BARSERVICE

Towards smart bargaining in the publishing sector in Slovakia

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2024

The project is funded by the European union, project No. 101126532

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Executive summary

This report examines the current structure of Slovakia's publishing sector, questioning these conditions for the possibility of developing collective bargaining. It introduces the concept of "smart bargaining," aimed at raising bargaining coverage to meet European standards set by the Directive on Adequate Minimum Wages.

Sector-specific challenges to collective bargaining include the the fact that this sector is largely unorganised, without trade unions operating in publishing companies. Bargaining is complicated also due to the predominance of small companies. Some specific subsectors of publishing are covered by collective bargaining, e.g. in publishing that is part of larger public institutions, e.g. university presses or the Slovak academy of sciences. In a related TV media sector, recent initiatives of establishing trade unions occurred in 2024. Efforts to establish collective bargaining could thus emerge either from organising across several small companies (both on the union and the employer side), or extending the coverage of collective agreements from other sectors onto the publishing sector.

Evidence to support these findings and recommendations originates from the author’s desk research conducted in 2024, and three written responses of anonymised publishing companies that belong to the largest in the country.

I. Sector identification and trends

Publishing refers to the category SK NACE Rev. 2 58 related to the production and distribution of printed and digital content. It includes the following subcategories:

58.1 Publishing of books, periodicals, and other publishing activities
- 58.11 Publishing of books
- 58.12 Publishing of directories and catalogs
- 58.13 Publishing of newspapers
- 58.14 Publishing of magazines and periodicals
- 58.19 Other publishing activities

58.2 Software publishing
- 58.21 Publishing of computer games
- 58.29 Other software publishing

The publishing sector is considered as a part of the broader field of creative industries. The Slovak creative industries are predominantly composed of small enterprises, with 98% having fewer than 10 employees (KEA European Affairs 2020). Between 2013 and 2017, employment in the audiovisual, media, and multimedia macro-area increased by 16%, while employment in the books and press macro-area remained stable during the same period. The sector also exhibited strong cultural content production: in 2017, 8,220 new book titles were published, with 31% available in digital formats; 257 new audiovisual works were created, including 23 feature films; and 55 new video games were released (ibid.).

In 2017, revenues in the books and press sector within creative industries comprised in 51% retail sales of books in specialized stores, and 54% of revenues were generaged in the publishing of journals and periodicals subsector (ibid.). In the books and press macro-area, 30% of the revenues were allocated to purchasing products from third parties. Additional income is generated from subscriptions, advertising, and government or EU grants for cultural projects.

This report summarises basic information on the structure of firms in the publishing sector, employment characteristics, and evidence on (prospects for) collective bargaining. Evidence in this report is based on the author's desk research conducted in 2024. In addition, the author approached five major publishing companies in Slovakia with an interview request, but due to the lack of bargaining practice, the interviews were replaced by an invitation to written responses. The author received three written responses between September and December 2024, which were anonymised and are integrated into the analysis below.

The publishing sector, besides its official NACE subcategorisation, can be divided into four key areas of economic activity. These areas are important from the point of view of developing collective bargaining, because some granular differences occur between these areas from the point of view of existing bargaining practices. The four areas include:

- **Book Publishing**: literary works, educational books, and professional publications. Dominted by small companies, although some of them are well-established market players since decades, they remain small in their number of employees.
- **Newspaper and Periodical Publishing**: daily newspapers, magazines, and journals in both print and digital formats. Here larger publishing houses as well as small companies operate, thus the landscape does not only comprise micro enterprises.
- **Digital Publishing**: e-books, online articles, and other digital content. Publishers of digital media are also predominantly smaller companies, yet the character of work in them is often project-based or based on non-standard contracts, which is important from the point of view of potential collective bargaining
- **Specialized Publishing**: academic and scientific publications. Publishers in speicalised publishing are often part of a larger entity, e.g., in the public sector, and are therefore covered by collective agreements for public services.

Statistics exclusively covering the NACE Rev 2 category 58 are not available, but statistics on the publishing sector is available as part of a larger cluster with culture (also covering NACE 59 (Film, Video, and Television Program Production, Sound Recording, and Publishing Activities), NACE 60 (Radio and Television Broadcasting Activities), NACE 90 (Creative, Artistic, and Entertainment Activities including Performing Arts; Support Activities Related to Performing Arts; Artistic Creation; Operation of Cultural Facilities), and finally NACE 91 (Activities of Libraries, Archives, Museums, and Other Cultural Institutions). Table 1 shows selected economic indicators, suggesting that the revenues of this combined sector increased between 2013 and 2017, while the number of employees increased only slightly, and the added value per employee decreased. The share of women working in the sector decreased marginally, and the average monthly wage in the sector increased from 965 EUR to 1,048 EUR.

