

Eurofound Study :

Exploring the connections between EU
and national-level social dialogue

What's in it for railways?

Sectoral Social Dialogue Committee for Rail Transport
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wmp consult

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in cooperation with Ecorys, KU Leuven and University of Primorska

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The study

RESEARCH REPORT



Industrial relations

Exploring the connections between EU- and national-level social dialogue

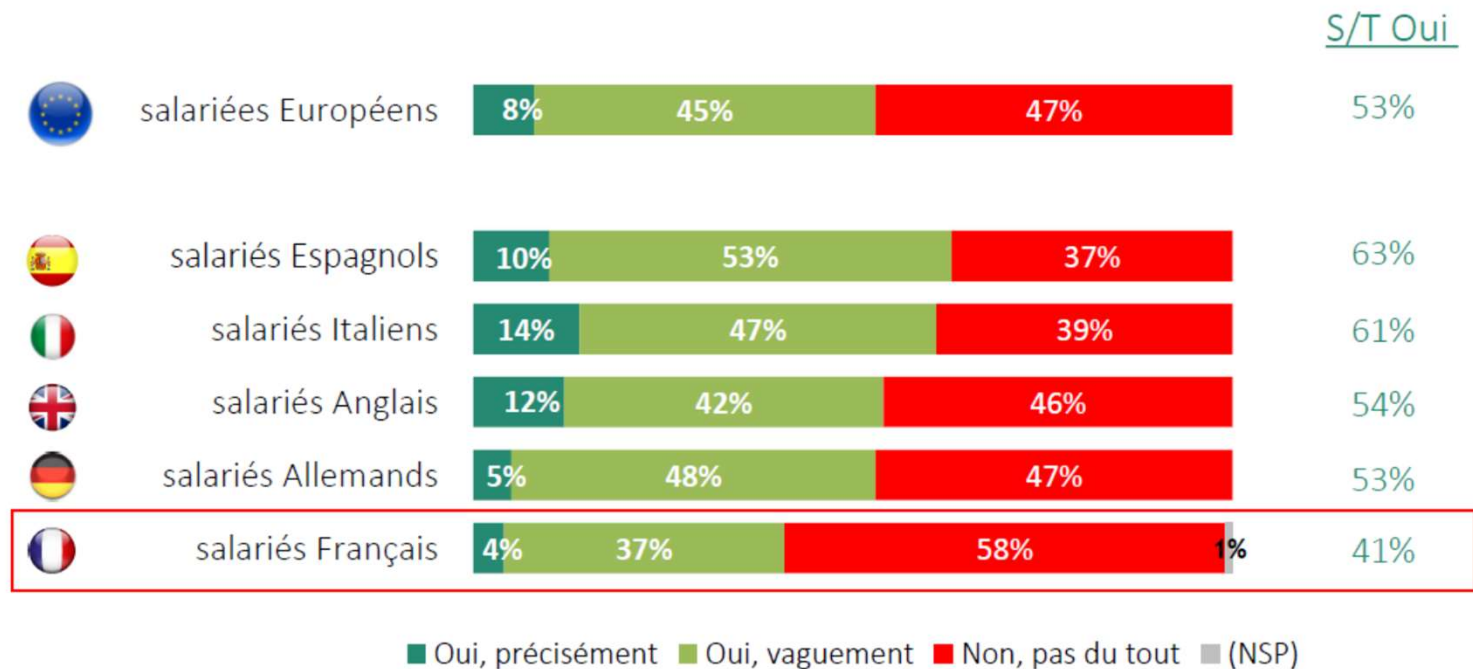
<https://www.eurofound.europa.eu/publications/report/2018/exploring-the-connections-between-eu-and-national-level-social-dialogue>



European social dialogue?



Savez-vous ce qu'est le dialogue social européen ?



Overview

- 43 sectoral social dialogue committees at EU level since 1998
- Large number of outcomes such as joint declarations, reports, statements
- But only 10 sectoral agreements having a legally binding character
- Even less (4) autonomous framework agreements at sectoral level – the last one in professional football 2012
- ***Success or not meeting expectations?***

