

Industrial relations and social dialogue

Collective bargaining beyond pay: An analysis of collective agreements in selected low-paid sectors



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Executive summary

Introduction

Collective agreements are usually associated with the setting of pay rates. However, collective bargaining addresses issues far beyond pay. This report analyses and compares the content of 94 collective agreements across three low-wage sectors (manufacture of food, leather, textiles and clothes; residential and social care; retail) in 11 EU Member States and Norway. The research builds on Eurofound's database of collective agreements related to low-paid workers. Agreements have been extracted from the database with the aim of identifying which topics 'beyond pay' are addressed and to compare how they have developed over time (from 2015 to 2022). The report also investigates the role of collective bargaining as a regulatory mechanism – beyond legislation – that shapes and improves the job quality of workers.

Policy context

European policy frameworks consistently recognise social dialogue and collective bargaining as key elements of the European social model. The European Pillar of Social Rights highlights the role of the social partners and encourages them to negotiate and conclude collective agreements. In addition, the directive on adequate minimum wages promotes collective bargaining in wage-setting. The 2023 proposal for a Council recommendation on strengthening social dialogue across the EU highlights that collective bargaining is relevant for preventing labour conflicts, improving wages and working conditions, and reducing wage inequality. Collective bargaining can also help employees and businesses to adapt to the changing world of work: in 2025, the European Commission and the European cross-industry social partners signed a new pact for European social dialogue. One of the key measures agreed as part of the pact was the quality jobs roadmap.

Key findings

- Wages, allowances and bonuses, and training are predominantly regulated through collective bargaining, or a combination of legislation and collective bargaining, across all Member States analysed and Norway. Occupational safety and health, social protection and terms of employment are primarily regulated through labour legislation.
- With regard to the shares of main topics among the collective agreements examined, clauses on wages are found in all (94) of the agreements; clauses on allowances and bonuses and clauses on leave are found in 97.9 % (92) of the agreements; clauses on working time are found in 95.7 % (90) of the agreements; and clauses on terms of collective agreements and labour relations are found in 94.7 % (89) and 93.6 % (88) of the agreements, respectively.
- Despite the topic of wages being found in all agreements, it is not the most frequently mentioned topic in agreements. When the number of references per main topic are counted, across the 94 collective agreements examined, clauses on allowances and bonuses were the most frequent, followed by clauses regulating working time. Labour relations was the third most frequent category.
- All types of bonuses were found in collective agreements. In addition, a large category of country-, sector- or agreement-specific allowances indicates that collective bargaining can further improve the remuneration of workers in low-paid sectors.
- Training and skills development is dealt with in a more dynamic way than other topics. Clauses related to training are changing more than those related to other topics and are the most inclusive of new themes, with the largest share of new clauses (22 %). However, specific references to upskilling and reskilling are rare.
- The smallest number of clauses coded as part of the exercise refer to work organisation and work transitions (e.g. technological, digital or just/green transitions). However, this small number of references is spread across almost 63 % of the agreements. There is almost no evidence of specific green and just transition clauses.
- Several new emerging themes are apparent: while collective agreements continue to address flexibility of working time and work organisation, they also compensate for irregularity of work and atypical working hours, referencing the well-being of employees. New clauses address work-life balance across all three low-paid sectors and give special protection to both younger and older workers.
- There are large differences between countries. Countries with well-developed industrial relations systems tend to have longer, more content-rich collective agreements than countries with less-developed industrial relations systems.

- At sector level, some countries (Croatia, Czechia, Slovakia) have more generalised collective agreements, while others (Austria, Finland, France, Norway, Portugal, Spain) have well-developed and detailed agreements.
- Collective agreements are relatively stable over time, with evidence of incremental change. Comparing the collective agreements at two points in time (2015 and 2022), it can be seen that 63 % of all clauses analysed did not change their meaning or form. Another 18 % did change and 12 % were new, compared with the earlier versions of the collective agreements. About 7 % of clauses were not relevant for comparison. However, there are significant country variations in how collective agreements change over time.
- When clauses found in collective agreements are matched to the seven dimensions of job quality identified in Eurofound's conceptual framework of job quality, the dimension 'work intensity' is the least prevalent in agreements. The dimension 'earnings', which covers wages and allowances and bonuses, is the job quality dimension most addressed.
- As a voluntary mechanism, collective bargaining can regulate any topic that the social partners agree to address. Many collective agreements are full of rich country- or sector-specific details. Others closely follow legal regulations and some focus on wages only. The social partners should be encouraged to use the potential of collective bargaining and address new risks and priorities for the labour market, such as the digital transition, climate change adaptation or the psychosocial health of workers.
- The social partners can promote collective bargaining by increasing the transparency of negotiated outcomes in their sectors or companies. The texts of collective agreements should be accessible to all workers (including digitally) and provided in a full, consolidated version. The language used in collective agreements could be less legal, more reader-friendly and more inclusive.
- Any meaningful comparison of collective agreements across multiple Member States requires the establishment of an EU-wide database of collective agreements. AI can be used to support automated categorisation of collective agreements.
- Measures to improve job quality should consider collective bargaining an important mechanism for negotiating quality jobs. The social partners can use job quality frameworks as a guiding tool and include dimensions of job quality in their bargaining agenda, focusing on those dimensions that are currently rarely covered in collective agreements, such as work intensity or the social environment.

Policy pointers

- Collective bargaining plays an important role in sectors with a large share of low-paid workers. Policymakers should focus on strengthening the capacities of the social partners in these sectors.

Introduction

The role of collective bargaining varies in different EU Member States in how it co-regulates employment relations alongside labour legislation. In general, collective agreements can cover any issue (within legal limits) that the social partners agree to address, and they can be tailored to specific sector or company needs. The flexibility and adaptability of collective bargaining to different circumstances in the labour market is often regarded as one of its advantages (Eurofound, 2022; ILO, 2022). In addition, as a joint outcome based on negotiated consensus, there is an underlying assumption that collective agreements enjoy a high degree of acceptance by the workers covered (Eurofound, 2022).

At European level, there is a consensus among policymakers that social dialogue and collective bargaining form a core pillar of fair labour relations. The Commission’s 2023 communication entitled ‘Strengthening social dialogue in the European Union’ (COM(2023) 40 final) sets out a number of measures to strengthen EU social dialogue and is accompanied by a proposal for a Council recommendation on how to strengthen national social dialogue and collective bargaining. The recommendation stresses that collective bargaining, by regulating issues related to working conditions and terms of employment (wages, hours of work, annual bonuses, annual leave, parental leave, training, and occupational safety and health (OSH)), is

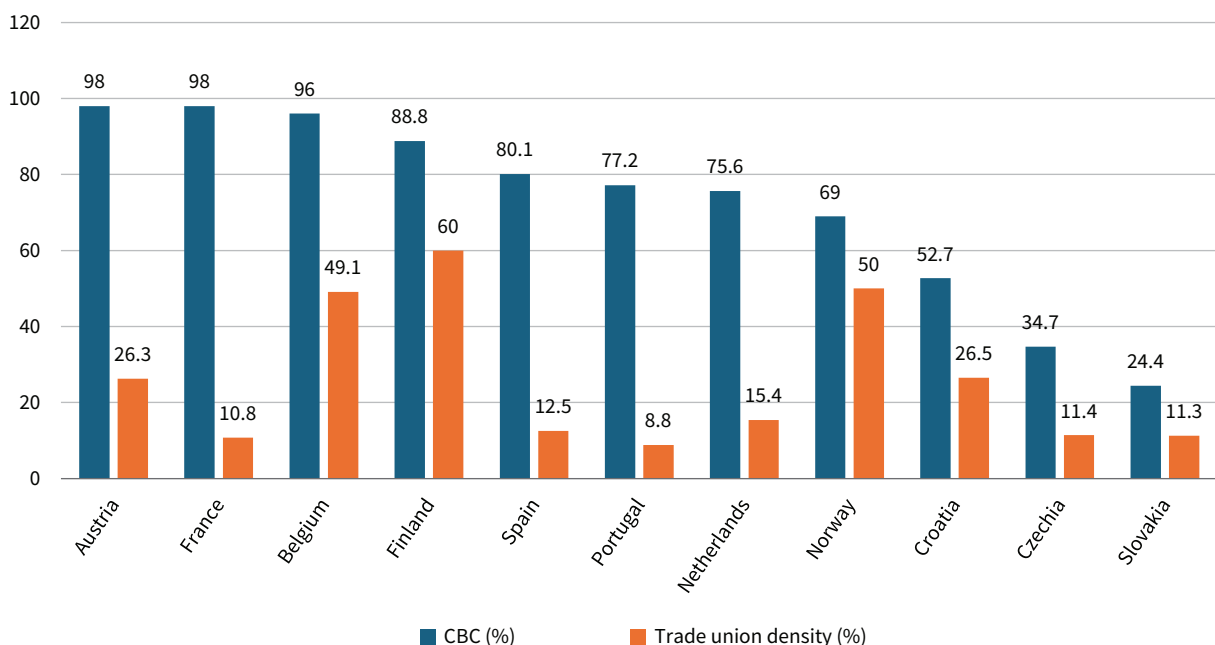
relevant for ‘preventing labour conflicts, improving wages and working conditions and reducing wage inequality’. The communication also points out that:

collective bargaining is a crucial tool to help workers and companies to adapt to the changing world of work and shape the design and definition of new labour protection elements, such as the right to disconnect from work, or improving existing ones, such as protection against violence and harassment at work, training of older workers, improving work-life balance and addressing challenges of mental health. It also plays a key role in addressing the impacts of unexpected crises, such as the COVID-19 pandemic.

(European Commission, 2023, recital 14)

The 2022 directive on adequate minimum wages (Directive (EU) 2022/2041) promotes collective bargaining in wage-setting. Member States with collective bargaining coverage below 80 % are required to establish a legal or agreed framework to support bargaining, develop a public action plan with clear targets and timelines to raise coverage, and regularly review and update this plan in consultation with the social partners. The goal is to progressively increase collective bargaining as a core tool for fair wage-setting across the EU. At present, only a few Member States have achieved the goal of collective bargaining coverage above 80 %. This is accompanied by low trade union density rates across Member States (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Collective bargaining coverage rates and trade union density rates in selected Member States and Norway



Notes: Adjusted bargaining (or union) coverage rate and trade union density rate. Selected Member States and Norway are included in this project sample. CBC, collective bargaining coverage.
Source: OECD et al., 2023.

Further to initiatives to strengthen social dialogue and collective bargaining, in 2025, the Commission and the European cross-industry social partners signed a new pact for European social dialogue with the aim of strengthening social dialogue at EU level. Among the key measures set to be agreed in 2025 is the quality jobs roadmap, which aims to provide ‘decent working conditions, high standards for health and safety, access to training and ensuring fair job transitions for workers and self-employed, and collective bargaining, with a view to attracting talent and contributing to the competitiveness of European industries’ (European Parliament, 2025).

Collective bargaining: Central in addressing issues faced by low-wage and low-skilled workers

Collective bargaining is an essential tool in defining working conditions for employees within a firm, which often translates to defining sector norms as well (Eurofound, 2021; Horecký et al., 2021). Compared with legislation, it also boasts more flexibility in its application to particular firms and sectors (Jaspers et al., 2024). In many countries, some or all collective agreements apply to workers in all companies in a sector due to the use of extension mechanisms, which act as a booster for collective bargaining coverage (De Spiegelaere, 2024). The directive on adequate minimum wages specifically mentions that the Member States with high collective bargaining coverage tend to have a small share of low-wage workers and high minimum wages.

Women, young workers, individuals with low levels of education and immigrants are overrepresented among low-wage workers (Sorensen et al., 2019). This is also acknowledged in the directive on adequate minimum wages, which states that ‘women, younger workers, migrant workers, single parents, low-skilled workers, persons with disabilities, and in particular persons who suffer from multiple forms of discrimination, still have a higher probability of being minimum wage or low-wage earners than other groups’ (recital 10). Low-wage and low-skilled workers in particular can benefit from the increased labour protection offered by collective agreements, which not only increase workers’ incomes, but also reduce inequality (Hayter et al., 2011). Since there is no single unifying way to apply collective bargaining at European level, countries are left to tackle issues pertaining to collective agreements based on national rules and legislation (Jaspers et al., 2024).

Topics beyond pay

In 2020, at the request of the European Parliament, the European Commission asked Eurofound to carry out a pilot project on minimum wages, which would serve to inform the monitoring of the European Commission’s initiative on adequate minimum wages. Within Module 2 of this pilot project, Eurofound built a database on minimum wage rates in collective agreements applicable to low-paid jobs. The database offers comparative data on pay rates in 692 collective agreements in the EU-27, covering a time series of observations from 2015 to 2022 (Eurofound, 2024).

However, collective bargaining extends beyond wage bargaining. This is why, in its annual work programme, Eurofound committed to developing a ‘spin-off’ project to look beyond wage-setting at other topics featured in the collective agreements. The database serves as a unique source of comparative data in this respect. Most importantly, it covers an entire time series for each collective agreement, from 2015 to 2022, enabling comparisons between two (or more) versions of the same collective agreement and a view of its development over time. Based on a sample of collective agreements, this report provides evidence on the topics covered in these agreements that go ‘beyond pay’ and compares how they have changed over time. This is a unique contribution to the research on topics in collective agreements, which usually analyses agreements at one point in time⁽¹⁾. The outcomes of this project further showcase the role of collective bargaining for low-wage workers and feed into the current debate on how to secure quality jobs for all workers in Europe.

The report starts with Chapter 1, which details the main research questions and the methodology for coding the collective agreements, and provides a description of the various stages of the project. Chapter 2 summarises the interplay of collective bargaining and legal regulations. Chapter 3 presents the results of the coding process and focuses on the descriptive overview of the main topics in collective agreements and their changes over time. Chapter 4 looks at the content of agreements from an analytical perspective and presents the main issues that can help low-paid workers to increase their pay and job quality. Chapter 5 links these findings to Eurofound’s seven dimensions of job quality. Chapter 6 highlights the added value of comparative information on the content of collective agreements. Chapter 7 summarises the main findings.

⁽¹⁾ For example, Besamusca et al. (2015), ILO (2022), Tijdens et al. (2022) and Medas et al. (2025).

1 Overview of the project

This chapter briefly presents an overview of the project and the main methodological considerations. A detailed methodological note is available as a separate working paper (Eurofound, 2025).

Research questions

The main objective (and main research question) is to analyse what other aspects of working conditions beyond pay are regulated in collective agreements across Europe. There are several ‘subquestions’ focusing on different dimensions (Table 1). The first dimension looks at the interplay of collective agreements and legislation in the main topics of interest identified and aims to answer how clauses in collective agreements relate to and compare with the legislation in the selected area. The second dimension analyses

the job quality of workers in low-paid sectors by investigating whether collective agreements in these sectors include clauses that improve earnings (through allowances and bonuses), offer additional non-monetary benefits, or enable upward transition. The third dimension examines whether there are country- or sector-level differences in how collective agreements regulate working conditions. It also investigates how collective agreements contribute to preparing sectors and workplaces for key economic, socioeconomic and environmental transitions. Finally, the project investigates how clauses in collective agreements change over time and which new or different topics appear in 2022 (the reference year) compared with the 2015 (or earliest available) version of the agreement in the database^(?).

Table 1: Summary of the research questions

	Main research question
	What other aspects of working conditions – beyond pay – are regulated in collective agreements across Europe?
Dimension	Subquestion
Interplay of collective agreements and legislation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How do the clauses in collective agreements relate to and compare with the legislation in the same area?
Job quality of workers in low-paid sectors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do collective agreements in low-wage sectors include clauses that improve the earnings of low-wage earners (e.g. in terms of additional bonuses and allowances), offer additional non-monetary benefits, or enable upward transition (e.g. upskilling and reskilling)?
Differences among and within countries and sectors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do we see any differences among selected countries and sectors in how collective agreements regulate working conditions beyond pay? How do elements beyond pay included in collective agreements contribute to preparing sectors and workplaces for key economic, socioeconomic and environmental transitions?
Change over time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How do the clauses in collective agreements change over time? Are different topics emerging in 2022 compared with the 2015 (or earliest available) version of the agreement?

^(?) 2015 is the earliest comparison (reference) year; however, there are some exceptions (see Table A1 in Annex 1).

Conceptual framework

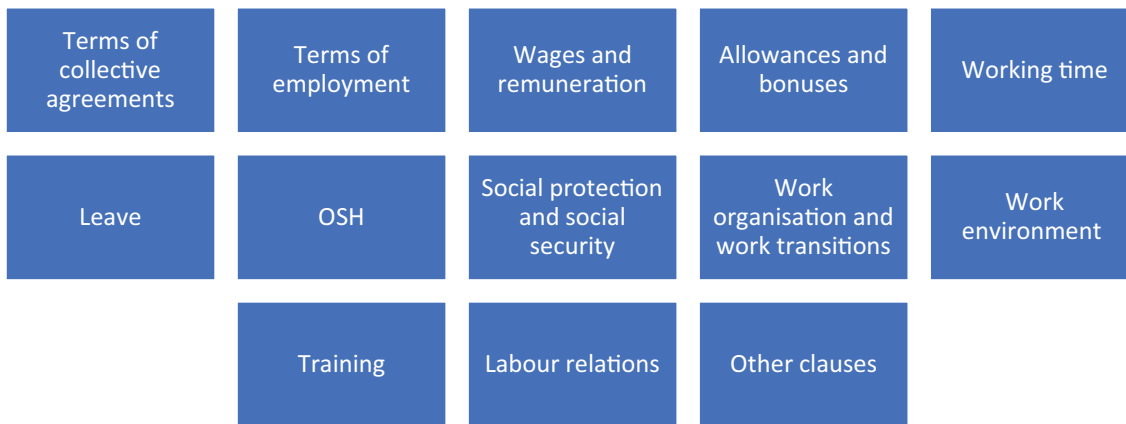
The coding protocol for this project was developed based on standard topics and themes identified across existing databases of collective agreements⁽³⁾ and research on collective bargaining (e.g. Besamusca et al., 2015; Eurofound, 2015; ILO, 2022; Tijdens et al., 2022). The project focused on 13 main topics⁽⁴⁾: terms of collective agreements, terms of employment, wages and remuneration, allowances and bonuses, working time, leave, OSH, social protection and social security, work organisation and work transitions⁽⁵⁾, work environment, training, labour relations and ‘other’ (Figure 2).

These main topics were further expanded to cover all issues that can be found in collective agreements and

resulted in 120 coding categories. Eurofound’s seven dimensions of job quality – (1) the physical environment, (2) work intensity, (3) working time quality, (4) the social environment, (5) skills and discretion, (6) prospects and (7) earnings – were considered during the development of the coding protocol. The detailed methodology and the full codebook can be found in the separate methodological note (Eurofound, 2025).

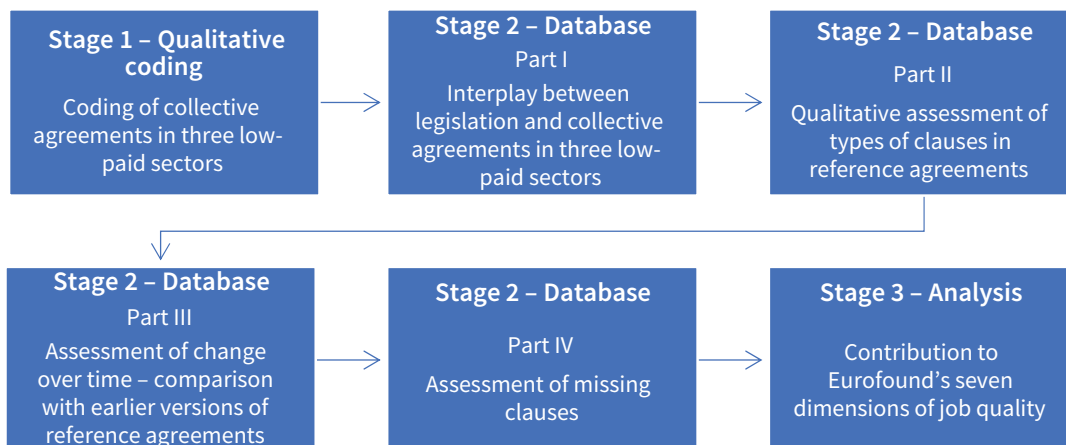
Figure 3 summarises the stages of the project. The project started with a content analysis of 94 agreements, progressed to the assessment of the clauses identified and concluded with the analysis of the content of the clauses in the context of the job quality framework.

Figure 2: Main topics analysed in collective agreements (level 1 codes)



Source: Adjusted version of the main coding themes identified in ILO (2022).

Figure 3: Stages of the project



Source: Author.

⁽³⁾ For example, the WageIndicator database of collective agreements or the database of collective agreements in the live performance sector by Pearle* Live Performance Europe and the European Arts and Entertainment Alliance. Several national registries of collective agreements (e.g. in Belgium or Estonia) also catalogue the agreements by the main topic. For more details, see Eurofound (2025).

⁽⁴⁾ As identified in ILO (2022).

⁽⁵⁾ This group includes clauses on work reorganisation/restructuring; clauses on productivity and performance; clauses on teleworking/remote work/hybrid work; clauses on surveillance and AI; a clause on technological transitions; clauses on the digital transition; and clauses on the just/green transition.

Sample selection: Low-paid sectors of interest, countries and collective agreements

This project builds on data on collective agreements collected in a new [Minimum Wage Database](#). As at August 2023, the database contained 692 fully coded agreements. For many, but not all, a complete time series of observations is available from 2015 to 2022. The agreements relate to 24 low-paid NACE (general industrial classification of economic activities within the EU) two-digit sectors and stem from all bargaining levels, with the national sector level being the most frequent one (Eurofound, 2024).

This project analysed collective agreements from a subsample of low-paid sectors. Three (grouped) low-paid sectors that cover a large number of workers

from public and private companies were selected: residential and social care, manufacture of food, leather, textiles and clothes (FLTC), and retail (Table 2). For each of the three sectors, the full set of all coded agreements, regardless of their bargaining level, was considered.

As a next step, only those agreements that were available at two points in time (i.e. in 2015 (or the closest year available) and 2022 (or the closest year available)) were selected. This gave rise to some restrictions in terms of the country coverage. The countries were selected to represent different traditions of industrial relations systems (Table 3). Their final number was further limited to 11 Member States and Norway due to budgetary and time constraints.

Table 2: Low-paid sectors of interest selected from the pilot project database

NACE one-digit code	Group name for the database	NACE two-digit code	NACE two-digit sector	Estimated size of the low-paid segment (number of employees in the EU-27 (thousands))	Share (%) of low-paid workers ^(a)	Share (%) of women employees in the sector	Share (%) of low-paid women among all women employees in the sector (with information on income) ^(a)
C – Manufacturing	Manufacture of FLTC	10	Manufacture of food products	1 388.1	35	43	49
		13	Manufacture of textiles	213.8	36	51	48
		14	Manufacture of wearing apparel	511.4	52	81	57
		15	Manufacture of leather and related products	190.0	43	59	50
G – Wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles	Retail	47	Retail trade, except of motor vehicles and motorcycles	8 312.1	52	63	59
Q – Human health and social work activities	Residential and social care	87	Residential care activities	1 651.7	41	82	43
		88	Social work activities without accommodation	2 515.6	52	82	54

^(a) The share of low-paid workers was derived based on the number of employees belonging to the first three earnings deciles in relation to all employees for which earnings decile data were available. In this regard, for a varying share of employees across sectors, no information on earnings deciles was available.

Source: Eurofound (2024).

Table 3: Industrial democracy clusters in the EU-27 (2008–2021)

Cluster	Characteristic	Countries
1	Industrial-democracy-based governance	Austria , Denmark, Finland , Germany, Netherlands , Sweden
2	State-centred governance	Belgium , France , Greece (2008–2012), Italy , Portugal , Romania (2008–2012), Spain
3	Market-oriented governance	Bulgaria, Cyprus, Estonia, Greece (2013–2021), Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Romania (2013–2021)
4	Company-centred governance	Croatia , Czechia , Hungary, Luxembourg, Slovakia , Slovenia

Note: The Member States covered by this project are presented in bold.

Source: Eurofound (2023a).

Overall, the selected sample represents 94 collective agreements: 42 from the manufacture of FLTC, 25 from residential and social care and 27 from retail (Table 4).

Full details on the sample, including bargaining levels and coverage of workers, can be found in Table A1 in Annex 1.

Table 4: Number of coded collective agreements per sector, compared with the overall available number of collective agreements in the Minimum Wage Database

Country	Manufacture of FLTC		Residential and social care		Retail		Total		Share of CAs coded in the CBBP Database
	Number of all available CAs	CBBP sample	Number of all CAs	CBBP sample	Number of all available CAs	CBBP sample	Number of all available CAs	CBBP sample	
Austria	5	5	2	2	2	2	9	9	100 %
Belgium	7	3	3	1	4	2	14	6	43 %
Croatia	3	2	1	0	3	1	7	3	43 %
Czechia	1	1	0	0	1	1	2	2	100 %
Finland	5	4	2	2	2	2	9	8	89 %
France	5	4	3	3	3	3	11	10	91 %
Italy	9	3	3	2	5	2	17	7	41 %
Netherlands	5	4	5	4	6	4	16	12	75 %
Portugal	6	6	2	2	2	2	10	10	100 %
Slovakia	3	2	1	1	3	2	7	5	71 %
Spain	7	4	6	4	10	4	23	12	52 %
Total	56	38	28	21	41	25	125	84	67 %
Norway	n/a	4	n/a	4	n/a	2	n/a	10	n/a
Grand total in the CBBP Database		42		25		27		94	

Notes: The maximum number of agreements selected per country was set at 12 due to sampling and budgetary reasons. Hence, for the Netherlands and Spain, the overall number of coded collective agreements was reduced from the 16 and 23 available, respectively, to 12. For Italy, the sample was kept at 7 agreements. For Belgium, collective agreements in the database did not cover topics beyond wages and remuneration. These are regulated by joint committees, the agreements of which were newly added to the database. Norway was not included in the Minimum Wage Database but is included in the CBBP Database. CBBP, Collective Bargaining beyond pay; CA, collective agreement; n/a, not applicable.

