

## Yule Lads, Dancing, and Treats - Efling's Christmas Ball is Coming Up



*The Yule lads won't miss out!*

One of the most fun events of the year at Efling is drawing near. The union's annual Christmas Ball will be held in style on Saturday, December 13th, at Gullhamrar in Grafarholt. The festivities begin at 14:00 PM. As per tradition, it will be a grand affair filled with a true Christmas spirit. We will

receive special guests from the mountains when the Yule Lads (Jólasveinar) drop by to entertain the youngest generation (and the older ones too!). The venue's band will provide the music as we dance around the Christmas tree and sing at the top of our lungs.

No one needs to go home hungry, as delicious refreshments and Christmas sweets will be offered to all guests. This is a great opportunity for members to come together, meet others, and enjoy a cozy time with the family amidst the busy month of December.



# Efling Strongly Condemns Attack on the Right to Strike



*The bill represents a serious assault on the independent collective bargaining rights of unions*

Efling has submitted a harshly worded statement to Parliament (Alþingi) regarding a new bill proposed by ten MPs from the Independence Party (Sjálfstæðisflokkurinn). The bill, introduced by Jens Garðar Helgason and others, aims to curtail the right of unions to strike and significantly increase the powers of the State Conciliator. According to the bill, the goal is to “improve efficiency” in collective bargaining by giving more weight to mediation proposals from the State Conciliator and restricting the ability

of members to take industrial action. Efling points out that there was no consultation with the labor movement during the drafting of the bill, describing this as a peculiar attitude towards workers’ rights. With this bill, the sponsors reveal total contempt for the rights of wage earners. If the bill were to pass, decision-making power regarding wages and terms would shift increasingly from the members themselves and into the hands of state officials. The Union opposes this bill in its entirety and warns that the

fundamental values of trade unions are being undermined in this manner. Read the full statement by following this QR link:





# Efling on the International Stage

## - Membership in UNI Global Union Confirmed



UNI Global Union represents over 20 million members in 150 countries

Efling Trade Union has had its application for membership in UNI Global Union, an international federation of trade unions in the service and care sectors, approved. The membership was granted at a

meeting of the organization's Executive Committee, held in Nyon, Switzerland, on November 12 and 13, 2025. The membership takes effect on January 1, 2026. In a letter from Alke Boesiger, Deputy General Secretary of

UNI Global Union, the organization warmly welcomes Efling and looks forward to closer cooperation in the coming years. UNI also expressed its commitment to supporting Efling's activities and strengthening the joint struggle for workers' rights and conditions. As previously mentioned, UNI Global Union is an international federation of trade unions representing over 20 million members collectively. The affiliated unions

operate in over 150 countries around the world. By joining, Efling strengthens its ties to a powerful network of sister organizations, gaining access to international expertise and joint campaigns, as well as the opportunity to influence labor market developments on a global scale. Efling's membership in UNI Global Union is, therefore, a significant step in the union's ongoing fight for the interests and rights of workers.

## What Are You Owed? – New Calculator for the December Bonus

Efling continues to improve its digital services for members and has now launched a new calculator on the union's website. This is a welcome addition, allowing members to check their right to the December bonus instantly. This is the third calculator the union has developed; previously, calculators for the holiday bonus and general wages were launched. With this new tool, it is easier than ever to verify whether your payslip is correct before Christmas.

### How does the calculator work?

Using it is very simple. You select the collective agreement you work under, enter your employment percentage, and how long you have worked during the year. The calculator then shows you the exact amount you are entitled to. Please remember that amounts and payout dates may vary depending on collective agreements. Most members are entitled to payment on December 1st, but in some cases, the due date is no later than December 15<sup>th</sup>. We

encourage all members to use this tool, visit the Efling website via the QR code, and ensure the Christmas bonus reaches your wallet correctly this year.



# Overwhelming Support for Changes to Nursing Home Collective Agreement



*94 percent of those who voted approved the changes to the agreement*

Efling members working in nursing homes have approved a change to Efling's collective agreement with the Association of Companies in Welfare Services (SFV). The changes were approved by an overwhelming majority of votes cast.

Disputes had persisted for several months, and Efling terminated the agreement last February. The reason was a failure to fulfill the agreement's promises regarding increased staffing, a stipulation that was a condition for termination in the agreement. Ultimately, the State Conciliator presented an internal settlement proposal in late October to resolve the dispute, which the negotiating committees of both parties agreed upon.

## Clear Results

The result of the vote was clear: 94 percent of those who voted approved

the changes to the collective agreement. Just under 4 percent were opposed, and just over 2 percent abstained. Voter turnout was just over 18 percent, which is considered good participation for a vote on a collective agreement.

Salaries of nursing home staff increase by between 7,479 and 18,604 ISK per month, varying by job title, seniority, education, and responsibility. The wage increases are retroactive from July 1st and were paid out on December 1st.

