



INTEGRATED PROGRAMME OF THE EU SOCIAL DIALOGUE 2009-2011

**JOINT STUDY OF THE EUROPEAN SOCIAL PARTNERS  
“THE IMPLEMENTATION OF FLEXICURITY AND THE ROLE OF THE  
SOCIAL PARTNERS”**

**NATIONAL FICHE:**

**SWEDEN**

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## Preface

This national fiche is part of the EU Social Partners’ Study “The implementation of flexicurity and the role of social partners” carried out in the context of the EU Social Dialogue Work Programme 2009-2011, which includes “*Jointly monitoring the implementation of the common principles of Flexicurity, notably in order to evaluate the role and involvement of the social partners in the process and to draw joint lessons*”.

To implement this task in the best possible way and to involve national member organisations actively in the gathering of data and information, the study applies a methodology that consists of multiple levels of analysis using a variety of instruments to be implemented with the help of a team of experts:<sup>1</sup>

- The expert team, with the advice of European Social Partners, agreed on a *set of selected statistical indicators* in the field of employment and economic and social development with labour market relevance.
- National social partners were asked to participate in a *questionnaire-based survey* focussing on the relevance of the flexicurity concept within national labour markets, the role of the social partners in policy implementation and their views of the flexicurity concept. To complement the research, the expert team visited a number of countries and carried out interviews with national social partners.<sup>2</sup>
- Based on the two sources above and a review of available written materials and information, the expert team prepared 29 national “*fiches*” on the implementation of the flexicurity principles and the role of social partners in the respective national contexts.
- Results of the questionnaire survey and main findings of the national analyses were discussed at four “*country cluster seminars*” that were organised by the European Social Partners with the help of national sections in Warsaw (November 2010), Lisbon (December 2010), Paris (31<sup>st</sup> January-1<sup>st</sup> February 2011) and The Hague (8<sup>th</sup> February 2011).
- In the light of the overall study results and the comments received by national social partners in the contexts mentioned above, the expert team has prepared a *comparative synthesis report* on “Social Partners and Flexicurity in Contemporary Labour Markets” that was presented and discussed at a *EU-level synthesis seminar* on 31<sup>st</sup> March and 1<sup>st</sup> April 2011 in Brussels.

This national fiche aims to present a broad overview on the economic and social context and the state of play with regard to flexibility and security in the labour market and current social security arrangements (sections one and two). Secondly, the report describes the role of the social partners and social dialogue in the implementation of policies and practices that can be considered under the broad umbrella of “flexicurity” (section three), also summarising inputs provided by national social partners to the questionnaire, from interviews carried out and other contributions made in the context of the study. Section three also presents brief descriptions of cases of good practice as has been indicated by the national social partners.

The text was originally prepared as draft report in the autumn of 2010 in order to facilitate the discussion at the cluster seminar on 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> December 2010 in Lisbon. The original dossier has been reviewed and revised to take into account the comments and discussions that took place during the seminar or received afterwards.

However, it should be stressed that this report is presented as an “independent expert report”. It represents the views of the individuals involved in its preparation and does not purport to represent the views, either individually or collectively, of the social partners’ representatives that contributed to it, or those of the European level social partner organisations that were responsible for its commissioning.

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<sup>1</sup> Expert team: Eckhard Voss (co-ordinator), Alan Wild, Anna Kwiatkiewicz and Antonio Dornelas.

<sup>2</sup> The following countries were visited in the context of the project between May and July 2010: Denmark, France, Ireland, Italy, Czech Republic, Poland, Germany, Portugal and the Netherlands.

# 1 The economic and social context

## Economic crisis and recovery

As a small open economy with an export structure oriented towards investment goods and transport equipment, Sweden has been hit relatively hard by the global recession. While the headwinds from the global slowdown were already discernible in early 2008, it was not until the final months of the year that the full force of the global financial crisis impacted the Swedish economy. After a GDP growth rate of 3,3% in 2007, GDP was already negative with 0.4% in 2008 and contracted in 2009 by 5,1%.

