



Collective Bargaining Systems in Europe: A Schematic Overview

Maarten Keune



Collective Bargaining Systems in Europe: A Schematic Overview

This overview draws heavily on the following publications: European Commission (2004) Industrial relations in Europe 2004, Luxembourg; Thorsten Schulten (2005) Changes in national collective bargaining systems since 1990, EIRO, (<http://www.eiro.eurofound.eu.int/2005/03/study/tn0503102s.html>);

Labour Research Department (2004) Worker representation in Europe, London; the national reports elaborated under the project 'The Evolving Structure of Collective Bargaining in Europe', directed by Prof. Silvana Sciarra and financed by the University of Florence and the European Commission

Maarten Keune

Brussels 2006

® Publisher: ETUI-REHS, Brussels

All rights reserved

Layout: Antoine Meurant



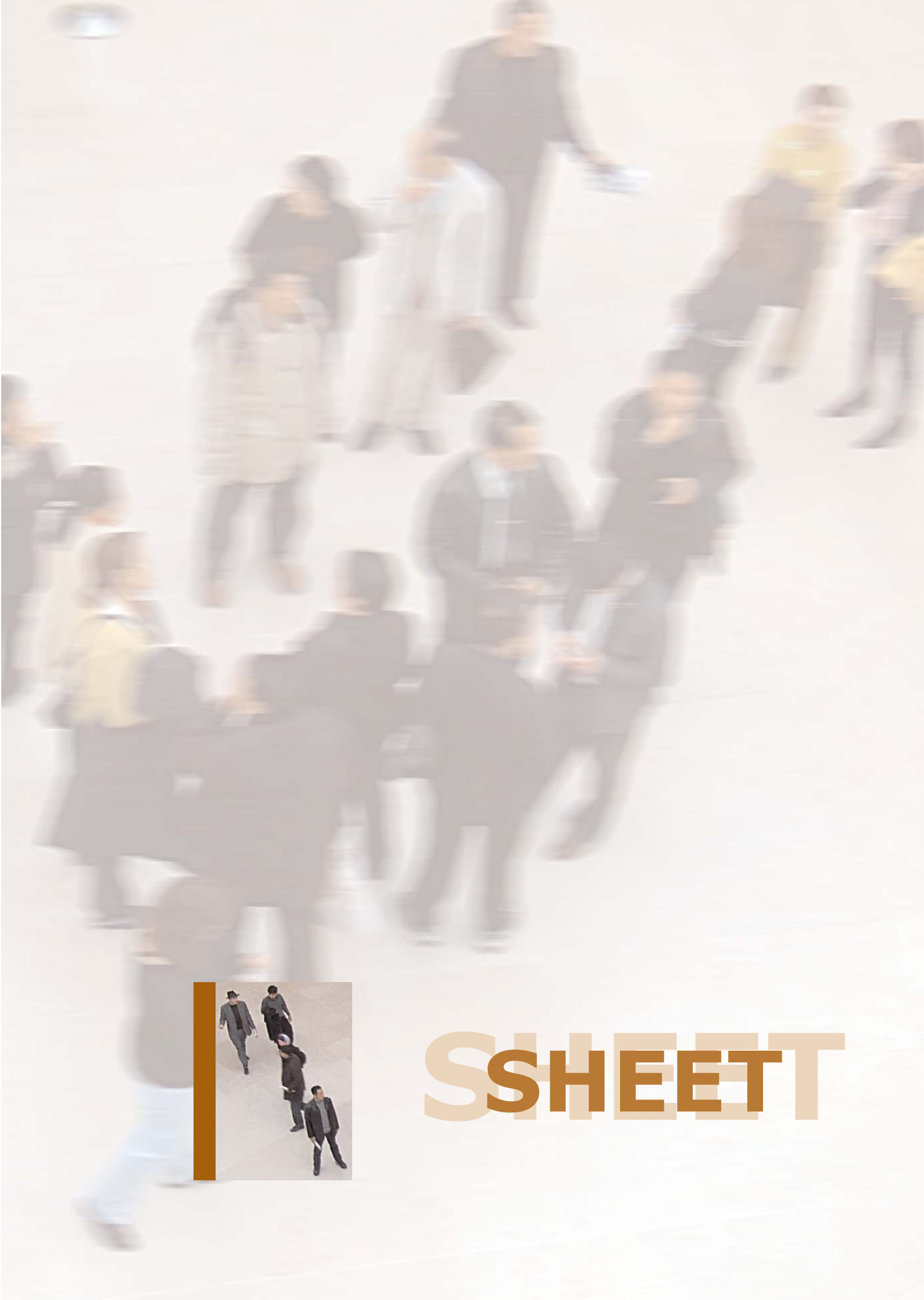
Summary

SHEET

5

COUNTRY FICHES

17



SHEET

The regulation of collective bargaining

In most European countries, collective bargaining is regulated extensively by law. In many countries the right to collective bargaining is considered important enough to be included in the Constitution. Labour legislation (e.g. the Labour Code, special Collective Bargaining Acts, Industrial Relations Acts, and others) in most countries specify issues like who can enter into collective bargaining, what can and cannot be bargained about, what procedures have to be followed, the possibilities for the extension of collective agreements, or how agreements can be enforced.

The law is however not the only source of regulation for collective bargaining. In a few countries the role of the law is of less importance and different mechanisms of self-regulation dominate. In Denmark the sources of law determining the concept of a collective agreement are mainly case law and legal literature, and most rules and regulations are left to the employers and trade unions themselves to decide upon. Also in Sweden the regulation of bargaining has been developed in a tradition of self-regulation and the present regulatory system is based mainly on agreements between the Trade Union Confederation (LO) and the Employers' Federation (SAF). In Italy the Constitution provides the right to collective bargaining. However, many aspects of collective bargaining are regulated through the tripartite intersectoral agreement of 23 July 1993. Finally, in the United Kingdom the system of collective bargaining is largely a voluntaristic one, not legally based. Collective agreements are in general not legally enforceable and are largely 'gentlemen's agreements'.

Levels of collective bargaining

Importance of the different levels of collective bargaining			
	National	Sector	Company
Austria	-	***	*
Belgium	***	**	*
Cyprus	-	***	*
Czech Republic	-	*	***
Denmark	*	***	**
Estonia	-	*	***
Finland	***	**	*
France	-	*	***
Germany	-	***	*
Greece	**	**	*
Hungary	*	*	***
Ireland	***	-	*
Italy	*	***	**
Latvia	-	*	***
Lithuania	-	*	***
Luxembourg	-	**	**
Malta	-	*	***
Netherlands	*	***	*
Poland	-	*	***
Portugal	*	***	*
Slovakia	*	**	**
Slovenia	**	**	*
Spain	*	**	**
Sweden	-	***	*
United Kingdom	-	-	***

*** = principle or dominant bargaining level; ** = important but not dominant level;
 * = existing level of bargaining; - = non-existent.

Collective bargaining can take place at the national level, the sectoral level and the company level. With the exception of the UK, in all European countries collective bargaining takes place at two or three levels. Most countries have however a dominant bargaining level:

National level dominant: Belgium, Finland, Ireland.

Sectoral level dominant: Austria, Cyprus, Denmark, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Portugal, Sweden.

Company level dominant: Czech Republic, Estonia, France, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, United Kingdom.

In five countries there is no clearly dominant level. In Greece and Slovenia the national and sectoral levels are more or less equally important, while in Luxembourg, Slovakia and Spain this concerns the sectoral and company level.

Bargaining actors

A variety of actors are involved in collective bargaining. Where bargaining takes place at the national level, the actors involved are trade unions confederations, employers' organizations (in Slovenia the employers are represented at the national level by the Chamber of Commerce), and often also the government.

At the sectoral level bargaining takes place between sectoral or industrial union organizations and sectoral or industrial employers' organizations (in Austria and Slovenia this concerns the industry chamber of commerce).

At the company level individual employers represent themselves. Employees are represented by a variety of actors. In most countries local trade unions organizations and delegates engage in collective bargaining. In other countries elected employee representatives (often the works council) are the bargaining partner. Also, in some countries shop stewards, i.e. voluntary representatives elected only by union members, are bargaining partners. In some countries more than one of these actors can participate in collective bargaining.

