Collective Bargaining during the Covid-19 Pandemic: Evidence from an International Negotiator Survey

Comparative report

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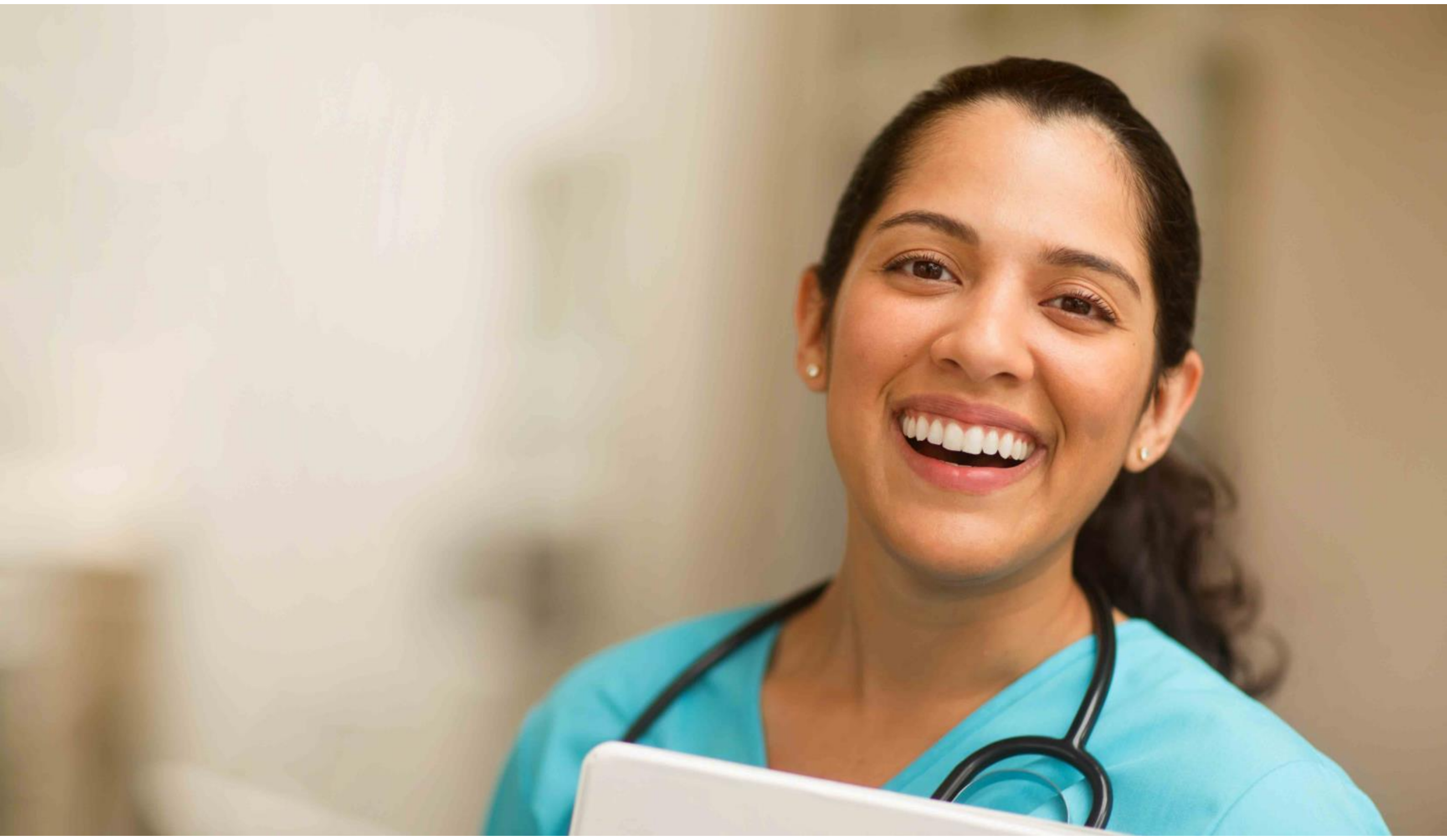

Collective Bargaining during the COVID-19 Pandemic: Evidence from an International Negotiator Survey

Comparative Report

June 2023

BARCOVID

AIAS-HSI

WageIndicator

CELSI Central European Labour Studies Institute

Sant'Anna School of Advanced Studies – Pisa

BARCOVID

The BARCOVID project aims to improve knowledge about the content of collective agreements in Europe and to undertake research activities to enhance the collection of comparative information on collective bargaining outcomes. The project takes in account the Covid-19 impact on industrial relations in Europe, which is approached from different angles, such as government measures and occupational health and safety. Lead partner is the University of Amsterdam/AIAS. The Central European Labour Studies Institute (CELSI), Sant'Anna School of Advanced Studies and WageIndicator Foundation are the project's key actors.

University of Amsterdam/AIAS-HSI

AIAS-HSI is an institute for multidisciplinary research and teaching at the University of Amsterdam (UvA), the largest university in the Netherlands. AIAS-HSI has as its objective the coordination, implementation and stimulation of interdisciplinary research into the practice of labour law and social security law. Therefore it combines insights from the social sciences, legal dogmas and legal theories in its research.

Central European Labour Studies Institute (CELSI)

Central European Labour Studies Institute (CELSI) is a non-profit research institute based in Bratislava, Slovakia. It fosters multidisciplinary research about the functioning of labour markets and institutions, work and organizations, business and society, and ethnicity and migration in the economic, social, and political life of modern societies. CELSI strives to make a contribution to the cutting-edge international scientific discourse.

Sant'Anna School of Advanced Studies

Sant’Anna School of Advanced Studies is a public university institute - with special autonomy - working in the field of applied sciences: Economics and Management, Law, Political Sciences, Agricultural Sciences and Plant Biotechnology, Medicine, and Industrial and Information Engineering. The School promotes the internationalization of didactics and research with innovative paths in the fields of university education, scientific research and advanced training.

WageIndicator Foundation

WageIndicator Foundation collects, compares and shares labour market information through online and offline surveys and research. Its national websites serve as always up-to-date online libraries featuring (living) wage information, labour law and career advice, for employees, employers and social partners. In this way, WageIndicator is a life changer for millions of people around the world.

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Bibliographical information

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1. Introduction

This research report aims to assess the extent to which the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted the negotiation process for collective labor agreements across various European countries. Much like other regions worldwide, Europe witnessed substantial economic disruption due to the emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic and the subsequent lockdown periods from 2020 to 2022. This crisis, especially during its initial stages, often complicated the renewal of collective agreements, at times causing negotiations to stall.

Beyond the alterations in the content of these agreements—addressed in the accompanying comprehensive report comparing specific clauses pre- and post-pandemic (see Cetrulo, 2023)—this report seeks to determine if the pandemic has also influenced the renewal process of Collective Bargaining Agreements (CBAs) and the wider climate of social dialogue across Europe.

In conducting a thorough investigation into the renewal process of collective agreements in Europe, this report utilizes survey data collected from negotiators across five countries: Austria, France, Italy, the Netherlands, and Spain. The survey encompassed 180 negotiators involved in 124 different agreements spread across these five nations. The core analysis of this report will focus primarily on Austria, Italy, and the Netherlands, as the number of respondents from Spain and France was insufficient to allow for separate statistical analysis. The respondents represent a balanced mix of negotiation parties. Just over half were affiliated with a trade union or another employee-representing organization, while the remainder were associated with employer organizations or independent businesses.

The survey results offer substantial insights into the CBA renewal process during the pandemic, highlighting the effects of COVID-19 on labor negotiation dynamics. The findings indicate that the COVID-19 pandemic did not fundamentally change the process of collective bargaining in the countries under study. Although negotiators attribute substantial impact to the pandemic and often perceive it to have made reaching an agreement more difficult, they also report remarkable levels of stability and continuity regarding the negotiations process (format, topics and outcomes) and the wider industrial relations climate.

2. Data Collection: Barcovid Negotiator Survey

We collected the data for this study through the *Barcovid Negotiator Survey*, which is an international survey conducted among negotiators and signatories of collective bargaining agreements in five European countries. The survey was conducted to investigate the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on industrial relations. We used an online questionnaire created using Qualtrics, and fieldwork was conducted between January 16 and March 10 2023. The survey questions were designed to understand the renewal process of CBAs during the pandemic and the wider implications of the pandemic on relations between social partners.

To gather respondents, we identified the signatory parties—both employee and employer organizations—for all collective agreements listed in the CBA Database for Austria, France, Italy, the Netherlands, and Spain. We collected their email addresses through web searches, and where possible, retrieved information on individual negotiators, including their names and professional email addresses. Invitations were extended only to the first five signatory parties associated with a CBA. In instances where multiple signatories or negotiators were listed for one organization, we contacted only one negotiator. The invitation emails and questionnaires were presented to respondents in their own language (German, French, Italian, Dutch or Spanish). These invitations were sent out in January 2023, with two reminders dispatched in February and March. For Spain and France, an additional reminder was issued, supplemented by follow-up telephone calls or social media messages for several respondents. Despite these additional efforts, the response rates for both Spain and France did not significantly increase. Consequently, response rates varied greatly between countries, as detailed in Table 1. The Netherlands demonstrated the highest response rate, nearing 30 percent, while France exhibited the lowest, with a mere 2 percent response rate. The analysis in this report are primary based on the responses from negotiators from Austria, Italy and the Netherlands.

