

Collective Agreements Remain in Place – Pay Rises Secured



From the meeting of Efling's Delegate Council on October 7th

Efling's Delegate Council unanimously approved keeping the collective agreements in force. Pay rises have been secured, and the government has pledged action on workers' rights issues that Efling has fought for over many years.

At its meeting on October 7, Efling's Delegate Council approved an agreement to keep the union's collective agreements with the Confederation of Icelandic Enterprise (SA) in force until the end of 2027. The agreement had been signed the previous day by Sólveig Anna Jónsdóttir, Chairperson of Efling, alongside the leadership of the Federation of General and Special Workers in Iceland (SGS) and Samiðn.

The decision followed an assessment of workers' circumstances, rising unemployment, and the progress achieved in negotiations with the government.

Pay Rises in January

In January 2027, the final negotiated pay rise under the collective agreements signed in 2024 will take effect. Workers paid according to collectively agreed wage scales will receive a 4.99% increase. Under Efling's general agreement with SA, other contractual wages will rise by 3.5%, or a minimum of ISK 23,750.

Had the agreements been terminated, these pay rises would have had to be negotiated again, bringing uncertainty and the possibility of industrial disputes.

At the same time, unemployment has been rising, particularly among migrant workers. In these circumstances, it is important to protect the gains already achieved and ensure that workers' conditions continue to improve.

Progress in the Fight for Workers' Rights

However, pay rises were not the only factor behind the decision.

For years, Efling has demanded stronger protection against wage theft, greater security for tenants, and more affordable housing for low-income workers. The government has now announced measures addressing these demands.

Of particular importance is a proposed bill introducing penalty payments for violations of minimum employment terms, which is to be presented no later than the spring parliamentary session of 2027. The legislation would give individual workers the right to penalty payments when employers fail to provide the minimum wages and conditions to which they are entitled.

Efling has campaigned for such penalties since 2019. Stronger action against wage theft was also among the resolutions adopted at the Efling Congress in February.

A new report from the Icelandic Confederation of Labour (ASÍ) highlights the urgency of this issue. In 2025, ASÍ-affiliated unions filed 863 general wage claims on behalf of their members, amounting to nearly ISK 729 million. The average claim was approximately ISK 845,000. More than half of these claims concerned workers with foreign citizenship.

And these are only the cases that reach the trade unions. Many violations are never reported.

The Struggle Continues

Other measures announced by the government include rent controls, increased construction of affordable housing, and adjustments to child benefits. The government has also made commitments to limit increases in public fees and charges.

These measures are of great importance to Efling members. Living standards depend not only on what appears on a payslip, but also on housing costs, the cost of living, and the security people enjoy in their daily lives.

But promises alone are not enough. The proposed legislative changes must be implemented and deliver real benefits for working people.

The decision to keep the collective agreements in force does not mean easing up in the struggle for better conditions. It is about defending the rights already won and pushing forward wherever opportunities arise.

The struggle for better wages and conditions continues – in our workplaces, within our union, and in our dealings with the government.



Sendinefnd Eflingar á 47. þingi ASÍ

Efling Members Attend the 47th Congress

The 47th Congress of the Icelandic Confederation of Labour (ASÍ) took place from 14 to 16 October under the theme “The Future of Work and Workers’ Struggles”. A total of 56 Efling representatives attended the congress, all of whom were union members who had volunteered to participate.

Efling’s representatives come from a wide range of workplaces and have first-hand experience of the challenges workers face in their daily lives. Their participation represents an important effort to bring workers’ perspectives and experiences to the forefront within ASÍ.

The congress addressed a range of issues, including wages and workers’

rights, economic and social justice, and the changes facing the labour market in the years ahead. At the congress, Georg Páll Skúlason was elected the new President of ASÍ.

Efling thanks its representatives for their participation and for the time and energy they dedicated to the congress.



Wolt Couriers Unite in the Fight for Better Working Conditions

Wolt couriers have taken action against deteriorating pay and are now working to strengthen solidarity among their ranks. Efling's field representatives have supported their organizing efforts and helped them reach more fellow couriers.

Around 60 couriers working for the delivery platform Wolt stopped work on September 16 to protest worsening pay conditions. According to the couriers, their payments had fallen by as much as 40% over the previous year.

The couriers themselves have taken the initiative in this struggle, working to bring their fellow workers together. Efling has expressed its support for their actions and emphasized the importance of ensuring that couriers enjoy the rights and protections guaranteed to workers under Icelandic collective agreements.

