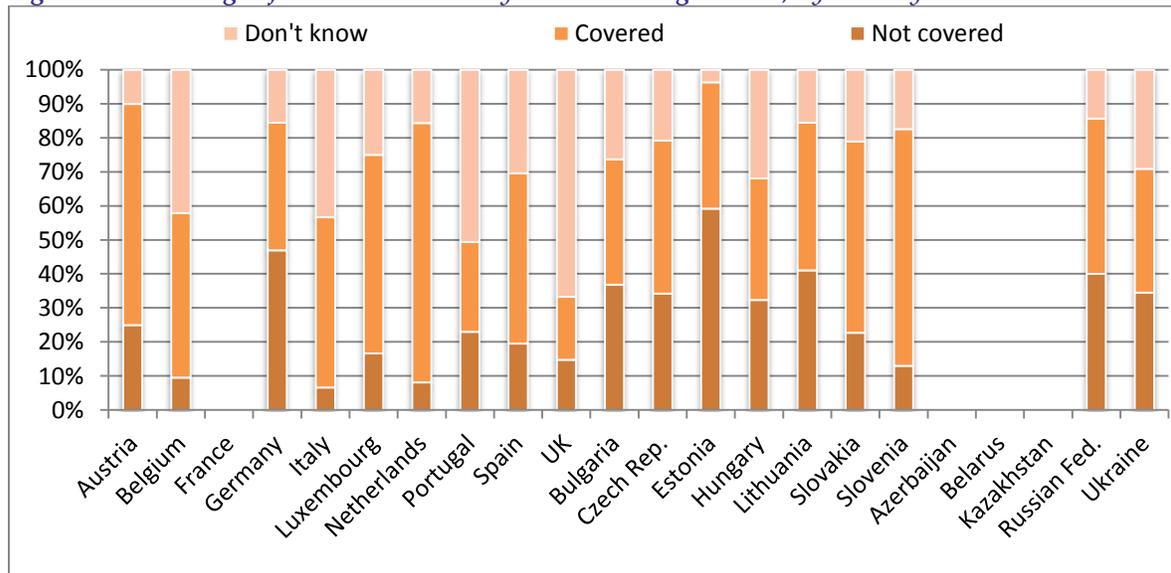


Workers' representation, bargaining coverage, union density and shop-floor representation

Report 5 of the [WICARE](#) project, February 2015

What are the industrial relations in workplaces in the social services? Based on

Figure 1 Percentage of workers covered by a collective agreement, by country



Source: WageIndicator data 01-Jan-2013 - 30-Sep-2014 (AZE, BEL, BLR, KAZ, RUS, UKR: 31-Jan-2015). Selection workers in social services in 22 countries. N = 6,438.

BOX: This report is part of the [WICARE](#) project, funded through the EU Industrial Relations and Social Dialogue Program of the European Commission (nr VS/2013/0404, DEC 2013 – NOV 2014). WICARE is coordinated by the University of Amsterdam/AIAS. Its main partner is the European Federation of Public Services Unions ([EPSU](#), Richard Pond and Mathias Maucher) in Brussels, the largest federation of the [ETUC](#) comprising of 8 million public service workers from over 250 trade unions; EPSU organises workers in the utilities, health and social services and local and national administration, in all European countries including in the EU's Eastern Neighbourhood. Other partners are the research institute [CELSI](#) in Bratislava (Brian Fabo and colleagues), and the [WageIndicator](#) Foundation (Paulien Osse). Authors: Kea Tijdens and Maarten van Klaveren, University of Amsterdam / Amsterdam Institute for Advanced labour Studies ([AIAS](#)). Sole responsibility for the project lies with the authors. More information about the [project](#).

Core of the WICARE project are the analyses of the data from the continuous [WageIndicator](#) web-survey on work and wages. Visitors of the national WageIndicator websites are invited to complete the survey. Survey data is used from workers in the residential care activities and the social work activities without accommodation, collected between 1/1/2013 and 30/9/2014 from the web survey and a printed version of the survey, which was distributed by the national affiliates of EPSU. For Azerbaijan, Belarus, Belgium, Kazakhstan, Russian Federation, and Ukraine data-collection was prolonged until 31/01/2015. In total 9,143 workers started the questionnaire, of which 4,223 gave valid details about their wages. Per country the number of observations ranges from 20 in Bulgaria to 2,911 in the Netherlands. On 18/11/2014 the draft project results are presented at a conference in Amsterdam. The current report is dated 28/02/2015.