Source: Author.

Thematic analysis of the content of collective agreements

The content of collective agreements was analysed (mainly) by the Network of Eurofound Correspondents using the qualitative coding software Taguette. The project analysed 13 main topics and their subthemes, resulting in a total of 120 coding categories. The following four levels of coding were applied:

- Level 1: main topics
- Level 2: subcategories of the main topics
- Level 3: detailed subcategories of level 2 codes
- Level 4 (in some instances): subcategories of level 3 codes

Box 1 shows an example of subcategories for the main topic ‘training’.

Data input and assessment of coded clauses in the project’s database

Once the coding process was completed using the qualitative software, clauses were transferred to Eurofound’s internal database for assessment. Within the database, the information was structured in the following way.

- **Clause in the original language:** An excerpt from the agreement.

- **Clause in English:** The translated clause.
- **Type of clause**⁽⁶⁾:
 - Descriptive/declarative – the clause is purely descriptive/declarative.
 - Substantive/transformative – the clause refers to a substantial topic/theme and has transformative power (to change behaviours, processes).
- **Time series:** Establishes whether the clause appears in the 2015 (or earliest available) version of a collective agreement by recording the answer to the question ‘Does the clause appear in the previous version of the collective bargaining agreement?’ (‘Yes’ / ‘No, it’s a new clause’ / ‘Not relevant’).
- **Change:** Records any changes to the form (format) or meaning of the clauses compared with the earlier version of the agreement. Three mutually exclusive categories can be selected as an answer to the question ‘Did the clause/selected text change its form and/or meaning?’ (‘Yes’ / ‘No, it’s the same’ / ‘Not applicable – new clause’).
- **Missing clauses:** Records all removed text from the most recent versions of the agreement, as compared with the earlier version of the agreement.

Box 1: Example of subcategories for the main topic ‘training’

1. Training (level 1)
 - 1.1. Apprenticeships and internships (level 2)
 - 1.2. Training and skills development
 - 1.2.1. Training related to upskilling (level 3)
 - 1.2.1.1. Upskilling due to the green transition/green skills (level 4)
 - 1.2.1.2. Upskilling due to technological transitions and technological change/technological skills
 - 1.2.1.3. Upskilling to improve digital skills
 - 1.2.1.4. Upskilling due to other transitions/reasons
 - 1.2.2. Training related to reskilling
 - 1.2.2.1. Reskilling related to the green transition/green skills
 - 1.2.2.2. Reskilling related to technological transitions
 - 1.2.2.3. Reskilling related to digital skills
 - 1.2.2.4. Reskilling due to other transitions/reasons
 - 1.3. Lifelong/continuous learning
 - 1.4. Other clauses on training

⁽⁶⁾ This distinction is used in the International Labour Organization’s (ILO) paper on green clauses for the just transition (Schmidt et al., 2025). See Eurofound (2025) for more details.

Clauses were categorised into two main types (descriptive and substantive) based on whether the text (clause/article) is descriptive in its nature or refers to a substantial topic that has a transformational power (Table 5). In general, descriptive clauses most commonly describe rules, rights or procedures without a specific reference to ‘how exactly’ and ‘in what amount’. Substantive clauses, in contrast, specify ‘how’ or ‘in what amount’ and refer to a tangible outcome. This categorisation enables the comparison of the number of clauses that are purely descriptive and the number that regulate specific topics in detail.

This classification does not assume any distinction in terms of the ‘importance’ of the clauses (important does not equal substantive, although substantive does equal important). In other words, declarative statements may also be very important (e.g. all clauses declaring an adherence to anti-discrimination at work principles) even if they are less clear on specifics. For more details, consult the methodological note (Eurofound, 2025).

Table 5: Examples of descriptive/declarative and substantive/transformational clauses

Type	Examples
Descriptive/declarative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ‘The signatory parties want to express their commitment to achieving the principle of equal treatment and opportunities in all areas and for all purposes’^(a). ‘The beginnings of individual shifts, including the determination of which shift (in the case of multi-shift operation) starts first in the working week, will be determined in writing by the employer’^(b).
Substantive/transformational	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ‘Overtime work is subject to a limit of two hundred hours per year, including work performed by part-time workers in the respective proportion ... Overtime work will be remunerated with a 100 % increase over the normal hourly wage ... The formula to be considered when calculating simple hours for remuneration for overtime work is as follows: monthly remuneration x 12’^(c). ‘[S]ingle women and single men permanently caring for a child under the age of 10 will be granted one day off per year’^(d).

(a) Spanish collective agreement (CA-ES-1259) in the retail sector.

(b) Czech collective agreement (CA-CZ-1974) in the manufacture of FLTC sector.

(c) Portuguese collective agreement (CA-PT-2179) in the retail sector.

(d) Slovak collective agreement (CA-SK-2028) in the manufacture of FLTC sector.

Source: CBBP Database 2025.

2 Interplay between legislation and collective agreements

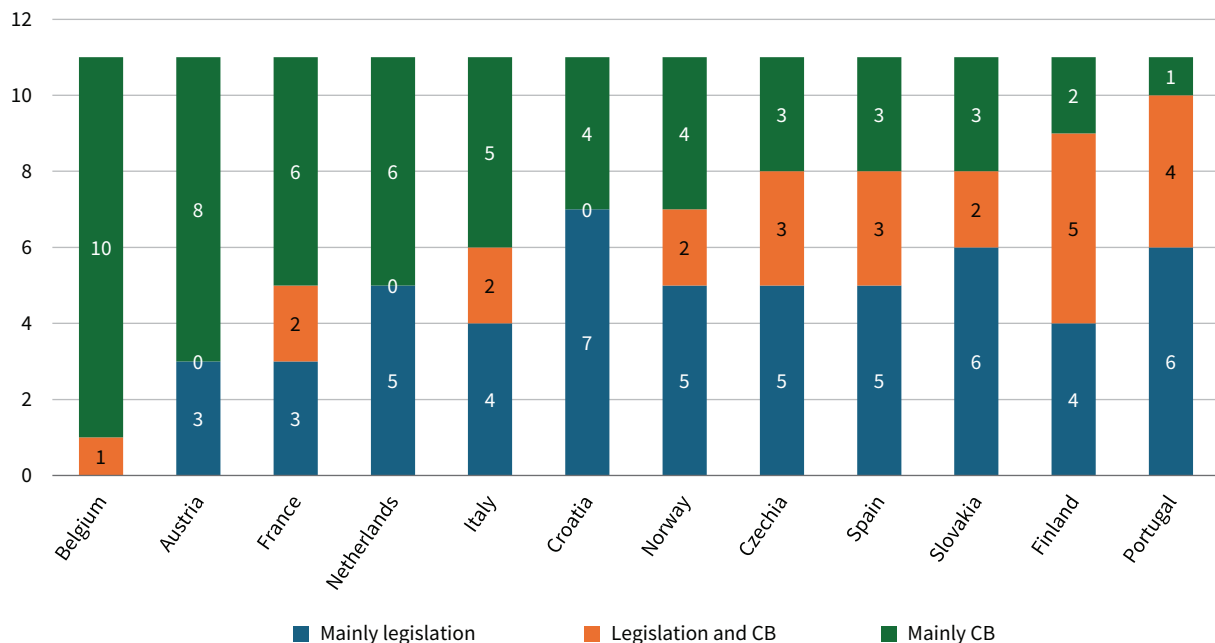
Before proceeding to the analysis of the content of the collective agreements, it is important to understand the regulatory role of collective bargaining in relation to national legislation. National legislation typically sets minimum standards, which can then be improved by provisions in collective agreements (in line with the favourability principle)⁽⁷⁾. Collective agreements thus complement and coexist with legislation. In other cases, the social partners may themselves regulate aspects in collective agreements that are not regulated in legislation or that the legal framework leaves significant leeway for collective agreements to regulate. Which of these approaches prevails – and thus what role collective agreements play and what room the social partners have to address an issue – varies among countries, sectors and topical areas.

To map this variation, the Network of Eurofound Correspondents was asked to provide information on the role of national labour legislation compared with the provisions of the collective bargaining agreements in their countries.

The legislation analysed by the correspondents covered the same main topics (level 1 codes) used for the analysis of the content of the collective agreements, namely (1) terms of employment, (2) wages and remuneration, (3) allowances and bonuses, (4) working time, (5) leave, (6) OSH, (7) social protection and social security, (8) work organisation and work transitions, (9) work environment, (10) training and (11) labour relations. Two topics were left out, namely the terms of collective agreements – as these are always defined in the agreements – and the category ‘other’, which can include almost any additional topic and is thus difficult to connect to specific labour legislation.

Figure 4 summarises the number of topics by form of regulation⁽⁸⁾ in each participating Member State and Norway. This summary also demonstrates the different approaches of the social partners in shaping terms and conditions of employment. In Belgium, 10 out of 11 topics are regulated mainly through collective bargaining; only labour relations are regulated in national legislation (specifically the Law of 5 December 1968).

Figure 4: Number of topics by form of regulation and country



Notes: The topic ‘terms of collective agreements’ was not included, as it is by default regulated through collective agreements. The total number of topics was 11 (terms of employment, wages and remuneration, allowances and bonuses, working time, leave, OSH, social protection and social security, work organisation and work transitions, working environment, training, labour relations). CB, collective bargaining. Source: CBBP Database 2025.

⁽⁷⁾ In some jurisdictions and contexts, legislation can anticipate the potential for the social partners to derogate from legal provisions within collective agreements (but this is much less frequent, typically restricted to specific areas (e.g. working time), conditional on certain factors and often temporary).

⁽⁸⁾ For each main topic, the national experts had to identify the prevailing form of regulation out of three categories: (1) regulated mainly through collective agreements; (2) regulated mainly through legislation; or (3) unable to estimate – regulated in both ways.

By contrast, in Croatia, 7 of the 11 topics analysed are regulated mainly through legislation: work environment, terms of employment, working time, leave, social protection and social security, OSH and labour relations.

Looking at trends among countries, the number varies, with the three central and eastern European countries analysed (Croatia, Czechia and Slovakia) showing a predominantly legislative form of regulation, and countries with a traditionally structured industrial relations landscape (Austria, Belgium and the

Netherlands) showing a strong trend of regulation through collective bargaining agreements.

Table 6 summarises the interplay between collective bargaining and legislation with regard to selected topics in each Member State and Norway. The three topics that are regulated most frequently through legislation are OSH (in 11 countries), social protection and social security (in 10) and terms of employment (in 8). In contrast, wages and remuneration, allowances and bonuses, and training are regulated through collective bargaining in most countries, or alternatively through a combination of legislation and collective bargaining.

Table 6: Interplay between collective bargaining and legislation with regard to selected topics

Topic	Regulated mainly through collective agreements	Regulated mainly through legislation	Unable to estimate – regulated in both ways
Terms of employment	3 (Austria, Belgium, France)	8 (Croatia, Czechia, Finland, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Slovakia, Spain)	1 (Italy)
Wages and remuneration	9 (Austria, Belgium, Croatia, Finland, France, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal)		3 (Czechia, Slovakia, Spain)
Allowances and bonuses	8 (Austria, Belgium, Croatia, Finland, France, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway)		4 (Czechia, Portugal, Slovakia, Spain)
Working time	3 (Austria, Belgium, France)	4 (Croatia, Czechia, the Netherlands, Slovakia)	5 (Finland, Italy, Norway, Portugal, Spain)
Leave	3 (Austria, Belgium, France)	6 (Croatia, Italy, the Netherlands, Portugal, Slovakia, Spain)	3 (Czechia, Finland, Norway)
OSH		11 (Austria, Croatia, Czechia, Finland, France, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Slovakia, Spain)	1 (Belgium)
Social protection and social security	1 (Belgium)	10 (Austria, Croatia, Czechia, Finland, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Slovakia, Spain)	1 (France)
Work organisation and work transitions	7 (Austria, Belgium, Croatia, France, Italy, the Netherlands, Spain)	3 (Czechia, Norway, Slovakia)	2 (Finland, Portugal)
Work environment	4 (Austria, Belgium, Croatia, the Netherlands)	8 (Croatia, Czechia, Finland, France, Italy, Norway, Portugal, Slovakia)	
Training	8 (Austria, Belgium, Croatia, Czechia, Italy, the Netherlands, Slovakia, Spain)		4 (Finland, France, Italy, Portugal)
Labour relations	5 (Czechia, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Slovakia)	6 (Austria, Belgium, Croatia, France, Portugal, Spain)	1 (Finland)

Source: Network of Eurofound Correspondents for CBBP Database 2025.

Social protection and social security is one of the aspects regulated mainly through legislation in most of the Member States analysed, except for Belgium. In Norway, the National Insurance Act of 1997 covers social protection. In Finland, several legislative acts cover different areas of social protection: pensions (Employees Pensions Act (395/2006)), sickness (Health Insurance Act (1224/2004)), parental benefits (Act on Social Assistance (1412/1997)) and unemployment benefits (Unemployment Security Act (1290/2002)). In Italy, different legislative tools regulate different aspects of social protection measures. Unemployment benefits are mainly regulated by Legislative Decree 22/2015 on social safety nets in cases of involuntary unemployment. Income protection in the case of a reduction in work activity not due to the employer or employee⁽⁹⁾ is mainly regulated by Legislative Decree 148/2015 on income support measures during an ongoing employment relationship. Health insurance schemes are regulated by statutory provisions. However, similar to the case for pensions, sectoral collective agreements generally complement the sick pay required by law and establish additional health insurance schemes to supplement the public service, representing another way in which the social partners and collective bargaining can work alongside statutory legislation in the field of social protection. In Portugal, social protection and social security rights and provisions are regulated by Law 4/2007 setting the general basis for social security. Collective agreements may include complementary clauses related to pensions and health insurance and services, but this is not common. Law 4/2007 is supplemented by several specific legislative acts (Law 13/2003 regulating income protection and Decree Law 187/2007 regulating pension schemes/contributions).

OSH is the topic most often regulated through legislation in all countries analysed except Belgium, where it is regulated in both ways. In Spain, it is highly regulated through legislation, although the social partners play an important role in approving national health and safety measures through tripartite social dialogue bodies. In Finland, it is covered by the Occupational Safety and Health Act (738/2002) (Työturvallisuuslaki) and the Occupational Health Care Act (1383/2001) (Työterveyshuoltolaki). Compensation is regulated by the Workers' Compensation Act (459/2015) (Työtapaturma ja ammattitautilaki). In Italy, statutory regulation regarding health and safety in the workplace is provided by Legislative Decree 81/2008 (i.e. the Consolidated Act on Occupational Health and Safety). In Norway, the Working Environment Act of 2005 regulates these measures. In Portugal, the Labour

Code establishes the general principles on health and safety at work (Article 281), information, consultation rights and training concerning OSH (Article 282), and rules on accidents at work and occupational diseases (Article 283). Law 98/2009 provides specific legislation on the prevention of work-related accidents and occupational diseases and a system for their compensation. Importantly, the Labour Code establishes that these legal provisions, including the specific legislation, cannot be altered by collective agreements, unless they set better conditions for the workers (Article 3(3)(l)).

Training is one of the aspects least often regulated through legislation when looking at topics beyond pay. In all countries analysed except Finland, Italy and Portugal, training is regulated mostly through collective agreements and not legislation.

In Finland, employer obligations for providing training are set out in the Employment Contracts Act (55/2001) and also in the Cooperation Act (1333/2021), according to which workplace development plans, which include staff skills development, should be prepared in the course of cooperation negotiations. Prerequisites for financial support for the employer are set out in the Act on Financially Supported Development of Professional Skills (1136/2013) and the Act on Compensation for Training (1140/2013).

In Italy, training in the workplace refers to the specific internship and apprenticeship contracts that include training as an obligation of the employer, or training and skills development such as upskilling, reskilling and lifelong continuous training for employees. Internships are purely training contracts and are not considered employment contracts⁽¹⁰⁾ and are part of either a study programme (*tirocini curricolari*) or an active labour market policy (*tirocini extracurricolari*). The latter type is regulated by statutory provisions (mainly at the regional level). A national framework for regulation was established by an agreement reached between the state and the regions in 2013 and revised in 2017. Apprenticeships are governed by Legislative Decree 81/2015, which outlines three types, with the 'professionalising apprenticeship' (*apprendistato professionalizzante*, also known as a second-level apprenticeship) being the most common. While the decree sets out a basic legal framework, collective agreements significantly expand on apprenticeship rules (in particular, but not only, for the professionalising apprenticeship). The decree explicitly delegates the implementation of the statutory regulations provided therein to sectoral collective bargaining. Upskilling, reskilling and lifelong continuous

⁽⁹⁾ This can be due to a set of temporary circumstances provided for by law, for instance market crises, raw material shortages, export bans and earthquakes or fires temporarily preventing the continuation of the activity, but also to issues such as business reorganisation processes or company crises.

⁽¹⁰⁾ For example, internship contracts do not include the right to a 'wage' but rather the right to an 'allowance', and these contracts are not regulated under the framework of collective bargaining, but generally only by means of statutory provisions.

training are mainly regulated through collective bargaining, with provisions related to the safeguarding or raising of productivity levels, and bilateral committees are often established at the sectoral level by social partners for this purpose. In-work training benefits both workers and companies, and therefore the role of company-level collective bargaining or company policies is crucial for the design of the training programmes.

In Portugal, the Labour Code defines the objectives of professional training (Article 130) as follows: to provide initial qualifications to those who entered the labour market without any; to ensure continuous training of workers at the company level; to promote the qualification or professional retraining of workers at risk of unemployment; to promote the professional rehabilitation of workers with disabilities, particularly those whose disability results from an accident at work; and to promote the socio-professional integration of workers from groups with particular entry barriers. Among other provisions, the Portuguese Labour Code establishes rules on workers' rights and company obligations concerning lifelong/continuous learning and training and skills development (Article 131). These include the obligation of employers to provide continuous training annually for 10 % of their workers and to guarantee a minimum of 40 hours of continuous training annually for every worker. The Labour Code also includes regulations about credit hours and allowances for continuous training (Article 132).

Collective agreements very often include the legal text and also specific rules adapted to the sector or company.

Allowances and bonuses are also not the subject of legislation in many countries. In Italy, a few statutory provisions provide a (very limited) basic requirement for some allowances, such as those for overtime work and night work (for which Article 2108 of the Civil Code requires higher compensation than that due for regular work) and work on public holidays (for which Article 5 of the consolidated version of Law 260/1949 requires higher compensation). The amount is, however, negotiated between the social partners through collective bargaining, thus representing the main form of regulation. In Portugal, the Labour Code defines rules and sets minimum levels for premiums for night and shift work (Article 266), overtime and work on weekends (Article 268) and work on public holidays (Article 269). Often, collective agreements replicate the legislative regulations. The conditions and levels of transport allowances and risk allowances are mainly defined by collective agreements, not legislation.

The extent to which collective agreements complement and coexist with legislation or replace it in certain areas will therefore influence the nature of the clauses found in collective agreements – that is, whether they are mainly substantive and transformative or of a more declarative nature (e.g. referencing legislation).

3 Content of collective agreements: Overview of the main topics and their changes over time

This chapter summarises the results of the coding of collective agreements from three low-paid sectors. This includes an analysis of the types of clauses found in the agreements sampled and an assessment of their changes over time.

The chapter is structured as follows. First, the general summary overview of all coded clauses is presented in the subsection ‘Overview of all coded clauses in collective agreements’. Second, coding results are summarised for each country in the subsection ‘Country overview’ and for each of the three low-paid sectors in the subsection ‘Sector overview’. The subsection ‘Overview of the main topics in collective agreements’ provides overview results for each of the main topics (level 1 code). Finally, a summary of missing clauses (i.e. those that have been removed from the 2022 version of collective agreements) is presented in the subsection ‘Missing clauses’.

Overview of all coded clauses in collective agreements

Table 7 presents the number of coded clauses in the 94 agreements analysed per country. Overall, **there are 13 347 coded clauses in the database**, distributed among countries in different ratios. Austria has the largest share of coded clauses (21.6 %), followed by Finland (18.7 %), Portugal (10.4 %) and France (9.1 %). Czechia (0.9 %), Croatia (1.7 %) and Slovakia (2.9 %) are the countries with the smallest shares of clauses, which is consistent with the fact that collective agreements from these countries are shorter and less complex, even though Croatia and Slovakia are among the few countries in the sample with company-level agreements that tend to be more specific and detailed than the sector-level agreements. Some of the high overall shares of clauses per country can be attributed to the clauses (usually the whole articles) coded with multiple coding categories (codes). This is the case in Austria, where more than 57 % of coded clauses were classified under more than one coding category. On average, 27.8 % of all coded clauses across countries are assigned multiple labels, controlling for the sample size.

Table 7: Number of coded clauses per country

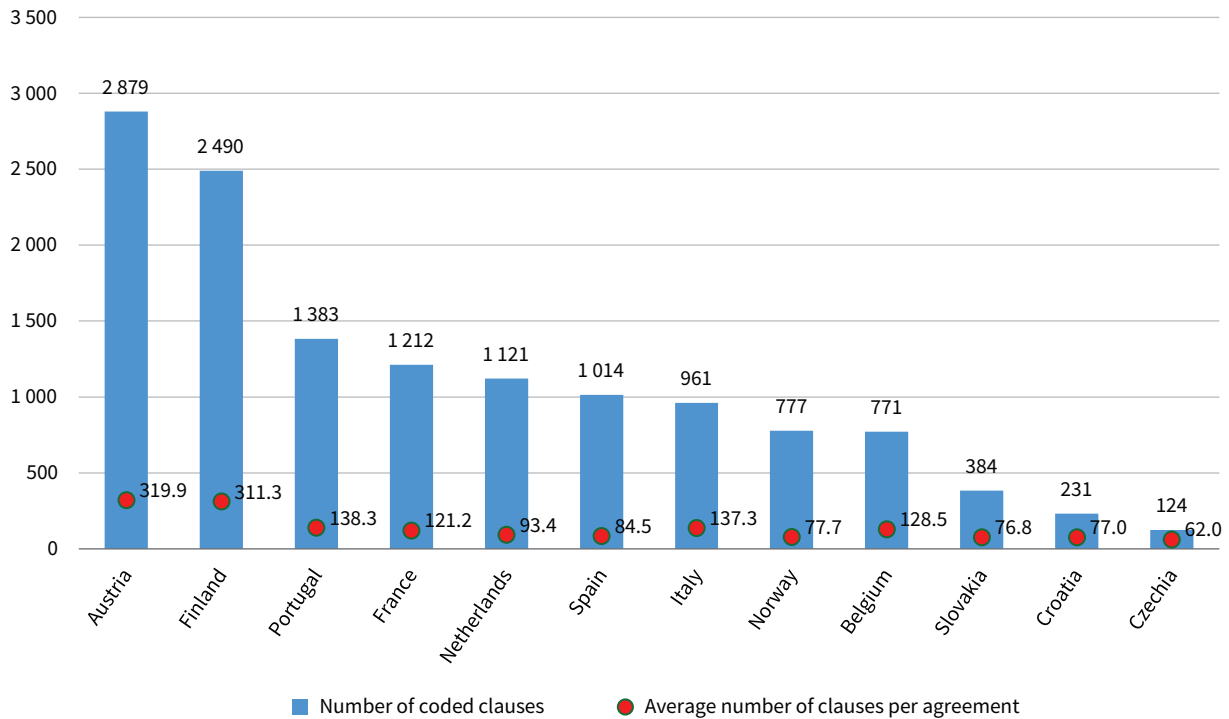
Country	Number of coded clauses – all ^(a)	% of all coded clauses	Number of coded clauses – distinct ^(b)	Share of clauses coded with multiple labels (all minus distinct as %)
Austria	2 879	21.6 %	1 227	57.4 %
Belgium	771	5.8 %	759	1.6 %
Croatia	231	1.7 %	218	5.6 %
Czechia	124	0.9 %	118	4.8 %
Finland	2 490	18.7 %	1 795	27.9 %
France	1 212	9.1 %	1 065	12.1 %
Italy	961	7.2 %	850	11.6 %
Netherlands	1 121	8.4 %	976	12.9 %
Norway	777	5.8 %	665	14.4 %
Portugal	1 383	10.4 %	905	34.6 %
Slovakia	384	2.9 %	324	15.6 %
Spain	1 014	7.6 %	740	27.0 %
Total	13 347	100.0 %	9 642	Weighted average: 27.8 %

^(a) This refers to the number of all references, regardless of the number of attached codes (i.e. some text may have been assigned more than one code and is thus repeated).

^(b) This refers to the number of unique codes (i.e. only those references that appear once are counted and are not repeated).