Company level bargaining actors from the employee side:

Local trade unions organizations and delegates: Belgium, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia, Sweden, United Kingdom

Works council and other employee representatives: In **Austria** and **Spain** the works council is the single company level actor from the employee side. In **Latvia** and **Lithuania**, works councils can conclude collective agreements if no union is present. In **France**, in case of absence of trade unions delegates and if the collective agreement at the branch level allows for it, works councils or, in small companies, non-unionized mandated workers have the right to bargain. In **Germany** works councils are not allowed to conclude collective agreements; they can however reach agreements with individual employers on issues not covered by the collective agreement, as well as on how the terms of the collective agreement will be applied in practice. In **Italy**, the employer negotiates with the RSU, a committee of which in the private sector two-thirds of the members are elected by the employees and one-third appointed by the unions; in the public sector all are elected by the employees.

Shop stewards: Ireland, United Kingdom.

Who is covered by collective agreements

In some countries, all employees that work for an employer who fall under a collective agreement are covered by this agreement. In other countries only the employees who belong to the parties signatory to the agreement (e.g. only the members of the union(s) concluding the agreement).

Only employees who belong to the parties signatory to the agreement are covered by the agreement: Estonia, Finland (however, if a collective agreement covers half of the employees in a sector, it applies to all employees), Germany, Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania (for national and sectoral agreements), Portugal, Sweden, United Kingdom.

All employees working for an employer that is covered by an agreement fall under the agreement: Austria, Belgium, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, France, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Lithuania (for company agreements), Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain.

The duration of collective agreements

	Normal duration of collective agreements (years)
Czech Republic	Variable
Estonia	Variable
Latvia	Variable
Lithuania	Variable
Luxembourg	Variable
Malta	Variable
Poland	Variable
Portugal	Variable
United Kingdom	Variable
Austria	1
Germany	1 to 2
Belgium	2
Finland	2
Greece	2
Hungary	2
Ireland	2
Italy	2
Netherlands	2
Slovakia	2
Slovenia	2
France	2
Cyprus	2 to 3
Spain	2 to 3
Denmark	3 to 4

In a number of countries there is a more or less standard duration for collective agreements, ranging from 1 year in Austria to 3-4 years in Denmark. In other countries there is no clear national standard for the duration of agreements.

Coordination of wage bargaining

There are several forms in which unions, employers or governments can engage in the coordination of collective bargaining on wages. Such coordination concerns stronger and weaker forms of harmonization of bargaining procedures, targets and outcomes. Coordination can be explicit and implicit.

Explicit coordination: when social partners, with or without the government, agree on joint rules or joint targets for wage bargaining, e.g. in the form of national wage agreements, social pacts or sectoral wage agreements.

Implicit coordination: when a particular union, employers' group or sector dominates or is taken as the main example to follow in collective bargaining in a country, and hence sets the trend, norm or target for others. In this way, certain sectors or multinationals can set the pattern for wage bargaining in the rest of the economy. Also, a particular union can set the trend for the rest of the unions through its wage demands. The trend or norm for pay developments can also be determined by the government through explicit guidelines, a legal pay-indexation mechanism and/or the statutory minimum wage.

The below table gives the situation concerning coordination of wage bargaining in Europe in 2003 (in some countries, important changes occur over time concerning forms of coordination).

Types of co-ordination of wage bargaining, 2003	
Finland	Explicit co-ordination through national wage agreements and sectoral co-ordination
Belgium	Explicit coordination in National Labour Council, little sectoral co-ordination
Slovenia	Explicit co-ordination through bipartite and tripartite national agreements
Denmark	Some explicit co-ordination and broad sectoral agreements and pattern setting
Netherlands	Some explicit, but mostly implicit co-ordination and some pattern setting by large employers and unions.
Sweden	Implicit co-ordination within confederations (unions) and pattern setting, aided by joint institutions
Austria	Implicit co-ordination through synchronisation of bargaining rounds and pattern setting between sectors
Ireland	Explicit co-ordination through national wage agreements, co-ordination within sectors absent
Germany	Implicit co-ordination through comprehensive sectoral bargaining and pattern setting
Spain	Some explicit co-ordination between confederations of unions and employers in recent years and weak pattern setting in sectoral bargaining
Italy	Implicit co-ordination between major employers (through strongest regional and sectoral federations) and in principle trade union confederations
Portugal	Implicit co-ordination between major employers, little coordination between unions.
Luxembourg	Implicit co-ordination among employees and employers, no sectoral co-ordination

Coordination of wage bargaining

Greece	Some explicit coordination, with government assistance, little sectoral co-ordination
France	Irregular implicit co-ordination through pattern setting in the public sector and nationalised industries
CyprusI	ncomplete pattern setting between sectors
Malta	Implicit coordination among unions and employers
Slovakia	No national co-ordination since 2000, some sectoral co-ordination
Hungary	Some national co-ordination through the tripartite body, no sectoral co-ordination
Latvia	Some national co-ordination, mainly on minimum wages
Poland	No national or sectoral co-ordination
UK	No national or sectoral co-ordination
Estonia	No national or sectoral co-ordination
Czech Rep.	No national or sectoral co-ordination
Lithuania	No national or sectoral co-ordination

Extension of collective agreements

The extension of collective agreements refers to the extension of the stipulation of collective agreements to enterprises, organizations and employees that are not part to the collective agreements. In most European countries extensions are possible, in some they are not.

Countries where extensions are possible: Austria, Belgium, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, The Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain

Countries where extensions are not possible (or not practiced): Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark (no practice of extensions in private sector), Ireland, Italy (the Constitution provides for extension but the relevant article was never enacted), Sweden (no practice of extensions in private sector), UK (no practice of extensions in private sector).

Extensions normally concern sectors or branches of the economy, and sometime occupations. The decisions on extensions are made by the government, with the exception of Austria where it is the Federal Arbitration Office. In most cases the government extends agreements only after a request of one of the parties to the agreement. However, in some countries (Finland, Greece, Malta, Poland, Portugal) such a request is not necessary. In some cases, extensions can only be made if already a certain percentage of employers or employees in a sector is covered by the original agreement (Finland, Germany, Greece, Latvia, the Netherlands), while in Hungary the partners to the agreement have to prove their representativity in the sector concerned. In some cases, extensions are automatic under certain conditions (in Belgium if agreements are signed by all parties in Joint Industry Councils or in the National Labour Council; in Spain if they are signed by a majority of the representatives of each party to the agreement). In Austria and Slovenia, because of the obligatory membership of employers in the Chamber of Commerce.

Extension of collective agreements can be very important to widen the coverage of collective agreements beyond trade union members. Indeed, in some countries there is a large differences between trade union membership and coverage of collective agreements.

Coverage of collective agreements

Percentage of the employed covered by collective agreements	
Austria	91-100%
Belgium	91-100%
France	91-100%
Slovenia	91-100%
Sweden	91-100%
Denmark	81-90%
Finland	81-90%
Italy	81-90%
Netherlands	81-90%
Spain	81-90%
Luxembourg	71-80%
Portugal	71-80%
Cyprus	61-70%
Germany	61-70%
Greece	61-70%
Ireland	51-60%
Malta	51-60%
Poland	41-50%
Slovakia	41-50%
Hungary	31-40%
United Kingdom	31-40%
Czech Republic	21-30%
Estonia	21-30%
Latvia	11-20%
Lithuania	11-20%

The percentage of employees that are covered by collective agreements varies a lot in Europe, ranging from close to 100 percent in some countries to just over 10 percent in others. A clear divide exists between the old and the new member states. In the old member states coverage is above 50 percent with the exception of the United Kingdom. For most new member states, coverage is below 50 percent, and it is only above 90 percent in Slovenia.

