



Industrial relations and social dialogue
**Sweden: Working life in the
COVID-19 pandemic 2020**

Author: Anna-Karin Gustafsson and Amanda Kinnunen (Oxford Research)

Research Manager: Christine Aumayr-Pintar (Eurofound)

Eurofound reference number: WPEF21033

Related report: Eurofound (2020), COVID-19: Policy responses across Europe.

© European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (Eurofound), 2021
Reproduction is authorised provided the source is acknowledged.

For any use or reproduction of photos or other material that is not under the Eurofound copyright, permission must be sought directly from the copyright holders.

Any queries on copyright must be addressed in writing to: copyright@eurofound.europa.eu

Research carried out prior to the UK's withdrawal from the European Union on 31 January 2020, and published subsequently, may include data relating to the 28 EU Member States. Following this date, research only takes into account the 27 EU Member States (EU28 minus the UK), unless specified otherwise.

The European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (Eurofound) is a tripartite European Union Agency established in 1975. Its role is to provide knowledge in the area of social, employment and work-related policies according to Regulation (EU) 2019/127.

European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions

Telephone: (+353 1) 204 31 00

Email: information@eurofound.europa.eu

Web: www.eurofound.europa.eu

Contents

Introduction	1
Impacts of the pandemic on working life	2
Political context	4
Governments and social partners response to cushion the effect	5
How COVID-19 accelerated and disrupted working life policies and impacted social dialogue	8
Accelerated developments	8
Disrupted developments.....	8
Impacts on the social dialogue and collective bargaining.....	8
Other important policy developments	10
Labour disputes in the context of the pandemic.....	11
Major developments in working time regulation as a result of the pandemic	12
Legislation on working time	12
Collective bargaining on working time.....	12
Ongoing debates on working time	12
Impacts of the crisis on wages and wage setting	13
What is new in working life in the country?	14
References.....	15

Introduction

Although Sweden's economy was severely impacted by COVID-19, it seems Sweden may have fared better than many of its fellow EU Member States. In the European Commission's Economic Forecast (2020), Sweden is prognosed to be one of the countries set to lose the least in terms of GDP (-3.4% between 2020 and 2022). But while budgetary and financial support measures have softened the blow, the pandemic has still negatively affected both GDP and employment in Sweden.

Seasonally adjusted data published by Statistics Sweden indicates that the last quarter of 2020 saw an improvement in the outlook on the labour market compared with the third quarter. But the labour market remains subdued compared with the first quarter of 2020, before the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic had yet had any significant impact on the Swedish labour market (Statistics Sweden, 2021).

Compared to the first quarter, unemployment increased in absolute as well as relative terms in the fourth quarter, by 82,000 people and 1.4 percentage points (to 8.6%) respectively. For young people (aged 15-24) the number of unemployed persons increased by 16,000 and the unemployment rate increased by 3.5 percentage points. On the other hand, the labour force participation rate remained at the same level as in the first quarter of 2020, before any noticeable labour market effects of the pandemic. This means that the pandemic has not caused a significant number of people to leave the labour market.

Different sectors of the economy have been differently affected by the pandemic. Initially, the HORECA sector was hit the hardest, but other industries affected by the pandemic include commerce, manufacturing industry, transport, and the construction sector. Industries that require a physical presence for the business or services were hard hit by the restrictions that the pandemic entailed. But there are also industries that are doing better than usual during the pandemic, including food production, pharmacies and supplies and services connected to home renovation, as well as some parts of e-commerce.

In contrast to many other Member States, Sweden never imposed a lockdown in 2020. Thus far, the Swedish government has relied mainly on the public following official health recommendations voluntarily. However, it should be noted that the public reasoning for this from the government and relevant authorities has not been to cushion the financial blow of the pandemic, but rather, that a strict lockdown and the closing of schools is not seen as a sustainable way of limiting contagion and something which could instead have long-term detrimental effects on public health. This strategy has received both criticism and praise, nationally as well as internationally.