Source: CBBP Database 2025.

Figure 5: Number of coded clauses per country and average number of clauses per agreement



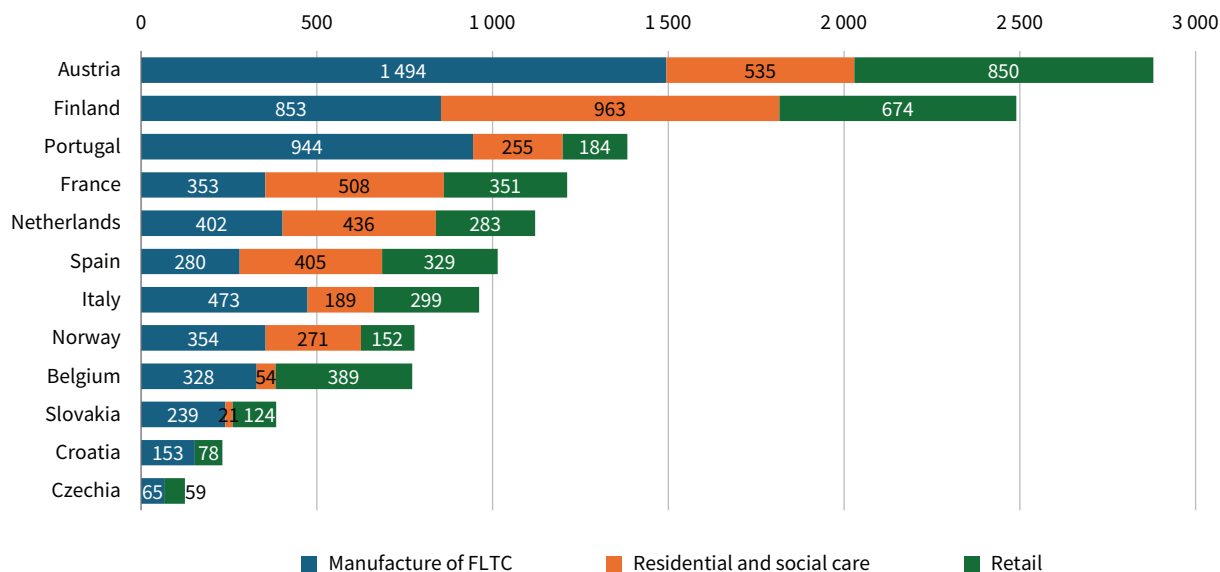
Notes: Total number of coded clauses = 13 347. Total number of collective agreements coded = 94 (Austria = 9, Belgium = 6, Croatia = 3, Czechia = 2, Finland = 8, France = 10, Italy = 7, Netherlands = 12, Norway = 10, Portugal = 10, Slovakia = 5, Spain = 12).
 Source: CBBP Database 2025.

Austria is also the country with the largest average number of coded clauses per single agreement (319.9), followed by Finland (311.3). In France, Belgium, Italy and Portugal, the average numbers of coded clauses per single agreement are similar, ranging between approximately 121 and 139. The rest of the countries are in the range of 62 to 94 clauses per agreement, as seen in Figure 5. However, Figure 5 does not show the within-country variation in the number of coded clauses per agreement. One of the outliers is a sector-level collective agreement in Austria in the food and beverage industry (coded under the manufacture of FLTC sector), with 803 coded clauses. Overall, the number of clauses per agreement varies significantly,

with as few as eight coded clauses in a single agreement in Spain (CA-ES-1215). For details on the number of coded clauses in each individual agreement, see Figure A1 in Annex 1.

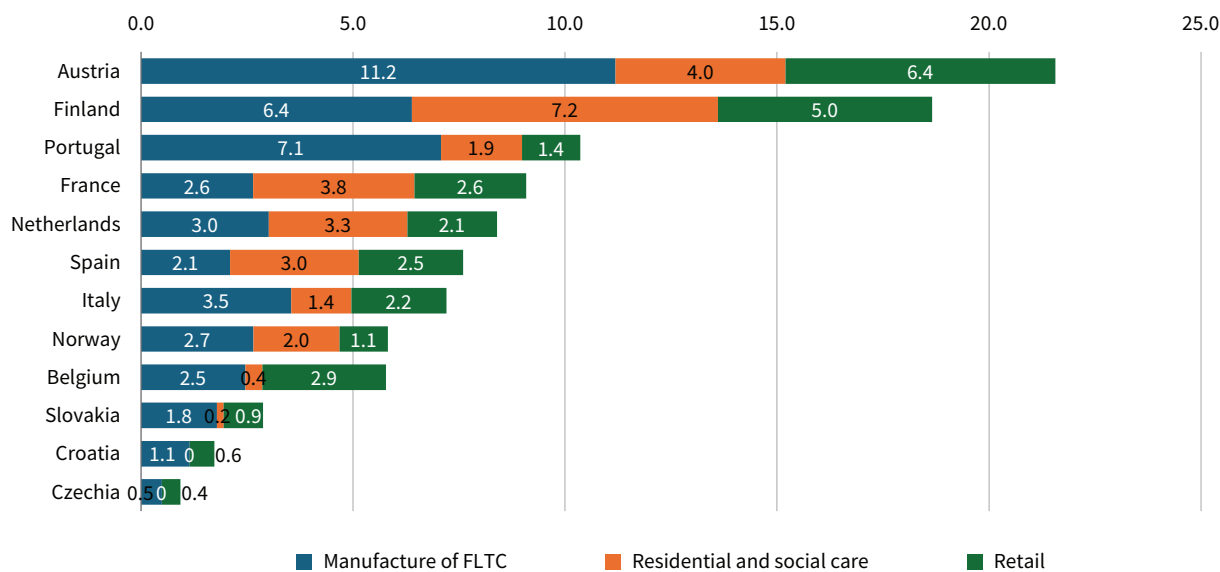
The absolute numbers of coded clauses per sector in each country are presented in Figure 6, and their shares are presented in Figure 7. In total, 44.5 % of all clauses come from collective agreements in the manufacture of FLTC sector, 27.2 % from the residential and social care sector and 28.3 % from the retail sector. The over-representation of clauses in the manufacture of FLTC sector is important to note for the upcoming analysis.

Figure 6: Number of coded clauses per country and sector



Notes: Total number of coded clauses = 13 347. Total number of collective agreements coded = 94 (Austria = 9, Belgium = 6, Croatia = 3, Czechia = 2, Finland = 8, France = 10, Italy = 7, Netherlands = 12, Norway = 10, Portugal = 10, Slovakia = 5, Spain = 12).
 Source: CBBP Database 2025.

Figure 7: Share of coded clauses per country and sector (%)

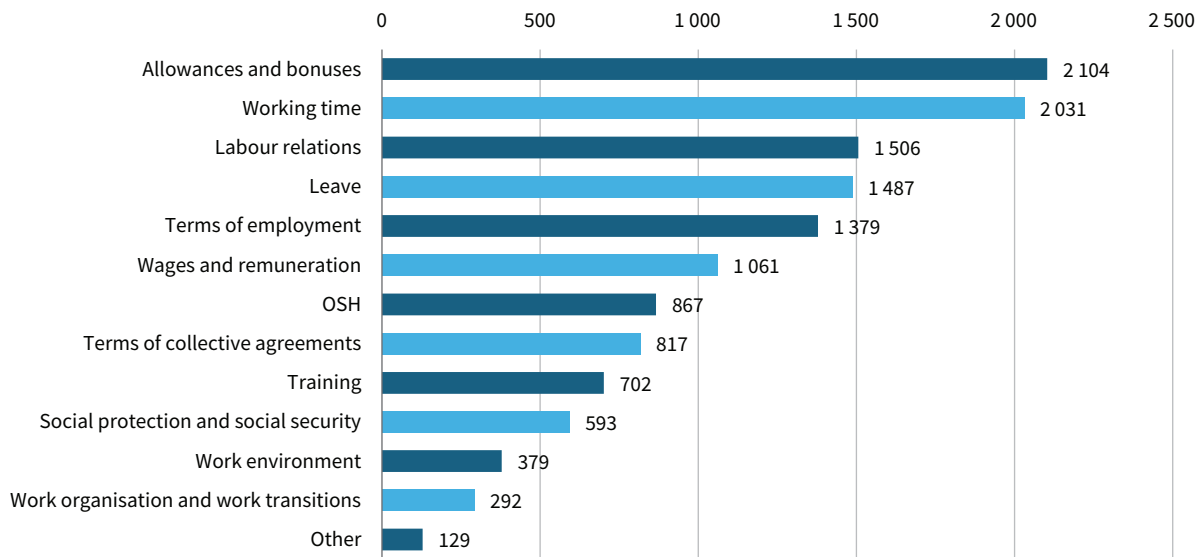


Notes: Total number of coded clauses = 13 347. Total number of collective agreements coded = 94 (Austria = 9, Belgium = 6, Croatia = 3, Czechia = 2, Finland = 8, France = 10, Italy = 7, Netherlands = 12, Norway = 10, Portugal = 10, Slovakia = 5, Spain = 12).
 Source: CBBP Database 2025.

The three topics with the largest number of references or codes at the first (main) level in all 94 collective agreements are (1) allowances and bonuses (2 104 clauses), (2) working time (2 031) and (3) labour relations (1 506). These are followed by clauses on leave (1 487) and terms of employment (1 379). The topics with the smallest number of references are social

protection and social security (593), work environment (379) and work organisation and work transitions (292). Several other topics have been identified and grouped under the overarching category of ‘other’ (129). Figure 8 shows the distribution of all codes by their main topic. Individual frequencies are presented as percentages of all clauses for better comparison in the next section, where detailed results for each code are also outlined.

Figure 8: Number of coded clauses by main topic (level 1)

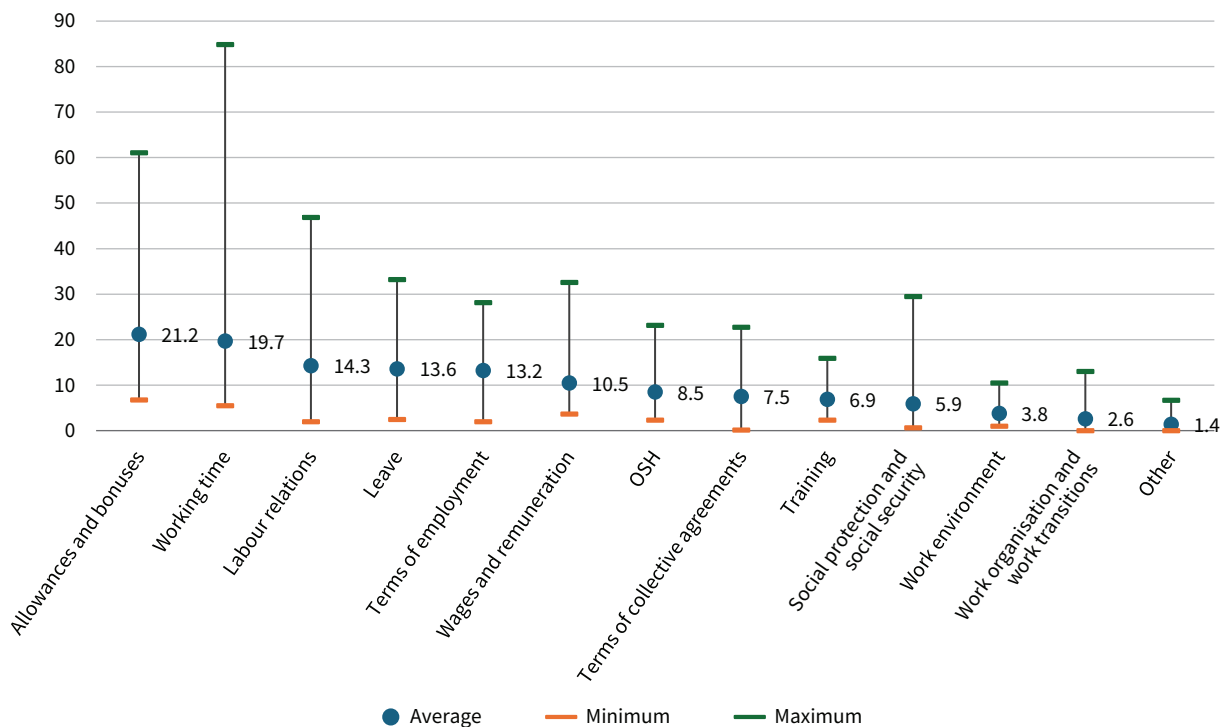


Note: Total number of coded clauses = 13 347.
 Source: CBBP Database 2025.

As Figure 8 does not take into account the sample size per country, Figure 9 presents the ranking of main topics controlling for the sample size differences. First, in order to adjust for the different number of agreements per country, the average number of references per country for each topic was calculated. Then, to find the overall prominence of each topic across all countries, the average of the country averages

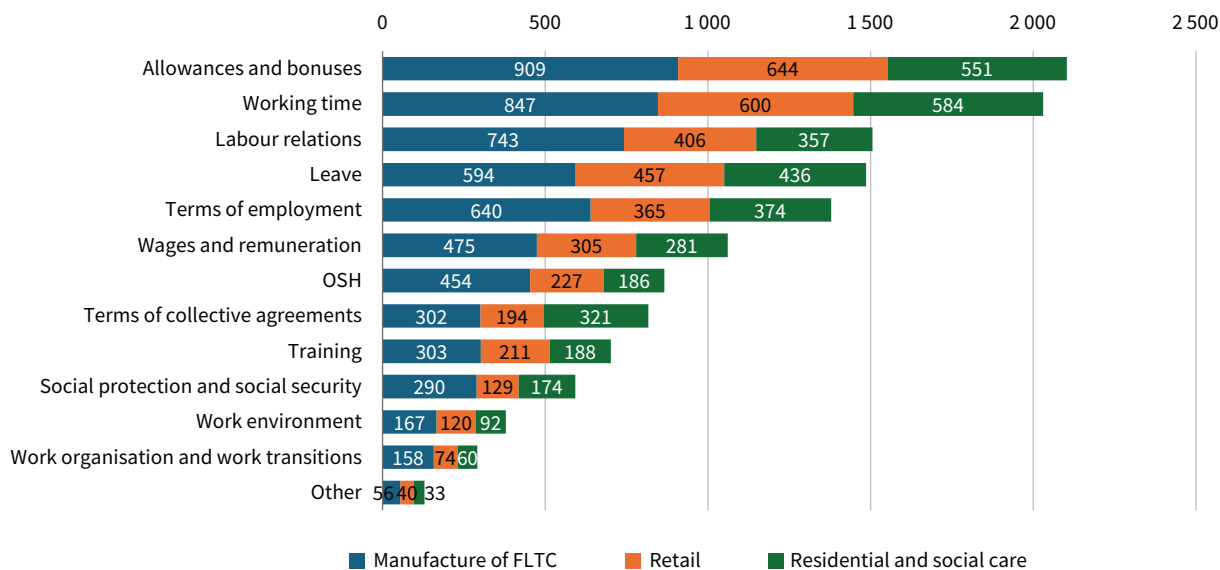
was calculated. Figure 9 presents the averages of the country averages, including the average minima and average maxima. On average, the sample has 21.2 references to allowances and bonuses, with the smallest average of 6.8 references in France and the largest (66.1) in Austria. Importantly, this method yields the same order of main topics as when ordered by the number of absolute references (Figure 8). In other

Figure 9: Ranking of topics by the average of the country averages for references in 94 agreements



Source: CBBP Database 2025.

Figure 10: Number of coded clauses per main topic and sector



Note: Total number of coded clauses = 13 347.

Source: CBBP Database 2025.

words, even if the number of agreements varies, countries broadly align on which topics matter the most. It can be concluded that, on average, the topics of importance are similar across countries in the sample.

The sectoral distribution of coded clauses is presented in Figure 10. In each of the three sectors, allowances and bonuses, working time and labour relations are among the most frequent topics. Notably, the proportions of clauses coded to each main topic show a stable distributional pattern regardless of sector size or clause count. This suggests that the code shares are sector invariant – there is variation among sectors in the quantity of clauses, but not in their thematic emphasis.

The following question was also investigated: does the length of an agreement correlate with the topic frequency? In other words, if a collective agreement is longer, does that mean it talks about a particular subject (e.g. training, working time) more often? Figure 11 shows a scatter plot of two variables: a total number of coded clauses per each agreement and a number of clauses coded under certain topics, in this case ‘allowances and bonuses’ and ‘work environment’.

The idea is to see whether in longer agreements (i.e. those containing more codes) the number of clauses on allowances and bonuses/work environment increase. While Figure 11(a) shows a positive correlation among the two variables, meaning that, with more coded clauses per agreement, the number of clauses on ‘allowances and bonuses’ increases, Figure 11(b) shows a very weak relationship. Even if the overall number of coded clauses increases, the number of clauses coded under ‘work environment’ does not change. In other words, the length of the agreement has no influence on the number of clauses on work environment, which include subcodes on anti-discrimination, inclusion and gender-based violence. Even though these clauses may feature only once in each agreement, they are still important. Overall, the numbers of clauses on allowances and bonuses, wages and remuneration, and working time linearly increase with more coded clauses, indicating that longer agreements tend to have more of these codes. Scatter plots for all main codes are available in Table A2 in Annex 3.

Figure 11: Relationship between the total number of clauses and the number of clauses coded as (a) allowances and bonuses and (b) work environment



Note: Total number of coded clauses = 13 347.
Source: CBBP Database 2025.

The project also looked at the typology of clauses in the agreements, with the aim of clustering the clauses into two main categories: declarative/descriptive statements and substantive/transformational statements. This approach enables the estimation of the proportion of text that describes rules, processes and aspirations of signatory parties (coded as declarative/descriptive statements) and the proportion deemed to have more substantive clauses⁽¹¹⁾. Overall, the majority of clauses were coded as substantive/transformational (52.5%), although the difference between the two types is small – a difference of 808 clauses in absolute numbers (Figure 12(a)). Given the specificities in national industrial relations systems, which this summary number disregards, it is also important to examine distribution within countries, which is presented in the subsection ‘Country overview’. The distribution of descriptive and substantive clauses per main topic shown in Figure 13 reveals that, in 6 out of the 13 main codes, the majority of clauses were coded as substantive. This is the case for clauses on leave (65.9%), work organisation and work transitions (63.7%), working time (62.8%), allowances and bonuses (62.5%), wages and remuneration (58.9%) and training (53.0%). In contrast, clauses coded as descriptive were found most

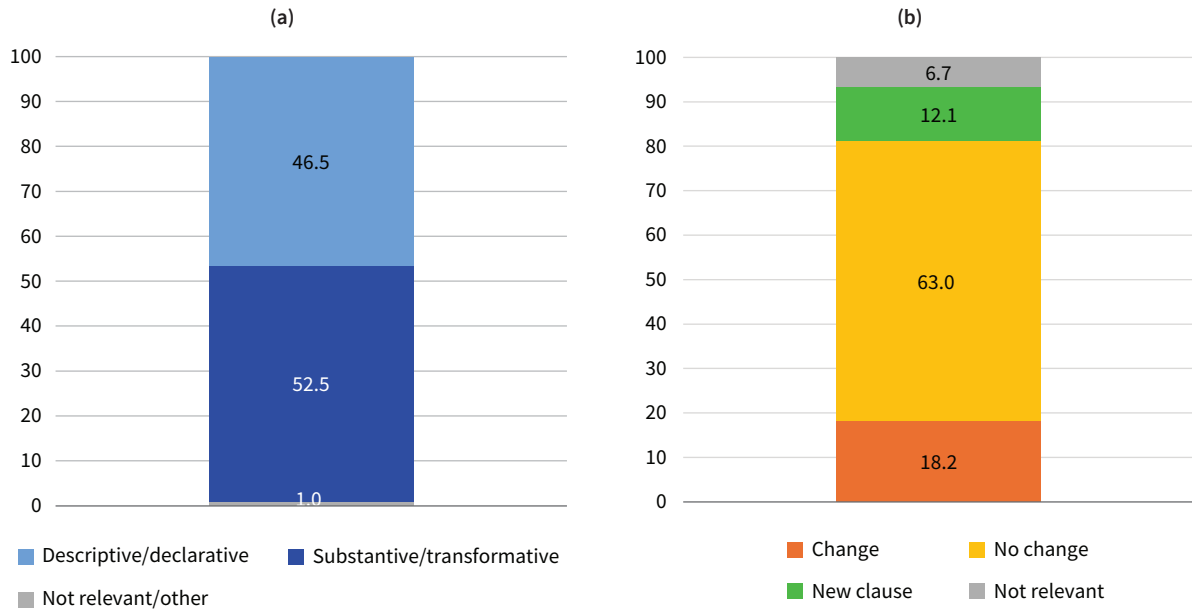
often in the following topics: terms of collective agreements (82.9%), work environment (64.4%), labour relations (56.9%), social protection and social security (56.2%) and OSH (53.4%). Various ‘other’ clauses are also considered more descriptive than substantive (56.6%).

More than 10 000 clauses appear in the older versions of the agreements, either in the same form or changed (Figure 12(b)). Of all coded clauses, 63.0% (or 8 414) are unchanged; in other words, they are the same in the current version (mostly 2022) as in the earlier version (2015 or the earliest available)⁽¹²⁾. Clauses that appear in the older versions but have changed their meaning or form in the new versions account for 18.2% (or 2 429). New clauses account for 12.1% (or 1 610) of all clauses analysed in the agreements. An additional 6.7% (or 894) are grouped under the category ‘not relevant’ in terms of comparing change. This category is selected for clauses for which comparisons cannot be made. Of these 894 clauses, 462 come from a Finnish agreement in the residential and social care sector (CA-FI-2010), for which there is no single earlier version. This is the result of a reform that introduced a new government administration level in the sector. The agreement, however, was still included in the sample as relevant

⁽¹¹⁾ See Eurofound (2025) for more information; see also the explanation in the subsection ‘Data input and assessment of coded clauses in the project’s database’ and examples in Table 5.

⁽¹²⁾ 2022 is the reference year, which means that all clauses were valid in 2022 but the validity period of collective agreements might be different. The comparison year – the year in which the same collective agreement was valid – is 2015 (or the earliest year if the collective agreement was not available for 2015). For details on the sample, see Annex 1 and Eurofound (2025).

Figure 12: Proportions of (a) clauses coded as descriptive or substantive (total) and (b) clauses that are new, changed or not changed (total) (%)

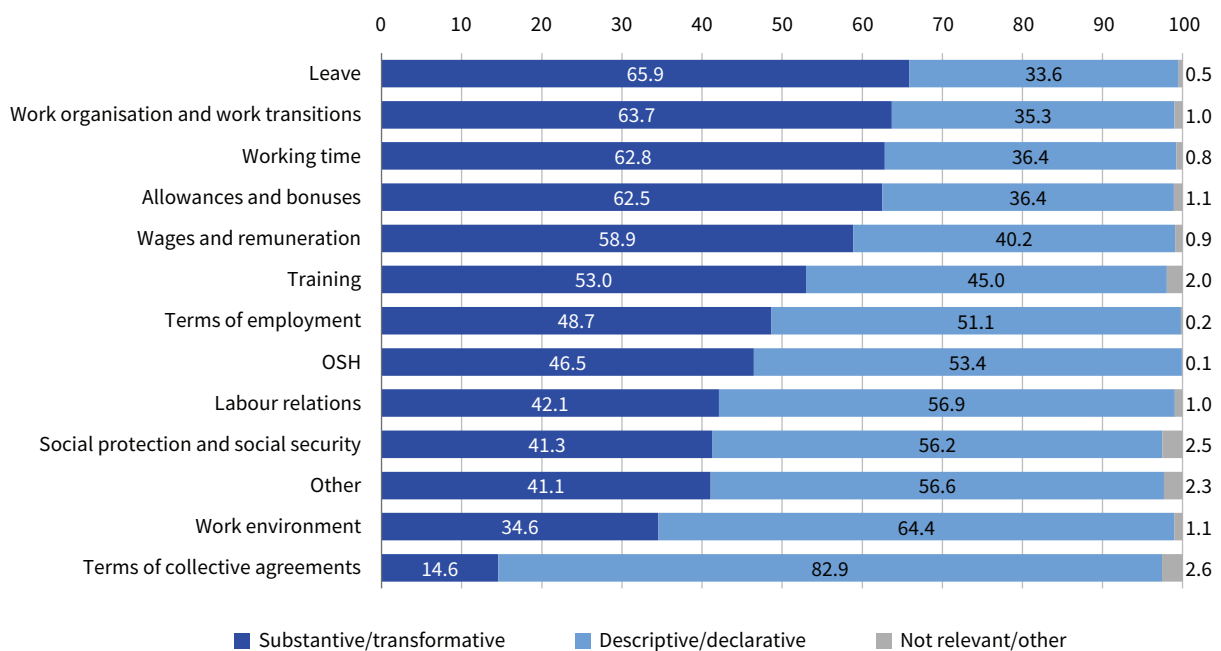


Source: CBBP Database 2025.

because the occupations under this collective agreement were previously covered under various different agreements included in the database. An additional 311 ‘not relevant’ clauses come from collective agreements in Belgium, where a comparison of the two time points proved to be difficult due to the adjusted methodology for this country (see Eurofound, 2025). For some agreements, both versions analysed are the same. For instance, this is the case for Austria’s

framework agreement in the meat industry (under the manufacture of FLTC sector). There were no changes to the content of the agreement between 1993 and 2020 other than changes to its wage tables, which were adjusted in the regional agreements (e.g. CA-AT-1935). This illustrates the complexity of possible methodological issues and exceptions arising during the qualitative research and specifically during the qualitative textual analysis of collective agreements.

