

MAP OF SUCCESSFUL COLLECTIVE BARGAINING PRACTICES



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Introduction

The ImproCollBar Project *Improving Collective Bargaining in European Union. Comparison of different industrial relations regimes* aimed to expand the expertise in the field of industrial relations in 7 EU member-states (Belgium, Bulgaria, Greece, Italy, Romania, Croatia and France) through comparative research of the factors and mechanisms that improve the scope and coverage of collective bargaining in different industrial relations regimes in the context of the Directive 2022/2041 on adequate minimum wages in the European Union and the Covid-19 pandemic.

The project outcomes will contribute for the re-thinking of the strategies of the national trade unions related to improving collective bargaining in general and were based on the contribution of the research activities which were in three dimensions. Firstly, on a theoretical level, the project shed lights on the factors and mechanism which lead to improvement of the scope and coverage of collective bargaining through bridging scholarship of industrial relations and social movement studies. Secondly, on the data level, the quantitative and qualitative research findings increased the awareness of industrial relations and collective bargaining in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic. Lastly, on a methodological level, in addition to refining and updating the statistical data for industrial relations, this project contributed to the industrial relations literature with an examination of collective bargaining through a qualitative analysis with a specific focus on

the interpretation and information given by actors involved in the social dialogue system on the mechanisms and factors for improving collective bargaining. Through the interviews with actors involved in the collective bargaining process and the analysis of the documents of collective agreements and collective actions, this project will supplement the understanding of industrial relations in the selected countries from micro-level and mid-level perspectives.

The development of this Map of Successful Collective Bargaining Practices is part of the implemented research activities in the framework of the ImproCollBar Project, and through it, many different national practices for the introduction and implementation of the Directive on adequate minimum wages in each of the partner countries of the project have been highlighted. The shared successful practices follow a common structure presenting the successful cases and their key results and impact in the respective partner country. The Map will contribute for finding new ways, solutions and mechanisms for developing and reinforcing better industrial relations in Europe related, in particular, to the functioning and effects of the coordination of collective bargaining across different levels and territories. The good practices also underline the necessity for greater collaboration between the Social Partners and the State when implementing national and sectoral level policies and measures related to the collective bargaining.

BELGIUM

CASE 1: The Renault Act

Time frame: 1997, law is still in effect today.

Organisations involved: Belgian Federal Parliament of 1997, trade unions and organisations involved in large scale layoffs.

Scope of case: National level

Description of the way this has been reached:

On February 27, 1997, workers at the Renault factory in Vilvoorde, Belgium, near Brussels, learned through the press that their workplace would cease operations, rendering over 3,000 individuals unemployed (Troch 2022). In response, the 3,098 blue-collar workers, fueled by a mixture of frustration and indignation, opted to stage a factory occupation, effectively barricading approximately 5,000 vehicles within the premises' parking lot. Erecting tents on-site, a group of 50 individuals established a semi-permanent presence. The manner in which the closure was announced by management was widely perceived as abrupt and tactless, further intensifying feelings of resentment. The ensuing month witnessed a significant public outcry, with around 50,000 individuals gathering in Brussels to protest against the factory's closure (Maerevoet 2022).

A year later, the collective outrage catalysed the enactment of legislation: the Act of February 13, 1998 Containing Provisions to Promote Employment known simply as the Act Renault (Grommen 2018a). This legislative framework mandated that companies first notify the works council of any plans involving collective redundancies and engage in discussions with them (Maerevoet 2022). During this process, employee representatives have the opportunity to ask questions and propose alternatives, which the company is obligated to consider (Grommen 2018a). The Act thereby promotes social dialogue in difficult times and foresees collaboration between management and the

trade unions. It should allow employees to understand the company's economic and financial reasons for the choices made (Troch 2022). Its objective is to afford employees and trade unions ample opportunity to evaluate the repercussions of impending layoffs and collaboratively devise viable alternatives. Typically, negotiations between unions and employers result in a social plan delineating the reorganisation's implications for departing and remaining staff. It contains agreements on severance pay, outplacement, training, etc. Despite the option for employers to dismiss employees without a social plan after a consultation period and a 30-day wait, this scenario is rare in practice (Grommen 2018a).

Description of the results and the impact:

The Act Renault continues to exert its influence in Belgium, prompting discussions among policymakers regarding potential modifications (Grommen 2018b; Lauwerier 2023). In 2023 alone, 73 companies terminated the redundancy process following announcements of collective job cuts, affecting a total of 6,617 positions. Subsequently, after undergoing the prescribed information and consultation procedures, 5,892 employees were ultimately laid off. Notably, the Act Renault facilitated the preservation of 11% of threatened jobs (FOD WASO 2023). This retention rate has remained relatively consistent over recent years, except for a notable deviation in 2021, where it stood at 18.1% (FOD WASO 2021).

However, beyond mere job retention, the Act Renault also prioritizes mitigating the adverse impacts of collective redundancies. Negotiations between management and trade unions stemming from the Act have yielded various measures aimed at achieving this objective. For instance, agreements have been reached to provide seniority bonuses in addition to standard severance pay and offer supplementary compensation atop unemployment benefits (Radio 2 and De Clerck 2023; 2024). Furthermore, provisions for early retirement and support for employees seeking alterna-

tive placements have been established (Maes 2018).

The abrupt mass layoffs by Renault in 1997 triggered a widespread spontaneous strike, garnering significant public backing with a gathering of 50,000 individuals in Brussels. The Act Renault aimed not only to curb the number of redundancies but also to alleviate the emotional toll of collective dismissals. It encouraged trade unions to delve into and discuss a company's rationale behind such actions, while also empowering them to suggest alternative solutions to the proposed plans.

CASE 2: ACV/CSC and Ryanair

After 1,5 years of negotiating, seven strike days and 51 lawsuits, Ryanair finally agrees to a collective agreement with ACV/CSC, covering the pilots operating from Belgium.

Time frame: 2022-2023

Organizations involved: Within Ryanair, only Belgium's Christian trade union has a following among the pilots. ACV/CSC is represented by two of their unions: ACV Puls and CNE, the Flemish and Walloon white collar unions of ACV/CSC.

Scope of case: This case is set at the company level at the company level. Additionally, remark that Ryanair is bound by sectoral and national CLAs if they are extended although it is not a member of any of the negotiating partners at the sectoral level.

Issue/Problem to be solved:

During the covid crisis, ACV/CSC agreed to signing a CLA decreasing the pilots' wages by 20% to help cope with the financial impact of the crisis and the difficulties the airway sector encountered (Vanhelden and Belga 2023). However, at the end of the crisis Ryanair normalised the managers' wages again and announced restarting paying dividends to its shareholders without compensating the pilots

for their wage decrease. These, however, did see their workload increase to pre-covid levels. Union militants and delegates were approached by their colleagues to ask them to do something about this. Although the company initially agreed to give back the 20% wage decrease, this would still mean a real wage loss for the pilots as the company did not want to consider the additional inflation and the index adjustments which the pilots normally would have gotten (Elsen, H., ACV Puls Union Representative, personal communication January 23, 2024).

Before the wage issue could be resolved, Ryanair announced plans to unilaterally change a collective labour agreement (CLA) governing the pilots' working time. Normally, pilots work five subsequent days and then have four days of rest. Ryanair wanted to change that to six days of work and three days of rest (Boukhalfa 2023). According to the ACV Puls, the company did so to cope with the labour market shortages in Belgium and to be able to fly all extra planes the company recently bought (Schoofs 2023). Several pilots went to court against Ryanair's desire to change their working hours (Everaert 2023).

Description of the way this has been reached:

ACV/CSC conducted a survey to gauge pilots' sentiments, focusing on their negotiation priorities with Ryanair and willingness to take action. Pilots expressed a desire for wage normalization and indexation, prompting negotiation attempts by unions. When initial dialogue failed, strikes were announced for July 15th-16th, resulting in more than 100 flight cancellations (Schoofs 2023; Calluy and Belga 2023). Subsequent strikes on July 29th-30th (100 flights cancelled, affecting 20,000 passengers) and August 14th-15th (88 flights cancelled) followed (Truyts and Van Driessche 2023; Schoofs and Belga 2023). Ryanair proposed restoring the 20% wage decrease without the indexation increase, which pilots rejected. On the 7th of September, hours before Ryanair CEO Michael O'Leary was to do a press conference in Brus-

sels, the pilots announced another strike. On September 14, during a general shareholders' meeting, and September 15, the pilots would again stop working. Ryanair, however, did not want to start negotiations on a new CLA on rest times unless the court cases filed by some pilots were withdrawn. According to CNE, that was impossible as the court already started their investigation (Belga 2023a).