Since spring 2009, various indicators have pointed to a gradual recovery of the Swedish economy and the EU Commission in its Spring 2010 Economic Forecast expected a return to GDP growth of 1.8% in 2010.

In response to the financial crisis and as part of a coordinated EU approach, Sweden has adopted financial sector support measures to stabilize the banking sector, which should also help to improve access to finance and thus support the economy at large, and underpin macroeconomic stability. In addition, in response to the economic downturn, Sweden has implemented measures, including support for the automotive and construction sectors, and deferred taxation for business and subsidies for household services.

### SWEDEN - MAIN ECONOMIC INDICATORS AND OUTLOOK

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
<b>GDP</b>	3.3	-0.4	-5.1	4.8	3.3
– annual percentage change					
<b>Employment</b>	2.5	0.9	-2.0	1.0	0.9
- annual percentage change					
<b>Unemployment rate</b> (Eurostat definition)	6.1	6.2	8.3	8.3	8.0
<b>General government balance</b> (as percentage of GDP)	3.6	2.2	-0.9	-0.9	-0.1
<b>General government gross debt</b> (as percentage of GDP)	40.0	38.2	41.9	39.9	38.9

Source: European Commission: Autumn 2010 Economic Forecast.

## Labour market indicators and trends

The Swedish labour market is characterised by a high level of participation by both women and men also in the older age groups as well as by a remarkable low rate of the long term unemployment. However, what has been a matter of concern is the relatively high young unemployment rate which was 25% in 2008 and above the EU27 average.

Sweden has a low self-employment rate when compared not only to the EU average but also to other Nordic countries such as Denmark (6.2 %) and Finland (12.1%).

Inequality in income distribution in Sweden is well below the EU average (3.5 compared to 5.0 respectively) and rather similar to the scores of other Nordic countries such as Denmark (3.6) and Finland (3.8).

# SWEDEN - MAIN LABOUR MARKET INDICATORS 2008 IN COMPARISON TO EU27

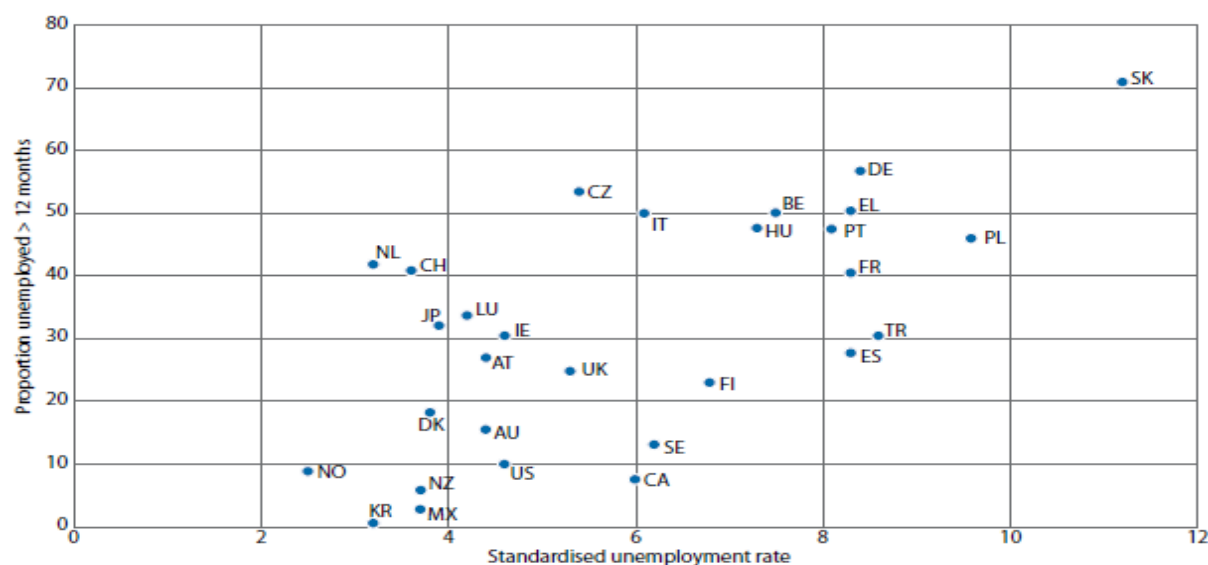
	Sweden	EU27
Employment rate – % population aged 15 – 64	72.2	64.6
Employment rate older people – % population aged 55-64	70.0	46.0
Self employed - % total population	5.4	15.5
Employment in services - % total employment	76.1	70.4
Employment in industry - % total employment	21.8	24.1
Employment in agriculture - % total employment	2.1	5.6
Unemployment rate - % labour force 15+	8.3	8.9
Youth unemployment rate - % labour force 15-24	25.0	19.6
Long term unemployment rate - % labour force	1.1	3.0
Inequalities of income distribution (2008)	3.5	5.0

