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Improving Collective Bargaining in  
European Union. Comparison of  
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# The Belgian Wage Norm Law

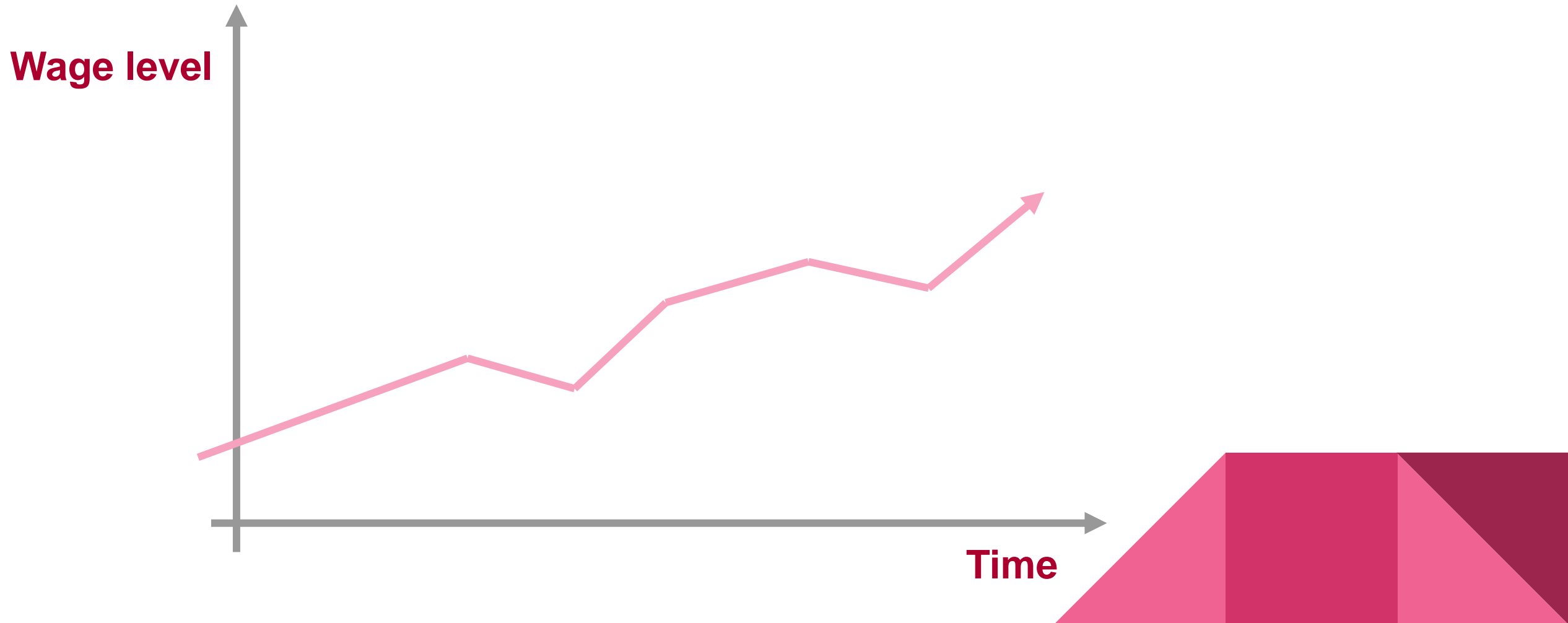
European Round Table, 23 October 2023, Leuven, Belgium  
Noah Vangeel, HIVA – KU Leuven