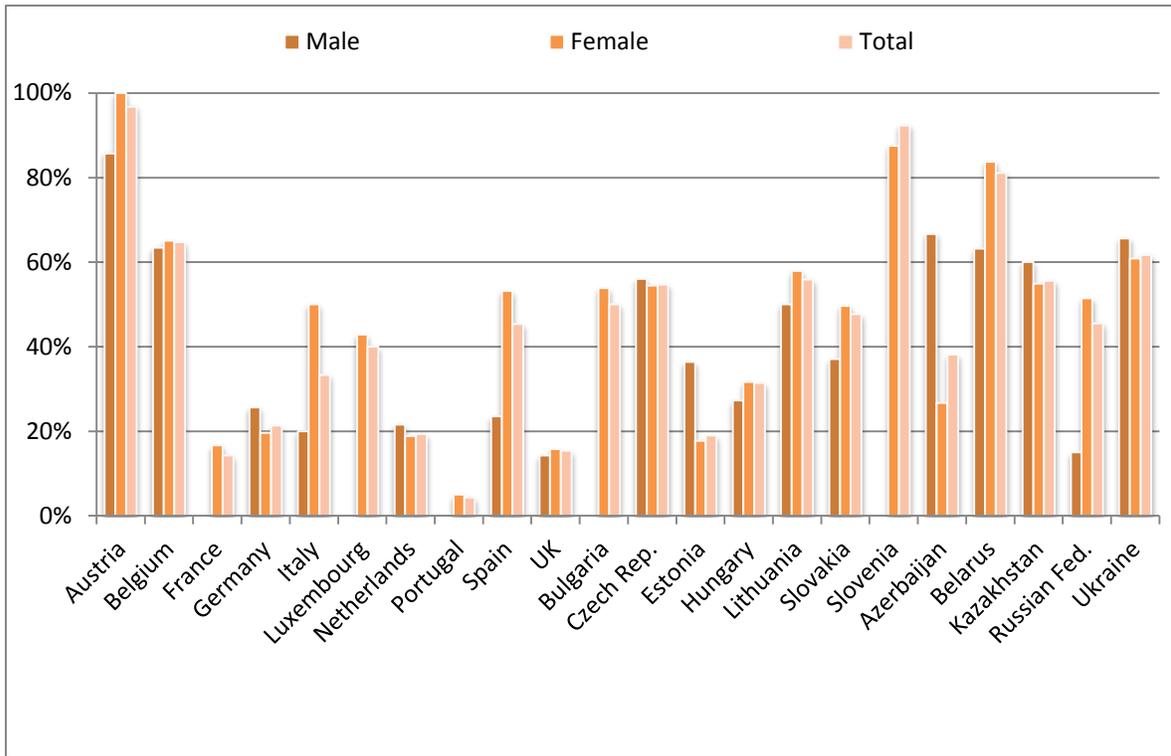
the 2013-2014 data of the WageIndicator survey on work and wages, WICARE aims to explore this topic. The survey has questions about collective bargaining coverage. Figure 1 shows that coverage is high in the Netherlands, and Slovenia. Here seven to eight of ten workers are covered by a collective agreement. In contrast, Portugal, Bulgaria, Hungary, and the UK reveal the lowest coverage: here at most three in ten workers are covered. In the remaining countries, four to seven in every ten workers are covered by an agreement. In Estonia six in ten workers reports not to be covered and in Germany this holds for five in ten workers.

We find large shares of workers reporting that they don't know whether they are covered by collective agreement. In Belgium, Italy, Portugal, and the UK this is even around five in ten workers. Luckily, this is with less than one in ten much lower in Austria, and Estonia. In the remaining countries this share "don't know" is between one to three in every ten workers.