Trade union membership

Trade union membership (percentage of employees)	
Sweden	78.0
Denmark	73.8
Finland	71.2
Cyprus	70.0
Malta	62.8
Belgium	55.8
Slovenia	41.0
Ireland	35.9
Austria	35.4
Slovakia	35.4
Italy	34.0
Luxembourg	33.5
United Kingdom	30.4
Portugal	30.0
Greece	26.7
Czech Republic	25.1
Germany	23.2
Netherlands	22.1
Latvia	20.0
Hungary	19.9
Estonia	16.6
Lithuania	16.0
Spain	15.0
Poland	14.7
France	9.7

Trade union membership of employees ranges from close to 80 percent in Sweden to just below 10 percent in France. The numbers here only concern employees. In some countries important percentages of the unemployed and of pensioners are also trade union members.

Organization rate employer

Organisation rate employers (% employees working in organised firms)	
Austria	100
Slovenia	100
Netherlands	85
Luxembourg	80
France	74
Belgium	72
Spain	72
Greece	70
Slovakia	65
Germany	63
Cyprus	60
Finland	60
Ireland	60
Portugal	58
Sweden	55
Denmark	52
Italy	51
United Kingdom	40
Czech Republic	35
Estonia	35
Latvia	30
Hungary	n.a.
Lithuania	n.a.
Malta	n.a.
Poland	n.a.

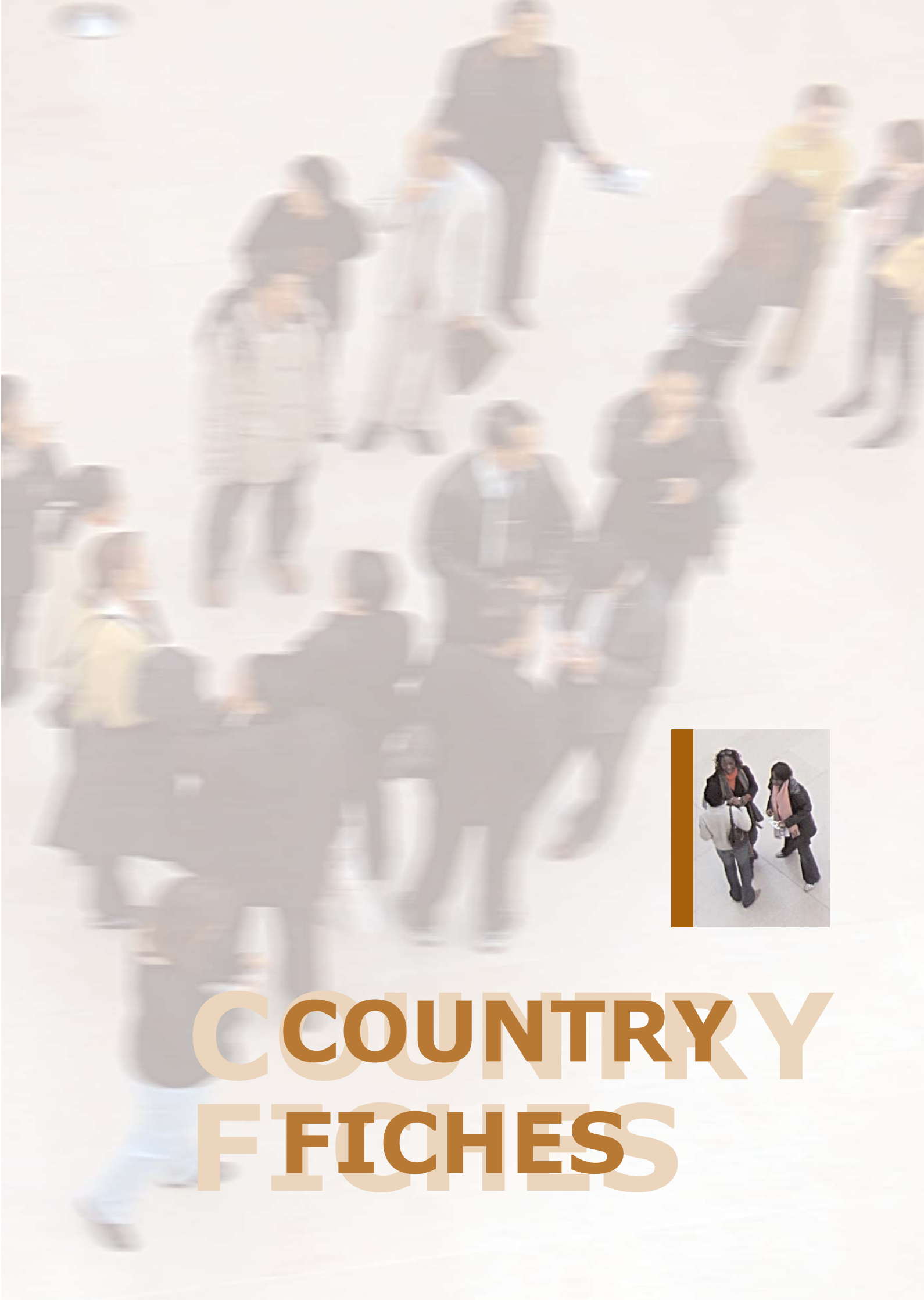
The organization rate of employers ranges from 100 percent in Austria and Slovenia (where membership of the Chamber of Commerce is obligatory), to 30 percent in Estonia. For some countries no reliable numbers are available.

Minimum wage

In 18 EU countries a statutory minimum wage exists, while in 7 it does not exist. The minimum wage influences collective bargaining by setting a floor to wage negotiations.

Countries with statutory minimum wage: Belgium, Czech Republic, Estonia, France, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Portugal, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, United Kingdom.

Countries without statutory minimum wage: Austria, Cyprus, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Italy, Sweden.



COUNTRY FICHES

COUNTRY FICHES

AUSTRIA	
Regulative framework	
Legislation regulating collective bargaining	Collective bargaining is mainly regulated by the Labour Constitution Act (Arbeitsverfassungsgesetz, ArbVG)
Legal possibilities for the extension of collective agreements	Extension can be ordered by Austrian Federal Arbitration Office on application of one or both bargaining parties. In practice of little importance, because obligatory membership in Austrian Economic Chamber (or Chamber of Commerce) guarantees inclusive coverage
Is registration of collective agreements obligatory?	Yes
Actors involved in collective bargaining	
Trade union density 2001-2002 (%)	35,4
Number of main union confederations	1
Share of largest union confederation in total membership	100
Organisation rate employers (% employees working in organised firms)	100
Who negotiates?	Negotiations normally take place at industry level between trade unions and the industry Chambers of Commerce. Often there are separate agreements for manual and non-manual workers. In some cases, company-level negotiations on wages take place between the works council and the employer.
Importance of the different levels of collective bargaining	
National	-
Sector	***
Company	*
Coordination of collective bargaining	
Type(s) of coordination	Implicit coordination through synchronisation of bargaining rounds and pattern-setting between sectors
Relationship between the various levels of bargaining	Collective agreements can provide 'delegation' or 'opening' clauses for bargaining at company level.
Coverage of collective agreements	
Percentage of the employed covered by collective agreements	91-100 %
Employees that are covered by a collective agreement	All employees working for an employer that is covered by an agreement
Content of collective agreements	
Subjects of negotiation	Negotiations deal with pay, working conditions, work organisation, training, health and safety, etc
Minimum wage	
Is there a national minimum wage?	No
Duration of collective agreements	
Normal duration of contracts (years)	1