Impacts of the pandemic on working life

To capture the effects of the pandemic on working life, a number of COVID-19-related questions were added to the Swedish Labour Force Survey. In October, 32.7% of respondents aged 15–74 who were in work (employed or self-employed), worked from home during the reference week (Statistics Sweden, 2020a). But the extent of the remote work differed quite a lot between industries and different occupational groups. Of those surveyed in the HORECA sector, almost 93% answered that they did not work from home at all during July – September. The corresponding figure in the information and communication sector was just under 23%, where two thirds stated that they mainly worked from home. Additionally, it was more common for people with occupations that require university qualifications to work from home than for people in other occupational groups.

Table 1: Answers to the questions: *Right now, many people are working from home due to the corona pandemic. During [reference week], did you work at home (in whole or in part) because of corona?*

Month	More than half of the days (%)	Around half of the days (%)	Less than half of the days (%)	I usually work from home (%)	Did not work from home (%)	No answer (%)
May	21.8	3.9	4.9	5.5	63.6	0.4
June	19.4	4.1	4.6	5.2	66.5	0.3
July	14.2	2.8	2.9	6.6	73.0	0.4
August	13.7	3.2	3.6	7.3	71.9	0.3
September	15.1	4.4	5.8	6.0	68.4	0.3
October	15.3	4.2	6.1	7.0	67.2	0.1

Source: Statistics Sweden, Labour Force Survey 2020

Other questions added to the Labour Force Survey to capture the impact of COVID-19 dealt with effects on employment (Statistics Sweden, 2020b). The answers to these questions showed that 125,000 employed people aged 15–74 were absent during the whole reference week in November due to COVID-19. This means that among people who were absent during the entire reference week, 27.2% were absent due to COVID-19 (31.0% for men and 24.2% for women). Among self-employed persons and assisting household members, 42.7% felt that they had less work due to the pandemic, while 15.1% felt that they had more work.

In November 2020, there were 2,059,000 people aged 15–74 years outside the labour force. Among these, 82,000 people stated that they would have been able to work but had not sought work due to COVID-19.

In another study by the company *Great Place to Work*, 8,349 employees at 113 medium-sized Swedish organisations were surveyed in May-June of 2020 (Great Place to Work, 2020). The study found that younger employees experienced the most difficulties working remotely. Half of the people under the age of 25 stated that they worked less efficiently outside their regular workplace, which is in stark

contrast to, for example, the age group 45–54, where 8 out of 10 felt that they were as efficient when working remotely as in the office.

On the whole, 82% were satisfied with their changed working life. Most satisfied with their current working life were those over 45 years. They felt largely entrusted with carrying out their jobs as before and felt that they were treated fairly if they needed to take time off and that their management kept them informed about important issues.

Out of all the participants, 43% stated that they worked more than usual during the pandemic. Among these, 31% wished for more support from their organisation and 35% felt that their organisation did not actively encourage them to focus on their personal health and well-being.

Political context

The last general election was held in September 2018. Neither of the two major blocs secured a parliamentary majority and the result was a hung parliament. The left bloc, 'the Red-Green coalition', secured 144 seats, while the centre-right bloc, 'the Alliance coalition', secured 143. In addition, the nationalist anti-immigration party the Sweden Democrats secured 62 seats.

The red-green coalition led the transitional government as negotiations about the forming of a new government was held. Four months later, in mid-January 2019, the parliament finally approved a new government. The current government is made up of a Social Democratic and Green Party coalition. However, in order to secure a parliamentary majority, the Liberals and the Centre Party have participated in designing the political agenda for the years to come. The four-party negotiations resulted in the so called 'January Agreement', a 73-point policy plan that the government is in the process of implementing (Eurofound, 2018a, 2018b and 2018c).

