Abstract

Changes in labour market regulations and institutions: Norwegian responses to the rise in cross-border labour mobility

Jon Erik Dølvik, Fafo

The main aim of this paper is, first, to take stock of the many adjustments undertaken in Norwegian labour market regulation and enforcement in response to the past years’ surge in posting and migration of workers. Second, it aims to discuss the implications of these changes in the operation and regulation of labour markets for the institutions of collective bargaining. Besides being among the countries in Europe that have received most migrant labour, relative to the population, Norway was under the former red-green government among the most proactive countries in enacting new means of regulation and enforcement to counter low-wage competition. Nonetheless, the growing gap between the scope of the effective labour market and the reach of national regulations, combined with the constraints imposed by EU rules, have set collective agreements and labour standards under pressure. In this view, it is time to try to assess what all these changes have meant for the functioning and effectiveness of the national institutions of wage setting and collective bargaining. In order to consider possible options and avenues for further change, the Norwegian experiences will to some extent be contrasted with experiences in the neighboring Nordic countries.