

# NFU Newsletter



## No, not yet...give me a minute!

Welcome to NFUs third Newsletter! This time the newsletter is full of news from our corporate clubs, from some of NFUs member unions, from UNI and lastly from NFU itself. With the collection of articles in this edition, it is difficult to claim that transnational cooperation is of no value and little significance. This newsletter is written for you, for your information and inspiration, and in order to share ideas, practices and policies.

Check for example the articles on the proposed amendments to the Capital Requirements Directive, which pose a significant threat to our collective agreements. This is serious business and we, the NFU family, are full force on the case! Or go to page 4 to read more about FSU-DK's 16 proposals for financial regulation. Why wait for cross-national regulation suggestions if we can start with talking sense into our own national governments? See also the news from Suora on their wage negotiations, and FSU-NO's Union Future project.

Our transnational corporate clubs are also highly active; visits to Russia, formalization of union association, claims of the importance of transnational work and more. Use this newsletter to learn from one another!

One thing is for sure; we need to continuously focus on how globalization affects us, and how we can improve our work to affect it.

At NFU, we are working on this in

all kinds of ways: through our new EWC project that focuses on the training of up and coming EWC representatives in our corporate clubs (see page 3 for more information), through lobbying, through seminars and meetings with our corporate clubs (see page 5), through visits with our member unions, Steering Committees and secretariats and through our strong cooperation with, and influence in, UNI.

Please find time to read through this newsletter, it will provide you with information on just some of our activities and challenges...

NFU is wishing you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

## NFU president

### steps down

Due to personal reasons, president of NFU, Allan Bang has stepped down from all of his responsibilities. Allan has been President of NFU since 2003 and was furthermore President of FSU-DK, of UNI-Europa Finance and UNI Finance. Naturally his departure means that the NFU Steering Committee is in the process of finding a new President who can sit until our next Union Council meeting in October 2010. NFU has developed strong ties and influence in our European and world organizations through Allan and his amazing work on all levels. NFU will continue to develop these ties and influence under the new political leadership.

*Christina J. Colclough, NFU*

## In this newsletter

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## NFU calendar

**Jan 13: NFU General Secretaries Meeting, Oslo**

**Jan 26: Social Dialogue Insurance Plenary, Brussels**

**Feb 23: NFU Steering Committee, Stockholm/FTF**

**Mar 4: UNI-Europa Management, TBC**

**Mar 17-18: 2nd NFU EWC Workshop, Copenhagen**

**Mar 19: NFU EWC Project Group Meeting (GR Network), Copenhagen**

**Mar 23: UNI-Norden meeting, Stockholm**

**Mar 25: UNI-Europa Finance Steering Group Meeting, Nyon (TBC)**

**Apr 14-15: NFU Sector Conference, Reykjavik**

**Apr. 28: NFU General Secretaries Meeting, Stockholm**

**May 2-4: NFU Youth Group Meeting, Reykjavik**

**May 5: DG IM Meeting, Brussels (TBC)**

**May 18: UNI-Europa Finance Steering Group Meeting, Brussels (TBC)**

## NFU links

**NFU Meeting Calendar 2009**

**NFU responses to EU-Commission Consultations**

**UNI-Europa Finance Website**

**AXA EWC agreement / More information on the agreement**

## NFU News

### Fight for your right... to bargain!

As a measure to combat the current financial crisis, the Commission has proposed some amendments to the Capital Requirements Directive (2006/48/EC and 2006/49/EC), one of them dealing with the issue of remuneration, i.e. non-fixed salaries and incentives.

According to the proposal, the new CRD should enable supervisory authorities to impose capital 'sanctions' on financial institutions where remuneration policies are found to generate unacceptable risk.

The overarching issue is that the Commission now has given itself, or rather taken, the right to regulate pay, although this is explicitly not for the Commission to do, according to art. 137.5 in the EC Treaty. The

issue of the Commission regulating remuneration is of particular interest to the Nordic countries, since this regulation may impose restrictions on the right to free collective bargaining.