Throughout the pandemic, the government has maintained a close dialogue with relevant expert government agencies on measures to counter the spread of the coronavirus. In early January 2021, Sweden's parliament voted in favour of a new pandemic law giving the government power to close certain businesses or limit visitor numbers and opening hours. A similar law in place over the summer expired without being used or extended, and the government has said this was too blunt a tool to be used effectively (The Local, 2021). The Swedish Prime Minister described the background for the new law, saying: "The Swedish corona strategy has always been a combination of tougher rules, prohibitions and, not the least, that people themselves assume great responsibility. [...] At the same time, it has been obvious that Sweden needs legislation that better hits the mark to handle COVID-19 and limit contagion." (Reuters, 2021)

Governments and social partners response to cushion the effect

Measures taken during the spring 2020

During the first months of the pandemic, many of the key policy measures taken by the Swedish government focused on making sure that **businesses stay afloat** despite the economic turbulence. Tax cuts for companiesⁱ and temporary reduction of employers' social security contributionsⁱⁱ were some of the first measures implemented by the Swedish government. These measures were available for all enterprises in the private sector. Rent support for companies in vulnerable sectors on the other hand was a targeted measure that supported entrepreneurs in HORECA, retail, and other sectors where the impact of the COVID-19 was immediate.ⁱⁱⁱ In addition, access to loans for businesses was significantly improved as the state increased the capacity of Almi (a state-owned provider business development support) and the Swedish Export Credit Corporation to provide loan and guarantee loans.^{iv}

However, the most significant measure was the introduction **of a temporarily strengthened short-time work allowance scheme**. As of 16 March 2020, it has been possible for Swedish employers affected by the COVID-19 crisis to reduce employees' working hours up to 60% or 80% (depending on the month) of working time and apply for financial support from the state.^v The measure has been widely used especially in professional, scientific and technical activities, trade and the HORECA sector (Swedish Agency for Economic and Regional Growth, 2021). The peak-level social partners welcomed the temporarily strengthened short-time work scheme. The social partners were also involved in the implementation of this measure in the sense that collective agreements have been updated accordingly.^{vi} In addition to measures that targeted businesses, the Government also introduced a range of measures that supported individuals who had been left without a job due to the crisis. Changes to the eligibility criteria for **unemployment allowance** and in particular, the earnings-based unemployment allowance were done in order to provide access to a wider range of job seekers. Some of the other central changes were increasing both the maximum and the minimum daily amount a job-seeker can receive. The duration of many of these temporary measures has been extended until 2021.^{vii}

Several changes to the regulation on sick leave were made by the Government in order to make sure that people can afford to stay at home if they experience any symptoms and thereby limit contagion. For instance, the obligation to show a doctor's certificate in case of sick leave is no longer necessary unless the leave is longer than two weeks.^{viii} The sick pay standard deduction (in Swedish '*karensavdrag*') – a 20% deduction of sick pay during the first week of absence – was removed in order to provide a stronger incentive for employees with symptoms to stay at home.^{ix} In order to lift the financial burden of increased sick leaves from employers, the Government first assumed the entire cost of all sick pays and later on continued to cover a higher part of the sick pay than it would in normal circumstances.^x Measures taken during the summer and fall 2020

While these earlier described changes provided well-needed support for both employers and employees during the first months of the COVID-19 crisis, in the summer of 2020 it became clear that new measures would be needed in order to help businesses get through the prolonged crisis.

During the summer and fall of 2020, **new forms of direct subsidies** for businesses were introduced:

- Turnover-based support for sole traders provides direct financial support for a group that had not been able to use many of the forms of support introduced during the very first months of the pandemic.^{xi}
- Reorientation support targets companies that need to adapt their business activity due to the COVID-19 crisis.^{xii}

Measures supporting recovery

In addition to the above-mentioned measures that mainly help enterprises and employees to get through the first stages of the crisis, the Government implemented several measures that aim at boosting recovery. Some examples of measures that help Sweden to recover from the crisis and meet the needs of the future labour market are:

- increased opportunities for further education through additional investments in vocational education; and
- providing people that have been unemployed for a long time and other groups that have weak connections to the labour market subsidised employment in the forest and nature conservation sector (Ministry of the Environment, 2020a). extension of Fossilfritt Sverige, a program that seeks to help Swedish enterprises to shift to a low-carbon economy, until 2024 (Ministry of the Environment, 2020b).

The role of the social partners

In Sweden, the social partners have a significant role in the design of policy measures affecting the labour market. Despite the tight timeframes and strong pressure to implement measures fast, the Government has continued to consult the social partners also during the COVID-19 crisis and several of the policies were indeed implemented entirely or partly through collective agreements, e.g. short-time work.