COUNTRY FICHES

BELGIUM	
Regulative framework	
Legislation regulating collective bargaining	Article 23 Belgian Constitution. The Belgian Act of 5 December 1968 (on collective labour agreements and Joint Committees) provides a detailed legal status for collective industrial agreements in the private sector. Public sector employees are covered by the Act of 19 December 1974 regarding the relations between the Government and the trade unions organising its staff. The Act guarantees a social dialogue, which does not amount to genuine collective agreements
Legal possibilities for the extension of collective agreements	Extension is automatic if agreements are signed by all parties in Joint Industry Councils or in the National Labour Council. If not, the Ministry can extend multi-employer agreements by royal decree on application of one or more bargaining parties.
Is registration of collective agreements obligatory?	Yes
Actors involved in collective bargaining	
Trade union density 2001-2002 (%)	55,8
Number of main union confederations	3
Share of largest union confederation in total membership	50
Organisation rate employers (% employees working in organised firms)	72
Who negotiates?	Negotiations at national and industrial level are carried out by the unions and employers' federations meeting in joint bodies. At company level, the trade union delegates together with local union organisations negotiate with individual employers. At the national level, also the government plays a main role in wage negotiations and has the power to intervene if wage increases threaten to surpass the level the government deems appropriate
Importance of the different levels of collective bargaining	
National	***
Sector	**
Company	*
Coordination of collective bargaining	
Type(s) of coordination	Explicit coordination in National Labour Council, little sectoral coordination
Relationship between the various levels of bargaining	Intersectoral agreement provides a framework for maximum wage increases. Normally the latter cannot be exceeded at sector or company level except for specific reasons laid down in the intersectoral agreement.
Coverage of collective agreements	
Percentage of the employed covered by collective agreements	91-100 %
Employees that are covered by a collective agreement	All employees working for an employer that is covered by an agreement
Content of collective agreements	
Subjects of negotiation	Negotiations deal with pay, working conditions, work organisation, training, health and safety, etc
Minimum wage	
Is there a national minimum wage?	Yes
Duration of collective agreements	
Normal duration of contracts (years)	2

COUNTRY FICHES

CYPRUS	
Regulative framework	
Legislation regulating collective bargaining	Constitution, Article 26(2). Industrial Relations Code.
Legal possibilities for the extension of collective agreements	No mechanism for the extension of collective agreements.
Is registration of collective agreements obligatory?	Yes
Actors involved in collective bargaining	
Trade union density 2001-2002 (%)	70
Number of main union confederations	4
Share of largest union confederation in total membership	43
Organisation rate employers (% employees working in organised firms)	60
Who negotiates?	Key negotiations take place at the industrial level between the main union federations, or in some industries like banking the autonomous union, and the relevant employers' association. However, many agreements are concluded at company level as well.
Importance of the different levels of collective bargaining	
National	-
Sector	***
Company	*
Coordination of collective bargaining	
Type(s) of coordination	Incomplete pattern-setting between sectors
Relationship between the various levels of bargaining	A company-level agreement can include lower terms and conditions of employment than agreed at sector level.
Coverage of collective agreements	
Percentage of the employed covered by collective agreements	61-70%
Employees that are covered by a collective agreement	All employees working for an employer that is covered by an agreement
Content of collective agreements	
Subjects of negotiation	Agreements cover pay, working conditions, trade unions facilities, etc. Many agreements also include a cost-of-living allowance, which is updated in line with inflation bi-annually.
Minimum wage	
Is there a national minimum wage?	No
Duration of collective agreements	
Normal duration of contracts (years)	2 to 3

COUNTRY FICHES

CZECH REPUBLIC	
Regulative framework	
Legislation regulating collective bargaining	Constitutional Act no.3/1991 Coll., Charter of Fundamental Rights and Freedoms; Act No. 65/1965 Coll., Labour Code (regulating the content of collective agreements); Act no. 120/1990 Coll. (regulating some aspects of the relations between trade unions and employers); Act No. 2/1991 Coll., On Collective Bargaining (regulating procedures); Act no. 1/1991 Coll., On Wages, compensation for readiness and average wage.
Legal possibilities for the extension of collective agreements	The right of the Ministry of Labour to extend sectoral agreements was abolished by the Constitutional Court in 2004.
Is registration of collective agreements obligatory?	Yes
Actors involved in collective bargaining	
Trade union density 2001-2002 (%)	25,1
Number of main union confederations	1
Share of largest union confederation in total membership	73
Organisation rate employers (% employees working in organised firms)	35
Who negotiates?	Negotiations take place mainly at local level, between individual employers and workplace unions. Bargaining at sectoral level is limited, also because employers' organisations often do not get a mandate to negotiate at this level, and because public employers cannot form employers' organisations, making sectoral bargaining in the public sector difficult.
Importance of the different levels of collective bargaining	
National	-
Sector	*
Company	***
Coordination of collective bargaining	
Type(s) of coordination	No national or sectoral coordination
Relationship between the various levels of bargaining	Some sectoral agreements define the room for negotiations at company level.
Coverage of collective agreements	
Percentage of the employed covered by collective agreements	21-30%
Employees that are covered by a collective agreement	All employees working for an employer that is covered by an agreement
Content of collective agreements	
Subjects of negotiation	Negotiations deal with pay, working conditions, work organisation, training, health and safety, etc.
Minimum wage	
Is there a national minimum wage?	Yes
Duration of collective agreements	
Normal duration of contracts (years)	variable

COUNTRY FICHES

DENMARK	
Regulative framework	
Legislation regulating collective bargaining	The Danish Constitution protects the freedom of association by outlawing intervention into that freedom by the legislator. The Danish sources of law determining the concept of a collective agreement are mainly case law and legal literature.
Legal possibilities for the extension of collective agreements	No practice of extension of private-sector wage agreements.
Is registration of collective agreements obligatory?	No
Actors involved in collective bargaining	
Trade union density 2001-2002 (%)	73,8
Number of main union confederations	3
Share of largest union confederation in total membership	66
Organisation rate employers (% employees working in organised firms)	52
Who negotiates?	At national level the main actors are the LO trade union confederation and the Danish employers' association. At industry level agreements are made between employers' associations and 'cartels' of unions grouped together to cover different industries (e.g. one for most of manufacturing, one for printing and media, etc.). At company level negotiations are between the trade union representative and the employer.
Importance of the different levels of collective bargaining	
National	*
Sector	***
Company	**
Coordination of collective bargaining	
Type(s) of coordination	Some explicit coordination and broad sectoral agreements and pattern-setting
Relationship between the various levels of bargaining	Some sectoral agreements are more open than others regarding the issues to be negotiated at company level; for instance, some 'minimum-wage' agreements provide for wage negotiations only at company level, though more usually at both levels, while 'normal-wage' agreements provide for wage negotiations only at central sectoral level.
Coverage of collective agreements	
Percentage of the employed covered by collective agreements	81-90%
Employees that are covered by a collective agreement	All employees working for an employer that is covered by an agreement
Content of collective agreements	
Subjects of negotiation	Pay and working conditions, working methods, etc. Agreements also cover issues covered by legislation in many other countries, including the regulations concerning collective bargaining itself.
Minimum wage	
Is there a national minimum wage?	No
Duration of collective agreements	
Normal duration of contracts (years)	3 to 4

COUNTRY FICHES

ESTONIA	
Regulative framework	
Legislation regulating collective bargaining	Employment Contract Act (1992); Collective Agreement Act (1993); Wages Act (1994); Trade Union Act (2000); Working and Rest Time Act (2002); Act on Leaves (2002); Amendment to the Collective Agreement Act (2002);
Legal possibilities for the extension of collective agreements	An agreement above the company level can be extended by a joint declaration of the signatory parties. An extension only comes into force after publication by the public authorities in its official bulletin and can only concern remuneration and working time.
Is registration of collective agreements obligatory?	Yes
Actors involved in collective bargaining	
Trade union density 2001-2002 (%)	16,6
Number of main union confederations	2
Share of largest union confederation in total membership	58
Organisation rate employers (% employees working in organised firms)	35
Who negotiates?	At industry level, negotiations take place between the unions and employers' associations. However, industry level agreements are rare. At company level, the main bargaining level in Estonia, negotiations are between the union and employer. According to the law, if no union is present, employees may be represented in negotiations by an 'authorised representative'. In practise this does not tend to occur however and collective bargaining is dependent on union presence.
Importance of the different levels of collective bargaining	
National	-
Sector	*
Company	***
Coordination of collective bargaining	
Type(s) of coordination	No national or sectoral coordination
Relationship between the various levels of bargaining	If there is a sectoral agreement, a company agreement can only improve the situation for the employees.
Coverage of collective agreements	
Percentage of the employed covered by collective agreements	21-30%
Employees that are covered by a collective agreement	Only employees who belong to the parties signatory to the agreement
Content of collective agreements	
Subjects of negotiation	Negotiations deal with pay, working conditions, work organisation, training, health and safety, etc.
Minimum wage	
Is there a national minimum wage?	Yes
Duration of collective agreements	
Normal duration of contracts (years)	variable