Negotiations resumed after the strikes, eventually leading to a consensus by the end of November. A few days before this preliminary agreement was reached, the court ruled that the company could not unilaterally terminate the CLA and had to respect the pilots' working hours. (Everaert 2023). The agreement between ACV/CSC and Ryanair thus entailed gradual wage increases over two and a half years, restoring pre-COVID wages with indexation, and improvements in rest times. Over 70% of pilots approved the Collective Labor Agreement (CLA) following union negotiations (Schillewaert and Belga 2023; Belga 2023b).

Description of the results and the impact:

The agreement, which runs until 2027, foresees to regularly raise the pilots' fixed pay. The intention is thus to reverse the retrenchments made by pilots during the covid pandemic. The pilots would also receive the indexation increases.

In this labour conflict, ACV/CSC was able to pressure Ryanair through collective actions (workplace bargaining power) and legal action (institutional power). The union kept pressure high by organising multiple strike actions, while also giving time to its members to recover both emotionally and financially. The legal actions by the unions further put pressure on the company.

CASE 3: The SERV on inclusion

Time frame: 2023

Organizations involved: The Socio-Economic Council of Flanders (*Sociaal-Economische Raad van Vlaanderen*; SERV) is the council for the Flemish employers' organisations (Voka, UNIZO, Boerenbond and Verso) and trade unions (ACV, ABVV, ACLVB). The SERV provides counsel to the Flemish Government and the Flemish Parliament on social and economic policies such as the labour market, economy, education, budgeting, energy, and social protection. The SERV prefers to proactively develop advice (<https://www.serv.be/serv/pagina/wat-doen-we>). The council cannot make CLAs and depends on the Flemish Government and Parliament to implement its advice.

Scope of case: The demographic challenges of migration and more specifically the entry of foreign workers in the Flemish labour market have long been a prominent debate in Flemish society. The agents within the labour market also have conflictual opinions. Employers see the labour supply as valuable in a context of labour shortages (Elias 2023), while employees are often concerned about the impact of migration on social security and on their own position (Mooijman 2024). Does migration displace jobs or is it indeed necessary for economic development? Although both sides show significant interest in the theme, social partners seem less involved in this regard.

Issue/Problem to be solved:

Despite ongoing efforts, the employment rates for individuals with a migration background (62.7%) and disabilities (46.5%) in Flanders remain significantly lower than the general population (77%). The Diversity Commission at the SERV thus marked its twentieth anniversary by highlighting persistent policy challenges and calling on Flemish politicians and the next Flemish Government to prioritize measures for creating a sustainable and inclusive

labour market. In December 2023, the council launched an Advice called “*Beleidsprioriteiten voor een Duurzame, Inclusieve Vlaamse Arbeidsmarkt*” (SERV 2023). The report formulates eight policy priorities for the Flemish government, with the goal to enhance the labour market participation of vulnerable groups by creating employment opportunities and addressing barriers to inclusion (SERV Commissie Diversiteit 2023).

Description of the results and the impact:

Despite the contentious nature of public discourse and political stances surrounding migration and the labour market participation of vulnerable demographics, the Flemish social partners have demonstrated a remarkable ability to reach consensus. They have shared their view with the Flemish minister of Economy, Innovation, Work, Social Economy and Agriculture. This report serves as tangible evidence that social dialogue remains a viable mechanism for addressing complex issues, showcasing the capacity of social partners to find common ground, even in the face of significant challenges.

BULGARIA

CASE 1: First ever collective agreement in Blagoevgrad hospital.

Time frame: 2022-2023

Organizations involved: CITUB, the Federation of Trade Unions in Healthcare at CITUB, and the local union organization at the Federation of Trade Unions in Healthcare.

Scope of case: Company level - “Multiprofile Hospital for Active Treatment - Blagoevgrad” AD.

Issue/Problem to be solved:

In general, medical workers in Bulgaria are underpaid for a long time and every year waves of medical workers migrate to Western Europe. Therefore trade unions focus on increasing the payments of the medical workers through various ways, including large protest demonstrations, symbolic strikes and negotiations on national, regional and company level.

Description of the way this has been reached:

In 2022, the medical workers in the hospital in Blagoevgrad held series of protest actions, blocked the traffic along the main boulevards in the city several times and demanded to update the salaries and solve the crisis in the health facility. One year after, on September 27, a Collective Agreement (CA) was signed with the trade union organization of the Federation of Trade Unions in Healthcare (FSZ) at CITUB in Blagoevgrad’s hospital. This is the first Collective Agreement after one year of negotiations. Participants in the negotiation process were Mrs. Slava Zlatanova and Mr. Plamen Radoslavov - vice-presidents of the FSZ, Sylvia Hristova, regional coordinator of the CITUB, Tatyana Kaneva, chairwoman of the trade union organization of the Federation of Trade Unions in Healthcare at the hospital, Dr. Ognyan Mitev, director of “Hospital - Bla-

goevgrad” Ltd. and the lawyer of the hospital Vanya Solachka.

Description of the results and the impact:

The signed CA in Blagoevgrad affects positively the working conditions and payments. The basic salaries of the medical staff increased between 32 and 40%. For a doctor with a specialty, for example, the basic monthly remuneration ranges between BGN 1,500 and BGN 1,900: for nurses, midwives, lab technicians and rehabilitators - between BGN 1,350 and BGN 1,400: for orderlies - BGN 900.

The food vouchers were also increased from BGN 2 to BGN 4. The payment for night work also increased.

CASE 2: The salaries of academicians at the Agricultural Academy increases by 17%.

Time frame: July-August 2023

Organizations involved: The Federation of Independent Trade Unions of Agriculture (FNSZ) and The Confederation of Independent Trade Unions in Bulgaria (CITUB).

Scope of case: Company level - Agricultural Academy.

Issue/Problem to be solved:

Low wage rates for scientists at the academy.

Description of the way this has been reached:

In July 2023, CITUB started protest actions in front of the parliament for higher salaries in budget sectors. As part of its demands, CITUB insisted on increasing budget allocated funds to the Agricultural Academy. As a result of the protest actions and the efforts of the FNSZ and CITUB, the 2023 budget of the Academy increased by BGN 3 million. After the final adoption of the state’s financial framework for 2023 at the end of July, FNSZ began a negotiation procedure to increase wages in the Acade-

my. About two weeks later, an agreement was reached.

Description of the results and the impact:

The basic salaries of academic staff at the Agricultural Academy increased by 17% as of 1 August 2023 and by more than 15% for all other staff. The increase was agreed by the President of FNSZ and the President of the Agriculture Academy. A supplementary increase in the additional monthly pay for highly qualified staff was also reached. The salary for staff with PhD education was increased in the range BGN 50 – BGN 70.

CASE 3: In 10 years: Teachers’ salaries in Bulgaria have increased nearly 4 times.

Time frame: 2007-2023

Organizations involved: Lead organizations are the trade union federations Union of Bulgarian Teachers at CITUB, Independent Teachers’ Union at CITUB, “Education” Union at the Confederation of Labour “Podkrepa”, and the national level confederations CITUB and CL “Podkrepa”.

Partner organizations in the social dialogue are the Ministry of Education and Science, the Union of Heads in the Public Education System in Bulgaria, and the Association of Directors in Secondary Education in the Republic of Bulgaria.

Scope of case: National level, Education sector, primary and secondary education level.

Issue/Problem to be solved:

Decent pay and working conditions for teachers.