In general, the social partner organisations from both sides have welcomed the measures taken by the Government. Delays in the implementation process of the short-time work allowance scheme and also maximum decreases in working hours are among the topics that have raised criticism from both sides.^{xiii}

The social partners have also sought to cushion the effects of the pandemic through their own initiatives such as 'Suntarbetsliv', a bipartite project promoting sustainable working conditions, and restructuring organisations such as Trygghetsfonden, Trygghetsstiftelsen etc. These are bipartite measure aim to help individuals who have been laid off or who have been affected by a redundancy notice (i.e. before actual lay-off).^{xiv}

In a report by the industrial sector's economic council (IER, a group of economists representing both employer and employee organisations advising social partners in the industrial sector) the importance of the bipartite restructuring organisations was highlighted (IER, 2020). The authors stated that, thanks to the organisations, nine out of ten workers who lost their jobs were able to find new employment within seven to eight months. One of the authors, Professor Ola Bergström, pointed out that it is important to be able to redistribute the workforce and speed up that process so that those who lose their jobs in one part of the industry can be transferred to another, and that the restructuring organisations have been key actors in this (Bergström *in* Arbetsvärlden, 2020).

- ⁱ Eurofound (2020), [Tax cuts and deferrals for companies](#), case SE-2020-1/561 (measures in Sweden), COVID-19 EU PolicyWatch, Dublin.
- ⁱⁱ Eurofound (2020), [Temporary reduction of employers' social security contributions](#), case SE-2020-10/559 (measures in Sweden), COVID-19 EU PolicyWatch, Dublin.
- ⁱⁱⁱ Eurofound (2020), [Rent support for companies in vulnerable sectors](#), case SE-2020-14/567 (measures in Sweden), COVID-19 EU PolicyWatch, Dublin.
- ^{iv} Eurofound (2020), [Increased loan facilities and credit guarantees for Swedish businesses](#), case SE-2020-13/740 (measures in Sweden), COVID-19 EU PolicyWatch, Dublin.
- ^v Eurofound (2020), [Short-time work allowance](#), case SE-2020-12/564 (measures in Sweden), COVID-19 EU PolicyWatch, Dublin.
- ^{vi} *ibid*
- ^{vii} Eurofound (2020), [Temporary reinforcement of unemployment insurance](#), case SE-2020-16/557 (measures in Sweden), COVID-19 EU PolicyWatch, Dublin.
- ^{viii} Eurofound (2020), [Doctor's certificate no longer mandatory during the first two weeks of sick leave](#), case SE-2020-11/623 (measures in Sweden), COVID-19 EU PolicyWatch, Dublin.
- ^{ix} Eurofound (2020), [Sick pay standard reduction suspended - Encouraging employees to stay home](#), case SE-2020-11/566 (measures in Sweden), COVID-19 EU PolicyWatch, Dublin.
- ^x Eurofound (2020), [Central government assumes sick pay responsibility](#), case SE-2020-14/562 (measures in Sweden), COVID-19 EU PolicyWatch, Dublin.
- ^{xi} Eurofound (2020), [Turnover-based support for sole traders](#), case SE-2020-46/1409 (measures in Sweden), COVID-19 EU PolicyWatch, Dublin.
- ^{xii} Eurofound (2020), [Reorientation support for companies](#), case SE-2020-27/1257 (measures in Sweden), COVID-19 EU PolicyWatch, Dublin.
- ^{xiii} Eurofound (2020), [Short-time work allowance](#), case SE-2020-12/564 (measures in Sweden), COVID-19 EU PolicyWatch, Dublin.
- ^{xiv} Eurofound (2020), [Trygghetsfonden - Competences for work](#), case SE-2017-5/1145 (measures in Sweden), COVID-19 EU PolicyWatch, Dublin.

How COVID-19 accelerated and disrupted working life policies and impacted social dialogue

Accelerated developments

The short-time work allowance system was first introduced in Sweden in 2014, in the aftermath of the financial crisis of 2008. The system that was then introduced could only be activated in the event of a particularly deep recession. Another requirement for activation was that the allowance does not impede structural change in the economy. In other words, in comparison to many other European countries with permanent schemes, the Swedish short-time work allowance system was much more rigid. This has been identified by a variety of actors as a disadvantage for the Swedish economy (SOU 2018:66) and it has been criticised by the social partners for focusing on aggregate level of economy instead taking into consideration the sector-specific differences.

