



# Key findings in the three public sectors/services in DIGIQU@LPUB

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Bruxelles,  
25 September 2023

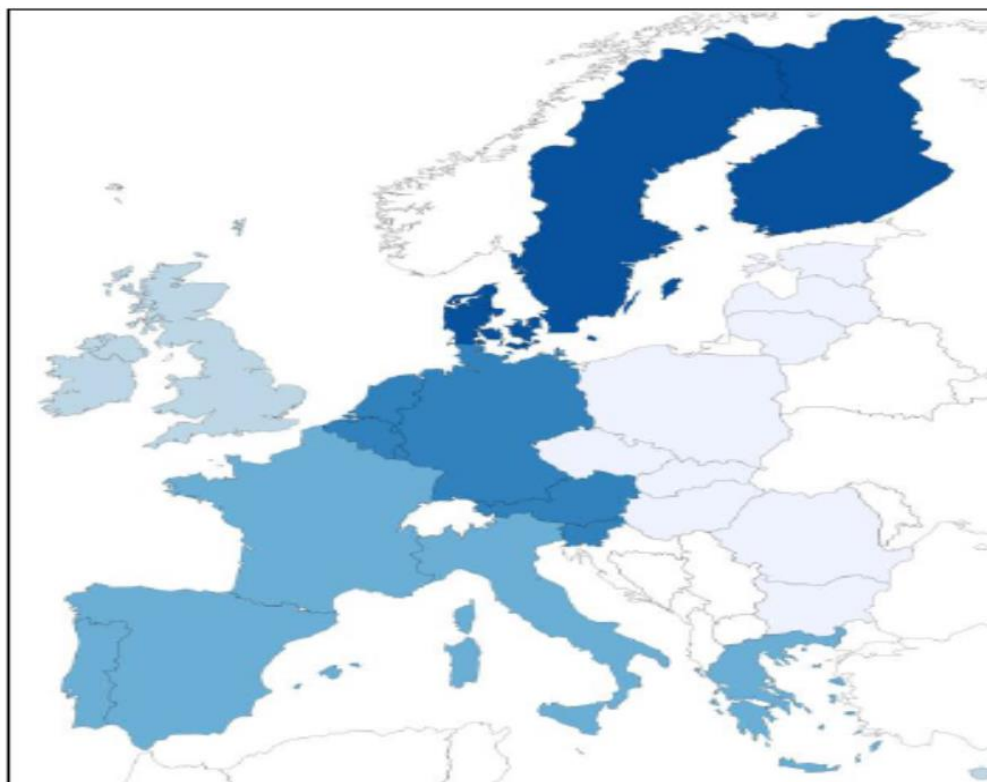
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# Digitalisation and social dialogue: the project's key issues

- How does the digital transformation (DT) of work impact traditional industrial relations (I.Rs) stakeholders and systems and, at the same time, how do these systems play a role in the digital transformation? How do they influence each other?
- To what extent is digitalisation gaining a growing role and importance in public services social dialogue (SD) and collective bargaining (CB)?
- Which trade union (T.U.s) approaches and priorities are better able to cope with the impact of the DT on working life and conditions?
- Which policy implications for the national and EU stakeholders?

# Varieties of industrial relations across the 8 Member States

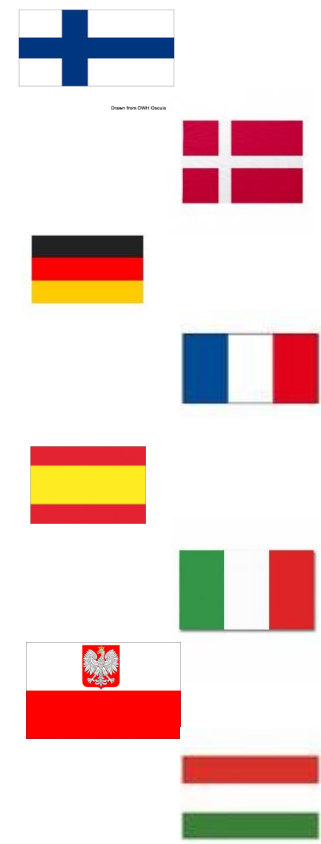


(a) national industrial relations systems

- Dark blue = Organised Corporatism
- Medium blue = Social Partnership
- Light blue = State-centred
- Very light blue = Liberal
- White = Mixed

Source: Bechter, B., Brandl, B. and Meardi, G.