Table 1. Response Rates

Country	Invited	Completed	Response rate
Austria	320	46	14.4%
France	151	3	2%
Italy	432	32	7.4%
Netherlands	312	93	29.8%
Spain	170	6	3.5%
Total	**1385**	**180**	**13.0%**

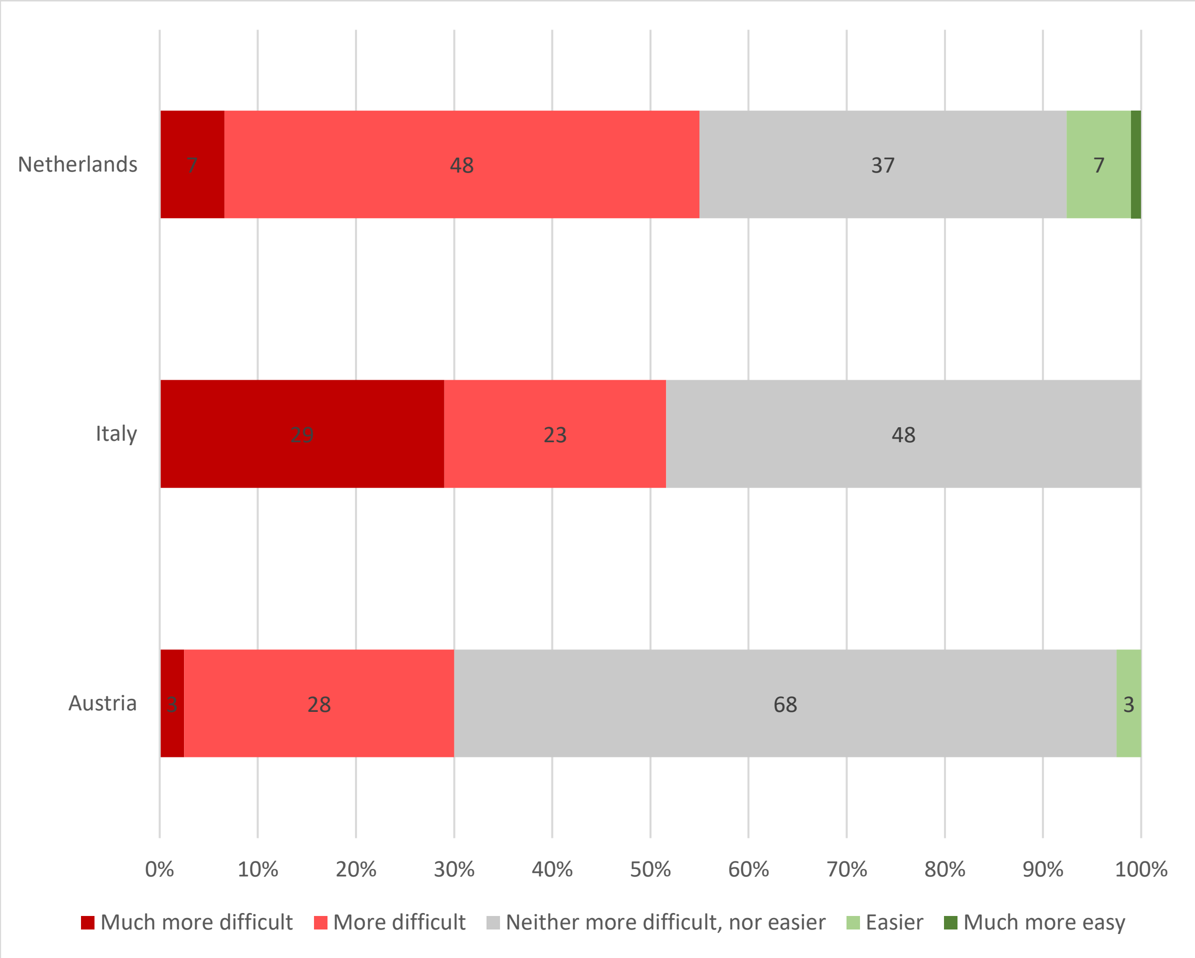
The survey respondents constitute a balanced assortment of negotiation parties. Slightly more than half (53.9%) were associated with a trade union or another organization representing employees, while the remaining 46.1% were affiliated with employer organizations or independent businesses. Furthermore, the overwhelming majority of surveyed negotiators (85%) participated in sector-level agreements. A small portion (11%) were involved in company-level agreements, while the remaining participants were engaged in national-level agreements or their negotiation level was unspecified.

The survey questionnaire encompassed a range of topics including the negotiation process, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the economic context of negotiations, the most critical issues discussed during negotiations, and the overall industrial relations climate. The subsequent sections of this report will delve deeper into these issues. For more details about the questionnaire and the wording of the questions in English, please refer to the appendix of this report.

3 The overall impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on collective negotiations

This section reflects on the negotiations for renewing agreements during the COVID-19 pandemic, starting with the negotiators' overall assessment of the pandemic's impact on the ease or difficulty of reaching an agreement. As illustrated in Figure 1, perceptions vary across countries regarding the extent to which the pandemic has complicated collective bargaining.

Figure 1. To what extent did the COVID-19 pandemic make it more difficult to reach an agreement (N=162)

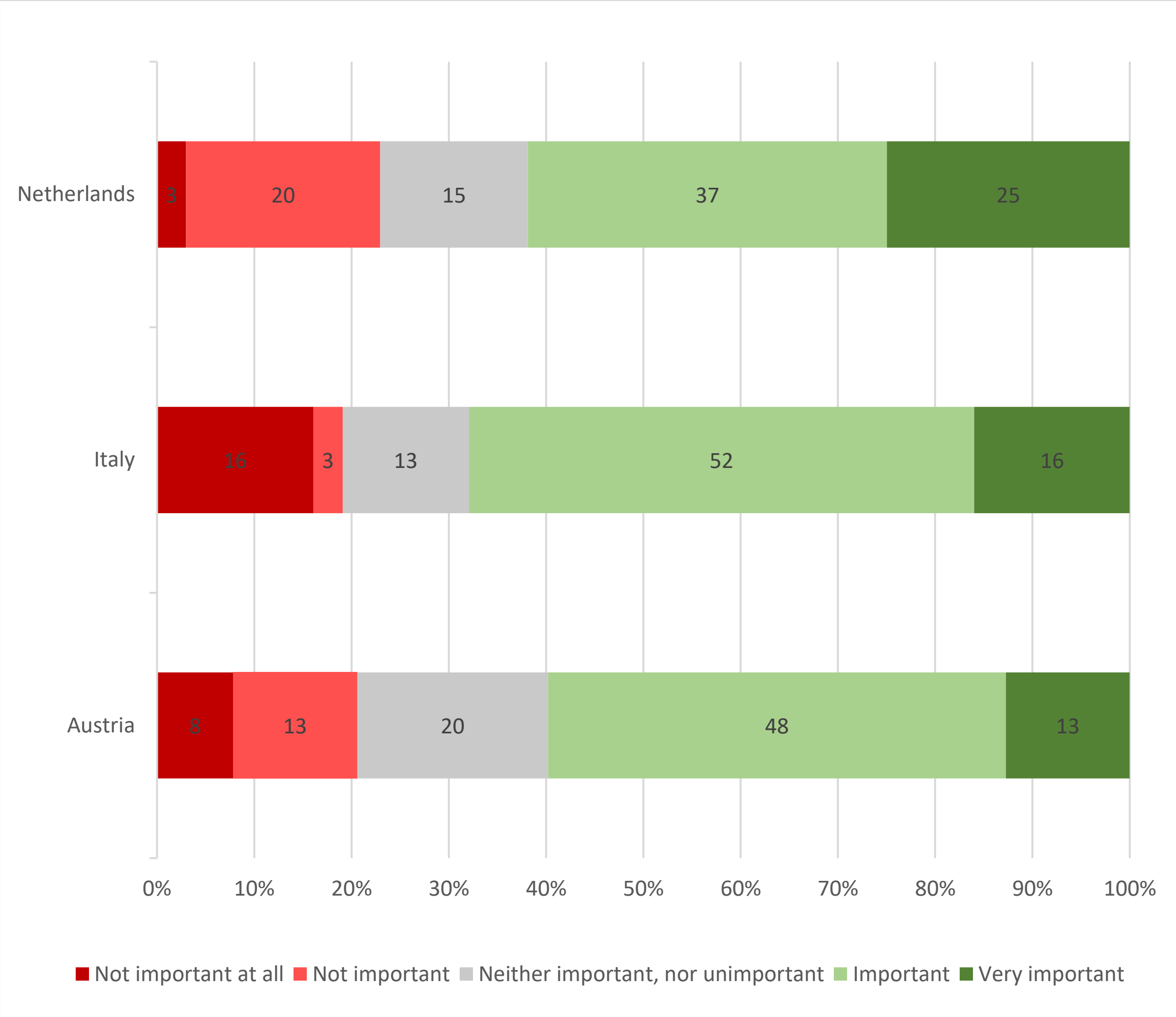


In the Netherlands, over half of the negotiators believed that the pandemic significantly increased the difficulty of reaching collective agreements. A small minority (7%) found that the pandemic somewhat facilitated the agreement process. However, a substantial group (37%) felt that the pandemic neither hindered nor eased negotiations.

In contrast, in Italy, 23% of respondents felt the pandemic made it more difficult to reach collective agreements, with an additional 29% believing it was much more challenging. The majority (48%) held the view that the pandemic neither complicated nor simplified negotiations. Notably, none of the Italian respondents found the pandemic to have made agreement processes easier.

In Austria, the prevailing opinion was that the pandemic did not alter the difficulty of negotiations. A significant majority (68%) of Austrian negotiators held this view. In comparison to respondents from the other two countries, the proportion of negotiators who believed the pandemic had made collective bargaining more difficult was the smallest (31%).

Figure 2. How important was the COVID-19 pandemic compared to other factors that affected the negotiation process (N=163)



We also inquired about the perceived importance of the COVID-19 pandemic relative to other factors impacting the negotiation process. The patterns across countries, as displayed in Figure 2, reveal that a majority of negotiators in all three countries considered the pandemic to be an important factor. This majority can be further divided into two groups: those who deemed COVID-19 to be significant, yet less critical than other factors (ranging from 37% to 52%), and those who considered COVID-19 to be the most influential factor in the negotiations (ranging from 13% to 25%). Additionally, approximately 20% of negotiators in each country viewed the pandemic as playing only a minor role in the negotiation process, or considered it not important at all.

Next, we examine the changes in negotiation methods during the pandemic, focusing on the frequency of negotiations and whether they were conducted online or offline, as reported in

Table 2. In Italy and the Netherlands, the majority of respondents participated in monthly meetings (45% and 66%, respectively), while in Austria, a significant majority (79%) reported occasional meetings. However, respondents in all three countries reported no significant changes compared to the pre-pandemic period.

Table 2. Characteristics of negotiations during the COVID-19 pandemic, percentages (N=153).

Frequency of negotiations	**Netherlands**	**Italy**	**Austria**
Weekly	18,9	8,3	10,3
Monthly	45,6	66,7	10,3
Incidental	35,6	25	79,5
Change in negotiation freqency (vs. before the pandemic)			
Decreased	12,4	25	10
Stayed the same	78,7	58,3	77,5
Increased	9	16,7	12,5
Online or offline negotiations			
Fully offline	26,7	-	25,6
Mostly offline, sometimes online	27,8	8,7	25,6
Both offline/online (about equally)	14,4	30,4	25,6
Mostly online, sometimes offline	22,2	26,1	17,9
Fully online	8,9	34,8	5,1
Changes due to quarantine[1]			
Never	17,8	13	42,5
Seldom	38,9	43,5	37,5
Sometimes	32,2	39,1	20
Often	11,1	4,3	-

[1] Responses to the questions "*To what extent did COVID-19 or quarantine measures affect the availability of negotiators during the negotiations for this agreement? (For example, individual negotiators who were unable to attend, or changes in negotiation delegates)*"

There are variations across countries concerning the format of negotiations, whether online or offline. In both Austria and the Netherlands, more than half of the respondents stated that negotiations were primarily held offline as in-person meetings, or mostly offline with occasional online sessions. The remaining respondents indicated a more significant prevalence of online negotiations, with varying ratios of online to offline meetings. Nevertheless, only a small minority in Austria and the Netherlands (5% and 9%, respectively) reported that meetings were conducted entirely online. This contrasts with Italy, where a smaller portion of respondents reported fully or primarily offline (in-person) meetings. Furthermore, a significantly higher proportion of Italian negotiators (nearly 35%) reported fully online meetings.