Description of the way this has been reached:

The constant increase in teachers’ salaries and the good social dialogue between the social partners is a long-term process that has been reached as a result of years of union struggle. The most critical moment was the 2007 strike,

when teachers protested for a three weeks period. The strike engaged about 80% of the teaching staff in primary and secondary education. Teachers were demanding an increase of state education budget. Protest demonstrations were held in the capital city and in other large cities. A tent camp, blocked roads and hunger strike were simultaneously used. The 2007 teachers' strike had widespread public support. Before the strike, only two collective agreements (CAs) had been reached at sectoral level. After 2007, CLAs are regularly signed (following the termination of CA) with updated pay rates and other provisions.

Social dialogue in the primary and secondary education system is highly impacted by the higher rate of trade union density in the sector (83% union density rate in primary and secondary education).

Description of the results and the impact:

The starting salary rate of young teachers in Bulgaria reached BGN 1 709 in January 2023. The rate is agreed by the Minister of Education and Science Prof. Galin Tsokov and the social partners signing the CA for the education system. Thus, teachers' salaries represent 125% of the average country wage. For comparison, 10 years earlier - in 2013, the lowest salary rate for teachers was BGN 500, a senior teacher received BGN 530, and a head teacher between BGN 570 - 580.

CASE 4: Branch Collective Labour Agreement for the Metallurgy Sector (BCLA)

Time frame: November 2022 - November 2024

Organizations involved: The Trade Union Federation "Metalitsi" affiliated to CITUB, the National Federation "Metallurgy" affiliated to the Confederation of Labour "Podkrepa" and the Bulgarian Association of the Metallurgical Industry (BAMI)

Scope of case: Sector level - Metallurgy industry

Issue/Problem to be solved:

Decent pay, benefits and safe working conditions

Description of the way this has been reached:

The BCLA is the result of many years of social dialogue and the good relations between the partners in the sector.

Description of the results and the impact:

The BCLA builds on the benefits for workers in the sector and has a 2 year term. It was signed in May 2023, but enters into force retroactively (from November 2022).

The strong social partnership leads not only to the solution of concrete problems, but also to sustainable development and competitiveness.

Sustainable wage growth and social benefits are always at the forefront of the bargaining process and when the sector's social partners are renegotiating. Some of the benefits for the employees in the Metallurgy sector enshrined in the BCLA are: BGN 950 minimum wage: a mechanism for income compensation in the event of increased inflation: higher pay for night work and on-call time: increase in the amount of free food: envisaged 21% increase in the minimum wage.

There is no base trade union organization (within the enterprises) affiliated to the Metalitsi TU Federation at CITUB that does not have a signed collective agreement. This is the result of maintaining a quality dialogue not only at branch level but also with employers at company level. The number of people directly employed in metallurgical production is around 13.5-14 thousand, while over 50 thousand workers are indirectly involved in auxiliary activities and services. The sector accounts for 15% of the country's industrial production (BGN 11-12 billion) and reaches 12-14% of Bulgaria's exports.

CASE 5: First CLA in the multinational enterprise STS Medical Group, Sandanski

Time frame: November 2022

Organizations involved: Federation of Independent Light Industry Trade Unions (FITULI) at CITUB, the local trade union organization in the enterprise with FITULI, representatives of the employer

Scope of case: Enterprise level – STS Medical Group, Sandanski

Issue/Problem to be solved:

The CLA addresses the demands of the company employees for higher wages. The company employs 400 people who have received inadequate wage increases over the past several years. Given the crisis that followed the health pandemic and the high rates of inflation, the purchasing power of wages is rapidly declining.

In the light industry in Bulgaria, there is no signed collective agreement at branch level, which also leads to difficult local bargaining and the less widespread use of CLAs at enterprise level.

Description of the way this has been reached:

Over a period of one and a half year, repeated attempts have been made by the union to negotiate a CLA with the employer, but without success. This led to effective industrial action, work stoppages by the workers and the organization of a large protest rally with the help of the Federation of Independent Light Industry Trade Unions (FITULI).

At the time of the protest, the average wage (AW) in the company was around BGN 915 (against a national minimum wage of BGN 695 for 2022). As a result of the protest, negotiations with the employer were held, which included the employer's representative from the

Human Resources Department, who arrived in Bulgaria specially for the occasion and the President of the FITULI, leading to the signing of a CLA in the company.

The international organizations of which the Federation of Light Industry is a member - IndustriAll European Trade Union and IndustriAll Global Union, representing over 50 million industrial workers in 141 countries worldwide and in Europe, expressed solidarity with the employees' demands. Solidarity with their colleagues was also expressed by the federation's trade union organizations at Ideal Standard - Vidima, Sevlievo and Mizia-96 AD, Pleven. In a declaration of support, they pointed out that given the high inflation, the increased prices of fuel and energy and the necessary means of subsistence, an adequate increase in wages and other payments was necessary through the mechanism of collective bargaining.

Description of the results and the impact:

An increase in food vouchers from BGN 80 to BGN 200, a Christmas supplement of BGN 60 and the union's participation in the drafting of the internal rules for wage bargaining and the internal rules of procedure were agreed. These rights were enshrined in the relevant sections of the collective agreement.

An agreement on the cessation of industrial action was also signed between the employer, the union organization and the FITULI.

The persistence, the continuous struggle and the support of FITULI and CITUB facilitated the conclusion of the CLA in the enterprise.

CASE 6: First Collective Labour Agreement in the State Puppet Theatre - Gabrovo

Time frame: August 2022 - August 2023

Organizations involved: The director of the theatre, the chairman of the trade union orga-

nization with the Union of Bulgarian Actors affiliated to CITUB and the regional coordinator of CITUB in the town of Gabrovo.

Scope of case: company: Enterprise level – the State Puppet Theatre in the town of Gabrovo

Issue/Problem to be solved:

Higher wages and guarantee of other benefits for workers.

Description of the way this has been reached:

The agreement to sign a collective labour agreement at the State Puppet Theatre is the result of a six-month negotiation process. The agreement has a term of one year. The signing of the agreement was thanks to the joint efforts and actions of the trade unions at different levels: sectoral, regional and company. The negotiation process involved the Regional Council of CITUB in Gabrovo and the Union of Bulgarian Actors - an associate member of CITUB.

Description of the results and the impact:

The CLA regulates wage increases through minimum wage thresholds for all employees by position:

- For an actor: minimum wage (MW) by a coefficient of 1.6:
- For a play director, stage designer, dramaturg, composer: minimum wage by a coefficient of 1.8:
- For a deputy director: minimum wage by a coefficient of 1.9:
- For all other positions: minimum wage by a coefficient of 1.4.

As a result of the agreements, those working in the theatre under the Melpomene programme will receive a 50% pay rise.

It was agreed to pay an additional remuneration for work performance and results, as well as for acquired work record (length of service) and professional experience - not less than 1% for each year of service. Retirement benefits for trade union members with up to 10 years of service in the theatre were agreed at 6 gross

salaries, and for those with more than 10 years of service - at 10 gross salaries. In the event of termination of employment due to sickness, a trade union member will be entitled to a severance payment of 4 gross salaries, and if laid off and remains unemployed - 2 gross salaries.

The basic paid annual leave for all employees party to the contract will be 36 working days for the artistic staff, 30 working days for the technical staff and 26 working days for the administrative staff. Additional paid leave has also been agreed for employees with 50 percent or more impairment, leave for mothers with two or more children, paid leave on marriage, on blood donation and on death of lineal relatives.

CASE 7: First Collective Labour Agreement for the employees of the Executive Agency for Fisheries and Aquaculture (EAFA)

Time frame: February 2023 – February 2024

Organizations involved: The Federation of Independent Trade Unions in Agriculture (FITUA), the Executive Director of the Executive Agency for Fisheries and Aquaculture (EAFA), the regional coordinator of CITUB in Burgas and the trade union organization in the Executive Agency for Fisheries and Aquaculture (EAFA) with the FITUA.

Scope of case: National level - divisions of the Executive Agency for Fisheries and Aquaculture (EAFA) throughout the country.

Issue/Problem to be solved:

Improving individual parameters of working conditions.

Description of the way this has been reached:

The trade union organization of CITUB in EAFA was established at the end of April 2022. Its

membership comprises over 50% of EAFA employees across the country.

