



# The Norwegian experience in social dialogue and HSE promotion

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*The Project is supported by a grant from Norway through the Norwegian Cooperation Programme for Economic Growth and Sustainable Development with Bulgaria*

*Проект с финансовата подкрепа на Правителството на Норвегия чрез Норвежката програма за сътрудничество за икономически растеж и устойчиво развитие в България*





## Who we are?

### Norwegian Confederation of Trade Unions (LO-Norway)

- Established in 1899
- Consists of 21 branch unions
- 865 000 members
- 130 000 local-level elected officers
- Almost 45 % of our members are female
- Experience participant in tripartite relations and the Norwegian social dialogue





## Some background from Norway:

- Norwegian labour force: 2 450 000 persons
- Low inflation
- Very sound public finances, much due to petroleum
- Union density: 52 %
- No minimum wage
- Generally binding collective agreement in construction and shipyards (as a result of labour migration, to fight social dumping)





# Historical background

- Depression of the 1930's
- Homogenous society - strong social cohesion and feeling of solidarity within and between groups and regions
- Strong civil society, in particular powerful - and responsible - labour unions
- Low income level before and after World War II was NOT seen as barrier to building the welfare state - "no reason to wait"



## Labour market - main figures

- High employment rate: 75
- Low unemployment rate: 3.3
- High female employment rate: 72



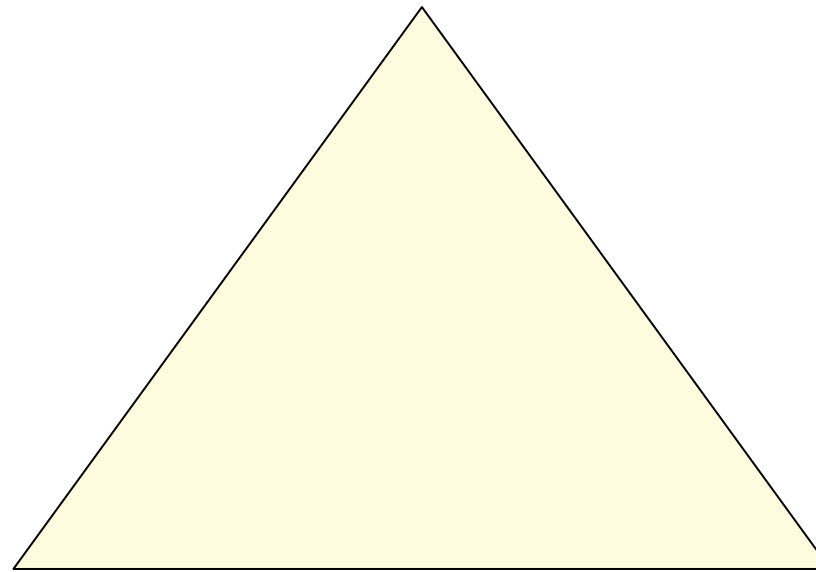
## Norwegian Model - Some basic features

- Cooperation and trust
- Mix of public and private responsibilities
- Firms and workers expecting and handling change
- Family policy - women in the work force
- Cooperation between government, trade unions and employers organisations



# Three independent partners working together

**Government**



**Employees/  
trade  
unions**

**Employers  
organisations**



# Enterprise development and employee participation

- Broad class compromises established in the 1930s, initiating a long-lasting co-operative partnership between capital, labour and the state
- Social democracy, strong state in the financial market, state or mixed ownership in many of the major corporations
- Institutionalised cooperation between the labour market parties (the social partners) through collective agreements and national programmes for enterprise development on a national level



# Enterprise development and broad participation (involvement of workers)

- Broad participation and social dialogue is the basis for the Norwegian Model
- Broad participation is essential to develop new local practises based on local knowledge and competencies
- Broad participation
  - Because it broadens the pool of knowledge and competencies behind decision-making in an enterprise
  - Because it is a democratic right and duty in a democratic society, supported by legislation and collective agreements
  - Because it ensures broad support of the measures and initiatives taken



# Worker protection

- Worker Protection and Work Environment Act (WPA)
- Right to organise and collective bargaining, including strikes
- Important part of the Norwegian model
- *Positive* for business!
- Keeps the workforce healthy longer, compared to “free market competition”!
- The Labour Inspection Authority



# The Working Environment Act

- Applies to all land enterprises with employees
- The employer is responsible for complying with the requirements of the act
- The act requires a systematic approach - Internal Control - "OSH-management system"
- The requirements are
  - risk analysis and risk assessment must be carried out
  - roles and responsibilities regarding health and safety issues must be clarified
  - plans of action made and carried out



## Safety reps.

- Safety reps - elected among the workers at the workplace for two years
- Safety reps are mandatory for all enterprises with more than 10 employees
- Enterprises with more than one safety representative shall have a senior safety representative who is responsible for coordinating the activities of the safety reps
- Their duty is to safeguard the interest of the employees in matters relating to work environment and represent workers on issues related to health, safety and welfare
- Shall be consulted during planning and implementation of measures for work environment and occupational health and safety issues.
- Have the right to halt (stop) dangerous work
- Work may be halted until the Labour Inspection Authority has decided whether work may continue.
- The safety representative is not liable for any loss suffered by the reps decisions.



# The Norwegian Labour Inspection Authority

- Supervise that enterprises comply with the requirements of the Working Environment Act.
- The overall goal "healthy working environment for all, safe and secure employment conditions and meaningful work for the individual"
- Covers all "land-based" enterprises with employees, both private and public sector
- Carry out inspections, give advice and information
- Close cooperation with social partners.
- Employees have the right to talk to the labour inspectorate without the employers present.



## The Norwegian Labour Inspection Authority - Sanctions

- Issue orders in writing and a time limit.
- Can demand immediate implementation of necessary measures if they find the situation dangerous for life and health. (Can stop the work!)
- Use coercive fines if orders are not complied with. The main rule is that the size of the fine shall make it unprofitable to violate the law.
- Can report the enterprise to the police for further investigation



## Working environment committees

- Enterprises with at least 50 employees shall have a working environment committee
- Employer, employees, safety rep and other OSH personnel are represented
- The employer and the employees shall have an equal number of representatives on the committee.
- Both parties shall alternately be elected as chairman of the committee.
- The Chairman can use casting vote
- Participate in the planning of safety and environmental issues



## Why the slow way is fastest in the long run

- Advanced and technologically challenging production requires competence and participation in production and innovation
- Investing in competence and safety is investing in good production
- Broad participation in enterprise development is highly valued
- Few disruptive conflicts
- High employee commitment



## The way ahead

- Valuable cooperation for LO-Norway
- Mutual learning
- Concrete exchange of experiences
- One year left of the project!
- Possibilities to prolong the cooperation!