There have been active plans to renew the Swedish short-time work allowance system. (In fact, it was a part of the so-called January Agreement of 2019 (in Swedish 'Januariavtalet') between the Social Democrats, the Swedish Green party the Center Party, and the Liberals – the agreement outlining the policy direction for the current government period.) However, the process of passing a new law on short-time work allowance moved slowly (Dagens Nyheter, 2020). The outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic changed this, and the new system was put in place April 2020 and was applied retroactively as of 16 March 2020. The key difference between this complementary system and the one that was introduced in 2014 is that individual employers who have been affected by temporary and severe economic challenges they could not foresee or avoid, can receive allowance for short-time work.

With time, the severity of the COVID-19 pandemic and its rapid impact on the labour market required more powerful measures than what was in the scope of the new permanent short-time work allowance system. Therefore, the Government proposed a temporary reinforcement of the short-time work system to the Parliament on 15 April 2020 and on 27 May 2020. The reinforced system is in force between 16 March 2020 and 31 December 2020 and includes the government covering 72% of the costs rather than 33%.

Disrupted developments

No delays or disruptions of significant working life-related policies have been identified.

Impacts on the social dialogue and collective bargaining

Bargaining rounds in Sweden – where a majority of Swedish collective agreements expire and are renegotiated – generally take place in three-year intervals. The last major bargaining round took place in 2017 and thus the next one was scheduled for the spring of 2020. The idea is that new agreements should be in place before the old ones expire, which they did at end of March. However, at that point the coronavirus was spreading quickly in Europe and the level of uncertainty – both from public health and economic perspectives – made bargaining impossible. Thus, all parties agreed to prolong the agreements to end of October and the negotiations were paused and set to be resumed in the autumn.

The uncertainty has also affected employees, which is clear from the spike in trade union membership. Part of the explanation is that the unions are a negotiating party in the event of redundancies but also

in matters related to short-time work and restructuring agreements and support. Most unions also have an income insurance as an important complement to the unemployment insurance fund. Additionally, unions offer support, negotiations and legal aid in the event of disputes between employees and employers. This issue may well be a higher priority during a crisis or recession as it is not as easy to simply change jobs. In total, the number of members in the unions increased during March and April by around 58,000 (Kjellberg, 2020).

Other important policy developments

The main working-life policy development in 2020 not directly connected to the pandemic was the negotiations on employment protection and restructuring support. According to the Employment Protection Act (1982:80), an employer who wants to terminate the employment of an employee must be able to show objectively justifiable reasons for the termination, either due to redundancy or due to personal reasons. Employers have long felt that these restrictions are too harsh, wanting a more flexible system. Trade unions have warned this would weaken employment security.

As part of the new collaboration with two liberal parties, the current government (the Social-Democrat and Green Party coalition) agreed to commission an inquiry into how the Employment Protection Act should be reformed, the results of which were shared in June (SOU 2020:30). Two of the most significant proposed changes were that all companies would be allowed to exempt up to five employees from the 'last in, first out' rule during any round of layoffs, and that it would not be possible for any dismissal from a small company (up to 15 employees) to be declared invalid.

The centre-right parties and organisations representing employers were largely satisfied with these proposals, while trade unions and left-of-centre parties, including the ruling Social Democrats, were critical. However, commissioning the inquiry was also a way for the government to put pressure on the social partners to reach a bipartite agreement – generally seen as the more favourable option. Bipartite negotiations between the social partners were going on or most of the autumn with the aim of reaching a bipartite agreement that would then lay the foundation for any legislative reform.

But in mid-October, The Swedish Trade Union Confederation (LO) left the negotiating table. In the months following, the Confederation of Swedish Enterprise and the Council for Negotiation and Cooperation (PTK) (which represents white collar trade unions) agreed to move ahead with the agreement anyway. In this process, two LO unions – the Metal Workers' Union and the Municipal Workers Union – chose to join the bipartite agreement (Svenskt Näringsliv, PTK, IF Metall and Kommunal, 2020). They did so without the support of their confederation, although it should be pointed out that their members together make up more than half of the confederation's members in total.