Negotiations for the signing of a CLA were initiated shortly after the establishment of the trade union. The negotiation process itself lasted more than half a year, requiring coordinated efforts of trade unions at different levels (sectoral, regional, company). The President of the Federation of Independent Trade Unions in Agriculture (FITUA), the President of the Regional Council of CITUB in Burgas and the Chair of the trade union organization in the agency negotiated with the Executive Director of EAFA. The parties were able to agree and sign the CLA in February 2023. The term of the contract is 1 year.

Description of the results and the impact:

A higher amount of basic paid annual leave has been agreed:

- from 3 to 5 years of service in EAFA - 22 working days:
- for more than 5 years of service in EAFA - 24 working days,
- for reduced working capacity of 50 and over 50% - 27 days.

For additional wages it is agreed that for each hour worked not less than BGN 1.30 shall be paid and for time on call - BGN 0.80. The Collective Labour Agreement also provides for additional material incentives in the form of cash rewards to employees on Easter, Christmas and, for female employees, on 8 March. For the benefit of the employees and within the framework of the Agency's budget, the employees' transport costs from their place of residence to their place of work and back shall be paid. The contract also provides for the following compensations from the employer on termination of employment for those entitled to a pension:

- Those with up to 5 years of service in EAFA – compensation in the amount of 2 gross salaries:
- From 5 to 10 years of service in EAFA - 3 gross salaries:

- Over 10 years of service in EAFA - 7 gross salaries.

The CLA also contains more favourable occupational safety and health provisions than the statutory ones.

GREECE

CASE 1: Successful strike of E-food platform delivery drivers and creation of enterprise trade union.

Time frame: September – November 2021

Organizations involved: lead organizations and partners organizations: Grassroots trade union of delivery drivers (SVEOD), Sectoral trade union of Employees in Food and Tourism Industry (SETEPE), Sectoral Federation of Employees in Food and Tourism Industry (POEET), Enterprise trade union of E-food employees

Scope of case: Company level (employees of E-food platform delivery company)

Issue/Problem to be solved: E-food platform delivery company employed both permanent employees and temporary freelancers under 3-month contracts. In September 2021, the company attempted to lay off 115 permanent employees, asking them to become freelancers in order to continue working for the platform.

Description of the way this has been reached: On 22.09.2021, the sectoral Federation of Employees in Food and Tourist Industry (SETEPE) proclaimed a national partial work stoppage to protest against the precarious and dangerous working conditions in the sector, and especially those faced by the most vulnerable and exposed workers, the delivery drivers. In Athens, the grassroots trade union of delivery drivers SVEOD joined the work stoppage, and in collaboration with a collective of drivers in E-food platform delivery company, it organized a motorcycle demonstration on the streets of Athens. The main trade union of Employees in Food and Tourist Industry in Athens (SETEPE) also supported this initiative. Rep-

resentatives of both SVEOD and SETEPE met with the E-food employers. Afterwards, E-food drivers organized a general assembly and decided to go on another 24h strike on 24.09, in order to exert more pressure on the company to fulfil their demands. As a solidarity act to the struggle carried out by E-food drivers, the sectoral Federation (POEET) also declared a sectoral general 24h strike on 24.09.

Description of the results and the impact: Under the consecutive pressure by workers and trade unionists, alongside the boycott actions launched by consumers in social media, the company was forced to recall the decision and proceeded into turning all freelancer contracts into permanent ones (for around 2000 workers). A militant enterprise union of E-food delivery drivers was also created in November 2021 with branches in both Athens and Thessaloniki, which recently started negotiations for an enterprise CLA. The E-food enterprise union is the first Greek union in a sector of the platform economy.

Overall, this example shows that coalition building between official and grassroots unions, such as the collaboration between the SETEPE union, the E-food employees collective and the SVEOD grassroots union in this case, seems to have a positive impact on the renewal of industrial actions and unionism (e.g. creation of a new militant enterprise union). Moreover, unions' practice of using digital media and campaigns for dissemination purposes, seems to have enhanced the social visibility of the struggle, leading to support from other social actors (e.g. from consumers, who boycotted the company and stood in support of strikers).

CASE 2: Conclusion of CLA for all dockworkers in Piraeus Port Docks II and III

Time frame: October 2021- June 2022

Organizations involved: Trade union of Cargo dockworkers in Piraeus Port Docks II and III (ENEDEP), other maritime trade unions and trade unions of dockworkers active in the Docks.

Scope of case: Sectoral level (all dockworkers employed in Piraeus Port Docks II and III)

Issue/Problem to be solved: In late October 2021, a cargo worker in Piraeus Port had a deathly accident on duty, due to lack of implemented safety measures in the Docks by the subsidiary company of COSCO.

Description of the way this has been reached: CLA negotiations between the trade union of cargo workers in Docks II and III (ENEDEP) in Piraeus Port and the employers had started since 2018. After the deathly accident of their colleague in October 2021, ENEDEP called for seven consecutive 24h strikes, until 31.10.2021. Trade unionists demanded the implementation of health and safety measures at work, such as 6-member working teams instead of 4, abolition of flexible/casual labour contracts, inclusion of the whole sector to the unhealthy and hazardous industries regime and start of negotiations for a collective labour agreement in Piraeus Port. ENEDEP unionists organized protests and demonstrations in Piraeus with informational purpose, while they also met with the Minister in Maritime Affairs and filed a petition with their demands. The employers' side made several appeals to the Court of Piraeus and to the government in order to declare strike activity illegal. The major disruption caused by the stoppage of cargo circulation in the whole Piraeus Port area, gave broad media coverage to the protests. Several political parties including the Communist Party, Mera25, Syriza, and

others, publicly expressed their support to ENEDEP. Moreover, various main trade unions in the maritime and shipping industry, such as the trade unions of engineers and cooks (STEFENSON) supported the strike in solidarity with ENEDEP trade unionists. The trade union organized another 48h strike on 05 - 06.11.2021, a 24h one on 01.12.2021 (which was declared illegal by the Court of Piraeus) and another on 07.02.2022. By February 2022, another trade union called "Syndicate" had been created in Docks II and Docks III, which openly expressed its opposition to the strikes organized by ENEDEP trade unionists. Eventually, in June 2022, the employers agreed to sign a CLA with the participation of all trade unions in Docks II and III of Piraeus Port, including ENEDEP and another two unions of dockworkers active in Docks II and III.

Description of the results and the impact: The CLA stipulated a 20% salary increase and several benefits, such as implementation of health and safety measures at work and increase of team numbers during each shift to 5 instead of 4. Thus, the ENEDEP union's strategy of employing large-scale, persistent industrial actions throughout a long period of time proved to be a crucial means for exerting pressure on employers and achieving successful negotiations, in a particularly high-risk economic sector.

CASE 3: The Dancers' Union SEHOHO drafted a comprehensive CLA plan, which is used for informal negotiations between employees and employers in the sector

Time frame: 2022

Organizations involved: lead organizations and partners organizations; Dancers' Union (SEHOHO)

Scope of case: Sectoral level (dancers' sector)

Issue/Problem to be solved: For SEHOHO Dancers' trade union, signing a CLA is challenging due to the absence of a fixed employer to negotiate with. In general, the sector of artists, and particularly of dancers, is characterized by a large degree of flexibility and fragmentation in regards to labour relations; usually dancers are employed on a fixed-contract or piece-rate basis, either by theatres, festivals or dance schools. In its effort to address this issue, SEHOHO union had held several meetings with state representatives from the Ministry of Culture in order to discuss their demands concerning the necessity to conclude a CLA, but no avail.

Description of the way this has been reached: In 2022 the members took the initiative to draft an unofficial document of employment terms¹. It was created during the general assemblies of the union, discussed and voted with participation of all members. This document determines basic working provisions, payment rate, working hours, benefits, leave policy, as well as a code of ethical conduct in the workplace (against mobbing, gender and sexual discrimination, etc).