Figure 13: Proportion of descriptive/substantive clauses grouped by their main topic (%)



Source: CBBP Database 2025.

Do workers still read paper versions of collective agreements? Selected examples

Collective agreements often mention workers' right to access the collective agreements, in both their physical and/or digital forms. In some countries, agreements are not always published in their full format in the official repository of collective agreements. This is the case in Italy, where it is common practice to publish only the amendments and changes to the agreements in the official national database of collective agreements (CNEL database).

- In the **Netherlands**, workers taking up employment in the **fashion and textile industry** are entitled as part of their employment contract to request a copy of the relevant collective agreement (CA-NL-1092). In the **residential and social care sector**, the employer is obliged to make the agreement (CA-NL-1211) available to the employee in digital form, and, at the employee's request, also in written form. In the case of changes to the agreement, the most recent copy of the agreement must be made available in digital form. The collective agreement for workers in the **retail sector** (CA-NL-1117) also specifically mentions the employer's obligation to make at least one digital or written copy of the agreement available in every shop, but the current version of the agreement (as opposed to the 2013–2017 version) does not obligate the employer to provide a copy upon the request of an employee.
- In **Italy**, a sector-level collective agreement covering approximately 150 000 workers in the **manufacture of textiles and clothes industry** (CA-IT-1884) stipulates explicitly that companies are required to distribute a copy of the agreement free of charge within three months of its conclusion to each individual employee in service. It also stipulates the exclusive printing rights of the signatory parties and prohibits the reproduction of the text in whole or in part without permission.
- In **France**, companies covered by the sector-level collective agreement in **retail** (CA-FR-2044) must distribute a copy of any agreement on their intranet. If all employees have access to the intranet, companies are not required to make a copy freely available for consultation. A sector-level agreement in **clothing retail** (CA-FR-2071) specifies that a copy must be given to each staff representative upon request in companies with more than 10 employees.
- In **Croatia**, a company-level collective agreement in **retail** (CA-HR-1169) must be posted on a noticeboard in the workplace.
- Higher-level collective agreements in **Czechia** and **Slovakia** do not mention the distribution of agreements to individual workers. Instead, the agreements are distributed to the signatory parties' member organisations and deposited at the relevant labour ministry (e.g. CA-CZ-1974 or CA-SK-2028, both of which relate to the manufacture of FLTC).

Source: CBBP Database 2025.

Summary findings for all subtopics

Figures 14 and 15 show a detailed distribution of codes across all levels of coding (i.e. the main topics in level 1 and the subcategories in levels 2, 3 and 4). The code 'basic wages' tops this distribution with 739 references, followed by the code 'other allowances' (679) and the code 'other working time-related provisions' (613). This suggests that the initial coding scheme was not detailed enough to capture all varieties of allowances and bonuses that can be found in collective agreements (even though this code has 11 individual subcategories), and that provisions on working time are not classifiable

into the seven subcategories listed under the main code 'working time'. Similarly, for almost all main topics, the subcategories for 'other' clauses are large – the code 'other employment-related clauses' is the fourth most frequent with 369 references, and the code 'other leave provisions' is the ninth most frequent with 313 references. Figure 15 shows the codes that are at the bottom of the distribution. There are only four references to ergonomics (from Austria (1), France (1) and Norway (2)) and two references to the green/just transition (both from Norway). A detailed analysis of the codes is presented in the subsection 'Overview of the main topics in collective agreements'.

Figure 14: Number of coded clauses at all category levels (part 1)

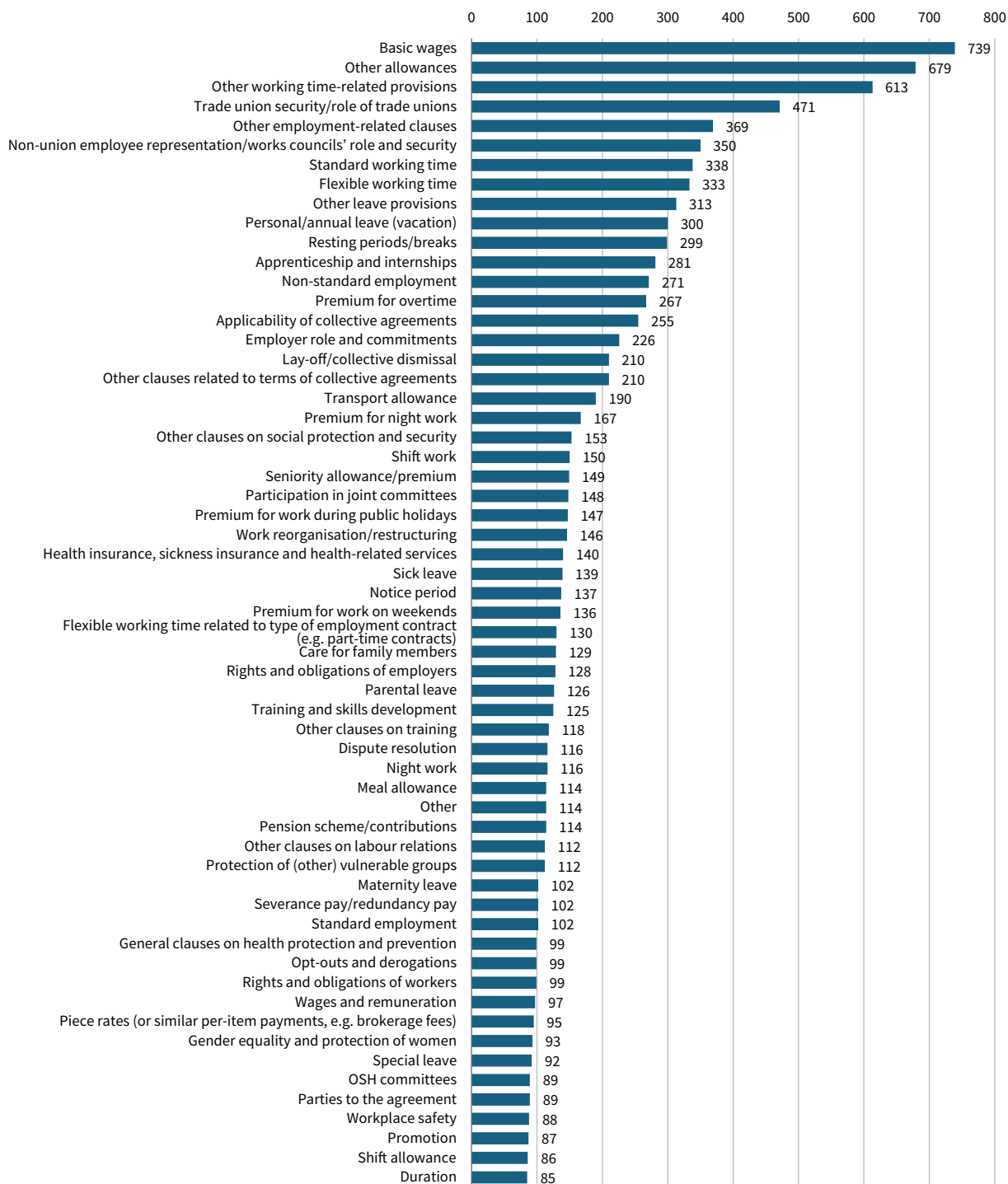
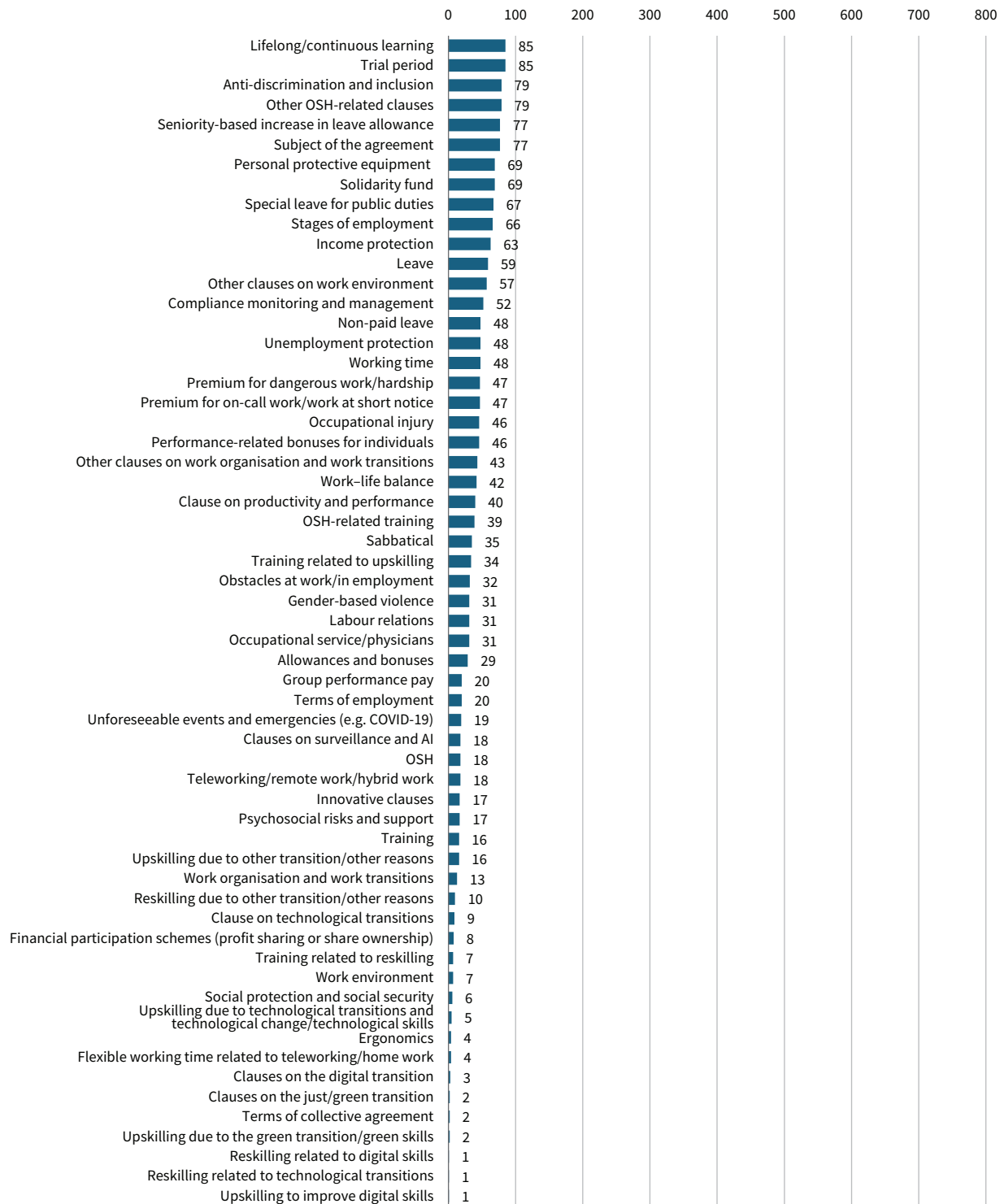


Figure 15: Number of coded clauses at all category levels (part 2)



Note: Total number of coded clauses = 13 347.

Source: CBBP Database 2025.

Country overview

The summary tables presented in the previous subsection, although comparative, disregard the specificities of the national industrial relations systems in the Member States and Norway. This section describes the distribution of coded clauses within each country. Importantly, these data come from a relatively small sample of collective agreements (a maximum of 12 per country) from three low-paid sectors; hence, the summaries are not representative (but rather indicative) of the national industrial relations systems.

Table 8 presents the top three most frequently addressed topics in collective agreements in each of the 11 Member States and Norway, based on the share of clauses coded under each category (aggregated codes at level 1). These align with expectations based on Table 6 regarding the interplay between legislation and collective bargaining. In other words, the most frequent codes in collective agreements were also those expected to be regulated by collective bargaining, as indicated by the national experts. For full country details, see the figures in Annex 2.

Several observations can be made. First, the most frequent among the top three main topics in each country are allowances and bonuses (in eight countries), labour relations (in six countries) and working time (in five countries). In contrast, the least frequent topics in general are work organisation and work transitions, and work environment (see Annex 2). Second, there are apparent country groupings, with Czechia and Slovakia prioritising OSH and procedural clauses on labour relations, while agreements in southern European countries (France, Italy, Portugal and Spain) focus more on leave provisions, terms of employment and labour relations. The last group

includes countries (Austria, Belgium, Croatia, Finland, the Netherlands, Norway) where collective agreements most frequently govern allowances and bonuses and working time, with some variations in the third most common categories. Collective agreements in Belgium also include clauses on social protection and social security among the top three topics. In Slovakia, agreements frequently include clauses on terms of collective agreements.

As presented earlier in the subsection ‘Overview of all coded clauses in collective agreements’, the majority of all clauses in this project were coded as substantive/transformativa (52.5 %) (Figure 12(a)). However, when each analysed country is viewed individually, this picture changes, reflecting the specificities of collective agreements in the sample and national industrial relations systems. Figure 16 summarises the typology of clauses per country.

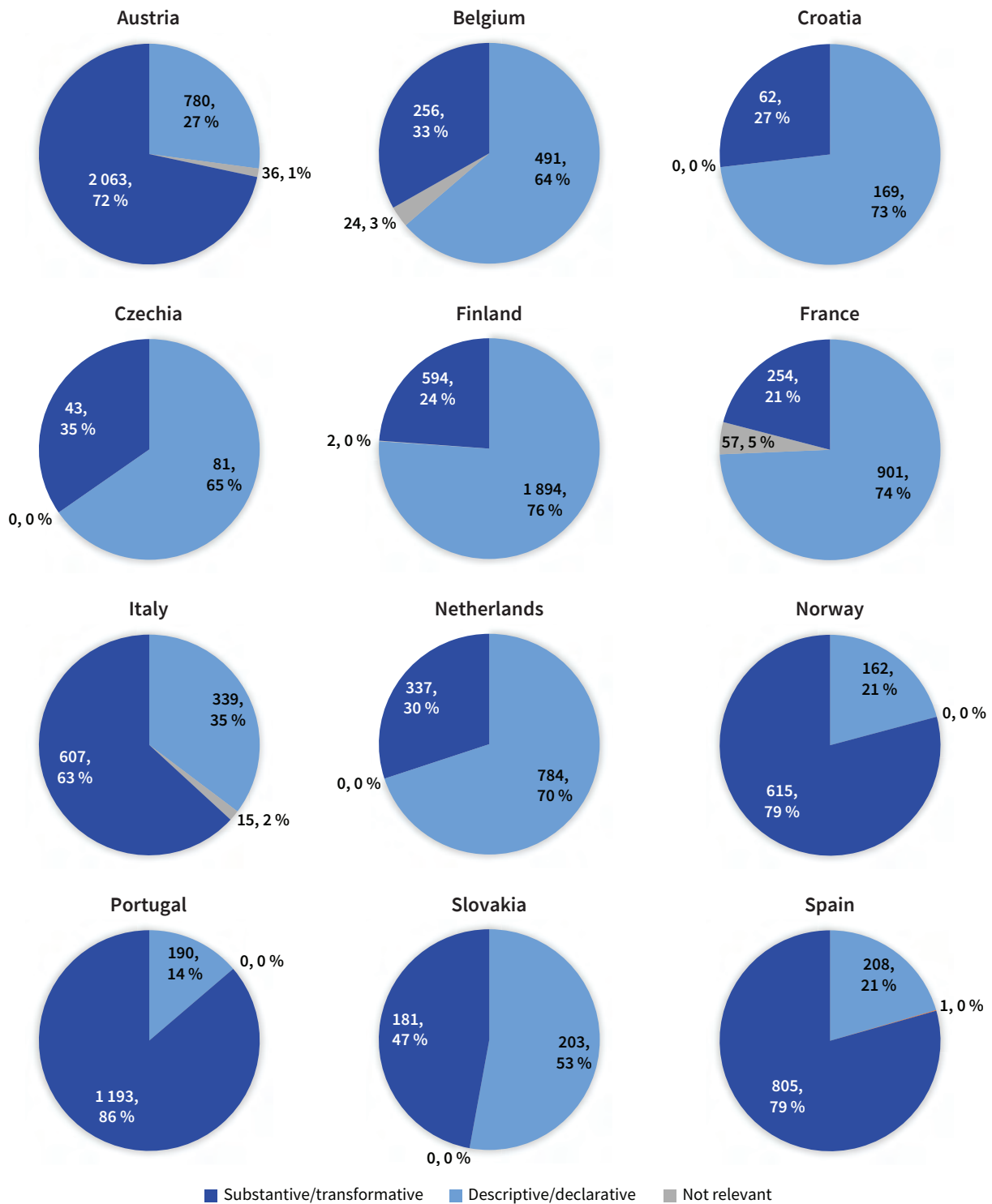
The majority of clauses found in collective agreements in Portugal (86 %), Norway (79 %), Spain (79 %), Austria (72 %) and Italy (63 %) were coded as substantive, while the majority in Finland (76 %), France (74 %), Croatia (73 %), the Netherlands (70 %), Czechia (65 %), Belgium (64 %) and Slovakia (53 %) were coded as descriptive. Some of these country variations are explained in Chapter 2 on the interplay between legislation and collective agreements. For example, in Austria, sectoral-level agreements often cover many thousands of workers and thus can be rather general, whereas more transformative clauses may be negotiated at the company level (i.e. in work agreements). Some countries that rely more on regulation through legislation, or a combination of legislation and collective bargaining, tend to have more descriptive clauses (Croatia, Czechia, Finland and Slovakia). However, there is no simple explanation. Countries like

Table 8: Three most frequent topics (level 1 codes) per country

Country	1	2	3
Austria	Working time (26.5 %)	Allowances and bonuses (19.1 %)	Wages and remuneration (10.2 %)
Belgium	Allowances and bonuses (25.8 %)	Social protection and social security (23.0 %)	Wages and remuneration (12.6 %)
Croatia	Allowances and bonuses (23.8 %)	Working time (14.7 %)	Terms of employment (11.3 %)
Czechia	OSH (21.8 %)	Allowances and bonuses (14.5 %)	Labour relations (14.5 %)
Finland	Working time (17.8 %)	Allowances and bonuses (16.0 %)	Labour relations (15.1 %)
France	Leave (14.0 %)	Labour relations (12.5 %)	Terms of employment (12.4 %)
Italy	Terms of employment (18.8 %)	Leave (14.9 %)	Labour relations (13.1 %)
Netherlands	Allowances and bonuses (19.0 %)	Leave (12.8 %)	Working time (11.4 %)
Norway	Allowances and bonuses (20.6 %)	Working time (14.7 %)	Wages and remuneration (12.5 %)
Portugal	Terms of employment (17.4 %)	Labour relations (16.6 %)	Leave (15.3 %)
Slovakia	Labour relations (17.4 %)	OSH (15.1 %)	Terms of collective agreements (14.8 %)
Spain	Leave (19.7 %)	Allowances and bonuses (13.4 %)	Terms of employment (10.5 %)

Source: CBBP Database 2025.

Figure 16: Shares of clause types by country



Source: CBBP Database 2025.

Belgium, France and the Netherlands have many descriptive clauses in their agreements, even though the topics are mostly regulated through collective agreements. These countries are also among those with the highest shares of coded clauses in the whole sample. In Finland, the most frequent topic of coded

clauses is working time, which can be regulated by both the Working Time Act and collective agreements.

Overall, the classification of clauses as substantive or declarative proved to be the most challenging part of the project. An attempt to compare agreements across

all countries yields similar shares of substantive and declarative clauses, and yet the country variations are vast. National experts coded agreements from their own country only and were not asked to compare their agreements with those of other countries. Hence, intercoder reliability⁽¹³⁾ may be lower than it would have been had the classification been conducted by a single researcher.

Table 9 summarises changes to the text of collective agreements in each country. It shows that collective agreements remain very stable over time in Slovakia, Czechia, Croatia and Portugal. Between 77.3 % and 96.7 % of agreements in these countries have the same clauses in both the older and newer versions. In Portugal, changes in content rarely occurred in the sample of collective agreements in the three low-paid sectors. Clauses in these agreements often state that the relevant legal provisions apply, meaning that if the law changes, the new legal rules will apply without the

necessity of modifying clauses in the agreements. Croatia and Czechia also show a limited number of changes, with over 85 % of clauses unchanged and only a few new or revised clauses. High rates of clauses changing their meaning or form over time are found in the samples from Belgium, Spain, Norway, Italy and the Netherlands. The Netherlands stands out with the largest share of changed clauses in agreements (47.2 %), showing a dynamic revision process, and a significant share of new clauses (18.3 %). Agreements in Italy also have a large share of modified clauses (34.1 %), but almost no entirely new clauses (0.1 %), implying a focus on revising existing terms rather than adding new ones. The largest share of new clauses is in agreements in Belgium (19.3 %). The number of changes in agreements per country differs significantly from the averages presented in the final row of Table 9, and therefore country-specific variation must be considered in any generalisations.

Table 9: Number of changes in collective agreements by country

Country	Number of clauses changed	Percentage of clauses changed	Number of clauses not changed	Percentage of clauses not changed	Number of new clauses	Percentage of new clauses	Number of clauses not relevant	Percentage of clauses not relevant	Total
Austria	416	14.4 %	1 978	68.7 %	483	16.8 %	2	0.1 %	2 879
Belgium	147	19.1 %	164	21.3 %	149	19.3 %	311	40.3 %	771
Croatia	7	3.0 %	213	92.2 %	10	4.3 %	1	0.4 %	231
Czechia	15	12.1 %	107	86.3 %	2	1.6 %	0	0.0 %	124
Finland	340	13.7 %	1 354	54.4 %	344	13.8 %	452	18.2 %	2 490
France	134	11.1 %	807	66.6 %	189	15.6 %	82	6.8 %	1 212
Italy	328	34.1 %	612	63.7 %	1	0.1 %	20	2.1 %	961
Netherlands	529	47.2 %	383	34.2 %	205	18.3 %	4	0.4 %	1 121
Norway	200	25.7 %	512	65.9 %	64	8.2 %	1	0.1 %	777
Portugal	44	3.2 %	1 337	96.7 %	2	0.1 %	0	0.0 %	1 383
Slovakia	65	16.9 %	297	77.3 %	22	5.7 %	0	0.0 %	384
Spain	204	20.1 %	650	64.1 %	139	13.7 %	21	2.1 %	1 014
Total	2 429	18.2 %	8 414	63.0 %	1 610	12.1 %	894	6.7 %	13 347

Note: In each category of change, the five largest shares are presented in bold.

Source: CBBP Database 2025.

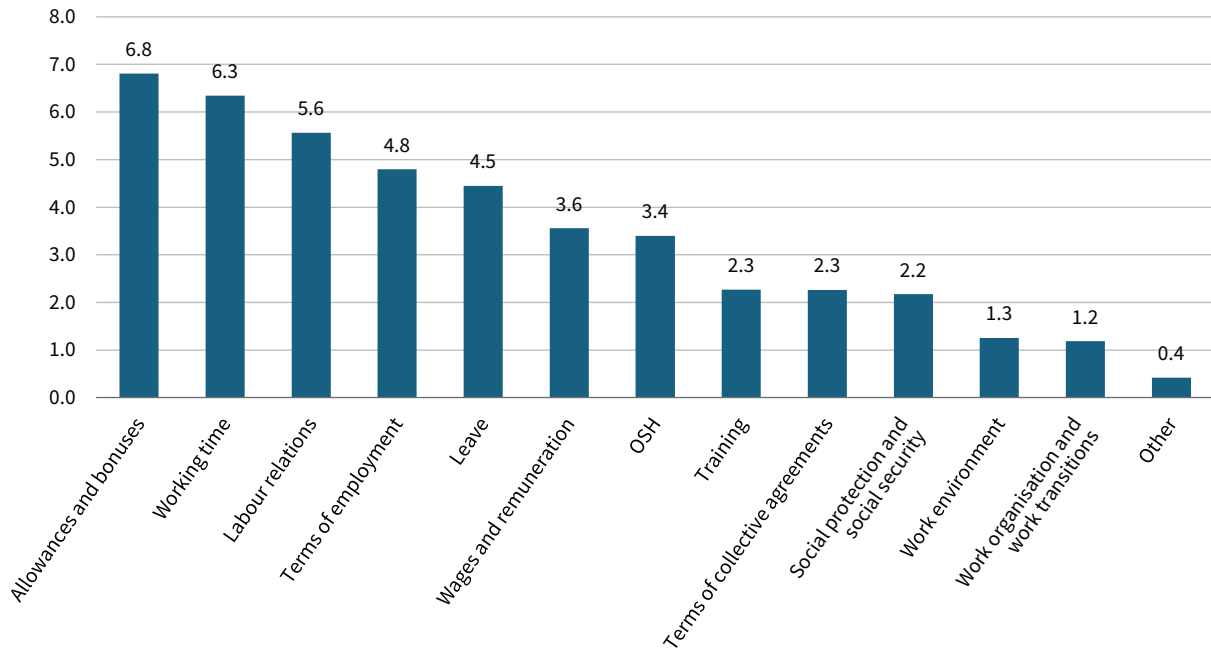
⁽¹³⁾ Intercoder reliability is 'a numerical measure of the agreement between different coders regarding how the same data should be coded'. 'Intercoder consistency' occurs when the degree of consensus is not quantified (O'Connor et al., 2020).