Finally, Table 2 also presents data on whether quarantine measures impacted negotiators' availability during negotiations, for instance, due to individual negotiators being unable to attend or changes in negotiation delegates. Comparatively, Austria appears to be least affected in this regard, with 80% of respondents stating that this was never or seldom the case. Both the Netherlands and Italy show slightly lower percentages, although the majority of respondents still indicate that quarantine measures did not or only rarely affected negotiator availability. In each country, only a few respondents – and none in Austria – reported that the negotiation process was frequently disrupted by this factor.

4. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the economic context of negotiations

This section investigates the extent to which the COVID-19 pandemic and lockdowns affected the economic context of negotiations. Negotiators were asked to reflect on four statements concerning the impact of the pandemic on the sector or organization covered by the CBA. The statements were about the interruption of production/service delivery, decrease of revenue, decrease of employment, and interruptions in payment of wages. Figure 3 illustrates that approximately half of the negotiators in all three countries reported a decrease in revenue, with 48% in Italy, 51% in the Netherlands, and 54% in Austria. A notable proportion of respondents in the Netherlands and Austria, 45% and 42% respectively, also reported interruptions in production or service delivery. However, this figure was considerably lower in Italy at 23%. Additionally, around 30-35% of respondents in all three countries reported decreases in employment. Among all the factors, interruptions in wage payments were least common across the countries. This issue was reported by only 2% of negotiators in the Netherlands, 8% in Austria, and 17% in Italy.

Figure 3. COVID-19 impact on economy in the sector/organization of the CBA (N=161)

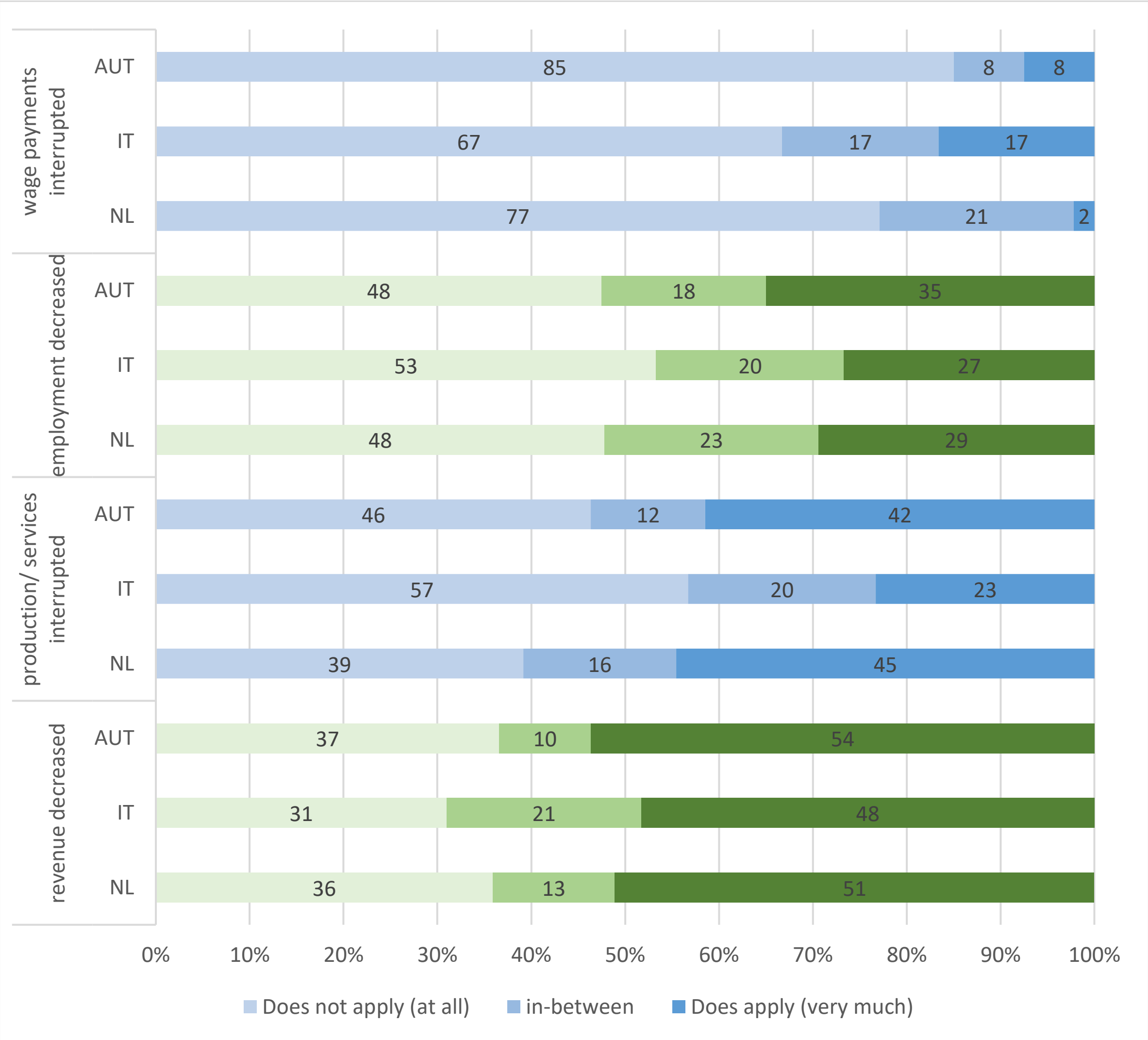
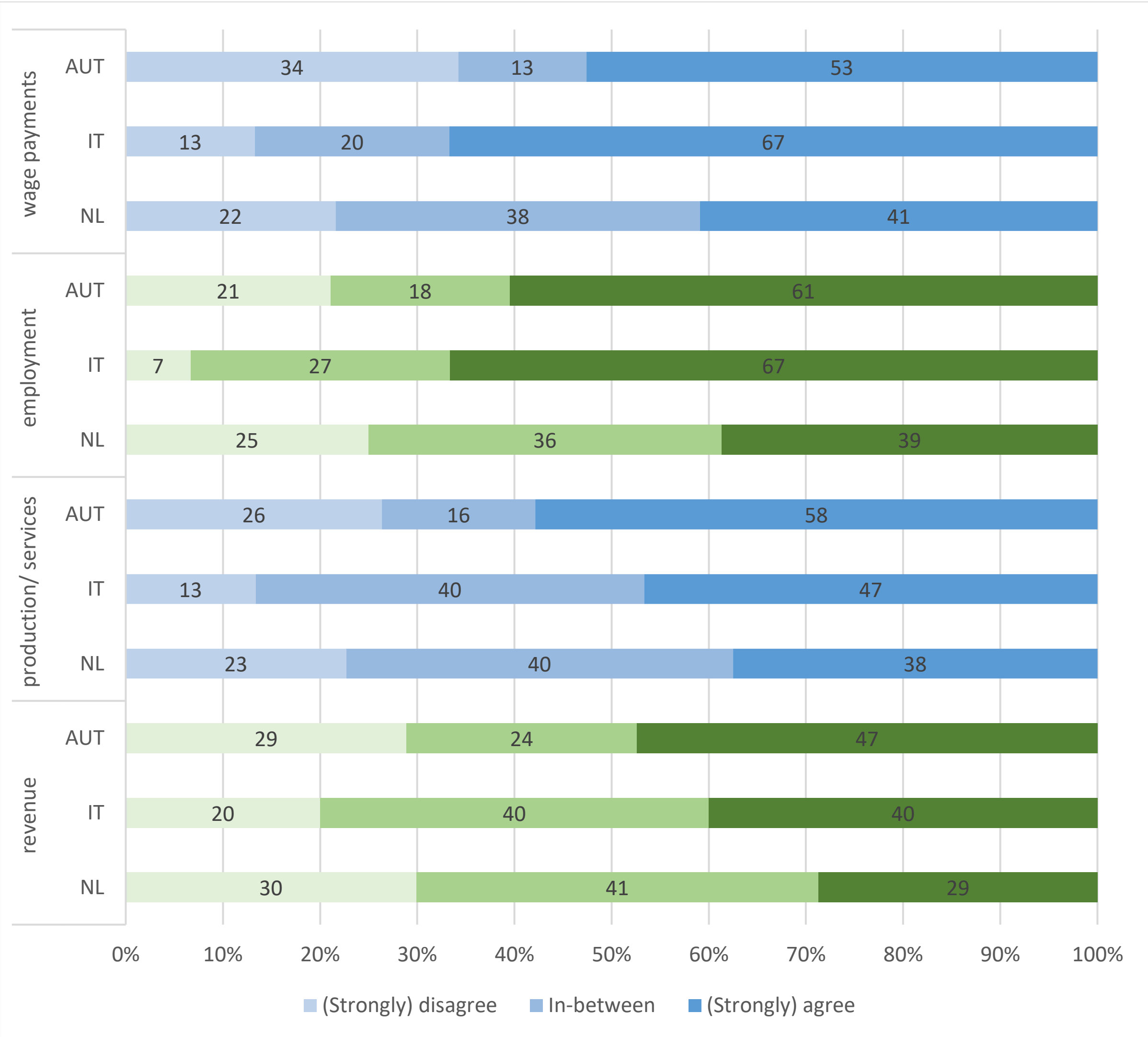


Figure 4 delves into negotiators' perceptions regarding the impact of support packages. It considers four potential impacts: sustaining production/service delivery, revenue, employment, and wage payments. Across these four dimensions, a similar pattern emerges among the countries. Dutch negotiators most frequently disagree that support packages were beneficial. For instance, only 29% of Dutch negotiators believe support packages helped maintain revenue, compared to 40% and 47% of their Italian and Austrian counterparts, respectively. Similarly, just 38% of Dutch negotiators found support packages beneficial for sustaining service delivery, a figure lower than that reported by negotiators in Italy (47%) and Austria (58%). This pattern persists with regards to maintaining employment and wages, where the share of Dutch negotiators who believe support packages were useful is smaller than that of their Austrian or Italian peers. However, it is noteworthy that even within the Netherlands, the proportion of negotiators who believe support packages were beneficial often surpasses the proportion who disagreed with this statement.

