

Foreword

Governments are looking to learn lessons from the unprecedented measures taken in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, as they address the new challenges brought about by the ongoing cost-of-living crisis but also make progress towards labour markets that are more inclusive, sustainable, and resilient to future shocks. The OECD Directorate for Employment, Labour and Social Affairs contributes to these efforts by analysing the impact of COVID-19 on employment and jobs, examining the labour market and social policy responses taken by countries and by developing policy advice drawing on international good practice.

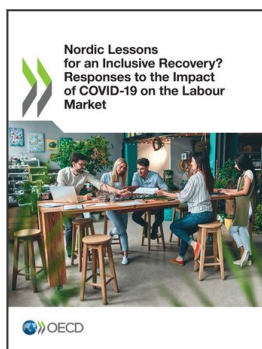
This report provides a detailed analysis of how the pandemic has affected labour markets in the Nordic countries – Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden and the autonomous regions to the extent possible – and different socio-economic groups within them. It also takes stock of the policy measures taken in the Nordic countries to avoid economic and social meltdown during the COVID-19 crisis, with a focus on action taken in the areas of unemployment benefits (UB), job retention (JR) schemes, active labour market policies (ALMPs) and skill policies. In doing so, it highlights similarities and differences in the approaches taken by different Nordic countries and places them in the wider international context. This report aims to assist governments in the Nordic countries and beyond in reflecting on the experience of the COVID-19 pandemic to build more inclusive, sustainable, and resilient labour markets.

This report was prepared by Satoshi Araki, Ailbhe Brioscú, Sandrine Cazes, Alexandre Georgieff, Anja Meierkord and Andrea Salvatori in the OECD's Directorate for Employment, Labour and Social Affairs (ELS) with the guidance of Theodora Xenogiani (project leader) and Glenda Quintini. The report also benefitted from contributions from Karolin Killmeier, Clara Krämer, Thomas Liebig, Marius Lüske, Isac Olave Cruz and Agathe Simon. Statistical assistance was provided by Dana Blumin and editorial assistance by Lucy Hulett and Hanna Varkki.

The report benefitted greatly from information and assessments received from stakeholders in Nordic countries through both questionnaires and data requests as well as through virtual fact-finding consultations held with the OECD team between April and June 2022. Consultations were held with representatives of relevant Ministries (including Ministries of Labour, Education, Finance and Enterprise where appropriate), Public Employment Services, national training agencies, local authorities, social partners (representatives of both workers and employers) and Job Security Councils (in the case of Sweden). The report also benefitted from insights from a virtual fact-finding meeting with representatives from the Åland Islands. Preliminary results were also presented by the OECD Director of Labour, Employment and Social Affairs (ELS), Stefano Scarpetta, and discussed at a meeting of Labour Ministers of the Nordic Council of Ministers in Oslo in November 2022.

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