Sector overview

In the manufacture of FLTC sector, the three most frequently coded topics are allowances and bonuses, working time and labour relations. In the residential and social care sector, working time leads the count, followed by allowances and bonuses and leave. In the retail sector, allowances and bonuses is the most

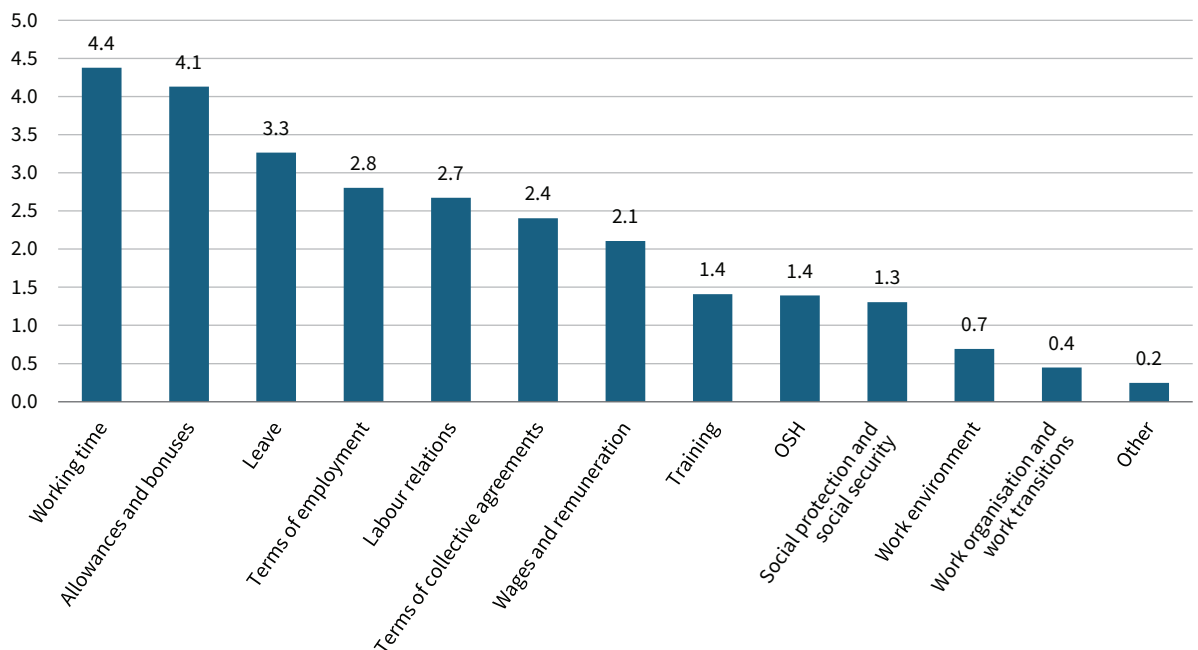
frequent, followed by working time and leave. The pattern is clear: all three low-paid sectors have a similar thematic distribution at the top end. At the bottom end, the least frequent topics (excluding the ‘other’ category) are again the same in all three sectors: social protection and social security, work environment, and work organisation and work transitions (Figures 17–19).

Figure 17: Share of clauses per main topic in the manufacture of FLTC sector (%)



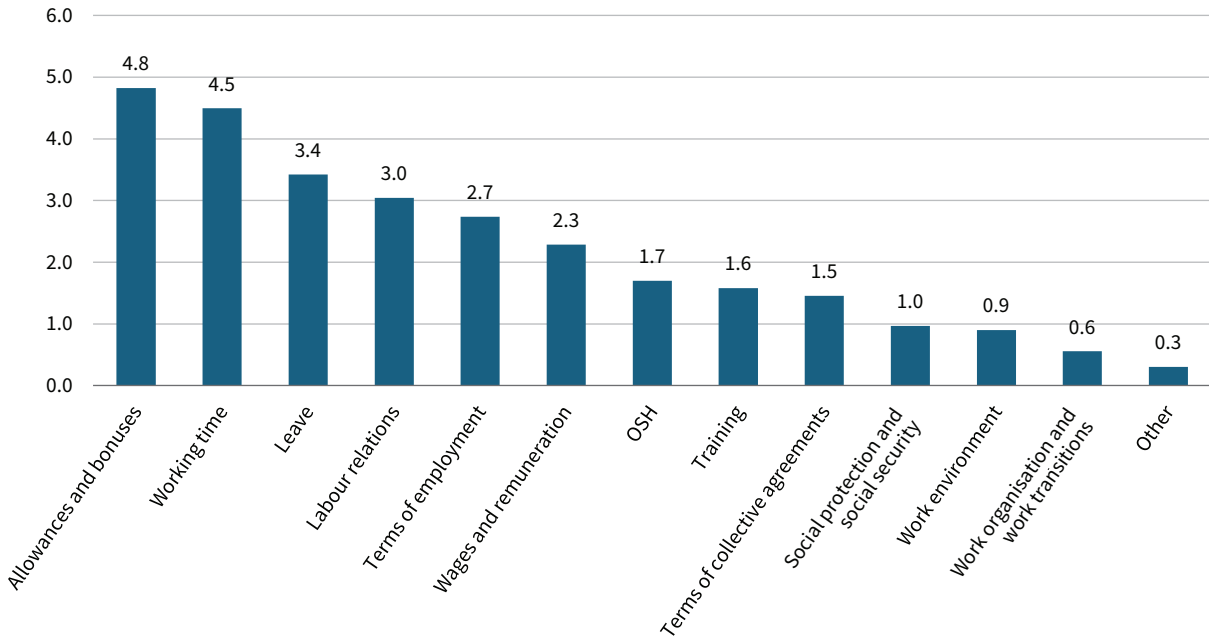
Source: CBBP Database 2025.

Figure 18: Share of clauses per main topic in the residential and social care sector (%)



Source: CBBP Database 2025.

Figure 19: Share of clauses per main topic in the retail sector (%)

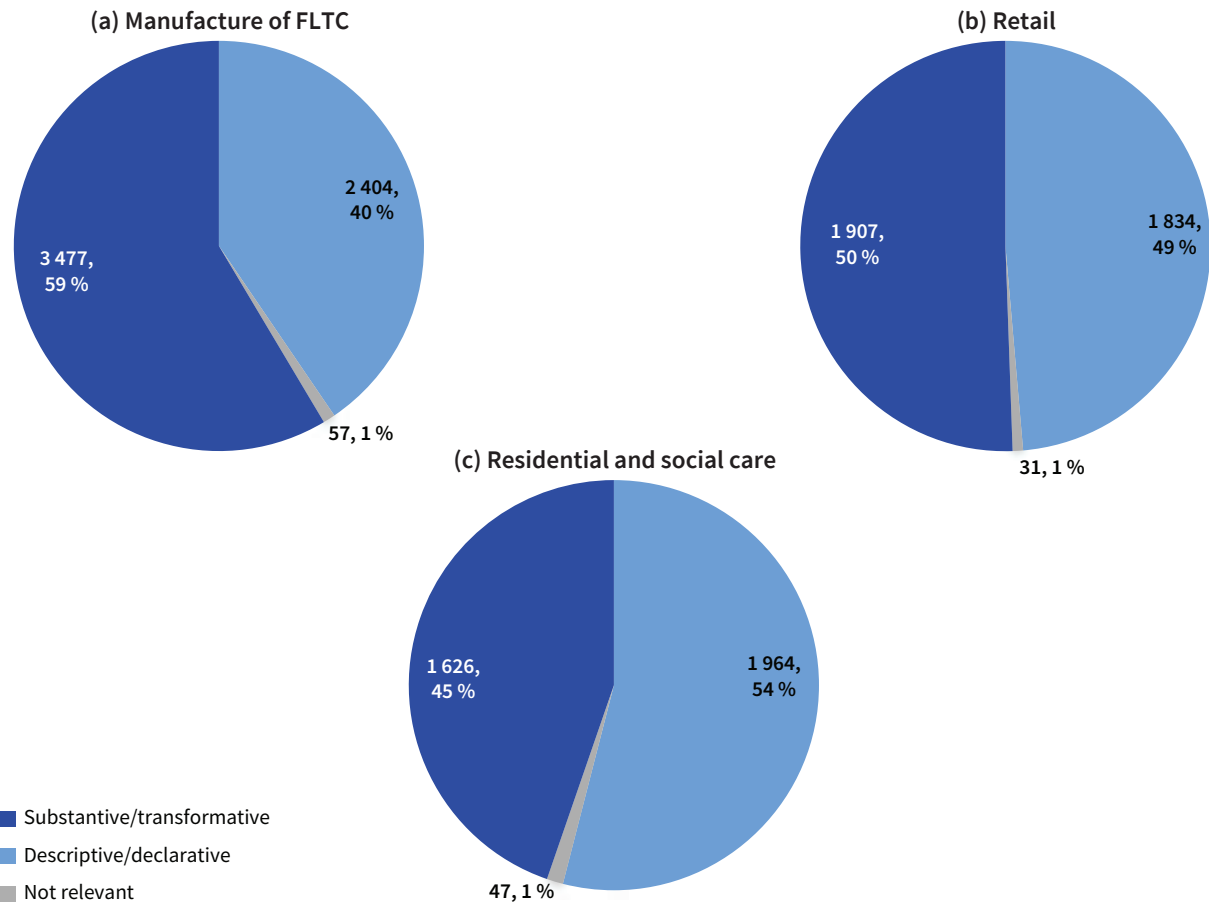


Source: CBBP Database 2025.

Similarly, Figure 20 presents coded clauses by their type for each of the three low-paid sectors. Manufacture of

FLTC is the sector with the largest share of substantive or transformative clauses, followed by the retail sector,

Figure 20: Types of clauses by sector



Source: CBBP Database 2025.

Table 10: Number of changes in collective agreements by sector

Sector	Number of clauses changed	Percentage of sector total	Number of clauses not changed	Percentage of sector total	Number of new clauses	Percentage of sector total	Number of clauses not relevant	Percentage of sector total	Total
Manufacture of FLTC	822	13.8 %	4 589	77.3 %	397	6.7 %	130	2.2 %	5 938
Care	1 800	49.5 %	735	20.2 %	562	15.5 %	540	14.8 %	3 637
Retail	872	23.1 %	2 025	53.7 %	651	17.3 %	224	5.9 %	3 772
Total	3 494	26.2 %	7 349	55.1 %	1 610	12.1 %	894	6.7 %	13 347

Note: The largest share in each category of change is presented in bold.

Source: CBBP Database 2025.

where the distribution is rather equal, and the care sector, where descriptive clauses dominate. Again, these sector groupings disregard country differences and, hence, should be interpreted with caution.

The sectors also differ in terms of the shares of clauses that remain unchanged, clauses that have changed and clauses that are new (Table 10). Clauses in the manufacture of FLTC sector have tended to remain unchanged over time (77.3 %). In contrast, in the care sector, almost half of the clauses have changed and another 15.5 % are completely new. In this sector, of the 540 clauses that are not relevant for comparison, 462 come from the aforementioned Finnish agreement (CA-FI-2010) for which there is no single earlier version. This is the result of a reform that introduced a new government administration level in the sector. In the retail sector, while the majority of clauses remain unchanged (53.7 %), the highest percentage of new clauses is observed (17.3 %), and a significant portion have also undergone changes to their form or meaning (23.1 %).

Overview of the main topics in collective agreements

This subsection provides descriptive statistics for all of the coded clauses in 94 collective agreements from three sectors per each of the main topics. The codes are presented hierarchically, ordered first by their occurrence, or frequency, at the second level (level 2 code) and then by their occurrence at the third (or fourth) level (level 3 or level 4 code). For the number of clauses per main topic, see again Figure 8.

Terms of collective agreements

The clauses specifying the basic terms and conditions of collective agreements cover 6.12 % (817) of all coded clauses (13 347) and are found in 94.7 % of all collective agreements, or 89 of 94 (Table 11). Within this group, collective agreements most frequently specify to whom the agreement applies (subcategory of applicability, 84 %). The second most frequent subcategory is the code 'other'.

The 'other' subcategory includes codes on:

- details on the accessibility of collective agreements to workers;
- procedural clauses on amendments, modifications, renewals and the transitional period between the conclusion of a new agreement or the cancellation of a collective agreement or its parts;
- details on interaction between various levels of bargaining and the favourability principle;
- themes/issues that can be addressed by local and company agreements (e.g. additional financial benefits (CA-FI-2009));
- cases where a separate wage agreement is concluded, rules on interaction between the collective agreement and a wage agreement;
- guidelines for the application of collective agreements;
- various other clauses that overlap with clauses on labour relations, particularly related to dispute resolution, such as peace clauses that prohibit industrial action during the duration of agreements, or employer–union cooperation, exchange of information and the value of mutual trust.

All five collective agreements with a missing reference to terms and conditions come from Belgium, where texts from several agreements had to be merged into one to map all subjects covered by one joint committee (see Eurofound (2025) for more details on the sample).

Quantitative summary 1

- **Total codes:** 817/13 347
- **Share:** 6.12 %
- **In:** 94.7 % of collective agreements
- **Descriptive:** 82.9 %
- **Substantive:** 14.6 %
- **Change:** 25.5 %
- **No change:** 53.6 %
- **New:** 12.7 %

Table 11: Number and proportion of clauses coded under ‘terms of collective agreements’

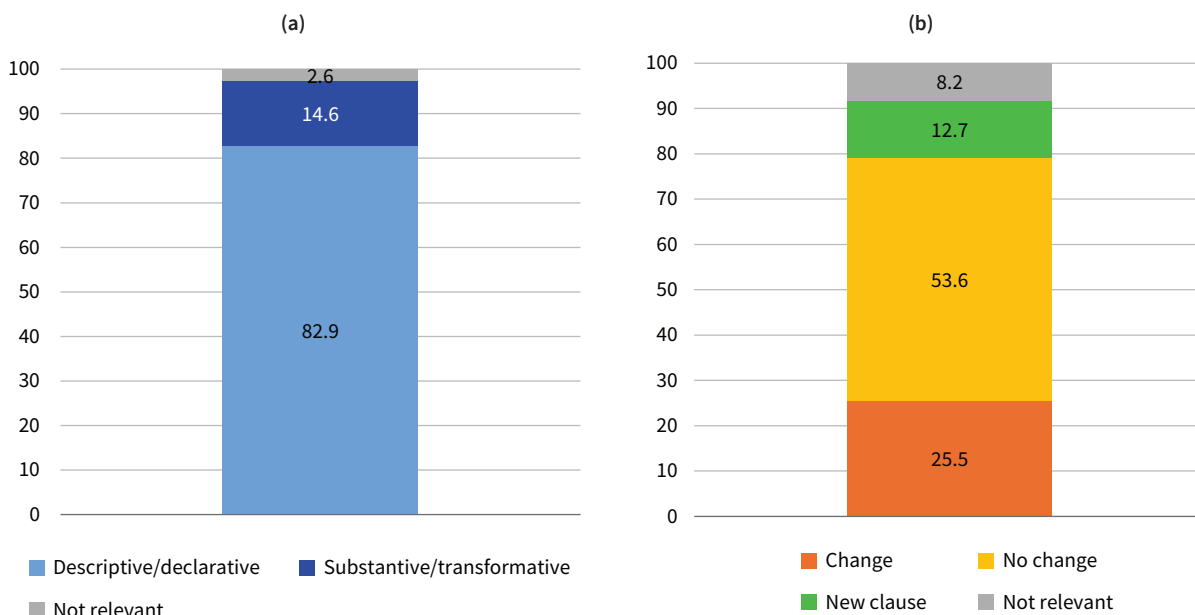
Code	Number of clauses	Percentage of all clauses	Number of collective agreements with this code	Percentage of all collective agreements
❖ Terms of collective agreements (level 1)	2	0.01 %	2	2.1 %
○ Applicability of collective agreements (level 2)	255	1.9 %	79	84.0 %
○ Other clauses related to terms of collective agreements	210	1.6 %	64	68.1 %
○ Opt-outs and derogations	99	0.7 %	43	45.7 %
○ Parties to the agreement	89	0.7 %	46	48.9 %
○ Duration	85	0.6 %	54	57.4 %
○ Subject of the agreement	77	0.6 %	43	45.7 %
Total	817	6.12 %	89	94.7 %

Source: CBBP Database 2025.

A vast majority of clauses (82.9 %, or 677) are descriptive or declarative. Only 14.6 % of clauses (119) are coded as substantive, mostly found under the subcategories applicability (35), other terms of collective agreements (37) and derogations (27) (Figure 21(a)). The majority of clauses (53.6 %, or 438) had not changed from their earlier versions. Where a change had occurred, it was most often related to the

applicability of agreements (53) and their duration (52 clauses). New clauses amount to 12.7 % and the majority of them are coded under ‘other’. For example, in a collective agreement concluded for the residential and social care sector in the Netherlands, a new clause stipulates transitional and guarantee arrangements in relation to a changed scope of entitlements in the new version (CA-NL-1210) (Figure 21(b)).

Figure 21: Terms of collective agreements – (a) proportions of clauses coded as descriptive or substantive and (b) proportions of clauses that are new, changed or not changed (%)



Source: CBBP Database 2025.

Terms of employment

The clauses coded under terms of employment amount to 10.3 % (1 379) of all clauses and are found in 92.6 % of all agreements, or 87 of 94 (Table 12). Within this group, ‘other’ employment-related clauses (i.e. those that do not fall under the other level 2 subcategories specified for this main topic) are most frequent, with 369 references (2.8 % of all codes). In the ‘other’ subcategory, collective agreements cover a wide range of topics, such as:

- job classifications (at least 84 references) and functional mobility (other than promotion);
- mandatory items in individual employment contracts and rules, including their expiry (~38);
- definitions of a workplace and location (~18);
- disciplinary measures (suspension of employees, compensation for damages) (~16);
- confidentiality and data protection;
- transfer and posting of workers (~18);
- end of employment and retirement;
- obligations for ‘good conduct’ and the civil liability of workers;
- many sector-specific issues, such as the right to be recognised as an inventor of a product (e.g. CA-IT-2569 in the manufacture of FLTC sector).

Clauses on non-standard employment, which to some extent overlap with the codes on various flexible

Quantitative summary 2

- **Total codes:** 1 379/13 347
- **Share:** 10.3 %
- **In:** 92.6 % of collective agreements
- **Descriptive:** 55.1 %
- **Substantive:** 48.7 %
- **Change:** 15.5 %
- **No change:** 71.4 %
- **New:** 10.5 %

working time arrangements, are the second most common, with 271 codes (2.0 % of the total). Next is lay-offs and dismissals, with 210 references (1.6 % of the total) across 53 agreements (56.4 % of all collective agreements).

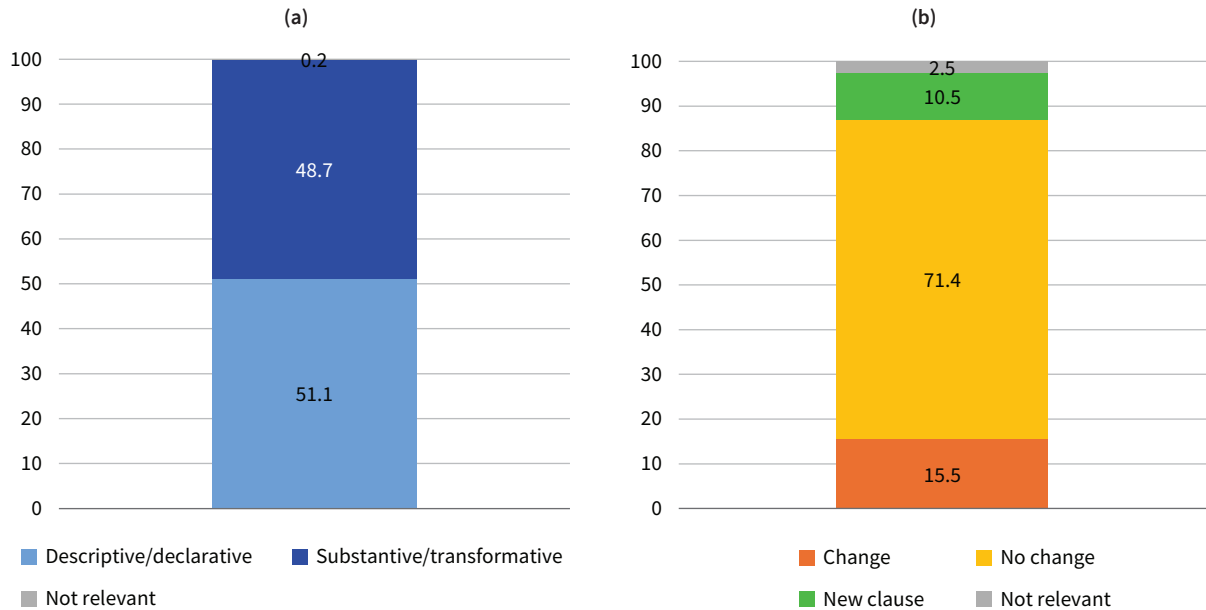
The distribution of substantive clauses (48.7 %, or 705) and descriptive clauses (55.1 %, or 671) is fairly even (Figure 22(a)). The majority of declarative clauses are ‘other’ employment clauses (228), clauses on lay-offs/dismissals (133) and clauses on non-standard employment (95). Codes in this category are also stable over time (71.4 % showing no change), and approximately 11 % are new clauses not found in the older version of the agreement. In total, 43 of 145 new clauses are on non-standard employment, of which 22 are from Austria.

Table 12: Number and proportion of clauses coded under ‘terms of employment’

Code	Number of clauses	Percentage of all clauses	Number of collective agreements with this code	Percentage of all collective agreements
❖ Terms of employment (level 1)	20	0.1 %	14	14.9 %
○ Other employment-related clauses (level 2)	369	2.8 %	63	67.0 %
○ Non-standard employment	271	2.0 %	65	69.1 %
○ Lay-off/collective dismissal	210	1.6 %	53	56.4 %
○ Standard employment	102	0.8 %	46	48.9 %
○ Notice period (level 3)	137	1.0 %	56	59.6 %
○ Trial period (level 3)	85	0.6 %	54	57.4 %
○ Promotion	87	0.7 %	29	30.9 %
○ Stages of employment	66	0.5 %	28	29.8 %
○ Obstacles at work/in employment	32	0.2 %	13	13.8 %
Total	1 379	10.3 %	87	92.6 %

Source: CBBP Database 2025.

Figure 22: Terms of employment – (a) proportions of clauses coded as descriptive or substantive and (b) proportions of clauses that are new, changed or not changed (%)



Source: CBBP Database 2025.

Wages and remuneration

Of the 13 main topics, the category ‘wages and remuneration’ is the sixth most common, measured by the sum of all codes aggregated at level 1 (Figure 8). With 1 061 references across the collective agreements analysed, wages and remuneration is the only main topic found in all 94 agreements across all three low-paid sectors.

As seen in Figure 14, ‘basic wages’ is the most common level 2 code in the sample. In other words, the clauses most frequently found in the collective agreements across the 12 countries are those describing basic wages. Clauses on basic wages also form the vast majority (69.7 %, or 739 of 1 061) of all clauses coded under the main category of wages and remuneration, and are found in 95.7 % of all agreements. Other subcategories included under this topic are not as common (Table 13).

Quantitative summary 3

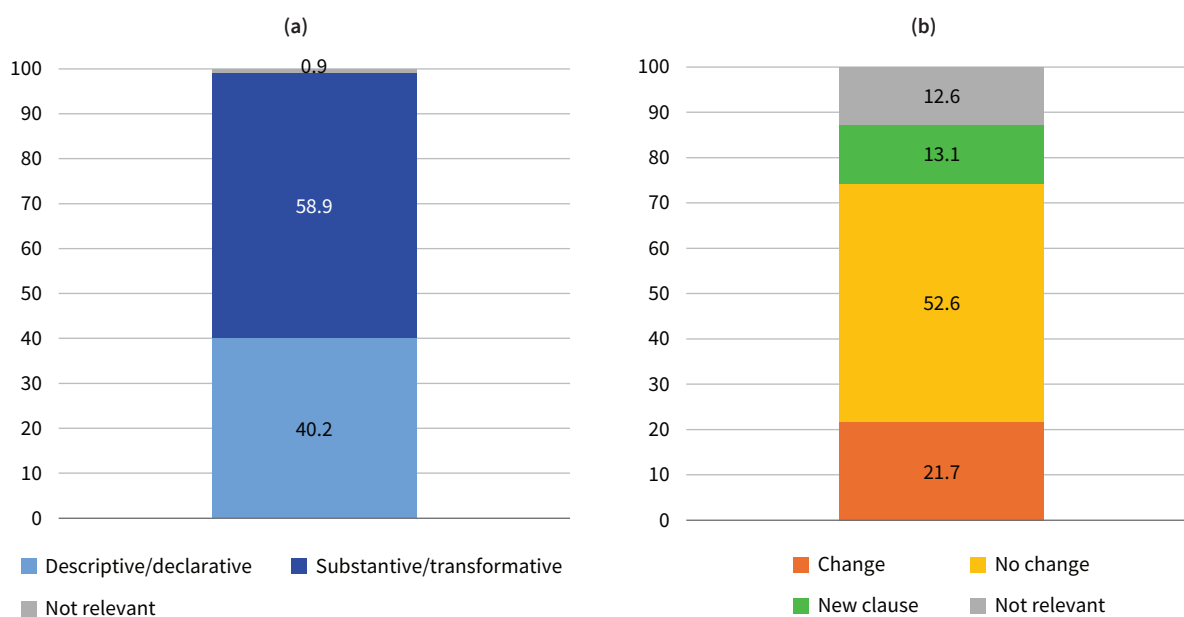
- **Total codes:** 1 061/13 347
- **Share:** 7.9 %
- **In:** 100 % of collective agreements
- **Descriptive:** 40.2 %
- **Substantive:** 58.9 %
- **Change:** 21.7 %
- **No change:** 52.6 %
- **New:** 13.1 %

Wages and remuneration clauses are more often substantive (58.9 %, or 625) than descriptive (40.2 %, or 426) (Figure 23(a)). In terms of change, 21.7 % of clauses changed their meaning or form, while there was no change to 52.6 %; 13.1 % of clauses are new, and about the same share (12.6 %) are not relevant for comparison. Again, the Finnish agreement (CA-FI-2010), which has no single earlier version, accounts for 69 of these 134 irrelevant references, and most of the rest (58) come from Belgium (Figure 23(b)).