Figure 4. Impact of support packages by the government in the sector or organization of the CBA (N=162)



5. Most important topics during the negotiations

This section delves into the most significant topics during collective negotiations amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. Negotiators were prompted to identify up to three topics they deemed most critical during negotiations. The topics were drawn from the thematic clustering in the Collective Agreement Database (Ceccon and Medas 2022), although respondents had the freedom to introduce other subjects. As Figure 5 illustrates, across all three countries, wages were the predominant concern. This topic was paramount for 96% of Dutch negotiators, 83% of Austrian negotiators, and 65% of Italian negotiators. The second most important topic revolved around working hours, followed by work-life balance arrangements in Austria and the Netherlands, and job security issues in Italy. Interestingly, remote working, which gained prominence during the pandemic lockdown, emerged as a vital topic for about 20% of Dutch negotiators and 13% of those from Austria and Italy. When it comes to contentious topics, Figure 6 underscores that wages are the primary source of disagreement among negotiators, although this issue is less contentious in Austria, where working hours tend to generate more disputes. In fact, Figure 7 highlights that wages can also represent common ground, particularly in Austria, where negotiators often find mutual agreement on this issue.

Figure 5. Most important topics during the negotiations, in percentages (N=171)

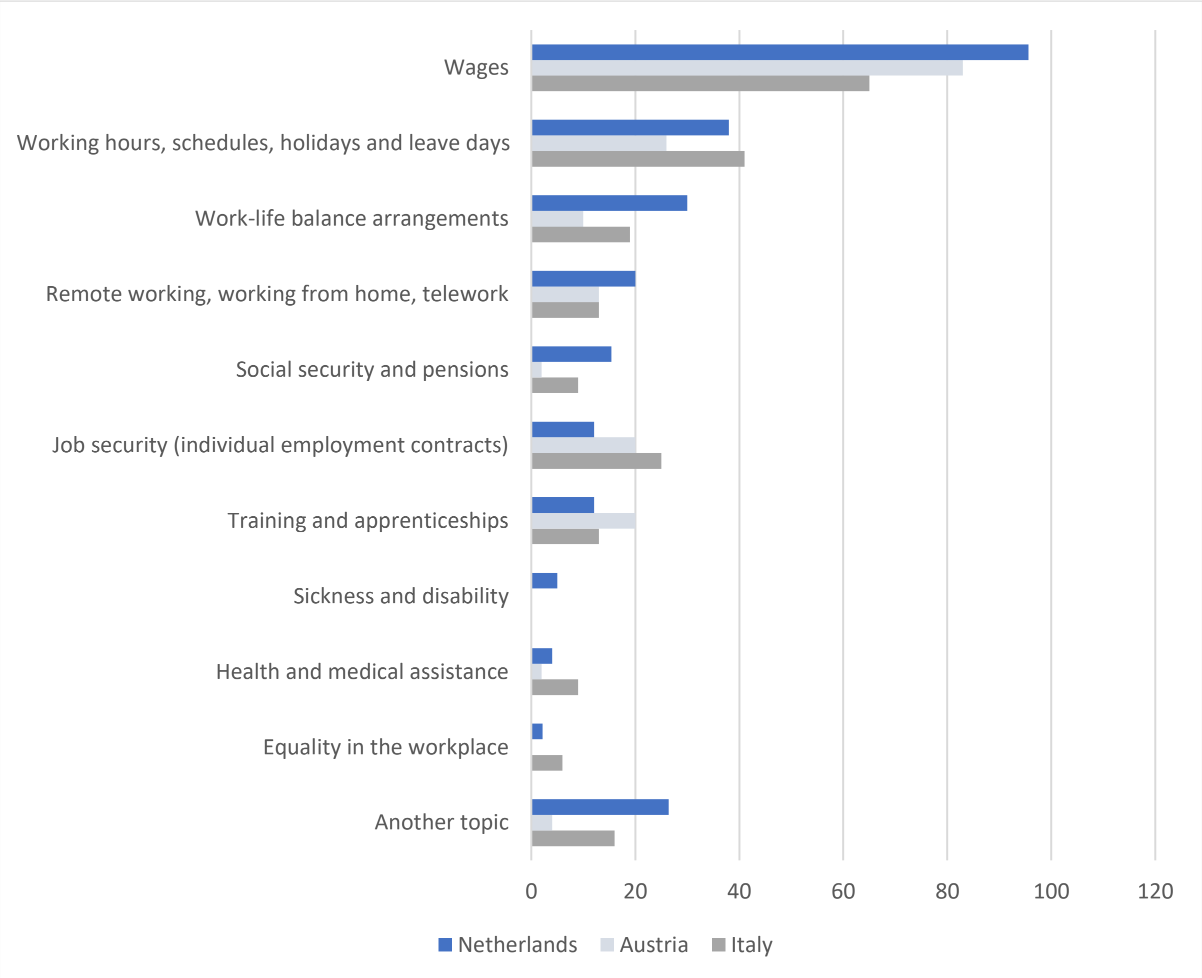


Figure 6. Topics where negotiators disagreed upon most, top-3 (N=171)

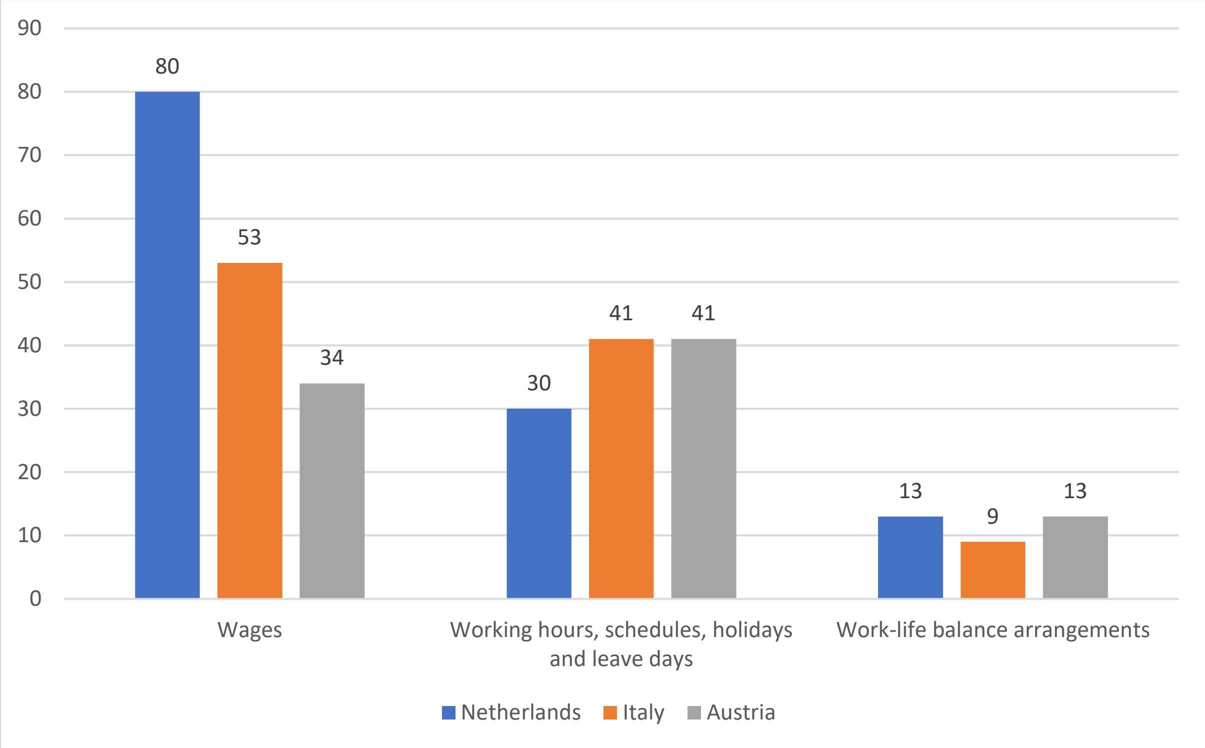
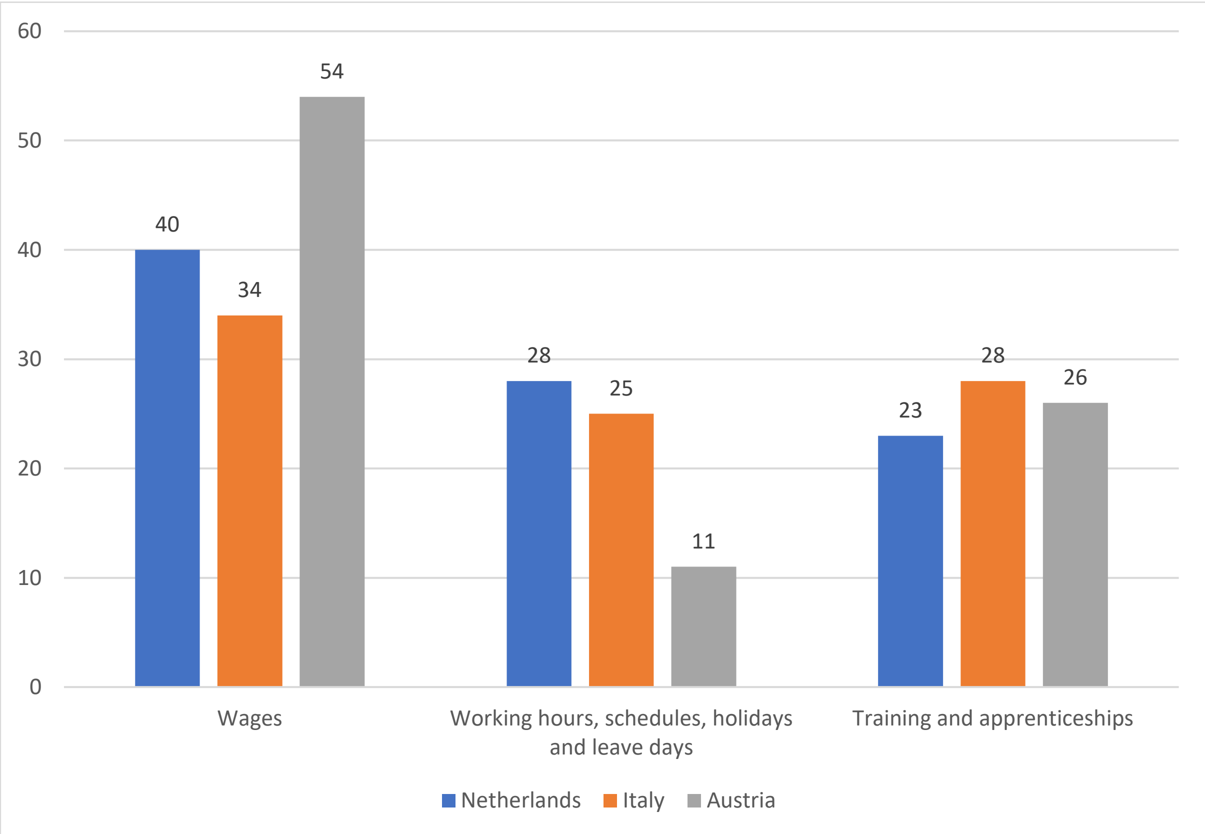


Figure 7. Topics where negotiators agreed upon most, top-3 (N=171).



