle 4 Recognition of parenthood in same-sex families

When a same-sex couple have a child with the help of assisted reproduction, the parenthood of the woman who did not give birth, also called co-motherhood, can be determined by consenting to the co-motherhood. There is legal uncertainty in Finland on how to handle this.

Iceland, Norway and Denmark recognise a co-motherhood determined by consent in another Nordic country. Sweden does not. In Sweden same-sex and different sex couples are treated unequally, fatherhood by consent established in another Nordic country when conceived with assisted reproduction is recognized. Co-motherhood is not, and the co-mother must apply for adoption of their own child.

The child formally loses a parent when moving to Sweden and the women who did not give birth does not get custody rights to the child.

¹³⁷ See Regulation 883/2004 and Regulation 1408/71.

Suggested solution: Changes to legislation in Sweden so that parenthood that has been established by consent in other Nordic countries when the parents are of the same sex and the child has been conceived with assisted reproduction is recognized.

Obstacle 5 Applying for child care and schools from abroad

When deciding to move to another Nordic country with children it is important to know if the children will get a place in a school or daycare within a reasonable amount of time, and that the school or daycare is located close to the home or place of work and has a high quality. Applying for placement from abroad is in most cases not possible.

A person usually has to be a resident in the local municipality where he or she is seeking daycare or at least apply in person. The move to the other country often happens close to the start of the new work for economic reasons and because the time between interviews and when the employer wants a new worker to start often is short. At the same time having child care is necessary when work begins, and the application process and placement can take a long time.

In Sweden for example members have been told that they must be living in the municipality to apply and that a daycare placement can take up to 4 months to get.

In addition to this, many moves happen during the summer holidays since many parents want to let the child end the school year, and many positions have their starting date after the summer. But during the summer schools, daycare, municipalities and authorities have limited or no service in several Nordic countries which complicates and prolongs the process further.

Suggested solution: Changes to legislation in all the Nordic countries so that it is possible to apply for placement from another Nordic country.

Obstacle 6 Care of close relative assistance

In Sweden it is possible to receive monetary assistance when caring for a close relative with an illness that is a threat to the life of the relative. When working in Sweden but taking care of a relative who is covered by another Nordic country's social security insurance it is not possible to receive this assistance.

Suggested solution: A change in Swedish law to the effect that the relative must no longer be insured in Sweden for the caretaker to receive assistance.

Obstacle 7 Professional qualifications not recognised

Many professions in the Nordics are regulated by the state, by the professional associations or by the sector itself. Since the demand for work in a certain profession varies in the Nordic countries when it comes to several professions this is a hinder for free mobility of labour. Some professions receive recognition by cross border agreements or Nordic conventions, others are covered by the EU directive 2005/36/EC on professional qualifications or other international law. Other professions are not recognised or demand additional study or experience.

Suggested solution: Make a review of the current rules for all professional scientists to be recognised in the Nordic countries. Work towards changes on the national, Nordic and EU-level. The Nordic governments could be encouraged to review their requirements and management of applications for validation of degrees and professional qualifications from other Nordic countries in order to facilitate and speed up the processing of such applications.

Talks across national borders between trade associations and unions in different sector in order to harmonize their industry regulations in order to create a common Nordic labour market within their field.

Obstacle 8 Clinical Microbiologists in Sweden

Swedish hospitals do not have the title or profession of Clinical Microbiologist. For clinical biologists coming from other Nordic countries it is hard to know what is included in the work and for the employer it is hard to identify their skills.

Suggested solution: Increased informational exchange between employers, educators and employees. Working towards Clinical Microbiologist as its own profession also in Sweden could be considered.

Obstacle 9 Recognition of health care professionals

Some professions common in hospitals and other health care services do not have a protected occupational title in Sweden, Norway and Denmark but have a protected occupational title in Finland. For example: clinical cell biologist, clinical chemist, clinical geneticist and clinical microbiologist.

Suggested solution: Mutual recognition of the professional qualifications of these professions in the Nordic countries. Information to the students before starting a program whether or not their education is usable in other Nordic countries.

