

Statement by the Icelandic Confederation of Labour (ASÍ) and SA – Business Iceland, organization of Icelandic employers on Volunteers

The labour market national associations have a shared responsibility for the development of the labour market and the rights and obligations applicable thereto. Their goal is to ensure a competitive labour market where employers associations and the labour unions negotiate for wages and other employment terms in collective agreements.

The social partners are obliged to ensure that the rules applicable to the labour market are followed.

These parties share the task of ensuring that wages and employment terms of companies in manufacture and service are in accordance with Icelandic law and collective agreements.

If collective agreements are not respected, it undermines other companies in same sectors and disrupts the basis for fair competition and a healthy economy.

In view of this, ASÍ, SA and their member associations believe in the importance of a mutual understanding regarding volunteer work in the labour market.

It is worth reiterating that it goes against collective agreements and general principles on the labour market, for volunteers to replace employees in general jobs for the economic activity of a company. For these jobs, the provisions of collective agreements apply, cf. Article 1 of Act No. 55/1980 on Working Terms. Employees have carried out this work and will not be replaced by volunteers. Contracts with individual employees stipulating less favorable terms than those provided for in the collective agreements are invalid.

There is nevertheless a long tradition for volunteer work, and such work is important for charities and cultural or humanitarian efforts. This kind of volunteer work is not disputed, as it has a long history and has not been a matter of contention.