Source: Eurostat, *Employment in Europe Report 2010*.

As a result of the recent recession, the situation on the Swedish labour market has deteriorated significantly, with unemployment rising from an average level of 6.2% in 2008 to 8.3% in 2010. So far, most of the labour shedding has taken place in the manufacturing industry, with the public sector and the private services sector proving more resilient than many forecasters believed during the most acute phase of the recession.

Unemployment seems likely to reach its peak at 8.3% in 2010. A key challenge will be to prevent potentially jobless growth and permanent loss of labour supply. Ensuring that active labour market policies (ALMP) remain of high quality even as they expand in scope will be important in this regard.

## INCIDENCE OF LONG-TERM UNEMPLOYMENT AND THE UNEMPLOYMENT RATE 2007



Source: *Employment in Europe Report*, p. 73, based on OECD figures.

## Flexicurity in the labour market and labour market policy

Regarding major flexicurity indicators (see table below) Sweden is ranking at the top level in Europe when it comes to educational attainment, access to flexitime, CVT participation rates, lifelong learning participation or investments of companies in the training of adults.

Sweden is also characterised – as other Nordic countries – by a high collective bargaining rate of 92% (2006) and high levels of expenditure on active labour market policy. Quite remarkable, the ALMP share in GDP in 2007 was even two times higher than the share of passive labour market policy measures.

Likely due to high level standards of educational attainment, social security and employment security, the level of job satisfaction in Sweden is clearly higher than the EU average.

It is quite interesting to have a closer look at the strictness of employment protection indicators for Sweden: while the overall strictness is rather high and similar to the EU average (and other Nordic countries as Denmark or Finland), the strictness of employment protection with regard to regular employment is significantly higher as both the EU average and the other Nordic States. At the same time there is a remarkable low strictness score with regard to temporary employment – 0.71 which is only a third the EU average and well below Finland (2,17) or Denmark (1.79).

As stated in a recent analysis of flexicurity in Sweden (Eurofound 2009), the Swedish labour market traditionally is characterised by relatively high levels of both job (at least for regular employment) and employment security while the flexibility aspect started to be discussed recently mainly by employers’ organisations.

