

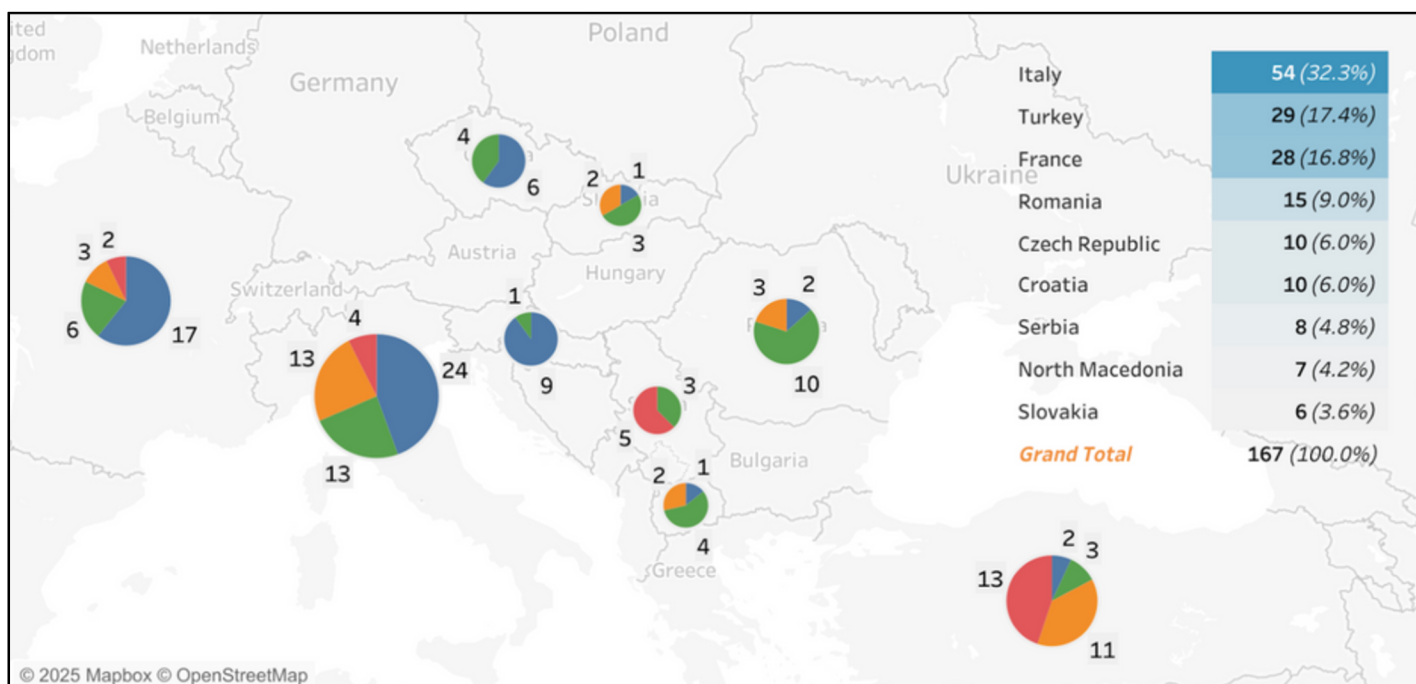


BARSERVICE



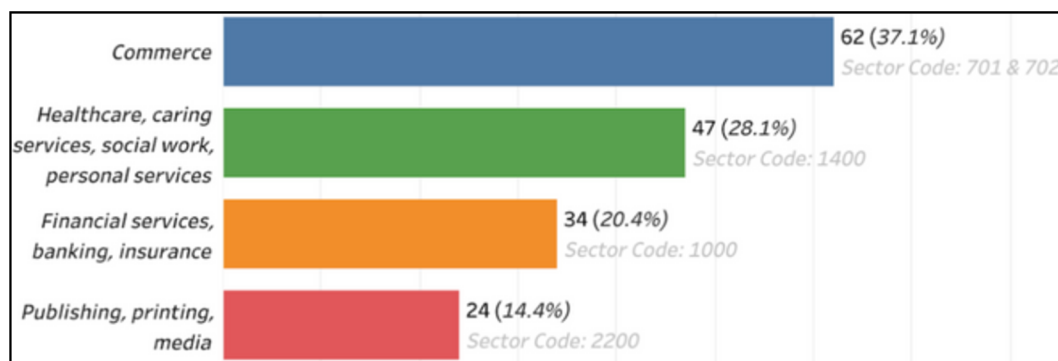
Smart bargaining in the Services Sector: Overview, Challenges, Opportunities

