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Et rettferdig arbeidsliv

SAFE Union representatives and members of SAFE Norway

19.03.2020

Corona info from SAFE's management as of 19.03.20

SAFE has had a number of meetings with both local and central parties in the past few days. Hence, we have developed a number of questions and challenges. These we have communicated to both NOG and NR. In addition, today we had a meeting with NOG, NR and the other central federations. Further details are highlighted in the text below.

Quarantine provisions:

As of today, it is the highest level of authorities which general regulations rule and apply. This means that Norwegian and foreign workers coming to work on the Norwegian continental shelf (Ncs) will follow guidelines given by the FHI (Norwegian Institute of Public Health) and other applicable Norwegian authorities. Employees who are healthy and who are not required to be in isolation and travel from the Nordic countries Norway, Sweden and Finland, will find no restrictions with regards to quarantine. Employees who are travelling to work on the Ncs from countries other than those afore mentioned, need to be in isolation for a period of 14 days after crossing the border into Norway before they can travel onward to offshore locations on the Ncs. One can in this case apply for "sick leave" from work and receive salary/sickpay. If you are a Norwegian citizen and are in isolation within Norway such to reduce the contagious risks, you can fill out a self-declaration form and receive payment. If you are sick and actually have contracted the corona virus you will be put on sick leave and also receive salary.

Travel pass:

NR informed us today in the meeting that they are still working with the authorities to get a Travel pass introduced for Norwegian and foreign employees living outside Norway, Sweden and Finland. The employers want to define employees active on the Ncs as "key personnel to society", but have not succeeded yet in getting approval for this by the authorities. They continue to work on this issue and are now drawing up a list of "special reasons" and new arguments in order to be able to send employees out to the Ncs without having to go in isolation in Norway first.

Rotation:

At this meeting as mentioned, the following topics were discussed, working schedules, quarantines/isolation issues and in addition the lack of personnel for shift/crew changes. By this evening many proposals for solutions have been presented, however without the companies presenting back up numbers for any real need. The proposals go from what we have at present which is too many 2-4 rotations, to personnel who are in isolation 1 week before departure, and then work 2 weeks offshore with possible 1 + 1 week extension before eventually qualifying for time off. SAFE has made enquiries and requested an overview of how many people at present are actually forced to be in quarantine by the authorities, the number which are in isolation imposed by the companies and finally the number of people who are in self-imposed quarantine. SAFE is waiting this evening for a proposal from NOG and NR for what now looks like a temporary change of schedule. The unions will evaluate this proposal protocol and provide feedback later tomorrow. Unfortunately, at this point in time we can't be more specific on anything in particular. The parties will have a new meeting tomorrow afternoon and SAFE will

evaluate any proposal with the various delegates within the union association(s) before anything will be decided or agreed.

Other union challenges:

In addition to the two above topics, SAFE brought a number of questions to today's meeting table, because it recognizes a great need for clarifications, explanation and equal practices for the different entities within our industry. Unfortunately, there was no time to discuss these issues in particular. SAFE has emphasized to NOG to initiate further clarification. Hopefully this will arrive and be presented early next week. The meeting agreed though, that it is of utmost importance to have these meetings and work forward together to achieve unified solutions if possible.

Do we need a Coronaworking law?

The Prime Minister made speeches, the King addressed the nation and spoke to the people, now it has taken a very serious turn. Norway shuts down and closes its country borders, but all this happens in the expectation of strict individual discipline, voluntarily and with common sense. In other countries we have seen this exercised by use of police enforced lock down.

However, continuously the approach within the government is changing. The latest development is the proposal of a Corona law. This would bypass the requirement for parliamentary approval to change the law. In a complex and uncertain situation the government does not often meet resistance from the parliament when "both ends need to meet".

The government does not necessarily have the wellbeing of the workers as its main priority. Do they actually want to eliminate the parties and our common ground of cooperation? Do they maintain a desire to be able to enforce and implement changes to one of our most important laws, the "Working Environment Act" itself? Many of us may remember what they did last time?

A good example of where the Government didn't do enough work alone is the "emergency measures" just over a week ago. After the parliament became involved, the measures were changed at many key points. It is also an example of the best solutions "emerging" when all the parties are united and involved, in this context by including the parliament.

SAFE is concerned whether the government will sideline unilaterally the collective agreements including annual hours worked without dialogue with the workers' unions. These agreements have been developed and build over many decades.

It is a time to respond and a time to be dynamic, that is our understanding. This can still be achieved within the legislation available today, however it is not the time to deprive our parliament of ownership of our laws.

SAFE disagrees that the Government should get a Corona law passed today!

Yours sincerely
SAFE Union leader.
Hilde-Marit Rysst