# Belgian wage bargaining

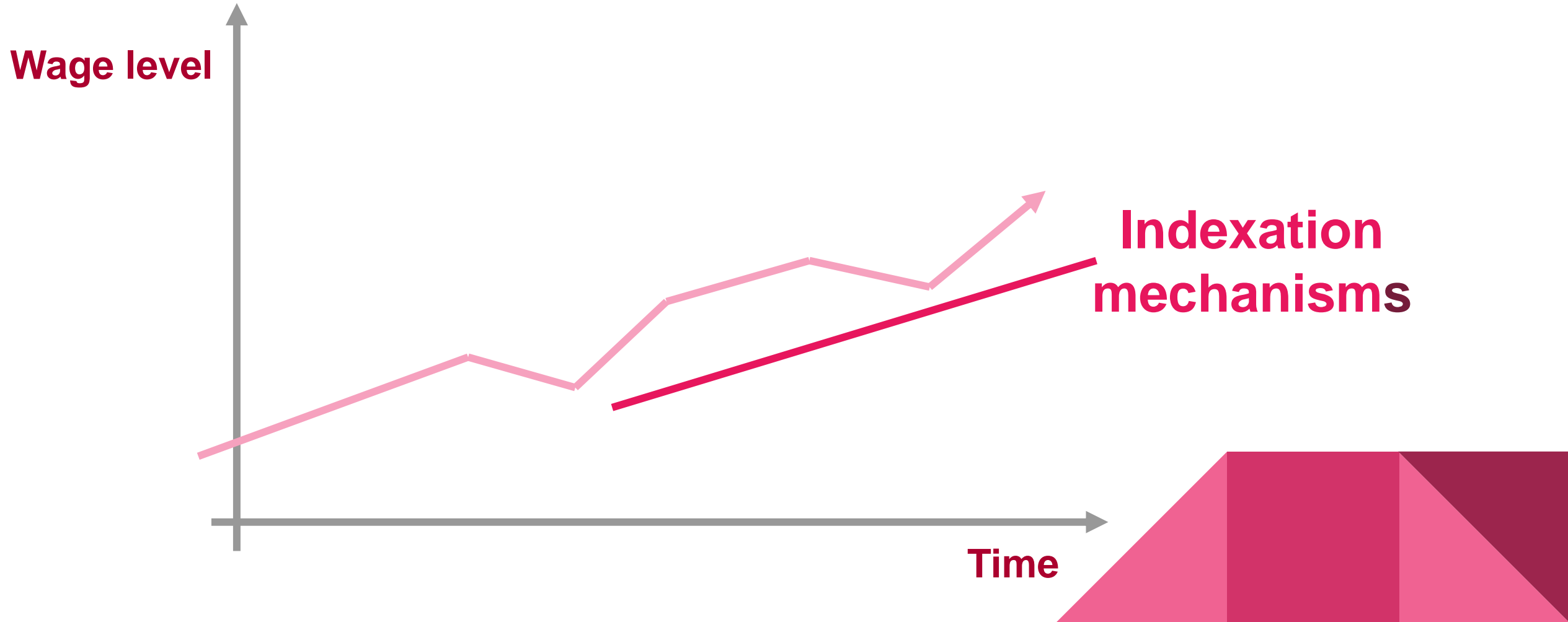
- Every two years
- Bipartite: employers' organisations and trade unions
- Starts at national level
- Can be further detailed at sectoral and enterprise level
  - E.g., social profit versus chemistry



# Belgian wage bargaining



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# The wage norm law

- The law of 26 July 1996 on employment promotion and preventive safeguarding of competitiveness
- **Indicative wage norm**