Table 13: Number and proportion of clauses coded under ‘wages and remuneration’

Code	Number of clauses	Percentage of all clauses	Number of collective agreements with this code	Percentage of all collective agreements
❖ Wages and remuneration (level 1)	97	0.7 %	39	41.5 %
○ Basic wages (level 2)	739	5.5 %	90	95.7 %
○ Severance pay/redundancy pay	102	0.8 %	45	47.9 %
○ Piece rates (or similar per-item payments, e.g. brokerage fees)	95	0.7 %	24	25.5 %
○ Group performance pay	20	0.1 %	17	18.1 %
○ Financial participation schemes (profit sharing or share ownership)	8	0.1 %	2	2.1 %
Total	1 061	7.9 %	94	100.0 %

Source: CBBP Database 2025.

Figure 23: Wages and remuneration – (a) proportions of clauses coded as descriptive or substantive and (b) proportions of clauses that are new, changed or not changed (%)

Source: CBBP Database 2025.

Allowances and bonuses

Allowances and bonuses is the most frequent main topic based on its aggregate number of level 1 coded references (2 104), amounting to 15.8 % of all references and appearing in 97.9 % of collective agreements (92 of 94). The subcategory of ‘other allowances’⁽¹⁴⁾ has 679 references (5.1 % of the total) and is the most frequent category within this topic and the second most frequent level 2 code after basic wages (Figure 14). 88.3% of collective agreements mention numerous allowances that are not captured by the predesigned subcategories.

Quantitative summary 4

- **Total codes:** 2 104/13 347
- **Share:** 15.8 %
- **In:** 97.9 % of collective agreements
- **Descriptive:** 36.4 %
- **Substantive:** 62.5 %
- **Change:** 20.6 %
- **No change:** 62.5 %
- **New:** 8.8 %

⁽¹⁴⁾ See the subsection ‘A plethora of other allowances found in collective agreements’ for a detailed overview.

These ‘other allowances’ are analysed in the next chapter.

Table 14 shows that six categories of bonuses and premiums ⁽¹⁵⁾ cover between 1 % and 2 % of all coded clauses and are found in between 57 and 78 collective agreements. The remaining five other categories of bonuses are less frequent.

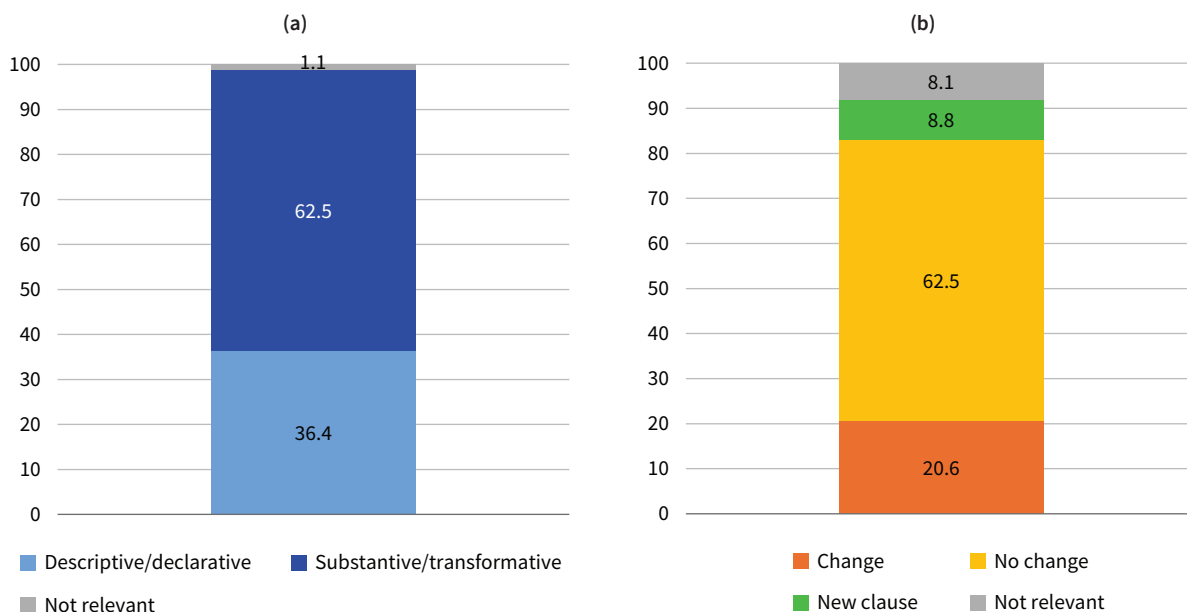
The majority of clauses are substantive (62.5 %) and stable over time with no changes (62.5 %). However, almost 30 % of the clauses are either changed (20.6 %, 433) or new (8.8 %, 185 clauses). The majority of new clauses are coded as ‘other’ types of allowances (71 of the 679 in that subcategory) (Figure 24).

Table 14: Number and proportion of clauses coded under ‘allowances and bonuses’

Code	Number of clauses	Percentage of all clauses	Number of collective agreements with this code	Percentage of all collective agreements
❖ Allowances and bonuses (level 1)	29	0.2 %	14	14.9 %
○ Other allowances (level 2)	679	5.1 %	83	88.3 %
○ Premium for overtime	267	2.0 %	78	83.0 %
○ Transport allowance	190	1.4 %	59	62.8 %
○ Premium for night work	167	1.3 %	71	75.5 %
○ Seniority allowance/premium	149	1.1 %	57	60.6 %
○ Premium for work during public holidays	147	1.1 %	62	66.0 %
○ Premium for work on weekends	136	1.0 %	60	63.8 %
○ Meal allowance	114	0.9 %	60	63.8 %
○ Shift allowance	86	0.6 %	41	43.6 %
○ Premium for dangerous work/hardship	47	0.4 %	32	34.0 %
○ Premium for on-call work/work at short notice	47	0.4 %	25	26.6 %
○ Performance-related bonuses for individuals	46	0.3 %	22	23.4 %
Total	2 104	15.8 %	92	97.9 %

Source: CBBP Database 2025.

Figure 24: Allowances and bonuses – (a) proportions of clauses coded as descriptive or substantive and (b) proportions of clauses that are new, changed or not changed (%)



Source: CBBP Database 2025.

⁽¹⁵⁾ Premium for overtime, transport allowance, premium for night work, seniority allowance/premium, premium for work during public holidays, and premium for work on weekends.

Working time

The second most frequent main topic is working time, with 2 031 code references (15.2 % of the total) across 90 agreements (95.7 %). As is the case with allowances and bonuses, the largest share of codes within this category are references to ‘other working time-related provisions’, with 613 references (4.6 % of the total) (Table 15).

The most frequent clauses in the ‘other’ subcategory are described in detail in the next chapter.

Clauses on working time are more commonly substantive (62.8 %) than descriptive (36.4 %) and the majority (64.0 %) have the same wording as in the 2015 (or earliest available) version of the agreement. Clauses that did change their form or meaning amount to 15.2 %, and new clauses reach almost 12 % (Figure 25).

Quantitative summary 5

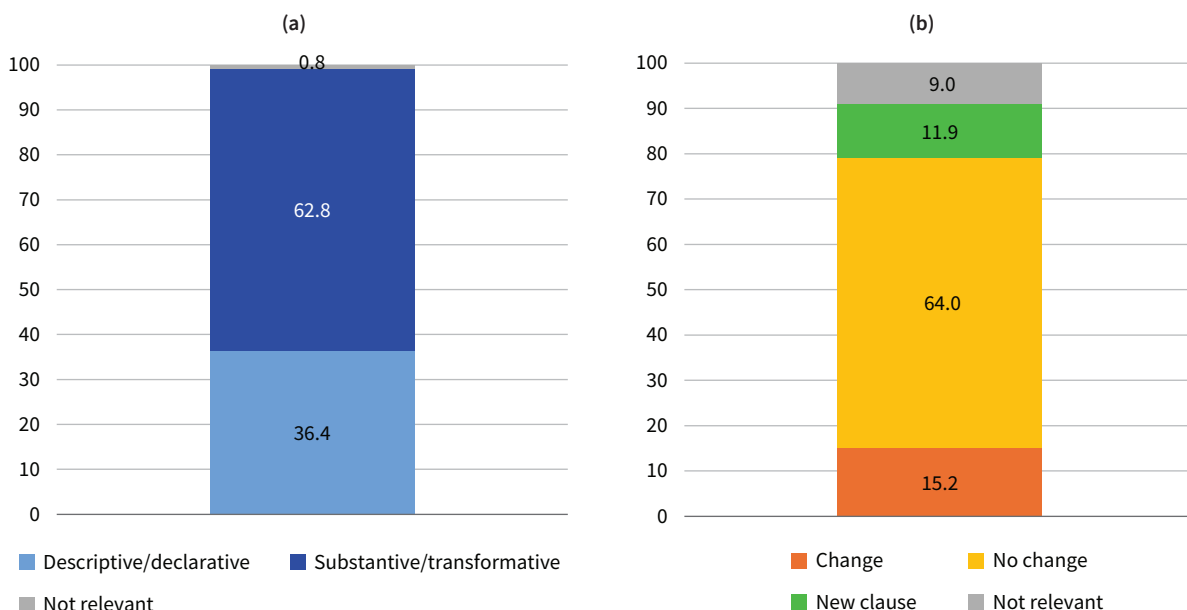
- **Total codes:** 2 031/13 347
- **Share:** 15.22 %
- **In:** 95.7 % of collective agreements
- **Descriptive:** 36.4 %
- **Substantive:** 62.8 %
- **Change:** 15.2 %
- **No change:** 64.0 %
- **New:** 11.9 %

Table 15: Number and proportion of clauses coded under ‘working time’

Code	Number of clauses	Percentage of all clauses	Number of collective agreements with this code	Percentage of all collective agreements
❖ Working time (level 1)	48	0.4 %	21	22.3 %
○ Other working time-related provisions (level 2)	613	4.6 %	66	70.2 %
○ Standard working time	338	2.5 %	85	90.4 %
○ Flexible working time	333	2.5 %	65	69.1 %
○ Resting periods/breaks	299	2.2 %	70	74.5 %
○ Shift work	150	1.1 %	43	45.7 %
○ Flexible working time related to type of employment contract	130	1.0 %	39	41.5 %
○ Night work	116	0.9 %	52	55.3 %
○ Flexible working time related to teleworking/home work	4	0.0 %	4	4.3 %
Total	2 031	15.2 %	90	95.7 %

Source: CBBP Database 2025.

Figure 25: Working time – (a) proportions of clauses coded as descriptive or substantive and (b) proportions of clauses that are new, changed or not changed (%)



Source: CBBP Database 2025.

Leave

Clauses on leave account for 1 487 references or 11.1 % of all coded clauses (Table 16). They are found in almost all collective agreements (92 of 94). Within this category, and looking at all codes regardless of their levels, clauses on 'other leave provisions' are the most frequent, with 313 references and a share of 2.3 % of all coded clauses. However, when grouping codes at level 2 with their level 3 subcategories, clauses on personal leave/vacation have 377 references in total, taking into account the level 3 code on seniority-based increases in leave allowances. Similarly, clauses on special leave are more frequent when grouped at level 2, with 371 codes in total⁽¹⁶⁾. The least common clauses among this group are on sabbatical, found only in 35 (0.3 %) agreements.

The majority of leave clauses are substantive (65.9 %, or 980) and unchanged over time (66.6 %, or 990). 19.5 % of leave clauses (290) changed their form or meaning and 10.6 % are new clauses (158) (Figure 26).

Quantitative summary 6

- **Total codes:** 1 487/13 347
- **Share:** 11.1 %
- **In:** 97.9 % of collective agreements
- **Descriptive:** 33.6 %
- **Substantive:** 65.9 %
- **Change:** 19.5 %
- **No change:** 66.6 %
- **New:** 10.6 %

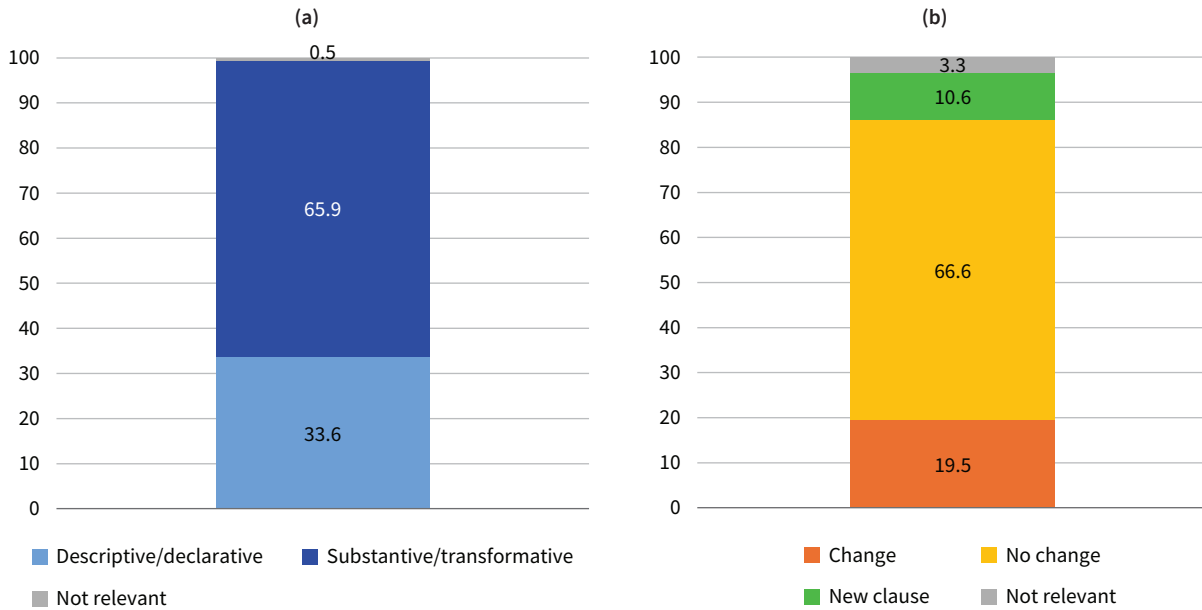
Table 16: Number and proportion of clauses coded under 'leave'

Code	Number of clauses	Percentage of all clauses	Number of collective agreements with this code	Percentage of all collective agreements
❖ Leave (level 1)	59	0.4 %	21	22.3 %
○ Other leave provisions (level 2)	313	2.3 %	76	80.9 %
○ Personal/annual leave	300	2.2 %	81	86.2 %
○ Seniority-based increase in leave allowance (level 3)	77	0.6 %	30	31.9 %
○ Sick leave	139	1.0 %	62	66.0 %
○ Parental leave	126	0.9 %	55	58.5 %
○ Maternity leave	102	0.8 %	48	51.1 %
○ Special leave	92	0.7 %	40	42.6 %
○ Care for family members (level 3)	129	1.0 %	62	66.0 %
○ Special leave for public duties	67	0.5 %	44	46.8 %
○ Non-paid leave	48	0.4 %	33	35.1 %
○ Sabbatical	35	0.3 %	20	21.3 %
Total	1 487	11.1 %	92	97.9 %

Source: CBBP Database 2025.

⁽¹⁶⁾ Sum of codes for special leave and all of its subcategories.

Figure 26: Leave – (a) proportions of clauses coded as descriptive or substantive and (b) proportions of clauses that are new, changed or not changed (%)



Source: CBBP Database 2025.

Occupational safety and health

Clauses on OSH at work amount to 6.5 % of all coded clauses, with 867 references found in 92.6 % of agreements (87 of 94). Table 17 shows that the distribution of codes within this category is equally spread, with many codes having similar frequencies and less than a 1 % share of the total number of codes. At the top are ‘general clauses on health protection and prevention’, which when aggregated together at levels 2 and 3 amount to 326 references⁽¹⁷⁾ (2.4 %). When disaggregated, rights and obligations of employers is the most frequent code within this category, referred to in 48 agreements. References to ergonomics are found in only four collective agreements.

The distribution of substantive and descriptive OSH clauses is more equal than that of the previously mentioned codes, with 53.4 % (or 463) coded as

Quantitative summary 7

- **Total codes:** 867/13 347
- **Share:** 6.5 %
- **In:** 92.6 % of collective agreements
- **Descriptive:** 53.4 %
- **Substantive:** 46.5 %
- **Change:** 13.7 %
- **No change:** 71.4 %
- **New:** 14.3 %

descriptive and 46.5 % (or 403) as substantive. In terms of change, the pattern stays the same, with the majority of clauses unchanged (71.4 %, or 619), 13.7 % (or 119) changed and 14.3 % (or 124) new (Figure 27).

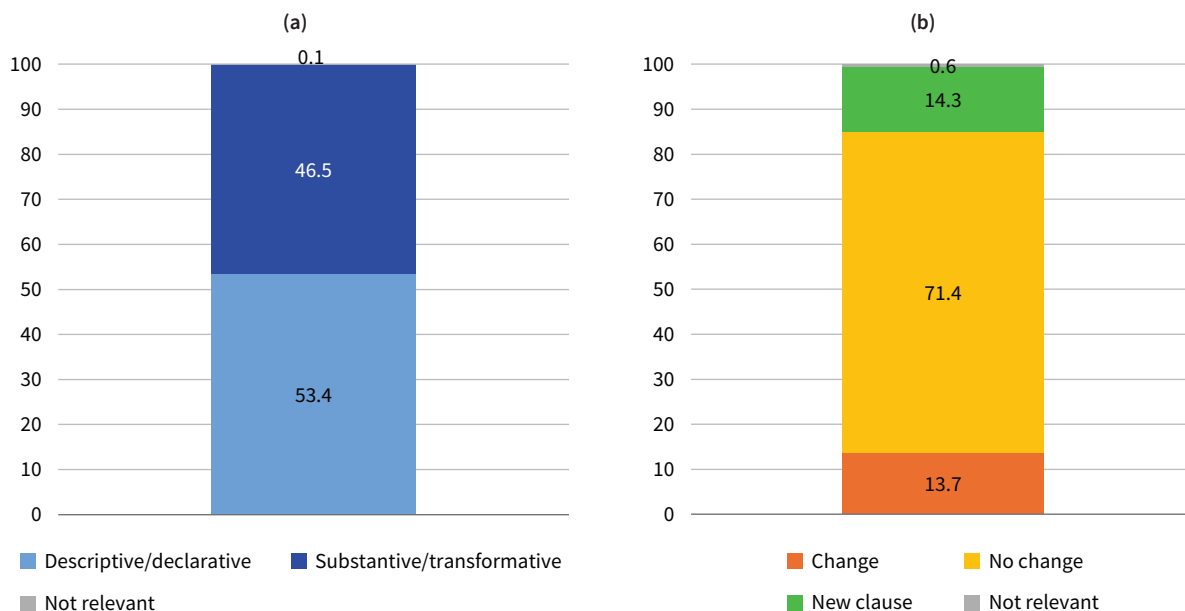
⁽¹⁷⁾ Sum of general clauses on health protection and prevention and all of its subcategories.

Table 17: Number and proportion of clauses coded under ‘OSH’

Code	Number of clauses	Percentage of all clauses	Number of collective agreements with this code	Percentage of all collective agreements
❖ OSH (level 1)	18	0.1 %	11	11.7 %
○ General clauses on health protection and prevention (level 2)	99	0.7 %	42	44.7 %
○ Rights and obligations of employers (level 3)	128	1.0 %	48	51.1 %
○ Rights and obligations of workers	99	0.7 %	45	47.9 %
○ OSH committees (level 2)	89	0.7 %	24	25.5 %
○ Workplace safety	88	0.7 %	38	40.4 %
○ Other OSH-related clauses	79	0.6 %	37	39.4 %
○ Personal protective equipment	69	0.5 %	47	50.0 %
○ Occupational injury	46	0.3 %	32	34.0 %
○ Work-life balance	42	0.3 %	22	23.4 %
○ OSH-related training	39	0.3 %	20	21.3 %
○ Occupational service/physicians	31	0.2 %	24	25.5 %
○ Unforeseeable events and emergencies (e.g. COVID-19)	19	0.1 %	12	12.8 %
○ Psychosocial risks and support	17	0.1 %	12	12.8 %
○ Ergonomics	4	0.0 %	4	4.3 %
Total	867	6.5 %	87	92.6 %

Source: CBBP Database 2025.

Figure 27: OSH – (a) proportions of clauses coded as descriptive or substantive and (b) proportions of clauses that are new, changed or not changed (%)



Source: CBBP Database 2025.

Social protection and social security

The topic of social protection and social security amounts to 4.4 % of all coded clauses with 593 references. The most frequent subcategory is again ‘other’, specifically ‘other clauses on social protection and security’ (153, or 1.1 % of all references), which includes specific issues not captured by the predefined codes, such as dismissal protection, maintenance of guarantees in the event of death, spousal protection or various codes overlapping with allowances and bonuses. Health-related insurance is the second most frequent subcategory under this topic, with 140 (or 1 % of all) references in 49 (52.1 %) collective agreements (Table 18).

The majority (56.2 %) of social protection and social security clauses are descriptive as opposed to substantive (41.3 %). The proportion of codes that had changed compared with a previous version is similar to that of the category allowances and bonuses, at 22.4 %.

Quantitative summary 8

- **Total codes:** 593/13 347
- **Share:** 4.4 %
- **In:** 86.2 % of collective agreements
- **Descriptive:** 56.2 %
- **Substantive:** 41.3 %
- **Change:** 22.4 %
- **No change:** 49.1 %
- **New:** 13.0 %

New clauses account for 13 % of all codes in this category and 49.1% remain the same (Figure 28). A relatively large share of codes (15.5 %) are not relevant for comparison, although in absolute terms this is the case for 92 references, mostly from Belgium⁽¹⁸⁾.

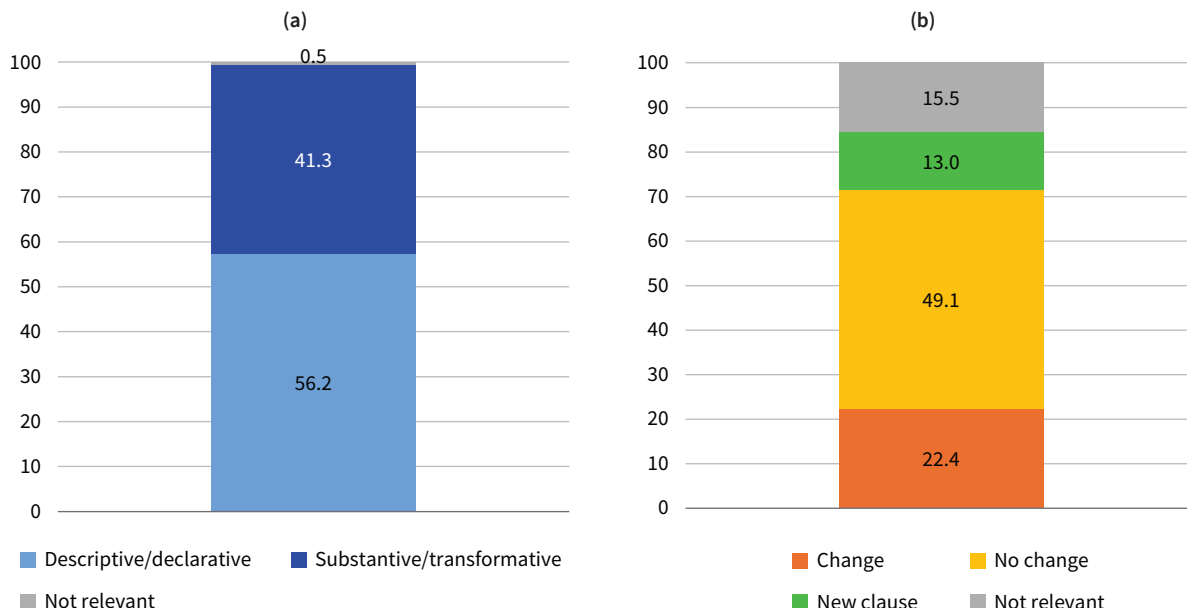
Table 18: Number and proportion of clauses coded under ‘social protection and social security’

Code	Number of clauses	Percentage of all clauses	Number of collective agreements with this code	Percentage of all collective agreements
❖ Social protection and social security (level 1)	6	0.04 %	4	4.3 %
○ Other clauses on social protection and security (level 2)	153	1.1 %	32	34.0 %
○ Health insurance, sickness insurance and health-related services	140	1.0 %	49	52.1 %
○ Pension scheme/contributions	114	0.9 %	65	69.1 %
○ Solidarity fund	69	0.5 %	16	17.0 %
○ Income protection	63	0.5 %	24	25.5 %
○ Unemployment protection	48	0.4 %	19	20.2 %
Total	593	4.4 %	81	86.2 %

Source: CBBP Database 2025.