To support the couriers' organizing efforts, Efling field representatives joined one of the couriers in distributing invitations to a meeting among other Wolt couriers. The aim was to reach more of their fellow workers, inform them about the campaign, and encourage them to attend a meeting



Efling field representatives joined a Wolt courier in distributing meeting invitations to other couriers, encouraging them to take part in the collective struggle for better working conditions

with the couriers who had already begun organizing.

Through these efforts, the couriers are working to expand their group, strengthen connections with one another, and build collective power. Their struggle is not only about payments for individual deliveries, but also about fundamental workers' rights and the employment status of couriers in Iceland.

Efling's Board has declared its solidarity with the couriers and emphasized that their work should be covered by Icelandic collective agreements. ASÍ

has taken a similar position, criticizing arrangements in which workers are treated as self-employed contractors rather than employees. Wolt, however, rejects the claim that its couriers are falsely classified as self-employed.

The actions of Wolt couriers demonstrate how solidarity is built in practice. By reaching out to fellow workers, discussing shared concerns, and organizing together, couriers can build the collective strength needed to win better working conditions.

Rent Controls One Step Closer - A Victory for Efling's Campaign



From the Efling Congress in February

A bill introducing rent controls has been presented. If passed into law, it will place a cap on annual rent increases and prohibit landlords from raising rents every month.

Housing is one of the largest expenses for many Efling members. In recent years, rents have risen far faster than the general cost of living, while many workers have faced growing insecurity in the housing market.

Efling has long demanded measures to protect tenants against excessive rent increases. At the Efling Congress in February, members adopted a resolution calling, among other things, for rent controls.

The government has now presented a bill that largely reflects proposals put forward by Efling's Board last spring.

Under the proposed legislation, at least twelve months must pass between rent

increases. Annual increases would also be limited to the rise in the Consumer Price Index. Clearer guidelines would be introduced for setting rents when rental agreements are signed or renewed.

Efling welcomes the proposal, although the union would have preferred stronger measures, including linking permitted rent increases to the Consumer Price Index excluding housing costs.

The campaign has achieved progress, but the next challenge is to ensure that the bill becomes law.

Secure housing at an affordable price is one of the most important foundations of a decent life for working people.

Follow the QR code to see Efling's full article about the proposed rent control legislation.



Food and Culture Brings Efling Members Together



From the festival, including members enjoying the food and a visit from the President of Iceland and her husband

Delicious aromas from around the world, cheerful conversations, and a celebration of cultural diversity filled Efling's community hall during the Food and Culture festival on September 27th. The President of Iceland was among the guests.

The festival was held for the fourth time and attracted a large turnout. Efling members from different countries prepared traditional dishes from their home countries, inviting visitors to taste the food and discover different culinary traditions.

Among the dishes on offer were Filipino-style whole roasted pig, Vietnamese

spring rolls, and seafood soup from Honduras.

Special guests at the festival included Halla Tómasdóttir, President of Iceland, and her husband, Björn Skúlason. They had the opportunity to meet Efling members and learn more about the union and its activities.

Sólveig Anna Jónsdóttir, Chairperson of Efling, expressed her great satisfaction with the festival and said it had been a particular honour to welcome the President and her husband.

Efling's members come from more than 140 countries, and this diversity is one of the union's greatest strengths.

Food and Culture provides an important opportunity for people to meet, get to know one another, and build connections across languages and backgrounds.

Solidarity is not built only in meetings or through industrial struggles. It also grows when people come together, share their experiences, and get to know one another.

See more photographs here:



Efling members from all around the world attended



Icelandic Nature Through the Lenses of Efling Members

Efling's photography competition has once again highlighted the diversity and talent of the union's members.

The theme of this year's competition was holidays in Iceland, and members submitted a wide range of photographs capturing Iceland's landscapes and wildlife during their travels.

First prize went to Sebastian Wójcik for his remarkable photograph of a smiling Arctic fox on Hesteyri. The fox looks directly into the camera, appearing almost to smile at the photographer.

Paweł Cieślíkiewicz won second prize for his photograph of an Arctic tern hunting near Jökulsárlón glacier lagoon, while Karolina Zyzik took third place with an image capturing the many shades of green in Icelandic nature near Þórsmörk.

With so many excellent entries, the judging panel decided to award a fourth prize as well. It went to Mark Stache for his photograph *Horses and Flowers*.

The prizes were ISK 50,000 for first place and ISK 25,000 each for second, third, and fourth place.

Some of the photographs will be displayed in Efling's holiday cottages, where members will be able to enjoy them for years to come.

Efling congratulates all the winners and thanks everyone who took part in the competition!



Scan the QR code to see the photographs.

