

UNIONS IN UNISON



Public Employees' Negotiation Council, OFR – a Modern Forum for Co-operation

TRADE UNIONS IN SWEDEN

There are three trade union confederations in Sweden; the Swedish Confederation of Professional Employees (TCO) for academics and other well-educated professionals, the Swedish Confederation of Professional Associations (SACO) for academics only, and the Swedish Trade Union Confederation (LO) for workers. TCO and SACO have no negotiating functions. Bargaining collaboration between the member organisations is handled by other bodies. In the public sector OFR is the main negotiating organisation. Presently, OFR is the body representing the greatest number of trade union members within local authority and state sector employment. OFR's affiliated trade unions are members of TCO and SACO except one, which is independent of central organisations.

OFR

OFR is an assignment-based service and negotiating organisation for trade unions with members in the public sector. At present, we have fifteen affiliated trade unions, which together represent over 600,000 members in the local government sector and State sector.

CO-OPERATION

OFR is commissioned to negotiate on behalf of the trade unions, but also to act as a forum for planning, co-ordination, follow-up and evaluation of collective bargaining rounds and other negotiations. OFR allows trade unions to consult and co-operate with each other on questions of common interest, while at the same time retaining a high level of independence. Unions decide for themselves the extent to which they wish to co-operate within OFR.

Swedish bargaining

BARGAINING RIGHTS

In Sweden, all employees, including those in the public sector, have legally guaranteed rights to bargaining and industrial action. This includes all public sector employees. No one – not even police or military officers – are excluded.

Given that Labour Market Legislation is in principal discretionary, central trade unions and employers' organisations may substitute parts of it in their agreements.

The right to bargaining gives trade unions, employers and their organisations the mutual right to negotiate wages and other terms of employment. Collective agreements resulting from such negotiations are binding to all parties and there is an obligation to maintain peaceful industrial relations throughout the period covered by the agreement.

In order to further rationalise the system, certain parties within the public sector have agreed on exactly who will have the right to settle agreements on behalf of employees and employers within the different bargaining areas.

THE ROLE OF OFR

Over the years, the bargaining process has become more closely linked to various different activities of the public sector. Wages are in most cases individually arrived at through local negotiations based on the prerequisites set out in the central agreements.

This decentralisation of the bargaining process means that the trade unions are themselves covering many of the tasks previously handled by central negotiation cartels. At the same time, this has created a need for cross-boundary co-operation between trade unions within the same overall sphere of activity. This is where OFR plays a vital role. Within OFR, the individual member unions can exchange information and co-ordinate their negotiation activities. We also provide negotiation services to all of our member unions. Agreements regarding pensions and insurance schemes are two of our main areas of responsibility.

Fifteen affiliated trade unions

At present, fifteen trade unions are affiliated to OFR. All of them represent public sector employees. With the exception of one, which is independent of central organisations, OFR's affiliated trade unions are members of TCO and SACO.

- ❖ **The Swedish Teachers' Union** – Lärarförbundet
- ❖ **The Swedish Union of Local Government Officers** – Fackförbundet SKTF
- ❖ **Swedish Association of Health Professionals** – Vårdförbundet
- ❖ **The Union of Civil Servants** – Fackförbundet ST
- ❖ **National Union of Teachers in Sweden** – Lärarnas Riksförbund
- ❖ **The Swedish Association of Graduates in Social Science, Personnel and Public Administration, Economics and Social Work** – Akademikerförbundet SSR
- ❖ **The Swedish Medical Association** – Sveriges läkarförbund
- ❖ **The Swedish Police Union** – Polisförbundet
- ❖ **The Swedish Association for Managerial and Professional Staff** – Ledarna
- ❖ **The Association of Military Officers in Sweden** – Officersförbundet
- ❖ **The Swedish Association of School Principals and Directors of Education** – Sveriges Skolledarförbund
- ❖ **The Swedish Union of Defense Employees** – Försvarsförbundet
- ❖ **Swedish Union of Customs and Coastguard Officers** – Tull-Kust
- ❖ **Swedish Union of Folk High School Teachers** – SFHL
- ❖ **Swedish Union for Theatre, Artists and Media** – Teaterförbundet

OFR monitors and influences developments

We have been commissioned by our member unions to develop the closer collaboration between trade unions and other co-operation bodies within the public sector.

Another of our mandates is to monitor the government, parliament and central authorities, putting us in a position to both influence and follow developments within the public sector. We also watch out for developments in the EU, especially with regard to pay trends, issues relating to bargaining rights for employees in the public sector and areas influencing the trade unions' collective agreements.