Table 1 Selected economic indicators of the culture and publishing sectors

Culture and Publishing sector	**Unit**	**2017**	**2013**
Production	thous. EUR	1,521,245	1,211,191
Revenues from own performance and goods	thous. EUR	913,705	655,298
Gross fixed capital formation	thous. EUR	114,274	78,692
Added value	thous. EUR	588,747	753,602
Added value per employee	thous. EUR	27	37
Number of employees	Persons	21,943	20,140
Of which women	Persons	11,696	13,002
Average gross monthly wage	EUR	1,048	965
Average hourly earnings in the private sector	EUR	8.469	7.854

Source: Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic and TREXIMA Bratislava[1]

Evalued by the number of employees, the culture and publishing sector ranks among the smaller sectors of the economy. In 2017, the sector employed nearly 22,000 people, accounting for slightly more than 1% of the total number of employed persons across all sectors in Slovakia. Approximately 53% of those employed in the sector were women. According to another source, the Labour Cost Information System, the sector employed 24,400 people in 2019, with women making up about 60% of this total. However, it is important to note that the sector includes a significant number of independent artists, freelancers, and self-employed individuals (SEIs), who do not fall under the category of employees (Sector committee for culture and creative industry 2020).

[1] Available at: https://www.sustavapovolani.sk/sektorove-rady/sektorova-rada-pre-kulturu-a-kreativny-priemysel/o-sektore/vseobecne-financno-ekonomicke-ukazovatele-za-sektor-kultury-a-vydavatelstva/

According to the Trade Licensing Register, the number of self-employed in the culture and creative industries sector stood at approximately 5,000 persons in 2018. However, data from the Financial Administration, specifically tax returns for 2018, indicate that the number of the self-employed in the cultural and creative industries (including advertising) is as high as 26,221 workers. Combined, the total number of workers in the sector reaches around 50,000 (ibid.).

These data have to be interpreted with caution, since the above estimates are not exhaustive on the number of workers and their form of work as employees, self-employed, freelancers and independent artists. A qualified estimate by the Slovak Coalition for Cultural Diversity suggests that the estimated number of professionals working in the CCI sector as independent artists is approximately 10,500. However, many do not officially report this status, meaning they are not recorded in official statistics, which significantly complicates their inclusion in such evaluations. The accuracy of data evaluation is moreover often hindered by the incorrect classification of employer entities within the relevant divisions of the statistical classification of economic activities, SK NACE Rev. 2 (Sector committee for culture and creative industry 2020).

From the point of view of ownership, the publishing sector encompasses a mix of private companies and publishing houses, but also public institutions and non-profit organisations. Larger publishing houses dominate the market, especially in book publishing and major newspaper production (see below). At the same time, smaller independent publishers serve specialized audiences and help maintaining the diversity in the sector.

Key economic challenges that the sector faces include the declining demand for print sales and the rise of digital media, as well as increased competition from international publishing houses (including digital publishers), and financial constraints that especially smaller publishers face.

Characteristics of the workforce and employment suggest that mostly higher-skilled persons work in the sector, which is a relevant piece of information in the context of worker organising, collective bargaing and challenges thereto (see the sections below). Employment is concentrated in urban areas, especially the capital city Bratislava, where most major publishing houses and media companies are located. Smaller, regionally based publishers focus their activities on local culture and language preservation. Salaries in the sector vary across traditional publishing vs. digital and specialized publishing, as well as according to the character of the employer. The majority of employers are private firms, while some specialised publishers may be part of larger public entities, or non-profit organisations. The form of employment also varies between standard employment relationship to project-based roles exposed to job insecurity.

The largest publishing houses are News and Media Holding and Ringier Axel Springer Slovakia. **News and Media Holding**, in the portfolio of the financial group Penta, offers the widest range of print and online titles. Its portfolio includes social, lifestyle, professional, economic, and hobby publications. These include the daily newspaper Plus 1 deň; weekly magazines Plus 7 dní, Báječná žena, Šarm, Trend; monthly magazines EMMA, Zdravie, Záhradkár, Dobré jedlo, Poľovníctvo a Rybárstvo; and for the Hungarian-speaking population the daily newspaper Új Szó and the weekly Vasárnap.[2] In the financial statistics[3] it is recorded as an employer with 250 to 499 employees.

