



Improving Social Dialogue through NO-SK Partnership

Project Experiences

2014

**Supported by the Norway Grants, through the Fund for Decent Work and
Tripartite Dialogue**

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION.....	3
EVEN SMALL THING CAN ENCOURAGE AND PUSH MAN FORWARD.....	4
NTL - FOR WORKERS IN THE STATE SECTOR	7
SLOVAK TRADE UNION OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AND CULTURE - BASIC INFORMATION	9
COLLECTIVE BARGAINING IN NORWAY AND IN SLOVAKIA	11
COLLECTIVE BARGAINING AND COLLECTIVE AGREEMENTS IN NORWAY	18
ASSISTANCE FOR PERSONS WITH SEVERE DISABILITIES IN SLOVAKIA AND NORWAY.....	21
ADAPTOR - ASSOCIATION HELPS PEOPLE WITH DISADVANTAGES ON LABOUR MARKET TO FIND JOB... 25	
MAY 1 IN OSLO	29
ACTIVE LABOUR MARKET POLICY IN SLOVAKIA AND NORWAY	31
NEWS FROM THE PROJECT	54

Introduction

"We are stronger together" – is a motto of the Norwegian Civil Service Union (NTL), the partner institution of the project „Improving Social Dialogue through NO-SK Partnership“ that has been implemented by the branch organisation of SLOVES in the Office of labour, social affairs and family in Zvolen in years 2013 - 2014. During this project, Slovak trade union members had an opportunity to learn about trade union movement and collective bargaining in Norway, in the country with hundred years long history of trade union traditions. The result of the learning is a publication issued at the end of the project. The authors of the publication are members of project team, trade unionists of local organisations of SLOVES in Zvolen, Krupina and Banská Bystrica. They have written down their experiences obtained during business trips to partner trade union NTL in Oslo. They have shared them with other colleagues within trade union movement in order to become stronger together and to build decent conditions for public sector employees.

We are thankful to secretary of NTL, Leif Helland, Vice president of NTL in NAV (local organisation of NTL at the Ministry of Labour of Norway) Sven Ivar Skodjevåg and their colleagues for perfectly prepared program of 2 weeks of Slovak trade unionists business trips to Oslo in Norway, useful discussions and wonderful hospitality and interesting presentations in Slovakia.



Ing. Magdaléna Bernátová, PhD.
project manager and publication editor

Even Small Thing Can Encourage and Push Man forward

Eva Kocmanová

- ❖ **Eva, you were at the beginning of this project. What was the reason for this project? What expectations did you have?**

I have been working for trade union since 1975 and I have always been interested in dignified statute of workers, good working conditions, rewarding of employees, health care and so on.

The project „Improving social dialogue through Norwegian-Slovak partnership“ was brought to me by my colleague, who came to me and pointed out this opportunity for me. At that time, I had been stagnating in my position of trade union chairwoman for a longer period of time and I had feeling that I had nothing to offer to members of our trade organisation, nothing to make them interested, to create the feeling that the union is not in isolation.

This project seemed to me to be a good way how to get out of the isolation, the way how to show the advantages coming from Norwegian experiences in area of tripartite dialogue, effective labour market policy, system of social improvement and possibilities of long-life learning.

- ❖ **Was it difficult to write the project? Did you prepare it alone or did you order somebody to draft the project?**

Certain apprehensions have existed about the project drafting as we have not got any project drafting experiences of this kind. However, our interest for project drafting came out of the facts that the project shall improve relationship between Norway and Slovakia based on advantages coming from Norwegian experiences in the field of tripartite dialogue, effective labour market policy, social security system and possibilities of life-long learning.

These facts were interested enough to become a basis for drafting this project by its author - Ing. Lívia Kimentová, who has been working for the ÚPSVaR Zvolen and has



been responsible for projects implementation. That was our advantage and also the hope for successful approval of this project. The project drafting concentrated on the area of social dialogue improving and its practice based on Norwegian experience in the field of tripartite dialogue and effective labour market policy. The project is aimed in an increase of the awareness of social dialogue improvement necessity and importance of social dialogue practices changes.

❖ **ZO SLOVES in ÚPSVaR Zvolen has been implementing this project for a period of one and half year. What has happened during that period of time?**

In May 2013, six representatives of Slovak part of the project participated in a study trip to Norwegian city Oslo. They had an opportunity to learn about collective bargaining history and principles of collective bargaining in Norway at present. Four representatives of project participated in a similar study trip in spring 2014.

Knowledge that participants have learned from Norwegian partners we strived to disseminate farther. We have organised meetings for trade union members in ZO SLOVES in ÚPSVaR in Krupina, in Veľký Krtíš and in Banská Bystrica too, in which our Norwegian partners had presentations.

❖ **What institutions did you visit in Oslo?**

Representatives of NTL have prepared very interesting program that consisted of presentations, discussions and excursions. We have learned a lot of interesting information about Norwegian Parliament, as well as about the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, about the local office of labour, social affairs and we have visited the Centre of compensation equipment for socially dependent citizens of Norway.

❖ **What was the most interesting thing of the study trip for you?**

The most interesting thing for me was the idea of Norwegian trade union and of people working with enthusiasm for improvement of working and social conditions of civil servants and employees of public service. The solidarity as the basic trade union value is a strong value valid all over the country.

❖ **Has it changed somehow your attitude to your work within trade union after your return from Norway?**

Yes, for sure. First of all, I found out that it is important to provide information not only to trade union members, but also to all employees. Then, it is important to change the way of collective bargaining and to apply into it equality in positions of bargaining partners, to bargain as a group, with clear goals and priorities identified in advance to bargaining, to discuss and find agreement in negotiations about working conditions as well as about social fund use. Then, it is important to concentrate more on working

environment, on work place conditions and adequacy of working tools used. It is not easy to apply all the obtained knowledge in to practise, but even small thing can encourage and move a man forward.

❖ **What successes achieved your trade union ZO SLOVES in bargaining with the management of Office of Labour, social affairs last year, respectively for collective agreement concluded for this year?**

Bargaining and finding agreement and compromises with management of the ÚPSVaR Zvolen representing employer is a difficult process. We started with smaller issues. We bargained that newly coming employees working with a risky group of clients will be vaccinated. Employees that go out to terrain and visit their clients at home, will get personal protection means. We bargained that during extreme heat load the working time can be adjusted. We bargained that every employee has ergonomically adjustable chair. Then we managed to bargain that the employer will provide monitor with TCO 03 protection for every employee working on computer. We also managed to bargain that the employer will buy legs support, odour eliminator and ventilation mounting in critical offices.

We managed to bargain with the management of ÚPSVaR Zvolen to guarantee stairs repair after one work accident on stairs was reported in work place in Detva.

Within the framework of working environment improvement, hot water distribution network was installed at work place in Detva and whole interior was painted there.

For collective agreement concluded for year 2014, we bargained only increased DDP (complementary pension insurance). Another 2 issues, such as increased social fund creation and reimbursement of lost income during temporary sick leave, were not bargained.

Interviewer: Magdaléna Bernátová

NTL - FOR WORKERS IN THE STATE SECTOR

Norsk Tjenestemannslag (The Norwegian Civil Service Union) (NTL) is a trade union for workers employed by the Norwegian state and state-related organisations, agencies and businesses, such as research institutions and formerly state-owned enterprises. NTL is also a trade union for students in studies relevant to the State Sector. All employees in these workplaces, regardless of position, can be members of NTL. NTL has approximately 50.000 members and is affiliated to LO Norway (The Norwegian Confederation of Trade Unions).



Collective Bargaining and Political Influence

NTL is an important political agent, influencing policies relevant to its members and the sectors in which they work. NTL also takes an active stance in favour of preserving and reinforcing the Norwegian social welfare system.

NTL takes part in collective bargaining and negotiations on salaries and working conditions, on its own or through LO Norway. (LO - The Norwegian Confederation of Trade Unions - is Norway's largest and most influential workers' organisation. LO has a strong position in the Norwegian society, and has strongly influenced society's development for more than 100 years. About 900 000 workers are affiliated to the 22 national unions which in turn are affiliated to LO and NTL is one of them.)

NTL perform negotiations with more than 100 employers, not only on pay and working conditions but also on a range of issues that influence our members' working lives: as contracts of employment, working hours, leaves including parental leaves, pension schemes, promotion procedures, privatisation, outsourcing and company takeovers.

NTL gives advice, defends and supports members if they have problems at work. We also:

- negotiate salary and working conditions
- campaign for safe jobs and working standards
- offer favourable benefits and services
- influence employers and the Government.

NTL is not affiliated to any political party. However, the trade union movement has set objectives, which can only be achieved through political decisions. This means that the trade union movement also has to work politically to ensure real influence on behalf of our members' interests.

For this reason, NTL attempts to influence the political parties and the elected political representatives so as to ensure that they take the trade union's views into account.

Organisation

NTL is subdivided into country-wide occupational branches all with their own boards. The branches are represented at the NTL Congress, which takes place every four years. The Congress is the union's supreme body and decides on NTL's political positioning through policy documents such as the Principles and Action Programme.

All trade unionists in Norway belong to a local trade union or a trade union branch, which represents members' interests at the local level. Spread around most of Norway there are about 3000 well-trained elected trade union officers representing NTLs' members in co-determination meetings, in wage negotiations and in solving various conflicts at the local level.

International Cooperation

The trade union movement is international. It makes contacts and cooperates across borders to solve important common tasks. NTL works through international organisations such as PSI, EPSU, and NOFS and also directly with LO and national trade union movements to ensure maximised efforts for freedom, equality and equity.

We Need You, You Need Us. Become a Union Member!

Anyone who works within the state administration, the civil service, public agencies or other enterprises in the public sector, like research institutes or cultural institutions, can become a member of NTL, regardless of position, educational background or vocation.

Students in relevant studies are welcome as student members.

Member Benefits

- The most important task NTL performs is the protection of workers' rights in the workplace and negotiations on improvement of these rights formalised in collective agreements. As a union member you are part of a collective defense against employers who try to bend or stretch the rules.
- NTL offers a wide range of learning opportunities for members free of charge, from basic organisational knowledge to professional qualifications for activists and members.
- If you experience problems at your workplace, whether it is a dispute concerning failure to pay wages or holiday pay, or in the worst case, unfair dismissal or occupational injury, NTL will assist you. If necessary, a union officer might take on the case at the workplace in an effort to settle the

case by means of local negotiations. In complicated cases, NTL also provides free legal aid according to specific guidelines.

- As an NTL member you are covered by Collective Home Insurance provided by LOfavør. In addition LOfavør offers a wide range of other favourable insurances and bank services to NTL members.

Costs

The membership fee is 1.1% of your wage, plus monthly premium for the Collective Home Insurance, which is mandatory for all NTL members, and for the the Collective Travel Insurance, which is optional.

Source: www.ntl.no and www.lo.no

Slovak Trade Union of Public Administration and Culture - Basic Information

Slovak Trade Union of Public Administration and Culture (SLOVES) is a stable, strong and representative organisation of civil servants and public services employees built upon democratic principles, which guarantees rights to its members and provides social security during difficult periods.

SLOVES is an individual, voluntary and politically independent association of members who work in national authorities, other state authorities, municipalities, organisations established by self-governing regions, municipal and other institutions of national and public administration and culture.

The basic mission of SLOVES is to associate members to defend their rights and fight for their working, social, cultural and other interests and needs connected with work and ensuring dignified living for them.

SLOVES acts in the framework of its Principles, financial discipline, executive regulations; it works on tasks defined in its program.

Basal organisations make the headstone of the trade union which is usually created according to domains or specialisations connected to sector domains eligible to negotiate and resolve professional and sector questions of trade union activities. Currently, there are 9 sections: section of central authority, section of territorial financial authorities, section of procurator, section of labour offices, supervisory, inspection and examination authorities, section of customs, section of territorial administration, section of Social Insurance Company and Services, section for Ministry of



Interior employees, geodesy and cartography and section of culture, environment and nature protection.

Heads of sections, along with the president of SLOVES, make the Board of Directors responsible for usual running of the trade union.

Congress of the trade union is the highest authority of SLOVES. It is held once in five years and it takes place in two sessions. The first part is done by annual conferences of sections and the second part is a convention which approves the most important documents and defines program goals of the trade union for the next five-year-period by approval of SLOVES program.

The highest authority of the trade union in between congress sessions is the convention SLOVES made up of board of directors and representatives of different sections. Its number depends on the number of members in every section.

The trade union defines yearly tasks on the basis of approved program and after the year is closed, they assess how those tasks were carried out.

