



An introduction to LO – the Danish Confederation of Trade Unions



Facts

- LO's affiliated unions have approximately 1.1 million members.
- 450,000 of them are public sector employees.
- 650,000 of them are private sector employees.
- LO-members are typically skilled and unskilled workers and workers with short-term further education.
- Approximately 73 per cent of all Danish workers are unionized.
- LO's affiliates organise both public and private sector employees. In Denmark, workers are organised according to their trade rather than the industry, they work in. A number of different unions can therefore represent workers at the same workplace.
- LO cooperates with NGO's, other central organisations, political parties and other interest groups in order to see to the interests of its members.

The Danish model offers influence for workers and employers rather than influence for politicians.



The Danish model/flexicurity

The Danish labour market model (the Danish flexicurity model) is based on the autonomy of the social partners. In most other countries, the labour market is governed by legislation.

However, in the Danish labour market, there is no legislation in central areas such as pay and working time. The social partner organisations agree on the rules in these areas by means of collective agreements – among others.

The Danish model offers influence for workers and employers rather than influence for politicians.

The Danish model provides flexibility and stability.

Aims

LO's principal tasks are the following:

- To safeguard and coordinate the trade union movement's common interests
- To formulate policies and strategies internally in the trade union

movement and externally vis-à-vis parliament, government, other organisations, etc.

- To represent the trade union movement's interests on various boards, commissions and committees
- To propose and coordinate guidelines for collective bargaining demands.

One of the most important LO-tasks remains the activities related to collective bargaining agreements. The collective agreements form the basis for wage-earners' living and working conditions. But as society rapidly moves away from the traditional industrial society towards the new challenges of the information society, LO activities in other fields gain more and more significance.

Tax policy, social policy, financial policy; all political aspects governing a modern society impact more and more directly and tangibly on the individual wage-earner. This is why LO is concentrating still more efforts on influencing legislative work.

Structure

Congress: 400 delegates. Convenes every 4 years

The General Council: 47 members. Meets 4-6 times a year

The Executive Committee: The Political Management and 10 representatives from affiliated unions. Meets every second week

The Political Management: The Political Management consists of LO's President, First Vice-President, and three Vice-Presidents

Nationally, these efforts are targeted towards the government, parliament and local authorities, but international work aimed at the EU and other organisations is becoming increasingly significant.

Structure

The structure of LO is characterized by the strong sovereignty of its 18 member unions within both the public and the private sector. LO's main role is thus to coordinate policies and provide service.

The Congress is the highest authority and is convened every four years. The 400 delegates lay down objectives and policies.

The General Council, which is the highest authority between Congresses, has 47 members and meets 4-6 times a year. It is responsible for updating activities and objectives between Congresses. All affiliates are represented.

The Executive Committee is the highest authority in between the

meetings of the General Council. Its members are appointed by the Congress. The members are: LO's President, the four LO-Vice Presidents and ten representatives from the affiliated unions. The Executive Committee meets every second week.

The Political Management consists of LO's President, Lizette Risgaard, First Vice-President, Arne Grevsen and Vice-Presidents, Ejner K. Holst, Morten Skov Christiansen and Nanna Højlund.

At the organisational level, LO consist of 6 political departments:

- The Management Secretariat
- Communication
- Campaign & Development
- Economics & Analysis
- Labour Market & Education
- Labour Law & Health and Safety at Work
- EU & International Affairs

Each department specializes in their particular trade union area while also taking part in cross-sectional projects.

The Political Management



LO's President
Lizette Risgaard



First Vice-President
Arne Grevsen



Vice-President
Ejner K. Holst



Vice-President
Nanna Højlund



Vice-President
Morten Skov

International perspectives

The trade union movement has a long and proud tradition for cross-border cooperation and globalisation has only made our values and efforts more relevant.

LO is a member of the Nordic Council of Trade Unions (NFS), the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) and the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC).

