

HK Norway

- The Norwegian trade Union of commerce and office employees

Effects of the pandemic

It is important to address the pandemic and how this have effected employees in commerce the last two years. All those who have been at the forefront in grocery at risk of bringing infection home, those who have been laid off for several short and long periods and those who even lost their jobs in retail.

Fortunately many of the employees in retail got their job back, on the other hand employees that got fulltime-jobs during the pandemic, lost hours and returned to part-time job.

Cross-border trade

Cross-border trade with Sweden is a challenge for employment and turnover in Norwegian supermarkets close to the border to Sweden. Norwegians shop for about NOK 16 billion a year. During the pandemic with closed borders, the turnover in Norwegian supermarkets increased by about 10 percent and employment by about 3 –4 000 employees. Now that the borders have been reopened, Norwegians are again travelling across the border to Sweden to shop for groceries, cigarettes and alcohol. The consequences are that the employment is decreasing on the Norwegian side of the border and the fact that several employees loses hours and is forced back into a part-time job.

Part-time job and equal pay

Retail trade is a major industry in Norway and employs approximately 350 000 employees, about 150 000 women and 200 000 men. But twice as many women than men work part-time, and not because they chose to do so. This also means that women earn less than men, and is a development we need to change.

In the last two years, there have been amendments to the collective agreements and Working Environment Act that strengthen part-time employees' right to increase their job percentage and full-time employment. This also has an impact on women's wages. We have been working on this for many years, and finally we've had an impact.

Election for the parliament in September 2021

In September 2021 the Social Democrats together with Socialist Left Party and Center won the majority of the seats in Parliament, and the nonsocialist government was replaced with a minority government consisting of the Labor Party and the Center Party. This is important for the workers rights, and has already secured a better pension, increased deductions for the union fee, strengthened the right to full-time og strengthened the work for an organized and safe working life.

HK Norway 36th Ordinary Congress in October 2021

Due to the pandemic HK Norway had to postpone the congress from autumn 2020 to autumn 2021. Never the less it was a good congress with constructive debates and resolutions on important issues, such as a better pension, better working hours regulations, a salary to live on, Sunday as a day off for as many people as possible, joint efforts for climate and the environment and solidarity with our union comrades who encounter war and conflict.

The war in our backyard

When we thought we were more or less back to normal, the war in the heart of Europe started. Putins war against the Ukrainian people have already taken thousands of innocent lives, and we don't know yet where this will end. The war in our backyard effects us in many ways. The rates on energy has gone up, rates on food has gone up, prices on fuel is rising and house prices continue to go up.

Collective bargaining mars - may 2022

After to years of pandemic, the war in our backyard and the rates going up, it was important for us to ensure employees' pay and working conditions. The result of this year's negotiations for the employees in commerce was increased purchasing power and full pay during illness for three months at least. It was an important victory for us, and only the beginning of the journey for full pay during illness and parental leave.

Membership development December 2019 - April 2022

Despite the pandemic or perhaps rather because of it, the number of members has increased over the past two years. We know that in crisis, employees needs assurance, and joins the union. HK in Norway has since December 2019 and to this day increased by almost 6 000 members. We are close to 80 000 members in total, about 56 000 members works in the service sector.