COUNTRY FICHES

FINLAND	
Regulative framework	
Legislation regulating collective bargaining	Collective Agreements Act (1946); Employment Contracts Act (2001).
Legal possibilities for the extension of collective agreements	If agreements already cover 50 % or more employees in the sector, agreements are automatically binding for all firms and workers in their domain. The decision is taken by a special government body and can be appealed in the Labour Court.
Is registration of collective agreements obligatory?	Yes
Actors involved in collective bargaining	
Trade union density 2001-2002 (%)	71,2
Number of main union confederations	3
Share of largest union confederation in total membership	49
Organisation rate employers (% employees working in organised firms)	60
Who negotiates?	Negotiations at the national level take place between the union confederations and the main private sector employers' association STK. At the industry level, unions, or groups of unions, bargain with the respective industry federation. At company level, individual employers bargain with local union organisations.
Importance of the different levels of collective bargaining	
National	***
Sector	**
Company	*
Coordination of collective bargaining	
Type(s) of coordination	Explicit coordination through national wage agreements and sectoral coordination
Relationship between the various levels of bargaining	Higher-level agreements define the issues for company bargaining and may determine the conditions under which companies can diverge from standards collectively agreed at intersectoral or sectoral level.
Coverage of collective agreements	
Percentage of the employed covered by collective agreements	81-90%
Employees that are covered by a collective agreement	In principle, agreements cover trade union members only. However, if a collective agreement covers about half of the employees in a sector, it applies to all employees.
Content of collective agreements	
Subjects of negotiation	Pay and working conditions are subject of negotiations at company, industry and national level. Minimum wage is negotiated at national level only. At national level a wide range of other topics is discussed as well, including trade union rights, training, etc.
Minimum wage	
Is there a national minimum wage?	No
Duration of collective agreements	
Normal duration of contracts (years)	2

COUNTRY FICHES

FRANCE	
Regulative framework	
Legislation regulating collective bargaining	The preamble of the French Constitution guarantees the right to collective bargaining; 1972 Labour Code (Code du Travail, Livre 1, Titre 3).
Legal possibilities for the extension of collective agreements	On the request of one or more of the bargaining parties, addressed to the National Commission on Collective Bargaining, the Minister can extend agreements to entire sectors and/or enlarge agreements to different geographical regions or other economic sectors.
Is registration of collective agreements obligatory?	Yes
Actors involved in collective bargaining	
Trade union density 2001-2002 (%)	9,7
Number of main union confederations	6 (7)
Share of largest union confederation in total membership	28
Organisation rate employers (% employees working in organised firms)	74
Who negotiates?	Negotiations take place mainly at the company level between unions and employers. On the employee side, in case of absence of trade unions delegates and if the collective agreement at the branch level allows, first the works council, and in case of its absence (undertaking < 50 workers), (non unionised) mandated workers have the right to bargain.
Importance of the different levels of collective bargaining	
National	-
Sector	*
Company	***
Coordination of collective bargaining	
Type(s) of coordination	Irregular implicit coordination through pattern-setting in the public sector and nationalised industries
Relationship between the various levels of bargaining	Agreements signed at sector and company level can only in exceptional circumstances dilute the benefits obtained at a higher level (sectoral or intersectoral agreements or legislation).
Coverage of collective agreements	
Percentage of the employed covered by collective agreements	91-100%
Employees that are covered by a collective agreement	All employees working for an employer that is covered by an agreement
Content of collective agreements	
Subjects of negotiation	At national level, a wide range of issues is negotiated. Including social security, industrial relations, or training. Pay, working conditions and work organisation are negotiated at industry and company level.
Minimum wage	
Is there a national minimum wage?	yes
Duration of collective agreements	
Normal duration of contracts (years)	2?

COUNTRY FICHES

GERMANY	
Regulative framework	
Legislation regulating collective bargaining	Art. 9 para. 3 of the Constitution (entitles trade unions and employers associations to enter into collective agreements); Act on Collective Bargaining (Tarifvertragesgesetz) of 1949, amended in 1974.
Legal possibilities for the extension of collective agreements	On the application of one or more of the bargaining parties and approved by a special committee for extensions, and if more than 50 % of the workforce is already covered, the Ministry can extend agreements to the entire sector. Since 1998, and only in the construction industry, the Ministry can extend minimum wage provisions at its own initiative.
Is registration of collective agreements obligatory?	Yes
Actors involved in collective bargaining	
Trade union density 2001-2002 (%)	23,2
Number of main union confederations	1 (2)
Share of largest union confederation in total membership	83
Organisation rate employers (% employees working in organised firms)	63
Who negotiates?	Bargaining takes place mainly at the industrial level between trade unions and employers' federations. They are binding for the members of these organisations. Industrial agreements are normally concluded at the regional and not at the national level. Industry-level agreements may include opening clauses, which allow for the setting of certain issues at the company level under specific circumstances. In some cases also individual company level agreements are concluded between trade unions and the employer. Works councils are not allowed to conclude collective agreements. They can however reach agreements with individual employers on issues not covered by the collective agreement, as well as on how the terms of the collective agreement will be applied in practice.
Importance of the different levels of collective bargaining	
National	-
Sector	***
Company	*
Coordination of collective bargaining	
Type(s) of coordination	Implicit coordination through comprehensive sectoral bargaining and pattern-setting
Relationship between the various levels of bargaining	Most sectoral agreements contain 'hardship' and 'opening' clauses, according to which companies are allowed to diverge from collectively agreed standards under certain defined conditions and on certain defined issues.
Coverage of collective agreements	
Percentage of the employed covered by collective agreements	61-70%
Employees that are covered by a collective agreement	Only employees who belong to the parties signatory to the agreement
Content of collective agreements	
Subjects of negotiation	Negotiations deal with pay, working conditions, work organisation, training, health and safety, etc.
Minimum wage	
Is there a national minimum wage?	No
Duration of collective agreements	
Normal duration of contracts (years)	1 to 2

COUNTRY FICHES

GREECE	
Regulative framework	
Legislation regulating collective bargaining	Art. 22(2) of the Greek Constitution of 1975 (guarantees right to collective bargaining); Law 1876/1990 regarding "Free collective bargaining and other provisions"; Law 2738/1999 regarding "Collective bargaining in public administration, permanent status for workers employed under open-ended contracts and other provisions".
Legal possibilities for the extension of collective agreements	The Minister can extend agreements at its own initiative, provided the agreement already covers more than 50 % in the sector or occupation.
Is registration of collective agreements obligatory?	No
Actors involved in collective bargaining	
Trade union density 2001-2002 (%)	26,7 (1999)
Number of main union confederations	1 (2)
Share of largest union confederation in total membership	70
Organisation rate employers (% employees working in organised firms)	70
Who negotiates?	The National General Collective Agreement (EGSSE), which affects all wage earners in Greece, can only be signed by the most representative top-level organisations of employers (SEV, ESEE, GSEVEE) and workers (GSEE). Industrial and occupational agreements can be made between the respective union and employers' organisations and apply only to the members of the signatory organisations. Company-level agreements are made between the employer and the union representative or primary-level union organisation
Importance of the different levels of collective bargaining	
National	**
Sector	**
Company	*
Coordination of collective bargaining	
Type(s) of coordination	Some explicit coordination, with government assistance, little sectoral coordination
Relationship between the various levels of bargaining	Strict hierarchy of bargaining levels on the basis of a 'favourability principle'.
Coverage of collective agreements	
Percentage of the employed covered by collective agreements	61-70%
Employees that are covered by a collective agreement	All employees working for an employer that is covered by an agreement
Content of collective agreements	
Subjects of negotiation	Negotiations deal with pay, working conditions, work organisation, training, health and safety, etc.
Minimum wage	
Is there a national minimum wage?	yes
Duration of collective agreements	
Normal duration of contracts (years)	2

