

30 Efling Members Graduate from Vocational Training in Kitchen and Canteen Work



The course is part of a successful collaboration between Efling and MK



It is safe to say that a feast was served



Part of the Efling board attended the graduation



Food from the members' countries of origin were prepared

Thirty Efling members graduated on Monday, May 4, from Vocational Course III in kitchen and canteen work at Menntaskólinn í Kópavogi (MK). The course is part of a successful, long-standing collaboration between Efling and MK that has given numerous members the opportunity to enhance their knowledge, strengthen their position in the labor market, and lay the foundation for further studies.

A special touch was added to the graduation as the students themselves handled the catering. They prepared main courses and desserts from their respective countries of origin, offering

guests diverse, elegant, and personal refreshments.

Efling and MK have offered three vocational courses of this kind, and most of the graduating students had now completed all three. Many did this alongside full-time work and family life, which demonstrates the great diligence and ambition of the group. Five students from the graduating group have already registered for continuing culinary studies.

The vocational courses are intended for staff working in cooking or service in kitchens and canteens. The program is fully paid for by Efling and combines

practical and theoretical instruction that is directly applicable on the job. In Vocational Course III, special emphasis is placed on menu creation, vegan cooking, and cooking for people with allergies and intolerances.

The teaching takes place in Icelandic with robust language support and an emphasis on job-related vocabulary. In this way, participants strengthen both their professional skills and their knowledge of Icelandic in a real-world context.

Efling sincerely congratulates its members on their excellent achievements.

Efling's Work Featured in UNI Global Report



Efling's members are a diverse and powerful group

A recent UNI Global report on care workers specifically discusses Efling's organizing work. The chapter on Efling is based, among other things, on an interview with Viðar Þorsteinsson, the union's Director of Education and Social Affairs, who describes the development that has taken place in organizing work, member participation, and the struggle for improved conditions for care workers.

The report notes that Efling has about 27,000 members in the capital area and in two neighboring municipal-

ities. It also states that nearly 60% of the members are of foreign origin. This proportion is particularly high in care work: at the end of 2025, 46% of Efling's members in nursing homes were of foreign origin, and 35% of members in preschools.

UNI Global traces how, since 2018, Efling has placed increased emphasis on women's low-wage jobs, workplace organizing, and member participation in the labor struggle. Nursing homes are specifically discussed, where staff experience heavy workloads, under-

staffing, and limited recognition of the responsibility and emotional strain of the job.

In the interview, Viðar points out that the number of Union Representatives at Efling has increased significantly. The report also covers the participation of members in nursing homes during the last collective bargaining negotiations, where Efling built an active staff negotiating committee from multiple workplaces. The report quotes Viðar saying that it is a victory in itself when members participate in collective bargaining, but an even greater victory when that participation results in real improvements in terms and conditions.

UNI Global also discusses how Efling has emphasized the genuine participation of immigrants, including through interpretation, the use of English at meetings, and having a diverse group of active members. Thus, Efling appears in the report as an example of a labor union that builds its strength on the active participation of its members, women, and immigrants in the struggle for improved wages and rights.

Efling Supports the Harm Reduction Work of the Matthildur Association



Sólveig Anna Jónsdóttir, Chairman of Efling, alongside the Chairman of Matthildur, Svala Ragnheiðar-Jóhannesdóttir

The board of Efling has agreed to grant Matthildur, a harm reduction organization, 1.7 million ISK. The grant goes toward the organization's

essential services for people struggling with substance abuse, poverty, and difficult social conditions.

The Matthildur Association was founded in 2022 and places special emphasis on harm reduction services at the earlier stages of substance abuse. The goal of harm reduction is to support people in staying alive, protecting their physical and mental health, and empowering them in small but important steps toward recovery and positive changes.

The organization operates the service Reykur, which is provided free of charge to clients. During the period from February 4, 2025, to January 31, 2026, Reykur provided services to 235 individuals for a total of 1,100 visits. About a quarter of the clients are active in the labor market, and some of them are Efling members.

The need for such services has grown significantly. The opioid crisis has been escalating for nearly the last fifteen years, and issues related to cocaine, crack, and methamphetamine smoking have also increased steadily over the last decade.