Acting from a wish to strengthen the trade union movement in the developing countries and in Central- and Eastern Europe, LO contributes bilaterally or in cooperation with the ITUC and the ETUC to the efforts to ensure that our cooperation partners can look after their interests at the national and at the international level.

In addition, LO is a member of the Trade Union Advisory Committee (TUAC) to the OECD and plays an active part in the activities of the International Labour Organisation both through the work in the Danish ILO

Committee, which is a tripartite body, as well as by participating in the annual Labour Conferences.

At the Nordic level, we also cooperate with the other Nordic trade union movements and social democratic parties in SAMAK, the Labour Movement's Nordic Cooperative Committee.

LO is involved in a wide range of development projects in the developing countries. This assistance is administered through the Danish Trade Union Council for International Development Cooperation, also called the LO/FTF Council since it was set up in cooperation with FTF (the Confederation of Salaried Employees and Civil Servants in Denmark).

It is a core task for LO to ensure a strong voice for Danish workers in the European decision-making process. LO therefore works to influence the future development of the EU. Our efforts aim towards giving the trade union movement a greater say when decisions are made in Brussels.



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LO's interests in the EU

The EU adopts many of the rules that are applied to the Danish labour market. LO therefore monitors the European legislation process closely and focuses on employment, the single market, the social dimension and trade policy.

Because the conduct of Danish interests is still central, it is necessary to influence the European agenda within the following areas of priority:

- Employment policy; including economic policy; the future workforce and lifelong skills' upgrading of each individual worker.
- The single market; the further development of services and workers' free movement, the regulation of social dumping and safeguarding the right to industrial action.
- The social dimension of the EU; including workers' rights and health and safety at work. LO monitors directives that may influence Danish collective agreements and the Danish labour market model.

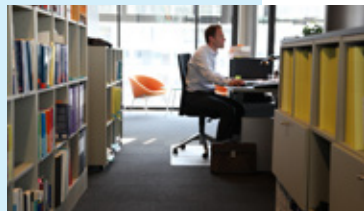
- Trade policy; employment, pay- and working conditions must be regulated in the free trade agreements.
- Green jobs.

LO's Department for EU and International Affairs

LO's Department for EU and International Affairs monitors the legislative work in the European Institutions and the general development in EU-policy. LO monitors the work in the EU-institutions on a continuous basis and on a case-to-case basis, we analyse the potential consequences of legislative proposals for Danish workers. In addition to this, it is an important task for LO to interpret the EU-directives and adapt them to Danish conditions. As a main rule, this happens through the agreement-based Danish labour market system.

LO is also affiliated to and cooperates with the ITUC and the ILO. Participation in the annual labour conference

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and in the Danish ILO Committee are important elements of this work. Monitoring the observation and implementation of ILO-Conventions is another important element of this work.

LO's lobbying is primarily directed towards the European Commission, the European Parliament, the Economic and Social Committee and, not least, the Danish government. In addition to this, LO is strongly committed to its cooperation with the ETUC (The European Trade Union Confederation).

LO's Department for EU and International Affairs is staffed by Advisers and clerical workers with political, financial and legal expertise on the EU.

LO's activities in Brussels

LO's Department of EU and International Affairs sees to LO-Denmark's priorities in terms of monitoring and influencing developments abroad, and in the EU in particular. LO is represented in a number of European and international organizations and in a

wide range of national-level committees dealing with international affairs.

In order for LO to look after its interests, it needs to stay as close as possible to the EU's decision making processes. LO therefore runs the Danish Trade Union Office in Brussels in cooperation with two other central organisations, AC (the Danish Confederation of Professional Associations) and FTF.

A member of the ETUC and the ITUC, LO works closely with its European and international colleagues and maintains cooperation with the relevant Danish MEP's, the Danish Permanent Representation and other stakeholders on the European scene.



Danish Labour News

If you would like to follow LO's work and trends in the Danish labour market, we recommend that you subscribe to our quarterly newsletter, Danish Labour News. Subscribe online at <http://www.lo.dk/Nyheder/Nyhedsbreve.aspx> or by writing to skc@lo.dk

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