### SWEDEN - FLEXICURITY INDICATORS IN COMPARISON

	Sweden	EU27
<b>Total population having completed at least upper secondary education (population aged 25-64, %), 2009</b>	80.7	72.0
<b>Part-time employment - % total employment, 2009</b>	27.0	18.8
<b>Fixed-term contracts - % total employees, 2009</b>	15.3	13.5
<b>Access to flexitime, % total employees aged 15-64, 2004</b>	61.2	31.3
<b>Percentage of employees (all enterprises) participating in CVT courses , 2005</b>	46.0	33
<b>Lifelong learning participation – percentage of the population aged 25-64 participating in education and training over the four weeks prior to the survey, 2009</b>	22.2	9.3
<b>Job satisfaction – percentage of workers that are either very satisfied or satisfied with working conditions in their main paid job (EWCS 2010)</b>	87.0	84.3
<b>Strictness of employment protection – regular employment, 2008</b>	2.86	2.11*
<b>Strictness of employment protection – temporary employment, 2008</b>	0.71	2.08*
<b>Strictness of employment protection – collective dismissals, 2008</b>	3.75	2.96*
<b>Public expenditure on <i>passive</i> labour market policies (categories 8-9) - % of GDP, 2008</b>	0.45	0.96
<b>Public expenditure on <i>active</i> labour market policies (categories 2-7) - % of GDP, 2008</b>	0.64	0.46
<b>Persons at-risk-of-poverty after social transfers - % of total population, %, 2009</b>	13.3	16.3

Source: Eurostat; Employment in Europe Report 2010; Eurofound (European Working Conditions Survey 2010); OECD. \*OECD average

In the debate about flexicurity also the comparison with the successful Danish model played an important role: The two countries are neighbours, have highly educated population and high employment rates. However, during the years prior to the global financial and economic crisis the Danish economy seemed to be more successful in managing structural changes and create new jobs

than the Swedish one. This has stimulated a debate on the need to introduce more “flexicurity” in the Swedish labour market and the Swedish centre-right government has developed its own approach to flexicurity.

## Conclusion

To sum up, the Swedish labour market is characterised by high standards in terms of employment participation across gender and age groups, high levels of educational attainment and high standards of social security.

As will be shown in the following chapter, against this, labour market reforms and adjustments in recent years very much focussed on aspects such as inclusion, further improvements and adjustments in the light of new needs, in particular in the context of globalisation.

## 2 Flexibility and security in recent labour market and social policy reforms

### Introduction and overview

Flexicurity has been an important term in the current Swedish debate on future orientations and strategies with regard to improvements in the labour market, economic and social policy. In particular the Swedish government, but also the employers’ organisations, are referring to the flexicurity concept in order to demand a stronger supply orientated and more flexible organisation of labour market regulations and institutions. At the same time trade unions are concerned about an erosion of employment and social security aspects.

In its most recent assessment of the implementation of the Lisbon Strategy Structural Reforms in Sweden, the European Commission summarized the Swedish approach to flexicurity quite positively as follows:

*While not explicitly defining a national pathway, Sweden addresses the four flexicurity components in an integrated way, with a strong involvement of social partners in regulating the labour market. The use of fixed-term contracts has been facilitated and a number of initiatives have been taken or announced to encourage life-long learning and ensure the delivery of skills in line with labour market needs. Active labour market policies focus on those furthest from the labour market. Recent initiatives in the context of modernizing social security systems aim at making work pay. These measures point in the right direction. However, the appropriate balance between work incentives on one hand and employability and long-term employment on the other could be further developed. (EU Commission 2008, 109)*

### Lifelong learning and the mobility of workers

The public adult education system in Sweden comprises of municipally-run adult education, adult education for the intellectually disabled and Swedish for immigrants. There is also advanced vocational education and training as well as supplementary educational programmes. The public education system is free of charge and students are to a large extent entitled to loans and grants. The social partners have not been particularly involved in lifelong learning initiatives, except for support for training in some redundancy program agreements.

According to trade union response to our survey there is a trend of increasing the quantity of university places, but, at the same time, the quantity of adult education on upper-secondary level has been declining.

With regard to professional and job transitions and mobility the Swedish social partners and collective bargaining at the sectoral level are playing an important role by the so-called “Security and Adjustment Agreements” which today cover around 50% of the Swedish workforce (see below for more details).

### External/internal flexicurity and contractual arrangements

Sweden in recent years has introduced a number of labour market reforms that aim at greater external flexibility: for example, the maximum possible duration for most kinds of the fixed-term contracts and temporary agency workers have been increased.

As the trade union TCO commented in its response to our survey, reforms in the field of sick leave have made it easier for employers to terminate the contracts of employees who are on sick leave.