Ringier Axel Springer reported revenues of €30 million and a post-tax profit of €4.3 million in 2023 (Hospodárske noviny 2024).[4] It publishes Slovakia's best-selling daily newspaper, *Nový Čas*. Its portfolio also includes popular weekly magazines like *Nový Čas pre ženy* (93,577 copies) and *Život* (85,104 copies), monthly magazines like *Nový Čas Krížovky* (83,271 copies) and *Eva* (49,813 copies), among others. The company also owns the online group Azet, which recorded 3.2 million unique visitors in September 2024 (azet.sk had 2.6 million and cas.sk had 1.7 million).

There has been speculation about interest from the financial group J&T in acquiring Ringier Axel Springer Slovakia. Both parties denied this, with the publisher stating they were not involved in any negotiations, and J&T declining to comment on acquisition speculations. In 2022, Czech investors Daniel Křetínský and Patrik Tkáč purchased the Czech branch of Ringier Axel Springer for €170 million, rebranding it as Czech News Center. However, this change did not impact the Slovak branch, which remains under its Swiss-German ownership.

Next to the largest publisher, publishing houses with the longest tradition include book publishers **Tatran, Slovart, VEDA**, or **Mladé Letá**. However, these remain rather small companies. The largest book publisher is **IKAR**, which is an umbrella publishing house for several brands. The company built its reputation with novels and later expanded to encyclopedias, educational literature, and a wide range of books, including health topics and collectible editions. IKAR is behind some of the most expensive books published in Slovakia, focusing on the art of collectible bookbinding through the project

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[2] Source: Association of Print and Digital Media, https://vydavatelia.sk/o-nas/clenovia/.
[3] Source: www.finstat.sk
[4] The daily economic paper Hospodárske noviny published an analysis of performance of Ringier Axel Springer Slovakia, and this paragraph summarises the key information from this analysis. Source: https://strategie.hnonline.sk/news/media/780833-aktualizacia-ringier-axel-springer-popiera-predaj-ide-o-famy-tvrdi

Luxusnakniznica.sk. IKAR operates well-known imprints such as Odeon for contemporary literature and literary art, Stonožka for children's books, and Ajna for esoterica. Additionally, the original Príroda publishing house, now a brand under IKAR, continues to release books on science and its practical implementation, maintaining the portfolio historically associated with Príroda. The portfolio of IKAR also includes Slovenský spisovateľ, a.s., renowned for its Zelená knižnica (Green Library) brand, which has published and continues to publish many famous crime novels and works by international authors.

Other renowned book publishes include the company **Albatros** – a Czech publishing house representing brands like CooBoo, Lindeni but also books directly under the brnad Albatros and the publishing brand Fragment. Albatros developed a good infrastructure and network with all major book sellers in Slovakia, where its books are distributed. **Slovart** is a publishing company focusing on books on nature, culture, arts, film, fotography and other niche markets. It also expanded to the Czech market. Slovart has around 50 employees. The publisher Tatran belongs to the oldest publishers, focusing on mainstream book publishing.

In the publishing of periodical media, several key organisations can be identified. The Czech publishing house **MAFRA Slovakia** operates on the Slovak market since 1992, it publishes the daily economic paper Hospodárske noviny and other scientific journals, and it also operates digital portals focusing on economic and financial questions. **Petit Press** publishes regular print and digital media including SME, Korzár, MY and Index. Finally, the company **Our Media** publishes one of the leading papers (print and digital) Pravda and also operates several online thematic websites.

Finally, two largest bookstore chains in Slovakia include Panta Rhei and Martinus. In the last quarter of 2024, Martinus sparked attention because of its interest in paying living wages to its employees, and aiming to engage in calculations to compare the current wage levels in the company with the living wage predictions for various regions and occupations in Slovakia.

II. Current state of collective bargaining

Collective bargaining in Slovakia's publishing sector is underderdeveloped within the broader framework of labour relations governed in Slovakia. The sector is part of the cultural and creative industries. While some marginal parts of the sector are organised and covered by collective bargaining, in the majority of the sector challenges like organisational fragmentation, low union density, and financial constraints affect the potential for collective bargaining.