Obstacle 10 Dietician from Norway in Sweden

The education to a bachelor's degree in Ernæring (nutrition) in Norway has a very similar curriculum and course content as the bachelors' program for dieticians in Sweden but ernæringsfysiolog is not a regulated profession in Norway. A license application from a Norwegian member was denied by the Swedish Socialstyrelsen because she did not have a professional license to transfer.

Suggested solution: Mutual recognition of the professional qualifications of dieticians in the Nordic countries. Information to the students before starting a program whether or not their education is usable in other Nordic countries.

Obstacle 11 Nutritionist in health care in Finland

In Finland and Iceland, one needs a masters' degree in clinical nutrition to get a license to work as a nutritionist in healthcare. In Norway, Sweden and Denmark a bachelor is enough.

Suggested solution: Information to the students before starting a program what is needed to work in other Nordic countries.

Obstacle 12 E-services not accessible for other Nordic citizens

Most services for e-legitimation (e.g. Nem-ID, Bank-ID) and e-signatures and other e-services do not work across the borders. These services often save costs and time and sometimes are necessary to complete a transaction. Access to e-services greatly simplifies communication with the national authorities.

In several Nordic countries it is not possible to get a bank-id or e-identification without a national personal identification number, temporary identification numbers are not enough.

Within the framework of the EU eGovernment Action Plan 2016-2020, the European Commission will come with proposals to improve access to cross border e-services and e-identification. The so called eIDAS-regulation should also have been implemented in the member states during 2018.

On December 8, 2017, the Nordic Council of Ministers for Digitization, MR-DIGITAL, decided to start a three-year project to ensure a common Nordic solution for electronic identification for all Nordic citizens. At the meeting, the Secretary-General stated that electronic identification could be the single most important measure since the Nordic passport freedom to simplify everyday life for residents of the Nordic countries when they move to another Nordic country. The project is led by Norway.

Suggested solution: Follow and support the work of the Commission and the Nordic Council of Ministers for Digitization. Work towards legal changes in all the Nordic countries, and the EU. Discussions with responsible authorities as well as the E-identification Boards in the Nordic countries.

Obstacle 13 Personal identification numbers and documents

Many private companies and employers demand personal identification numbers from customers, for example when opening a bank account, ordering goods on the internet or renting accommodation. A personal identification number is many times a must or very important when dealing with authorities in the Nordic countries. Not everyone is eligible to receive a personal identification number or a temporary identification number. It may also take a long time to receive such a number and it is hard or impossible to apply for one from abroad. The countries have different systems for individuals who are temporary residents. Norway has a “D-nummer”, Sweden “samordningsnummer”, Denmark “CPR-nummer”, Iceland “Kennitala” and Finland “henkilötunnus”. The Nordic Council has issued recommendations 11/2009 and 12/2009 that recommends the coordination of national personal identification number registers so that Nordic citizens can use their ordinary personal identification number in the other Nordic countries.

Suggested solution: Changes to legislation in all Nordic countries that makes it possible to use one's ordinary personal identification number in all Nordic countries. And changes to legislation so that it is possible to use these when buying goods on the internet.

Obstacle 14 Personal ID-number and ID-card in Sweden

Getting an ID-number and ID-card in Sweden is reported to take a long time. The ID-card is needed to get an apartment but at the same time you need an address in Sweden to apply for an ID-card. Members report that for example a Finnish passport in many situations is not enough as proof of identity.

To receive an ID-card you need to have a Swedish personal ID-number. To get an ID-number you must be nationally registered (folkbokförd). To be nationally registered you must have a Swedish place of residence and you must plan to reside at least one year.

Lack of a Swedish personal ID-number also often causes problems when writing the employment contract.

A “samordningsnummer” and identification from other Nordic countries is reported to sometimes not be enough to get an apartment or open a bank account.

Suggested solution: Changes to legislation in Sweden that makes it possible to use a personal identification number from the other Nordic countries.