According to TCO, the recent measures implemented by the government have deteriorated employment security in Sweden and contributed to greater external flexibility with the pressure having been put mostly on the employees.

LO Sweden is therefore demanding an approach which would focus more on “functional” rather than “numerical” flexicurity: the idea is to adapt the company’s production to the new market situation, instead of the numerical adaptation of the number of worked hours. It is beneficial if the work force is multi-skilled and able to rotate to other tasks. A more creative work organisation also stimulates innovations.

An issue of major debate is the Swedish legal regulation on notices and the termination of contracts. This is mainly regulated in the Employment Protection Act (LAS). An important part of this regulation states that the employer cannot freely choose whom to dismiss in times of work redundancy. LAS states that in times of downsizing the workforce, the employee that was hired most recently should also be noticed first (“first in, last out” principle). There are, however, some exemptions from this rule for small and middle-sized companies in order to make the implementation of the act more flexible. LAS also regulates the notice period before the employee can be laid-off depending on tenure. According to the Confederation of Swedish Enterprises the LAS should be reformed so that employers can keep the most important employees in times of reduction of workload. In addition, they hold the view that deregulating LAS would lead to more flexibility, in a way that the employee would not fear to change jobs. This is opposed by the trade unions who claim that the government already has reduced security for employees in Sweden by worsening the conditions of the unemployment insurance.

Sweden had in place so-called ‘lay-off pay’ until 1995, when it was abolished despite strong opposition by both employers and trade union organizations. “Lay-off pay” was based on the assumption that in times of temporary downturn, the company could lay off an employee for 30 days a year and the employee got 100% compensation – 45% from the company, 45% from the state and 10% from employer organisations. Both the employers and the trade unions criticized the fact that the employers no longer have this alternative to dismissal. However, the government has not been willing to reintroduce the temporary layoff. Therefore, the social partners have moved on through bipartite negotiations.

### Active labour market policy

Sweden has well developed active labour market programmes that stand for a substantial part of the public spending - 1.5% of the GDP in 2007. The government is the primary supplier of active labour market programmes.

The recent liberal-conservative Government which took office in 2005 have introduced a change in the general orientation of labour market policy in Sweden, in particular focussing more on the supply side.



As a result, the government has carried out a number of reforms and measures to stimulate the supply of labour, in particular in-work tax credit and changes in unemployment- and sickness insurances. Furthermore, the government has carried out measures that aim at increasing the demand of people having difficulties in entering labour market, e.g. hiring payment (“hiring bonus”)- for employers who recruit those who have been unemployed or sick for more than a year and newly-arrived immigrants.

The government has also inaugurated a structural reform of labour market policy by transforming the Swedish Labour Market Administration into the Swedish Public Employment Service (since 1<sup>st</sup> January 2008). According to the government, the purpose of this reform has been to make the system more effective as well as provide uniform and fair public employment service. Moreover, the Government's intention was to ensure that more priority is given to control functions in unemployment insurance, the improved procurement of external services and a function for analysis, follow-up and evaluation of employment services.

In its reply to our survey the employers federation *Foretagarna* is demanding an even more substantive reform. From the organisations’ point of view the PES could be made more efficient by more private competition in this field, e.g. in the field of better matching of demand and supply.

### Supportive social security systems

The Swedish unemployment insurance has two components: a general basic insurance and a loss of income insurance. The basic insurance is available for the unemployed workers that are not members of an unemployment fund or for those who have not been members for a sufficiently long time. The unemployment insurance is financed partly by the state budget and partly by the unemployment funds. The centre-right wing government has introduced new policies for the unemployment funds. The monthly fees have increased and the ceiling of the benefit has been lowered. The unions are administrating the unemployment funds and, because of this responsibility, play substantial role in the social security provisions.

