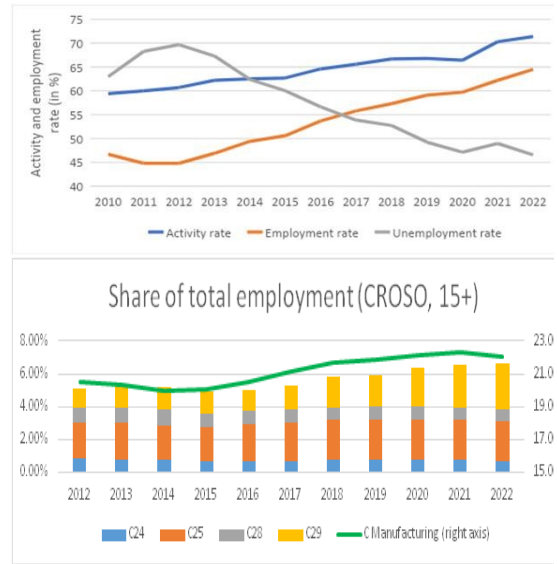


BARMETAL: Digitalization, Automatization and Decarbonization: Opportunity for strengthening collective bargaining in the metal sector (101052331) Country Factsheet - SERBIA

/Elevators pitch/

Overall labour market situation in Serbia has improved over the last decade (upper graph on the right). Metal sector accounts for relatively big share of the total employment. In 2022 more than 5.8% of all formal workers were employed in the observed sub-sectors (lower graph on the right). It also accounts for more than a quarter of total Manufacturing employment. The above-average growth of production and employment in the Metal sector in the last decade owes to the sharp increase in Foreign Direct Investments (FDIs). Despite long trade union tradition in metal sector there is no sectoral or sub-sectoral level collective agreement in metal sector. The company level social dialogue remains the most important while the company level agreement are still the most common type of collective agreements. According to a recent assessment of the European Commission social dialogue in Serbia remains weak, especially in regard to the participation of social partners in the development of relevant policies.



Key challenges in the metal sector

- Add 3 main challenges you identified in relation to D-A-D.
- Industrial growth has traditionally been a cornerstone of overall Serbian economic development. Serbia has issued a set of strategic documents fostering implementation of D-A-D, with strong focus on manufacturing industry and metal sub-sectors.
- D-A-D makes significant part of public discourse, yet with low participation of worker representatives.
- Trade unions primarily focus on basic workers rights and working conditions, staying relatively unaware of the new challenges resulting from further implementation of D-A-D.

Role of social partners in addressing D-A-D

- Add 3 main findings how sectoral dialogue deals with D-A-D
- The sectoral dialogue on issues related with D-A-D is non-existent which among other results from low interest of employers to associate.
- Collective bargaining is limited at company level, where not much attention is paid to D-A-D and related issues, such as education and training of workers.
- When settling disputes resulting from company transformation (e.g. case of Stellantis in Kragujevac, Serbia) Government has still been perceived an important social partner.

D-A-D in workplace

- Strategic decisions including investment in D-A-D are brought by company management without participation of workers representatives.
- Trade unions mostly focus on basic workers rights, while facing negative unionisation trend and rising fears among workers in raising their voices.
- Job losses resulting from D-A-D are perceived to mostly affect older workers with obsolete skills who are not ready to participate in re-skilling and up-skilling

Bargaining efforts in companies

- No evidence was found of any D-A-D related bargaining efforts on company level.
- Awareness of worker representatives and workers remains low when it comes to the needs for initiating social dialogue on issues related with trainings, or anything other than basic workers rights.
- Workers are invited to directly share their ideas and suggestions for improvements of production process and working environment (LEAN/KAIZEN), yet complaints, if any,

trainings while it facilitates work, making it more efficient, improving safety and general working environment due to electrification and reducing carbon emissions.

are mostly forwarded indirectly, through trade union representatives.

Key recommendations/Main message/Additional findings

- As the new topics resulting from D-A-D and its implementation in metal sector generally refer to education and training related issues it is worth reconsidering the need for initiation of social dialogue on upper levels, such as sectoral and even national levels.
- Social dialogue on any level should be initiated by both employers and government representatives to include newly emerging topics related with D-A-D such as work-based, formal and non-formal trainings.
- Broad national social dialogue should be opened within Socio-economic Council to discuss possibilities for establishment of a special fund (e.g. Skills fund) with financial contributions paid both from the side of companies and government to allow further trainings for changing labour market. The stress may be put on non-formal trainings and work-based learning rather than formal education which is much slower and less flexible in meeting the needs of the fast changing technologies.