# Belgian wage bargaining

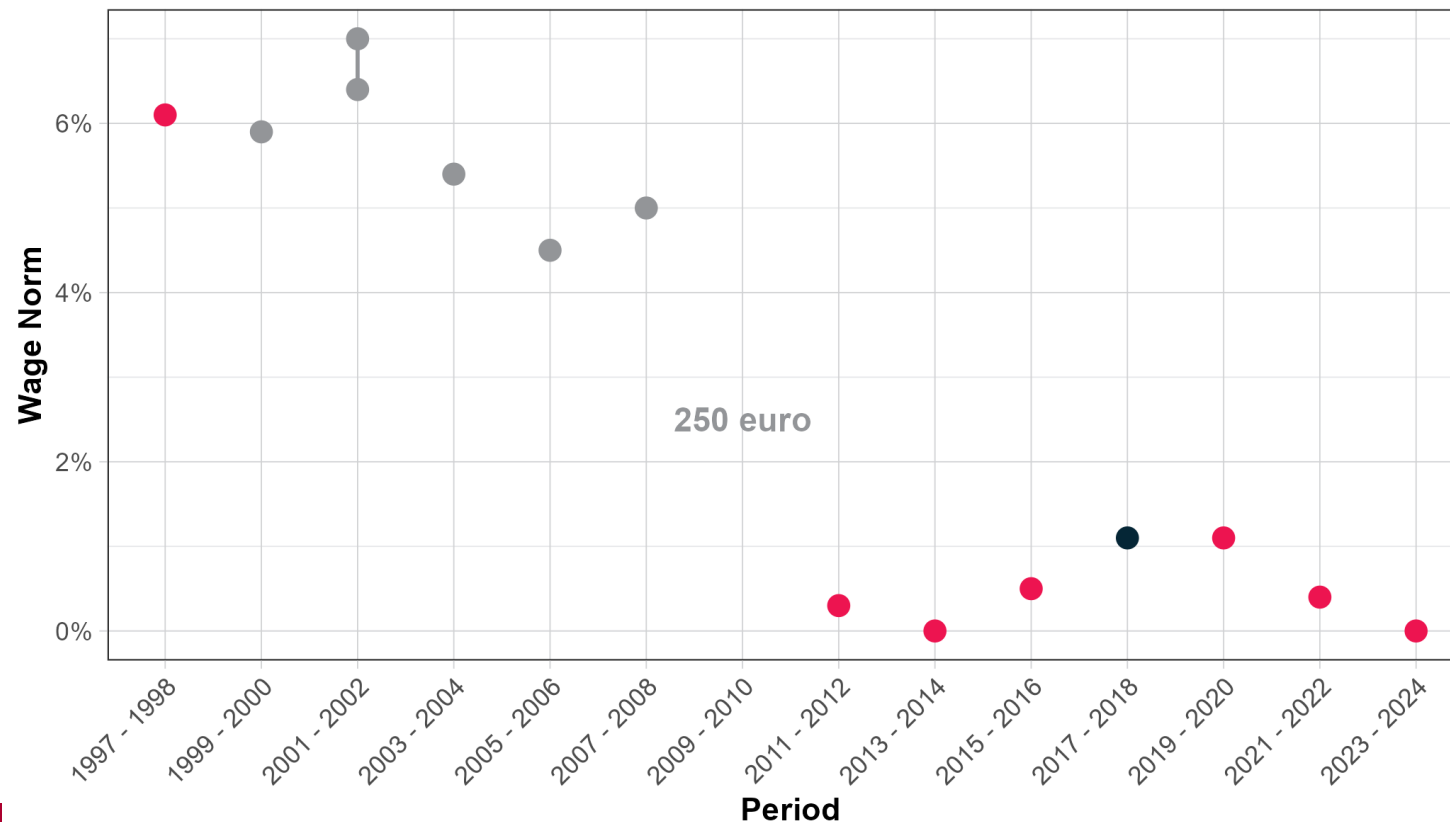


# The wage norm law

- The law of 26 July 1996 on employment promotion and preventive safeguarding of competitiveness
  - **Indicative wage norm**
  - Preventively adjust wage cost developments to the expected evolution in Germany, the Netherlands and France
    - Open economy (70% of GDP)
  - **Government Michel (2017): changes in calculation**
  - **Binding wage norm**
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# The wage norm law

- All Group of 10 negotiations since 2017 failed (19-20, 21-22, 23-24)
- Margin for negotiations limited





# The wage norm law

- All Group of 10 negotiations since 2017 failed (19-20, 21-22, 23-24)
- Margin for negotiations limited
- National level strikes
- **The indexation mechanisms for the wage norm law?**
  - **Indexation comes from collective labour agreements (social dialogue)**
  - **The wage norm from politics**
- “The wage norm law shoots itself in the foot”
  - Kurt Vandaele, ETUI