Trade union aims at social dialogue as an effective instrument of employee's and unionist engagement by advocating their demands to secure social cohesion. Collective bargaining belongs to the most significant formal expression of a functional social dialogue at all levels.

Collective agreement of a higher stage is negotiated annually not only to reach better working conditions for more than 300 thousand employees of public administration, but firstly to reach increase of their tariff salaries, thus the most important thing for members. Due to financial and economic crisis, bargaining in the domain of salaries was not successful and results were not worth the struggle. Luckily, they had gotten shorter working time, longer holidays, and bigger pension for those leaving for pension, higher compensation for employees who terminated labour relation, pension savings and social fund, which are important advantages for public administration employees.

SLOVES is active in preparations of all legal regulations, not only for labour domain, but also for other domains which are important for the majority of our citizens. It presents comments and opinions on these drafts via Confederation of Trade Unions in SR, of which it is a member, as well as via delegated representatives of SLOVES in the authorities of confederation and its labour commissions, mostly in tripartite dialogue. Trade union follows and actively influences development of labour relations legislation of the European Union and continually demands for more rights for employees and unionists in Slovakia to reach the extent of rights laid by EU directives, international agreements and conventions. To reach this goal we take advantage of our membership in EUROFEDOP - European Federation of Public Servant Employees because it continues in dialogue with the European Commission and European parliament deputies.

Internal expert activities of the trade union are oriented on assistance to its members in application of their eligible demands by the means of increase of their legal awareness while applying Labour Code, as well as other legal regulations in the domain of labour relations and social area. In order to help, we organise training on current problems for members on a regular annual basis. During their training, unionists are informed about positions, intentions and activities of the trade union.

Due to a long-term on-going reformation of public administration in Slovakia, SLOVES endeavours to present optimal designs for labour relations of employees – members of SLOVES, while organisational changes or restructuring of an employer happens. Experts of SLOVES are in daily touch with members who contact union via telephone or electronic mail demanding for aid with their labour relation problems. If no extra judicial agreement is reached with an employer, they represent our members in legal cases free of charge.

We have to mention another important role of the trade union – it is activating young members of basal organisations by the means of creating conditions which increase their activity within the union. Commission of Youth SLOVES is here to make work in trade union for new young members more attractive, show them that union is inevitable for work place, because it has its role and function and deserves confidence and support of employees.

More than 20 years of history of the trade union is filled with hard work, much success and much discouragement at the same time. But after these years, we can proclaim, that SLOVES is a strong, representative organisation of public servants. Its professionalism and respectability cannot be denied. It has got its stable position in policy making structure of the Slovak Republic.

Mária Mayerová
President of SLOVES

Collective Bargaining in Norway and in Slovakia

Introduction – Expression – Trade Union Movement And Its Meaning

Trade union movement became an important part of political, economic and social life of European countries. Majority of our inhabitants thinks that in democratic society trade union is a real leftover. But, there is an argument against, which claims that in Western Europe with a liberal development of trade union movement, it still holds on an important position.

A big part of trade unions of Slovakia, as well as of Norway belong to international organisations which help them to strengthen their position in the International Labour

Organisation making a part of tripartite structure made of employers', employees' and governmental representatives.

Unionists in Slovakia and Norway work differently due to the influence of traditions and interior legislation. But this fact limits mutual unionist cooperation.

Unionist movement in Norway and Slovakia underwent a huge transformation since its birth. However most of unionists' questions were resolved in Norway, as well as in Slovakia. But still, there are new ones arising, to which social dialogue would be an answer. Trade union plays a big role in democratic society.

Due to afore mentioned, SLOVES - Slovak Trade Union of Public Administration and Culture, as well as the Norwegian one - The Norwegian Civil Service Union (NTL), do not focus on pushing other unions aside, but on documenting their belief in the power of dialogue, solidarity, progress and social justice. SLOVES - SOZVSK and NTL reject all economic systems using human being as an instrument. Human being is the most important factor of the production and mean time it is also its reason. Every human has the right for working conditions which enable a normal personal development. Unionist organisations belong to the inalienable rights of employees. People are organised via free association in unionist organisations and defend their legitimate petition and demand for their rights. Unionist organisations fully cooperate on creation of democratic structures and functional social and economic life, enforcement of human rights, protection of employees' rights and cooperate by gathering of information for workers in the section of education. NTL enforces active participation of women in social and unionist life in Norway and works on effective policy concerning mostly environment (for ex. what kind of surroundings does the employee work in).

Due to rapid changes in the domain of employment in Slovakia, SLOVES orients to strengthening of activities in the area of unionist rights, any kind of discrimination and equal treatment of men and women. The main request is to create equal opportunities for all groups of employees.

The most important mission of Norwegian and Slovak unionists, done also via international cooperation between unionist organisations, is supporting and protecting of employees. This means: enhancement of safety at work place and improvement of living conditions of employees and their families and support of human and civil rights, social justice, equal position of men and women, procurement of liberty and democracy.

Slovakia - history and development of trade unions

1990 – year of Slovak general unionist conference where the Confederation of Trade Unions of the Slovak Republic (KOZ SR) was established, is an important milestone in the development of unionist movement in Slovakia. This organisation gathers 300,000 members in 28 sector trade unions and in the unionist movement which makes a part of

SLOVES – Slovak Trade Union of Public Administration and Culture. Confederation of Trade Unions plays a dominant role in Slovakia. There are several smaller sector organisations with no more than 10 thousand members which work along with KOZ SR.

General Free Trade Union (VSOZ) branches were established during 1997 at district labour offices and other public institutions as a counterbalance to sector trade unions covered by KOZ SR and in November of the same year the constitutional assembly of the Association of Trade Unions (ZPZ) took place, which should have been an alternative representative of employees at tripartite negotiations instead of KOZ SR which had ceased social dialogue at the moment within the frame of Council of Economic and Social Contract. Constitution of the Slovak Republic guarantees right to decide freely to everybody and associate with others to protect their economic and social interests. Unionist organisations are created independently from the state. It is impossible to limit the number of unionist organisations, as well as giving preferential treatment to some of them in an enterprise, or sector. Limitation of trade unions is acceptable only in case, if state safety is threatened. The General Treaty on national level was not signed for 1997 and it happened for the first time in history of tripartite model. KOZ had taken decisively a negative position to the negotiation due to parliamentary decision on wage regulation.

Years 1990 – 1998

Council of Economic and Social Contract (RHSD) – it is a tripartite authority for collective bargaining. Structure of RHSD: government, trade union and employers.

Years 1998 – 2002

In autumn 1998, after parliamentary elections, a new government is formed - "right - leftist" which knocked down wage regulation meaning limitation of unionist activity in Slovakia. Relations between government and trade unions were improved and representation of individual social partners was cleared. Labour legislation was liberalised – modifications to the Labour Code.

Years 2002 – 2006

The government had defined a goal to lessen the ratio of corporations in public life of Slovakia. Unionist organisations criticize Programme Declaration of the government. Unionists are criticised for making economic and social reforms. The government felt about unionists' dissatisfaction as of politicizing of unions. In 2004 the government had discharged RHSD and established a counselling authority for the government in the area of social dialogue at national level. Discontent of unionists with the acts of government and parliament led to pre-term elections.

Years 2006 – 2010

After establishment of new government after parliamentary elections, the unionists expected some change in labour relations. According to their proposals, it seemed that they had asked for changes into a three-stage counselling on national level. Economic

Council of the SR (HR SR) is established. The Act on trilateral counselling is amended. Amendment on the Act on Collective Bargaining had shown that binding principle of collective agreement on a higher level had been spread to all employers.

Years 2010 – till nowadays

Amendment on the Act on Collective Bargaining and Labour Act brings with liberal stipulations which enforce and broaden up competence of employees' councils and employees trustees by negotiation of labour conditions, wages and conditions of employment.

In May 1999 National Assembly of SR had approved new act on tripartite and there is only KOZ SR which fulfils conditions of tripartite bargaining so far. That organisation holds pre-tripartite meetings with partner unionist representatives. At the same time, the institute of an independent judge was established and they were chosen by an agreement of participating parties. Council of Economic and Social Partnership works in Slovakia since 01 Dec 2004. Its members: Slovak government, Confederation of Trade Unions, Association of Employers and Associations, Republic Union of Employers and Association of Municipalities of Slovakia. Based on approved statute, representatives of association of trade unions of employees defend interests of employers who are members of union. Since 01 April 2007 RHSP is entitled as Economic and Social Council of the SR.

Slovakia

Nevertheless complicated economic situation, it is very important to create or maintain work places, fair wages and sustain system of social security. New measures on economic policy supporting creation of new employment and restructuring of existing employment, increase of motivation of working power to enter or return to employment by providing advantages in receipts from labour, social security and increasing effectiveness of active labour policy belong to priorities. Trade unions are here to create economic stimulation plans which consider real opportunities to be accepted by social partners.

Following present results of economic development of both countries, we have to accentuate that economic, social and political relations differ from Slovakia to Norway. From the point of view of labour market, Norwegians prefer to react to their specific needs.

Unionist movements in Slovakia stand for the most important representation of employees. Their attention is focused on social dialogue, economic policy and policy of labour market.

Even though, there is a difference in the development of social partnership between our countries, social partners still have their important place and influence different levels –

national ones, as well as the international ones. Knowledge gained in Norway gives us a chance to focus interests of society on social themes.

Norway

Due to the fact that wages of state administration and public administration are different, NTL has to unify wages between those two institutions. Norwegian trade union organisation NTL takes care for safety of members and convinces them about its ideas and searches for alternatives to cooperate with other trade unions active in Norway, as well as with political parties present in government. One of its tasks is to establish a 33-hour work-week.

Training of unionists: Norwegian system pays attention to training of unionists. NTL is there to aid its members to gain higher education.

NTL follows the privileges given to individuals integrated into Norwegian social system via specialist commissions to avoid misuse of this social system.

Employees are assigned to a medical doctor appointed by their employer. Employers have to develop a plan how to improve working environment and how to eliminate and lower sickness absence of employees.

Collective Bargaining in Slovakia

A real social dialogue leading to concluding of collective agreement and achieved social cohesion was started only after the fall of communism in Slovakia in 1989. Within more than 20 years the institute of social dialogue and its legal framework was developed. Social dialogue comprises two areas. The first one is providing information and counselling among social partners and the second one is collective bargaining at different levels, which usually leads to conclusion of a collective agreement. These two areas usually intersect each other.

Collective bargaining presents the basic form of communication among social partners. Social partners lead a social dialogue - tripartite counselling in presence of state administration on national, sector, or regional level, which means a two stage bargaining. State participates in social dialogue, because it belongs to the biggest employer and it endeavours to lead collective bargaining in a perspective of a long-term national interest in social issues and possibilities of economy.

Social dialogue works as a preventive instrument oriented on prevention from conflicts and problems and ex-ante, not ex-post solutions to problems. This social policy instrument should head to establishment and sustainability of social cohesion and stability in Slovakia.

Collective Bargaining in Norway

Collective bargaining in Norway has two stages. Collective Agreement of Confederation (LO STAT) results from collective bargaining. Such collective agreement is negotiated for one year duration. It contains bargaining on the principles of minimum wage and maximum wage (minimum yearly wage is 27,500 NOK and maximum yearly wage is 1,215,900 NOK).

First stage: At first stage they gather to decide on how and what to bargain about in the collective agreement, so called "first outline". The first outline contains individual propositions which unionists want to claim in collective agreement – in the second stage.

Second stage: Bargaining results in collective agreement which contains tariffs according to work positions and years worked, working conditions etc. Collective agreement is published on internet site of unionists and is printed out.

Principles of collective bargaining in Norway are oriented on the following:

1. Equal treatment of partners - unionists prepare a strategy before they start bargaining and decide on prioritization of demands.
2. Group bargaining - Norwegian unionists bargain with employers in a group. They take minutes from negotiation and they consult it with unionists to find out whether the bargaining is understandable and correct.
3. Unionists have clear goals and priorities when bargaining, they put importance to their introduction, they prepare the object of negotiation, they inform about support from other unions which are integrated to resolving problems within bargaining with the employer. If they are not capable to give their position immediately, they ask for time to negotiate the issue within the group of members of union.
4. Their discussions are not pushed to extremes, they search for compromises, ask the right questions, they do not show aggression, do not use irony, but they present their opinions as a zeal for a good cause.
5. Unionists search for common word when looking for resolving demands. In case that the opposing parties do not reach a consensus, the decision making commission – judges – enters. Judges decide. Their decision is binding and unchangeable for both parties.

