

Project scope

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Relevance

Objectives

Background and general objectives

- ▶ The European Commission, through its call 'Improving Expertise in industrial relations' (SOCPL-2021IND-REL) promotes analysis and research on industrial relations, at EU level as well as in comparative terms, with the aim of contributing to developing and reinforcing industrial relations structures in Europe.
- ▶ In response to this call, the general objective of the BARMETAL project is to explore opportunities for **strengthening collective bargaining in the metalworking industry** (NACE classification sectors C, in particular, C24, C25 and C29) under **digitalization**, **automatization** and **decarbonization**.
- ▶ The project deals primarily with strengthening collective bargaining across 11 EU Member States. In a number of countries covered, especially in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) and Serbia, where these technological transformations are expected to be hardest, while the collective bargaining infrastructure is the weakest in Europe.

Context

- ▶ I4.0 has been mostly a strategic plan of continental European countries to reinvigorate a productive structure that was under pressure since the 2008 crisis
- ▶ *Automatization*, although the emphasis puts by the economic literature, particularly in upstream production phases like welding and machining was already extensively implemented.
- ▶ *Digitalization*, has seen a spur, by means of integration and interconnection of production processes BUT has hardly lead to the total I4.0 factory
- ▶ *Decarbonization* looks to be more an external institutional constraint rather than an actual direction to re-orient the strategic orientation

Expected impacts

- ▶ Hugely different across EU countries and dependent on GVCs positioning but also managerial orientation
- ▶ Labour cost reduction remains the main motive behind strategies of relocation
- ▶ Worker conditions may even worsening under those combined processes while some others are directly threatened by the possibility of being expelled
- ▶ Need to mobilize social dialogue to prevent undesirable outcomes

Contribution to the call's general objectives

Object 1 - Analyzing the role and contribution of industrial relations, including social dialogue at different levels

Responding to the major challenges and in seizing the opportunities related to the transition to a climate-neutral and digital economy, including artificial intelligence, as well as globalisation and technological change

Contribution to the call's general objectives

Object 2 - Understanding the adaptation of social dialogue, in particular collective bargaining, to changes in employment and work-related challenges, such as:

- ▶ modernisation of the labour market, job creation and job matching
- ▶ new forms of work; quality of work, anticipation, preparation and management of change and restructuring;
- ▶ digitalisation and automatization (including artificial intelligence)
- ▶ decarbonization of the products but also production processes

Key concepts and methods

- ▶ Twin Transition vs Just Transition
- ▶ Multi-method approach, quantitative and qualitative