WIBAR-3

Wage**I**ndicator **S**upport for **BAR**gaining
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December 2014 – November 2016

INTRODUCTION TO THE WIBAR-3 PROJECT

The European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) has asked the Amsterdam Institute for Advanced labour Studies of the University of Amsterdam (UvA-AIAS) to undertake a project called WIBAR-3 (WIBAR stands for <u>W</u>age<u>I</u>ndicator Support for <u>Bar</u>gaining). The project aims to analyze industry-level bargaining structures and practices in relation to employment and competitive structures in five industries: metal and electronics manufacturing; wholesale; retail; information technology (IT), transport & telecom. In this analysis, 23 EU member states are included namely: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, and United Kingdom. The European Commission has supported the project through a grant within the framework of its Industrial Relations and Social Dialogue Program (nr VS/2014/0533). WIBAR-3 is coordinated by the UvA-AIAS, and carried out jointly with two other research institutes, CELSI in Bratislava and Ruskin College in Oxford. It also has three associate partners: the ETUC, the WageIndicator Foundation (WIF) in Amsterdam, and the Hans-Böckler-Stiftung - WSI in Düsseldorf. The project will run from December 2014 to November 2016.

The rationale for the WIBAR-3 project

The ETUC and its affiliates have acknowledged a clear need to improve their knowledge and understanding of the ways in which recent developments in labour markets and competitive economic conditions, (including Foreign Direct Investment [FDI]) interact with collective bargaining processes and outcomes. Many trade union officials, for example, seem to be aware that multi-employer (or sectoral) bargaining may offer advantages for the majority of workers over company-level bargaining, yet the pressures to move toward company-level bargaining are plainly evident in a number of countries within the EU.

Conversely, multi-employer bargaining remains strong in certain EU nations thereby providing useful comparisons both in terms of workplace outcomes and indications of trade union influence. Accordingly, the WIBAR-3 project will evaluate the bargaining preferences and practices of employees and their unions in the industries and countries mentioned with a view to establishing key lessons for the future development of bargaining structures. In this way the project aims to underpin and stimulate debate in the trade union movement throughout Europe on the opportunities to strengthen multi-employer bargaining.

The WIBAR-3 project will build upon the experiences of the earlier AIAS-coordinated projects WIBAR (2007-08) and WIBAR-2 (2008-13), conducted in close cooperation with the ETUC, and WISUTIL (2010-11) and WICARE (2013-14), based on cooperation with the European Federation of Public Service Unions (EPSU). In all these projects, cross-country comparative data gathered by the *WageIndicator* web survey were used to support collective bargaining in the EU coordinated through ETUC and EPSU. The first WIBAR project resulted in lasting cooperation between AIAS and ETUC/ETUI (European Trade Union Institute) resulting, for instance, in the monthly *AIAS-ETUI Collective Bargaining Newsletter* (2008-current).

Project feedback

In July and September 2016, draft outcomes of the research will be presented in three industry-based seminars. These seminars, offering excellent opportunities for debate among trade unionists, will be organized respectively in Oxford (transport & telecom and IT) by Ruskin College; Bratislava (metal and electronics manufacturing), by CELSI; and Amsterdam (wholesale and retail), by AIAS. The outcomes of both the research and the seminar debates will be consolidated into one overarching report supported by five short industry reports, 1page-1country-1industry reports (on trade union request), and an ETUI policy brief.

Methodology

 The WIBAR-3 project will gather evidence via the following activities:
-     a review of the literature on multi-employer or sectoral bargaining, to evaluate the implications for labour and also for employers particularly in labour-intensive industries;
-     expanding the earlier WIBAR-2 literature review on the relationship between the strategies of multinational enterprises and the feasibility of multi-employer bargaining, focusing on differences across industries and across home and host countries;
-     producing a comprehensive overview of recent developments in industrial relations and collective bargaining regimes at European level and in the 23 countries studied, including overviews of trade union density, employer organisation density and collective bargaining coverage per industry / country, based on existing sources and an expert survey carried out specifically for the project;

- analysing recent developments in employment in the five industries and 23 countries, including employment in multinational affiliates, based on Eurostat data and the AIAS Multinationals Database;
- analyzing competitive and employment structures at industry level, including divisions by firm size and by ownership, based on an expert overview and the AIAS Multinationals Database;
- mapping prevailing collective bargaining structures and practices by industry / country, focusing on numbers, coverage and contents of collective agreements per industry / country; also, assessing benefits and constraints regarding multi-employer bargaining as perceived by trade union officials;
- relating collective bargaining coverage to employees' bargaining preferences, using recent data from the continuous WageIndicator web survey on work and wages.

The final conclusions of the project will be based on the merged data from these various activities, thereby enabling the conditions for and feasibility of multi-employer bargaining for the 5 industries and the 23 countries covered by the project to be analysed and assessed in detail.

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