



The use of the Social Dialogue in Ribe County

Ribe County has traditionally been a very liberal county – a typical sign of the strong representation of entrepreneurs within the agricultural- and fishing sector. Until recently, it was only in the town of Esbjerg, that the Social Democrats were overrepresented as it was here, the industrialisation took place, but now even Esbjerg has a liberal mayor!

Back in time, the conflicts within the labour market have been extremely tough. The reason for this is the traditional liberal politicians who suddenly were confronted with labour actions from tough fishermen who could no longer practise their job on the sea, but were forced to get back to Esbjerg to become workers in one of the factories either connected to the fishing industry, the harbour or the off shore sector.

The last big conflict on the labour market that Ribe County has known was in 1995, when the regional bus services were handed over to a private company. It was one of the most serious labour market conflicts that Denmark has known, as the drivers went into strike during 268 days. Probably rather typical, as Ribe County politically, is one of the most liberal counties in Denmark, and the labour unions maybe some of the most tough ones.

Nowadays, the social dialogue is much less characterised by conflicts but by co-operation, and e.g. in the regional council, which is concretising the overall concrete development actions for the region, the social partners have an important role to play, together with private enterprises, representatives for educational institutions, a few politicians and public administration representatives.

Moreover, within the Regional Labour Market council, the social partners are represented.

Within some of the boards for the schools and colleges, the social partners are also represented.

It is though very important within the Danish culture that boards, committees etc. which have something to do with, either education, professional training, labour market issues, regional development or business development.

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