Themes and Success of Collective Bargaining of Unionists in Norway

Collective bargaining in Norway is focusing on equality of partners. When bargaining, a discussion goes on and common idea is searched for to decide in the domain of working conditions, environment, safety at work, distribution of social fund and so on.

The amount of wage for employees – during assigned working period is a salary according to position and amount of years worked. Overtimes are limited by a fix tariff of 100%. In Norway, overtimes could be transferred to the next year in the extent of 40 hours.

Norwegian unionists care for environment, supervise surrounding conditions at working place and working hours of an employee. There are different types of employment contracts in Norway. Full employment working hours of an employee per one work-week is 35 hours.

Duration of a maternity leave, obligatory whether for mother or father is: mother 1 year, father 14 weeks with a possibility to prolong the maternity leave for two years.

Working hours are flexible in Norway.

Health care for an employee: in case of sick leave, it is paid up to 100% of the salary.

Collective agreements are firstly concluded with national economy, thus business sector and further on with public and state administration. If salaries in economy are increased, then salaries in state and public administration could be increased, too.

Summary – Comparison of Unionist Activity Between Both Countries

Following this trend, it is necessary to let Slovak trade unions integrate into legislation more possibilities to deflect from collective agreement of the higher stage from minimum standards and decrease them. Such activity would avoid threatening of employees by inadequate means and threatening of their certitudes – which means that entrepreneurial agreements should regulate employees' demands in a smaller extent than determine collective agreements of a higher stage. These changes in collective bargaining are already included in Norwegian unionists' activity and their work.

- To enforce that salary and working conditions are negotiated within collective bargaining and not within the frame of minimum standards bringing along legislative amendments;
- To increase flexibility in labour relations, it is adequate to open legislation for more deflections in collective agreements from minimum legislative standards towards their decrease.

- To search for forms of cessation of unfavourable development of membership trade unions with an annual decrease of number of members by app. 8%.
- To contact people directly and gain positive promotion of unions.
- To promote stable social dialogue for just and effective answers to contemporary crisis.

During lectures and workshops the Norwegian partners had shown how to cope with the situation with endurance, mutual respect and gender equality step by step. To achieve this goal we need confidence that such thing is right and persuade our colleagues about these goals.

All mentioned principles have to be applied within the trade union organisation. Even though there are differences in development and scope of unionist movement and social legislation in Slovakia and Norway, it is natural for unionists to be close in the basic questions and support of the ideas of solidarity and equality.

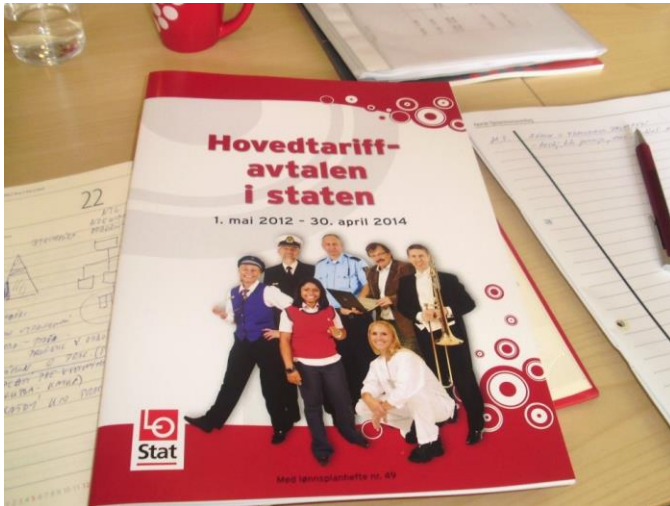
Eva Kocmanová, Martina Šantová

Collective Bargaining and Collective Agreements in Norway

If we start talking about working environment in Norway, firstly we have to clarify some principles of collective bargaining. In Norway, it is set by the law that every person that works has the right for his wage. This principle is valid in every economic sector including public sector and civil sector. How high the wage will be and whether it will be sufficient to cover the standard living conditions of public sector employees and civil servants it depends on wage level negotiated by trade unions. The Norwegian trade union for civil sector employees (NTL) negotiates wages for their employees with employers. The level of wage is to be negotiated in accordance with other sector wages negotiated and new job places to be created.

Employers prefer to hire people with university-level completed education. The level of completed education is one of the important factors to be considered when hiring people for civil service. Employees of Norwegian labour offices are people with university-level completed education. Beside this fact, it is not a long time ago, when this criterion of university-level completed education did not relate to the posts of heads of labour offices departments. Through negotiations, the NTL achieved that now all the managers and heads have to have completed university-level education.

Wage conditions are to be negotiated directly with an employee. The trade unions ensure that any relevant job position that is going to be created is necessary for efficient work performance of the Office. Wages are negotiated annually. So what is the system of wage negotiating in Norway?



So-called small collective agreement describes conditions of bargaining wages in a company. It sets conditions of bargaining wages on central level between trade unionists and employers, as well as on the level of individual companies. Negotiated conditions are then published in so-called big collective agreement. The collective agreement includes the method of calculating the wages as well as the table of wage

tariffs – which are the outcomes of trade union negotiations on central level that are to be formalised as law applied for the negotiated period. The length of annual leave above the legal minimum limit which is four weeks similarly to Slovak conditions set by the Labour Code is to be negotiated by trade unions. The Collective Agreement formalised five weeks of annual leave. Priority number one of Norwegian trade unions negotiations on Collective agreement for next period is the working time shortening. The working time negotiated and included in the Collective agreement for the period of May 1, 2012 through April 30, 2014 is bargained for 37,5 hours per week, with shortened working time and bonuses for working in night shifts. The law sets working time of 35 hours per week for workers working in night shifts, however the Norwegian trade unions negotiated working time of 33 hours per week for workers working in night shifts. The Collective agreement provisions apply to higher and lower working categories, but in companies without any collective agreement concluded only the Labour Code working conditions apply. The Collective agreement can set so-called flexible working time. It is the flexible working time negotiated between trade unions and employer. Employees prefer to have more bonuses such as bonuses for overtime work instead of having compensatory leave. During negotiations preferences of particular employees are taken into consideration. It is considered to be a disadvantage of flexible working time that not employees but employers decide on time when an employee will use his leave to compensate his overtime. It is more difficult to find an agreement between employee and employer on this time, e.g. if an employee wants to use his leave to compensate his overtime on Monday, but the employer disagrees with this time because he has an important working meeting scheduled for that day. It is more advantageous for the employer rather than for the employee.

It is necessary to mention that the first Collective agreement reported by historians was negotiated in 1935 and its main priority was to maintain peace, equality of rights and obligations of employers and employees. The historical experiences of Norwegian trade unions show that it is more advantageous if the agreement is achieved between the employer and the employees. Therefore, according to trade unions representatives,

achieving partnership relations is very important. It is a dialogue between trade unions that represent employees and employers.

Ivan Bartoš

Principles of Collective Bargaining

- Collective bargaining is based on equality.
- Do not enter into bargaining alone but always with several members of union.
- It is important to decide how to negotiate or speak, ideal is to bring a spokesman within.
- If we cannot answer quickly, it is necessary to ask for reflection time and engage members to the negotiation and search for alternative possibilities.
- To look for common points: to gain trust of the employer, to have clear goals, to achieve requested issues of unionists not during collective bargaining but already before the negotiation.
- Unionists should have a leader of trade union group.
- Unionists should have clear goals, have an excellent ability to "bargain", should have general knowledge and should be flexible.
- Knowledge means power – so be always ready for bargaining.
- It is great to know how to read in between lines, because collective bargaining is many times heading far away from expected plans.
- Bargaining is an art with its base in respect to partners.
- The result of bargaining is different than the originally intended target – it is something in between.
- We should not do promises that we cannot achieve.
- Norwegian trade unions do not act in opposition, they are partners.

Eva Kocmanová, Martina Šantová, Elena Kašiaková

Techniques of Collective Bargaining

- Human nature affects considerably the whole process of collective bargaining. It is necessary to keep the line of bargaining, mostly by questioning about understanding and clarifying the whole bargaining.
- To focus on correct formulation of questions (we can use phrases like, for ex.: it's not clear to us, we don't understand what you were saying, etc. ...).
- During bargaining we show interest in negotiated issue and we take notes to be able to return to ideas and develop them.
- We clarify common arrangements. We are not ironic, we do not get influenced by employer's anger and we are zealous.

- We should have prepared a strategy of bargaining, have determined goals, their prioritization, we cannot jog.
- When bargaining, it is good to sit back to window, so that the light does not shine straight to eyes.

Examples of Themes to Bargaining

- distribution of social fund,
- duration of work-week,
- possibility of flexible working hours,
- health care for employees,
- social security schemes for employees who had been dismissed.

Problems of Norwegian Unionists and What do they Endeavour for

- Different wages between state and public servants – the task is to unify wage policy of state and public servants.
- System of social security, family care;
- Shortening of working hours from 35 to 33 hours;
- Employment of women for a full-time job;
- Distribution of social fund;
- Flexible working hours;
- Health care, decrease of sick absences, employee has got an appointed doctor;
- Social security for employees who had been dismissed from work;
- Surroundings for employees – in what kind of environment the employees work;
- Employee's wage, depending on statistical data and results of national economy;
- Training of employees, legal counselling for employees;
- Drafting of statistical data and their practical use.

Eva Kocmanová, Martina Šantová

Assistance for Persons with Severe Disabilities in Slovakia and Norway

Mobility Aids

Disability can be defined in various ways. For example, as a modification of health status which is long-lasting and causes objective disadvantages to man in comparison to other people. Such disability may be associated with impaired sight, movement or intellect, and includes also a mental disability.

Assistance for disabled in Slovakia represents on average 10% of social spending, while in the Netherlands, Norway and Poland reaches 20% of social spending (OECD, 2003).

In Slovakia, very low percentage (19%) of disabled are employed. This percentage indicates inability of Slovak social state to provide sufficient motivation and assistance in job seeking to disabled citizens. Disabled people therefore do not have available resources of society and their income mainly consists of social benefits from the state. The state is trying to provide support to disabled through sheltered workshops (in a form of financial contribution to sheltered workshop establishing), which employ disadvantaged people and thus they can participate in the labour market with some support from the state.

Beside efforts to improve social care and integration of people with health disability into society by introduction of different motivation tools (care allowance, care services, motor vehicle allowance, personal assistant allowance, contribution for various devices, flats adaptations, etc) services for disabled citizens in Slovakia are still insufficiently developed.

In Slovakia, the Office of Labour, Social Affairs and Family provides following types of cash allowances for compensation costs of people with severe disabilities:

- cash allowance for personal assistance,
- cash contribution for the purchase, training in use and adjustment of an aid,
- a cash contribution for aid/device repairing,
- cash allowance for the purchase of lifting equipment,
- a financial contribution to the purchase of a motor vehicle,
- cash benefit for adjustment of a motor vehicle,
- cash allowance for transportation,
- cash allowance to adjust apartment, house or garage.
- cash allowance to compensate for increased spending on a special diet,
- cash allowance to compensate increased expenses related to hygiene or wear of clothing, shoes and household equipment
- cash allowance to compensate costs of increased expenses associated with the operation of a motor vehicle

- cash allowance to compensate increased expenses associated with caring for specially trained dog,
- cash allowance for nursing.

In Norway, this care for people with disabilities is provided through Office of Social Affairs - the department, dealing with compensatory devices, called the Centre for Simplification and Participation located in Oslo, which administrates two regions.

It is located in one building together with other institutions. It has large premises in which the devices are centralized such as: cars, bikes, trucks, adjustable armchairs, various chairs for all age categories.

The procedure for obtaining these compensatory devices is similar to one in Slovakia:

- Doctor advises medical device based on the level of disability
- Client writes request that is submitted for consideration to the Office of Social Affairs in the concerned district
- The Office sends approved request to the Office of compensation devices in Oslo, where the client comes to select a specific device. Devices are adjusted and tailored in little workshops according to individual requirements of clients, where workers are available during business hours
- Cars are adjusted and refurbished according to type of client's used wheelchairs, methods of loading up - platforms, etc., where client uses them free of charge and in case of failure the Office provides repairing for him
- For immobile clients different adjustable beds are tailor made, with special pillows on them according to client's requirements,
- The clients who suffer from e.g. Alzheimer's disease, can get a special board with a daily timetable with light, sound or other signals alerting of the specific task of the day to be fulfilled (hygiene, walking, etc.)
- The largest group of devices involves different chairs, wheelchairs ranging from the baby's size up to size for adults,
- Special care is devoted to kids, who have their special room, where they spend time until their device will be selected and adjusted accordingly.

