



Country : Finland

Organization : Teollisuusliitto

Date : Wed 6th May 2020

Here are some thoughts collected from our sector experts, all of them might not be directly replying to the exact questions posed, but they should however contain some information that can be useful for you.

1/ What is the current situation of economic activity in the wood/forestry/furniture sectors?

Attached to the email you will also find the business cycle survey of the Federation of the Finnish Woodworking Industries (Puutuoteteollisuus, <https://puutuoteteollisuus.fi/english>) from week 17 (in Finnish): layoffs are not planned in 52% of the companies that replied / layoffs are likely in 1-3 months in 18% / layoffs have already been made or they are just about to take place in 30%. Same figures for redundancies: 83% / 12% / 5%. This survey does not apply to the plywood or sawmill industry.

- The biggest impact of the epidemic is uncertainty about the future and declining demand, as well as the postponing of agreed deals. These apply to the home and export markets. The industries in the sector have a clearly different employment situation: in some work is scarce, in others there is still enough work (the export industry keeps up despite the problems). More employment problems to be expected in the post-holiday period.
- Export problems began in China, which is slowly recovering, mainly in the sawmill industry. There are problems in Europe with the so-called closed economies.
- Good employment and order backlog in the plywood industry so far. Probably due to shutdowns of industrial plants in competitor countries (Russia and South America).
- Construction and the desire of some households to renovate in Finland will maintain employment in the sector for the time being. Applies to the carpentry and sawmill industries
- Perhaps, in summary, opening up economies and maintaining the economic and activity of citizens is likely to contribute to a rapid recovery from the demand slump. Under no circumstances should industrial plants be closed in Finland.

2/ What are the specific agreements, measures or regulations that were adopted to fight the COVID-19 situation in our sectors; Related to what topics ?

Temporary changes in Finnish law concerning the notice and minimum negotiating periods for layoffs, the trial period and the employer's duty to re-engage a redundant employee took effect at the beginning of April. These changes will remain in force until the end of June.

Most unions affiliated to SAK (blue-collar confederation) have negotiated changes to their collective agreements.

More details from the SAK website: <https://www.sak.fi/en/whats-new/news/temporary-changes-layoff-procedures-and-unemployment-benefit-finland-due-coronavirus-epidemic>

3/ What is the current situation of migrant and mobile workers in the wood/forestry/furniture sectors? Is it possible for you to monitor the situation effectively?

For this we don't have a specific answer. While we are monitoring the situation as a whole, we will also monitor the situation of the migrant and mobile workers who are in the country - the borders are closed anyway.

4/ Is there an exit strategy plan on sectoral level? Are sectoral trade unions involved in the discussions and /or implementation of the exit strategy plan (sectoral level)?

See question #2. Teollisuusliitto and other unions are having ongoing discussions with the employers' organizations.

5/ What are your ideas / proposals to fight the COVID-19 crisis and its effects

- **Related to Health and Safety for specific occupations/work processes and conditions**
- **Related to income protection**
- **Related to an economic relaunch of the construction and wood/forestry/furniture sectors**
- **Related to better protection of workers in our industries**
- **Related to specific protection of posted and migrant workers in our sectors**

See questions #1 and #2.

To conclude, here are some more links with information in English

<https://www.teollisuusliitto.fi/tyoelama/korona/>

<https://www.sak.fi/en/whats-new/news/how-does-coronavirus-affect-working-life>