Obstacle 15 National registration in Norway

When a Nordic citizen, including a Norwegian citizen, moves to Norway from another Nordic country, and intends to stay in Norway for more than six months, the person in question has a duty to register with the Norwegian Tax Administration within 8 days of arrival in the country.

To be able to register people, the Norwegian Tax Administration requires that the individual meet personally at one of 42 selected tax offices for ID verification. In addition to a proof of identity, the applicant must bring a contract of purchase of a residence, or a rental contract that lasts at least 6 months. If you are going to work in Norway, you also need to be able to present a contract of employment that is valid for at least 6 months and if you are to study it requires that you can show confirmation that you have been accepted for studies.

”Any other documentation” that can prove that you intend to stay more than 6 months in Norway can also be included. There is uncertainty as to which documentation is accepted as ”any other documentation”.

If a person intends to move to Norway for a period of more than 6 months but does not have a purchase contract or lease agreement in combination with, an employment contract, or a place of study, which extends over 6 months, public records are not possible. Norwegian citizens returning home after a period abroad can end up in trouble because of this practice as well.

Such a requirement that one must be able to prove that one has a residence and employment contract or place of study for at least six months in order to be registered as a national is not required in public records in Denmark, Finland or Sweden, and although the problem does not specifically concern residence permits, the documentation requirement may seem strict in relation to the fact that Nordic citizens automatically have a permanent residence permit in all the Nordic countries, and therefore do not have to state a reason for entering or moving to another Nordic country.

Suggested solution: That the Norwegian Tax Administration changes its documentation requirement, so that the rules corresponds to other Nordic countries.

Obstacle 16 Phone plan in Norway

Reportedly it is very difficult to get phone plan in Norway without personal ID-number. Border workers may not be able to get an ID-number and for those who move to Norway it can get a long time to get an ID-number while having a phone number is essential. International calls and data traffic can be prohibitively expensive.

Suggested solution: The phone companies, many of whom are pan-Nordic concerns, could be encouraged to accept all forms of Nordic ID. Changes to legislation in all Nordic countries that makes it possible to use one's ordinary personal identification number in all Nordic countries is another solution.

Obstacle 17 Social security benefits received late or not at all

At times it is unclear or contested which country's legislation is applicable when an individual works in one Nordic country but lives in another (so called cross-border workers). The individual may then receive their social security benefits late or not at all. There exists the possibility today to make interim payments until the authorities come to an agreement, but this is seldom done. EU law concerning border work is based on the principles that the individual should be covered by the legislation of one country and that this country should primarily be the country where the individual works.

Suggested solution: The Nordic countries need a unified interpretation of which legislation is applicable in all cases, that also is in accordance with EU law. This issue is discussed by the Nordic Council of Ministers.

Obstacle 18 Long waiting times when dealing with authorities in Sweden

To receive a decision from relevant authorities in Sweden can take a very long time and it is not unusual that the authority seems unused or unprepared for dealing with Nordic citizens beginning to work in Sweden. A decision about which wage taxes a person is to pay (a-skattebesked) can take more than 8 weeks. A decision about which rate of income tax to pay in Sweden for border workers, a so-called SINK-decision, was reported as taking 12 weeks.

Suggested solution: Dialogues with relevant authorities, departments and politicians about the slow handling. Increased public awareness of the issue.

Obstacle 19 No reimbursement for transport for cross-border workers in Norway

The main principle is that border workers is to be covered by the health insurance in the country in which they work. Border workers who work in Norway and who are home because of illness do not get reimbursement or help with their trip to the hospital in Norway. The reason is that according to Norwegian rules the trips must start and end close to the workplace and most border workers live far away.

Suggested solution: A change to Norwegian law so that the border workers are reimbursed for travels in their home country for trips to hospital in Norway, and for trips to the hospital in their home country.