For comparison - in Slovakia, a part of medical devices is paid from the health insurance regularly paid by every employee as a deduction of their salary or paid by the state for

unemployed people. Certain compensation devices are provided by the Office of Labour, Social Affairs and Family, but only in a form of partial reimbursement of their costs up to the maximum contribution, e.g. 6 638.79 EUR for the purchase of motor vehicle. These compensation contributions are provided in Norway free of charge through offices of social affairs.

Source: OECD, Disability Programmes in Need of Reform, Paris: OECD, 2003.
Jana Kohoušková



Wheelchairs of different size prepared for clients.

Photo: Jana Kohoušková

ADAPTOR - Association Helps People with Disadvantages on Labour Market to Find Job

Basic information

Adaptor AS is an association that consists of two organisational units. One unit has its residence in Oslo and another one in Hønefoss. This company is owned by the Norwegian association of blind and visually handicapped. Adaptor was certified according to program Equass in years 2011 and 2013 (EQUASS Assurance is a certification program that guarantees quality and control of social services provided. It enables social service providers to take part in an external independent certification process on European level and in that way to secure quality of social services provided to their users and to other involved parties).

It deals with people who are disadvantaged on labour market due to physical or psychic handicaps, blind and visually handicapped, as well as people with migraine headaches. "These people are not competitive on labour market. Therefore, we help them to find „back doors“. Beside their disadvantage we help them to find their dream work“, says Adaptors worker Brynjar Uddu.

Employees

Eighteen advisers work in Oslo in four programs. Six advisers work in Hønefoss in two programs. The total number of employees is 32. In Oslo, they can deal with maximum 116 clients and in Hønefoss forty clients at the same time.

Education of employees

The employees of Adaptor have various professional and cultural backgrounds. Five employees out of seventeen advisers in Oslo have completed "magisters" level of education. All advisers are trained in two areas: work placement interviews and widening of interests in work. The main aim of their work is to obtain supported job for their clients.

Values and principles

All employees of Adaptor respect four principles at work representing shared values:

EQUALITY → RESPECT → COOPERATION → PROGRESS

These values are also expressed in the motto they use: Partnership for Success

The partnership means for them not only cooperation based on equality principle with client but also with training and health care organisations. Every man has his doctor, his family. We cooperate with them too we work out plans for our clients in cooperation with them.



Slovak visitors in the Adaptor Association

Photo: Magdaléna Bernátová

Rules

The main credo of client-oriented work is that: „Every client is the main person that makes decision about his life. “ The role of advisers is to provide useful information that help clients to make the right and efficient decisions.

The main aim of client-oriented work in Adaptor is to help every client to improve his quality of life. As the quality of life means something different for every person, everybody has to decide individually what it means to him. Another basis of client-oriented work is that obtaining a job is not the main achievement, but obtaining job that makes him successful is the main achievement. Therefore, they teach clients how to work out their development carrier’s plans that are in consistency with clients goals, with their education obtained, existing health limitations and skills.

"We do not want to have any prejudices and we do not want to guess. Therefore, we ask many questions“, says Brynjar Uddu from Adaptor. "It is not an easy work and our

results are not achieved quickly. Every man has his secret and never says full story at first time, for example man does not explain why he has lost 3 jobs in one last year."

Programs

Workshop

Capacity of Oslo unit is 33 clients, who are administered by six advisers and in Hønefoss, there five advisers administer 28 clients.

Content of the Program:

- practical learning of activities related to work,
- training in the field of social skills, personal hygiene and health protection,
- sheltered workshops.

Staff cooperates with specialists in health care and other fields in order to provide optimal support to clients in process of job finding as well as keeping job as long as possible.

Client's assessment

Capacity: 17 clients, 4 advisers.

Content of the Program:

Assessment of basic language knowledge, mathematical, technological and social skills, and including health assessment too. Again, it is necessary to pay attention to broadening clients horizons in work area, as clients may not dare to master some job positions, for example due to their handicaps. Mainly during this program, clients are trained in work placement interviewing, in order to avoid stress, to show how to express them in appropriate way, how to point out their strengths. Clients stay in this program for 12 weeks. Every client has individual meetings with his advisor. Also the program is prepared for every client individually and is unique due to different needs, expectations, experiences and skills of every client.

The Program is divided into several processes. Firstly, it is pointing out available sources in social care system and rehabilitation possibilities, and then it is gaining working skills and preparation of individual development plan. At the end of the program – after 12-weeks - client usually undertakes some program provided by the NAV (Central Office of labour and social affairs).

Work practice

Capacity: 27 clients, 7 advisers.

This program is oriented to obtaining work practise on common labour market. So far it is only unpaid work practise. Clients can be employed for a trial by somebody who they know. They will obtain self-confidence, working skills. They did not work for several years and therefore they have to renew their working skills.

Content of the Program:

1. Initial phase:
In this part, client introduce himself, says about his past working experience and his work requirements.
2. Evaluation phase:
 - 2.1. Individual development plan.
 - 2.2. Health assessment.
 - 2.3. Obtaining of skills and knowledge in writing application forms and successful holding work placement interviews mainly with concentration on real goals setting.
 - 2.4. Evaluation of basic skills.
 - 2.5. Assessment of needs for technical supporting instruments.
3. Preparation phase:
Preparation to labour market requirements (common labour market).
4. Training phase during which clients are trained for particular job field (relevant to client's interests).

Supported employment

This issue is covered by four advisors in Oslo, dealing with maximum of 39 clients (out of fit with three visually handicapped clients) and by one advisor in Hønefoss, who has 12 clients. Content of meetings between client and advisor is assistance in writing CV and applications for job placement, analysis of job offers and fictive work placement interview.

Beside work with unemployed clients with any kind of handicap, they work with visually handicapped and blind people. For this work they cooperate with employers to discuss necessary adjustments of work place.

The association Adaptor provides visually handicapped people with following services:

- Assessment of needs for adaptation technologies,
- Application for relevant technology/equipment,
- Training of area orientation and of mobility,
- Work place adjustment.

After successful completion of all phases and processes comes most likely EMPLOYMENT, the goal of Adaptors help to clients.

Financing

90% of financing of Adaptors activities come from state funds of NAV (Norwegian Central Office of labour and social affairs) and 10% from sale of own products (e.g. preparation of gift and fruit baskets for companies and institutions used as refreshment for their employees during work breaks) or second-hand commodities.

Jozef Alakša

More information available on association web: <http://www.adaptor-arbeid.no/>

May 1 in Oslo

First of May is the international workers day. Resolution adopted on the celebrations was adopted at the first congress of the Second International in Paris in 1889 at the memory of general strike and mass demonstrations in Chicago workers held in 1886 for an eight-hour working time.

We, born earlier, still remember the May 1 with tribune mounted on a square and May Day parade march. Different party officials were standing on the tribune and had long speeches. And then the whole crowd began to move and passed underneath the tribune while shouting various rehearsed and prepared in advance slogans. We, as children, we have practiced mottos shouting during large breaks in the school yard.

During our visit to Oslo in the project Improving social dialogue through Slovak-Norwegian partnership – Decent work we had opportunity to participate in May Day celebrations organised by Norwegian unions and thus experience different view on May 1.

For Norwegian trade unionists is the May Day like Christmas. While this is a public holiday, but all take it as their important day and conscientiously prepare themselves to it. None of them is at home, but all in all weathers go to manifestation. Top 10 mottos of that date are to be approved in advance. Local trade union organizations may also approve your other slogans.

Every trade union organisation prepares May Day celebration. Several trade unionists from the Norwegian headquarters travelled to different parts of the country that day to take part in the celebrations there and to have speech for local workers' unions.

We were right in the heart of celebrations prepared by headquarters.



Project team at the 1st May Celebration in Oslo

Foto: NTL

Trade unionists celebrate together the whole day, so we attended the common breakfast with them. For us it was interesting that on the tables, there was agenda of the day prepared with songbook attached. We learned that trade unionists have many of their songs, which compose themselves, but also sing old songs. So we sang several times International that day.

After breakfast, we went to the square, which was festively decorated and was slowly filling with trade unionists.



Every group of unionists has its own flag and so it is easy to find in the crowd the one to which you belong. Health nurses even came in ancient uniforms. Brass band played and different unionists had speeches from the tribune. Everyone's speech did not last more than 5 minutes. It ended with the singing of the International, and then began to march around the city centre. Gradually, the various workers' unions groups marched, in front of with flag bearer of the flag, some with their own brass band. On the sidewalk almost throughout whole our trip, people were standing and greeting trade unionists. The march ended at the square again.



From there, we went to premises of the Norsk Tjenestemannslag (NTL - Norwegian trade union of government) headquarters, where they offered prepared refreshments. Lunch was also attended by families of some participants. When we greeted each other and sat down, the Vice President of NTL read speech and wished us bon appétit.

Songbooks were not missing on tables. After the meal, people were talking to each other and throughout sang several times. And of course, we ended with the International.

Ring the whole celebration you could feel solidarity and the strength of trade union movement. The fact that they have such a common day of celebration, gives them a new power for the whole year.

Elena Kašiaková

Active Labour Market Policy in Slovakia and Norway

Active policy measures

The setting of Slovak and Norwegian systems of active policy measures is different. Slovak system is split into passive and active policy measures on labour market, where active measures provide financial contributions to employers as well as to applicants for job. Active labour market policy measures are divided into two groups:

- contributions claimable by law: § 32 – recruitment mediation, § 52 - activation activity, § 52a - voluntary service, § 53 – commuting, § 53a - labour migration, § 59 - activities of a work assistant, § 60 - operating costs of sheltered workshop,
- contributions requiring prior approval of evaluation commissions: § 46 - education and training for the labour market, § 49 - self-employment, § 50 - the employment of disadvantaged jobseekers, § 50j - development of local and regional employment, § 50k - promoting job maintaining, § 51 - graduate practice, § 54 - projects and programs, § 56 - setting up a sheltered workshop, § 57 - self-employment of disabled.

These contributions, which are defined in the Act No. 5/2004 of Coll. of laws. on employment services and on amending and supplementing of certain acts, as amended, have clearly defined their amounts.

Social allowances are not included in active policy.

The Norwegian system combines unemployment benefits and the social benefits. It does not set the exact amount of contributions, but is rather based on previous earnings of applicants.

When comparing unemployment rates in Slovakia and Norway, we see an ultimate difference. In May 2014, the registered unemployment rate of Slovakia was 12.80%, which represents 345 457 unemployed people and for the same period in Norway, 72 495 people were without work, 2.70% respectively. The aim of the Norwegian labour market policy is to help unemployed to return to the labour market, even with higher state contributions, supporting the improvement of workers working conditions (e.g., pay a taxi to travel to / from work for a limited period of time, if a person has a problem with public transportation, purchase of special devices, etc.).

Sources: statistics of Central Office of Labour, Social Affairs and Family in Slovakia and the NAV - Norwegian Labour Office
 Ľubomír Kyslý

Active Labour Market Policy in Slovakia

Active measures for labour market are oriented on distribution of different contributions supporting creation of new job positions for entrepreneurial or non-commercial entities and for unemployed.

Different types of contributions are divided into two groups - obligatory and optional. Obligatory contributions are legitimate after meeting conditions stipulated within: §32, §52, §53, §53a, §59 and §60.

Optional contributions are submitted to approval of the Committee for Employment Issues or other assessment committees: §46, §47, §49, §50, §50j, §50k, §51, §52a, §54, §56, §57.

Providing travel allowance for part of travel expenses concerning participation in selection procedure or job interview

(§ 32 Act no. 5/2004 on employment services as amended).

Definition of the Contribution

This contribution is provided through partial reimbursement of travel allowance of the job seeker, related to their participation in selection procedure or job interview at employer's from the address of permanent stay, or habitual residence to the place of the activity and back.

Job Seeker

is a person who is able to work, who is willing to work, is looking for a job and is registered in the register of job seekers at the office and who:

- a) is not an employee;
- b) is not in a legal job relationship based on an agreement on work performed outside employment relationship;
- c) does not operate or execute any trade license;
- d) does not execute any gainful employment in states of the European Union or abroad

Employer

is a legal entity with its registered office or registered office of its operational unit at the territory of the Slovak Republic, or a natural person with its permanent residence at the territory of the Slovak Republic and who employs such natural persons in a legal employment relationship or parallel employment relation.