6. Perceptions of changes in CBAs

In this section we report on changes in the characteristics of renewed CBAs, as reported by negotiators. As such, this section supplements the accompanying country reports with before and after comparisons of the content of CBAs. For the vast majority of CBAs negotiators report high (expected) wages compared to the previous agreement, see Table 3. This is the case for 94% of Dutch negotiators, 89% of Austrian negotiators and 73% of Italian negotiators.

Table 3. Perceived changes in renewed CBAs compared to the previous CBAs (N=157).

		Netherlands	**Italy**	**Austria**
Wages	Decreased	0.0	0.0	5,4
	Stayed the same	2.3	0.0	5,4
	Increased	94.3	73.3	89,2
	DK/NA	3.4	26.7	5,4
Coverage	Decreased	10,3	6,7	2.7
	Stayed the same	62,1	60,0	83.8
	Increased	19,5	20,0	8.1
	DK/NA	8,0	6,7	5.4
# Signatories	Decreased	5,7	0.0	0.0
	Stayed the same	88,5	93,3	94.6
	Increased	3,4	6,7	5.4
	DK/NA	2,3	0.0	0.0

Coverage – in terms of organizations/number of employees – has generally perceived to have stayed about the same: In the Netherlands continuity in coverage is reported by 62 per cent of the negotiators, in Austria by 84% and in Italy by 60%. That is, only between 8% (in Austria) and 20 per cent (in Italy) report the coverage rate to have increased or is expected to increase. Even fewer negotiators report coverage to have decreased. Also the number of signatories is perceived to be rather stable during the COVID-19 pandemic. Stability in this respect is reported by almost 90 percent or more of the negotiators in all three countries.

7. The Industrial Relations Climate

In this section, we delve into the relationships between social partners during the COVID-19 pandemic. We interviewed negotiators about the quality of their relations at the time of negotiations to renew collective bargaining agreements during the crisis. According to Figure 8, the relationships between social partners in Austria, Italy and the Netherlands were generally considered (very) good. That is, good or very good relationship are reported by 64% of negotiators in the Netherlands, 55% of negotiators in Italy, and 58% of negotiators in Austria. Only a small minority (around 10% in each country) indicated that the relations were (very) bad.

Figure 8. Quality of relations between social partners at the time of negotiations (N=161)

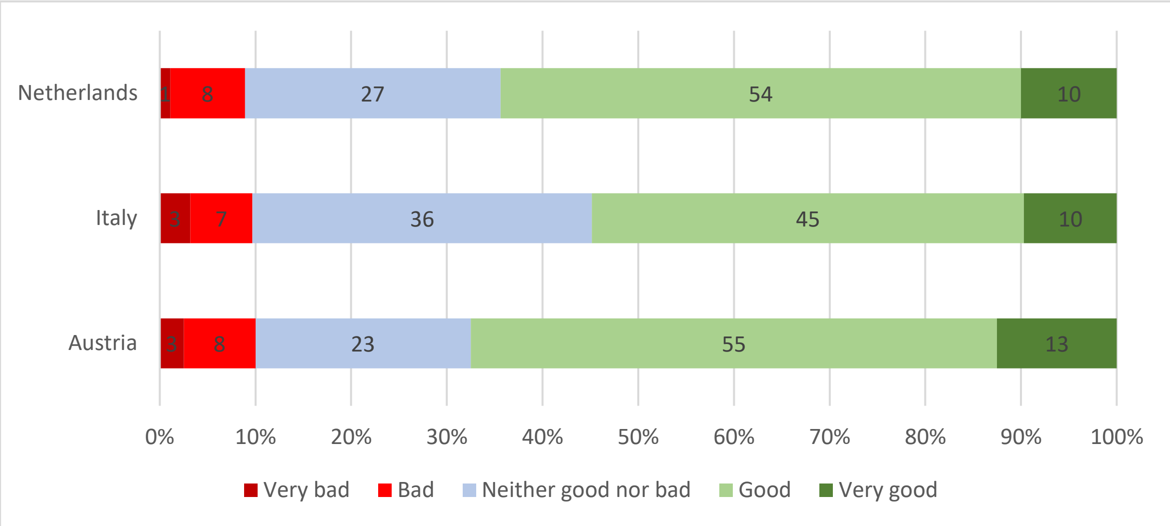
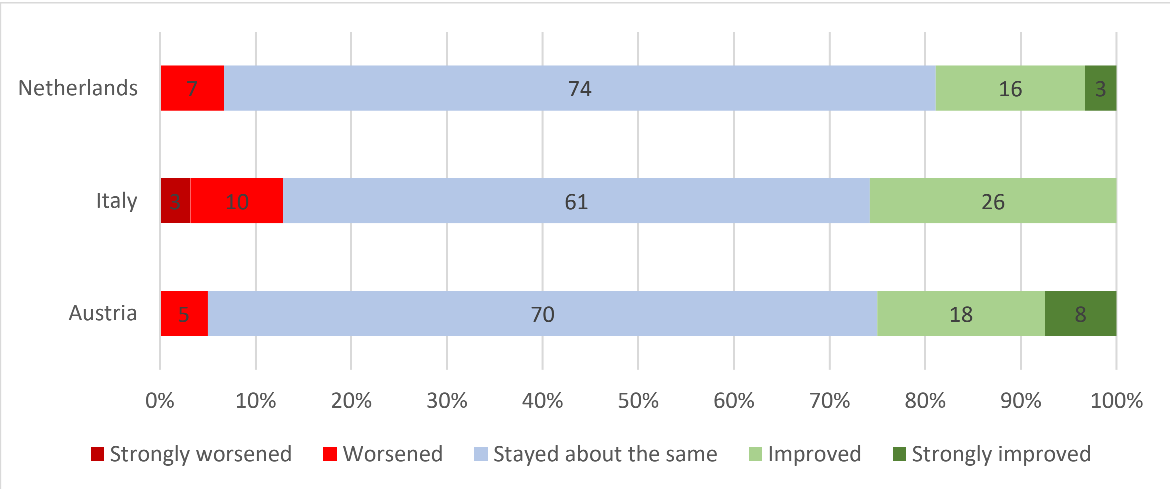


Figure 9 Change in the quality of relations between social partners since the start of the pandemic (N=161)



Furthermore, there is little indication that relationships between social partners worsened during the pandemic. Figure 9 shows that the majority of negotiators in all three countries believe that the quality of industrial relations has remained stable since the onset of the COVID-

19 crisis. In fact, in each country under study here a larger percentage of negotiators observed an improvement in relationships compared to those who observed a deterioration.

Next, we broaden our focus to the general industrial relations climate in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, as opposed to specific CBA negotiations. As the data show in Figure 10, Dutch negotiators did not generally believe that the pandemic eased the acceptance of opposed parties' terms. In fact, a larger proportion disagreed (44%) than agreed (9%) with this sentiment. Similarly, as can be seen in Figure 11, more negotiators disagreed (35%) than agreed (23%) with the idea that the pandemic simplified the recognition of common interests.

Figure 10. The COVID-19 pandemic 'made it easier for negotiators to accept each other's terms' (N=162)

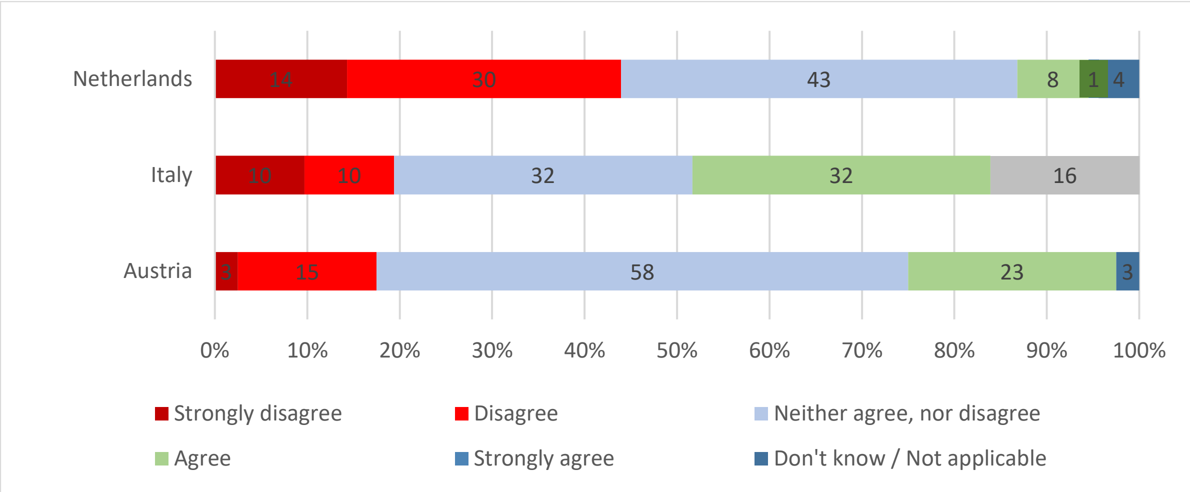
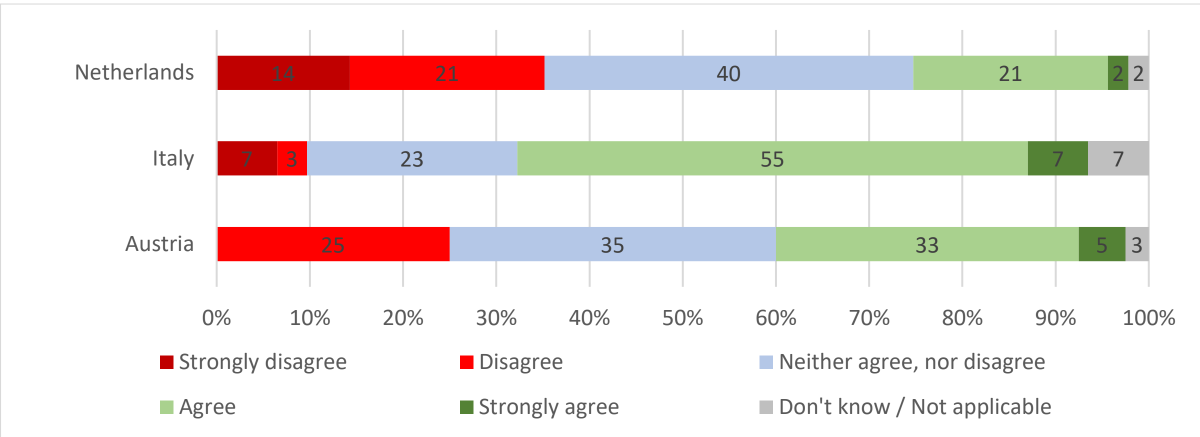


