

BARSERVICE



Smart bargaining in the services sector: overview, challenges, opportunities

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Project: 101126532 — BARSERVICE

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About the Project:

Project Summary:

To support capacity building for collective bargaining in the Services Sector, BARSERVICE seeks to provide a complex analysis of industrial relations in the services sector of 9 countries (6 EU Member States and 3 Candidate Countries). Knowing the current situation, its challenges and opportunities is the prerequisite for improvements in bargaining processes and coverage. The project will map the structure of collective agreements (which companies have them and what is their content), involvement of unions and employers' organizations, opinions and views of the social partners regarding (sectoral) collective bargaining, organizing rates and obstacles to organizing, the power position of trade unions and strategies to combat undeclared work in the service sector. The project will focus specifically on several areas of services: commerce, finance, social care and publishing.

Partners:

Central European Labour Studies Institute (CELSI) | Bratislava, Slovakia
WageIndicator Foundation | Amsterdam, the Netherlands
UNI Europa | Brussels, Belgium
Dokuz Eylül Üniversitesi | Izmir, Türkiye
Academia de Studii Economice (ASE) din Bucuresti | Bucharest, Romania
Institut za razvoj i međunarodne odnose (IRMO) | Zagreb, Croatia
Macedonia2025 | Skopje, North-Macedonia
Ekonomski fakultet, Univerzitet u Beogradu | Belgrade, Serbia

Associate Partners:

Confederația Patronală Concordia | Bucharest, Romania
Konfederácia odborových zväzov Slovenskej republiky | Bratislava, Slovakia
Federazione Informazioni, Spettacolo e Telecomunicazioni | Rome, Italy
Sindikata trgovine Hrvatske | Zagreb, Croatia
Institute Syndical Européen (ETUI) | Brussels, Belgium
Odborový zväz bánk a poisťovní | Bratislava, Slovakia
Organizacija Na Rabotodavaci Na Makedonija | Skopje, Macedonia
AWVN | The Hague, Netherlands

Bibliographical information

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Deliverable D 7.3 Final conference, including conference outputs

For this deliverable, a conference was organised in Brussels on 4th of December together with trade union affiliates of UNI Europa, the consortium partners and researchers, policy makers at country level and European level, and interested stakeholders.

The conference, held in Atelier29 on 4 December 2025, was titled “Towards Smart Bargaining in Europe’s Services Sectors”.

The conference was a live event, mainly held in English, with interpretation available in Turkish, Slovak, Czech, Romanian, Croatian, Serbian and French.

This deliverable D7.3 describes the conference itself, and includes:

- A description of the event and conference agenda
- Links to recordings of the various panels, introduction, a presentation held by UNI Europa and the closing presentation
- A list of registered participants
- The list of participants present in Brussels
- Some pictures of the event

A description of the event and conference agenda

Conference Towards Smart Bargaining in Europe's Services Sector 4 December 2025, Brussels, Belgium

About the event

Towards Smart Bargaining in Europe's Services Sector brings together trade unions, employers, policymakers, and researchers to discuss how collective bargaining can adapt to Europe's fast-changing services sector. Building on research done in Croatia, Türkiye, Serbia, Slovakia, Czechia, North Macedonia, Italy, Romania, and France, the one-day event explores how smart dialogue can improve bargaining outcomes in Europe's Care, Finance, Publishing, and Commerce sectors. Key speakers include representatives from the European Commission, the European Parliament, UNI Europa, and national social partners from across Europe. Together, they will discuss how to strengthen collective bargaining coverage and build more resilient social dialogue in Europe's services sector.

Date, Time and Place

- Thursday 4 December 2025: 9:15 - 16:15 CET
- Atelier29: Rue Jacques de Lalaing 29, 1000 Brussels, Belgium



CELSI
Central European
Labour Studies
Institute

UNI
global
union

ĐOKUŽEVA
UNIVERSITY



UNIVERSITY OF BELGRADE
Faculty of Economics

IRMG
INSTITUTE FOR DEVELOPMENT AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