Description of the results and the impact: According to trade unionists, this CLA plan is ready to be presented to the relevant employer organization or to the Ministry of Culture, whenever future collective negotiations are about to start. However, at present time, it has also a practical purpose. It serves as a useful basis for informal negotiations regarding employment terms and working conditions between employees and employers in the dance sector, and thus partially makes up for the lack of a sectoral CLA. *"We consider it to be quite useful because it legitimizes and delegitimizes certain practices concerning working*

¹ <https://sexwxo.weebly.com>



conditions in our sector, both for employees and employers." (excerpt from interview with SEHOHO trade unionist). What this unofficial practice of bargaining can show, is that unions can find novel, grassroots ways to guarantee a minimum protection of working rights, in cases of insufficient institutional power which renders official bargaining difficult. Additionally, such practices seem to foster a participatory culture within the union on the basis of formulating collective claims, and can prepare the members for engaging more effectively in future negotiations.

CASE 4: The Hellenic Actors' Union (SEI) concluded three CLAs with the biggest theatre production companies and started negotiations for another one with private companies.

Time frame: 2022-2023

Organizations involved: lead organizations and partners organizations: SEI (Hellenic Actors' Union)

Scope of case: Sectoral level (artists' and actors' sector)

Issue/Problem to be solved: Protection of employment and working rights in artistic professions.

Description of the way this has been reached: The artist sector was one of the most brutally hit by the pandemic, since many artists were traditionally working with seasonal labor contracts. As a result, when activities in the sector were halted due to lockdown in 2020, artists in various sectors were excluded from the state support of 800 euros provided for suspended workers. In April 2020, "Support Art Workers" movement was initially launched as a digital

social media campaign which brought together 25.000 art workers from different disciplines across Greece, in order to address the invisibility of the labor relations in the art industry and the insufficient state support provided to art workers. The initiators of the movement were politicized, left-wing artists, who had an experience in social movement participation but most of them were not yet unionized. The movement maintained an active social media presence, launched digital campaigns of support, organized protests, festivals and symbolic actions in major urban centers, demanding, inter alia the establishment of a 535 euros monthly financial benefit to all suspended workers in the industry.

“Support Art workers” movement incited intense processes of politicization for a heterogeneous and fragmented workforce facing various degrees of flexibility. Supporters and militants of movement later participated in the leadership of trade unions in the arts (SEI Actors’ Union, SEHOHO Dancers’ Union, “Under the Scene” union of technical personnel in theatre productions) and they managed to rejuvenate them. SEI, the actors’ union, saw a big rise in its membership rate after Covid-19 – it currently counting around 2000 members. In 2022 and 2023, via intense and long-time negotiations with employers, the union signed three CLAs with the biggest state theater production companies (National State Theater in Thessaloniki, Municipal Theater of Patras and National Theatre in Athens) and has currently started negotiations for a another one with private theater companies.

Description of the results and the impact: Organizationally boosted by previous mobilizations in the artists’ sector, SEI union managed to maintain the CLAs with the National State Theaters in Thessaloniki and Athens, which had been signed by the previous union leadership before Covid-19, and additionally sign a new one with the Theater of Patras and start negotiations for another one with private theater employers. These practices show that the union successfully maintained a legacy of ef-

fective social dialogue and further enhanced it. The recent CLAs include several extra benefits for employees compared to previous ones, such as securing Monday as a day-off day for all employees, 1 ½ month of fully paid rehearsals, rights for the recording and online streaming of performances, etc. All these parameters outlined in the CLAs, significantly improved actors’ working conditions.

What is more, the SEI Actors’ union, alongside the SEHOHO dancers’ union and other trade unions in the arts, participated in the massive mobilizations that were organized by art students organizations and school students against the presidential decree 85/2022 introduced by New Democracy government, which attempted to downgrade their educational qualifications, posing a threat for the bargaining power of the employees in the sector². The protests, strikes and theatre building occupations took place in the cities of Athens, Thessaloniki and Patras and peaking in January-April 2023.

CASE 5: Creation of National Sectoral Trade Union of Researchers and Higher Education Employees (SERETE)

Time frame: 2021

Organizations involved: lead organizations and partners organizations; SERETE trade union

Scope of case: Sectoral level (Researchers, Higher Education personnel)

Issue/Problem to be solved: Working conditions in Greek academia have been character-

² Announcement of the Greek Actors’ Union (SEI) for the decree 85/2022.



ized by long-term precarity due to the prevalence of fixed-contract employment and lack of insurance for PhD students, early-career researchers and non-tenured personnel alike. Unionization processes have traditionally been scarce in the sector.

Description of the way this has been reached:

In 2021, leftist and anarchist militants, members of the social collective *Attack against unemployment and precarity*, along with other non-organized researchers, participated in the creation of the national sectoral union of Researchers and Higher Education Personnel (SERETE). Since then, SERETE has been quite active. It organized its first national sectoral strike in March 2022 and during the following years and has taken various initiatives to address precarious working conditions, dismissals, and gender discrimination (such as sexual harassment cases) in academic environments. The trade union has established committees in various higher education institutions, as well as union working groups/committees (for example, a committee on gender discrimination).

Description of the results and the impact: The creation of SERETE union has been particularly important for boosting unionization processes in a historically precarious sector. Notably, the union's inner life is characterized by a democratic culture, based on collective decision-making during General Assemblies and function of specialized committees for specific issues, such as for gender discrimination at workplace; these practices are crucial for attaining union legitimacy, by actively engaging all members.

Even though an official discussion about a sectoral CLA for researchers is still in a preliminary stage within SERETE, a collective dispute started between the union and the State Scholarship Foundation (IKY) in 2022. IKY had requested that all PhD grantees who had exceeded the 5-year research completion timeframe, return back part of the grant sum. SERETE opposed this decision, arguing that scholarships

correspond to research work that was properly carried out and therefore should not be returned by any means. The dispute is still ongoing. The union has organized several protests at the buildings of the IKY Foundation and demands that scholarships be legally recognized as wages, encompassing all working rights similarly to an official employment contract (such as insurance, maternity leave, benefits, pension rights).

Additionally, SERETE is very active in supporting protests organized by other actors of the educational sector, such as student organizations and trade unions in secondary education, against the recent reforms in public education (e.g. against the "university police" bill, the "evaluation" bill for public school teachers, the bill for the establishment of private universities, etc.)

ITALY

CASE 1: Application of the national CLA (NCLA) for Logistics and Transport to workers in the furniture chain Mondo Convenienza

Time frame: May 2023 – January 2024

Organizations involved: Lead organizations are Si.Cobas Prato e Firenze, supporting organizations GKN Factory Collective, other social movements (students, ecologists, etc.), ANPI, and institution at local level.

Scope of case: Company level - “Mondo Convenienza”, at national level.

Issue/Problem to be solved

The main problem addressed through the mobilization of the workers of the Campi Bisenzio (Florence) factory, supported by the Si.Cobas Prato and Florence trade union, concerned the exhausting shifts, low wages and poor safety conditions. In order to improve working conditions, the protest demanded the application of the NCLA of Logistics to workers who work (directly or through contract companies) for Mondo Convenienza, to whom the multiservice contract was applied instead. Since the same multiservice contract is considered by the union in question as degrading in terms of rights and wages, the protest demanded the abolition of this type of contract often adopted inappropriately by companies precisely because it is advantageous to them.

Description of the way this has been reached;

The workers' protest was expressed through a very wide-ranging repertoire. What has made this dispute known throughout the country, however, is the decision to go on strike for 162 days and set up a garrison in front of the company gates to prevent furniture deliveries,

using the slogan ‘zero rights, zero deliveries’. During the months of permanent garrison, there were numerous attempts by the police to evict them, which the workers resisted, supported by local institutions (Campi Bisenzio municipality), students who set up a student camp, associations such as ANPI and others in solidarity. Mondo Converganza is the motto the workers coined to highlight the importance of uniting struggles. Presidio, demonstrations, and appeals were some of the forms of action chosen by the union and the workers.

Description of the results and the impact

From 1 March 2024, for a duration of 3 years, the companies carrying out the furniture delivery and assembly service for Mondo Convenienza will apply the NCLA Logistics and Transport, signed between Ansi (National Association of Integrated Services) and the trade unions FitI-Cgil, Fit-Cisl and Uil Trasporti. With the NCLA Logistics and Transport, employees get a significant increase in their monthly pay, as well as holidays, leave, travel and function allowances, and meal vouchers.