Figure 11. The COVID-19 pandemic 'made it easier for negotiators to see common interests' (N=162)



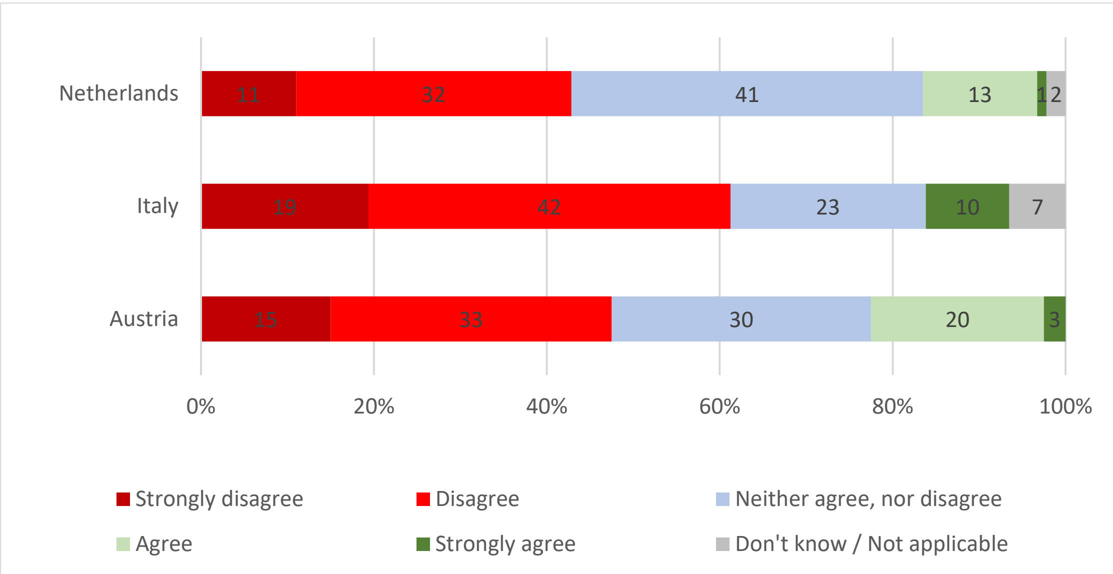
Conversely, negotiators in Austria and Italy held a somewhat more optimistic view of the pandemic's impact on the industrial relations climate. In Italy, 32% of negotiators concurred with the notion that accepting each other's terms became easier, while a smaller fraction (20%) contradicted this viewpoint (see Figure 10). In Austria too, more negotiators agreed (23%) than disagreed (18%) with this statement. However, it is important to note that a substantial group of respondents across all three countries maintained a somewhat neutral stance on this matter.

Yet again, in Figure 11, the share of respondents who report that the COVID-19 pandemic made it easier for negotiators to see common interests is larger in Italy (63%) and Austria (38%) compared to the Netherlands (23%)

Finally, we also looked at the perceived relationships and power balances between social partners during the pandemic. That is, we asked respondents to reflect on whether the bargaining power of trade unions, employers and governments changed because of the COVID-10 crisis. However, when it comes to the perceived bargaining power of different social partners, the majority of negotiators did not believe that the pandemic has undermined the power of trade unions and other employee representatives. This trend, as can be seen in Figure 12, is broadly consistent across the three countries under consideration. In the Netherlands, a mere 14% of respondents felt that the pandemic had weakened the influence of trade unions. The majority of negotiators either disagreed with this statement (43%) or maintained a neutral stance (41%). Similar patterns can be observed in Italy and Austria.

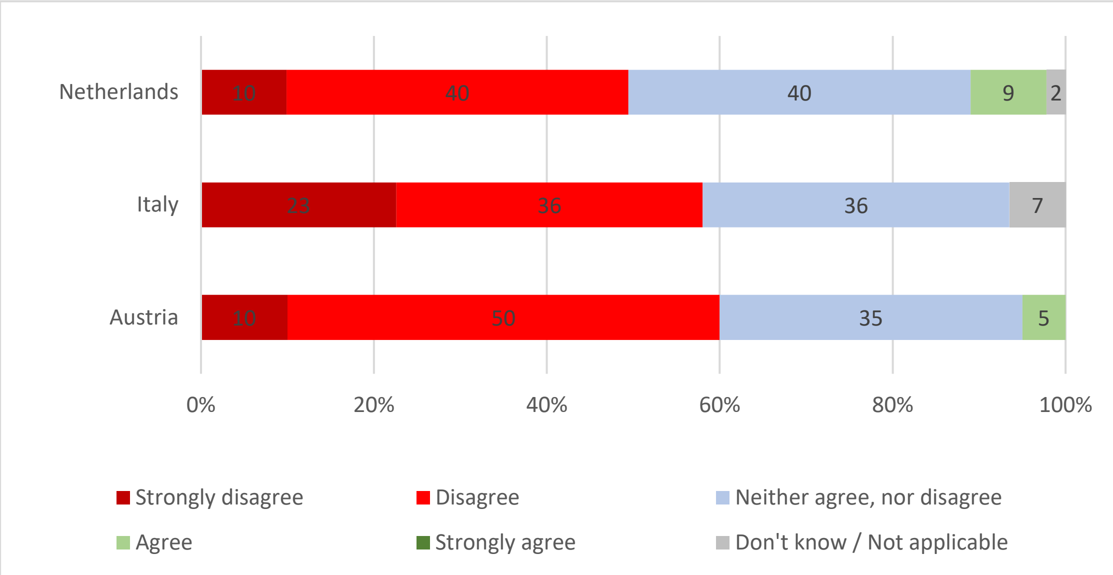
In Italy, only 10% of respondents held the belief that the pandemic has weakened the power of trade unions, whereas over 60% disagreed with this proposition. Meanwhile, in Austria, a slightly higher proportion of respondents (23%) felt that trade union power has diminished, yet a larger number of respondents (48%) disagreed with this statement.

Figure 12. The COVID-19 pandemic 'weakened the bargaining power of trade unions' (N=162)



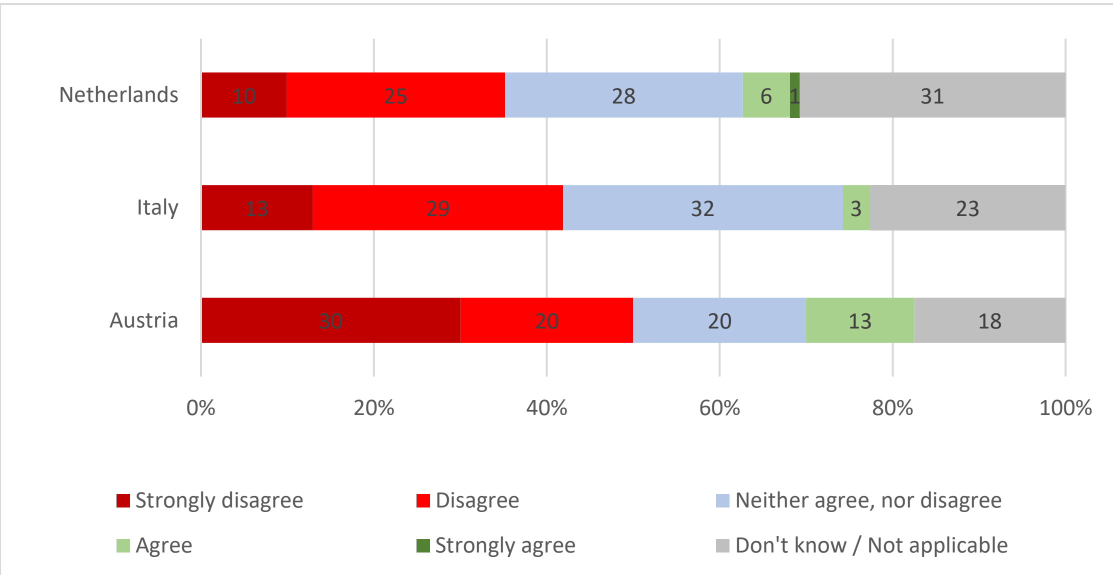
Looking at employer power the patterns are more of less similar, see Figure 13. Also here about half of the respondents in all three countries tends to (strongly) disagree with the statement that the bargaining power of employers and employer organisations weakened during the COVID-19 pandemic. Similar to the previous figure, up to 40% of the interviewed negotiators remain neutral about perceived changes in employer bargaining power. The share of respondents who believes employer power declined is about 10% or lower in all three countries. Compared to perceived changes in trade union power in the previous figure, even fewer respondents believe the crisis weakened employer power.

Figure 13. The COVID-19 pandemic 'weakened the bargaining power of employers' (N=162)



Lastly, we asked respondents whether they believe the COVID-19 pandemic strengthened the role of governments in tripartite negotiations, see Figure 14. It should be noted this question was not applicable to all respondents, indicated by the 18% (Austria), 23% (Italy) and 31% (Netherlands) of the respondents replying 'don't know / not applicable'. But again, the recurring pattern is that respondents either (strongly) disagree with the statement (35% in the Netherlands, 42% in Italy, and 50% in Austria) or remain neutral (28% in the Netherlands, 32% in Italy, and 20% in Austria). In neither of the three countries we find that the group who agrees with a stronger role for government exceeds 13%.

Figure 14. The COVID-19 pandemic 'strengthened the role of governments in tripartite negotiations' (N=162)



8. Conclusions

This report aimed to investigate the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the process of collective bargaining in Europe. In particular, it aimed to address the question whether the pandemic hindered the renewal of collective agreements. To this end, an online survey was fielded among negotiators and other representatives of signatory parties of collective agreements in 5 European countries of which 3 are analysed in this report.

The overall pattern that emerged from the survey is one of both continuity and change. On the one hand, many negotiators – in some countries even the majority - acknowledged that the pandemic made negotiation processes more difficult. Yet, at the same time, across various aspects of the negotiation process, the negotiators who participated in this survey report that things have remained more or less stable since the onset of the COVID-19 crisis. While many reported increased difficulty in reaching agreements, a substantial group saw negligible changes due to COVID-19.

On notable change, reflecting a wider societal shift towards remote working during the pandemic, is the transition from face-to-face negotiations to online negotiations. In all countries under study online negotiations were used to substitute or supplement offline meetings. This new format of negotiations, helped to sustain the negotiation rhythm in collective bargaining. The majority of respondents who participated in study, report that the negotiation frequency stayed about the same when compared to pre-pandemic times.

Stability is also observed in terms of coverage rates, the number of signatory parties per agreement, and the topics that were considered most important during negotiations. Instead of 'new' COVID-related issues (e.g., health and safetly, or remote working), the main issue during the pandemic were wages. Wages were most often mentioned as the issue where negotiators disagreed about the most, and negotiators reported that wages were going up since the start of the pandemic.