Obstacle 20 Additional work demands when applying for unemployment benefits

A general principal is that periods of work and being insured in another Nordic country can be used to qualify for unemployment insurance when returning home. Denmark and Finland have additional demands for granting membership of unemployment insurance or unemployment fund, it is not sufficient that the time working and being insured in the other Nordic country is long enough. Denmark demands 296 hours of work in Denmark in a 3-month period preceding the application, and that the application must be done no later than 8 weeks after no longer being covered by the other country's insurance. Finland demands 4 weeks of work in Finland preceding unemployment. Iceland demands 12 weeks of work in Iceland. It is questionable whether this practice is in accordance with EU-law¹³⁸ as well as the Nordic Convention on Social Security. EFTA Surveillance Authority (ESA) has criticised similar demands in Norway and Iceland which are now changed.

Suggested solution: Changes to Finnish and Danish legislation.

Obstacle 21 No housing benefits when working abroad

A person who lives in Sweden and works in another Nordic country loses their right to a significant part of housing benefits (*det särskilda bidraget*). The other Nordic countries handle housing benefits in other ways than being part of family benefits and in these countries, this is not a problem.

Suggested solution: Change to Swedish law.

Obstacle 22 Opening a bank account

Having a bank account in the country where a person works, or lives, is many times necessary or at least vastly simplifies life. After the implementation of the payment account directive in June 2017 all residents of EEA countries have the right to open a bank account with basic functions in another EEA country and the situation has greatly improved. However, there are some reports from members that a bank denied them access to an account. Also, a national proof of identification and a passport is sometimes not enough to open a bank account, a local national identification number is demanded from the bank. Members report that in Sweden it was “almost impossible to open the bank account without a Swedish ID-number”. Consequently, it can take a long time to open a bank account.

Suggested solution: Talks with the national banking federations to ensure that all Nordic citizens are granted access to a bank account unless specific reasons against exists according to the directive. The national banking federations could be encouraged to implement a common standard across the Nordics wherein all Nordic proof of identification together with a passport is sufficient to open a bank account.

¹³⁸ Article 3 and article 67 regulation 1408/71.

Obstacle 23 Expensive bank transfers and card payments, and slow bank transfers

It is possible for banks to have high fees for bank transfers between the Nordic countries when done in local currencies. Euro payments within the EU cannot exceed the fee for a similar transaction within the country. Sweden has applied this as well to transfers in SEK across the borders. These sorts of transfers also can take days.

Similarly, the fees for paying or changing to local cash with a credit or debit card can be expensive.

In the region of Öresund these problems are partly solved with so called border workers accounts (gränsgångarkonton). The employee has two accounts in the same bank and get their wages deposited to the work country account which is then automatically transferred at once to the account in the country of residence. This is done free of charge and at the market exchange rate.

Suggested solution: Changes to legislation in the Nordic countries and/or EU-law, and/or the implementation of border workers accounts across the Nordics.

Obstacle 24 Unable to get a mortgage before being registered

To be able to apply for a home loan, most, if not all, banks in the Nordics require that the borrower is registered in the population. This can only be done after the immigration and when the person has a place of residence which is a catch-22 for those looking to own their residence or wanting to arrange the living situation before the move. Renting places to live for a short while can be very difficult and expensive. Furthermore banks in one Nordic country generally do not give mortgage loans to a house in another country.

Suggested solution: Talks with the national banking federations to see what can be done for Nordic citizens on this issue.

Obstacle 25 Arranging services before moving

It is a common problem of several obstacles above that it is hard to arrange many several services before moving for example permanent place to live, identification number, tax decisions, child care. At the same time as many of these are important for the decision to move in the first place. Will we be able to get a good school close to the home, and so on. The time between changing jobs and moving countries and starting the new job is also for practical and economic reasons often very short. So, when a member arrives to the new country, they must start their job and fix everything else at once. This is perceived as too stressful to some members and too high of a risk for others who then have decided not to move to another Nordic country.

Suggested solution: A general focus of the Nordic cooperation should be that as much as possible regarding moving for work can be arranged before the move from the home country.

Obstacle 26 Assessment of ability to work

The assessment of a person's ability to work based on the same medical basis differs between the countries. A person could be assessed to have no ability to work in one country and be assessed to be able to work to some extent in another.