⁽¹⁸⁾ See Eurofound (2025) for the specific case of Belgium.

Figure 28: Social protection and social security – (a) proportions of clauses coded as descriptive or substantive and (b) proportions of clauses that are new, changed or not changed (%)



Source: CBBP Database 2025.

Work organisation and work transitions

Codes under the main topic of work organisation and work transitions are less frequently found in the collective agreements, with only 292 references (or a share of 2.2 %) in 59 (or 62.8 %) agreements (Table 19). Notably, clauses on the green transition are found in only two agreements, and both are new clauses in Norway related to the sustainability development plans of retail companies. This points to the limited responsiveness of the sampled collective agreements to key socioeconomic and environmental transitions.

Even if less frequent, most of these clauses are substantive or transformative (63.7 %) and also stable over time⁽¹⁹⁾ (63.4 % unchanged). A change in form or meaning is found in 19.5 % of clauses under this topic, 13 % are new clauses and 4.1 % are not relevant (Figure 29).

Quantitative summary 9

- **Total codes:** 292/13 347
- **Share:** 2.2 %
- **In:** 62.8 % of collective agreements
- **Descriptive:** 35.3 %
- **Substantive:** 63.7 %
- **Change:** 19.5 %
- **No change:** 63.4 %
- **New:** 13.0 %

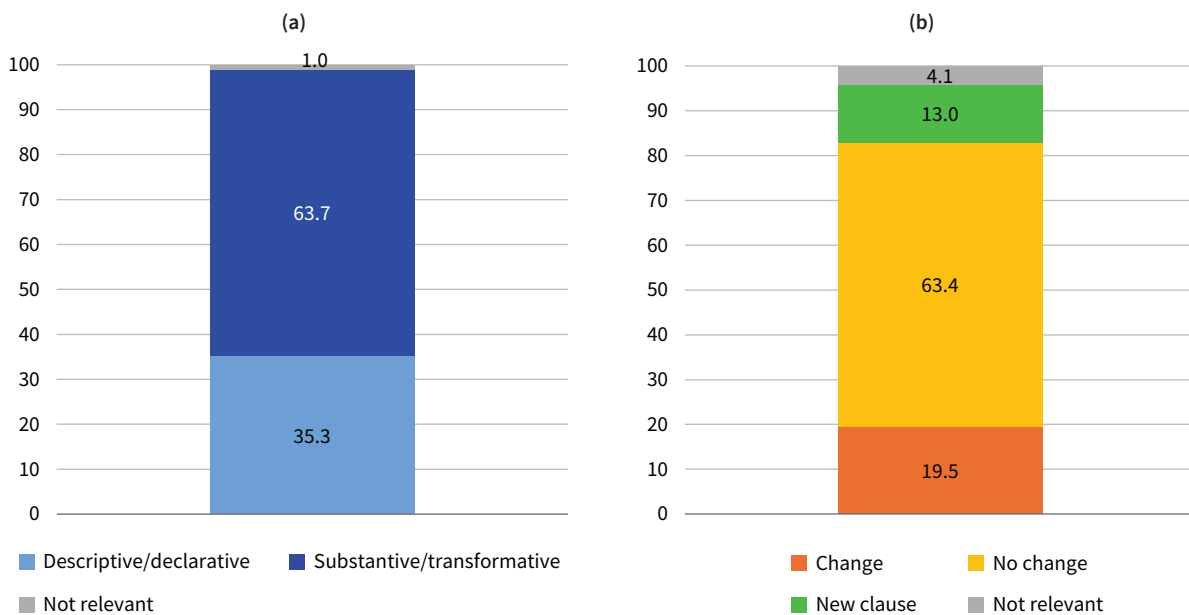
⁽¹⁹⁾ Measured only by comparison of two points in time.

Table 19: Number and proportion of clauses coded under ‘work organisation and work transitions’

Code	Number of clauses	Percentage of all clauses	Number of collective agreements with this code	Percentage of all collective agreements
❖ Work organisation and work transitions (level 1)	13	0.1 %	5	5.3 %
○ Work reorganisation/restructuring (level 2)	146	1.1 %	43	45.7 %
○ Other clauses on work organisation and work transitions	43	0.3 %	17	18.1 %
○ Clauses on productivity and performance	40	0.3 %	18	19.1 %
○ Teleworking/remote work/hybrid work	18	0.1 %	11	11.7 %
○ Clauses on surveillance and AI	18	0.1 %	5	5.3 %
○ Clauses on technological transitions	9	0.1 %	7	7.4 %
○ Clauses on the digital transition	3	0.0 %	2	2.1 %
○ Clauses on the just/green transition	2	0.0 %	2	2.1 %
Total	292	2.2 %	59	62.8 %

Source: CBBP Database 2025.

Figure 29: Work organisation and work transitions – (a) proportions of clauses coded as descriptive or substantive and (b) proportions of clauses that are new, changed or not changed (%)



Source: CBBP Database 2025.

Work environment

The topic of work environment includes five level 2 subcategories. In total, there are 379 references (2.8 % of all codes) distributed across 81 collective agreements (86.2 %). More than half of all agreements refer to the protection of (other) vulnerable groups of workers (54.3 %) and gender equality and protection of women (56.4 %). Almost half of the agreements also include anti-discrimination and inclusion clauses (Table 20).

Quantitative summary 10

- Total codes: 379/13 347
- Share: 2.84 %
- In: 86.2 % of collective agreements
- Descriptive: 64.4 %
- Substantive: 34.6 %
- Change: 21.1 %
- No change: 54.4 %
- New: 16.9 %

Due to their aspirational or procedural nature, the majority of these clauses are descriptive (64.4 %) as opposed to substantive (34.6 %). More than half of the clauses remain unchanged (54.4 %), and 16.9 % are

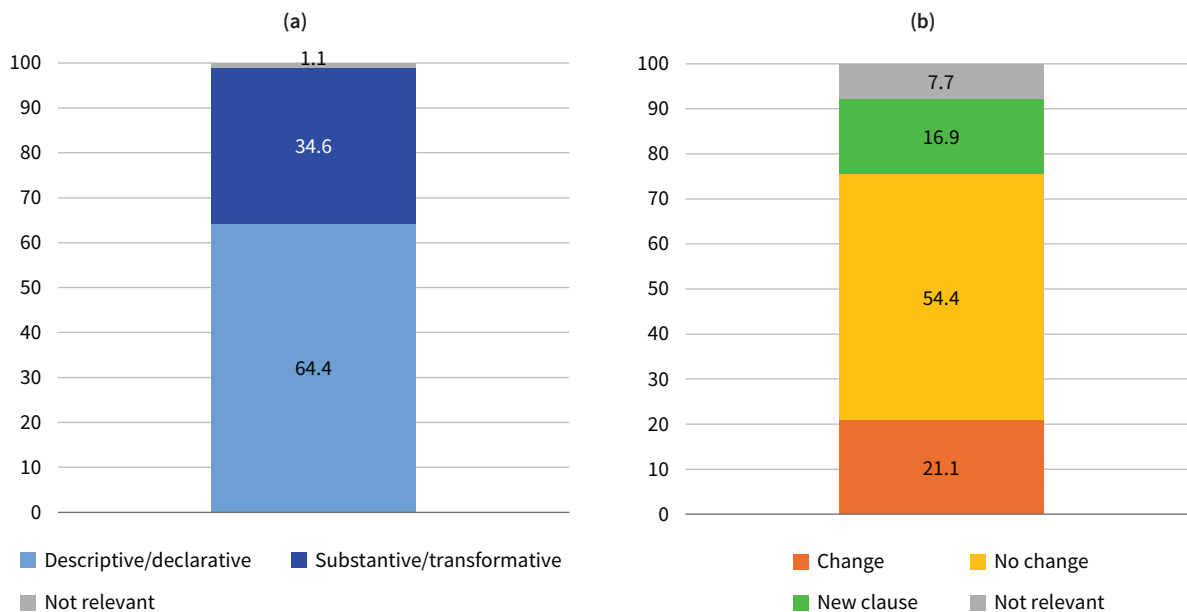
new, which is the second largest share of new clauses among the main 13 topics after training. More than 20 % are the same in both versions of the agreement (Figure 30).

Table 20: Number and proportion of clauses coded under ‘work environment’

Code	Number of clauses	Percentage of all clauses	Number of collective agreements with this code	Percentage of all collective agreements
❖ Work environment (level 1)	7	0.1 %	6	6.4 %
○ Protection of (other) vulnerable groups (level 2)	112	0.8 %	51	54.3 %
○ Gender equality and protection of women	93	0.7 %	53	56.4 %
○ Anti-discrimination and inclusion	79	0.6 %	46	48.9 %
○ Other clauses on work environment	57	0.4 %	31	33.0 %
○ Gender-based violence	31	0.2 %	21	22.3 %
Total	379	2.8 %	81	86.2 %

Source: CBBP Database 2025.

Figure 30: Work environment – (a) proportions of clauses coded as descriptive or substantive and (b) proportions of clauses that are new, changed or not changed (%)



Source: CBBP Database 2025.

Training

Overall, there are 702 references (5.3 %) in 87 collective agreements (92.6 %) under the main code 'training'. The codes under this main topic are the most detailed among all categories, and are designed to capture reskilling and upskilling initiatives in low-paid sectors and their causal factors. However, during the coding process, it became obvious that a distinction between upskilling and reskilling initiatives is not always present or clear in collective agreements. Reskilling related to the green transition/green skills yielded no results and is not included in Table 21. Clauses on apprenticeships and student internships are the most frequent in this category (281, or 2.1 %), followed by training and skills development (125, or 0.9 %) across 57 agreements. As can be seen from Table 21, training related to upskilling and reskilling yielded only a few results.

Most clauses on training are substantive (53 % versus 45 % descriptive), but the difference is small. 16.1 % of clauses changed and a little over half did not change

Quantitative summary 11

- **Total codes:** 702/13 347
- **Share:** 5.3 %
- **In:** 92.6 % of collective agreements
- **Descriptive:** 45.0 %
- **Substantive:** 53.0 %
- **Change:** 16.1 %
- **No change:** 51.4 %
- **New:** 21.9 %

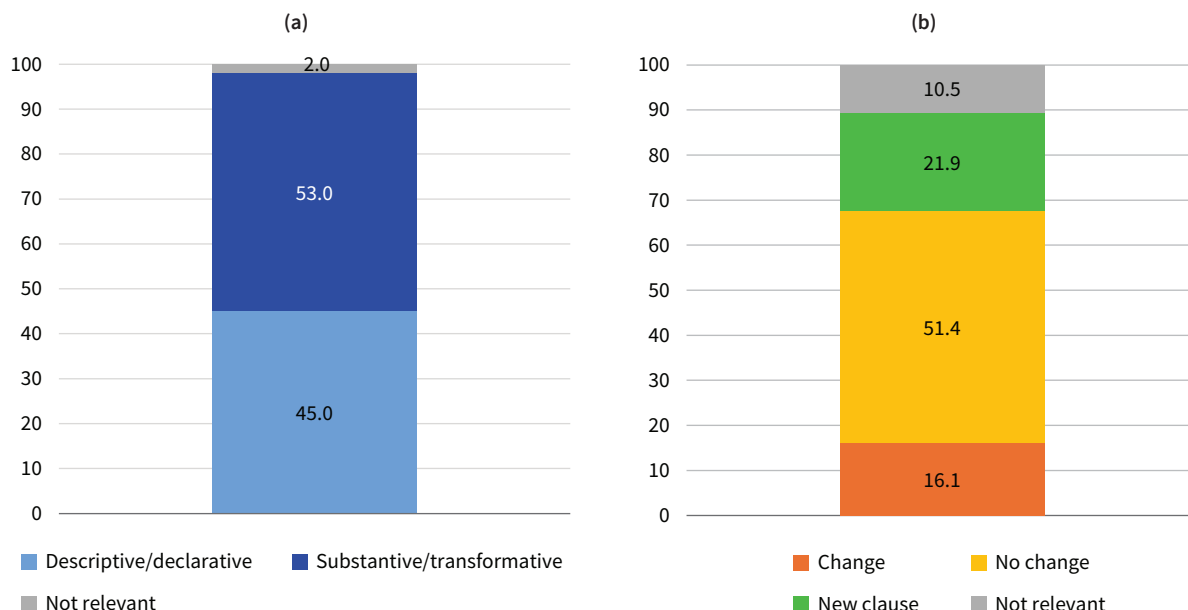
either their meaning or form (51.4 %). The share of new clauses on training (21.9 %) is the largest among all codes, although, in absolute numbers, this amounts only to 154 references, suggesting a higher responsiveness of collective bargaining to changes related to skills and development programmes (Figure 31).

Table 21: Number and proportion of clauses coded under 'training'

Code	Number of clauses	Percentage of all clauses	Number of collective agreements with this code	Percentage of all collective agreements
❖ Training (level 1)	16	0.1 %	11	11.7 %
○ Apprenticeships and internships (level 2)	281	2.1 %	70	74.5 %
○ Training and skills development	125	0.9 %	57	60.6 %
○ Training related to upskilling (level 3)	34	0.3 %	20	21.3 %
◆ Upskilling due to other transitions/other reasons (level 4)	16	0.1 %	8	8.5 %
◆ Upskilling due to technological transitions and technological change/technological skills	5	0.04 %	4	4.3 %
◆ Upskilling due to the green transition/green skills	2	0.01 %	2	2.1 %
◆ Upskilling to improve digital skills	1	0.01 %	1	1.1 %
○ Training related to reskilling (level 3)	7	0.1 %	7	7.4 %
◆ Reskilling due to other transitions/other reasons (level 4)	10	0.1 %	7	7.4 %
◆ Reskilling related to technological transitions	1	0.01 %	1	1.1 %
◆ Reskilling related to digital skills	1	0.01 %	1	1.1 %
○ Other clauses on training (level 2)	118	0.9 %	46	48.9 %
○ Lifelong/continuous learning	85	0.6 %	31	33.0 %
Total	702	5.3 %	87	92.6 %

Source: CBBP Database 2025.

Figure 31: Training – (a) proportions of clauses coded as descriptive or substantive and (b) proportions of clauses that are new, changed or not changed (%)



Source: CBBP Database 2025.

Labour relations

Labour relations is the third most frequent of the 13 main topics (see again Figure 8), with 1 506 references (11.3 %) in 88 collective agreements (93.6 %). Most often, agreements stipulate the role of trade union (3.5 %) and non-union (2.6 %) representatives, followed by the employer’s role and commitments (1.7 %) (Table 22). There is some overlap with codes on terms of collective agreements; for example, a peace clause could be coded under both terms of collective agreements and labour relations, depending on its specific meaning. Some collective agreements have a particularly large number of clauses governing labour relations, such as the Finnish agreement in the textile and fashion industry (CA-FI-2026), with 71 references (0.5 % of all coded clauses).

The majority of clauses governing labour relations are descriptive (56.9 %), while 42.1 % are substantive. Almost two thirds of clauses are unchanged (72.3 %), while 14.9 % changed their form or meaning and 10.7 % are new clauses (Figure 32).

Quantitative summary 12

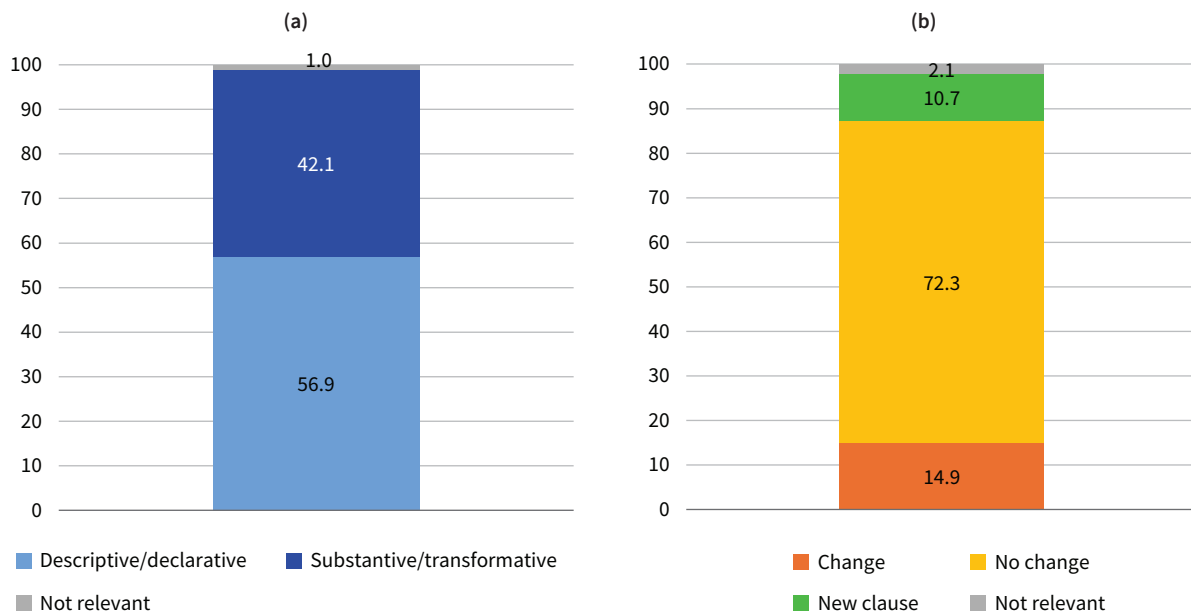
- **Total codes:** 1 506/13 347
- **Share:** 11.3 %
- **In:** 93.6 % of collective agreements
- **Descriptive:** 56.9 %
- **Substantive:** 42.1 %
- **Change:** 14.9 %
- **No change:** 72.3 %
- **New:** 10.7 %

Table 22: Number and proportion of clauses coded under ‘labour relations’

Code	Number of clauses	Percentage of all clauses	Number of collective agreements with this code	Percentage of all collective agreements
❖ Labour relations (level 1)	31	0.2 %	16	17.0 %
○ Trade union security/role of trade unions (level 2)	471	3.5 %	73	77.7 %
○ Non-union employee representation/works councils’ role and security	350	2.6 %	52	55.3 %
○ Employer’s role and commitments	226	1.7 %	51	54.3 %
○ Participation in joint committees	148	1.1 %	51	54.3 %
○ Dispute resolution	116	0.9 %	60	63.8 %
○ Other clauses on labour relations	112	0.8 %	40	42.6 %
○ Compliance monitoring and management	52	0.4 %	27	28.7 %
Total	1 506	11.3 %	88	93.6 %

Source: CBBP Database 2025.

Figure 32: Labour relations – (a) proportions of clauses coded as descriptive or substantive and (b) proportions of clauses that are new, changed or not changed (%)



Source: CBBP Database 2025.

Other topics in collective agreements

The category of ‘other’ groups all codes that did not fit any of the main topics described above. In total, the number of references within this category is small, with 129 (1 % of the total) in 40 collective agreements (42.6 %). Often, annexes or specific protocols are found under this category, especially if they were not coded as part of the agreement due to either their size or tabular references with numerical values. Broadly, ‘other’ topics include references to working conditions not captured by the other codes, such as various job-specific working conditions (e.g. for drivers in retail (CA-AT-1866)), labour inspections (CA-AT-1866) and noticeboards for communications in the workplace (CA-FI-2030), among other issues. Within this topic, the Network of Eurofound Correspondents also had a chance to flag any innovative clause found in the collective agreements⁽²⁰⁾. For the presentation of results in Table 23, all codes are aggregated under the level 1 code ‘other’.

Quantitative summary 13

- **Total codes:** 129/13 347
- **Share:** 1.0 %
- **In:** 42.6 % of collective agreements
- **Descriptive:** 56.6 %
- **Substantive:** 41.1 %
- **Change:** 15.5 %
- **No change:** 60.5 %
- **New:** 14.7 %

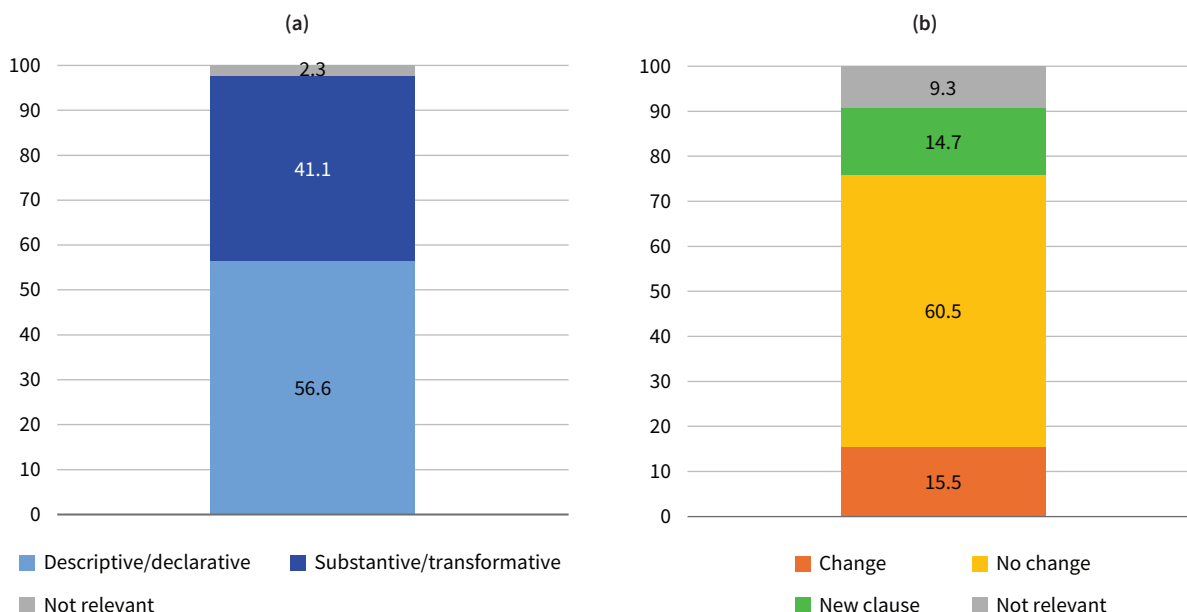
The majority of clauses in this category are descriptive (56.6 %) and unchanged in form and meaning (60.5 %). Almost 15 % are new clauses and 15.5 % were changed (Figure 33).

Table 23: Number and proportion of clauses coded under ‘other’

Code	Number of clauses	Percentage of all clauses	Number of collective agreements with this code	Percentage of all collective agreements
❖ Other (level 1)	129	1.0 %	40	42.6 %
Total	129	1.0 %	40	42.6 %

Source: CBBP Database 2025.

Figure 33: Other – (a) proportions of clauses coded as descriptive or substantive and (b) proportions of clauses that are new, changed or not changed (%)



Source: CBBP Database 2025.

⁽²⁰⁾ These are discussed in the subsection ‘Understanding change and innovation in collective agreements’.

Missing clauses

A textual analysis of two versions of collective agreements from two points in time – 2015 (or the earliest year available with validity in 2015) and 2022 (or the latest year available) – shows that no removals in terms of deletions of text were made in 68 of the 94 reviewed agreements (72.3 %). In 25 agreements, some parts of the text are missing in the new versions. And for one agreement, this comparison is not available (Table 24). For countries with relatively short collective agreements, such as Czechia and Slovakia, this comparison is relatively easy to make without the help of specific software; however, the analysis for countries with lengthy collective agreements is more laborious. For suggestions on how to improve this process in the future, see Chapter 6.

Agreements from France, Italy, Norway and Portugal showed no significant deletions, reflecting strong continuity in bargaining content. Removals were identified in only one agreement each in Austria, Belgium, Croatia, Czechia and Slovakia, typically justified by legal overlap, integration of content elsewhere in the document or structural simplification. For Czechia and Slovakia, textual removals were related to the topic of wages and wage increases.

In addition, collective agreements concluded in two countries, the Netherlands and Spain, underwent both minor and major removals in terms of the content of the agreement and the changes to it. In the Netherlands, all 12 collective agreements analysed underwent clause removals or structural streamlining. These changes were aimed at improving clarity, language and organisation, though some involved the elimination of specific topics. In Spain, 8 out of 12 agreements included deletions, ranging from significant clause removals to partial updates. In most cases, these deletions did not significantly affect workers' rights, but were linked to efforts to modernise and simplify agreements or reflect existing legislation.

These findings are in line with the overall proportions of changes in clauses across all 94 agreements analysed (see again Figure 12(b), which shows that 63.0 % of all clauses are unchanged, 18.2 % are changed and 12.1 % are new). When the unit of analysis is switched from clause to collective agreement, unchanged clauses are found in 90 agreements (95.7 %), new clauses in 64 agreements (68 %) and clauses with changes in 79 agreements (84 %) ⁽²¹⁾. In other words, the majority of agreements include all three elements – stability (no change of meaning or form), novelty (new clauses) and adaptability (modification of clauses). These results suggest a general trend of cautious continuity in which agreements not only preserve their original structure and scope but also add new clauses and modify the existing ones.