The government is now in the process of drafting a policy based on the agreement, both on employment protection legislation and restructuring support. The issue has been politically very sensitive as employment protection regulation is generally seen as the domain of the social partners, and political intervention seen critically. On the side of the social partners, the matter has caused a severe rift between the LO unions as many are very disappointed with the "betrayal" by the municipal and metal workers' unions.

Labour disputes in the context of the pandemic

No working days were lost due to industrial action (on the central level) in 2020 (National Mediation Office, 2021). There were, however, a number of conflict notices issued, which is to be expected during a bargaining round. But all disputes were settled through the signing of new agreements before any strikes, blockades or lockouts broke out.

Perhaps the most heated disputes were in sectors like HORECA and commerce. The social partners finding it difficult to reach an agreement there is not surprising as both sectors have a large share of the employees with low wages, which the Swedish Trade Union Confederation (LO) fought to raise.

All in all, the fact that no days were lost to conflict despite 2020 being a year when a bargaining round took place, not to mention with the added challenge of doing it in an ongoing pandemic, could be seen as a testament of strength of the Swedish bargaining model.

Major developments in working time regulation as a result of the pandemic

Legislation on working time

No significant changes in legislation on working time have been identified.

Collective bargaining on working time

Crisis agreements (sometimes called crisis clauses) are based on collective bargaining and can be activated in a crisis to allow for derogations for the Working Hours Act (1982:673). Such agreements have been activated by Swedish employer organisations during the pandemic, primarily for the hospitals, but also in other sectors put under increased strain due to COVID-19.

In the healthcare sector, the crisis agreement which (primarily) covers nurses entails longer working hours but higher wages (Aftonbladet, 2020):

- In addition to monthly or hourly salary, a crisis allowance of 120% of the salary per hour is paid. This means a total compensation of 220% of the salary per hour. The crisis compensation is increased to 150% of the salary per hour when taking special emergency overtime.
- The Working Hours Act has been replaced by provisions in the collective agreement that are specially adapted based on the crisis situation.
- The regular working time raised to 48 hours per week during a period of a maximum of four weeks.
- A special emergency overtime can be taken in addition to the regular working hours.
- Adapted rules for daily and weekly rest, whereby breaks can be exchanged for meal breaks. The aim should be that the continuous daily rest does not fall below an average of nine hours and that the continuous weekly rest does not fall below 24 hours.

Ongoing debates on working time

No significant debates on working time have been identified.

Impacts of the crisis on wages and wage setting

Due to the great deal of uncertainty characterising the first quarter of 2020, the wage bargaining round scheduled for the first few months of 2020 was postponed. Once negotiations resumed in the autumn, the lingering general uncertainty regarding economic outlook continued to pose a problem for the social partners. The trade unions and employer organisations respective initial points of departures in the negotiations were further than normal apart in terms of if and how large wage increases would be possible in order to maintaining competitiveness. The fact that sectors were hit differently was also an issue. The manufacturing industry, where the wage norm is set, did comparatively well, meaning that once the Industrial Agreement and thereby the benchmark for wage increases in other sectors was set (5.4%), other industries that were worse off, such as large parts of the service industries, expressed deep concern that the wage norm had been set far too high (Koskinen, 2020).

At the time of writing, all collective agreements are not yet finalised. But all agreements signed in 2020 met the wage increase mark set by the industrial sector.

What is new in working life in the country?

The increase in telework is likely the most significant change to Swedish daily working life. While many will likely go back to their offices once the pandemic is over, it seems many have found that combining work and private life has become easier when the five days a week commute was required. In a recent survey with 700 Swedish employers with more than 50 employees, the companies' HR managers estimate that 16% of their employees will continue to work from home (full or part time) after the pandemic is over (Dagens PS, 2020). In Stockholm, where currently around half of all employees work from home, the trend is even more pronounced with 29% estimated to keep working from home.