NFU and its member unions have been in continuous contact with national governments as well as European institutions in order to highlight the problems this may pose for the trade union movement.

Our two main points are that the amended Directive must provide **adequate protection for provisions agreed in a collective agreement, and that it must be made clear what type of personnel is affected by the Directive.**

At the moment it is very unclear

who might be encompassed by the definition: "staff whose professional activities have a material impact on the risk profile of the bank or investment firm".

The large number of employees that might be included in this vague definition will likely be even larger if this regulation in the future will be extended to include also the insurance sector, where non-fixed salaries are very common.

The future's not ours to see, but NFU and its member unions will continue to work on the matter, and to fight for your right to bargain!

*Magnus Lundberg, NFU*

### NFU Union Council 2009

NFU held its annual Union Council recently in Copenhagen on October 27-28. Ulla-Britt Lundquist from FTF in Sweden was unanimously elected as NFU's new vice-president. Furthermore, the Union Council listened to Sony Kapoor from financial reform think tank Re-Define. After his speech the participants had interesting discussions with him about ways out of the financial crisis. The meeting also discussed at length what NFU's political priorities should be in the next activity period 2011-2012.



Ulla-Britt Lundquist

### First workshop in the project on EWC training, Stockholm 14-15 December

The first workshop in NFU's Commission-financed project on EWC training will take place at Finansförbundet's premises in Stockholm on 14-15 December. The main aim of the workshop is to highlight what transnational union work means, what challenges lie ahead of us and the best ways to go about this. The target group for this workshop is younger, newly elected or presumptive representatives of EWCs and similar structures.

### Second workshop in the project on EWC training, Copenhagen 17-18 March

The second workshop in NFU's project on EWC training will take place at the offices of Finansförbundet in Copenhagen on 17-18 March. This workshop aims to highlight practices and challenges related to EWC work, including look-

ing at the new EWC Directive and what it entails. The target group of this workshop is wider, including also experienced and executive union representatives.

### UNI-Europa Finance Conference, Dublin 10-11 December

The overall theme of the Conference is: "Addressing responsible sales of financial products and the role of trade unions in financial regulation and supervision."

The Conference will include the following agenda items:

- Trends in the finance industry and key issues for the future of the industry,
- Shaping a new regulatory and supervisory framework for the finance industry: EU legislation and UNI's bottom-up approach,
- Sales and advice: towards stricter legal obligations and a charter on responsible sale of financial products.

## New EWC agreement making history?



Effective as of 1 December 2009, French insurance group AXA's new EWC agreement marks a significant twist to how the story of EWC agreements is told.

For the first time in history, a EWC agreement has given authority to the European institutions, includ-

ing the European Court of Justice, to govern the agreement under EU law.

This, among other things, opens up for new dispute resolution mechanisms, since the previous agreement (as any other EWC agreement up to this point) was governed by national law. That meant that any

judgment on the rights and obligations of the EWC was only formally valid under the jurisdiction of that national court.

According to the agreement, the new agreement is inherently supranational and its purpose is to allow employees within the European Union to be represented without regard to national borders, entities or outlooks. This means that any difficulties in connection with the agreement shall be resolved by the institutions of the European Union and according to EU law, leading to a more consistent and foreseeable approach to information and consultation rights.

This is highly interesting since it may solve problems regarding uniform interpretation of transnational agreements. If there is only one set of rules to adhere to, and only one interpreter of these rules, many question marks regarding legal effects of transnational company agreements may be straightened out.

*Magnus Lundberg, NFU*

## News from the NFU unions

### FSU-NO Union Future

The Finance Sector Union of Norway has recently initiated a project called Union Future. Through three project phases it will explore what will be our identity and priorities in the future. One intention is to strengthen our position among employees with higher education as well as young academics – an area where we currently experience strong competition from other unions.

