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## Why the EU?

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Are you interested in issues that concern  
your work and your daily life?

Then you are interested in EU issues.





The EU may feel complex and far away, but it is clearer and closer than people often realise. When we are at work, the EU influences our work environment, and when we buy food at the shop, the EU decides which additives may or may not be present in our food.

The EU brings us together. Previously, Europe's history has always been lined with war, and we are currently living in the longest ever period of continued peace. In the EU peace project, we focus on solving our problems using trade and cooperation, instead of using military might.

We are also linked to other European countries through the fight for international solidarity. In a time of heightened nationalism, this is something worth fighting for.

Right-wing parties have been successful in several elections across Europe in recent years. These are parties that readily claim to represent the interests of the workers, but when it comes down to the bottom line, they have repeatedly proven themselves closer to the employers than us industrial workers.

Money and businesses are moving across borders all over the world. That is why it is so important that the EU, through international law, is able to protect us industrial workers. We simply face common challenges that require common solutions.

IF Metall wants to see an EU that fights for your work environment and our trade union rights. Therefore, we take an interest in EU issues. Which kind of Europe do you want?



## We have influence

Decisions made in the EU have not always been positive for European workers, but in true trade union tradition, we will get involved and organise ourselves in order to influence the development. We do not always win when we are involved, but we always lose when we are not.

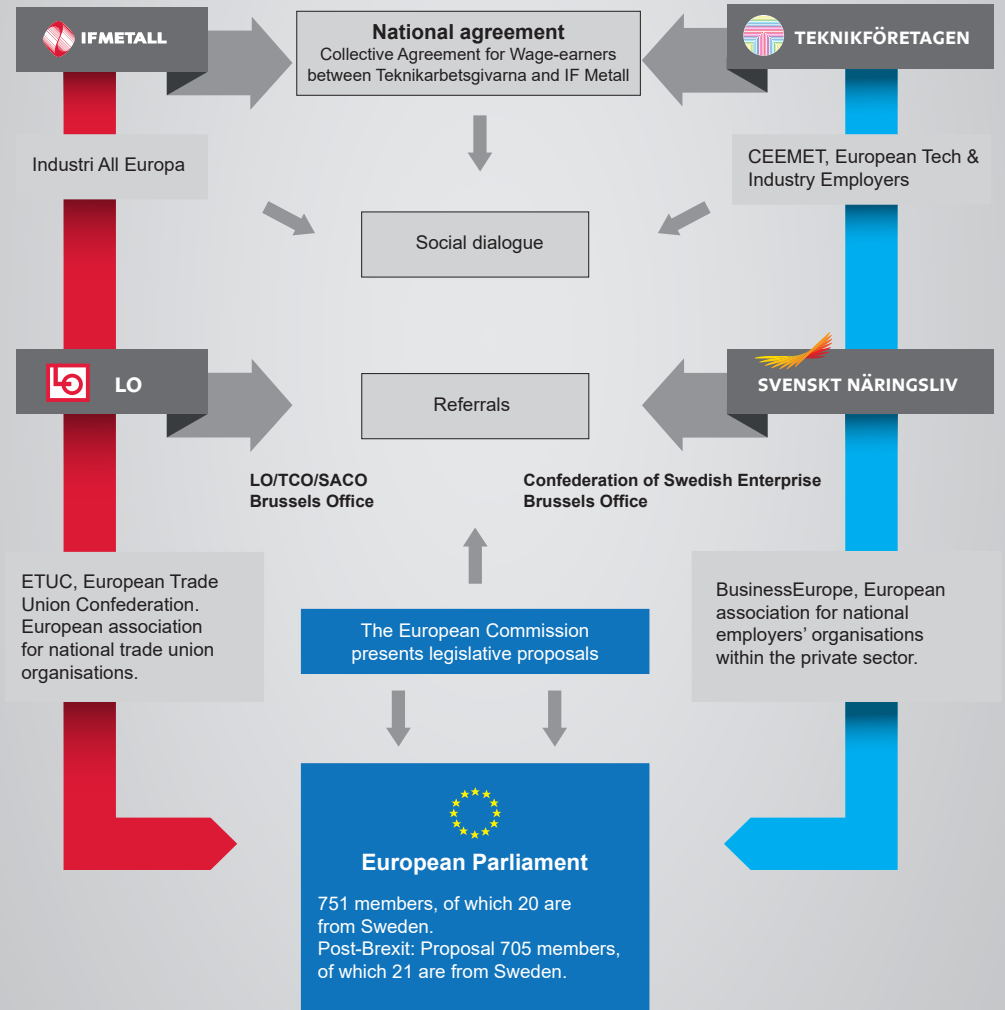
In order for IF Metall to be heard, we must engage and support those who fight for our cause. Otherwise, the interests of companies and capital will prevail.

In order to protect us workers and our trade union interests, we need to support European labour parties – the real social-democratic parties who actually cooperate with us and who listen to the opinions of trade unions. The right wing and the populists will never take the fight for us.