BARSERVICE analysed 167 collective agreements in the services sector - Social care, Commerce, Finance, and Publishing - across the 9 targeted countries listed in the below visual:



Source: WageIndicator Collective Agreements database (2025)

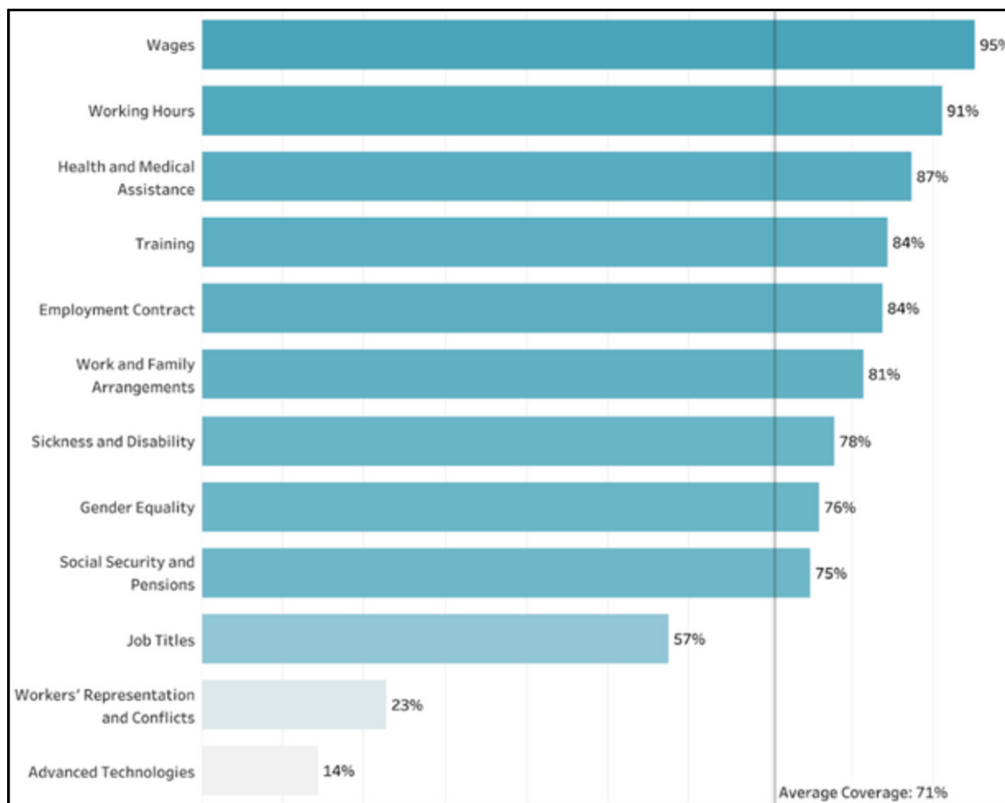
Most of the agreements collected are from the commerce sector and the least from the publishing sector, as shown in the visual alongside.



Source: WageIndicator Collective Agreements database (2025)