The relevant associations operating in the sector, albeit currently not involved in collective bargaining, include two organisations on the side of publishers/companies:

The **Association of Publishers and Booksellers of the Slovak Republic** *(Združenie vydavateľov a kníhkupcov SR, ZVKS)* is an independent voluntary organization that represents the interests of its members, protects their publishing and business activities, and provides advisory and informational services. ZVKS focuses on fostering the traditions of democracy and humanity within Slovak culture. The association was founded on June 27, 1991 to represent the professional interests of publishers and booksellers. It organizes conferences, seminars, and webinars for its members and supports their participation in book fairs such as Bologna, Frankfurt, London, and Prague. Currently, the association oversees more than 80% of book production in Slovakia and brings together over 80 members (both larger publishing houses and small independent publishers). ZVKS plays a key role in establishing and maintaining relationships with related institutions both domestically and abroad. ZVKS is a member of the Federation of European Publishers and the European and International Booksellers Federation, headquartered in Brussels[5].

ZVKS currently does not engage in collective bargaining. In an anonymised written response to the author of this report, one of ZVKS members revealed that they are not partiticipating in collective bargaining – neither at the company level or the association level. In internal discussions of ZVKS, the fact if ZVKS could operate as an employers' association was never thematised and nobody has yet proposed to engage in collective bargaining. If bargaining would be required e.g. by legal regulation, the member organisations would be coerced to engage, but the questioned respondent claimed that they would not voluntarily initiate bargaining. There is also no trade union to bargain with.

The **Association of Printed and Digital Media** *(Asociácia tlačených a digitálnach médií, ATDM)* is the second umbrella organisation with 18 members, employing in total around 3500 employees. ATDM has been promoting the principles of ethical self-regulation in journalism since its establishment on April 26, 1991, under the name Association of Periodical Press Publishers of Slovakia. It is a co-founder of the Association for the Protection of Journalistic Ethics (AONE), whose executive body is the Press-Digital Council of the Slovak Republic (TR SR). The adopted Journalist's Code of Ethics (EKN)

[5] Source: ZVKS website at https://zvks.sk/.

was recently amended to address the needs of the digital environment. Its activities do not involve collective bargaining. ATDM is also not a member of any higher-level employers' association that participates e.g. in national tripartism. ATDM never thematised in its internal discussions the need to engage in collective bargaining.

On the side of workers' representatives, a dedicated union or unions in the publishing sector do not operate. A unique development – not directly in the publishing sector, but a closely related one - was an establishment of trade union at one of the largest televisions in 2024 upon worker discontent with political censorship of the broadcasting shows after management change. Beyond this initiative, part of the publishing sector is covered by the higher-level collective agreement for public services (e.g. university publishing houses). A **trade union federation operates within the Slovak Academy of Sciences**, serving as an umbrella organisation for 38 base trade union organisations within the Slovak Academy of Sciences[6]. This union federation closely cooperates with the union federation SLOVES – the **Slovak Trade Union Federation of Public Service and Culture** (*Slovenský odborový zväz verejnej správy a kultúry*), organising workers in the public sector including cultural industries. The current concern of SLOVES (late 2024) is the fact that the government still could not guarantee that all involved social partners will sign the higher-level collective agreements for state service and public service, negotiated in 2024 and valid for 2025-2026. It is especially the employers' association ZMOS (Federation of Cities and Municipalities, *Združenie miest a obcí*) that refuses to sign the agreement including wage rises as long as the state does not guarantee funds to cover these extra costs in municipal budgets. Sloves organises unions and workers in public organisations, e.g. libraries, cultural clubs, etc., but not in private publishing houses.

The third potentially relevant trade union organization is the **Trade union Federation of Library Workers of Slovakia** (*Odborový zväz pracovníkov knížníc SR, OZPK*). OZPK was established as an offspring of a federal organisation in Czechoslovakia after the split of the country to Czechia and Slovakia in 1993. Similar to SLOVES, OZPK also operates only in public institutions and institutions established by local governments. Interaction with regional and territorial governmental units as founders of public libraries and cultural establishments is important for OZPK. Currently OZPK organised 30 members[7].

Finally, some workers of publishing houses that are part of universities or university libraries may be covered by the higher-level collective agreement for the public sector with specific wage stipulations for the education sector, negotiated by the **Trade Union Federation of Workers in Education and Research** (*Odborový zväz*

[6] Source: **https://odbory.sav.sk/.**
[7] Source: www.ozpksr.sk

pracovníkov školstva a vedy, OZPŠaV).