In order to complement the rather low level of unemployment benefits, the Swedish social partners have negotiated so called “security and adjustment agreements” providing financial support to ease the effects of notice. The security and adjustment agreements are negotiated within the collective agreements. The aim of the programmes are to meet both the companies’ demands regarding the composition of its workforce, and redundant employees’ needs of financial and job matching support. At present there are eight security and adjustment agreements on the Swedish labour market and they cover 50% of the labour force (for more details see the following chapter).

The redundancy programmes are implemented by private companies or trusts (foundations/councils). The two most important ones are the Job Security Foundation (*Trygghetsstiftelsen*) and the Employee Security Council (*Trygghetsrådet*, TRR). The Job Security Foundation was established under the Employee Security Agreement for Government Employees in 1990. It is governed partly by representatives for the trade unions and partly by representatives for the public authorities. The Employee Security Agreement covers employees whose conditions of employment are regulated by collective agreements between the Swedish Agency for Government Employers and the parties on the employee side. The agreement covers 240,000 employees, mainly in the public sector. The agreement provides employees, affected by notice or relocation, with severance pay, as long as the employee has at least one year of tenure. The severance pay is, with some exceptions, equivalent to an amount that together with the unemployment insurance benefit makes up to 80% of the wage during the first 200 days and 70% the following 100 days for employees with incomes above the ceiling applicable for the unemployment insurance.

The Employee Security Council is a trust owned by the Confederation of Swedish Enterprises and the Council for Negotiation and Cooperation (PTK). The members of TRR are usually white-collar workers in the private sector. TRR assists redundant employees in finding a new job and provides severance pay and financial support for training for individuals over the age of 40 and with at least five years tenure. They also support employees who wish to start their own business. 700,000 employees in 32,000 companies are affiliated to the TRR. Fees that are accounted for 0.3% of the wage costs for the affiliated employees finance the trust. During the past 10 years 158,000 employees have used services from TRR. Out of these, 80% have obtained a new job.

### High quality and productive workplaces

The term “work environment” (*Arbetsmiljö*) and “work environment policy” is a crucial concept in the Swedish labour market policy. As stated in the 2008-2013 Growth and Jobs Work Programme by the Swedish government:

*A good working environment that provides scope for influence, responsibility, skills development and creativity on the job will help develop the business activity and thus create the conditions for growth and more jobs. The Government thinks that a good workplace should not only have a good work environment free from risk of injury or illness but also provide opportunities for employees to participate and develop based on their individual potential. This presupposes that work on the environment at the workplace is integrated into the planning, direction and operation of the activity in a systematic manner. A good work environment should be seen as a tool for success and a competitive instrument (Swedish Government 2008, p. 81).*

Swedish trade unions have criticized strongly the abolishment of the Swedish research institute on the work environment and the reduction of financial resources of the national health and safety agency.

### Gender equality

Pay differential has remained largely unchanged since the beginning of the 1990s. In 2007, women’s pay was on average 84 per cent of men’s pay (see Swedish Government 2008, p. 84). The National Mediation Office has the task of analysing wage developments from a gender equality perspective. In 2007 several sectors where women predominate received extra pay increases. Under the Equal Opportunities Act, every year employers with 25 or more employees have to draw up a gender equality plan for equal pay. In the plan, the results of the survey and analysis are to be reported as well as any wage adjustments and other measures that need to be taken.

### Financial sustainability

Financial stability according to both employers and trade union organisations has been a major focus of the current Swedish government.

### Conclusion: Strengths, weaknesses and challenges

The rather significant changes in the field of labour market and social policy both with regard to single instruments, programmes and policy fields as well as in regard to the stronger emphasis on supply side measures have contributed to a quite polarized debate on flexibility and security in the Swedish labour market.

While employers organisations such as the SME confederation *Foretagarna* still regard the Swedish labour market regulation as too strict and demand for more flexible regulations (which may be compensated by higher unemployment benefits), trade union organizations such as TCO are strongly opposed to many measures taken by the government which, from the employee organisations’ point of view, have drastically deteriorated employment and social security in Sweden.