Analysing the linkages between European and national level

Sector	Articulation analysed	EU Social Partners	National ESD analysed
Cross-industry	Horizontal	ETUC and ETUFs BusinessEurope, UEAPME, CEEP, sectoral EOs	----
Cross-industry	Vertical	ETUC, BusinessEurope	Denmark, Germany, Spain
Cross-industry	Vertical	ETUC, BusinessEurope	Hungary, Poland, Slovenia
Construction	Vertical	EFBWW, FIEC, EBC	Denmark, Germany, Slovenia, Romania
Tanning & Leather	Vertical	industriAll, COTANCE	Italy, Romania
Chemical Industry	Vertical	industriAll, ECEG	Belgium, Bulgaria, Germany
Food and Drink Sector	Vertical	EFFAT, FoodDrinkEurope	Slovenia, UK
Local and regional government	Vertical	EPSU, CEMR	Denmark, Hungary, UK
Railways	Vertical	ETF, CER, EIM	Bulgaria, France, Germany, Slovakia
Commerce Sector	Vertical	UniEuropa, EuroCommerce	Spain, Norway, Poland

Research interests and objectives

- Better understanding of the **functioning** of social dialogue
- Relationship between **cross-sectoral and sector-specific** social dialogue
- Analysis and comparison of **information flows and cooperation** between national and European social dialogue
- Similarities and varieties between **different sectoral social dialogues**
- Major **barriers and challenges**
- Developing **solutions for improvements** (internal and external)

Hindering factors

- Employer organisations highlighted in particular the following
 - The less structured and binding character of national level social dialogue (e.g. no multi-annual work programmes, lack of joint understanding, less-supportive role of national governments, etc.)
 - The pluralism of employer organisations and the absence of sector-level social dialogue;
 - Topics addressed by EU level social dialogue that are not very relevant for companies in the respective countries (e.g. telework, demographic change, work-life balance)
- Trade unions
 - the 'lack of enthusiasm and commitment' of national employer organisations for European level social dialogue;
 - a weak mandate of national employer organisations for entering into negotiations with trade unions at cross-sectoral level – both with view on European Social Dialogue as well as within the national context;
 - issues related to the representativeness of employer organisations;
 - the lack of political support for social dialogue received by national governments.

Sectoral social dialogue railways

- Similar to other transport sectors (maritime transport, inland waterways) very active sector within social dialogue
- Drivers:
 - EU regulation versus self-regulation
 - Strong social partners
 - Joint interests
 - Integration of social partners in new EU Member States
 - Mandate of national employer organisations
- Support of EU level social dialogue from the highest level of railway companies
- Added-value from the national perspective

Results in detail

Engagement and motivation of actors	<ul style="list-style-type: none">◊ Overall, social partners are strongly committed and engaged with European social dialogue.◊ There is good coordination when dealing with EU regulatory issues.
Effectiveness of top-down and bottom-up articulation processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">◊ The rail sector includes one of the best sectoral examples of top-down and bottom-up articulation: the Women in Rail agreement, which was inspired by national-level activities and led to related activities in France, Germany and Bulgaria.
Factors facilitating articulation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">◊ The fact that this sector is very exposed to EU regulation and the social partners can contribute significantly through dialogue.◊ Two binding agreements linked to EU regulation have been negotiated.◊ Involvement of senior figures in social dialogue.◊ The topics chosen, such as women in rail, are highly relevant and interesting for the social partners on both sides.
Factors hindering articulation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">◊ Language barriers.◊ Low participation levels in meetings and restrictions on the number of participants in meetings.◊ Issues around the visibility and relevance of European sectoral social dialogue in some countries, as well as the perception that the Commission is focused on Article 155 agreements.
Recommendations for improving articulation and links between levels	<ul style="list-style-type: none">◊ The good experiences in France, Germany and Bulgaria should be promoted and built upon in order to widen perceptions of social dialogue and its relevance in Member States.◊ Ensuring that the appropriate participants attend meetings – in terms of mandates and interests – should be a priority, which is challenging in a sector that is so diverse.◊ Social partners should work with the Commission to ensure the relevance of the dialogue and its outcomes, not just in terms of binding agreements, but its outputs as a whole.

Recommendations (from social partners)

- **EU Commission:**

- Less “New Start” narrative and stronger support in terms of resources and consideration in policy development
- Better promotion of social dialogue
- Stronger respect of joint initiatives and declarations of social partners

- **Own practice of social partners:**

- Intensification of exchange – independent of EU funding and support
- Participation of all national member organisations / ownership
- EU sectoral social dialogue as a topic for the whole organisation
- Focussing not only on “soft” issues?

Food for discussion

- **Negotiations** between unions and employer organisations on the basis of a strong mandate are the core of social dialogue
- **Dilemma:** It is not possible that social partners in all EU countries will regard outcomes of social dialogue as having an added value
- Strong need for **horizontal exchange and linkage:** There should be more linkages between cross-sectoral and sectoral social dialogue at EU level

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