This change will affect more than 6,000 Mondo Convenienza employees throughout Italy. Although the mobilization was led by the trade union Si.Cobas Prato and Firenze, the adoption of those NCLA to the Mondo Convenienza workers has been signed by CGIL, CISL and UIL, due to the existing collective agreement rules in Italy.

CASE 2: Adoption of a (logistics or trade) NCLA for riders and recognition of the subordinate nature of work

Time frame: 2018 – ongoing

Organizations involved: lead organizations and partners organizations: Riders Union Bo-

logna, other riders of JustEat, Foodora, Glovo, UberEats, etc.; confederal unions as NidiL CGIL, CISL and UIL.

Scope of case: company level, sector/industry level, national level: Sector level – Delivery services, at national level.

Issue/Problem to be solved

Absence of rights and protections for riders, absence of contracts or laws regulating the sector and recognizing the subordinate nature of work.

Description of the way this has been reached;

With the spread of new forms of work, such as those linked to digital platforms, new demands from workers have also emerged. Since 2018, protests by riders linked to various Delivery platforms have grown, and some organizations such as Riders Union Bologna have developed. Through organizing workers and striking from deliveries, riders have forced the issue onto the public agenda, and various trade union, governmental and corporate actors have begun to address it, albeit with different objectives, sometimes contested by the riders themselves (as will be seen below).

Riders Union Bologna signed, together with other actors, the “Digital Workers’ Bill of Rights” (Carta dei diritti dei lavoratori digitali) and submitted to the government in 2019 some demands such as the extension of employment guarantees to platform workers and the end of piecework (instead maintained in the contract signed between UGL and Assodelivery).

Description of the results and the impact;

In 2020 the UGL union and the trade association Assodelivery signed a Riders’ NCLA that recognises the autonomous nature of work and piecework. The NCLA was contested by many riders who immediately called new strikes and defined by CGIL and UIL as a capestro contract. The imposition by delivery companies of this NCLA on workers has been defined by the Court of Bologna, Court of Florence and Court of Appeal of Palermo as illegitimate.

In the meantime, Just Eat has exited Assodelivery and signed the NCLA logistics and transport for riders with NidiL CGIL, UIL and CISL, and the riders’ goal is the extension of this contract to other platforms. In 2021 the same European Union issued a directive recognizing the subordinate nature of the work of riders.

Although the riders’ ultimate goal has not yet been achieved, their mobilization has pushed for the regulation of the sector.

CASE 3: National Smartworking Protocol

Time frame: 2021

Organizations involved: Trade unions (CGIL, UIL, USB, CISL, UGL), employers organizations (Confindustria, Confapi, Confcommercio, Confesercenti, Confartigianato, Can, etc.) and Minister of Labour.

Scope of case: company level, sector/industry level, national level: National level

Issue/Problem to be solved

Identification of standards and rules for agile working from home

Description of the way this has been reached;

Through social dialogue between the parties, an attempt was made to reach an agreement regulating work from home. While the topic was already extremely relevant given the transformations that had taken place in the world of work, the pandemic made this issue and the development of a regulation on smartworking even more urgent for pandemic-related safety reasons.

Description of the results and the impact:

Signature of the “National Protocol containing the guidelines for collective bargaining on agile work in the private sector” (Protocollo Nazionale contenente le linee di indirizzo per la contrattazione collettiva sul lavoro agile nel settore privato.). Among the 16 points that

define the agreement, there is first of all the recognition that adherence to agile work is voluntary and is subject to the signing of an individual agreement, so that the refusal of the worker of smart working does not integrate the extremes of dismissal. Among the issues regulated are the right to disconnection, organisation of work without a specific timetable, remote trade union rights, employer-provided work tools, security guarantees, equal pay, gender equality, and other.

CASE 4: Introduction of FFP2 masks for personnel working with children between 0 and 6 years.

Time frame: 2020-2021

Organizations involved: lead organizations and partners organizations: USB P.I.Settore Educativo e Scolastico

Scope of case: company level, sector/industry level, national level: Sector level (nursery and elementary school) at national level

Issue/Problem to be solved

Enforcement of prevention standards related to Covid 19 through the use of protective equipment. USB conducted a large campaign on the issue of health, both in general and during the pandemic, supporting many disputes related to it, and the effective adoption of the stipulated rules. Among the various disputes is the one related to the provision of FFP2 masks to staff caring for children exempt from the mask-wearing obligation in the 0-6 year services. Along with this request, there are others concerning more recruitment in schools, classes with smaller numbers, continuous monitoring of infection (not guaranteed by the Green Pass).

Description of the way this has been reached; USB started this battle from the beginning of

the health emergency, publishing in August 2020 the document "Safe at School" and sending it to all national and regional institutions. The demands were first taken up by some municipalities, such as Milan and Rome, and then implemented in 2021 by the national government when it converted the Green Pass Decree for Schools, Universities and Transport into law. Information and pressure activities on institutions were central.

Description of the results and the impact;

Provision of FFP2 masks to workers working with children, to protect the workers themselves who work in close physical contact with children, and to protect children and their families. This measure, although considered insufficient, is essential to ensure the resilience of the service itself.

CASE 5: Stopping collective redundancies and ecological reconversion of GKN

Time frame: July 2021 - ongoing

Organizations involved: GKN Factory Collective (informal workers organization of GKN) is the leading organizations, sometimes supported by other trade unions as FIOM (in particular in negotiation phase) and Si.Cobas Prato e Firenze. There is a very wide coalition of partners organizations linked to climate movements (such as Fridays for Future), mutual workers cooperative (such as Rimaflow), associations (Arci, Anpi, etc.), ethic bank (as Banca Etica), local institutions and several informal organizations and social movements.

Scope of case: Firstly factory level, then national automotive sector level.

Issue/Problem to be solved

Stopping collective layoffs, reindustrialisation of the production site in an ecological way and with public capital, and re-employment of the

workers.

This battle was connected to a broader struggle for a state-led ecological industrial policy based on public capital, workers' control, and production aimed at social utility. Among the demands made by the workers was the enactment of a law against relocation to prevent unfair practices by large companies in the sector, as was the case in their case. With this objective, the factory collective supported by solidarity lawyers produced a bill that was presented to parliament in 2021 but was rejected.

Description of the way this has been reached;

Following the closure of GKN in Campi Bisenzio (Florence) and the dismissal of all the workers, they decided to preside over the factory and set up a permanent assembly inside it, participated in by workers and solidarity. The victory of two appeals for anti-union conduct sustained by the FIOM against the company has allowed the workers to receive their salaries these last two years or so (albeit with really significant delays), while a process of industrial reconversion has been started from below, supported by means of the popular shareholding. Negotiations with the Region of Tuscany for economic and political support for the reconversion project are still in progress. The forms of supporting the dispute have been very varied: demonstrations, symbolic actions, appeals, institutional meetings, festivals, cultural productions, tours, crowdfunding, mutualism practices, and much more.

Description of the results and the impact;

The results of this dispute are not yet definitive, and the workers' mobilisation goes on. Some objectives have not yet been achieved, such as public intervention with projects and capital to restart production, and the approval of a law against relocations. Other objectives, such as the rejection of redundancies, have been achieved and allow the dispute to continue.

In any case, this can be considered an important example for the impact it produced. Although there is a deficit in terms of collective

bargaining and a weak state intervention in the issue, the mobilisation that arose around the dispute was very significant, as it brought labour and the need for a more present state in collective bargaining back to the centre of the political debate, while building a new imaginary in terms of socio-environmental relations, ecological transition from below, and working class culture.

ROMANIA

CASE 1: Increased Payment and a New Collective Labour Agreement in the Health Sector

Time frame: June 2022 - September 2023

Organizations involved: Lead organization is the National Federation SANITAS affiliated to the National Confederation of Free Trade Unions of Romania “Brotherhood” (Confederația Națională a Sindicatelor Libere din România “Frăția” - CNSLR-FRĂȚIA) and partner organisation is Health Solidarity Federation of Romania (Federația „Solidaritatea Sanitară” din România - FSSR) affiliated to the National Trade Union Confederation “Cartel Alfa” (Confederația Națională Sindicală “Cartel Alfa” - CNS Cartel ALFA).