Employment Mediator Providing Intermediation for Reward

is a legal entity or a natural person who is authorised to provide such services on the basis of an authorisation pursuant to specific regulations and meets conditions determined in the Act on Employment Services.

Temporary Employment Agency

is a legal entity or a natural person who employs citizens in labour relation to outsource them to another user employer at the territory of the Slovak Republic to work under their supervision and management

Travel Allowance

is considered to be an expense on travelling by public transport from the place of permanent stay or temporary residence except from taxi or personal motor vehicle.

Amount of the Contribution

is determined as a payment of **70%** out of documented travel allowance, in a minimum sum of **4.-€** and in a maximum sum of **35.- €** in total for all voyages made in a current calendar month.

Training and Preparation of Job Seeker for Labour Market

(§ 46 Act no. 5/2004 on employment services as amended)

Definition of the Contribution:

Training and preparation of job seeker for labour market (further on as "Training and prep") is a theoretical or practical preparation of a job seeker or employee. It has to be applicable for labour market and facilitate job seeker to gain new vocational knowledge, skills and abilities to assert oneself in an adequate job or to maintain a job by an employee.

Educational Institutions

May be:

- a) secondary grammar schools, secondary vocational schools, conservatories, schools for children with special educational needs, primary schools of arts, language schools and colleges and universities which provide also training programmes beyond their regular educational programmes,
- b) legal entities which are oriented on education and activities related to education;
- c) natural persons – entrepreneurs who are oriented on education and activities related to education.

Training and preparation of job seeker for labour market is executed in different forms of education:

- a) in accredited training programmes leading to completion, renewal, broadening or deepening of qualification necessary for execution of expert activities;
- b) in accredited training programmes leading to achievement of a partial qualification or complete qualification, specialised skills for one or more activities in other occupation than the job seeker had accomplished during previous educational process;
- c) in training programmes focused on development of communication, computer, management, social and business competence, and on development of language skills.

Individual training is such training and preparation of job seeker for labour market, which is sought for by job seeker themselves and which leads directly to beginning of a labour relation or commencement of a trade license.

Amount of Contribution

Contribution for individual training covers 100% of expenditures, based on a **written demand for disbursement of finances** It is defined by a **maximum** sum of **600.- €** which are reimbursed only **after commencement of job relation** or **commencement of execution of trade license**.

Contribution for family services for a job seeker with a family is provided in a partial disbursement which does not exceed **54.- € monthly** per **one child** and **42.- € per every other child** during participation of JS at Training and prep.

The **following equipment is accepted** as eligible expenditures for Training and prep. of JS:

- a) necessary expenditures for text books and learning material at maximum sum of **49.80 €** per participant of Training and prep of JS;
- b) expenditures for protective equipment, washing, cleaning and disinfecting agents and protective drinks provided to participants during Training and prep of JS;
- c) insurance for damages caused on health of a participant during Training and preparation of job seeker for labour market covering a certain period of time during participation.

Supplier of Training and preparation of job seeker for labour market cannot ask for an advance payment or for reimbursement of a part of eligible costs spent for implementation of Training and prep of JS.

Contribution for Trade License

(§ 49 Act no. 5/2004 on employment services as amended)

Definition of the Contribution

Contribution for Trade License (further on "TL") serves as a partial disbursement of expenditures related to operating of TL to a job seeker who was registered in the register of job seekers and who will be operating their own trade license.

Contribution for TL may be provided by the office to job seekers (further on "JS"):

- registered in the register of JS **for at least for three months**;
- they had terminated, ceased or suspended operating of TL 6 months before they had been registered in the register of JS; they were registered in the register **for at least 12 months**;
- they will execute agricultural activity inclusive of forestry and aquaculture;
- they will ask for contribution **in writing**;
- they will operate their trading **for at least three years in a row**.

Amount of contribution for TL is determined upon total labour cost of an average employee in the Slovak economy for the first to third quarter of a calendar year which proceeds the year of contribution. For 2014:

- a) it is in Bratislava region 2.5 times average, which makes at max. **2,714.10 €**;
- b) in districts with an average registered unemployment rate **lower or equal to** national average **it is 3 times of the average labour cost, so** it makes a max. of **3,256.92 €**;
- c) in districts with an average registered unemployment rate **bigger than** national average **it is 4 times of the average labour cost, so** it makes a max. of 4,342.56 €;

The Office provides 60% of the contribution within 30 calendar days from the day of signing of the agreement on providing of contribution **and the rest of it, at max. 40% is paid after receiving of the first report about trade license activity and financial report on usage of funds after first 12 months of operating a TL.**

Repeated contribution

It is possible to provide contribution after **eight years** from the beginning of operating a TL for which the contribution was provided.

The application for contribution on TL

is filled in by JS and presented with annexes to the office:

- business plan with calculation of expenditures necessary for operating of a TL on a pre-defined form;
- document acknowledging eligibility of the place for business, or rental agreement, or agreement on future contract if the place for business is not identical with data claimed in the certificate on operating a TL, or it is not identical with registered office of the plant or other document which authorises the applicant to operate a TL;
- document on completed degree of education (relative to specialisation of the applicant);
- sworn statement that they did not have a trade license in past;
- certified copy of the trade license, or an extract from the register of TL or a document
- authorising the applicant for contribution to carry a TL. Such document does not have to be presented with the application, but **has to be presented before concluding of an agreement.**

Report on Operating a TL

and on usage of provided contribution for every year of TL activity should be presented during the eligible three-years-period for which period the agreement is valid.

Contribution for Support of Employment to Disadvantaged Job Seeker

(§ 50 Act no. 5/2004 on employment services as amended)

Definition of the Contribution:

Contribution for Support of Employment to Disadvantaged job seeker is predestined for employers who will take a disadvantaged JS registered by the Office for at least for three months for a job position, **if such position is agreed for at least for a half of legitimate weekly work time.**

Amount of Contribution

Amount of contribution is determined upon total labour cost of an average employee in the Slovak economy for the first to third quarter of a calendar year which precedes the year of contribution. For 2014:

- it is in Bratislava region up to **25%**, which makes a max. of **271.41 €**;
- in districts with an average registered unemployment rate **lower or equal** to national average it is at **30%**, so it makes a max. of **325.69 €**;
- in districts with an average registered unemployment rate **bigger** than national average it is **40%**, so it makes a max. of **434.25 €**;

Contribution for Support of Employment to Disadvantaged JS could be provided to employers only during a period of 12 calendar months for employment of a JS registered in the register of JSs and for a period of 24 months at the longest for employment of a disadvantaged JS.

Eligible expenditures

are expenditures for salaries and payments for social security, public health insurance, pension insurance and other obligatory allowances paid by employers for employees.

Creation of a job position

means an increase in the number of job positions which is shown in an average value for 12 calendar months in comparison to a previous period of a parallel time span, though overall growth in the number of their employees.

Contribution to Support the Development of Local and Regional Employment

(§ 50j Act no. 5/2004 on employment services as amended)

Definition of the Contribution

Contribution to support the development of local and regional employment serves as an instrument to create job positions for a definite period of time for disadvantaged JS registered in the register of job seekers for at least for 3 months.

Such an employer is: municipality, self-government region, budgetary or contributory organisation founded by a municipality or self-government region.

Disadvantaged job seeker is a:

- citizen of 50 years of age and older;
- citizen registered in the register of job seekers, who is in evidence for more than 12 consecutive months;
- citizen who had achieved lower than secondary vocational education.

Amount of contribution

is determined as 80% of total labour cost, but at max. 60% of an average labour cost in the Slovak economy for the first to third quarter of a calendar year which precedes the year of contribution. For 2014 the sum is determined to 651.38 €.

Duration of support

Contribution is provided for **nine calendar months** without any possibility to ask repeatedly for support to the same employee during the period of **two years** directly after the labour relation was ceased.

Payment of contribution

Based on the application for payment, contribution is provided to the employer as a reimbursement of expenditures on a monthly basis, but at the latest **within 30 days** from the date they had presented a complete documentation.

Contribution for Maintaining of Job Positions

(§ 50k Act no. 5/2004 on employment services as amended)

Definition of the Contribution:

Contribution for Maintaining of Job Positions is provided to employer who maintains job positions, even in a difficult situation which leads to the lack of work for employees and who instead of dismissal of employees limits activity of the plant for a transitional period and they would not give work to employees in a proportion of at least 6% and at most 20% of determined weekly work time.

Amount of Contribution

Monthly contribution makes 50% of the salary given to an employee, but not more than 50% of the average salary of an employee in the Slovak economy for the first to the third quarter of a calendar year previous to the calendar year of contribution.

Average hourly wage * number of really not worked hours * salary determined in the agreement (min. 60%) * 50% of compensation of the salary = monthly contribution

Contribution is provided for a period of maximum 12 months. Contribution is provided only for days for which the employee was compensated, in total maximum of 60 days, if the agreement upon contribution was concluded for 12 months. If the agreement was concluded for a shorter period of time than 12 months, overall number of days of contribution is adequately shortened.

Contribution for Graduate Practice

(§ 51 Act no. 5/2004 on employment services as amended)

Definition of the Contribution

Graduate practice enables graduates registered in the register of job seekers to get special vocational skills and experience at employers' which corresponds to their degree of education in the relevant group of study programmes.

Graduate practice may be executed by a school graduate registered in the register of JS for one month at least and defined as disadvantaged JS, citizen younger than 26 years of age who completed obligatory preparation for profession within a certain degree of education in a full-day program at least 2 years ago and before registering in the register of JS they did not have a regular employment.

Duration of graduate practice is from 3 months minimum to 6 months max. - 20 hours weekly, there is no possibility to prolong or repeat it. Employer decides on the beginning and volume of the graduate practice. Upon its termination, employer issues to the graduate an acknowledgement on graduate practice.

Amount of Contribution

A flat rate for the school graduate presents 65% of the sum of minimum income standard, i.e. **128.75 €** per one major natural person monthly for indispensable personal costs connected with implementation of the graduate practice. If the graduate concludes a contract on casualty insurance, the Office should reimburse such insurance.

A flat rate is shortened, if the graduate does not ***work all workable days agreed upon:***

- for days off in an amount of 10 workable days,
- for absence at graduate practice caused by temporary inability to work or care for a family member.

An application for graduate practice

School graduate applies for graduate practice in the area of their permanent stay. Employer presents along with their application also an exact number and type of demanded job positions for graduate practice.

Payment of the flat rate is conditioned by the evidence of timesheets of the graduate which should be presented by the employer **within 10 days** from the end of calendar month in which the practice took place.

Activation Programmes in the Form of Minor Services for the Municipality or Self-governing Regions

(§ 52 Act no. 5/2004 on employment services as amended)

Definition of the Contribution

Activation programmes in the form of minor services for the municipality or self-governing regions mean support of maintaining labour skills of long-term unemployed citizen receiving material need assistance.

Minor works for municipality are oriented on:

- enhancement of economic conditions, social conditions, cultural conditions;
- creation, protection, sustainability and enhancement of environment of inhabitants in the municipality;
- care for protection and maintenance of cultural heritage;
- support of education;
- development of providing social services and other activities in the domain of social issues;
- development and protection of spiritual and cultural values;
- supplementary education of children and youth, development and support of community activities.

Minor municipal works are continuously executed during a period of 6 calendar months at maximum - 20 hours weekly with a possibility of repetition for a period of the following twelve calendar months.

Amount of Contribution

During the execution of activation works, the job seeker can receive a contribution for activating works amounting up to **63.07 €** per month.

Contribution for municipality or self-government consists of the **contribution for compensation of partial expenditures for activation and partial compensation of labour cost of the person who organises activating works**. Maximum sum of contribution **provided for 20 hours of work weekly** and number of participants **25 job seekers** makes 49.- € **per month per capita**.

Contribution for municipality or self-government administration can be used to pay:

- partial expenditure of personal protective material;
- casualty insurance for long-term unemployed citizens;
- part of expenditure for working instruments;
- part of other expenditure related to minor municipal services for municipalities and self-government administration;
- part of total labour cost of the employee who organises activating works.

Activating Works of Job Seekers Through Volunteering

(§ 52a Act no. 5/2004 on employment services as amended)

Definition of the Contribution

Volunteering is a form of activating a job seeker by volunteering activities which are focused on gain of practical skills for labour market. Job seeker provides their help during their volunteering activity:

- care for unemployed persons, disabled citizens, immigrants, persons returning from their sentence, drug abusers and other kind of abuses, dependent children, and other persons relying on care of other persons and family, or other type of public service and activities in social sphere, health care, education, culture, sport, creation, protection and sustainability of environment, maintenance and protection of cultural heritage, organising cultural or charity activities for persons pursuant to this disposition....., by protection of customers and public relations;

- natural and environmental disasters, humanitarian aid and civil protection.