The Swedish Social Democratic Party are a small party in a European context, but are part of a larger party group along with other social democratic parties in the European Parliament. Together, they form an influential political block, and the larger that block becomes, the more room there will be for trade union issues in the EU.

IF Metall is also part of a larger international movement. Our European sister organisations are in the EU, and through them, we help both other European trade unions and ourselves to influence the conditions for workers here in Sweden, as well as abroad throughout Europe.

# Union-political influence in Europe



## **Together, we make Europe stronger.**

One common misconception is that in Sweden, we have such high standards for our labour law, our work environment and our collective agreements that we are not affected by the EU's minimum standards. But several of the EU directives have forced Sweden to strengthen workers' rights. Even when Swedish rules do not need to be changed, we are still indirectly affected, because when workers in other countries receive improved conditions, the risk of lower salaries and working conditions in Sweden decreases.

Here are some examples of how the EU directive has strengthened us industrial workers and our rights.

### **Workers are guaranteed salaries and pensions**

**If your employer is unable to pay your salary, for example prior to a forthcoming bankruptcy, this directive guarantees that you will receive the salary you are entitled to.**

### **The working environment should be safe**

**Sets requirements to ensure that your work and protective equipment is safe and that there are limit values for hazardous substances.**

### **Redundancy during parental leave**

**If you are on parental leave and are made redundant due to a shortage of work, the notice period does not begin until you return to work.**

### **Workers are protected upon transfer**

**If your workplace is taken over by another employer, you are entitled to keep your job.**

### **Right to influence**

**Your union organisation is entitled to collaboration, and the right to information and consultation with the management, in cases where a company has operations across several countries.**

### **Right to take breaks and rest**

**Sets requirements regarding your entitlement to daily rest and breaks.**



## People before the market

Human rights are at least as important as corporate rights. We industrial workers must be given improved security, both during and after work. The EU must put their foot down with countries that violate labour regulations and human rights.

The EU must improve social protection networks and reduce the gaps in society. The EU primary legislation requires stronger protection for trade union and social rights, such as protection against precarious forms of employment and our right to enter collective agreements.

Social and trade union rights have recently risen higher on the EU's political agenda. An active discussion surrounding ways to create a fairer Europe has begun, and the interest in placing more focus on justice issues is growing.

Work on what is known as the European Pillar of Social Rights is based on the insight that countries that prioritise welfare and justice on the labour market work better both politically and economically.

If we are active, we can use the EU parliamentary election to make a mark on the direction in which we want the EU to progress. The right-wing and extremist parties, such as SD, do not see the importance of this. Their unwillingness to support much-needed changes is a threat to the Swedish model in the long run.

This is not a matter of reshaping all countries according to the same form, but instead concerns putting people before the market. Because the EU takes greater responsibility for ensuring that union rights are respected throughout Europe, the risks of social dumping here in Sweden are also reduced.



## **The European Pillar of Social Rights will entail:**

### **Education and lifelong learning**

You shall be entitled to lifelong learning in order to be able to cope with changes in working life.

### **Active labour market measures**

You shall be entitled to personalised support to improve your opportunities for employment.

### **Workers' influence**

Employees shall be entitled to influence in the event of restructuring, transfer or merging of companies, as well as in collective redundancies.

### **Dialogue between the social partners**

The social partners (trade unions and employers) must have the right to enter collective agreements and these collective agreements must be respected.

### **A healthy and safe working environment**

All employees must be entitled to sound protection regarding health and safety at work. You must be entitled to a working environment in which you can work for a long time without becoming worn out.

**In the vote within the European Parliament regarding the social pillar, the Social Democratic Party, the Left Party, the Green Party and the Feminist Initiative voted yes. The Sweden Democrats, the Moderate Party, the Christian Democrats, the Liberal Party and the Centre Party voted no.**



## **Our jobs need the EU**

For centuries, Sweden has been linked to the outside world, especially to Europe.

IF Metall is in favour of free trade and the EU's single market, although we are not friends of free trade solely on principle. For us, free trade and the EU's single market are about creating and keeping industrial jobs in Sweden.

Few countries are as export-dependent as Sweden, as around two thirds of our exports go to the EU's single market. Exports create jobs for Sweden's industrial workers. Nothing is more significant to the Swedish welfare than trade with our European neighbours.

The fact that Sweden is part of the single market is also an important factor for companies to both want to start and maintain industrial production in Sweden.

The EU is a strong international force, both financially and politically. When the United States imposes tariffs on steel and aluminium and threatens additional duties on other industrial goods, it is the EU that stands up for us and protects our interests. Had Sweden tried to fight this battle alone, it would have been lost before it even began. Together we are strong.



**Would you like to know more or  
do you wish to get involved?**

Contact [valcentrum@ifmetall.se](mailto:valcentrum@ifmetall.se) so we can help you.

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