Scope of case: Sector level - Health Sector

Issue/Problem to be solved

Romania’s health care system is facing both staff shortages for years (mainly due to the migration of medical staff to Western European countries) and underfinancing at sector level, including in terms of infrastructure, services and low wages for medical and auxiliary staff. 80% of health care and social care employees work for less than the national average income. Most of them are close to the minimum wage. This situation has been deepened in the last decade due to the old law on social dialogue (SDL 62/2011 - in force until December 2022), that led to a decline in collective bargaining power. However, even during the restrictive period of the pandemic, when statutory wage increases were frozen by the government, SANITAS Federation continued to raise these issues fighting for their members’ rights through numerous petitions, strikes and large protest demonstrations at all

levels (unity, local, regional, national). The current legislative framework for social dialogue relaunched collective bargaining at all levels (including sectoral and national).

Description of the way this has been reached

On 15 June 2022, with 10000 protesters on the streets, the SANITAS Federation launched a series of protest actions, rallies, strikes, intense negotiations with political decision-makers in the coalition government (e.g. Prime Minister, Minister of Health, Ministry of Labour and Social Protection), and opening labour conflicts in the public health and social care sector. The actions continued throughout 2023.

On 1st February 2023 the National Council of the SANITAS Federation decided the calendar of protest actions, the demands being: Urgent triggering of government negotiations with social partners on the draft new law on salaries of staff paid from public funds; Ensure fair financing for health and social care institutions; Increase the income of health and social care workers.

From 6 to 8 February 2023 SANITAS organized protests with more than 2000 union members in Victory Square in front of the Government, followed by a march along the route of Victory Square, the main hospitals, the institutions responsible for the health of the population and to the headquarters of the two governing parties - the Social Democratic Party and the National Liberal Party. The grievances expressed were related to the non-compliance with the existing wage legislation (Law no. 153/2017) in the two sectors. Concerns were also raised about the authorities’ commitment in the National Recovery and Resilience Plan to change the public sector wage legislation, including bonuses, without considering the specificities of work in the health and social care sectors. SANITAS Federation representatives have imposed their demands by participating in negotiations with the social partners on the new law on salaries of the budgetary system staff. Also, have expressed their disagreement with the freezing of posts in the health and social

care system.

Description of the results and the impact

Some of the key results achieved by the SANITAS Federation in 2023 are as follows:

1. Mai 2023 - the Government agreed the unlock of 14,000 jobs in the health system.
2. On 8 June 2023, the government approved the Emergency Ordinance bringing all basic salaries for all employees listed in Annex 2 of Law 153/2017 in Health and Social Care to the maximum level (2022 level). As a result of the actions taken and continuous negotiations with the authorities/government, SANITAS has been able to obtain wage increases and bonuses for all categories of represented employees, which have partially redressed the injustices of the past 5 years.
3. As of 29 May, negotiations on the draft of the new budget salary law resumed at the Ministry of Labour. The Minister agreed to respect the principles set out by SANITAS. At the same time, the authorities have committed themselves to revise the staff hierarchies in order to eliminate inequalities and reposition nurses in the future grid. Recognition of the important role of nurses in the functioning of the public health system will be reflected in the government programme.
4. The authorities have found financial resources that have been allocated for the payment of holiday vouchers for all employees in the health system.
5. On 5 September 2023, SANITAS Federation signed the new collective labour agreement (CLA) for the public HEALTH sector covering the period 2023-2025. The new CLA entered into force on 11.09.2023.
6. Started negotiations with the authorities for a new collective bargaining agreement at the level of the collective bargaining sector SOCIAL CARE (in the last 15 years there has not been a CLA at this level).

CASE 2: Increased Wages and a New Collective Labour Agreement in the Pre-university Education Sector

Time frame: December 2021 - July 2023

Organizations involved: Federation of Free Trade Unions in Education (Federația Sindicatelor Libere din Învățământ - FSLI) and Federation of Education Trade Unions "SPIRU HARET" (Federația Sindicatelor din Educație "SPIRU HARET" - FSE-SPIRU HARET), Federation of Trade Unions "ALMA MATER" (Federația Națională Sindicală "ALMA MATER" - FNS-ALMA MATER)

Scope of case: Sector level - Education

Issue/Problem to be solved:

Following several protest and failed negotiations with government representatives over the last three years, the Federation of Education Trade Unions "SPIRU HARET" (Federația Sindicatelor din Educație "SPIRU HARET" - FSE-SPIRU HARET) of the National Confederation of Free Trade Unions of Romania "Brotherhood" (Confederația Națională a Sindicatelor Libere din România "Frăția" - CNSLR-FRĂȚIA), the Federation of Free Trade Unions in Education (Federația Sindicatelor Libere din Învățământ - FSLI) of the Confederation of Democratic Trade Unions from Romania (Confederația Sindicatelor Democratice din România - CSDR) and the Federation of Trade Unions "ALMA MATER" (Federația Națională Sindicală "ALMA MATER" - FNS-ALMA MATER) launched a series of large national protest actions on 10 May 2023 that lasted over a month. Tens of thousands of members took part in protest marches, warning strikes and a nationwide general strike. Teachers demanded fair pay increases and bonuses for all teaching and non-teaching staff in the education sector. Education unions also called for increased investment in education (endowments and infrastructure) to

improve the quality of education. Despite the promises of political decision-makers, the education sector has been underfunded for many years.

Description of the way this has been reached

Over the past three years, education trade union organisations have undertaken a series of actions to draw the attention of governments to the problems in education that need to be urgently addressed:

- 6 December 2021 - 163,000 petitions from education employees were submitted to the Government Registrar's Office requesting an emergency pay rise;
- 20 - 22 December 2021 - picketing of the Romanian Government's headquarters;
- 13 January 2022 - picketing of the Romanian Government building;
- 19 January 2022 - two-hour warning strike;
- 25 May 2022 - protest rally in Victory Square;
- 1 February 2023 - picketing of the Romanian Government;
- 21 February 2023 - the education unions announce, via a press release, that they will launch a general strike;
- 29 March 2023 - picketing of the Romanian Government;
- 25 - 26 April 2023 - picketing of the Romanian Government;
- 10 May 2023 - a protest march attended by more than 15,000 education workers;
- 17 May 2023 - two-hour warning strike. Teachers suspended their work for two hours, from 11.00 to 13.00.
- 22 May 2023 - teachers from all over the country stop working and start a general strike and large protest marches take place all over the country until June 12.

Multiple rounds of negotiations with the Government representatives failed to accomplish with the protesters' demands. The teachers' strike ends with the publication in the Official Monitor of Emergency Ordinance 57/2023,

which provides for the settlement of the demands of education employees, as negotiated by the Government with the trade union federations.

Description of the results and the impacts

Following the nationwide strike, with over 150,000 employees on the streets at the end of May 2023, pay rises were granted with immediate impact. A starting teacher would receive a net salary of 3,157 lei/637 euro (gross salary 5,400 lei) from June, reflecting a 31.7% increase. In addition, the leaders of the governing coalition have promised that in 2024 they will give teachers a further 25% increase in two stages: 20% in January and 5% in August.

On 12 June 2023, Emergency Ordinance 57/2023 is published in the Official Monitor, with the negotiated salary increases for teachers (pre-university and university level) approved by the Government, including the scales with each basic salary by function, experience and teaching grade, valid from 1 June 2023.

Vouchers of 1500 lei for teaching and auxiliary staff and 500 lei for non-teaching staff will be granted annually from European funds until 2027.

On 5 July 2023 – FSLI and FSE-SPIRU HARET signed with the Ministry of Education a new Collective Labour Agreement for the Pre-university Education Sector, covering the period 2023-2025.