In a number of countries, the survey was actively promoted by the trade unions, in other countries the data-collection relied fully on the volunteers who completed the survey, not necessarily being trade union members. Figure 2 shows that union membership rates are very high, that is, over eight in ten workers, in Austria, Slovenia and Belarus, and rather high in Belgium with six to eight in ten workers. We assume that in these countries trade unions have been actively involved in distributing and promoting the survey. In other countries membership rates are lower, such as in France, Netherlands, Portugal, and the UK. Here, trade unions were hardly involved in the survey. Hence, Figure 2 shows in part real union membership rates in the social services, but it reflects also how active the trade unions were in disseminating the survey.

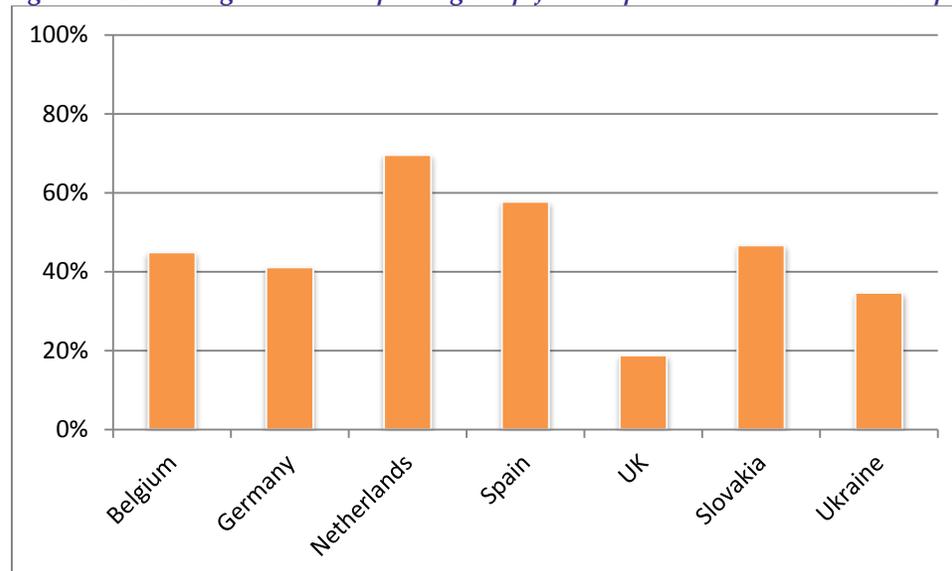
The figure shows that overall gender differences are not large when it comes to trade union membership, although countries differ in this respect. A few remarkable findings: in Belgium and the Russian Federation substantially more women compared to men are a trade union member. In Estonia, the reverse holds. Here more men than women are a member of a trade union.

Figure 2 Percentage trade union members of workers in the social services by gender, by country



Source: WageIndicator data 01-Jan-2013 - 30-Sep-2014 (AZE, BEL BLR, KAZ, RUS, UKR: 31-Jan-2015). Selection workers in social services in 22 countries. N = 9,125.

Figure 3 Percentage workers reporting shop-floor representation in their workplace, by country



Source: WageIndicator data 01-Jan-2013 - 30-Sep-2014 (AZE, BEL BLR, KAZ, RUS, UKR: 31-Jan-2015). Selection workers in social services in 22 countries. N = 2,302.

Finally, we discuss the incidence of workers' shop-floor representation. Unfortunately, this survey question was asked in seven countries only (see Figure 3). The Netherlands and Spain rank highest here with shop-floor representation reported by respectively seven and nearly six in every ten workers, whereas shop-floor representation is hardly reported in the UK, namely, by less than two in ten workers in this country. Belgium, Germany, Slovakia and Ukraine take a position in between, with an incidence between four and five in every ten respondents.

In conclusion, we find that in the majority of countries four to seven in every ten workers in social services are covered by a collective bargaining agreement. In the Netherlands, and Slovenia this share is even slightly higher. Overall, large shares of workers report not to know whether they are covered by collective agreement; this is notably the case in Belgium, Italy, Portugal, and the UK.

From the survey, union membership rates show up as very high in Austria, Slovenia and Belarus, and rather high in Belgium, suggesting that in these countries trade unions have been actively involved in disseminating the survey. Shop-floor representation is mostly reported in the Netherlands and Spain.