Volunteering is predestined for a legal entity or a natural person who executes some of their activities in here within mentioned domains for more than a year (to the date of applying for contribution), but may not execute this activity for the purpose of reaching profits.

Job seeker may work in volunteering for **20 hours a week continuously during a period of six months** in an eligible entity. **Job seeker participates at volunteering** on a voluntary basis.

Amount of Contribution

Job seeker receives a flat rate amounting to the sum of minimum income standard during their volunteering, i.e. **198.09 €** valid until 30. 06. 2014. The flat rate is shortening according to the number of excused or non-excused absences instead of execution of voluntary activities proved by the evidence of timesheets.

Legal entity or natural person may use the contribution to pay partial expenditures necessary for qualified execution of volunteering and providing such services, casualty insurance for job seekers to cover the fee approving their physical health condition, if

such is demanded by a legal entity or a natural person, to pay partial expenditures for personal protection material, working instruments and other costs related to the operation of volunteering and expenditures for labour cost of an employee who organises volunteering service. Maximum sum of contribution **provided for 20 hours of work weekly** and number of participants **25 job seekers** makes 49.- € **per month per capita**.

Contribution for Travels to Work

(§ 53 Act no. 5/2004 on employment services as amended)

Definition of the Contribution

Contribution for travels to work is oriented on reimbursement of travel allowance for travelling by means of public transport from the permanent stay to the temporary residence or to the place of work stated in the labour contract and back.

An eligible applicant is an employee who

- was registered as a job seeker in the register of job seekers for at least for three months,
- was removed from the register of job seekers due to finding a job or other similar labour relation.

Duration of providing this contribution

Contribution for travels to work is provided to an employee during a period of 6 months since their commencement of work and it could be repeated after two years passed since the last contribution. Contribution is provided by an office where the job seeker was registered before being employed and until 30 calendar days since they present approval on employment.

Contribution for travels to work is not provided to employees who move from their permanent stay to a temporary residence or work stated in the labour contract within one municipality.

Amount of Contribution

Contribution is provided via travel allowance reimbursement via public transportation, but at maximum sum of 135 € monthly according to the distance between permanent stay and temporary state of the employee:

- a) *from 5 km to 10 km* it is a maximum of **19 eur**,
- b) *from 11 km to 20 km* it is a maximum of **33 eur**,
- c) *from 21 km to 30 km* it is a maximum of **51 eur**,
- d) *from 31 km to 40 km* it is a maximum of **68 eur**,
- e) *from 41 km to 50 km* it is a maximum of **72 eur**,

- f) *from 51 km to 60 km* it is a maximum of **88 eur**,
- g) *from 61 km to 80 km* it is a maximum of **96 eur**,
- h) *from 81 km to 100 km* it is a maximum of **116 eur**,
- i) *from 101 km to 200 km* it is a maximum of **130 eur**,
- j) *more than 200 km* it is a maximum of **135 eur**.

Public transport covered by this contribution: autobus transport, railways, airlines, ship transport, there are no taxis and personal motor vehicles included.

Contribution for Work Migration

(§ 53a Act no. 5/2004 on employment services as amended)

Definition of the Contribution

Contribution for work migration consists of reimbursement of presented costs related to moving of job seeker from permanent stay to another one within the Slovak Republic due to finding a job. These are also first rental costs and first payments for accommodation.

The idea of this contribution is support of migration for work, support of usage of migration for work as a form of work mobility to solve lack of qualified workers in the regions with absence, or lack of working power.

Contribution is provided for job seekers, who were registered in the register for at least for 3 months, who were removed from the register and are nationals moving for work. A citizen may ask for the migration for work contribution within 12 months from the date of change of the permanent stay which is related to the finding of job. Office provides contribution for work migration once in two years in a lump sum.

The sum of contribution mounts up to 1,327.76 € if the new permanent stay at the territory of the Slovak Republic is due to the new job distant of at least 50 km from the original one.

Eligible costs related to work migration:

- moving services done by a business company, for ex.: transportation of furniture and interior equipment, load and unload of moved stuff, insurance of moved stuff, etc.
- *first rental payment* paid after movement/ or change of a permanent stay,
- *first monthly charges connected with usage of apartment:*

Documents to prove eligibility of costs related to work migration: invoice for supplied moving services by a business company making business in the domain of transport and moving with supporting documents.

Contribution for Support to Create Job Positions in Public Administration for Young Unemployed - National Project XX

(§ 54 Act no. 5/2004 on employment services as amended)

Definition of the Contribution

Contribution is provided for support to create job positions in public administration for young unemployed and employment of young unemployed from the target group - job seekers younger than 29 years of age.

Possible employer: **municipality, self-government**, or contributory and budgetary organisations founded by them **which may accept a job seeker for full-time job for a 12-months period supported for 6 months or at maximum 18 months with support for 9 months, who was registered as a job seeker for at least 3 months by the Office.**

Amount of Contribution

Amount of contribution is determined upon total labour cost of an average employee in the Slovak economy for the first to third quarter of a calendar year which proceeds the year of contribution. For 2014:

- **monthly** per one job position **95%**, though a maximum of **456.54 €**
- **lump sum** to pay a part of expenditures for **fatigues clothes, boots and personal protective instruments** used to execute works, with **maximum 95%** of presented expenditures **with maximum sum of 40.00 € per one job position, possible to cumulate** according to the number of created job positions.

Contribution for Support to Create Job Positions for Young Unemployed - National Project XXI

Definition of the Contribution

Contribution is provided for support to create job positions for young unemployed and employment of young unemployed from the target group - job seekers younger than 29 years of age.

Eligible activity no. 1 creation of job positions at certain employers inclusive of those who are involved in freight service or other transport of persons for job seekers accepted for a job position full-time for a period of at least 18 months with aid for 12 months.

Amount of Contribution

Amount of contribution is determined upon total labour cost of an average employee in the Slovak economy for the first to third quarter of a calendar year which proceeds the year of contribution. For 2014:

- **monthly** per one job position **90%**, though a maximum of **456.54 €**

Eligible activity no. 2 creation of job positions at certain employers inclusive of those who are involved in freight service or other transport of persons for job seekers accepted for a job position of driver or co-driver full-time for a period of at least 30 months with aid for 9 months.

Amount of Contribution

is determined by 1.2-x of minimum labour cost for year 2013, monthly per one job position - 95%, so max amount of 547.85 €.

Contribution for Renovation of Cultural Heritage Within the Frame of National Project "Involvement of Unemployed in Renovation of Cultural Heritage - 2"

Definition of the Contribution:

Contribution defined for short-term job positions for job seekers and disadvantaged JS working at renovation of a cultural monument within the frame of projects for renovation of cultural heritage.

Employer creates full-time short-term job positions for job seekers and disadvantaged job seekers. For a period of at least six months to execute supplementary or expert works connected with innovation of cultural heritage, which they are capable of doing.

Amount of contribution is determined:

- a) **monthly** per one job placement **for a period of 6 months max. amounting up to 100% of total labour cost of an employee** for an employee who was taken for supplementary works at cultural heritage renovation **but in a maximum of 561.- €**
- b) **monthly** per one job placement **for a period of 6 months max. amounting up to 100% of total labour cost of an employee** for an employee who was taken for expert works at cultural heritage renovation **but in a maximum of 696.- €**
- c) **monthly** disbursement **for allowance of an employee - appointee to work on cultural heritage renovation** at maximum extent of **2 € per working day.**
- d) **in maximum of two payments** for one created job position, **contribution for disbursement on working dress, shoes and personal protective utilities for work up to a maximum of 100 €,**
- e) **lump sum** per one created job position **a contribution to cover expenditures of the contract of insurance payment up to 20 € per one created job.**

Contribution for Establishing a Sheltered Workshop or Workplace

(§ 56 Act no. 5/2004 on employment services as amended)

Definition of the Contribution:

Office may provide a contribution for establishment of a sheltered workshop or workplace to the employer who creates a workplace in a sheltered workshop or sheltered workplace and takes a job seeker who is a disabled citizen registered in the register of job seekers for **at least for one month**.

The employer who received such contribution is obliged to maintain the job position created in a sheltered workshop or sheltered workplace for **at least for two years**.

Amount of contribution per one created workplace is determined upon total labour cost of an average employee in the Slovak economy for the first to third quarter of a calendar year which proceeds the year of contribution. For 2014:

- a) it is in Bratislava region 4.0 times of this average, which makes at max. **4,342.56 €**;
- b) in districts with an average registered unemployment rate **lower or equal to** national average **it is 4.8 times of the average labour cost, so** it makes a max. of **5,211.07 €**;
- c) in districts with an average registered unemployment rate **bigger than** national average **it is 5.2 times of the average labour cost, so** it makes a max. of **5,645.32 €**;

Eligible expenditures

are considered to be expenditures necessary to provide execution of labour activity for a disabled citizen which are related to the establishment of a sheltered workshop or a sheltered workplace and were spent by the employer according to preliminary calculation of expenditures for establishment of a sheltered workshop or a sheltered workplace, which is an integral part of the agreement.

Contribution is not paid for partial salary and disbursements of social security to health care and social insurance company.

Contribution for Activities of an Assistant at Work

(§ 59 Act no. 5/2004 on employment services as amended)

Definition of the Contribution

Contribution for an assistant at work is designed for an employer who employs disabled persons or trade license owner who is a disabled citizen and is provided by an assistant at work, if the kind of working activity or trade license activity demands to be supported by one.

An assistant at work is:

- an employee who provides help during execution of employment activity at work or with personal activity to an employee, or several employees who are disabled citizens,
- natural person who provides assistance to trade license owner who is disabled by operating of their trade license or by execution of their trade license.

Assistant at work has to be 18 years old and competent to execute legal acts:

is a legal entity with its registered office or registered office of its operational unit at the territory of the Slovak Republic, or a natural person with its permanent residence at the territory of the Slovak Republic, who employs such natural persons in a legal employment relationship or parallel employment relation.

Trade license owner is:

- a) a shareholder of public business company, company comandit with shares or limited liability company, agent or a member of a supervisory board of a limited liability company, or a member of presidency, or advisory board of a stock corporation pursuant to a specific regulation, if they are not an employee,
- b) operates a trade license pursuant to a specific regulation,
- c) provides activities pursuant to specific regulations,
- d) works in agricultural production, including forestry and aquaculture pursuant to specific regulations,
- e) works as an agency of temporary work,
- f) works as an agency of supported work.

Amount of contribution

is determined upon total labour cost of an average employee in the Slovak economy for the first to third quarter of a calendar year which proceeds the year of contribution. For 2014 it is a monthly contribution of at least 41%, which makes: **445.11 €** and 70% in maximum **which is: 759.94 €** for the activity of one assistant at work during agreement validity **but at most 12 months.**

Contribution to the **employer** is determined by the number of employees - disabled citizens who are directly supported by assistant at work, they have a lesser ability to produce gainful work and spend less at work.

Eligible costs for contribution for an assistant at work are in a form of refund of costs for:

- salary expenditure for the assistant at work, who is an employee,
- payments to a disabled trade license owner who paid to an assistant at work based on a contract on providing of assistance by operating of a trade license.

Contribution to Cover the Operating Costs of a Sheltered Workshop or Workplace and Transportation Costs of Employees

(§ 60 Act no. 5/2004 on employment services as amended)

Definition of the Contribution

Contribution to cover the operating costs of a sheltered workshop or workplace and transportation costs of employees to a legal entity or a natural person, if such a person demands for the contribution in writing at the latest at the end of the first calendar month of the quarter following the quarter for which the contribution is demanded.

Operational expenditures of a sheltered workshop or workplace are the following ones:

- a) rental and rental services,
- b) expenditures for obligatory revisions and insurance of the building, if the building is owned by an employer,
- c) expenditure for fuels and energies,
- d) water and sewage providing, disposal and liquidation of waste,
- e) transport of material and finalised products,
- f) expenditures for salaries and payments for insurance and social fees,
- g) expenditures for repair and maintenance of the building owned by an employer if these are related to the operation of a sheltered workshop or workplace,
- h) expenditures for repair and maintenance of an establishment with sheltered workshop or workplace owned by an employer,
- i) expenditures related to administration of a sheltered workshop or a sheltered workplace.

Expenditures for transport of employees, if those are related to the transport of disabled employees to their workplace and back home.