CROATIA

CASE 1: First collective agreement (CA) in Čistoća (public utility company) Varaždin

Time frame: 2022 – 2023

Organizations involved:

Regional industrial union, Independent union of workers in utility and related activities

Scope of case:

Company level

Issue/Problem to be solved

Low salary and small number of vacation days

Description of the way this has been reached

Due to the big rise in cost of living, the real income for workers in garbage collection, who make core membership of the Regional industrial trade union (RIS), decreased. This combined with bad shape of equipment and constant malfunctions on trucks made workers dissatisfied and made the workers shortage (that then increased pressure on existing workers) more severe. RIS, who has the bigger membership, made an agreement with a smaller Independent union of workers in utility and related activities (SSKH) that mostly organizes the administration staff to start the process of collective bargaining with the management of the company so they would deal with most of the issues troubling workers. There was no CA signed in the company yet so it was also an attempt to make the rules and standards clear and transparent for/to all the workers. The proposal was written by RIS and agreed on by all the members and with the partner union. The management agreed to negotiate expressing the will to sign the agreement, but the process was stalled. Union representatives of RIS held regular meetings with the members informing them about the progress of

the negotiations, asking for their opinions and support for their proposals. The negotiations were heavy and at one point it seemed they got stuck. RIS that started a process of mediation that is a necessary precondition for organizing a strike. During the mediation unions and management found a common tongue and reached a compromise that resulted in signing the first collective agreement after 1 and half years of negotiation.

Description of the results and the impact:

New systematization of jobs was created with a clause that the base salary will grow together with minimum wage proscribed yearly by the government – that ensured automated pay rise. Since the minimum wage for 2024 rose 20%, together with a raise given to the workers when agreement was signed in November 2023 workers net wage increased 20 - 30% compared to the wage before signing the agreement. The amount of paid vacation days also increased significantly. Other important gains include increase of salary supplements, severance pay, paid leave for personal purposes.

FRANCE

CASE 1: The “Ségur de la santé” – collective agreement in the public hospital sector during COVID

Time frame: 2018 - 2023

Organizations involved: Trade unions for non-medical professions (FO, CFDT, UNSA) and organizations for medical professions (INPH, SNAP-HP, CMH) with the ministry of Health (as public employer)

Scope of case: Sectoral and local levels.

Issue/Problem to be solved

Reversing past dis-investment in the French public hospital sector, including the freeze of the remuneration in the French public services leading to a significant diminution of real wages. Ensuring the attractiveness of the public hospital sector including medical and non-medical professions to resolve growing labour shortages.

Description of the way this has been reached;

French trade unions have led significant mobilizations, including strikes and demonstrations since 2018, to criticize the constant degradation of the working conditions and the loss of purchasing power in the French public hospital sector and all its professions. The demonstration from September 2019 against the draft pensions' reform has revigorated the trade union mobilization in the French public hospital sector, highlighting the difficult working conditions and the arduousness at work for many professions in the sector. The COVID-19 pandemic has further supported the trade union mobilization in the sector leading to the opening of the “Ségur de la santé”, a process of consultation of the trade unions in the sector from May 2020, leading to a comprehen-

sive sectoral collective agreement and a new investment plan in the sector also supported by the French Recovery Plan financed by Next Generation EU, the EU recovery plan.

Description of the results and the impact;

The agreements of the Ségur de la Santé provide: (i) 7.6 billion euros per year of pay increases of all non-medical professions in health and medico-social institutions in the public or private sectors (ii) the recruitment of 15,000 staff and (iii) 450 million euros per year dedicated to the attractiveness of the public hospital for hospital practitioners.

The investment plan includes:

1. €19 billion investment in the health system to improve patient care and the day-to-day lives of caregivers.
2. 8.2 billion euros per year to upgrade the professions of health facilities and nursing homes, and recognize the commitment of caregivers to the health of French.
3. 15,000 recruitments at the public hospital.
4. Accelerate exit from fee-for-service and focus on quality of care.
5. Fund the opening or reopening of 4,000 “on demand” beds.
6. End the medical temp mercenary at the public hospital.
7. Give hospital services their rightful place in health facilities.
8. Train more caregivers in paramedical pathways to better manage patients.
9. Facilitate access to non-programmed care and coordinated exercise.
10. Strongly develop telehealth based on the gains of the crisis to better care for the French.
11. Provide territories with key levers for investing in health for the benefit of their residents.
12. Addressing health inequalities.

These agreements serve now as a basis to

support stronger collective agreements at local level in the public health sector but also the private health sector, for medical and para-medical and non-medical professions. These agreements serve already as a shield against further cuts in public hospitals but the spirit of the “Ségur de la santé” remains difficult to revive years after the COVID-19 pandemic and further challenges may come forward.

CASE 2: Creation of the High Council on Remuneration, Employment and Productivity

Time frame: March 2024 - ongoing

Organizations involved: one representative for each French social partners with the three representative employers’ organizations (MEDEF, CPME, U2P) and the 5 representative trade unions (CFDT, CGT, FO, CFE-CGC, CFTC) with six qualified personalities and eight representatives of public administrations.

Scope of case: National, sectoral and company levels

Issue/Problem to be solved

Growing share of workers at the level of statutory minimum wage notably women.

Low dynamism of collective bargaining on sectoral minimum wages.

Transposition of the directive (EU) 2022/2041 on adequate minimum wages in the EU.

Description of the way this has been reached;

Trade unions have put continuous pressure on the French government and employers at every level on the issue of purchasing power and wages in front of the cost of living crisis in 2023. This pressure has been put in medias, in national and sectoral social dialogue instances, in companies in collective bargaining rounds or through strikes and demonstrations

and within their collective campaign against the return of austerity and the cost of living crisis supported by the European Trade Union Confederation leading to a euro-demonstration on the 12th of October 2023.

Description of the results and the impact;

The main result of this pressure is the organization of a national social conference on the 16th of October 2023 on wages to address with social partners the constant trend of concentration of low-wage earners around the statutory minimum wage, the low dynamism on collective bargaining on pay at sectoral and company level but also the interrelation between remuneration and active labour market policies. This national social conference has led to some proposals on pay, including on eventual social conditionalities on state aids for companies benefiting from exemptions of social contributions. Months after this proposal, the French government has announced the creation of a new national social dialogue instance on pay, employment and productivity to continue to work on the conclusions of the national social conference of the 16th of October 2023. Transposition at national level of the EU directive on minimum wages could also be addressed in this new instance but first discussions on this transposition show an inexistant role of this instance for now in the process. It is also unclear at this stage how this new instance will play out with the main national social dialogue instance on employment, VET and wages (CNNCEFP).

CASE 3: New collective agreement in the metallurgy sector

Time frame: 2016 - ongoing

Organizations involved: French representative trade unions in the metallurgy sector (FO, CFDT, CFE-CGC) and the main representative employer’ organization in the metallurgy sec-

tor (UIMM).

Scope of case: Sectoral and company levels

Issue/Problem to be solved

Ensure the attractiveness of jobs in the metallurgy sector in front of growing labour shortages and skills mismatches.

Ensure a just transition in the metallurgy sector to mitigate the impact of the green and digital transitions on the working and employment conditions in the metallurgy sector.

Respond to the cost of living crisis in the metallurgy sector.

Description of the way this has been reached;

Trade unions have put more than six years to negotiate this new collective convention for the metallurgy sector. It has been modified four times since its signature on the 7th February 2022: July 2022, September 2022, July 2023 and November 2023. However, it is the fruit of constant and relatively healthy social dialogue in the industry provoked by positive yet realistic social dialogue at EU level but also within the national social dialogue instance in the industry (CNI). The COVID-19 pandemic has also shown a certain level of responsibility between social partners with other agreements to face the sanitary crisis, adapt the exercise of unions' and workers' rights or also adapt telework practices and the right to disconnect. The finalization of this new collective convention also takes place in a context of positive social dialogue between social partners at cross-sectoral level in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Description of the results and the impact;

This new convention comes into force on the 1st of January 2024. It reinstates and updates the general principles in the branch on employment, vocational training, working conditions, disability and occupational equality. It also reaffirms and updates the governance of social dialogue in the branch and creates paritarian instances at branch level on employment and vocational training, including at regional and local level. It also frames generally collective bargaining and social dialogue at company level, reinstating the principle of the more favorable dispositions. It recalls and updates the rules on employment contract, on work classifications, on working time, on pay and on supplementary social protection. The main challenge is to secure the effective application of the new convention in every company in the metallurgy sector across France, especially on pay, while workers are still struggling in front of the cost of living crisis.

Abbreviations:

CLA – Collective Labour Agreement

BCLA – Branch Collective Labour Agreement

NCLA – National Collective Labour Agreement

TU – Trade Union

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