Experts will be hired to write a report on the development of the finance sector in Norway on a short and long term basis. The report will also analyze what kind of compe-



FINANCE SECTOR UNION  
Norway

tence the finance sector will demand in the future. As a result of these

conclusions, the union's market position and identity will be defined.

Finally, the project seeks to identify what kind of consequences this will result in for the union's future products and policies, communication, behaviour and visual identity.

The time schedule for the project is rather ambitious. The three project phases are due to be finished before the next Congress meets on November 30, 2010.

*Anne Greva, Finance Sector Union of Norway*



Swedish Union of Insurance Employees

## Swedish Authority to restrict bargaining rights

The Swedish Financial Supervisory Authority has made proposals for regulations and general guidelines in the financial sector in Sweden, which are emanating from the Recommendation on remuneration in the financial services sector by the European Commission.

Both unions and employers are very concerned about the proposals, since they impinge on the right of social partners in collective bargaining. A rather large number of FTF's members would be affected by the proposals, namely those of FTF's members that have a variable component in their salaries.

FTF has concluded around 80 collective agreements on variable pay for sales employees in the insurance sector. In Sweden, as in our neighbour countries, it is the right as well as the responsibility of the social partners to agree on working conditions, not least including salaries, without state intervention. Therefore, when the Swedish Financial Supervisory Authority claims that social partners must follow its regulations and guidelines when concluding future collective agreements, the Swedish model is threatened. FTF has demanded that The Swedish Financial Supervisory Authority respects the right of the social partners to conclude collective agreements.

The Swedish Financial Supervisory Authority has proposed that all employees and all kinds of variable pay fall under the scope of the regulations and general guidelines, not only such employees or such forms of variable pay that have a material impact on the risk profile of the bank or investment firm. This would lead to absurd consequences for a large number of employees who have no impact whatsoever on the risk profile of the company, and FTF has demanded the Swedish Financial

Supervisory Authority to amend its proposals.

FTF understands the overall intention of the Financial Supervisory Authority. The financial sector has acted with short-sightedness when it comes to bonuses, and this has accelerated the financial crisis. Thus, it is even more important today that social partners take their responsibility and work for collective agreements. Perhaps the time has come to demand collective agreements on all kinds of pay, even bonuses!

*Ingolf Lundin and Anna Söderqvist, FTF, Sweden*



Ammattiliitto Fackförbundet Trade Union

## Tough Negotiations in Finland

***In Finland, the financial sector negotiates in a period when no agreement is in force.***

Trade union Suora has been negotiating about a collective agreement with the Federation of Finnish Financial Services (FK) since February. Suora gave a notice of the termination of the collective agreement for the financial sector by the end of September, and the period when no agreement is in force started in the beginning of October. This also concerns Sampo Pankki, which adheres to its own agreement.

The round of negotiations is now especially difficult in the whole la-

bour market field: the Confederation of Finnish Industries (EK), which represents all employers in the private sectors, permits their employers to negotiate a rise in salary of only 0.5%. In Finland, people talk about the salary anchor, in which the Federation of Finnish Financial Services has also committed itself.

Suora is worried about the system of remuneration built into the previous contract. This has a wholly new element: salary discussion. The unsubstantial per cents offered by an employer undermine reasonable salary discussions.

Nonetheless, the banks are still doing well and there are funds for salary payments. Stock exchange notices, economists' predictions and analyses as well as the banks' interim reports provide a clear picture of the ability to pay salaries. Last year, the banks achieved all-time record results and the results for this year are good as well. The banks also received solid readings in the stress test made by the Financial Supervision in September.

The degree of the rises in salaries has a marginal significance to the banks' result. Per one employee Finnish banks made a profit of almost 100,000 EUR in 2008.

*Eira Ketola, Suora, Finland*



## FSU-DK: Financial Crisis – On the Right Track

On 5 October 2009 Finansforbundet published 16 concrete proposals for financial regulation in Denmark, aiming to bring the sector back on the right track.