IMPORTANT CORNERSTONES OF OUR WORK:

- Pensions and insurance schemes
- Wage formation, agreement analysis and wage statistics
- The work environment and a sustainable working life
- EU related negotiation issues
- Legal matters, particularly Labour Law

Organisation

OFR's SEVEN TRADE UNION BRANCHES

The local government sector

- ° Teachers
- ° General local government operations
- ° Health and medical care
- ° Medical practitioners

The state sector

- ° Civil Servants
- ° Police
- ° Military Officers

THE RIGHT TO BARGAINING

OFR is divided into seven trade union branches. According to main agreements with the employer, these branches each carry the same bargaining rights. The branch classification makes it possible for each branch to work in a flexible and efficient manner while at the same time exploiting the strength and experience of the main organisation. Conflicts of interest between trade unions can also be avoided through this decentralisation. All decisions regarding issues of common interest reached by the organisation are consensus-based.

In the local government sector, main agreements give each trade union branch the right to independent bargaining, industrial action and settlement. Locally, negotiations are handled by individual trade unions.

In the State sector, there is greater need for co-ordination. Overall and central agreements for the three trade union branches are mainly settled through joint negotiations. Decisions regarding possible industrial action are also taken jointly. At local level, the trade unions act in unison if the bargaining issue in question concerns several trade unions within the same trade union branch.

DECISIONS WITHIN OFR

OFR's supreme decision-making body is the assembly. The assembly appoints OFR's President and Governing Board, with representatives from all trade unions. There is also an Executive Committee, which is in charge of day-to-day operations. The committee is made up of OFR's President and nine Trade Union Presidents.

Affiliated trade unions



Lärarförbundet

Lärarförbundet –
The Swedish Teachers' Union
+46 8 737 65 00
www.lararforbundet.se



Fackförbundet SKTF –
**The Swedish Union of Local
Government Officers**
+46 8 789 63 00
www.sktf.se



Vårdförbundet –
**Swedish Association of Health
Professionals**
+ 46 8 14 77 00
www.vardforbundet.se



Fackförbundet ST –
The Union of Civil Servants
+46 8 790 51 00
www.st.org



Lärarnas Riksförbundet –
**National Union of Teachers
in Sweden**
+46 8 613 27 00
www.lr.se



Akademikerförbundet SSR –
**The Swedish Association of
Graduates in Social Science,
Personnel and Public Administra-
tion, Economics and Social Work**
+46 8 617 44 00, www.akademssr.se



Sveriges läkarförbund –
The Swedish Medical Association
+46 8 790 33 00
www.lakarforbundet.se



Polisförbundet

Polisförbundet –
The Swedish Police Union
+46 8 676 97 00
www.polisforbundet.se



Ledarna –
**The Swedish Association for
Managerial and Professional Staff**
+46 8 598 990 00
www.ledarna.se



Sveriges Skolledarförbund –
**The Swedish Association of
School Principals and Directors
of Education**
+46 8 567 06 200
www.skolledarna.se



TULL-KUST –
**Swedish Union of Customs
and Coastguard Officers**
+46 8 405 05 40
www.tullkust.se



Teaterförbundet –
**Swedish Union for Theatre,
Artists and Media**
+46 8 441 13 00
www.teaterforbundet.se



Officersförbundet –
**The Association of Military
Officers in Sweden**
+46 8 440 83 30
www.officersforbundet.se



Försvarsförbundet –
**The Swedish Union of Defense
Employees**
+46 8 402 40 00
www.forsvarsforbundet.se



Svenska folkhögskolans lärarförbund –
**Swedish Union of Folk High School
Teachers**
+46 8 564 835 35
www.sfhl.se

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**OFR IS A FORUM FOR DIALOGUE AND CO-OPERATION
BETWEEN PUBLIC SECTOR TRADE UNIONS.**

OFR is an assignment-based service and negotiating organisation for fifteen trade unions with members in the public sector. OFR affiliation allows trade unions to consult and co-operate with each other on questions of common interest, while at the same time retaining their strong independence.

OFR acts as a forum for planning, co-ordination, follow-up and evaluation of collective bargaining rounds and negotiations regarding changes in basic terms and conditions.

OFR can also be commissioned to negotiate on behalf of the trade unions.

OFR provides the affiliated trade unions with reports and facts such as wage statistics, analysis of previous collective bargaining rounds, labour law, work environment, pensions and insurance schemes.