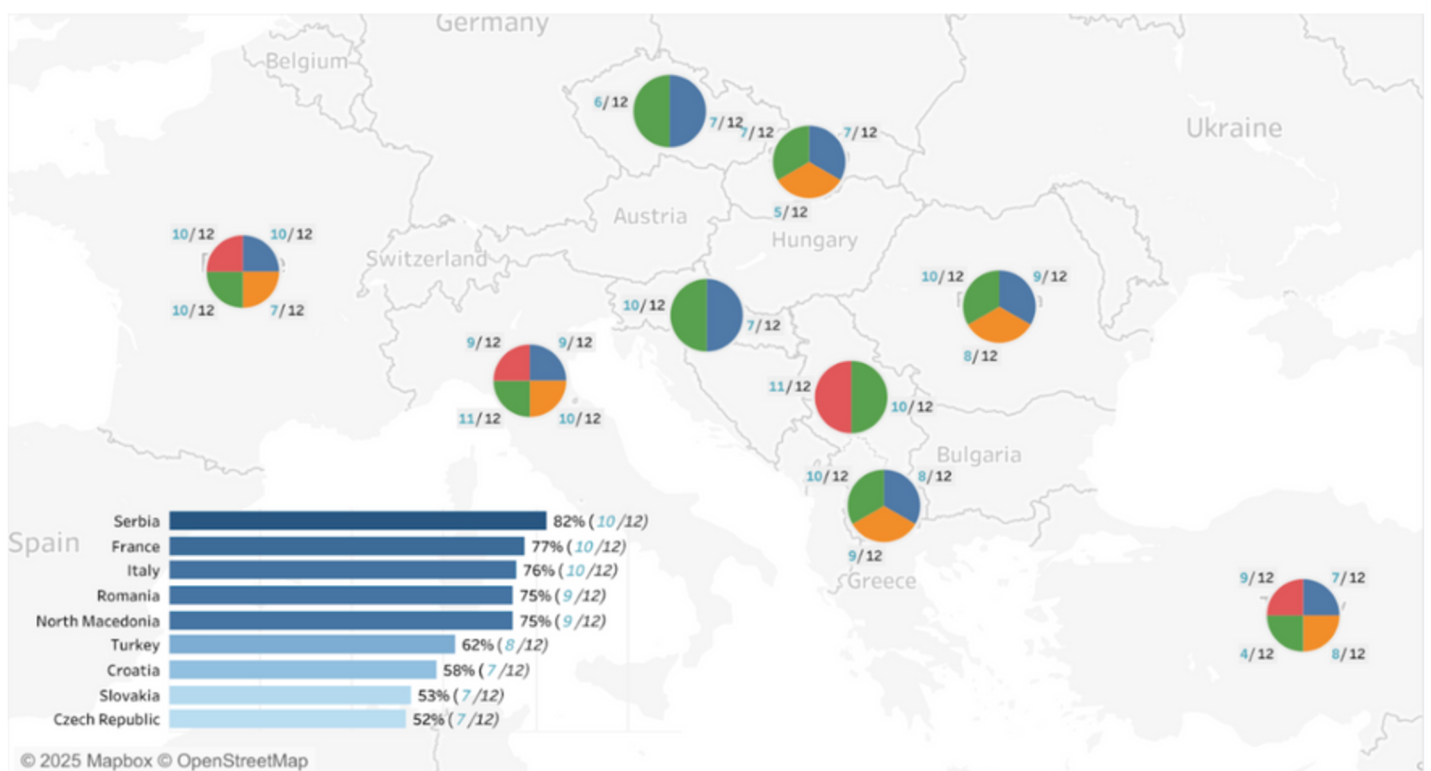
Twelve topics were covered in the analysis of these CBAs:

1. Job titles
2. Social security and pensions
3. Training
4. Employment contracts
5. Sickness and disability
6. Health and medical assistance
7. Work/family balance arrangements
8. Gender equality issues
9. Wages
10. Working hours
11. Workers' representation & conflicts
12. New technologies & green clauses



The chart on the left shows the percentage of CBAs that covered the twelve topics studied, while the below visual shows the distribution across countries and sectors.

Source for both visuals:
WageIndicator Collective
Agreements Database
(2025)



Main findings and suggestions based on the analysis conducted

Timeline

- The majority of the analyzed agreements (120/167 CBAs) were signed recently, between 2016 and 2024

Well covered areas

- Basic employment conditions such as wages and working hours are well-addressed
- Provisions on health and safety, job security, and individual employment contracts are common, indicating their importance for workers' rights and well-being
- Many agreements include clauses on work-family balance, gender equality, and workplace violence, indicating their importance in labor negotiations

Areas with Less Consistent Coverage

- Training is frequently mentioned but often ignores on emerging technologies or environmentally sustainable practices
- Worker participation in decision-making is limited; less than 50% of agreements including such provisions
- Though overtime compensation is often addressed, other wage-related matters like structural increases and bonuses are covered in just over 50% of agreements

Summary

- Collective bargaining plays a crucial role in shaping employment conditions in the services sector
- While wages, working hours, and worker protections are generally well-addressed, improvements can be made in training for future-oriented skills (including AI), green transition, workers participation, and wage enhancements
- The differences across countries indicate the need for individualised approaches to ensure effective bargaining and better outcomes for workers

Recommendations

- A shift toward more strategic, forward-looking collective bargaining—often referred to as "smart bargaining"—is recommended
- Bargaining should incorporate lifelong learning provisions, gender equality measures, flexible work arrangements, and protection from workplace violence
- Capacity building for social partners and best practice exchanges across sectors and countries can support comprehensive and future-proof agreements