Collective Bargaining and renewals in Turkey during the Covid-19 Pandemic: Observations based on the Collective Agreements Database

Country Report

June 2023

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.

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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.

Funding

Bibliographical information

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Collective Bargaining and Industrial Relations during the Pandemic: Limited Evidence from the Collective Agreements Database

For this report, the WageIndicator Collective Agreements Database has been utilized as a primary resource for analysing Collective Bargaining Agreements (CBAs).[1] The database, maintained by the WageIndicator Foundation (WIF), offers a comprehensive collection of annotated CBAs from around the globe. As of April 2023, it contains 2300+ CBAs in 27 different languages, originating from 67 countries. The database provides a unique opportunity to closely examine and compare agreements across countries, industries, and bargaining levels.

The collection process for the CBAs involves downloading from national registries, conducting smart Google searches, and directly requesting full-text agreements from bargaining social partners. The annotation process of CBAs in the database is based on a comprehensive coding scheme with more than 800 variables related to fourteen macro topics. This scheme is constantly evolving and is updated according to the most relevant topics emerging from public debates worldwide. Each CBA is annotated by professionals, native speakers of the language used in the documents under analysis, with knowledge and understanding of industrial relations and collective bargaining. For more detailed information on the coding scheme and variables used in the annotation process, the WageIndicator Collective Agreements Database Codebook (Ceccon and Medas, 2022) can be consulted as a reference.

This report focuses on the information available in the CBA Database on collective agreements in Turkey. More precisely, to investigate any possible change in the process of renewal of collective agreements in Turkey during the pandemic, we exploit the information collected through the annotation of the content of 12 Turkish collective agreements signed before and renewed after the explosion of the Covid-19 pandemic.[2]

We investigate whether: i) the number of signatories has changed, ii) the type of signatories has changed; iii) direct references are made with respect to the pandemic for what concerns the process of agreement renewal.

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[1] See: https://wageindicator.org/about/researchlab/cba-database
[2] In the case of Austria, France, Italy, The Netherlands, and Spain, richer information was collected through the diffusion of an online survey – the Barcovid Negotiator Survey - on the process of renewal (please see Jansen at al.,2023 for further details).

First, let us briefly describe the Turkish database on CBAs. The twelve Turkish agreements show a certain heterogeneity in terms of sector of activity (**Table 2**), but they mainly belong to the public sector (**Table 2**).[3]

Table 1 Turkish CBAs by sector

Sector of the CBA	Number of CBAs
Manufacturing	1
Waste treatment, sanitation, supply of water	5
Transport, logistics, communication	2
Financial services, banking, insurance	1
Education, research	1
Trade, fuelling and repair of motor vehicles	1
Entertainment, culture, sports	1

Table 2 Turkish CBAs by type of organization

Type of organization	Number of CBAs
Private	1
Public	9
Semi-public	2

All agreements exhibit as signatories trade unions and single employers or single employers' organization (**Table 3**). No professional associations appear as signatory.

Table 3 CBAs Signatories and process of renewal (Pre/Post-Covid comparison)

Information on signatories	Pre-Covid	Post-Covid
Single employer/company	12	12
Trade unions	12	12
Professional associations as signatories	0	0

For what concerns the presence of specific clauses related to the pandemic, as shown in **Figure 1**, only 1 agreement out of 12 has a specific clause related to the Covid-19 pandemic, concerning the possibility for workers to perform remote working only in case children are affected by Covid.

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[3] The analyses presented in this report depend on data made available once the process of CBAs annotation was completed by the coders.

Figure 1 Turkish CBAs by Covid-19 related clauses (number)
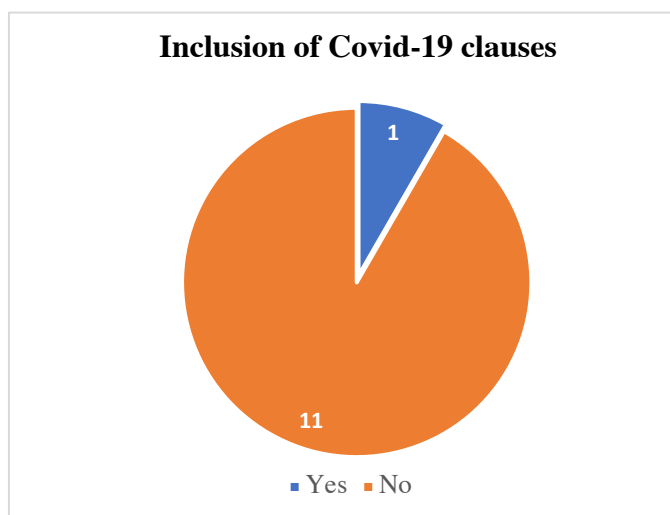
According to the limited data available on Turkish CBAs, no significant change is observed on the number and type of signatories. What is more, almost all agreements do not make any direct reference to the pandemic. Further information on collective bargaining and industrial relations in Turkey can be found in Guler (2023).

References

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