MACEDONIA
2025
Helping Build a Stronger Nation

WageIndicator
Clear data, better decisions

Co-funded by
the European Union

Agenda

8:30 - 9:30	Walk-in & coffee
9:30 - 9:45	Introduction and video <i>Fiona Dragstra - WageIndicator</i>
9:45 - 10:00	UNI Europa and Europe's services sector <i>Stan De Spiegelaere - UNI Europa</i>
10:00 - 10:45	Deep dive in the care sector <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jannette Armstrong (UNI Global Union) • Jakov Kolak (Regional Industrial Trade Union (RITU) – Croatia) • Sylvia Ščepková (UniJA – Slovakia) • Adem Sarıçoban (Türkiye Sağlık-İş – Türkiye) <i>Moderation: Valeria Pulignano (KU Leuven)</i>
10:45 - 11:15	Coffee break & poster sessions
11:15 - 12:15	Smart bargaining in Europe's services sector: what is needed? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diana Crumpăna (European Commission) • Oliver Roethig (Regional Secretary UNI Europa and VP of ETUC) • Branislav Ondruš (MEP for Slovakia) <i>Moderation: Stan De Spiegelaere (UNI Europa)</i>
12:15 - 13:00	Lunch break & poster sessions
13:00 - 13:45	Deep dive in the finance sector <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jana Szászová (Odborový zväz bánk a poisťovní (OZBP) – Slovakia) • Adrian Soare (Federation of Insurance and Banking Unions (FSAB) – Romania) <i>Moderation: Hrvoje Butković (IRMO – Croatia)</i>
13:45 - 14:30	Deep dive in the publishing sector <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • İlyas Coşkun (Türkiye Gazeteciler Sendikası (TGS) – Türkiye) • Ilenia Ventroni (UNI Europa) • Darije Hanzalek (Sindikat Grafičara i Medja (SGIM) – Croatia) <i>Moderation: Galjina Ognjanov (Faculty of Economics, University of Belgrade – Serbia)</i>
14:30 - 15:00	Coffee break & poster sessions
15:00 - 15:45	Deep dive in the commerce sector <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nikoletta Kiss (UNI Europa) • Peter Jančík (Odborový zväz pracovníkov obchodu a cestovného ruchu (OZPOCR) – Slovakia) • Vasile Gogescu (Federatia Sindicatelor din Comerț (FSC) – Romania) <i>Moderation: Jana Krstevska (Macedonia2025)</i>
15:45 - 16:15	Closing <i>Marta Kahancová - CELSI</i>

Recordings

All 8 video clips from the BARSERVICE Conference 2025 can be found below and on Youtube.

Here are the individual links:

- Introduction by Fiona Dragstra (WageIndicator)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xXArCYDgFjQ>
- UNI Europa and Europe's Services Sectors by Stan de Spiegelaere
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fg3B6A9NnK4>
- Panel: Deep Dive into the Care Sector
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-u45DKeXVM0>
- Panel: Smart Bargaining in Europe's Services Sector: What is Needed?
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RMGaXDzJsvY>
- Panel Deep Dive in the Finance Sector
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ubOi9WYTOSI>
- Panel Deep Dive into the Publishing Sector
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TXxkLWV_GyE
- Panel Deep Dive into the Commerce Sector
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L754YgLKGBU>
- Entire conference, including the closing by Marta Kahancová
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fhEx2IYen84>

The playlist on YouTube with all panels and the full day can be found here:

<https://youtube.com/playlist?list=PLYHZaVWkSj5mKKVNXNDaL1CqktFbcaQmp>

Presentations

During the conference, UNI Europa and CELSI gave presentations to introduce and close the event. These presentations can be found online on the event page:
<https://wageindicator.org/about/events/2025/barservice-conference-towards-smart-bargaining-in-europes-services-sectors>

and via the below links:

[UNI Europa and Europe's services sectors](#)
[Stan de Spiegelaere - UNI Europa](#)

[Closing](#)
[Marta Kahancová - CELSI](#)

List of registered participants

Below is a list of people who had registered to join the conference. Some of the international participants, such as from Bangladesh, South Africa and Kenya, knew they could not come to the conference but were very interested in the outcomes of the project. All registered participants (84 in total), have received the recordings of the day.

Name	Institution	Title / Role
Saulo Aristides de Souza	University of Coimbra	Researcher
Hrvoje Butkovic	Institute for Development and International Relations	Researcher
M M Makfur Hassan	Bangladesh Labour Foundation (BLF)	NGO / CSO
Marta Kahancova	Central European Labour Studies Institut	Researcher
Simona Brunnerová	Central European Labour Studies Institute (CELSI)	Researcher
JAGRITI LAMBA	DEPARTMENT OF GEOGRAPHY, DELHI SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS, UNIVERSITY OF DELHI	Researcher
Sylvia Ščepková	ROD ZO ECHOZ uniJA	Trade union
Janka Zámečnicková	ROD ZO ECHOZ uniJa	Trade union
Anna Farquharson	ISS	Employer / employer's association
Annalisa Dordoni	University of Milano-Bicocca	Researcher
Cecilia Comastri	UNI Europa	Trade union
COLMONT Clémentine	UCLouvain	Researcher
Indira Kuburas	Université de Liège - HEC Liège	Researcher
Nikoletta Kiss	UNI Europa	Trade union
Murat Gerçek	Türk Koop-is Union	Trade union
Jean Luc Diatta	NA	Other
Libérat Bigirimana	WageIndicator Foundation	Researcher
Robbie Stakelum	Eurofound	Policy maker
Suriya Yawichian	The Compliance Network Co., Ltd	Other
CULLEN BRIGGS LIBENDI	Kenya union of domestic hotels educational institutions and hospitals workers	Trade union
Eric Muhia	KUDHEIHA WORKERS	Trade union
Jana Szaszova	OZBP	Trade union
İbrahim	Health and Social Service Workers' Union of Turkey(Sağlık İş)	Trade union
Adem Sarıçoban	Health and Social Service Workers' Union of Turkey(Sağlık İş)	Trade union
Visnja Samardzija	Institute for Development and International Relations - IRMO Zagreb	Researcher