Moreover, also the overall quality of social relations remained good and stable throughout the pandemic. Not only does a majority of the surveyed negotiators report that the relationships between social partners during the pandemic were good, an even greater majority of them report that the quality of relations has remained about the same. Next to the social relations, also the bargaining power of social partners is believed to be more or less stable. Most respondents believe that the bargaining power of trade unions or employers has not weakened due to the pandemic.

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Appendix 1: Questionnaire Barcovid Negotiator Survey

Textbox 1. Example of invivation e-mail (English translation)

Dear Mr/Mrs ${m://LastName}

You receive this questionnaire because you were involved in the collective agreement **${e://Field/CBA}**. According to our information, you were among the signatories of this agreement.

This questionnaire contains questions about the renewal process of the aforementioned CBA. In particular, questions are asked **about the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the negotiations and the relationships among social partners**.

This questionnaire is part of the BARCOVID project. BARCOVID studies how the Covid-19 crisis has affect collective bargaining and its outcomes in 5 Eurpean countries. BARCOVID is funded by the European Commission through its Social Dialogue Program.

Filling out the questionnaire takes about **12 minutes**. Your answers will be treated confidentially, and will not be traceable to you personally in any publication. If you want to be informed about the study's results, or be invited to an online webinar about the study, you can indicate that at the end of the questionnaire. Your contact information will be stored seperately from your results.

Follow this link to the Survey
${l://SurveyLink?d=Take the Survey}

Or copy and paste the URL below into your internet browser:
${l://SurveyURL}

Follow the link to opt out of future emails:
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Start of Block: Introduction Block

0_0 We start with a few questions for confirmation. First, according to our information you were involved in the negotiations for the collective agreement ${e://Field/CBA}. Is this correct?

Yes (1)
No (2)

Display This Question:
If 0_0 = No
0_0b For which other CBA are you filling out this questionnaire?
(open answer)

0_2 Has this agreement been renewed after **May 1st 2020**?

Yes, once (1)
Yes, more than once (2)
No (3)

Display This Question:
If 0_2= No
0_3 When did negotiations for this renewed agreement start? (month/year)\

If 0_2= No
0_4 When has this agreement been renewed most recently? (month/year)

End of Block: Introduction Block

Start of Block: Block A: Questions for NOT renewed CBAs

A2 Are there at this time (still) negotiations for a new agreement?

Yes (1)
No, negotiations started, but stopped (2)
No, negotiations to renew this agreement never started (3)

Skip To: End of Block If Are there at this time (still) negotiations for a new agreement? = No, negotiations to renew this agreement never started

Display This Question:
If 0_2= No
A2 = Yes
A2 = No, negotiations started, but stopped

A3_a When did negotiations for this agreement start? (month/year)

Display This Question:
A2 = No, negotiations started, but stopped

A3b And when did negotiations for this agreement stop (without reaching an agreement)?
(month/year)

A4 What is the main reason the agreement has not (yet) been renewed?
(open answer)

A5 To what extent has the COVID-19 pandemic made it more difficult to reach an agreement?

Much more difficult (1)
More difficult (2)
Neither more difficult, nor easier (3)
Easier (4)
Much more easy (5)

Display This Question:
If A5= No= Neither more difficult, nor easier
A5_b Can you explain your answer?
(open answer)

A5_c How confident are you that a new agreement will be reached **<u>within a year from now</u>**?

Not confident at all (1)
Not confident (2)
Neither confident, nor unconfident (5)
Somewhat confident (3)
Very confident (4)
I don't know / don't want to say (6)

A6 How important is the COVID-19 pandemic compared to other reasons for not (yet) renewing the agreement?

Very important (most important reason) (1)
Important, but other reasons are more important (2)
Neither important, nor unimportant (3)
Not so important (it plays only a minor role) (4)
Not important at all. (5)

A7 How frequent were negotiations talks during the COVID-19 pandemic?

Weekly (1)
Monthly (2)
Incidental (3)

A8 And if you compare the frequency of negotiation talks to the period before the COVID-19 pandemic, did the frequency increase or decrease?

Decrease (1)
Stayed the same (2)
Increase (3)

A9 Have negotiations during the COVID-19 pandemic mainly taken place online or offline?

Fully offline (in person negotiations) (1)
Mostly offline, but sometimes online (2)
Both offline and online (about equally) (3)
Mostly online, but sometimes offline (4)
Fully online (5)

A10 To what extent did COVID-19 or quarantine measures affect the availability of negotiators during the negotiations for this agreement? *(For example, individual negotiators who were unable to attend, or changes in negotiation delegates)*

Never (1)
Seldom (2)
Sometimes (3)
Often (4)

A12 To what extent do the following statements apply to the sector or organization of this CBA? During the COVID-19 pandemic...

...production/service delivery was interrupted (1)
...revenue decreased (2)
...employment decreased (3)
...wage payments were interrupted (4)

Does not at all apply (1)
Does not apply (2)
Somewhere in-between (not much change) (3)
Does apply (4)
Does very much apply (5)

A13 To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements regarding support packages by the government in the sector or organization of this CBA.

support packages helped to sustain production/service delivery (1)
support packages helped to sustain revenue (5)
support packages helped to sustain employment (2)
support packages helped to sustain wage payments (3)

Stronly disagree (1)
Disgree (2)
Neither disagree, nor agree (3)
Agree (4)
Strongly agree (5)

End of Block: Block A: Questions for NOT renewed CBAs

Start of Block: Block G: Question for CBAs for which negotiations never started

GA5 To what extent has the COVID-19 pandemic made it more difficult to reach an agreement?

Much more difficult (1)
More difficult (2)
Neither more difficult, nor easier (3)
Easier (4)
Much more easy (5)

GA6 How important is the COVID-19 pandemic compared to other reasons for that (yet) renewing the agreement?

Very important (most important reason) (1)
Important, but other reasons are more important (2)
Neither important, nor unimportant (3)
Not so important, it plays only a minor role (4)
Not important at all. (5)

GA12 To what extent do the following statements apply to the sector or organization of this CBA? During the COVID-19 pandemic...

...production/service delivery was interrupted (1)
...revenue decreased (2)
...employment decreased (3)
...wage payments were interrupted (4)

Does not at all apply (1)
Does not apply (2)
Somewhere in-between (not much change) (3)
Does apply (4)
Does very much apply (5)

GA13 To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements regarding support packages by the government in the sector or organization of this CBA

support packages helped to sustain production/service delivery (1)
support packages helped to sustain revenue (5)
support packages helped to sustain employment (2)
support packages helped to sustain wage payments (3)

Stronly disagree (1)
Disgree (2)
Neither disagree, nor agree (3)
Agree (4)
Strongly agree (5)

GB7 To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements regarding the collective negotiations **in the sector of this CBA**? The COVID-19 pandemic…...

…made it easier for negotiators to accept each other's terms (1)
…made it easier for negotiators to see common interests (2)
...weakened the bargaining power of trade unions and other employee representatives (3)
…weakened the bargaining power of employers and employer representatives (4)
…strengthened the role of governments in tripartite negotiations (5)

Stronly disagree (1)
Disgree (2)
Neither disagree, nor agree (3)
Agree (4)
Strongly agree (5)
Don't know / Not applicable (6)

GB8 How would you describe the relations between social partners at this moment?

Very bad (1)
Bad (2)
Neither good nor bad (3)
Good (4)
Very good (5)

GB9 How have the relations between social partners changed since the beginning of the Covid pandemic (in 2020)?

Strongly worsened (1)
Worsened (2)
Stayed about the same (3)
Improved (4)
Strongly improved (5)

GC1 The following questions are about the current economic situation in the sector of the CBA.

How difficult is it in this sector to **find employees with the required skills**?

Very easy (1)
Easy (2)
Neither difficult nor easy (3)
Difficult (4)
Very difficult (5)
I don' t know/ don't want to say (6)

C2 How do average **profit margins** in this sector compare to “normal times”?

Much lower than normal (1)
Lower (2)
About normal (3)
Higher (4)
Much higher than normal (5)
I don't know / don't want to say (6)

GC3 How do average **prices** in this sector compare to “normal times”?

Much lower than normal (1)
Lower (2)
About normal (3)
Higher (4)
Much greater than normal (5)
I don't know/ don't want to say (6)

GC4 How do **investment plans** in your sector/company compare to “normal times”?

Much lower than normal (1)
Lower (2)
About normal (3)
Higher (4)
Much higher than normal (5)
I don't know/ don't want to say (6)
Not applicable (7)

G45 This is the end of this questionnaire. Is there anything else you would like to share regarding the CBA renewal process in general and regarding the Covid pandemic specifically?
(open answer)

G6C Would you like to be informed about the results of this study?
No (1)
Yes, please fill out your email address (2) _

Skip To: End of Survey If Would you like to be informed about the results of this study? = No
Skip To: End of Survey If Would you like to be informed about the results of this study? = Yes, please fill out your email address

End of Block: Block G: Question for CBAs for which negotiations never started

Start of Block: Block B: Questions for NOT renewed CBAs

B1 The following questions are on the negotiation process and your expectations regarding a new CBA.
If there are no longer negotiations for this agreement, please answer these questions with respect to the time of negotiations.

In your view, which topics are (or were) most important in a potential new agreement? (3 answers maximum)

Social security and pensions (1)
Job security (individual employment contracts) (2)
Work-life balance arrangements (3)
Equality in the workplace (4)
Wages (5)
Training and apprenticeships (6)
Sickness and disability (7)
Health and medical assistance (8)
Working hours, schedules, holidays and leave days (9)
Worker representation and conflict (10)
Remote working, working from home, telework (11)
Another topic, namely (12)

B2 In your view, regarding which topics in the agreement is (or was) there **most common interest** among social partners? (3 answers maximum)

Social security and pensions (1)
Job security (individual employment contracts) (2)
Work-life balance arrangements (3)
Equality in the workplace (4)
Wages (5)
Training and apprenticeships (6)
Sickness and disability (7)
Health and medical assistance (8)
Working hours, schedules, holidays and leave days (9)
Worker representation and conflict (10)
Remote working, working from home, telework (11)
${B1/ChoiceTextEntryValue/12} (13)

B3 In your view, regarding which topics in the agreement is (or was) there **most disagreement** among social partners? (3 answers maximum)

Social security and pensions (1)
Job security (individual employment contracts) (2)
Work-life balance arrangements (3)
Equality in the workplace (4)
Wages (5)
Training and apprenticeships (6)
Sickness and disability (7)
Health and medical assistance (8)
Working hours, schedules, holidays and leave days (9)
Worker representation and conflict (10)
Remote working, working from home, telework (11)
${B1/ChoiceTextEntryValue/12} (13)

B4 Compared to the previous (or current) CBA, do you expect wages to…

Decrease (lower wages) (1)
Stay about the same (2)
Increase (higher wages) (3)
I don't know / don't want to say (4)

B5 Compared to the previous (or current) CBA, do you expect coverage (in terms of organizations/number of employees) to…

Decrease (lower coverage rate) (1)
Stay about the same (2)
Increase (higher coverage rate) (3)
I don't know / don't want to say (4)

B6 Compared to the previous (or current) CBA, do you expect the number of signatories to…

Decrease (fewer signatories) (1)
Stay about the same (2)
Increase (more signatories) (3)
I don't know / don't want to say (4)

B7 To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements regarding the collective agreement negotiations? The COVID-19 pandemic…...