The proposals concern the dilemma of sales and advice, the role of management and board members, the issue of remuneration, the tasks of supervision, the future of Danish bank recovery packages, and, finally, taxation of the financial sector.

[Download "On the right track" here](#) (can be downloaded in Danish and soon also in English)

*Annette Mikkelsen, Finansforbundet, Denmark*



*Finnish Stock Exchange  
Photo by Mahlum*

## Insurance hit by crisis aftershock

At first it seemed as the Danish insurance industry would go on almost unhurt through the financial crisis. But now the crisis aftershock has set in with a decreasing level of activity in the Danish society in general and that has shown its impact on the insurance industry.

As a result insurance companies in Denmark are at present busy adapting to the new market situation. Part of this involves improving efficiency through more advanced



use of technology and a geographical consolidation but another part involves still more significant lay-offs.

As a consequence unemployment in the Danish insurance industry has

grown from just over 1% in 2007 to now around 2,4%. As of today 17 companies have laid off around 400 employees solely due to the crisis. We have not yet seen the end of this as more companies are announcing lay-offs.

The upcoming EU-directives for financial solidity in the insurance business may lead to further consolidations as smaller companies will face challenges fulfilling these demands on their own. Time will show what impact this will have.

*Mette Bergmann, DFL, Denmark*

## News from NFU's corporate clubs



## If Union Team visit to St. Petersburg 20-21 April 2009

If Union Team (IUT) consists of ten Union representatives from the Nordic countries and Estonia, and is mainly working with union matters on Nordic/Baltic level within If on the basis of an EWC-agreement.

For a couple of years If has had an office in St. Petersburg insuring Nordic industrial customers operating in Russia, with approximately 30 persons employed. In 2007, If bought a Russian insurance company, Region, working mainly with car-insurance in the St. Petersburg/Moscow area, but also with branch-

offices at some other major cities. Its headquarters are situated in St. Petersburg and the number of employees is around 500 persons.

With the experience we have from Union matters in the Nordic/Baltic region we considered that it would be very interesting to pay our Russian companies a visit. Not to forget getting a chance to introduce both ourselves and our union-work to the Russian management.

We started planning this visit already six months ahead of departure. First of all we had to have an

invitation. One of our union reps, Liisa Halme, has good connections with the Russians from her work within Industrial, Finland, and thanks to her we soon had the invitation.

Travelling to Russia is a bit more complicated than travelling within the rest of Europe.

Visas applications take time and are costly. We were reminded of security matters such as not to go by taxi but instead to pre-order safe transportation, choosing the right hotels, etc.

### **So, finally, off we went!**

With all travel documents in order, entering Russia went very fast and smooth.

Today St. Petersburg is a modern business-city with the same range of shops, hotels and restaurants as any major western city. Unfortunately we soon found out that also the prices were on top.

First we met with the If-company manager CEO Andrei Bogdanov and his assistant, at the office that had a central location at the Sweden house. We introduced ourselves and gave a presentation that we had prepared beforehand. Andrei told us about how If Russia is operating. We had a couple of questions to him and could state that the way they work was very similar to the way we work in the other countries. One interesting question that we asked him was

*continued on next page...*

what possibilities there are to start a local union or at least get an employee-representative elected. His answer was very diplomatic, and it was nothing that he recommended! We ended our stay by visiting the office premises. They were of the same standard as all other If offices.

On the second day we went to Region, our Russian company, situated at the outskirts of St. Petersburg. Our driver put us off outside an old worn out building, and we started wondering - "what is this"? But the office was right around the corner in a very modern building. When If purchased Region we were informed that the company would work under its own name and logo for a couple of years. Here we saw the use of the If logo on business cards etc. We were greeted by the CEO of Region, a young man named Maxim Kondrashov, and his charming HR-manager Olga Dobryakova. The procedure was the same as the day before - introduction of Region and then our presentation. We understood that the employees were satisfied with having Nordic owners. What surprised us was when Olga told us about the employee-benefits they were introducing at the company. These are really high-class and we almost began to feel envious. After our presentation, we also met a totally different attitude towards how we are organised and the way we act at home. Andrei at If was well aware of western Union work,



but to Maxim it came as news and a complete surprise. For example, when he was told that we, the union, attend recruiting processes on manager level, he found it hard to believe and nothing he would appreciate to have at Region.

