

# Collective agreement coverage and the labour market organisations 2024



SWEDISH NATIONAL  
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## **Collective agreement coverage and the labour market organisations 2024**

This is a translation of the introduction and summary of the report  
"Kollektivavtalstäckning och arbetsmarknadens organisationer 2024"

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# 1 Introduction

Collective agreements are the cornerstone of the Swedish labour market model. These agreements set out the wages and working conditions negotiated between trade unions and employers' organisations for the coming agreement period. Through the negotiated provisions in the agreements, the parties in the Swedish labour market can regulate conditions that in many other countries are regulated through legislation. In Sweden, a significant proportion of labour law is instead dispositive in favour of collective agreements, and the ambition is for the State to stay out of matters relating to collective agreements and their application to the greatest extent possible. The model also enables the parties to find industry-specific solutions to various issues in different areas of the agreement without this affecting other areas.

A prerequisite for the model to work is that as much of the labour market as possible is covered by collective agreements, which is why collective agreement coverage is a key measure in this context. This report therefore presents statistics on collective agreement coverage in Sweden – both how high it is at an aggregate level and broken down into groups such as industries, occupational groups, etc. As all public sector employees in Sweden are covered by collective agreements, the report largely focuses on the coverage rate in the private sector. A company usually becomes bound by a collective agreement through membership in an employers' organisation, but companies that are not members of an employers' organisation can sign a substitute agreement with the relevant trade union. Through this, the company is bound to the collective agreement in the same way as if they were a member of that employers' organisation. The report includes statistics on the number of substitute agreements signed by various trade unions in 2024.

The legitimacy of the model is also based on the labour market parties, i.e. those who sign the agreements, representing as many employees and employers as possible. The unionisation rate should therefore be high for both employers and employees. The report contains a chapter on the unionisation rate among employees, focusing on differences in the union membership rate of employees in blue-collar versus white-collar occupations and of employees born in Sweden versus those born abroad.

There are just over 100 central parties on the Swedish labour market. Of these, employers' organisations and trade unions each account for about half. The report shows which organisations exist in the parties of the model, how many members and employees the various organisations have, which collective bargaining cartels exist, and which trade unions are included in the various central organisations and which are outside of these.

## 2 Summary

In 2024, 88 percent of all employees aged 18–68 were covered by a collective agreement. This proportion is unchanged compared to 2023, and measurements show that the collective agreement coverage rate has remained stable around this level in recent decades.

As all public sector employees are covered by a collective agreement, those not covered work exclusively in the private sector. In this sector, 82 percent of employees were covered by a collective agreement in 2024. In total, approximately 560,000 employees were not covered by any collective agreement in 2024. Of these, around 215,000 were women and 345,000 were men.

Employees in blue-collar occupations are covered by a collective agreement to a greater extent than those in white-collar occupations. Approximately 89 percent of blue-collar workers and 75 percent of white-collar workers in the private sector were covered by a collective agreement in 2024. This means that employees in blue-collar occupations have a higher rate of collective agreement coverage than managerial and other white-collar occupations.

Collective agreement coverage is highest in public administration, but it is also high in other industries in which a very large proportion of the employees work in the public sector. The coverage rate was just shy of 100 percent in the sectors “Education”, “Arts, entertainment, recreation and other service activities” and “Human health and social work activities”. Industry also had a high coverage rate in 2024, with 95 percent of employees covered by a collective agreement.

In the private sector, collective agreement coverage correlates with company size. In micro enterprises, i.e. companies with fewer than ten employees, 44 percent of employees were covered by a collective agreement in 2024. The coverage rate then successively increases as the size of the company increases. In the largest size class, i.e. companies with at least 500 employees, the coverage rate was 98 percent in 2024. Just over half of those not covered by any collective agreement in 2024 worked in a company with fewer than ten employees.

About 66 percent of employees were a member of a trade union in 2024, but the difference in unionisation rate between blue-collar workers and white-collar workers has increased. In 2006, 77 percent of both blue-collar and white-collar workers were members of a union. The union membership rate of blue-collar workers in particular has declined since then, amounting to 54 percent in 2024. There was a much smaller decline among white-collar workers, from 77 percent in 2006 to 73 percent in 2024.

Employees in blue-collar occupations are thus covered by collective agreement to a greater extent than those in white-collar occupations, but at the same time have a lower rate of union membership than white-collar workers.

A union membership rate of 66 percent means that there were approximately 1.6 million employees who were not a member of any trade union in 2024. Of these, around 900,000 were men and 700,000 were women.

The unionisation rate is lower among those with fixed-term contracts compared to permanent employees. It is also lower among part-time workers compared to those working full-time. Immigrants are less likely to join a trade union than workers born in Sweden.

At the end of 2024, the Confederation of Swedish Enterprise had 60,000 member companies, representing a total of 2 million employees. Compared to 2023, the number of member companies decreased by 1.6 percent, while the number of employees in them increased by 4.1 percent.

The number of professionally active members in LO decreased by 1.8 percent in 2024, while TCO saw an increase of 1.3 percent and Saco an increase of 1.4 percent. Overall, the number of professionally active members of the three central organisations increased slightly and, if the increase in Ledarna is added to this, the number of professionally active trade union members has increased by 4,700 compared to 2023.



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