COUNTRY FICHES

HUNGARY	
Regulative framework	
Legislation regulating collective bargaining	Labour Code (1992).
Legal possibilities for the extension of collective agreements	On application of one or more of the bargaining parties and after consultation with the subcommittee of the National Interest Reconciliation Committee, the Ministry can extend agreements to the entire sector. Applicants must provide proof of their representativity in the sector concerned.
Is registration of collective agreements obligatory?	Yes
Actors involved in collective bargaining	
Trade union density 2001-2002 (%)	19,9
Number of main union confederations	6
Share of largest union confederation in total membership	31
Organisation rate employers (% employees working in organised firms)	n.a.
Who negotiates?	National-level discussions between the main trade union confederations, employers' associations and the government set a framework for bargaining. Collective bargaining takes place mainly at the company level between unions and employers. Unions must get 10% of votes in the works council elections to be entitled to bargain, and can sign agreements alone if they get more than 50% of these votes. Otherwise they must be signed jointly. Some industry-level agreements are signed as well between the respective employers' associations and unions.
Importance of the different levels of collective bargaining	
National	*
Sector	*
Company	***
Coordination of collective bargaining	
Type(s) of coordination	Some national coordination through the tripartite body, some sectoral coordination
Relationship between the various levels of bargaining	According to the Labour Code, in some exceptional cases company agreements can provide for conditions that are more unfavourable for the employees in comparison with those agreed at higher level or guaranteed by law.
Coverage of collective agreements	
Percentage of the employed covered by collective agreements	31-40%
Employees that are covered by a collective agreement	All employees working for an employer that is covered by an agreement
Content of collective agreements	
Subjects of negotiation	Negotiations deal with pay, working conditions, work organisation, training, health and safety, etc. Non-binding wage recommendations are set at national level as well.
Minimum wage	
Is there a national minimum wage?	yes
Duration of collective agreements	
Normal duration of contracts (years)	2

COUNTRY FICHES

IRELAND	
Regulative framework	
Legislation regulating collective bargaining	Various Acts on Industrial Relations
Legal possibilities for the extension of collective agreements	No practice of extension of private-sector wage agreements.
Is registration of collective agreements obligatory?	No
Actors involved in collective bargaining	
Trade union density 2001-2002 (%)	35,9
Number of main union confederations	1
Share of largest union confederation in total membership	97
Organisation rate employers (% employees working in organised firms)	60
Who negotiates?	National pacts dealing with wages as well as broader economic and social issues regulate collective bargaining (although they do not have legal force). They are signed between the main union confederation ICTU, the government and the employers (in particular the IBEC). Industrial or multi-employer agreements have become rare; where they exist they are signed between industrial unions and employers' associations. At the company level negotiations are usually undertaken by the shop stewards, often with the support of union officials.
Importance of the different levels of collective bargaining	
National	***
Sector	
Company	*
Coordination of collective bargaining	
Type(s) of coordination	Explicit coordination through national wage agreements, coordination within sectors absent.
Relationship between the various levels of bargaining	National tripartite agreements establish guidelines on minimum and maximum wage increases. They also include provisions for deviation from the national norm company (or sector) level regarding both 'above the norm' pay deals as well as 'inability to pay' arrangements, whereby company agreements may provide lower wage increases than agreed at national level.
Coverage of collective agreements	
Percentage of the employed covered by collective agreements	51-60%
Employees that are covered by a collective agreement	Only employees who belong to the parties signatory to the agreement
Content of collective agreements	
Subjects of negotiation	Pay is mainly negotiated at the national level, where regular social pacts are concluded. Other issues like working conditions or training can be negotiated at national and local level.
Minimum wage	
Is there a national minimum wage?	yes
Duration of collective agreements	
Normal duration of contracts (years)	2

COUNTRY FICHES

ITALY

Regulative framework	
Legislation regulating collective bargaining	Constitutions, Art. 39-40. Many aspects of collective bargaining are regulated through the tripartite intersectoral agreement of 23 July 1993.
Legal possibilities for the extension of collective agreements	The Constitution declares collective agreements signed by 'representative trade unions' generally binding on all employee categories covered by the agreement, but the relevant article (39) was never enacted. However, judges generally take minimum wage levels set by sectoral agreements as a reference in disputes.
Is registration of collective agreements obligatory?	No
Actors involved in collective bargaining	
Trade union density 2001-2002 (%)	34
Number of main union confederations	3
Share of largest union confederation in total membership	41
Organisation rate employers (% employees working in organised firms)	51
Who negotiates?	Collective bargaining takes mainly place at the industry level and company level. At industry level it involves the employers' federations and the industrial federations of the major trade union confederations. At company level the employer negotiates with the RSU, a unified committee for all the unions in the workplace (in the private sector two-thirds of the RSU members are elected by the employees and one-third appointed by the unions; in the public sector all are elected by the employees).
Importance of the different levels of collective bargaining	
National	*
Sector	***
Company	**
Coordination of collective bargaining	
Type(s) of coordination	Implicit coordination between major employers (through strongest regional and sectoral federations) and in principle trade union confederations
Relationship between the various levels of bargaining	The two bargaining levels are essentially coordinated, by the provisions of an intersectoral incomes policy agreement as far as wage dynamics are concerned, and by the prevalence of sectoral over company bargaining, since the former sets the framework rules that define the scope of the latter. A limited number of sectoral agreements also contain opening clauses that allow for divergence at company level in certain cases, notably when company restructuring is under way. These clauses do not apply to wages.
Coverage of collective agreements	
Percentage of the employed covered by collective agreements	81-90 %
Employees that are covered by a collective agreement	All employees working for an employer that is covered by an agreement
Content of collective agreements	
Subjects of negotiation	Negotiations deal with pay, working conditions, work organisation, training, health and safety, etc. At the national level the unions are actively involved in broader political issues such as welfare and pension reforms, however, there are not always negotiations on these issues.
Minimum wage	
Is there a national minimum wage?	No
Duration of collective agreements	
Normal duration of contracts (years)	2

COUNTRY FICHES

LATVIA	
Regulative framework	
Legislation regulating collective bargaining	Labour Code, Part 2.
Legal possibilities for the extension of collective agreements	Industry-level agreements can be extended provided that the employers' organisation that signed the agreement represents more than 60 % of the employees in the industry.
Is registration of collective agreements obligatory?	No
Actors involved in collective bargaining	
Trade union density 2001-2002 (%)	20
Number of main union confederations	1
Share of largest union confederation in total membership	90
Organisation rate employers (% employees working in organised firms)	30
Who negotiates?	The scarce negotiations at the industry level are conducted between unions and employers' associations. At company level the employer negotiates with the union or with the 'authorised employee representatives' if there is no union presence.
Importance of the different levels of collective bargaining	
National	-
Sector	*
Company	***
Coordination of collective bargaining	
Type(s) of coordination	Some national coordination, mainly on minimum wages
Relationship between the various levels of bargaining	-
Coverage of collective agreements	
Percentage of the employed covered by collective agreements	11-20%
Employees that are covered by a collective agreement	Only employees who belong to the parties signatory to the agreement
Content of collective agreements	
Subjects of negotiation	Negotiations deal with pay, working conditions, work organisation, training, health and safety, etc.
Minimum wage	
Is there a national minimum wage?	yes
Duration of collective agreements	
Normal duration of contracts (years)	Variable

COUNTRY FICHES

LITHUANIA	
Regulative framework	
Legislation regulating collective bargaining	Labour Code.
Legal possibilities for the extension of collective agreements	The Labour Code (Article 51) allows collective agreements above the enterprise level to be extended by a decision of the Minister of Social Security and Labour upon request by one of the parties to the agreement.
Is registration of collective agreements obligatory?	Yes
Actors involved in collective bargaining	
Trade union density 2001-2002 (%)	16
Number of main union confederations	3
Share of largest union confederation in total membership	61
Organisation rate employers (% employees working in organised firms)	n.a.
Who negotiates?	The scarce negotiations at the industry level are conducted between unions and employers' associations. At the company level negotiations are normally between the employer and the union (or unions) in the company. However, if there is no union present, negotiations can be conducted by the works council.
Importance of the different levels of collective bargaining	
National	-
Sector	*
Company	***
Coordination of collective bargaining	
Type(s) of coordination	No national or sectoral coordination
Relationship between the various levels of bargaining	-
Coverage of collective agreements	
Percentage of the employed covered by collective agreements	11-20%
Employees that are covered by a collective agreement	National and sectoral agreements cover trade union members only, while company agreements are valid for all employees
Content of collective agreements	
Subjects of negotiation	Negotiations deal with pay, working conditions, work organisation, training, health and safety, etc.
Minimum wage	
Is there a national minimum wage?	yes
Duration of collective agreements	
Normal duration of contracts (years)	Variable