Amount of contribution is determined upon total labour cost of an average employee in the Slovak economy for the first to third quarter of a calendar year which proceeds the year of contribution. For 2014:

- a) 2.5 times, which is **2,714.10 €** annually per one disabled citizen who works for a determined weekly labour time,
- b) 5 times average, which is **5,428.20 €** annually per one disabled citizen, whose capacity to work is lessened by 70% by their unfavourable health state, who works for a determined weekly labour time.

It is possible to get refunded 25% of expenditures per term according to presented documents on their spending. If the employer provides documentation for spending less than 25% of expenditures, they will be paid by office only a lesser sum.

The Unemployment Benefits in Norway

Unemployment

The unemployment benefit is a partial replacement for lost earnings and shall stimulate recipients to seek and retain employment. To get unemployment benefits you must register with NAV¹ (the Norwegian Labour and Welfare Administration, originally an abbreviation of Nye arbeids- og velferdsetaten) as an active jobseeker and actually apply for work. The benefit is therefore lower than previous income and is limited.

The main requirements for benefits are:

- your working hours must have been reduced by at least 50 % (laid off at least 40%),
- you were paid wages of at least 1,5 times the National Insurance Scheme basic amount (G) in the last calendar year (last year), or at least 3 times G over the past three full calendar years,
- you are registered as a jobseeker, and submit your employment status form every 14 days you actually apply for work,
- you live or are present in Norway,
- you are not a student.

The benefit period

The general rule is to apply for unemployment benefit at the earliest from one week before the first day of unemployment. Unemployed must register as a jobseeker at www.nav.no, or at local office of the Norwegian Labour and Welfare Administration (NAV). Unemployment benefits can be paid no earlier than from the day you make your claim. Four weeks are generally considered as a reasonable time. The duration of unemployment benefits depends on the earned income during the previous year or on average during the last three calendar years before application:

- 104 weeks if income was at least twice the National Insurance Scheme basic amount,
- 52 weeks if your income was less than twice the National Insurance Scheme basic amount.

Amount of benefits

The unemployment benefit is calculated from the previous income. Income in excess of 6 x G is not taken into account in the unemployment benefit basis. The daily

1) NAV is the current Norwegian public welfare agency, which consists of the state Labour and Welfare Service as well as municipal welfare agencies.

unemployment benefit is 0.24 % of the basis for the unemployment benefit and is paid for five days a week. On average, this is 62.4% of previous income before tax. But it's limited to a maximum of NOK 319 157 (38 008,45 €)². The unemployment benefit is taxable. As a general rule the payment is not changed during the benefit period. For example: an unemployment benefit basis of NOK 250 000 (29772,53 €) means NOK 600 (71,45 €) per day. The unemployment benefit is paid via a bank or post office. It's paid every 14th day.

Laid off

Unemployment benefit is intended to reduce an employee's loss of income when he or she has been temporarily laid off and is limited to 26 weeks within any 18-month period. The reason for being laid off must be a lack of work or other circumstances beyond the control of the employer. Working hours must have been reduced by at least 50 %.

Business start-up

People who want to set up own business and continue receiving unemployment benefit, must submit a separate written claim. With an approved business plan they may be allowed to retain unemployment benefits for up to six months while they set up the business, as well as up to three months after they have started trading.

Partial unemployment benefit

People who are partially unemployed or laid off and they work 50 % or less of their normal working hours they may receive a partial (reduced) unemployment benefit. The payment is in proportion to the number of hours you have worked during the reporting period. The unemployment benefit may also be partial in accordance with set rules if you are reported partially sick or receive partial pensions or benefits.

Benefits while participating in employment schemes

Employment schemes are tools to help jobseekers gain work. If they participate in an employment scheme, they are entitled to certain financial benefits. Employment scheme benefits and child supplements are intended to cover their living expenses and are provided for the days in which they participate in the scheme. They may also be eligible for child supplements if they have children under the age of 16 in care.

2) Exchange rate from 08.07.2014: 8,397 NOK for 1 €

They may also receive supplementary benefits to cover extra expenses they incur in connection with the employment scheme: daily transport costs (travel more than six km each way), a child care supplement, a housing supplement, supplements for trips home, support for the purchase of educational materials.

Employment scheme benefit payments depend on your age at the time of application. You will receive the high rate if you are above the age of 19, and the low rate if you are below the age of 19. You will receive payment for the days during which you participated in an employment scheme, and for national holidays. Benefits that are calculated based on the information on your employment status report are paid approximately two to four days after NAV has registered your report.

Sickness benefits for employees

Sickness benefits compensate for loss of income for employed members of the National Insurance Scheme who are occupationally disabled due to an illness or injury. Your occupational disability may be documented by a personal declaration or by a sick leave certificate from your doctor. The "personal declaration" is the notification you make to your employer that you are occupationally disabled due to an illness or injury, but without presenting a declaration from your doctor. Within six weeks, you and your employer must create a follow-up plan that aims to return you to work as soon as possible.

Transport supplement

If, due to an illness or injury, you temporarily cannot travel as usual to and from work, you may be entitled to a transport supplement from day 17 after the occupational disability arose. The transport supplement is limited to the amount you would have been paid in sickness benefits during the same period. You may also be entitled to a transport supplement in combination with partial sickness benefits.

The payment of sickness benefits

As an employee, you are entitled to sickness benefits from the first day of your sick leave. Your employer pays your sickness benefits for the first 16 calendar days of your sick leave. As of day 17, the National Insurance Scheme pays your sickness benefits. The payment is made directly to you, or your employer may continue to pay your salary and claim reimbursement from the National Insurance Scheme. Sickness benefit is calculated from your average weekly salary in a specific time period prior to your becoming occupationally disabled (normally the past four weeks).

The sickness benefits basis cannot exceed six times the National Insurance Scheme basic amount. If you are on partial sick leave, you are entitled to sickness benefits equivalent

to the percentage of your sick leave. The sickness benefits can be graduated between 100 and 20 %.

You may receive sickness benefits for a maximum of one year. This time limit applies even if you have been on full or partial sick leave. Other rules apply if you are between 67 and 70 years old.

Pregnancy benefits

Pregnancy benefits are given to healthy pregnant women who cannot continue work during their pregnancy because it may cause harm to the foetus. If you reduce your hours at work but remain working, you may be eligible to receive graduated pregnancy benefits. You must have been employed for at least four weeks. Pregnancy benefits are given from the time you had to stop working, and until three weeks prior to birth. Pregnancy benefits are paid monthly and are taxable. Benefits are not given for income above six times the National Insurance basic amount.

For employees, pregnancy benefits are usually calculated based on your income at the time when you had to stop working. The NAV office will calculate your benefits.

For those who are self-employed, the pregnancy benefits are usually calculated based on their average pensionable income during the last three years of income. The pregnancy benefit is given at 100 % of the eligible income.

For freelancers, pregnancy benefits are calculated in the same way as for the self-employed. The pregnancy benefit is given at 100 % of the eligible income.

Parental benefit

Parental benefit is intended to ensure parents an income in connection with the birth or adoption of a child. The parental benefit period is split in three parts: maternal quota, paternal quota (also called paternity leave) and a shared period.

If you are employed, the parental benefit basis is normally calculated on the basis of your income at the start of the leave. If you are self-employed or a freelance worker, your parental benefit is normally calculated on the basis of your average pensionary income from the last three years. Parental benefit is paid in accordance with a daily rate. One parental benefit week is equivalent to five benefit days. This means you will not be paid parental benefit for Saturdays and Sundays. The total benefit period for parental benefit in the case of a birth is 49 weeks at 100 % coverage and 59 weeks at 80 % coverage.

Child care benefit

Child care benefit is a benefit for single parents, to help them pay for child minding so they can work, actively seek work, study or set up own business. Child benefit covers the

costs of the day-care institution, day-care facilities for schoolchildren or a child minder. It is also a condition that you pay for this child care.

As a general rule, you are entitled to receive child care benefit until the child has completed their fourth year of school. Child care benefit covers up to 64 % of the documented expenses. This means that you must pay 36 % of the costs of child care yourself. Child care benefit is not subject to taxation and is paid from the month you meet the conditions for entitlement.

Attendance allowance

You may be eligible for attendance allowance to compensate for your loss of income in connection with caring for a sick child or attending to persons to whom you have close ties in the final stages of life. The term close ties generally include individuals with whom you have close family ties, but it could also include individuals with whom you have developed a close personal bond, such as a close friend or neighbour. As a main rule, you must have been employed during the last four weeks and you must have suffered a loss of earned income.

If you are caring for a child under the age of 12 who is, or has been, admitted to a health care institution, or who is receiving outpatient treatment, you may be entitled to an attendance allowance from NAV. If your child is chronically ill or disabled, this right is extended until the child turns 18 years old.

Attendance allowances are calculated on the same basis as sick pay when you are sick yourself. NAV will pay holiday pay to recipients of attendance allowances. Holiday pay is only paid for the first twelve weeks of the period you receive an attendance allowance. The holiday pay constitutes 10.2 % of the allowance.

Training allowance

If you have to attend courses or undergo other training necessary for you to care for a chronically ill or disabled child in your care, you may be entitled to a training allowance to compensate for your loss of income. Such allowances are not limited to the parents of the child, but may also be granted to others who care for the child, such as siblings. If necessary, several caregivers may be granted training allowances at the same time.

As a main rule, you must have been employed during the last four weeks prior to the course or training and you must have suffered a loss of earned income. It is a condition for being granted a training allowance that the training you are receiving is necessary for you to be able to care for and provide treatment to the child and is provided an approved healthcare institution.

Training allowances are calculated on the same basis as a sick pay, and constitute 100 % of the sick pay. NAV pays your training allowance from day 1. However, your employer may advance training allowance payments to you and claim reimbursement from NAV.

NAV will pay holiday pay to recipients of training allowances. Holiday pay is only paid for the first twelve weeks of the period you receive a training allowance. The holiday pay constitutes 10.2 % of the allowance.

Source: www.nav.no
Lubomír Kyslý

News from the Project

Our first contact with partners from Norway took place in Zvolen

On February 1, 2013, the meeting of partners of the project Improving Social Dialogue through NO-SK Partnership took place in Zvolen in which participated the following:

Norway - Leif Helland (Project Manager of Norwegian side and Secretary of Norwegian civil service union - NTL), Finn Olav Haga (Secretary of Norwegian civil service union), Sven Ivar Skodjevåg (Vice President of NTL Section for offices of labour and social affairs),

Slovakia - Peter Titka – Representative of the National Council of SLOVES, Chairman of Regional Council of Trade Unions Confederation for Banska Bystrica region, member of local organisation ZO SLOVES, Ivan Bartoš – member of SLOVES Section for offices of labour and social affairs and Chairman of ZO SLOVES in Office of labour, social affairs and family (ÚPSVaR), Eva Kocmanová – Chairwoman of ZO SLOVES in ÚPSVaR Zvolen, Jana Kohoušková – member of ZO SLOVES in ÚPSVaR Zvolen, detached office in Krupina, Magdaléna Bernátová – Project Manager and Lívia Klimentová – Project author.

The aim of this project is to improve social dialogue and its practices according to long Norwegian experiences based on tripartite dialogue. Target groups of the project are: local trade union of ZO SLOVES in ÚPSVaR Zvolen, SLOVES at national level, Norwegian trade union NTL at national level, employers' organisations, civil servants.

The meeting of project partners was opened by Magdaléna Bernátová, the new Project Manager as a leader the project. Lívia Klimentová (the former Project Manager) presented basic information on project goals, outputs, time schedule and financial plan of the project as well as the proposed changes. Participants informed others within discussion about their knowledge and experiences of civil services trade unions in Norway and in Slovakia in the field of collective bargaining on national and on local levels. They mutually exchanged information on current legislation for public and civil service, trade union coverage on work places, paid evaluation of labour and burden on employees.

Representative of Norwegian trade union Mr. Sven Ivar Skodjevåg said that he has experience in measurement of burden on employees on how many clients has to have one civil servant and at present he is having negotiations on this issue with the Minister

of labour. Mr. Leif Helland pointed out in discussion that it is important to concretise the main goal of the project and at the same time to contribute to competence development of our trade unions in way of activating membership basis and obtaining more members. Beside this all kinds of decision making on decent work, environment, improving working conditions and gender equality were discussed.