Suggested solution: It is difficult to envisage a solution to this problem other than the countries joining into a very close Nordic Union. And even then, the problem would most likely still exist as it does today where assessments differ across regions within Nordic countries.

Obstacle 27 Economic support for international interviews and moving

Job seekers in Norway and Sweden and Finland can get economic support for the travel cost when going to an interview in another Nordic country and EU/EEA countries. In Sweden it is also possible to receive support for the moving costs and extra travel costs when becoming a border worker. The European Commission has argued that it is not allowed to only support travels within the country but not cross-border travels. In Denmark it is decided on a case by case basis whether a person is to receive travel support and there are no rules against giving support for international travels. Iceland does not offer support for travels to interviews at all.

Suggested solution: Changes to legislation in Denmark and Iceland. Participation of the countries in the EU-projects Your First Eures Job and Reactivate which can give economic support for interviews and the move.

Obstacle 28 Declining language skills

Nordic languages are taught less and less in schools. Nordic languages as obligatory courses or elements of courses are becoming rarer. The demands on actual proficiency is generally very small or non-existent. The possibility to learn another Nordic language in school for those who want is small, especially in Iceland. Knowledge and understanding of other Nordic languages are declining and English is increasingly taking over. If we invest in Nordic languages, we can increase our countries competitiveness, the mobility of our labour market as well as increase mobility of students and researchers. A greater understanding of the Nordic languages and a greater conversion of the Nordic languages is of great importance for the Nordic sense of community and for increase contact between the Nordic peoples.

Suggested solution: Increased understanding and knowledge of the Nordic languages should be part of the basic education. Increased exchange programs of different sorts for young people, pupils and students within the Nordic countries.

Obstacle 29 The Nordic Language Convention is not respected

In the Nordic Language Convention, our countries have undertaken to ensure that a Nordic citizen may, if necessary, use his or her own language in contact with authorities and other public bodies, see page 22. Members report that this is in most situations not possible.

Suggested solution: Inform members of the existence of the convention. Remind relevant authorities of the convention.

Obstacle 30 Language courses outside working hours

In most Nordic countries it is not possible, or it is difficult and expensive, to join a language course in the national language, outside of normal working hours. In Sweden there are courses in Swedish held in the evening for immigrants for free or at low cost.

Suggested solution: Advocate for the need for affordable language courses for Nordic citizens outside normal working hours.

Obstacle 31 Finding a job in Iceland

The employment service agency in Iceland, Vinnumálastofnun, has very little written information in English or other Nordic languages.

Suggested solution: Talks with Vinnumálastofnun.

Obstacle 32 Recognition of Faroe Islands driver licenses

When taking up residence in a Nordic country the driver's license is to be exchanged for a new one. Drivers licenses from the Faroe Islands is not recognized in Sweden and in Finland.

Suggested solution: Changes to Swedish and Finnish legislation so that holders of drivers licenses from the Faroe Island are treated in the same way as drivers from the other Nordic countries and the EU/EEA countries.

Obstacle 33 Early Pension in Iceland

An Icelandic citizen whose ability to work is lowered because of sickness can apply to the Tryggingastofnun (Social Security services) for örorkumat or early pension, or to the Sjúkratryggingar Íslands (Health insurance services) if there is an injury. The Icelandic compensation is based on time worked in Iceland. If the person has been working abroad in another Nordic country for a long time, and in Iceland a short time, and sustains an injury that qualifies in Iceland for an early pension but not in the other Nordic country then the total pension will be very low and can be lower than the minimum income for all Icelanders. So, by exercising their right to free movement they risk receiving a considerably lower minimum income.

Suggested solution: A change in Icelandic law is needed so that these persons will receive at least the minimum income.

Obstacle 34 Information about jobs, culture, wages and wage negotiations

Members report that information about jobs, the labour market, applications, wages, contracts, and the work culture and such can be difficult to find, contradictory or unavailable.

Suggested solution: This report hopes to give members relevant information and ways to find more. A common guest membership agreement between our unions whereby members can become guest members and receive information and counselling from one of our unions would be of great benefit to members.

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- for Professional Scientists