COUNTRY FICHES

LUXEMBOURG	
Regulative framework	
Legislation regulating collective bargaining	Act on collective labour relations, the regulation of collective labour disputes, and the National Conciliation Office (2004)
Legal possibilities for the extension of collective agreements	The Ministry can extend multi-employer agreements by decree on the application of one or more of the bargaining parties.
Is registration of collective agreements obligatory?	Yes
Actors involved in collective bargaining	
Trade union density 2001-2002 (%)	33,5
Number of main union confederations	2 (3)
Share of largest union confederation in total membership	50
Organisation rate employers (% employees working in organised firms)	80
Who negotiates?	At the industrial level negotiations are between employers' associations and national or sectoral unions. At the company level the parties are the unions and the employer.
Importance of the different levels of collective bargaining	
National	-
Sector	**
Company	**
Coordination of collective bargaining	
Type(s) of coordination	Implicit coordination among employees and employers, no sectoral coordination
Relationship between the various levels of bargaining	Collective agreements cannot go below the provisions of the law. Company level agreements have to be more favourable than sectoral agreements for workers.
Coverage of collective agreements	
Percentage of the employed covered by collective agreements	71-80%
Employees that are covered by a collective agreement	All employees working for an employer that is covered by an agreement
Content of collective agreements	
Subjects of negotiation	Negotiations deal with pay, working conditions, gender equality, work organisation, training, health and safety, etc. Pay is indexed to price increases.
Minimum wage	
Is there a national minimum wage?	yes
Duration of collective agreements	
Normal duration of contracts (years)	Variable

COUNTRY FICHES

MALTA	
Regulative framework	
Legislation regulating collective bargaining	The Employment and Industrial Relations Act 2002.
Legal possibilities for the extension of collective agreements	The extension of collective agreements is possible by Legal Notice by the government.
Is registration of collective agreements obligatory?	Yes
Actors involved in collective bargaining	
Trade union density 2001-2002 (%)	62,8
Number of main union confederations	2
Share of largest union confederation in total membership	55
Organisation rate employers (% employees working in organised firms)	n.a.
Who negotiates?	In the private sector bargaining takes place largely at the company level between the employer and one or more unions. In the public sector there are also multi-employer agreements, made by employers and unions.
Importance of the different levels of collective bargaining	
National	-
Sector	*
Company	***
Coordination of collective bargaining	
Type(s) of coordination	Implicit coordination among unions and employers
Relationship between the various levels of bargaining	-
Coverage of collective agreements	
Percentage of the employed covered by collective agreements	51-60%
Employees that are covered by a collective agreement	All employees working for an employer that is covered by an agreement
Content of collective agreements	
Subjects of negotiation	Negotiations deal with pay, working conditions, work organisation, training, health and safety, etc.
Minimum wage	
Is there a national minimum wage?	yes
Duration of collective agreements	
Normal duration of contracts (years)	Variable

COUNTRY FICHES

NETHERLANDS	
Regulative framework	
Legislation regulating collective bargaining	Collective Labour Agreements Act of 1927; Collective Labour Agreements Act (Declaration of Universally Binding and Non-binding Status) Act of 1937.
Legal possibilities for the extension of collective agreements	On the application of one or more bargaining parties, after (non-binding) advice of the (bipartite) Labour Foundation, and if 55-60 % or more of the workforce is already covered, the Ministry can extend agreements to entire sector.
Is registration of collective agreements obligatory?	Yes
Actors involved in collective bargaining	
Trade union density 2001-2002 (%)	22,1
Number of main union confederations	3
Share of largest union confederation in total membership	66
Organisation rate employers (% employees working in organised firms)	85
Who negotiates?	National negotiations take place between the main unions confederations, employers' organisations and the government. At industry level industry unions and employers' organisations negotiate. At the company level the employer negotiates with trade unions.
Importance of the different levels of collective bargaining	
National	*
Sector	***
Company	*
Coordination of collective bargaining	
Type(s) of coordination	Some explicit, but mostly implicit coordination and some pattern-setting by large employers and unions.
Relationship between the various levels of bargaining	Sectoral agreements may contain provisions that allow or oblige employer and works council to negotiate certain issues at company level.
Coverage of collective agreements	
Percentage of the employed covered by collective agreements	81-90%
Employees that are covered by a collective agreement	All employees working for an employer that is covered by an agreement
Content of collective agreements	
Subjects of negotiation	Negotiations deal with pay, working conditions, gender equality, work organisation, training, health and safety, etc.
Minimum wage	
Is there a national minimum wage?	yes
Duration of collective agreements	
Normal duration of contracts (years)	2

COUNTRY FICHES

POLAND	
Regulative framework	
Legislation regulating collective bargaining	Constitution 1997 (art. 59.2); Labour Code (Chapter XI).
Legal possibilities for the extension of collective agreements	The Ministry can extend multi-employer agreements to cover unaffiliated employers in a particular sector, if considered 'a vital social interest'.
Is registration of collective agreements obligatory?	Yes
Actors involved in collective bargaining	
Trade union density 2001-2002 (%)	14,7
Number of main union confederations	3
Share of largest union confederation in total membership	43
Organisation rate employers (% employees working in organised firms)	n.a.
Who negotiates?	Most negotiations take place between the employer and local trade union organisations (unions often negotiate jointly at the company level).
Importance of the different levels of collective bargaining	
National	-
Sector	*
Company	***
Coordination of collective bargaining	
Type(s) of coordination	No national or sectoral coordination
Relationship between the various levels of bargaining	Bargaining parties can agree on a suspension of an agreement or parts of the agreements if the company has difficulties. A 2002 amendment to the Labour Code gives employers the opportunity to suspend the application of an agreement in the face of financial hardship.
Coverage of collective agreements	
Percentage of the employed covered by collective agreements	41-50%
Employees that are covered by a collective agreement	All employees working for an employer that is covered by an agreement
Content of collective agreements	
Subjects of negotiation	Negotiations deal with pay, working conditions, work organisation, training, health and safety, etc.
Minimum wage	
Is there a national minimum wage?	yes
Duration of collective agreements	
Normal duration of contracts (years)	Variable

COUNTRY FICHES

PORTUGAL	
Regulative framework	
Legislation regulating collective bargaining	Constitution (art. 55-56); Labour Code.
Legal possibilities for the extension of collective agreements	On its own initiative, the Ministry can extend agreements to the entire economic sector or geographical regions, and/or enlarge the agreement to different regions. Interested parties can appeal the decision.
Is registration of collective agreements obligatory?	n.a.
Actors involved in collective bargaining	
Trade union density 2001-2002 (%)	30
Number of main union confederations	2
Share of largest union confederation in total membership	65
Organisation rate employers (% employees working in organised firms)	58
Who negotiates?	At the national level, employers' associations, trade unions and the government set a framework for collective bargaining at lower levels. The main level is the industrial level where employers' associations and trade unions negotiate. Company agreements are largely confined to large companies and are negotiated between the employer and the trade unions.
Importance of the different levels of collective bargaining	
National	*
Sector	***
Company	*
Coordination of collective bargaining	
Type(s) of coordination	Implicit coordination between major employers, little coordination between unions
Relationship between the various levels of bargaining	n.a.
Coverage of collective agreements	
Percentage of the employed covered by collective agreements	71-80%
Employees that are covered by a collective agreement	Only employees who belong to the parties signatory to the agreement
Content of collective agreements	
Subjects of negotiation	Negotiations deal with pay, working conditions, gender equality, work organisation, training, health and safety, etc.
Minimum wage	
Is there a national minimum wage?	yes
Duration of collective agreements	
Normal duration of contracts (years)	Variable

