

## **Supporting Immigrant Workers in Norway: CPN Workshop on Trade Unions and the Norwegian Work Model**

*Oslo, November 6, 2024* — As part of our ongoing mission to empower and support Norway’s immigrant workforce, Chinese Professionals in Norway (CPN) hosted a successful workshop titled “How Trade Unions Operate in the Norwegian Model? Why Join Trade Union?” The event took place at Litteraturhuset in Oslo and attracted a diverse group of participants, including migrant workers and international professionals eager to learn about their workplace rights and the vital role trade unions play in Norway.



This workshop, made possible through the joint efforts of CPN and Norwegian governmental support, provided valuable insights into navigating the unique Norwegian labor model. The session addressed essential questions for immigrants, such as understanding labor rights, accessing union benefits, and navigating challenges in a foreign workplace environment.

### **Welcome and Introduction: CPN’s Mission to Support Immigrant Workers**

The evening began with welcoming remarks by Dr. Weiqing Zhang, Vice President for Innovation and Technology at CPN. Dr. Zhang highlighted CPN’s mission and long-term commitment to supporting Norway’s immigrant professionals through resources like the Competence Center for Immigrants, which CPN launched in 2011 with Oslo Municipality’s backing. “Through workshops, training, and networking, we aim to empower immigrants to build a successful professional life in Norway,” Dr. Zhang shared. This workshop exemplifies our mission to create a bridge between Norway’s work culture and international workers, helping them build knowledge and networks to thrive in their careers.



### **Insights from Industry Experts on Trade Unions and the Norwegian Model**

The first keynote speaker, Ole Alexander Pihl Konstad, Head of the Tariff Committee in NITO Private, Oslo & Akershus, gave an in-depth overview of the Norwegian Model. Drawing on his extensive experience with NITO, Norway’s leading organization for engineers, Konstad discussed the distinctive “tripartite” collaboration between government, employers, and unions that protects workers’ rights and strengthens workplace democracy.

In an engaging talk, Konstad emphasized the lasting relevance of trade unions, describing how they offer members legal protection, wage negotiation support, and an invaluable network of colleagues. He provided real-world examples to illustrate how union membership can empower immigrant and foreign workers to navigate unfamiliar systems, establish fair treatment, and advance in their careers.



### **Real-Life Applications of Bipartite Dialogue: Dr. Xinli Wang's Perspective**

Following Konstad's talk, Dr. Xinli Wang, an IT architect and long-time employee representative at Telenor, shared practical insights on bipartite dialogue, a key feature of the Norwegian workplace. As an immigrant herself, Dr. Wang connected with the audience by sharing her own experiences navigating challenges unique to foreign workers. She emphasized the support her trade union provided in situations like salary negotiations and combating workplace discrimination, underscoring the union's role as a critical ally.



Dr. Wang's detailed look at how unions help immigrant employees resolve conflicts and adapt to new workplace norms resonated deeply with the audience, who engaged enthusiastically during the following Q&A.

### **Looking Ahead: A Commitment to Empowering Norway's Immigrant Workforce**

During the final phase of the workshop, the audience engaged in a lively question-and-answer session that added significant depth to the event. Participants posed numerous questions on topics such as establishing a member group of trade union at workplace, navigating wage negotiations, and managing relationships with employers. The discussion was so animated and insightful that the workshop's closing time was extended by more than half an hour to accommodate the audience's enthusiasm. This interactive exchange not only provided valuable takeaways but also reinforced the relevance of the session's themes for everyone present, sparking positive feedback from both participants and observers.



This workshop was proudly organized by the Chinese Professionals in Norway (CPN) with sponsorship from Oslo Municipality. CPN staff members, including YiQun Zhang, Dr. Juan Yang, Dr. Xinli Wang, and Dr. Weiqing Zhang, were instrumental in ensuring the event ran smoothly and provided valuable support to all attendees.

At CPN, we are committed to providing continuous support for immigrants in Norway's workforce. Through events like this, we aim to equip immigrant and foreign workers with the knowledge, networks, and confidence to pursue rewarding careers. This workshop, supported by Oslo Municipality, reflects our dedication to bridging cultural and professional gaps, fostering a more inclusive work environment for everyone in Norway. We thank everyone who attended and contributed to making this event a success, and we look forward to hosting more workshops that empower immigrant professionals in the Norwegian workplace.