All in all we had two very interesting days with new experiences.

It remains to be seen whether IF Union Team should put any effort in trying to get employee-representatives at our Russian companies. We have contacted UNI for advice and consultation in this matter.

*Gunnar Ulander, IF Union Team  
Photos: Helge Meen, Finance Sector Union of Norway*



## Danske Kreds

On September 16th 2009 Danske Unions was formalised as transnational union association formed by the local Danske Bank unions in Norway, Sweden, Finland, Ireland, Northern Ireland and Denmark. This happened at the first annual general meeting of Danske Unions, which was held in Brussels as part of an EU-supported project aiming to improve co-operation between employee representatives in Danske Bank and between the employee representatives and the Danske Bank Group management ([Read more](#)

[about the constitution of Danske Unions here](#)).

The project had its final activity in Stockholm in October ending two consecutive project years with a lot of international activity. Over the two years, there has been focus on the transnational communication between employee representatives, on the co-operation within the EWC, on the formalisation of a strong transnational union structure, on

# DANSKE KREDS

regulations regarding transnational and national structures of information and consultation, on employee representation in the Baltic countries and other issues and on other issues. You can find more about the projects on [www.danskeunions.org](http://www.danskeunions.org). Besides the formalisation of the transnational union structure, the projects have also boosted the work and the co-operation in the EWC, strengthened the communication and improved the knowledge of the different systems of employee representation in the different countries.

*Anders Lyager Olsen,  
Danske Kreds*

## Attending first NUB meeting as president

After Nils Q. Kruse's exit from Nordea Union Board (NUB), Steinar Nickelsen was appointed president. He recently attended his first physical NUB meeting as president.

- The immediate feedback from my fellow board members was good. This motivates and inspires me to try to keep a good standard in our future NUB meetings, Steinar Nickelsen said afterwards.

Steinar Nickelsen has been involved in union work since 1987 and in 1999 he became a full time union representative in the union office in Oslo.

- I like to be involved and influence decisions with my knowledge and experience. By that I hope I can make a difference for those I represent - nationally as well as internationally, Steinar Nickelsen states.



Steinar Nickelsen

To Steinar Nickelsen, the cross-border cooperation is important to focus on and continuously evolve.

- As a cross-border union we have so far achieved a lot in terms

of influence and co-decision with our system of Group Council, Consultative Committees and Nordea AB board representation. My vision - or I would rather say *our* vision - is to maintain and even try to improve this unique system of influence, Steinar Nickelsen says.

When not working, Steinar Nickelsen focuses on his family and his key interest: Football.

- I like spending my weekends outdoors as much as I can. I am a football supporter, and I follow my favourite team, Lyn, closely. The games are mostly played on Sundays so it occupies some of my weekend time. Actually, I am also still playing football myself, Steinar says with a smile.

*Charlotte Ahlburg Andersen,  
Kreds Nordea*

## Union work across borders makes sense

The annual seminar for shop stewards and safety stewards of Nordea in Denmark was visited by Nordea unionists Stevan Sulja from the Nordea Union in Sweden and Kjell Arne Ystenes from the Nordea Union in Norway. They both agreed that the subjects that are important to the employees in Denmark are also important to the employees in Sweden and Norway.

The annual seminar for shop stewards of Nordea in Denmark was held on 17-19 September 2009. The first day of the seminar focussed on teambuilding. The shop stewards and safety stewards were organised in their usual geographic teams working together solving both intellectual and physical assignments. They had to take control of the day themselves and decide which and how many assignments the team wanted to solve.