COUNTRY FICHES

SLOVAKIA	
Regulative framework	
Legislation regulating collective bargaining	Constitution (art. 36); Act on Collective Bargaining 1991; Labour Code 2001.
Legal possibilities for the extension of collective agreements	On the application of one or more of the bargaining parties and recommended by a special tripartite committee for extension, the Ministry can extend agreements to employers with similar business activities and economic and social conditions.
Is registration of collective agreements obligatory?	Yes
Actors involved in collective bargaining	
Trade union density 2001-2002 (%)	35,4
Number of main union confederations	1
Share of largest union confederation in total membership	95
Organisation rate employers (% employees working in organised firms)	65
Who negotiates?	Employers' associations, trade unions and the government irregularly (I.e. only in certain years) negotiate general agreements concerning incomes policy and broader economic, social and employment policy. Negotiations at industry level take place between industry unions and the respective employers' associations. At the local level the two sides are the employer and the local workplace unions.
Importance of the different levels of collective bargaining	
National	*
Sector	**
Company	**
Coordination of collective bargaining	
Type(s) of coordination	No national coordination since 2000, some sectoral coordination
Relationship between the various levels of bargaining	Sectoral collective agreements create a framework for company bargaining. According to the 'favourability principle', company agreements can only improve employment conditions. Opening clauses in sectoral agreements are not allowed.
Coverage of collective agreements	
Percentage of the employed covered by collective agreements	41-50%
Employees that are covered by a collective agreement	All employees working for an employer that is covered by an agreement
Content of collective agreements	
Subjects of negotiation	Negotiations deal with pay, working conditions, work organisation, training, health and safety, etc.
Minimum wage	
Is there a national minimum wage?	yes
Duration of collective agreements	
Normal duration of contracts (years)	2

COUNTRY FICHES

SLOVENIA	
Regulative framework	
Legislation regulating collective bargaining	Employment Relationships Act 2002
Legal possibilities for the extension of collective agreements	Obligatory membership of employers in chambers of commerce assures inclusive coverage.
Is registration of collective agreements obligatory?	Yes
Actors involved in collective bargaining	
Trade union density 2001-2002 (%)	41
Number of main union confederations	1 (2)
Share of largest union confederation in total membership	68
Organisation rate employers (% employees working in organised firms)	100
Who negotiates?	At the national level the parties to collective agreements are the trade unions, the chamber of commerce and industry and the government. At the industry level the parties to collective agreements are the trade unions and the chamber of commerce and industry. At company level the negotiating parties are the individual employer and the local trade union.
Importance of the different levels of collective bargaining	
National	**
Sector	**
Company	*
Coordination of collective bargaining	
Type(s) of coordination	Explicit coordination through bipartite and tripartite national agreements
Relationship between the various levels of bargaining	The current tripartite pay agreement allows companies facing economic difficulties to postpone agreed pay increases under certain conditions.
Coverage of collective agreements	
Percentage of the employed covered by collective agreements	91-100%
Employees that are covered by a collective agreement	All employees working for an employer that is covered by an agreement
Content of collective agreements	
Subjects of negotiation	Negotiations deal with pay, working conditions, work organisation, training, health and safety, etc.
Minimum wage	
Is there a national minimum wage?	yes
Duration of collective agreements	
Normal duration of contracts (years)	2

COUNTRY FICHES

SPAIN	
Regulative framework	
Legislation regulating collective bargaining	Constitution 1976 (Art. 37); Workers' Statute 1980 (Art. 82-92).
Legal possibilities for the extension of collective agreements	Extension is automatic throughout the agreement's domain if signed by a majority of the representatives of each party to the agreement. Upon request by unions and/or employers, the Ministry can enlarge the agreement in cases where no bargaining exists.
Is registration of collective agreements obligatory?	Yes
Actors involved in collective bargaining	
Trade union density 2001-2002 (%)	15
Number of main union confederations	2 (3)
Share of largest union confederation in total membership	41
Organisation rate employers (% employees working in organised firms)	72
Who negotiates?	At the company level agreements are negotiated between the employer and the works council. At regional, industrial and national level agreements can be signed only by trade unions considered as 'most representative' or unions that can show they have a specific level of support in the area covered by the agreements. The status of 'most representative' depends on support in the works council elections (at national level a confederation must get 10% of the votes, at regional level the barrier is 15%).
Importance of the different levels of collective bargaining	
National	*
Sector	**
Company	**
Coordination of collective bargaining	
Type(s) of coordination	Some explicit coordination between confederations of unions and employers in recent years and weak pattern-setting in sectoral bargaining
Relationship between the various levels of bargaining	In principle, lower-level agreements can improve on or worsen standards agreed at higher levels. Many sectoral agreements include opening clause for company bargaining.
Coverage of collective agreements	
Percentage of the employed covered by collective agreements	81-90%
Employees that are covered by a collective agreement	All employees working for an employer that is covered by an agreement
Content of collective agreements	
Subjects of negotiation	National agreements deal with non-pay issues like pension and training, and have also started to set broad wage guidelines. Lower-level agreements cover pay, working conditions, work organisation, training, health and safety, etc.
Minimum wage	
Is there a national minimum wage?	yes
Duration of collective agreements	
Normal duration of contracts (years)	2 to 3

COUNTRY FICHES

SWEDEN	
Regulative framework	
Legislation regulating collective bargaining	The regulation of bargaining has been developed in a tradition of self-regulation. Hence, the present regulatory system is based mainly on agreements between the Trade Union Confederation (LO) and the Employers' Federation (SAF).
Legal possibilities for the extension of collective agreements	No practice of extension of private-sector wage agreements.
Is registration of collective agreements obligatory?	No
Actors involved in collective bargaining	
Trade union density 2001-2002 (%)	78
Number of main union confederations	3
Share of largest union confederation in total membership	52
Organisation rate employers (% employees working in organised firms)	55
Who negotiates?	Industry-level agreements are concluded by the employers' association and the trade unions. At the company level the employer negotiates with the local union organisation. There are separate agreements for manual and non-manual workers.
Importance of the different levels of collective bargaining	
National	-
Sector	***
Company	*
Coordination of collective bargaining	
Type(s) of coordination	Implicit coordination within confederations (unions) and pattern-setting, aided by joint institutions.
Relationship between the various levels of bargaining	Sectoral agreements usually define the scope for company bargaining. In principle, company agreements can worsen standards in comparison with the sectoral level. However, in practice, this is very rarely the case.
Coverage of collective agreements	
Percentage of the employed covered by collective agreements	91-100%
Employees that are covered by a collective agreement	Only employees who belong to the parties signatory to the agreement
Content of collective agreements	
Subjects of negotiation	Negotiations deal with pay, working conditions, work organisation, training, health and safety, pensions, etc.
Minimum wage	
Is there a national minimum wage?	No
Duration of collective agreements	
Normal duration of contracts (years)	3

COUNTRY FICHES

UNITED KINGDOM	
Regulative framework	
Legislation regulating collective bargaining	Largely a voluntaristic system, not legally based. Collective agreements are in general not legally enforceable and are largely 'gentlemen's agreements'.
Legal possibilities for the extension of collective agreements	No practice of extension of private-sector wage agreements.
Is registration of collective agreements obligatory?	No
Actors involved in collective bargaining	
Trade union density 2001-2002 (%)	30,4
Number of main union confederations	1
Share of largest union confederation in total membership	84
Organisation rate employers (% employees working in organised firms)	40
Who negotiates?	Collective bargaining takes mainly place at the company level, between the employer and one or several trade unions.
Importance of the different levels of collective bargaining	
National	-
Sector	
Company	***
Coordination of collective bargaining	
Type(s) of coordination	No national or sectoral coordination
Relationship between the various levels of bargaining	In the case of sectoral agreements, there is usually also complementary bargaining at company level.
Coverage of collective agreements	
Percentage of the employed covered by collective agreements	31-40%
Employees that are covered by a collective agreement	Only employees who belong to the parties signatory to the agreement
Content of collective agreements	
Subjects of negotiation	Some negotiations cover all aspects of pay and working conditions, but others deal principally only with pay and flexibility, since employers refuse to negotiate about more issues.
Minimum wage	
Is there a national minimum wage?	yes
Duration of collective agreements	
Normal duration of contracts (years)	Variable