Ivan Bartoš

From Slovakia to Oslo

26.5. - 31.5. 2013 six people from Slovakia visited Oslo within the project "Improving social dialogue through SK-NO partnership - Decent Work - Slovakia". The objective of the work trip was to collect information about collective bargaining in NTL (Norsk Tjenestemannslag) - Norwegian Trade Union for Public Administration Employees. Mr. Leif Helland, the Union Secretary in NTL with his team and Mr. Sven Ivar Skodjevaag, the vice-president of NTL in NAV - The Norwegian Labour and Welfare Administration - prepared very interesting programme consisted from lectures, discussions and place visits. Among topics of the work trip were: collective bargaining, negotiating techniques, Union policies of gender equality, history of trade unions in Norway. Visitors from SLOVES - Trade Union for Public Administration Employees in Slovakia, from branches based at Job Offices in Zvolen, Krupina and Banská Bystrica were eager to here Norwegian experience, based on solidarity and strong trade union movement. They would like to distribute new information and experience gained in Oslo among trade unionists at labor offices in four districts from and around Zvolen, Slovakia in June.

Magdaléna Bernátová



Slovak visitors in the Norwegian Parliament



Part of the Slovak group (from left: Livia Klimentová, Eva Kocmanová, Ľubomír Kyslý, Ivan Bartoš, Magdaléna Bernátová) with Norwegian hosts (from right: Sven Ivar Skodjevaag and Leif Helland)
Photo: Jana Kohoušková



Thanking Norwegian trade unionists for excellent hospitality and knowledge and experience presenting.
Photo: Jana Kohoušková

Seminar on Collective Bargaining in Krupina - Slovaks Disseminate Norwegian Experience

Eighteen members of local SLOVES trade union organisations located at offices of labour, social affairs and family (ÚPSVaR) in Zvolen, Krupina, Banská Bystrica and Veľký Krtíš met in Krupina on June 20 to listen to information collected during business trip to Norway. The business trip and seminar were organised within the Project "Improving Social Dialogue through SK-NO Partnership" financed by the Norway Grants. Participants of the trip were trade union members from Zvolen, Krupina and Banská Bystrica. During six days, they participated in several lectures, discussions and guided tours, in which they learned interesting information about collective bargaining procedures from Norway, in particular from the Norwegian trade union for civil sector employees (Norsk Tjenestemannslag - NTL), the organiser of the business trip programme.

Jana Kohoušková, the member of ZO SLOVES in ÚPSVaR Zvolen shared her experiences on availability of compensation mobility aids for disabled in Norway:

"The biggest surprise for me was to find out that severely disabled people are provided with different kinds of compensation mobility aid tools free of charge. In Oslo, these compensation mobility aids are concentrated in one facility of office of labour and social affairs on several floors. Every person with disability can choose suitable aid device based on submitted application form and consequent approval by department of compensation aid and labour office staff or craftsmen will adjust the chosen aid to his individual needs accordingly. As the disabled person changes similarly as the child is growing/changing, the person has the possibility to change/ replace compensation aids. For wheelchairs – dependant people, there are cars with platforms, different types of wheelchairs – starting from sizes for children up to sizes for adults, adjustable beds, different kinds of chairs – in sizes for children up to sizes for adults, toys that help to develop personality, soft motor skills, mobility supporting staffs, lifting equipment for daily cleansing, stairclimbers, different relaxation and massage armchairs with added massage for different parts of body and so on.

It was new for me to see the aid for people suffering from Alzheimer's disease - these people are offered different graphics boards with a light and a beep signalisation, set by time. The signal has to remind them some important activities of the day that the person should not forget about – such as taking the medication, time for a walk with dog, time for lunch, time for a walk with a friend, time for an appointment with a friend and so on.

This care for disabled people and free provision of aids give disabled the opportunity to integrate into the workforce and to create additional value for the state and, of course, to be more independent as long as possible. "



Ivan Bartoš presents his experience from Norway.

Photo: Magdaléna Bernátová



Participants of the seminar in Krupina interested in presentation.

Photo: Jana Kohoušková

Third meeting - Norwegian Partners in Slovakia – Seminars in Three Towns

Two members of the Norwegian trade union NTL – NTL Secretary Leif Helland and Vice President of NTL Section for offices of labour and social affairs Sven Ivar Skodjevåg arrived to working visit to Slovakia within the Project of trade union best practice exchange on September 29, 2013. During four days, they were leading 3 seminars for trade union members in Krupina, Veľký Krtíš and Banská Bystrica, they visited ÚPSVaR Director Milan Beľa and had a meeting in headquarters of SLOVES trade union in Bratislava – with the Chairwoman Mária Mayerová and her team.

Magdaléna Bernátová



Visitors from Norway hosted by the director of the Job Office in Zvolen.

From the right: Sven Ivar Skadjevåg, Leif Helland, Milan Beľa, Eva Kocmanová, Lívia Klimentová.

Photo: Magdaléna Bernátová



Visit of Norwegian partners in Bratislava

From left: Sven Ivar Skodjevåg, Lívia Klimentová, Leif Helland, Mária Mayerová and employees of SLOVES

Photo: Ivan Bartoš

Visitors from Norway in Krupina

The program of our Norwegian partners of NTL included a visit to the Office of Labour, Social Affairs and Family (ÚPSVaR) in Krupina, where visitors presented their experience of trade union work in Norway at the meeting with ÚPSVaR employees.

The main idea was to highlight the need to involve as many people in labour unions, because only then some progress can be achieved and in particular strong position in negotiations shall be ensured. After presentation of both delegates knowledge employees asked questions. They showed interest mainly in specific results achieved by conducting dialogue with employers.

After the meeting with ÚPSVaR employees and lunch time, the program continued with a guided tour on watchtower Vartovka, during which the Norwegian colleagues learned about history of the town and significance of watchtower itself from Miroslav Lukáč, the local chronicle writer and historian. The walk across the history of the town continued

to the Museum of Andrej Sládkovič and to local cellars excavated into the tuff bedrock. After this interesting experience the guests said goodbye.

Jozef Alakša



Seminar in Krupina

Photo: Jozef Alakša



Norwegian and Slovak partners underneath the watchtower Vartovka in Krupina

Photo: Jozef Alakša

Trade Unionists from Veľký Krtíš Were Also Interested in Experience from Norway

About the way how the international exchange of experience looks like in practice, the staff of the Office of Labour, Social Affairs and Family (ÚPSVaR) in Veľký Krtíš could learn on October 1, 2013 . They have got this experience thanks to branch trade union organisation of SLOVES that celebrated 10th anniversary of its operation in Veľký Krtíš and organised this meeting with representatives of the Norwegian trade union NTL in cooperation with branch trade union organisation of SLOVES in Zvolen.

Two-members delegation of Norwegian Kingdom consisted of Leif Helland – NTL Secretary and Sven Ivar Skodjevåg Vice President of NTL section operating in Central Office of Labour, Social Affairs in Norway (NAV). In ÚPSVaR in Veľký Krtíš, they were welcomed by the office Director Jozef Gallo and the chairwoman of local SLOVES trade union organisation Jozefína Klačová. After friendly introduction and explanation of Slovak social security system by Slovak side, a presentation of Norwegian guests followed. The Norwegian guests tried to highlight the important role of trade union and social dialogue in tripartite system and bring closer to participants of the meeting individual techniques of collective bargaining. As Sven Ivar Skodjevåg is an employee of the Central Office of Labour and Social affairs of Norway, his knowledge and practical experience were of particular interest of participating labour office employees. Their interest to learn something new about living and working in Norway became an issue of the concluding discussion.

After completion of the seminar, visitors from Norway could find out how employment policy is implemented into practice in our country. Thanks to hospitality of Mgr. Helena Ferencová, the Director of the Museum of Puppet Cultures and Toys in Modrý Kameň, Norwegian colleagues had the opportunity to visit Blue Stone Castle, where 19 job seekers help in the reconstruction of the dominant historical monuments in the district of Veľký Krtíš under the National Project called Involvement of unemployed in restoration of cultural heritage cofinanced by the European Social Fund in cooperation with the Slovak Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family and the Slovak Ministry of Culture. At the end of the meeting, both parties agreed that would welcome the sharing of experiences continued in the future.

Silvia Cellengová

We have taken this article from the newspapers "Pokrok", released on October 28, 2013 with the title International Exchange of Experience in Practice.

Slovaks Back to Norway Again

On April 27 – May 2, 2014, business trip to Oslo, Norway was organised within the Project Improving Social Dialogue through SK-NO Partnership - Decent work. The trip began with a meeting at the headquarters of the Norwegian trade union for public sector employees - Norsk Tjenestemannslag (NTL), which is a member of the Norwegian Confederation of Trade Unions. It has about 50,000 members, which ranks it to the group of the largest trade unions in the Confederation.

(Explanation of graph legend: LO as the oldest and largest trade union organization has 900 000 members; UNIOS represents nurses, policemen...; Akademikernes represents executives, doctors ... YS is trade union that does not cooperate with the government.)

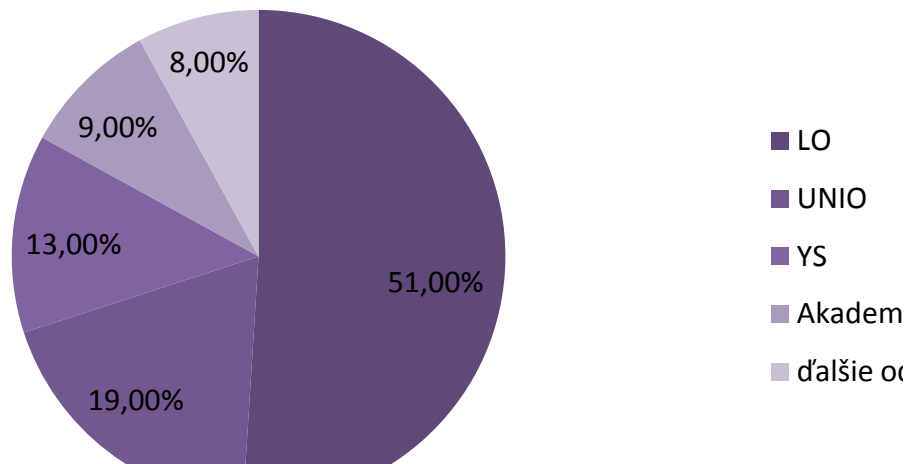
NTL issues for its presentation brochures and its own magazine, thus providing regular information to its members. The membership fee is 4500 NOK per year.

Their primary goal is always to avoid a strike. If, however, it must inevitably come, it is attended by around 10% of trade unionists and almost always with exclusion of the staff in key positions, such as doctors.

Trade union bargaining is preceded by the session of the commission consisting of export companies, economists, statisticians and trade unionists to determine the sort of framework within which the negotiations are recommended to move. Their goal is not to help the rich, but people with lower incomes so that - if they have full time employment relationship - with secured salaries that are sufficient for comfortable and safe life.

Trade unions in Norway have long tradition, and this is also a reason why they have such a strong position, although in recent years they also face with the loss of members.

%-age share of members coverage



Source: Norwegian National Office of Statistics, year 2011

I remember one tragic case mentioned in the lesson of Norwegian partners that describes reaction of trade union aiming in protection of other employees, says Magdaléna Bernátová:

"It is important to negotiate not only wages but also safe working conditions. There was a serious case reported in Norway in summer 2013: one client killed with his knife one labour office worker. If she had wider table and the doors would be opened outward, maybe it would save her life. Trade unionists from the Ministry of Labour consequently concluded with their head these changes for all labour offices because they find out that the situation was wrong everywhere in all offices. What a little thing and so important. However, without trade unions negotiating it would not be achieved. In Norway bosses say too: I will have a look at it. It is not possible to change."

Jozef Alakša



Visitors in NTL. From the left: Jozef Alakša, Leif Helland, Mária Mayerová, Elena Kašiaková. Photo: Magdaléna Bernátová



Slovak and Norwegian unionists in Vigeland Park in Oslo. From the left: Tine Olsen, Magdaléna Bernátová, Mária Mayerová, Jozef Alakša, Elena Kašiaková, Sven Ivar Skadjevåg. Photo: Leif Helland

Contacts

If our information was interesting for you and you want to learn more:

- Join the group Improving Social Dialogue through Norwegian-Slovak Partnership on Facebook,
- write an e-mail to Eva Kocmanová, the Chairwoman of ZO SLOVES in ÚPSVaR Zvolen ekocmanova@centrum.sk or Magdalena Bernatová, the Project Manager bernatovamagda@gmail.com.

Editor of the publication: Magdaléna Bernátová
Translation from Slovak language: Lívia Klimentová
Produced in 2014

This publication was produced within the Project Improving Social Dialogue through Norwegian-Slovak Partnership, which is supported by Norway Grants, through the Fund for Decent Work and Tripartite Dialogue.