The European Commission in its Spring 2010 Economic Forecast have commented on a rather negative effect of the economic crisis on contractual security in Sweden which may have also negative effects on labour relations in Sweden in general:

*A further issue of discord is the practice of some employers of dismissing their own employees and then re-hiring them via replacement firms in order to circumvent employment protection laws. This is heavily resisted by the unions. Despite increased risks related to a difficult bargaining round, including strikes, high unemployment is nevertheless expected to result in historically low wage increases over the forecast period. (EU Commission Spring 2010 Economic Forecast, p. 145).*

### 3 The role of the social partners

#### General remarks on the role of social partners

As already described above the social partners are playing an important role in the implementation of flexibility and security in the Swedish labour market, in particular as regards to collective agreements and negotiated joint initiatives at the national, sectoral and company level. Striking examples for the substantive role of social partners are, for example, the security and adjustment agreements or the administration of the unemployment insurance funds.

#### SWEDEN - MAIN SOCIAL DIALOGUE INDICATORS

	Sweden	EU27
Collective bargaining coverage, 2006	92%	63%
Trade union density, 2005	76%	25%
Employer organization density, 2006	~ 58%	n.a.

Sources: Eurofound EIRO Country profiles, EU Industrial Relations Report 2008.

Both the trade unions and the employers' confederations are in general positive to the Danish Flexicurity model. The social partners, however, stress different parts of the labour market model and have different views upon why the model is successful. While the employers demand more flexibility for example in the field of contractual arrangements, the trade unions are concerned about imbalances and erosion of active public policies in the labour market, lifelong learning, training and employment security.

#### Main instruments and levels of influence

Against the background of strong social partner organizations based on high membership rates, collective bargaining at national, sectoral as well as at company level is regarded as the most important instrument of influencing policy design and implementation in Sweden.

An example for the strong role of social dialogue and collectively bargained solutions in the field of implementing flexicurity in the labour market are the so called “security and adjustment agreements” (see also previous chapter) that have been described in more depth in paper that have been sent in reply to the questionnaire survey by the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions SALAR: Currently there are eight adjustment agreements, covering about half the labour force. The social partners in the municipal sector have started negotiations aimed at an adjustment agreement. It may become one of the largest in the Swedish labour market, covering 1.1 million employees. If the negotiations result in agreement, most employees in the Swedish labour market will be covered by an

adjustment agreement. The municipal sector concluded an adjustment agreement recently, in spring 2010.

#### Security and adjustment agreements in Sweden

The social partners have negotiated security/adjustment agreements that promote flexicurity in the labour market. The aim of these agreements is to help workers who have been given notice due to shortage of work to find new jobs by means of adjustment measures and financial support. Deviations from the order of selection rules may be made through local negotiations. Some agreements also offer employees who are at risk of being declared redundant when the employer cannot continue to offer them employment help such as skills development, some financial support or support and advice in the form of measures that make the adjustment to a new job easier. Employers are also given advice and support in the adjustment process. By supplementing the efforts of the public employment service, the agreements help to improve the security of workers and to geographic and professional mobility in the labour market. In this way, the necessary structural change will be more readily accepted by the employees concerned.

The central organisations of the unions and the employers' organisations negotiate the agreements together, and the programmes are administered by organisations specially established for this purpose, employment security councils or job security foundations. The employers finance the activity by paying in a share estimated as a percentage of the total annual wage bill, at present between 0.15 and 0.3 percent. All employees in the collective agreement area covered by the adjustment agreement are included in the activity, regardless of whether they are union members or not. If an employee is given notice, the security council/foundation will take action and give the employee personal help to find a new livelihood. It can be anything from simple advice, such as how to improve a CV, to more far-reaching measures, such as changing occupations or starting a business. Several security councils and foundations emphasise that speed is crucial – assistance should be given as soon as possible after notice.

Source: SALAR 2010

### Recent changes and challenges

A quite striking result of the survey carried out amongst Swedish social partners is the assessment of both employers' organisations and trade unions that the role of social partners and tripartite dialogue has decreased in the aftermath of the 2008 global financial and economic crisis.