## What else is included in the changes?

The agreement marks a significant step towards wage equality. The base wage structure for job titles will change and will now be in line with the base wage structure of comparable titles at Landspítali (The National

University Hospital). This means staff will move up in pay grades; "Employee A" moves up one pay grade based on seniority and B two pay grades. Social care workers (félagsliðar) move up two pay grades.

Furthermore, new job titles are added to the agreement to reflect responsibility and supervision. The roles of team leader, supervisor, group leader, and shift manager will be defined with appropriate pay grades.

The agreement also stipulates a joint "value assessment process." The goal is to prepare the ground for correcting the historic undervaluation of women's work and to ensure that the jobs of general staff in nursing homes are valued equally to comparable jobs in the public sector.



# Can the Banks Lower Interest Rates?

## – Stefán Ólafsson Examines the Numbers



*Stefán Ólafsson, Professor Emeritus and Specialist at Efling*

Is there room for the banks to lower interest rates, regardless of the Central Bank's decisions? Stefán Ólafsson, Professor Emeritus and expert at Efling, answers this question in a new and detailed article on the union's website. Stefán's conclusion is clear: Yes, the banks can lower interest rates if the will is there. In his analysis, Stefán points out that the high interest rate spread – the difference between deposit and lending rates – is one of the main sources of the banks' record profits in recent times. This „markup“ by the banks, on top of the

Central Bank's policy rates, hits Icelandic households and Efling members hard, as they see a large portion of their disposable income disappear into interest costs. Stefán argues that there is no law of nature compelling the banks to maintain such a high margin. On the contrary, this is a matter of political and ethical choice; whether to prioritize shareholder profitability or the financial security of households. We encourage all members to read Stefán's article on the Efling website. There, the numbers are examined in detail, showing in black and white how

the banks could demonstrate social responsibility in practice by lowering their own markup today. Read the article in its entirety by following the QR code.



## Union Representative of the Month - Hjördís Bech Ásgeirsdóttir



*Hjördís Bech Ásgeirsdóttir is Eflings' union representative at the community center Vitatorg*

*What has made this December special for you so far?*

The Christmas spirit and the excitement surrounding the holidays. Candlelight and cozy moments while preparing for Christmas.

*What tradition or habit puts you immediately in the Christmas mood?*

On the first Sunday of Advent, I usually put up Christmas lights and create a little Christmas atmosphere at home – in the windows and then the Christmas wreath on the table. Lighting candles is the custom as soon as it starts to get dark.

*What has been most rewarding for you in the role of shop steward recently?*

Participating, being present, and being able to assist members when needed. The refreshing and fun interactions and companionship with members and Efling. The knowledge and encouragement that comes with

it. Taking part in various projects regarding the wage struggle, etc., for workers is invaluable.

*What change or improvement would you most like to see at the workplace in the new year?*

At my workplace, there is always room for improvement. The main thing is to be open to new possibilities that can improve the work.

*How do you experience the short days in December, does it affect you, and do you do anything special to enjoy or keep your energy up during the darkest month of winter?*

The dark winter days have little effect on me. That is the time for candlelight. The candles provide a subconscious energy and warmth. This is a month that is usually very busy with Christmas preparations, so it passes quickly.

*If you could wish for one change for workers generally in 2026, what would it be?*

Oof. That's a big question... There is so much. Higher wages. Stricter monitoring of companies that exploit people's vulnerable situations and pay them below minimum wage. That they can be held accountable to correct the wages, even retroactively with fines.

That workers get their full lunch and coffee breaks back. After all, everyone needs to nourish themselves to maintain good health for work, etc. I have certainly heard that workers are being exploited and hardly get to take time to sit down between tasks, overloaded with work as if they were robots.

Raise the tax-free threshold to 450,000 ISK; that would make the biggest difference in the paycheck.

A cap on rental costs.

Mortgage credit assessments (greiðslumat) should be based on rental history. If it is possible to pay 250,000 – 400,000 ISK in rent, it goes without saying that the person should be able to pass a credit assessment without trouble.

All sports and leisure activities should be integrated into the elementary schools for children, free of charge for parents. That way, children have an equal opportunity to practice their hobbies, regardless of the family's finances. Teachers in elementary schools in Norway state: "This way, all children get to flourish, and they do better in their studies as a result." That is how it is done in Norway.

Longer parental leave, and that parents get to choose for themselves how they split the months between them at home. I could list more, but let this suffice.

If I had to choose just one of these, I would choose: All sports and leisure activities should be integrated into the elementary schools for children, free of charge. That alone would be a great financial relief for families. There are incredibly many children who cannot pursue their hobbies because it is so expensive. Some parents try to get loans or use payment plans so the child can flourish, while other parents see no way to cover that cost, leaving the dear children hurt and sad about not getting the same opportunities as many others.