- This is a very interesting way to

develop the teamwork and create a better cooperation between the shop stewards and safety stewards - not only at the seminar, but also afterwards. I am wondering if we could try something similar in Norway, Kjell Arne Ystenes says.

The second day of the seminar focussed on debates and started out with a "market place" of ten stalls. Most stalls were headed by the board members of the Nordea Union in Denmark. Two stalls, however, were headed by invited guests: The president of Finansforbundet in Denmark, Allan Bang, Team Leader of Premises Security in Nordea, Jørgen Vang Pedersen, and safety steward, Anne Karin Jensen.

All in all, the ten stalls each offered different views of the working day in Nordea. The shop stewards and safety stewards joined the debate at the stalls of their choice and had the opportunity to discuss important matters such as the upcoming collective agreement 2011, the working environment of the employees, and the possibilities for education and training.

At the market place, questions to

the management were written down and brought to a debate with Head of Banking Denmark, Anders Jensen, and Head of HR Nordic Banking Denmark, Niels Gregers Hansen, later that afternoon.

- Creating a market place is a great way to give everybody a chance to formulate questions and later ask the management the question directly. It is interesting to hear that the subjects important to the Danish employees are similar to the subjects important to the Swedish employees, Stevan Sulja says.

Kjell Arne Ystenes agrees: - The subjects of importance in Denmark, Sweden and Norway are extremely similar.

At the end of the seminar, Stevan Sulja expressed his view of the seminar:

- I am very impressed by the commitments of the shop stewards and safety stewards, and Kreds Nordea's professional and competent approach to the seminar is truly remarkable. It has been a pleasure to attend.

*Charlotte Ahlburg Andersen,  
Kreds Nordea*



## News from UNI and UNI-Europa Finance

### Moderate progress within the regulatory scene



**By Katrine Søndergaard**

*UNI-Europa  
Finance Policy  
Officer*

For UNI-Europa finance, autumn in Brussels has offered moderate progress and development within the regulatory scene as well as the two European social dialogues, bank and insurance.

After a series of proposals from the European Commission over the summer, the scene has now moved to the European Parliament. UNI-Europa has set up an expert group together with ETUC, the European Trade Union Confederation, to develop sound proposals for amendments to the proposed regulation to suggest to the Members of the European Parliament.

Among the most important are proposals on a new European structure for supervision and a revision of the Capital Requirements Directive. As regards the supervisory structure, UNI-Europa finance has managed to get footprints in the proposal in terms of representation of finance employees in the consultative bodies to the new European Supervisory Authorities. This is a first step in recognising the relevance of finance employees in the supervisory processes, but much still needs to be done.

The Capital Requirements Directive is undergoing a series of revisions. As part of one of these revisions, the European Commission has



*EU Berlaymont building  
Photo by J. Logan*

proposed to include remuneration policies under the scope of financial supervision to discourage excessive risk taking. This can potentially impact on collective bargaining, and UNI europa finance is therefore working with the Commission and the Parliament to ensure that the Directive does not impinge on social partners' right to collective bargaining. See also Magnus Lundberg's article above.

These and many other issues were discussed recently with the Commission at the biannual consultation meeting with DG Internal Market, the Commission Directorate

dealing with internal market affairs including financial regulation. The Commission accounted for recent developments and replied to questions and concerns put forward by the trade unions.

The social dialogue in both the insurance sector and the banking sector has made progress during autumn. In the insurance sector, the four social partners have concluded a joint declaration on "The demographic challenge", addressing issues of Life long Learning, work-life balance and stress and health. The declaration is a result of smooth negotiations over the past 12 months in a constructive and positive atmosphere.

In the bank social dialogue, the first plenary meeting for more than two years marked a new start for the dialogue. The dialogue has been on hold since the break down of negotiations on a joint declaration on "demography" in spring 2008 and the four social partners has been in a process of reassessing how to conduct the social dialogue to ensure that it leads to an outcome and not just a lot of talking.



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