- Finland
- Denmark
- Germany
- France
- Spain
- Italy
- Poland
- Hungary



# A diversified landscape in a few numbers and features

Country	Statutory Minimum Wage (hourly 2023)	Extension mechanism	Predominant level in CB	CB coverage (2020)	Trade union density (2021)
Denmark	no	no	Sector	83%	64%
Finland	no	Frequently	Sector	89%	60%
Germany	12,00€	Limited	Sector	51%	15%
France	11,27€	Frequently	Mixed	98%	8%
Italy	no	no	Sector	98%	32%
Spain	6,55€	Frequently	Sector	80%	13%
Poland	4,30€	Rarely	Company	20%	12%
Hungary	3,41€	Rarely	Company individual	22%	8%

# A cross-country overview in a nutshell

- The positive stance on digitalization in the **Nordic countries**, not causing controversies. The self-confidence in their tightly structured I.R. system (the “Danish Model”; the Finnish corporatism), widely based also on informal cooperation, ready to successfully cope with the new challenges.
- In **Germany**, the DT most as a consequence of top-down strategies, with better capacity at workplace level than in sectoral CLAs. The importance of the codetermination right. The issue of the data protection. Shortage of skilled staff. Fears for making unionism in times of remote working.
- In the **Southern countries**, the importance of the framework agreements on DT and teleworking and a two-tier CB. The benefits but also the worries about possible negative consequences. *“Deconstruct the current narrative on the injunction to adapt to digitalization, which does not come from natural evolution”* (CGT, F)
- **CEECs**: DT welcomed as an opportunity, if workforce will be highly and timely prepared. But the SD institutional framework is quite poor and the State unilateralism very strong. A very secondary issue in collective bargaining

# Cross-cutting analysis in the electricity production and supply

- 2 TUs, 2 CB scopes (generally, industrial and municipalities), 2 levels (sector and company), with Poland and Spain excluded, with no sectoral CLA at the moment.
- TU density and CB coverage beyond national average (>80-90%).
- In **Finland** a shift from the traditional centralisation vs. branches/individual companies and the TU claim to overcome boundaries across energy sectors. From municipalities to private electricity in **Denmark**, with a key role of tri-bipartite committees.
- Limited mobile work in **Germany** and unsatisfactory achievements according to the TUs
- The weight of the state-owned companies, although weakened by the liberalisation, still influences managerial approaches and cultures in **Southern Europe**. Sectoral I.R.s are tightly structured, with participatory best practices and even TCAs.
- Noteworthy the **two CEECs**; the sector is one of the very few in both the Countries where the quality of I.Rs reaches similar levels to those of Western European countries.

# Some other National highlights

- **Finland:** The “*Joint Memorandum of Agreement on digitalization*”
- **Denmark:** Cooperative forums and constant exchange of information at workplace level
- **Germany:** T.U. training, information and guidelines in workplaces (ver.di) for a good design of the DT and A.I.
- **France:** DT rarely discussed. The ENDIS (2021; 2022) and the EDF “TAMA” CLAs (2022-25) on TW, digital training and right to disconnect
- **Italy:** “Agile working” (teleworking) and “*Statute of the Person*” (NCLA & ENEL, 2022); right to socialization and to disconnect
- **Spain:** No national CLA. No specific chapters in company CLAs. In Endesa, facilitations in anticipated retirement for aged workers difficult to be digitalized
- **Poland:** no sector CLA. A secondary issue. no specific references to technological change yet, pushed by the managers but supported by the TUs. “*More advantages than disadvantages*”.
- **Hungary:** sector CLA, but not dealing with the issue. Worries about psycho-physical stress.

# Cross-cutting analysis in the public administration

- The employee's legal status: public vs. private law.
- Two-tiers centrally coordinated CB; approx. 100% coverage. Administrative decentralization vs. SD practices differentiation for single units
- Digitalisation has not been addressed through specific chapters/clauses in the CLAs.
- **DK** and **FI**: TUs trust in their cooperative system but industrial conflict occur here more frequently than in the private sectors.
- **Germany**: union density and CB coverage much higher than in the National average. Despite the high CB centralization, adopted solutions can differ greatly between local administrations. "*Good work*"; "*Employees First*" (DGB/ver.d.i)
- **France**: CB well beyond salaries only; public employees vs. civil servants in **Spain**. The only sector in **Italy** where the law rules all the key issues of CB (actors, scopes, processes, bidding effects, available budget for pay increases, right to strike)
- **PL** and **HU**: civil servants are denied by law of the key TU rights. CB coverage 1-2%. Apparent tripartitism, *de facto* State and local PA unilateralism. Fragmented TUs.



# Some other national highlights

- **Denmark:** The guidelines “*Digitalisation and good work*” in the P.A. (2019)” and the “Competence Funds”. For the TUs, DT not a threat but an opportunity to communicate with the employees
- **Finland:** No specific but indirect mention in the sectoral CLAs. For the TU, DT is not a threat
- **Germany:** NCLA on DT in the Federal Government (2021) with limited impact in Lander and municipalities. Unions against privatization, job insecurity, and stress training, participation and ‘good work’ as a precondition for better services
- **France:** Framework agreement on psycho-social risk (2013) and on teleworking (2021); no other specific quotations in the CLA texts. Workers’ claim to be better informed on the DT.
- **Spain:** Framework agreement on teleworking in 2021, top of the TU’s agenda, and for the P.A. Digitalisation Plan, in Oct. 2022. A secondary issue in CB at all levels
- **Italy:** in the last “*Central Functions*” NCLA signed in 2022, guidelines to negotiate remote work (“agile”), strategic for the TUs. The “Joint Examination” for the change anticipation.
- **Hungary:** No CLA. No focus on digitalization. TUs have achieved a general regulation of teleworking
- **Poland:** No CLA. No focus on digitalization. TUs have now other priorities