For many, Reykur is the first point of contact for assistance. There, people receive support, follow-up, and connections to social and healthcare services. The Matthildur Association has assisted people in accessing substance abuse treatment, opioid substitution therapy, and appropriate social services. By doing so, the organization helps people achieve recovery, maintain housing, improve mental health, and remain in the labor market.

Efling Declares Support for Norwegian Colleagues in Strike Actions



Solidarity is prominent among our Norwegian colleagues in the Norwegian Union of General Workers (Norsk Arbeidsmandsforbund)

At its meeting on May 13, the board of the Efling union approved a statement of support for the strike actions of Norwegian colleagues in the cleaning sector within the sister union *Norsk Arbeidsmandsforbund* (NAF). In the statement, fighting and solidarity greetings are sent to colleagues in Norway.

The statement reads as follows:

The board of Efling sends its fighting greetings and declares full support for the strike actions of workers in the Norwegian cleaning sector under the leadership of our sister union NAF. The members of Efling know the courage and the massive amount of work required to organize a successful

strike. The board is also well aware of the necessity of improving the wages and conditions of workers in the cleaning sector globally, including in Iceland and Norway. Efling believes in the power of solidarity and wishes our co-workers in Norway the best of success in their struggle.

The Economy Stuck in Stagnation Until 2028?



A construction worker on the job

In an article on Efling's website, Stefán Ólafsson, professor emeritus and expert at Efling, warns that the Central Bank's high-interest policy is trapping the Icelandic economy in stagnation.

The Central Bank has kept interest rates high in the hope of bringing down inflation. Stefán points out, however, that this measure primarily hurts indebted households and businesses, without adequately addressing the

main roots of inflation. He mentions, among other things, foreign price increases, housing costs, the demand of high-income and low-debt groups, and the impact of mass tourism.

In the article, Stefán refers to the recent economic forecast by Landsbankinn for the years 2026 to 2028, which projects only 1.6 to 1.8% economic growth per year. Since population growth will likely exceed

economic growth, this means that economic growth per capita will be negative. In Stefán's estimation, this indicates that the economy has entered a period of stagnation that could last until 2028.

Stefán criticizes relying almost exclusively on high interest rates and balanced budgets to bring down inflation. He calls for more direct and targeted government actions, including in the housing market, the financial market, and through the tax system. He also points to Efling's proposals for a rent brake as an example of actions that could quickly curb inflation.

According to Stefán, it is time for fundamental changes in economic management if prolonged stagnation of the Icelandic economy is to be averted.

The article can be read in its entirety by following the QR code.



Union representative of the month: - Anibal Eduardo Hernandez



Anibal is Eflings' Union rep at Coca Cola Eur.Partn. Ísland ehf

What do you enjoy doing outside of work to recharge your batteries?

Outside of work I usually like to just chill and play video games. It's a good way for me to relax and switch my brain off for a while.

What's the most important thing in terms of organizing and mobilizing a workplace?

I think the most important thing is that people stand together and actually communicate with each other. If coworkers support one another, it's much easier to organize and make changes happen.

Considering the warnings at the Efling Annual General Meeting about a tougher economic situation this autumn, what do you think are the main concerns or demands of the staff at your workplace

regarding wages and working conditions?

I think a lot of people are concerned about prices going up while wages don't always keep up. At my workplace people also talk a lot about fair treatment, better schedules, and having less stress at work.

What has surprised you the most, or been the most rewarding, about taking on the role of union representative?

What surprised me the most is how much people appreciate having someone who listens to them and speaks up for them. The best part has been helping coworkers feel like their opinions matter.

Summer is finally here – does the atmosphere at the workplace change, or

how people spend their free time during this season?

Yeah, the atmosphere changes a bit in summer. People seem more relaxed and happier, especially when the weather is good. A lot of people spend more time outside or with friends and family after work.

If you had to encourage one colleague to step up and actively participate in the labor struggle, what would you say to them?

I would probably tell them that being involved is important because nothing changes if nobody speaks up. Even just showing support and participating a little can make a big difference over time.