Jannette Armstrong	UNI Global Union (UNI Care)	Trade union
Meral Erdoğan	BASISEN	Trade union
María José Tarrero Martos	Permanent Representation of Spain to the EU	Other
Iida Nokkala	Central European Labour Studies Institute	Researcher
Jakov Kolak	RITU	Trade union
Tea Radović	Regional Industrial Trade Union	Trade union
Canan Cevikbas	BASISEN	Trade union
Rautu Vlad Ionut	FSITC (Federation of IT&C Trade Unions)	Trade union
Gogescu Vasilica	Trade union federation of Commerce Romania	Trade union
Elena georgeta	Trade union federation in Commerce Romania	Trade union
Peter Jancik	OZPOCR	Trade union
Ceyhun GÜLER	Dokuz Eylül Universtiy	Researcher
Barış Seçer	Dokuz Eylul University	Researcher
Md Bablur Rahman	Fair Wear Foundation (www.fairwear.org)	Other
Fiona Dragstra	WageIndicator	NGO / CSO
Bojana Gjorgjieva	Macedonian E-commerce Association	Employer / employer's association
Alina Popescu	Bucharest University of Economic Studies Romania	Researcher
Nevena Mutavdžić	University of Belgrade - Faculty of Economics and Business	Other
Izabela Brankovic	Association of media	NGO / CSO
Tamara Filipovic Stevanovic	Independent Journalists Association of Serbia	NGO / CSO
GEANA SILVIU	FEDERATIA SINDICATELOR SILVA	Trade union
Galjina Ognjanov	University of Belgrade Faculty of Economics	Researcher
FORNEA DUMITRU	National Trade Union Confederation MERIDIAN from Romania	Trade union
Alexandre	Ounnas	Researcher
Valentin Liviu Chifor	UNIUNEA TESA -CSN MERIDIAN	Trade union
Paraschiv Constantin	FSAB	Trade union
Adrian Soare	Fsab	Trade union
DUSA IOANA	FSAB	Trade union
Gabriela Luminita Tudosie	Sindicatul Vocea Noastra	Trade union
Barcau Nicolrts Claudia	FSAB	Trade union
Stan De Spiegelaere	UNI Europa	Trade union
Andoni Iriondo	UNI Europa	Trade union
Alessandra Giannessi	UNI Europa	Trade union

Tangeniomwene Ndakolonghoshi	WageIndicator	NGO / CSO
David Pospisil	Centrum dlouhodobé péče a.s.	Employer / employer's association
Miloš Vlasisavljević	EPSU	Trade union
Katharina Scheinast	AK Wien	Employer / employer's association
Darije Hanzalek	Sindikát grafičara i medija	Trade union
M M Makfur Hassan	Bangladesh Labour Foundation (BLF)	NGO / CSO
José Mário Almeida Correia	DGERT	Other
Gabriele Medas	WageIndicator	NGO / CSO
Chandra Shekar Rajgopal Dashrath	Indian National Trade Union Congress-INTUC	Trade union
yeboua eric		Other
cecilia muiruri	Cecilia virtual support	Employer / employer's association
Kutubuddin Ahmed	President, Industrial Bangladesh Council-IBC	Trade union
Attia Hanif	Home Net Pakistan	NGO / CSO
Rawaha Ali Khan	HomeNet Pakistan	NGO / CSO
Tanya van Meelis	COSATU	Trade union
Beatrice Muthoni Wanjiku	Kenya Jockey/Betting workers Union	Trade union
Jerry Detse Mensah-Pah	Health Services Workers Union of TUC Ghana	Trade union
David Opor	Foundation Leads Limited	Researcher
Mark Bergfeld	Uni	Trade union
Alan Sable	UNI Global Union (UNI Care)	Trade union
Maria Sedlakova	Eurofound	researcher
Diana Crumpana	European Commission	policy maker
Branislav Ondrus	European Parliament	policy maker
Oliver Roethig	UNI Europa	Trade union
Ilenia Ventroni	UNI Europa	Trade union

Outcomes of the day and brief description including pictures

The *Towards Smart Bargaining in Europe's Services Sectors* conference in Brussels was a success for the BARSERVICE consortium.