In particular the trade unions in most policy fields of flexicurity, apart from collective bargaining, report a decreasing influence on policy and practice development and implementation in recent years. On contrast to this, the employer organisation that took part in the survey, reported that no significant change took place in recent years with regard to influencing policy and practice.

### Cases of good practice in the field of labour market flexibility and security

A number of cases of good practice were mentioned in the replies of the Swedish social partners to the questionnaire survey and also in the context by SALAR (SALAR 2010).

The following table is presenting an overview of those examples and cases of good practice that have been pointed out by the Swedish social partners in the replies to the survey and which have been already described in the context of this report in chapter 2 and 3 in more depth.

#### CASES OF GOOD PRACTICE IN THE FIELD OF “FLEXICURITY” AS SUGGESTED BY THE DANISH SOCIAL PARTNERS

Good Practice	Social Partner	Flexicurity principle addressed
Collective agreements on outplacement services for corporate managements and trade union representatives (TRR)	TCO / ETUC	Job transition
Personalized services of trade unions to individual members on issues such as social security or career development	TCO / ETUC	Job transition Mobility and lifelong learning
Security and adjustment agreements	SALAR / CEEP	Job transition Mobility

Sources: Questionnaire replies

## 4 Key points arising

From the point of view of the author of this report, the following key points are arising with view on flexicurity in Sweden:

- *Though the case of Sweden is regularly mentioned as a case illustrating a positive example of flexicurity, the assessment of the Swedish social partners (in particular trade unions) regarding strengths and weaknesses of flexicurity principles in Sweden is quite sceptical – how can this discrepancy be explained?*
- *The current Swedish government has initiated quite a number of significant changes in the Swedish labour market system – based inter alia on the EU flexicurity principles – are these changes regarded by the social partners as necessary adjustments of the Swedish labour market model or as a substantial change?*
- *Do the Swedish social partners regard the Swedish concept of “Work Environment” as a “pathway” of flexicurity or as an alternative route? If yes, what are the differences?*

## Sources and references

### Replies to the questionnaire survey, interviews and other contributions

Questionnaire replies were received from two trade union confederations (LO and TCO) and one employer confederation (*Foretagarna*). In addition, the *Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions* – SALAR, sent a paper of the organisation which addressed the EU Commissions’ “Towards Common Principles of Flexicurity: More and better jobs through flexibility and security” (2007) focusing in particular the role of social dialogue in the implementation of flexicurity”.

Representatives of the Swedish social partners (SALAR and TCO) also delivered presentations on Flexicurity in Sweden (TCO) and the transition agreement in the Swedish Public Sector (SALAR) at the cluster seminar in Lisbon on 9 December 2010.

### Further resources

1. SALAR 2010: Mission for flexicurity - Comments and questions from Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions – SALAR. Comments on Towards Common Principles of Flexicurity: More and better jobs through flexibility and security COM (2007) 359 final, 28 May 2008, revised 2010.
2. Swedish Government 2008: The Swedish Reform Programme for Growth and Jobs 2008 to 2010.
3. Eurofound 2009: Flexicurity and Industrial Relations. Country Report Sweden.
4. EU Commission: Annual Progress Report / Annual Country Assessment, Brussels, December 2008.

5. EU Commission 2009: Implementation of the Lisbon Strategy Structural Reforms in the context of the European Economic Recovery Plan - Annual country assessments: Recommendation for a Council Recommendation on the on the 2009 up-date of the broad guidelines for the economic policies of the Member States and the Community and on the implementation of Member States' employment policies, Brussels, January.
6. EU Commission: “A year of delivery” - The Commission's Assessments of National Reform Programmes for Growth and Jobs, Brussels, December 2006.
7. EU Commission: “Time to Move Up A Gear” - The Commission's Assessments of National Reform Programmes for Growth and Jobs, Brussels, January 2006.