From these organisations operating at the margin of the publishing sector, the most relevant for the development of bargaining could be the **Slovak Trade Union Federation of Polygraphy workers** (*Slovenský odborový zväz pracovníkov polygrafie, SOZ PP).* This is the only union that engages in collective bargaining with the **Union of Printing in Slovakia** (*Zväz polygrafie na Slovensku, ZPnS*). ZPnS is a voluntary association of independent legal entities operating in the field of printing and related industries. Members of ZPnS include printing companies based in Slovakia, key suppliers of equipment, software, and materials for the printing industry, schools specializing in printing, as well as individual members. The federation fosters a climate of partnership among its members while respecting the spirit of rivalry and competition within the printing market. ZPnS represents the interests of employers both in relation to central state authorities and the *SOZ PP* as its social dialogue partner. It actively participates in the review of legislative standards, incorporates proposals from its members, and facilitates the implementation of laws into business practices.

Finally, a relevant platform for social dialogue (not practicing collective bargaining) is the sectoral committee for culture and creative industries (part of the Alliance of sectoral committees, *Aliancia sektorových rád*). In the committee, representatives of ZVKS on the employer side, as well as SLOVES on the union side, participate and engage in social dialogue relevant for the sector.

To sum up, collective bargaining in the core of the publishing sector is currently limited, and practiced only in marginal parts of the sector that are part of the public sector and thus covered by collective agreements in the public sector, or the polygraphy industry. Still, the fact that publishers as companies are well organised in two professional associations is a relevant finding regarding the potential development of coordinated bargaining in the future.

III. Challenges to collective bargaining

Key challenges for bargaining in the publishing sector emerge from worforce fragmentation and coverage gaps as well as other reasons specified below:

1. **Fragmentation of the Workforce**:
   - The publishing sector includes diverse roles such as writers, editors, graphic designers, and printers, each with different needs and bargaining priorities.
   - Freelancers and independent contractors, who represent a significant portion of the workforce, are not covered by traditional collective bargaining agreements.
2. **Union Density**:
   - Union membership is low, especially among younger workers and freelancers, weakening the potential bargaining power of trade unions.
3. **Financial Pressures**:
   - Declining revenues in traditional publishing due to the rise of digital media make employers reluctant to agree to higher wages or improved benefits.
   - Smaller publishers often lack the resources to meet union demands.
4. **Coverage Gaps**:
   - Private publishing companies operate without union presence, operating only individualized employment contracts.
   - Workers in digital publishing are even more exposed to individualised working conditions then workers in traditional publishing

One of the responses by a publisher company to the report's author also confirmed the above challenges; namely; the fact that bargaining makes sense at workplaces with many employees in similar job positions. However, in publishing, jobs are specific and individualised, especially in companies with flat hierarchies. In such conditions, collective interest representation and bargaining is challenging to be implemented.

IV. Towards Smart Bargaining

Based on the evidence provided above, this section attempts to propose strategies that would help to establish and promote bargaining in the publishing sector. The concept applied is the one of *smart bargaining* - defined as a kind of bargaining that effectively facilitates two aspects in bargaining (Kahancová 2024):

- Improving the quality and content of collective bargaining
- Raising bargaining coverage to meet the threshold recommended by the Directive on Adequate Minimum Wages.

Rather that pre-defining the concept of 'smart bargaining' before empirical research, the approach adopted is more inductive by letting the author and the stakeholders in the sector directly identify what smart bargaining means in their sector. This concept is rather novel in the industrial relations literature, and by this modified approach the author seeks to contribute also to practical policy goals. Developing the concept of smart bargaining based on research findings is also a practical input for strengthening bargaining procedures and equipping social partners with the right (smart) strategies in their specific empirical contexts.

Smart bargaining relates on the one hand to the bargaining process, and on the other hand to the contents of bargaining. In the bargaining process, the above evidence shows that bargaining in the publishing sector is underdeveloped, and basically non-existing. It exists in some related areas, which partly overlap with publishing, e.g. publishing that is part of university publishers, where the employers may be covered by collective agreements of the university or the higher-level agreement for the public sector.

At the core of the publishing sectors, the predominance of small employers and project-based work prevent the emergence and regular practice of collective bargaining. In such conditions, to options to develop smart bargaining are feasible.

