

## Norway

In early 2012, a project on the sustainability of the Nordic system for the coming years was launched, bringing together researchers from five countries - Iceland, Norway, Sweden, Finland and Denmark. They will reflect on the future of the Nordic system, defined as a welfare state with a comprehensive social security system, high taxes and strong unions, with gender equality and an ambitious environmental policy, and how it can be adapted to better face the challenges of increasing global competition, the rapid development of new high-population industrial countries (China, India), global warming, demographic ageing, the financial crisis and the increase in unemployment, thereby enabling the Nordic countries to remain competitive in terms of skills and knowledge. The focus is on:

- The cornerstones of the Nordic system: past, present and future, allowing researchers to analyse the threats to the system's fundamental elements, such as domestic changes (notably the impact of demographic ageing) and external changes (the impact of global warming and energy policies, ways to maintain a high taxation level and the comprehensive protection system).
- Developments in the individual countries (Iceland, Norway, Sweden, Finland and Denmark) to define the status quo of the system in 2012. This will later be used to compare the countries. The point will be to highlight how the system in the individual countries is affected by national changes in terms of population, employment, social protection, gender equality, infrastructures, aspirations, standards, requirements and international changes due to the economic situation, development and political governance.
- Thematic issues: 1/ the prospects for stable economic growth; 2/ decent labour and the future of the collective agreement system (working conditions, state of the trade unions, collective bargaining and the definition of wages); 3/ integration and challenges (how can the countries guarantee equal and high participation in employment, education and civil society, particularly for minorities); 4/ finance and sustainability; 5/ democracy, and in particular the future of the social protection system. The first results should be revealed in 2014.

In Norway, the rules on temporary lay-offs (LOV 1988-05-06 No. 22: Lov om lønnsplikt under permittering) are generally amended quite frequently depending on employment market conditions. At the time of the 2009 financial crisis, the temporary lay-off period during which the employer had to pay an employee was reduced from 10 to 5 days. With the

stabilisation of the Norwegian employment market and the country's overall financial status, the 10-day temporary lay-off period was restored as of 1 January 2012 on the basis of amendments to the legislation on 16 December 2011 (No. 58). In addition, the employer must now resume paying the salary of employees who have been temporarily laid off after 30 weeks instead of the previous 52 weeks.

## **References/sources**

### Electronic newsletters/websites

Planet Labor: <http://www.planetlabor.com>

EIROOnline: <http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/eiro/>

Epsucob@NEWS – Collective Bargaining in the Public Services: <http://www.epsu.org/>

ETUI-AIAS Collective Bargaining newsletter:

<http://www.etui.org/E-Newsletters/Collective-bargaining-newsletter>

ETUC website section on economic and social crisis: <http://www.etuc.org/r/1378>

ETUI website section on crisis: <http://www.etui.org/Topics/Crisis>

European Labour Law Network (ELLN) - <http://www.labourlawnetwork.eu>

### Periodicals

Liaisons sociales Europe

Social International

### Other

#### Contributions by ETUC affiliated organisations:

ETUC Litigation network (meetings 29 June 2012 and 10 December 2012)

ETUC Social Policy and Legislation Ad hoc working group (Meetings 13 November 2011, 5 April 2012, 24 October 2012).

ETUC Legal Experts Network NETLEX (Annual Conference 1-2 December 2011, 11–12 December 2012)