The full day, the engagement, the panels and the questions from the participants contributed to an insightful and meaningful discussion and marked the perfect conclusion to the BARSERVICE project. The event offered an opportunity to reflect on how smart dialogue can enhance bargaining outcomes in Europe's care, finance, publishing, and commerce sectors, and the challenges and opportunities this presents.

The day was kicked-off by Stan de Spiegelaere from UNI Europa who shared the importance of focussing on collective bargaining in the services sectors for UNI Europa and its affiliates, and used for this the analogy of “round holes and square pegs” to describe how services are central to our economy, however collective bargaining in the sector is extremely low. This poses the question whether collective bargaining, the way it functions now, functions in the wrong way, or that approaches need to be adapted.



Picture: Stan de Spiegelaere (UNI Europa) introduces his theory of the holes and pegs.

During the rest of the day, we had expert panels covering the four sectors: care, finance, publishing and commerce. Additionally, we were joined by three policy makers and social partners (and MEP, a representative from the European Commission and the Regional Secretary of UNI Europa), in a panel on what is needed from the policy arena to make the bargaining coverage a reality in light of new EU directives and the Job Quality discussions.

The dialogue served as a solid foundation for further discussion. During the conference, there was an emphasis on how the services sectors represent a key pillar of the European economy, with three out of every four jobs falling within this sector. This vast landscape is shaped by unique characteristics, including significant subsector diversity, atypical forms of employment, and the growing role of technology. The panel discussions also showed how the concept of smart bargaining varies significantly across countries, reflecting distinct institutional structures and bargaining traditions.



Picture: the panel with representatives from the European Parliament, the European Commission and UNI Europa to discuss the policy roadmaps.

A RESEARCH AGENDA TO UNDERSTAND BARGAINING AND BARGAINING COVERAGE

Bargaining actors

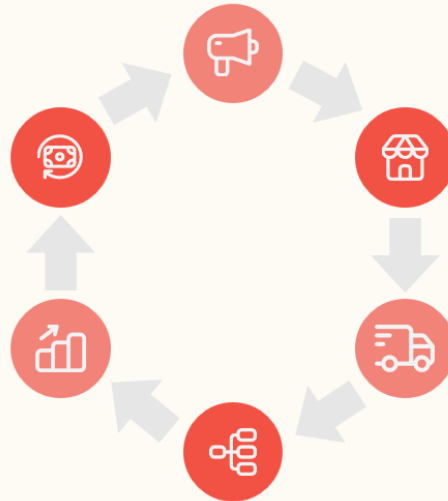
Unions fragmented, employers unorganised - are there systematically capable bargaining partners?

Content of collective agreements

What do collective agreements actually regulate?

Legislation

To what extent and how exactly is legislation supporting collective bargaining?



Extension mechanisms

Are there effective extension mechanisms, and do social partners want to use them?

Role of the state

How can the state support collective bargaining even more, beyond the transposition of legislation?

Major conclusions from the research and the conference were that collective bargaining needs to happen inductive and ***that one size does not fit all!***

Smart bargaining means that bargaining practices need to occur at the most feasible level leading to collective agreements beyond wages. The concept of smart bargaining varies significantly across countries, reflecting their distinct institutional structures, bargaining traditions, and sectoral challenges. It is therefore crucial to understand working conditions and the needs of the services sectors and its workers.

Collective bargaining must evolve and strengthen in response. Further research is needed into the role of different actors, supportive legislation, state intervention, and the content of collective agreements beyond wages. In the wider conversation about job quality in Europe, it is important to acknowledge the potential of collective bargaining to address issues such as health and safety, skill development, and work-life balance.



A picture of the participants during the Towards Smart Bargaining Conference, 4 December, Brussels

Not only did the day prove a good moment for many social partners to participate, discuss – in their own language, thanks to excellent interpretation – and exchange ideas and challenges, but the BARSERVICE team also enjoyed their time together, reflecting on next steps.



Picture: The BARSERVICE team at the UNI Europa office on 3 December 2025.



This project has received funding from the European Union's [Social Prerogative and Specific Competencies Lines \(SOCPL\)](#) programme under grant agreement N. 101126532