The two possible strategies to develop smart bargaining include:

a. **Establishing single-employer bargaining at non-unionised workplaces**

This would be relevant for private publishing employers that are currently completely unorganised and would first require setting up company-level trade union organisations. The fact that these are mostly small companies complicates this vision.

b. **Extending the coverage of already existing collective agreements in other (related) sectors to employers in the publishing sector**

This is relevant for workplaces currently only covered by the higher-level collective agreement for public service. This would help preventing the risk of workers to be left uncovered should the higher-level agreement not be concluded.

An alternative way to develop this level of multi-employer bargaining could be facilitated by legal coercion. One of the most important changes emerging from the transposition of the EC Directive on Adequate Minimum Wages is the perception of employers' associations that have been established as voluntary associations but not as employers' associations. The new legislation establishes that all organisations, if members of a recognized higher-level employers' associations, are seen also as employers' associations that can engage in collective bargaining. As explained above, the two relevant associations organizing employers in publishing and related media sectors are the ATDM and the ZVKS.

Regarding the scope of bargaining, collective agreements could focus on the following content:

1. **Wages**: Establishing minimum wage levels and addressing wage gaps within the sector.
2. **Working Hours**: Negotiating flexible working arrangements, particularly relevant for journalists and editors working under tight deadlines.
3. **Job Security**: Provisions for redundancy protection and severance pay in a sector prone to financial instability.
4. **Training and Professional Development**: Agreements often include funding or time allowances for employee upskilling.
5. **Health and Safety**: Provisions for safe working conditions, especially in printing and production roles.
6. **Issues related to digital publishing**, such as intellectual property rights, remote working arrangements, and the need for training in digital skills.

V. European Perspectives

The EU-level Directives, such as the Directive on Adequate Minimum wages, are relevant for the publishing sector mainly in aligning minimum wages with wages paid in the publishing sector. In the part of the sector that is covered by collective agreements for public services, this is a relevant issue, because the statutory minimum wage does not apply to wages of public service workers. These are determined only by collective bargaining, and it happens that when the minimum wage increases, the workers in lowest wage tariffs fall beyond the minimum wage level. These wages are compensated, but it means extra expenditures for e.g. municipal employers without state guarantees to secure additional funding, which then leads to hesitations in signing higher-level collective agreements that increase employer costs without guarantees of extra funds.

VI. Conclusions

This report examines Slovakia's publishing sector, focusing on the challenges of developing collective bargaining practices. It introduces the concept of "smart bargaining," aiming to improve collective bargaining coverage and align with European standards, such as those in the Directive on Adequate Minimum Wages.

The publishing sector, categorized under SK NACE Rev. 2 (58), encompasses books, newspapers, magazines, digital content, and software publishing, including computer games. It forms part of the creative industries, which are dominated by small enterprises. Employment in the sector totaled nearly 22,000 in 2017, accounting for slightly more than 1% of Slovakia's workforce, with women making up 53%. Employment is primarily urban, centered in Bratislava, with smaller publishers focusing on local culture.

The publishing sector remains largely unorganized, with no dedicated trade unions operating in private publishing companies. Only marginal parts of the sector, such as university presses, publishers and libraries operating under public institutions, are covered by collective agreements for public services. Notable professional associations include the Association of Publishers and Booksellers of the Slovak Republic (ZVKS) and the Association of Printed and Digital Media (ATDM). None of them is currently engaged in collective bargaining, but the fact that all major publishing companies are organised in two associations is a potential infrastructure for future bargaining.

On the employee side, relevant unions operate primarily in public-sector contexts (e.g., Slovak Academy of Sciences) but do not extend to private publishers. Challenges include fragmented workforce roles, low union density, and financial constraints faced by smaller publishers.

Smart bargaining strategies proposed in this report include expanding single-employer bargaining at non-unionized workplaces, extending collective agreements from related sectors, such as public services or printing, to cover publishing employees, and aligning agreements with issues specific to digital publishing, including intellectual property rights and remote work.

In some, while Slovakia's publishing sector lacks robust collective bargaining due to workforce fragmentation and financial constraints, the existing professional associations and public-sector agreements offer a foundation for potential developments towards smart bargaining. Strategies to foster smart bargaining can improve conditions while addressing sector-specific challenges. One of the fundamental obstacles is the diversity of the workforce, which complicates organised interest representation.

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