…made it easier for negotiators to accept each other's terms (1)

…made it easier for negotiators to see common interests (2)

...weakened the bargaining power of trade unions and other employee representatives (3)

…weakened the bargaining power of employers and employer representatives (4)

…strengthened the role of governments in tripartite negotiations (5)

Stronly disagree (1)
Disgree (2)
Neither disagree, nor agree (3)

Agree (4)
Strongly agree (5)
Don't know / Not applicable (6)

B8 How would you describe the relations between social partners at this moment?

Very bad (1)
Bad (2)
Neither good nor bad (3)
Good (4)
Very good (5)

B9 How have the relations between social partners changed since the beginning of the Covid pandemic (in 2020)?

Strongly worsened (1)
Worsened (2)
Stayed about the same (3)
Improved (4)
Strongly improved (5)

B10 Have there been any instances or strikes or other forms of industrial action during the negotiations during the pandemic?

Yes (1)
No (2)

Display This Question:
If B10 = Yes
B10_a Was this strike of other form of industrial action directly or indirectly related to the Covid pandemic? Please briefly explain your answer.

Directly (1) ____
Indirectly (2) ____
Not related to the COVID-19 pandemic (4)

B11 Do you expect any future instances or strikes or other forms of industrial action during the negotiations for a new agreement?

Yes (1)
No (2)
I don't know / don't want to say (4)

End of Block: Block B: Questions for NOT renewed CBAs

Start of Block: Block C: Questions for NOT renewed CBAs

C1 The following questions are about the current economic situation in the sector of the CBA.

How difficult is it in this sector to **find employees with the required skills**?

Very easy (1)
Easy (2)
Neither difficult nor easy (3)
Difficult (4)
Very difficult (5)
I don' t know/ don't want to say (6)

C2 How do average **profit margins** in this sector compare to "normal times"?

Much lower than normal (1)
Lower (2)
About normal (3)
Higher (4)
Much higher than normal (5)
I don't know / don't want to say (6)

C3 How do average **prices** in this sector compare to "normal times"?

Much lower than normal (1)
Lower (2)
About normal (3)
Higher (4)
Much greater than normal (5)
I don't know/ don't want to say (6)

C4 How do **investment plans** in your sector/company compare to "normal times"?

Much lower than normal (1)
Lower (2)
About normal (3)
Higher (4)
Much higher than normal (5)
I don't know/ don't want to say (6)
Not applicable (7)

C5 This is the end of this questionnaire. Is there anything else you would like to share regarding the CBA renewal process in general and regarding the Covid pandemic specifically?
(open answer)

C6 Would you like to be informed about the results of this study?
No (1)
Yes, please fill out your email address (2)

End of Block: Block C: Questions for NOT renewed CBAs

Start of Block: Block D: Questions for renewed CBAs

D5 The following questions are looking back at the negotiations for the renewed agreement during the COVID-19 pandemic.

To what extent did the COVID-19 pandemic make it more difficult to reach an agreement?

Much more difficult (1)
More difficult (2)
Neither more difficult, nor easier (3)
Easier (4)
Much more easy (5)

Display This Question:
If D5= Neither more difficult, nor easier
D5_b Can you explain your answer?
(open answer)

D6 How important was the COVID-19 pandemic compared to other factors that affected the negotiation process

Very important (most important reason) (1)
Important, but other reasons are more important (2)
Neither important, nor unimportant (3)
Not so important, it plays only a minor role (4)
Not important at all. (5)

D7 How frequent were negotiations talks during the COVID-19 pandemic?

Weekly (1)
Monthly (2)
Incidental (3)

D8 And if you compare the frequency of negotiation talks to the period before the COVID-19 pandemic, did the frequency of negotiation talks decrease or increase?

Decrease (1)
Stayed the same (2)
Increase (3)

D9 Have negotiations during the COVID-19 pandemic mainly taken place online or offline?

Fully offline (in person negotiations) (1)
Mostly offline, but sometimes online (2)
Both offline and online (about equally) (3)
Mostly online, but sometimes offline (4)
Fully online (5)

D10 To what extent did COVID-19 or quarantine measures affect the availability of negotiators during the negotiations for this agreement? *(For example, individual negotiators who were unable to attend, or changes in negotiation delegates)*

Never (1)
Seldom (2)
Sometimes (3)
Often (4)

D12 To what extent do the following statements apply to the sector or organization of this CBA? During the COVID-19 pandemic...

...production/service delivery was interrupted (1)
...revenue decreased (2)
...employment decreased (3)
...wage payments were interrupted (4)

Does not at all apply (1)
Does not apply (2)
Somewhere in-between (not much change) (3)
Does apply (4)
Does very much apply (5)

D13 To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements regarding support packages by the government in the sector or organization of this CBA

support packages helped to sustain production/service delivery (1)
support packages helped to sustain revenue (5)
support packages helped to sustain employment (2)
support packages helped to sustain wage payments (3)

Stronly disagree (1)
Disgree (2)
Neither disagree, nor agree (3)
Agree (4)
Strongly agree (5)

End of Block: Block D: Questions for renewed CBAs

Start of Block: Block E: Questions for renewed CBAs

E1 The following questions are looking back on the negotiation process regarding the CBA renewal. Please try to answer these questions with respect to the time of negotiations.

In your view, which topics were most important during the negotiations for a new agreement (3 answers maximum)

Social security and pensions (1)
Job security (individual employment contracts) (2)
Work-life balance arrangements (3)
Equality in the workplace (4)
Wages (5)
Training and apprenticeships (6)
Sickness and disability (7)
Health and medical assistance (8)
Working hours, schedules, holidays and leave days (9)
Worker representation and conflict (10)
Remote working, working from home, telework (11)
Another topic, namely (12)

E2 In your view, regarding which topics in the agreement was there **most common interest** among social partners? (3 answers maximum)

Social security and pensions (1)
Job security (individual employment contracts) (2)
Work-life balance arrangements (3)
Equality in the workplace (4)
Wages (5)
Training and apprenticeships (6)
Sickness and disability (7)
Health and medical assistance (8)
Working hours, schedules, holidays and leave days (9)
Worker representation and conflict (10)
Remote working, working from home, telework (11)
${E1/ChoiceTextEntryValue/12} (13)

E3 In your view, regarding which topics in the agreement was there **most disagreement** among social partners? (3 answers maximum)

Social security and pensions (1)
Job security (individual employment contracts) (2)
Work-life balance arrangements (3)
Equality in the workplace (4)
Wages (5)
Training and apprenticeships (6)
Sickness and disability (7)
Health and medical assistance (8)
Working hours, schedules, holidays and leave days (9)
Worker representation and conflict (10)
Remote working, working from home, telework (11)
${E1/ChoiceTextEntryValue/12} (13)

E4 In the renewed CBA, compared to the previous CBA, did **wages**…

Decrease (lower wages) (1)
Stay about the same (2)
Increase (higher wages) (3)
I don't know / don’t want to say (4)

E5 In the renewed CBA, compared to the previous CBA, did **coverage** (in terms of organizations/number of employees)…

Decrease (lower coverage rate) (1)
Stay about the same (2)
Increase (higher coverage rate) (3)
I don't know / don’t want to say (4)

E6 In the renewed CBA, compared to the previous CBA, did the **number of signatories…**

Decrease (fewer signatories) (1)
Stay about the same (2)
Increase (more signatories) (3)
I don't know / don’t want to say (4)

E7 To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements regarding the collective agreement negotiations? The COVID-19 pandemic…...

…made it easier for negotiators to accept each other's terms (1)

…made it easier for negotiators to see common interests (2)

...weakened the bargaining power of trade unions and other employee representatives (3)

…weakened the bargaining power of employers and employer representatives (4)

…strengthened the role of governments in tripartite negotiations (5)

Stronly disagree (1)
Disgree (2)
Neither disagree, nor agree (3)
Agree (4)
Strongly agree (5)
Don't know / Not applicable (6)

E8 How would you describe the relations between social partners at the time of negotiations?

Very bad (1)
Bad (2)
Neither good nor bad (3)
Good (4)
Very good (5)

E9 How have the relations between social partners changed since the beginning of the Covid pandemic (in 2020)?

Strongly worsened (1)
Worsened (2)
Stayed about the same (3)
Improved (4)
Strongly improved (5)

E10 Have there been any instances or strikes or other forms of industrial action during the negotiations during the pandemic?

Yes (1)
No (2)

Display This Question:
If E10 = Yes
E10_a Was this strike of other form of industrial action directly or indirectly related to the Covid pandemic? Please briefly explain your answer.
Directly (1) ____
Indirectly (2) ____
Not related to the COVID-19 pandemic (4)

End of Block: Block E: Questions for renewed CBAs

Start of Block: Block F: Questions for renewed CBAs

F1 The following questions are about the **economic situation** in the sector of the CBA **at the time of negotiations for a new agreement**.

How difficult was it (at that time) in this sector to **find employees with the required skills**?

Very easy (1)
Easy (2)
Neither difficult nor easy (3)
Difficult (4)
Very difficult (5)
I don' t know/ don't want to say (6)

F2 How did (at that time) average **profit margins** in this sector compare to “normal times”?

Much lower than normal (1)
Lower (2)
About normal (3)
Higher (4)
Much higher than normal (5)
I don't know / don't want to say (6)

F3 How did (at that time) average **prices** in this sector compare to “normal times”?

Much lower than normal (1)
Lower (2)
About normal (3)
Higher (4)
Much greater than normal (5)
I don't know/ don't want to say (6)

F4 How did (at that time) **investment plans** in your sector/company compare to “normal times”?

Much lower than normal (1)
Lower (2)
About normal (3)
Higher (4)
Much higher than normal (5)
I don't know/ don't want to say (6)
Not applicable (7)

F5 This is the end of this questionnaire. Is there anything else you would like to share regarding the CBA renewal process in general and regarding the Covid pandemic specifically?
(open answer)

F6 Would you like to be informed about the results of this study?

No (1)
Yes, please fill out your email address (2) ____

End of Block: Block F: Questions for renewed CBAs

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