1st place: Sebastian Wójcik - Smiling Arctic fox at Hesteyri



2nd place: Paweł Cieślíkiewicz. Arctic tern hunting, taken at Jökulsárlón lagoon



3rd place: Karolina Zyzik. Shades of Green Iceland, taken at Þórsmörk

Coming Up at Efling Family Cinema - October 23rd



Shaun the Sheep welcomes Efling members!

Efling invites members and their families to Laugarás Cinema on Friday, October 23rd, at 2:00 p.m., for a screening of the family film *Shaun the Sheep*.

Ticket sales open on October 16th at 12:00 noon through My Pages on Efling's website. Tickets cost just ISK 500 each, including popcorn and a drink. Each member can purchase up to five tickets.

Rights and Responsibilities in the Labour Market - In Polish

November 4th, 5:30–7:30 p.m.,
Guðrúnartún 1, 4th floor.

A course covering the main rights and responsibilities of workers in the Icelandic labour market.

Preparing for Retirement - In Icelandic

November 12th, 9:00 a.m.–3:00 p.m.,
Guðrúnartún 1, 4th floor.

A course for members approaching retirement who want to prepare for the next chapter of their lives.

Further information and registration at efling.is.

Union Representative of the Month: - Andri Þorsteinsson



Andri is the Efling union representative at Eimskip Ísland ehf.

Union representatives are an important link between Efling members and their union. They play a key role in building solidarity and defending workers' rights in the workplace. In every issue of Sókn, we introduce one of these dedicated representatives.

This month, we speak with Andri Þorsteinsson, an Efling union representative at Eimskip, about his work, his involvement in the union, and the importance of standing together with fellow workers.

What do you do outside of work to recharge your batteries as the days get darker?

I find it relaxing to spend time cooking and experimenting in the kitchen, trying out dishes from different parts of the world. Sometimes the results turn out well enough to earn a place in our family's recipe book.

How did you become a union representative? Was it your own idea, or did your coworkers encourage you to take on the role?

I actually stumbled into union matters quite unexpectedly when discussions

began at Sundahöfn about establishing a dockworkers' division within a union other than Efling. The idea was to gain more direct influence over collective bargaining matters specific to the harbour.

Out of curiosity, I started looking more closely at our main collective agreement and supplementary agreements to better understand our wages, working conditions and rights.

I believed that we, as Efling members, could achieve significant improvements by renegotiating our supplementary collective agreement with Eimskip, which had not been revised for many years.

Word of my interest in collective agreements spread among my coworkers, and before long, we began working on collective bargaining demands within Efling. Following this, my coworkers encouraged me to stand for election as a union representative.

Negotiations with Eimskip over our supplementary collective agreement began around the same time I became a union representative. The negotiating committee started its work in December 2024, and we eventually reached an agreement, which was signed on 21 May 2025.

What are the biggest concerns among your coworkers right now? What do you hear when you talk to people?

The atmosphere at work has become somewhat more tense since a new time-tracking system was introduced. Difficulties interpreting time records and ensuring that working hours are recorded correctly have been frequent topics of discussion lately.

The possibility that the underlying assumptions of our collective agreements may no longer hold has also been widely discussed.

The Education and Training Service Centre (Fræðslumiðstöð atvinnulífisins) is currently carrying out a skills assessment of our jobs. There has been considerable interest among the workers in this process. The assessment is expected to be completed

soon and should lead to higher wage classifications in line with the skills evaluation.

Can you tell us about a time when you and your coworkers stood together to achieve something? What did you do, and what was the outcome?

I experienced firsthand how important workplace solidarity can be, and how powerful its impact can be, shortly before I became a union representative.

One day, when I arrived at work, a group of coworkers had gathered in the break room to discuss proposed changes to our shift schedules. The changes would have increased the number of night-shift hours, supposedly to ensure sufficient staffing at certain times.

Later, during a formal meeting with management, we made it very clear that, over the previous 12 months, work had rarely, if ever, been disrupted by staff shortages during those hours. We were accustomed to working overtime into the night whenever necessary.

We also pointed out that the proposed changes would negatively affect our earnings.

Thanks to our collective stand, management agreed to compensate us for the potential loss of income through additional payments.

What would happen to society if your work stopped for a single day?

Well, I suppose we'd have to be talking about Christmas Day! On every other day, goods need to reach their destinations.

We do our part and make sure the wheels keep turning on our side of the operation.

What would you say to a coworker who has never participated in Efling's activities but is considering getting involved?

Participation begins with curiosity. I encourage everyone who is interested to take an active part in Efling's work.

Through active participation, we can defend our rights, improve our working conditions and achieve real progress in collective bargaining.