A second substantial change, not yet implemented, but set to become so shortly, is the reformation of the employment protection regulations as agreed upon by, not all, but a large number of Swedish social partner organisations (Svenskt Näringsliv, PTK, IF Metall and Kommunal, 2020). Key points in the agreement include:

- Only twelve months' employment will be required before temporary employment is transformed into a permanent employment.
- Employers' opportunities to reduce an employee's working hours without their consent will be limited.
- The right to further education and skills for employees is strengthened.
- The parties agree to investigate a collectively agreed unemployment insurance who guarantee employees at least 80 percent of the salary.
- Employers have the right to make exceptions to the rules of priority ('last-in-first-out') in the event of dismissal for three employees, regardless of the company's size.
- The term 'factual grounds for personal reasons' in the event of termination is replaced by 'factual reasons' (correspondent's translation). Factual reasons include whether the employee has seriously violated the employment contract through, for example, refusal to work, difficulties in working together, abuse or crime.
- The employer must continue to offer support measures, give a warning and offer relocation before an employee can be dismissed. However, if the employer has offered a relocation and there are still objective reasons for dismissal, there is no obligation to offer a new relocation.

References

All Eurofound publications are available at www.eurofound.europa.eu

All cases related to Eurofound's COVID-19 EU PolicyWatch database can be found at <https://www.eurofound.europa.eu/data/covid-19-eu-policywatch>

Aftonbladet (2020) 'Krisavtal i vården i jul', 23 December.

Arbetsvärlden (2020), 'Staten och partsmodellen har hjälpt industrin hantera krisen', 11 December.

Dagens PS (2020), 'Ny undersökning: Hemarbetet här för att stanna', 8 January.

Dagens Nyheter (2020) 'Möjligt med snabbt stöd för företag – om coronakrisen förvärras', 28 February.

Eurofound (2018a), 'Sweden: Latest working life developments – Q1 2018'.

Eurofound (2018b), 'Sweden: Latest working life developments – Q2 2018'.

Eurofound (2018c), 'Sweden: Latest working life developments – Q3 2018'.

European Commission (2020), 'European Economic Forecast', Institutional Paper 136, November 2020.

Great Place to Work (2020), 'Så har arbetslivet påverkats under coronapandemin – Den största svenska studien om svenskarnas arbetstillvaro under Covid-19'.

Industrins Ekonomiska Råd (2020), 'Industrin och pandemin', December 2020.

Kjellberg, A. (2020), 'Facklig medlemstillströmning under coronapandemin', *Nio - Fem Tidskrift om arbetsliv & profession*, Vol. 3, No. 2, p. 12-15.

Koskinen, S. (2020), 'Almega starkt kritiska till Industriparternas uppgörelse', *Almega*.

Reuters (2021) 'Sweden tightens COVID rules, but still no lockdown' 8 January.

SOU 2018:116 'Ett mer konkurrenskraftigt system för stöd till korttidsarbete', Delbetänkande av utredningen om ett mer konkurrenskraftigt system för stöd vid korttidsarbete, Stockholm, Sweden.

SOU 2020:30 'En moderniserad arbetsrätt', Betänkande av Utredningen om en moderniserad arbetsrätt', Stockholm, Sweden.

Statistics Sweden (2021), 'Some recovery on the labour market in the fourth quarter 2020', Statistical news from Statistics Sweden, 9 February.

Statistics Sweden (2020a), 'En av tre jobbar hemifrån', Press release, 16 November.

Statistics Sweden (2020b), 'Labour market remains subdued', Statistical news from Statistics Sweden, 17 December.

Svenskt Näringsliv, PTK, IF Metall and Kommunal (2020), 'Överenskommelse om trygghet, omställning och anställningsskydd på den svenska arbetsmarknaden'.

The Local (2021), 'Swedish parliament gives green light to new pandemic law', 8 January.

The Swedish Agency for Economic and Regional Growth (2021), '[Statistik om korttidsarbete](#)'.

The Swedish National Mediation Office (2021) 'Varsel, medling & stridsåtgärder 2020-2021'

The European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (Eurofound) is a tripartite European Union Agency established in 1975. Its role is to provide knowledge in the area of social, employment and work-related policies according to Regulation (EU) 2019/127.