# Cross-cutting analysis in hospitals & health sector

- **Finland:** centrally coordinated CB; close to 100% coverage; consultation and cooperation highly formalised. Industrial unrest related to the welfare state (“Sote”) reform, pay and staff shortage. A CLA reached in Oct. 2022
- **Denmark:** Two-tier CB with the regional predominant; 100% coverage. Unevenness of treatment. Nurses militant unionism, mobilized for better wages and working conditions. Some tension with other unions.
- **Germany:** fragmentation public, private, non-profit with a triple repercussion on the CB system. Big problem with the staff shortage. Work intensification; inadequate pay. TU: *“the health must not become a commodity”*
- **France:** Centralized negotiation but decentralized practices, where many decisions are taken by the hospital directors.
- **Spain:** From State to Regional Governm. in CB,. “Framework Forum for SD” in the health sector.
- **Italy:** the ongoing privatization of the health system. The staff shortage and work over-load. The huge waiting lists and the mass escape of the doctors from public hospitals. Two-tier centrally coordinated CB. A “Joint National Committee for the Innovation” (since 2016-18). I&C rights.
- **Poland:** State-regulated . Some consultation is formally allowed; CB only takes place at hospital level, 2% coverage.
- **Hungary:** CB banned; no regular forums to discuss strategic issues. TUs very much focused on calling for full recognition of fundamental union rights, appealing to the ILO to fight their violation.

# Some other National highlights

- **Finland:** a secondary issue in CB
- **Denmark:** a secondary issue in CB. Prominent role of the local cooperation council
- **Germany:** low level of digitalization. Not very mentioned in the CLAs
- **France:** DT is decided by the directors of the various hospitals
- **Spain:** Digitalization and technological changes not a subject in itself
- **Italy:** The «agile» work the most focused topic in the new agreements at all levels
- **Hungary:** no regular forums to discuss strategic issues; T.U are not involved in the digital change going on.
- **Poland:** digitalisation is not a priority for the social partners, with the interest of the sectoral unions ranging from moderate to none.

# The sectors and the West/CEE divide

## Electricity production/supply

- The sector with the narrower West/Central-East divide
- Comparable and medium-high CB coverage, multi-employer CLAs, union density, workplace representation; stronger participatory rights and actors' proactive attitudes.

## Public administrations and hospitals

- West/CEE divide is very much pronounced from all the viewpoints
- In the 6 WCs, employees legal status and trade unions freedoms and rights, with few exceptions, are basically the same of the private sectors
- In the 2 CEECs, civil servants and public official are denied of most of those rights. The law rule the employment relationships. CB quite absent, strike banned, tripartite social dialogue just apparent to mask unilateralism

# The DT: highly evoked but rarely quoted and ruled in CLAs

- Across the countries and sectors, very limited references and quotations relating to the digital transformation of work and services.
- Where such references to digitalisation exist in CLAs, the most important and common issue so far is teleworking and, in particular, the full maintenance of employee rights (both individual and collective), an acceptable work-life balance, ad hoc health and safety measures, the right to disconnect, and the right to sociability.
- The role of tripartite consultation and fora: widespread in most of the countries and sectors.
- A quite high degree of informality and management unilateralism seems to prevail everywhere; digitalisation as a prerogative of the HRM offices?
- The trade union rights/powers: if/where not adequately institutionalized and protected, may be at risk as consequence of growing individualisation in employment relationships and by the social isolation of digital workers.

# Some general conclusions

- Great diversity and speeds of practices, mostly related to the growing degree of decentralization (organizational and in the SD) in all sectors
- The most important and common area of negotiation, so far, has been everywhere the teleworking
- New regulations are needed and innovative agreements searched for. From reacting defensive to proactive involvement.
- “Trade Unionism 2.0”. New ways and tools for T.U. to reach wage-earners.
- The importance of investing in the workers reps skills in negotiating the technological change
- No much attention seems to be addressed to the generational, educational and “digital divide” among citizens and users of the new digital platforms. The risk for new forms of social exclusions.

# Some policy implications and pointers

- A holistic approach to the DT to guaranteeing both the quality of public services for all citizens, and the overall job quality of public-sector workers.
- Trade unions have a role to play in encouraging new levels of societal awareness and understanding of the challenges related to digitalisation.
- Both management and worker representatives need to take the reins in all phases of development (from design to evaluation), to identify workplace benefits and risks and propose solutions.
- Social dialogue, collective bargaining, information, consultation and participation must all play a key role in coping with the digital transformation.
- Trade unions need to adapt their organising techniques to ensure they reach and better interact with teleworkers and other workers using digital tools.

# What we can all realistically try to do

“We must as citizens, workers and unions "guard our destiny". This means understanding that there are aspects of the technological revolution which are not directly in our hands. We are not its promoters or legal regulators. But it indicates a critical attitude which, yes, we possess, and which concerns the possibility of understanding and evaluating our experience, mediated, filtered, conditioned, empowered, enlarged by new technologies“

(Adriano Pessina, *“To be somewhere else. The human experience in the age of artificial intelligence”*, 2023)