

Agreement on temporary layoffs

You will be temporarily laid off from work, but you will keep your employment and you will be paid more than the unemployment benefit. This is the content of the agreement on temporary layoffs that IF Metall and the employers have reached.

- This is an extreme situation and a temporary agreement. A considerable number of our members will be spared from being put on unemployment compensation, says Veli-Pekka Säikkälä, IF Metall's Collective Bargaining Chief.

Currently 25 000 of the IF Metall members are unemployed, and further 40 000 have been given notice of the risk to lose their job. The development is dramatic – the threat is mass unemployment. Now some will get help to keep their work.

IF Metall and the employers' federations, Teknikarbetsgivarna (engineering employers), Metallgruppen (metal employers) and Industri- och kemigruppen (industry and chemical employers), reached a framework agreement on temporary layoffs and training. The agreement is valid until March 31, 2010 and has a three months' period of notice. To be valid, an arrangement has to be based on a local agreement between the employer and the union.

- If the national agreement is terminated, all the local agreements expire as well, says Veli-Pekka Säikkälä.

Under the agreement, a person to be laid off from work will always receive at least 80 per cent of the monthly wage plus unsocial hours bonus. A person working two-shift and temporarily laid off from the evening shift should have at the lowest 80 per cent of the salary received before, inclusive the unsocial hours bonus.

During the autumn and winter IF Metall has suggested several financial and training measures to the Conservative government, in order to survive through this critical situation. The proposals have led to no action.

- We have now reached an agreement in which our members are making a big contribution. But, then we also would like to see that the government makes some efforts and contributions by financing training. If employers send people home from work, they still have 80 per cent left to live on, says Veli-Pekka Säikkälä.

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