⁽²¹⁾ Calculation based on data in the CBBP Database 2025. It is not physically possible to present 13 037 clauses per each dimension analysed in this project in one summary table. For details, see Eurofound (2025) and/or the dashboard with data.

Table 24: Summary overview of missing clauses (comparison between 2015 and 2022 or the closest years available)

Country	Missing clauses: 2015 versus 2022			
	No of CAs	Removals: no	Removals: yes	Explanation
Austria	9	No removals/no significant removals in 8 CAs	Text removals in 1 CA (CA-AT-2305)	Chapter on 'Remuneration of the supervisory bodies' deleted, but supervisory activities integrated into the wage agreement in other ways
Belgium	6	No removals/no significant removals in 5 CAs	Text removals in 1 CA (CA-BE-2627) ^(a)	Some explanatory information removed in the 2022 version, but the content of the CA remains the same
Croatia	3	No removals/no significant removals in 2 CAs	Text removals in 1 CA (CA-HR-1146)	Chapters on shortened working time in workplaces with hazardous conditions (regulated by law) and on unpaid leave (regulated by law) removed. Another chapter deleted but integrated in the main text, with no implications for rights or obligations resulting from this change
Czechia	2	No significant removals in 1 CA	Minor text removals in 1 CA (CA-CZ-1981)	Deleted article under the wage section on the commitment of the employer to 'strive for such an increase in wages that their real decrease does not occur'. A different set of rules is now included in the newer version
Finland	8	No significant removals in 7 CAs ^(b)		
France	10	No significant removals in all 10 CAs		
Italy	7	No significant removals in all 7 CAs		
Netherlands	12		Removals and deletions in all 12 CAs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Significant removals of some topics and deletions to improve the structure and language of the CA (CA-NL-1090, CA-NL-1091, CA-NL-1092, CA-NL-1118, CA-NL-1119, CA-NL-1120, CA-NL-1210, CA-NL-1211, CA-NL-1213) ◦ Minor removals (CA-NL-1105, CA-NL-1117, CA-NL-1212)
Norway	10	No significant removals in all 10 CAs		
Portugal	10	No significant removals in all 10 CAs		
Slovakia	5	No significant removals in 4 CAs	Text removals in 1 CA (CA-SK-2028)	Annex 2 on jobs by individual level of demand (relevant for calculations of minimum wage levels) is not part of the agreement. The article on a wage increase of at least 1.5 % was deleted, and instead no wage increase was agreed for 2019. Three other minor articles were deleted
Spain	12	No significant removals in 4 CAs (CA-ES-1209, CA-ES-1215, CA-ES-1324, CA-ES-1326)	Removals and deletions in 8 CAs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Significant removals (CA-ES-1259, CA-ES-1328) ◦ Minor removals (CA-ES-1207, CA-ES-1208, CA-ES-1258, CA-ES-1260, CA-ES-1261, CA-ES-1323 ^(c))
Total	94	68	25	

^(a) In Belgium, agreement CA-BE-2627 is the only text that was directly comparable with its previous version (meaning that both versions were in the same format). For more details on the specific case of the sample of agreements from Belgium, see Eurofound (2025).

^(b) For 1 CA (CA-FI-2010), comparison is not available due to non-existence of a single earlier version.

^(c) CA-ES-1323 does not repeal clauses from the 2015 agreement but limits itself to a partial update.

Note: CA, collective agreement.

Source: Network of Eurofound Correspondents for CBBP Database 2025.

4 Content of collective agreements: Key issues in collective agreements for low-paid workers

This chapter summarises the results of the third stage of the project and provides an analytical summary of the main findings. Several studies summarise preventative measures that aim to reduce low pay and increase the probability of low-paid workers progressing to a higher-paid job. The European Commission emphasises the relevance of education and training, active labour market policies, statutory minimum wages, specifically designed tax and benefit systems and a reduction in labour supply constraints (European Commission: Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion et al., 2016).

This chapter will therefore focus on the abovementioned aspects. In particular, the following pathways for reducing the likelihood of staying in low-paid jobs will be discussed:

- receiving bonuses and allowances additional to wages, including, for instance, monetary bonuses for taking on additional responsibilities;
- increasing pay by working overtime or taking extra work;

- acquiring new skills or certifications and seeking additional education and training.

These aspects coincide with the three most frequent main topics identified during the coding process (i.e. allowances and bonuses, working time and labour relations) (see again Figure 8). Due to the importance of skills development for low-paid sectors, this chapter also addresses training and skills development. In addition, as healthy and safe working conditions are an essential factor contributing to work performance, OSH clauses are analysed. The thematic focus is rounded off with a section on social dialogue as a key underlying condition for any topic in collective agreements (see the subsection ‘Sound social dialogue and labour relations in the workplace’). The chapter ends with a section on innovative provisions in collective agreements (see the subsection ‘Understanding change and innovation in collective agreements’).

Why words matter: A collective agreement that is addressing YOU

Pull out the preamble of your [c]ollective [b]argaining [a]greement. Read it through the eyes of a new employee or new front-line supervisor. Is your first impression that the words convey an atmosphere of safety and inclusion? Does it set a welcoming tone for a trusted work relationship? If not, join for an engaging session looking at the language of our agreements through a fresh lens. We’ll consider the science behind our words, the impact of centering on our reader rather than potential litigation, and easy ways to build foundational trust through our words and contracts

(Muir et al., 2024)

Are collective agreements accessible, reader-friendly and inclusive for all workers? As they are legal documents, this may not always be the case. A comparative study of collective agreements across countries suggests the same level of formal language. However, several illustrative examples suggest that social partners do understand that ‘words matter’.

Some articles in the **collective agreement from the manufacture of FLTC sector in the Netherlands (CA-NL-1092)** were rephrased to speak directly to the workers:

- ‘Do you work shifts with shifted hours? Then you will receive an allowance for shifted hours ... The allowance is a percentage over your hourly wage, including your shift bonus ...’
- ‘Are you 55 years or older and do you want to work in a less stressful schedule or function? Then your employer has an obligation to make an effort to make this possible. This does not mean that you are entitled to it, but your employer has the obligation to investigate it. You can think of a switch to a different shift schedule. ...’

A **collective agreement in Austria (CA-AT-1866) in retail** changed its language from exclusively male-specific to more inclusive and in the new version uses terms such as:

- *Die Lenkerin/Der Lenker* (female driver/male driver);
- *Die Fahrerin/Der Fahrer* (female operator/male operator);
- *Vorarbeiterinnen/Vorarbeiter* (female supervisor/male supervisor);
- *Arbeitnehmerinnen/Arbeitnehmer* (female employee/male employee).

Similarly, an **agreement in the residential and social care sector in Spain (CA-ES-1328)** includes an article on ‘non-sexist language’, in which:

- social partners must ensure that non-sexist language is used in internal and external communication in the workplace;
- attempts are made to refer to workers without specifying their sex, even if generic terms have sometimes been used to provide clarity and ease of reading ‘without this implying less commitment on the part of the parties to equality policies and against discrimination based on sex’.

Source: CBBP Database 2025.

Looking beyond wages: Compensation through allowances and bonuses

The data presented in the previous overview section show that all agreements in the sample (94) include some type of clause on wages and remuneration, with the code ‘basic wages’ leading the count. Clauses on severance pay are found in only about 50 % of all agreements. Clauses on piece rates are found predominantly in the agreements for the manufacture of FLTC sector, with a minority in the retail sector and very few in the residential and social care sector. Specific clauses on group performance pay and financial participation are less common (see again Table 13). Wages, especially collectively agreed pay rates⁽²²⁾, were extensively covered in the pilot project on minimum wages and are summarised in the final report of the project (Eurofound, 2024). This subsection will therefore not focus on a detailed description of wages and remuneration, and will instead dive directly into, as the name of the project suggests, aspects beyond wages.

Allowances and bonuses: Substantial provisions for low-paid workers to improve their earnings

Almost all of the agreements (92 of 94, or 97.9 %) include references to allowances and bonuses, premiums, reimbursements and other forms of financial compensation. Clauses grouped in this category define the type of allowance, the subject – who is entitled to

these allowances – the conditions under which these bonuses are paid or reimbursed, the content (monetary rather than in-kind⁽²³⁾) and the terms and conditions and rules for payment/reimbursement.

Table 25 presents a comprehensive overview of the number of references coded as ‘allowances and bonuses’ across 94 collective agreements in three sectors in 11 Member States and Norway. The three main categories of bonuses can be seen: individual-based bonuses that reward an employee and their performance; job-based bonuses that are tied to the position/job; and group-based bonuses that are applicable to the whole workplace/a group of workers.

Individual-based bonuses are equally spread across all three sectors and the majority of countries, but seniority allowances are more common, especially in agreements in residential and social care. While allowances for seniority increase progressively with years of experience, performance bonuses are often temporary and based on (mostly) formal appraisals. Performance-based bonuses were found in agreements in five Member States and Norway.

The most frequent form of **job-based bonuses** (in fact, the most frequent of all three categories of bonuses) are overtime premiums, which are widely established across all countries and sectors, with an exceptionally large count (a total of 267 references in 83 % of collective agreements), reflecting their importance in compensating irregular and extended work hours. Premiums for night work, work during public holidays and work on weekends are also widely negotiated

⁽²²⁾ The majority of collective agreements in our sample have pay rates set in the agreements (67 out of 94), with the exception of all collective agreements in Czechia (2) and Croatia (3) and some in Slovakia (3 out of 5), France (2 out of 10) and Austria (1 out of 9). Collective agreements from Belgium (6) and Norway (10) were not included in the pilot project. See Eurofound (2025) for more details.

⁽²³⁾ The only forms of in-kind benefits that were found are housing benefits for employees and work clothes or work tools provided by employers, which are necessary conditions for the performance of work rather than a form of bonus.

across the countries and sectors. Shift allowances are found across all countries but feature predominantly in agreements in the manufacture of FLTC (52.4 %) and care (52 %) sectors. Compensation for shift work is often cumulative and combines several different allowances. For example, an agreement in the manufacture of FLTC sector in Portugal (CA-PT-2167) shows an elaborated calculation based on types of shift, which grants allowances of between 15 % and 30 % depending on the shift regime (two- or three-shift regime) and whether work is performed totally or partially at night. In the Netherlands, a new clause on sleeper shifts in an agreement in the residential and social care sector (CA-NL-1211) stipulates that hours spent on sleeper shifts will be regarded as half-working hours and compensated in time. Premiums for on-call work are more frequent in residential and social care agreements. All of these allowances vary in definition,

eligibility and compensation models (e.g. fixed, percentage, time off in lieu) and often allow for cumulative or differentiated application. Premiums for dangerous or difficult conditions are sector specific, mostly found in collective agreements in the manufacture of FLTC sector (50 %), highlighting the sector's physically demanding nature, while the care sector features fewer references in fewer agreements (12 %).

Finally, **group-based or collective allowances**, such as meal and transport allowances, are included in more than half of the agreements in each sector. These are often tax exempted and come in many forms (e.g. vouchers or reimbursements). The lack of references in the rest of the agreements suggests that collective allowances could be further specified in company agreements, defined by the law or left unregulated.

Table 25: Allowances and bonuses in collective agreements in the three low-paid sectors of interest

Type	Allowance/ bonus	Main issues	Manufacture of FLTC (42 CAs)	Retail (27 CAs)	Residential and social care (25 CAs)	Countries
Individual-based allowance	Seniority allowance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eligibility based on length of service Progressive increase in the allowance Inclusion in salary calculations (e.g. for bonuses or retirement) 	Yes 46 refs in 24 CAs (57.1 %)	Yes 70 refs in 15 CAs (55.6 %)	Yes 33 refs in 18 CAs (72.0 %)	Austria, Belgium, Croatia, Finland, France, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain
	Performance-related bonuses for individuals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Link between performance and pay Temporary nature Based on formal appraisal 	Yes 16 refs in 8 CAs (19.0 %)	Yes 10 refs in 8 CAs (29.6 %)	Yes 20 refs in 6 CAs (24.0 %)	Austria, Finland, the Netherlands, Norway, Slovakia, Spain
Job-based allowance						
Compensation for irregularity and atypical working hours	Premium for overtime	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Definition of overtime work (overlap; see Table 31), including maximum limits on overtime work Cumulative versus non-cumulative reference periods Optional compensation method: monetary versus time off 	Yes 134 refs in 36 CAs (85.7 %)	Yes 67 refs in 24 CAs (88.9 %)	Yes 66 refs in 18 CAs (72.0 %)	Austria, Belgium, Croatia, Czechia, Finland, France, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Slovakia, Spain
	Shift allowance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Qualification criteria, amount and method of compensation Conditions for payment Differentiation by worker category (e.g. full-time, part-time) Cumulative application of different allowances (e.g. night shift supplement) 	Yes 51 refs in 22 CAs (52.4 %)	Yes 12 refs in 6 CAs (22.2 %)	Yes 23 refs in 13 CAs (52.0 %)	Austria, Belgium, Croatia, Czechia, Finland, France, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Slovakia, Spain
	Premium for on-call work/work at short notice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Definition and scope of on-call duty Compensation models (flat rate versus percentage) Payment for standby versus actual work during on-call duty Restrictions and duration of on-call assignments 	Yes 8 refs in 8 CAs (19.0 %)	Yes 10 refs in 7 CAs (25.9 %)	Yes 29 refs in 10 CAs (40.0 %)	Austria, Croatia, Czechia, Finland, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Slovakia, Spain

Type	Allowance/ bonus	Main issues	Manufacture of FLTC (42 CAs)	Retail (27 CAs)	Residential and social care (25 CAs)	Countries
Job-based allowance						
Compensation for work on weekends and public holidays	Premium for work during public holidays	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scope of application Basis for calculation (e.g. percentage of basic wage) Time off in lieu (compensatory rest) Voluntary (refusal with some limits), mandatory but based on consent or agreement (or law) 	Yes 65 refs in 28 CAs (66.7 %)	Yes 39 refs in 17 CAs (63.0 %)	Yes 43 refs in 17 CAs (68.0 %)	Austria, Croatia, Czechia, Finland, France, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Slovakia, Spain
	Premium for work on weekends	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Definition of weekend work and premiums Conditions and eligibility Sector- or role-specific variations Interaction with other premiums Time off in lieu (compensatory rest) 	Yes 52 refs in 24 CAs (57.1 %)	Yes 48 refs in 21 CAs (77.8 %)	Yes 36 refs in 15 CAs (60.0%)	Austria, Belgium, Croatia, Czechia, Finland, France, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Slovakia, Spain
Premium for work in difficult working conditions	Premium for dangerous work/hardship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exposure-based compensation Task- or role-specific variations Compensation models (fixed or percentage based, granted only for time worked under hardship) 	Yes 30 refs in 21 CAs (50.0 %)	Yes 12 refs in 8 CAs (29.6 %)	Yes 5 refs in 3 CAs (12.0 %)	Austria, Belgium, Croatia, Czechia, Finland, France, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Slovakia, Spain
	Premium for night work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Definition of night work Conditions or eligibility criteria Percentage-based premiums (from 10 % to 60 %) Higher premiums for late hours Link to health and safety 	Yes 65 refs in 28 CAs (66.7 %)	Yes 51 refs in 21 CAs (77.8 %)	Yes 51 refs in 19 CAs (76.0 %)	Austria, Belgium, Croatia, Czechia, Finland, France, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Slovakia, Spain
Group-based allowance/collective allowance	Transport allowance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eligibility based on distance or commuting conditions May differ based on mode of transportation Fixed versus reimbursable allowance models Allowance conditions during absence or special circumstances Often tax-free 	Yes 74 refs in 27 CAs (64.3 %)	Yes 74 refs in 16 CAs (59.3 %)	Yes 42 refs in 16 CAs (64.0 %)	Austria, Belgium, Croatia, Czechia, Finland, France, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Slovakia, Spain
	Meal allowance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eligibility criteria Monetary value or meal vouchers, or canteen Often exemptions from tax and social contribution Proportionality based on duration of work 	Yes 62 refs in 27 CAs (64.3 %)	Yes 32 refs in 19 CAs (70.4 %)	Yes 20 refs in 14 CAs (56.0 %)	Austria, Belgium, Czechia, Finland, France, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Slovakia, Spain

Notes: There are no CAs in the residential and social care sector for Croatia and Czechia in the CBBP sample. Total number of references = 13 347. Total number of CAs = 94, of which 42 are from the manufacture of FLTC sector, 27 from the retail sector and 25 from the residential and social care sector. Percentages in brackets show how many collective agreements out of all in the sector include a given reference. CA, collective agreement; refs, references; WT, working time.

Source: CBBP Database 2025.

A plethora of other allowances found in collective agreements

In addition, a significant number of other allowances and bonuses were found in the collective agreements analysed. Table 26 summarises all other allowances that were found across all agreements. Among additional bonuses not captured by the predesigned coding scheme, collective agreements most frequently stipulate provisions on holiday allowance (at least 71 references, present across all three sectors in agreements from Austria, Belgium, Finland, the Netherlands, Portugal and Slovakia⁽²⁴⁾). Holiday allowance is calculated differently across the Member States and Norway. For instance, in the manufacture of FLTC sector, holiday allowances are calculated as 8 % of an annual wage (e.g. CA-NL-1090⁽²⁵⁾), one month's salary (e.g. CA-AT-1936), 50 % of holiday pay (e.g. CA-FI-2026)⁽²⁶⁾ or holiday allowance equal to the remuneration for the holiday period (e.g. CA-PT-2165). In Slovakia, the agreement in the manufacture of FLTC sector refers to the holiday allowance in money or in holiday vouchers as defined by law (e.g. CA-SK-2122). However, in the retail sector, for instance, holiday allowances are calculated as 100 % of the gross monthly salary (e.g. CA-AT-1865). These calculations seem to be country specific rather than sector specific (i.e. countries utilise similar calculations regardless of the sector). The second most frequent category is agreements that govern bonuses and allowances connected to business trips (with at least 58 references), including daily allowances associated with these trips. The third most frequent category is bonuses payable on top of monthly wages, usually at the end of the year (with at least 54 references). Collective agreements in different countries refer to these as a Christmas bonus (references in Austria, Portugal and Spain⁽²⁷⁾), an end-of-year bonus (Belgium and the Netherlands⁽²⁸⁾), an annual premium (Belgium⁽²⁹⁾) or a 13th and 14th salary (Austria and Slovakia⁽³⁰⁾). Conceptually, the calculations of these bonuses differ, similarly to those

for holiday allowances. While an end-of-year bonus is calculated as a percentage of annual income in, for example, the manufacture of FLTC sector in the Netherlands (CA-NL-1091) (4 %), other agreements refer to the monthly salary (e.g. 100 % in the retail sector in Belgium).

Apart from the three most frequent allowances, numerous other categories of bonuses were found in the collective agreements and these are summarised in Table 26. Some allowances are sector specific, such as the freezing allowance/cold room allowance in the retail sector or the trade fair allowance⁽³¹⁾ in the manufacture of FLTC and retail sectors. Agreements in the manufacture of FLTC sector also feature trade union premiums, housing allowances and relocation bonuses. Functional and role-based allowances (e.g. for first-aiders, shop stewards or special responsibilities) appear consistently across sectors, especially in Finland, the Netherlands and Spain.

The variety of these bonuses means that some appear in agreements in only some countries and the bonuses can show distinct national features or reflect sectoral challenges. For instance, workers covered by Finland's care sector agreement used to receive an allowance for work in remote areas, cold regions or the archipelago (CA-FI-2009)⁽³²⁾. Employees in the retail (and wholesale) sector in Finland receive a language supplement for using more than one language on a daily basis (CA-FI-2006)⁽³³⁾. In the Spanish retail sector agreement, this can amount to an additional increase of 10 % of the base salary for each language spoken (CA-ES-1260). Two agreements in Belgium, aiming to promote environmentally friendly behaviours, include entitlements to eco-vouchers worth EUR 250. These are awarded once a year to every full-time employee working for at least 12 months, with a proportional sum for part-time employees (CA-BE-2626)⁽³⁴⁾. Another example is a cash handling allowance for employees who work with money, found in agreements in Italy and Portugal, accounting for possible mistakes or financial loss⁽³⁵⁾.

⁽²⁴⁾ Holiday allowance is a form of annual bonus. Various national languages may use different names for holiday allowances.

⁽²⁵⁾ In the Netherlands, holiday allowance is a mandatory legal requirement for all employees.

⁽²⁶⁾ In Finland, workers are entitled to holiday pay (additional pay when using leave) and holiday allowances/bonuses. The agreement in the manufacture of FLTC sector has a separate section titled 'Holiday pay agreement'; however, it largely copies legal provisions set out in the Annual Holidays Act.

⁽²⁷⁾ *Weihnachtsremuneration* in Austria (e.g. CA-AT-1936), *Presente navideño* in Spain (e.g. CA-ES-1328) and *Subsidio de Natal* in Portugal (e.g. CA-PT-2165).

⁽²⁸⁾ *Eindejaarsuitkering* in the Netherlands (e.g. CA-NL-1211) and *Eindejaarspremie* in Belgium (e.g. CA-BE-2625).

⁽²⁹⁾ *Jaarlijkse premie* in Belgium (e.g. CA-BE-2625).

⁽³⁰⁾ In Slovakia's sector-level agreement in the retail sector, payment of an additional salary is not obligatory and can be agreed in company-level collective agreements.

⁽³¹⁾ Allowance received when employees provide services at trade fairs or exhibitions.

⁽³²⁾ Nowadays, these allowances are part of an employee's individual and regular salary.

⁽³³⁾ If the language skills are used for only part of the year (e.g. during the tourist season), the language supplement is paid only for this period.

⁽³⁴⁾ Eco-vouchers can be used by employees to purchase environmentally friendly products or services, such as public transport tickets, bicycle equipment, energy-efficient appliances, eco-friendly cleaning products and local organic food (Eurofound, 2009).

⁽³⁵⁾ Found in CA-PT-2255, CA-IT-1884, CA-IT-1890, CA-IT-1894 and CA-IT-2055.

Table 26: Most frequent other allowances found in collective agreements

Type	Allowance/bonus	Ranking (frequency)	Manufacture of FLTC	Retail	Residential and social care	Countries
Collective allowance	Holiday allowance	1	Yes	Yes	Yes	Austria, Belgium, Finland, the Netherlands, Portugal, Slovakia
	Christmas bonus, end-of-year bonus, annual premium, 13th and 14th salary	3	Yes	Yes	Yes	Austria, Belgium, Finland, the Netherlands, Portugal, Slovakia, Spain
	Corona (COVID-19) premium	6	Yes	Yes	Yes	Austria, Belgium
	Childcare premium, bonuses for children	7		Yes	Yes	Austria, Belgium, the Netherlands
	Eco-vouchers	8		Yes		Belgium (two agreements)
	Education/study allowance	9	Yes	Yes		Austria, the Netherlands
	Housing allowance	12	Yes			Finland (two agreements)
Job-based allowance	Business trip allowance and daily allowance	2	Yes	Yes	Yes	Austria, Croatia, Finland, the Netherlands, Portugal, Slovakia
	Allowance for a specific role (shop steward allowance, first-aider)	5	Yes	Yes	Yes	Finland (shop steward), the Netherlands (first-aider ^(a))
	One-off bonuses	5	Yes		Yes	Austria, Belgium, Finland, the Netherlands
	Freezing allowance, cold room allowance	6		Yes		Finland, the Netherlands
	Functional allowance (bonus for additional tasks and responsibilities)	7	Yes	Yes	Yes (predominantly)	Finland, Norway, Spain
	Apprentice allowance	7	Yes	Yes		Austria, Norway
	Cash/money handling allowance (allowance for failures)	8	Yes	Yes	Yes	Italy, Portugal ^(b)
	Compensation for separation (relocation bonus)	9	Yes	Yes		Austria, Croatia
	Irregularity allowance/irregular work (other than already specified)	9			Yes	The Netherlands (three agreements)
	Functional allowance	9	Yes	Yes	Yes	Austria, Belgium, Italy, Spain
	Homeworker and work from home allowance	10	Yes	Yes	Yes	Austria, the Netherlands
	Trade fair allowance	11	Yes	Yes		Austria (three agreements)
	Individual-based allowance	Jubilee/anniversary bonus	4	Yes	Yes	Yes
Language bonus		8		Yes	Yes	Finland, Spain

^(a) The allowance *BHV-toeslag*.

^(b) In Italian, *Indennità di cassa e maneggio denaro* (cash handling allowance); in Portuguese, *Abono para falha* (allowance for failures).

Notes: Rankings are ordered frequencies of codes. As these codes were not predesigned but are the results of analytical clustering, we do not show their absolute numbers due to accuracy issues and comparability with other codes that were coded by native speakers. Only sectors and countries with these types of allowances and bonuses in collective agreements are reported in the table (i.e. flagged with 'Yes').

Source: CBBP Database 2025.

Top-up for non-standard work

Clauses on allowances and bonuses **may help low-paid workers to top up their pay, especially if they also work on non-standard contracts**. For example, in Italy, workers involved in seasonal work related to the processing and transformation of tomatoes and fresh peas receive a company bonus as a fixed amount (CA-IT-1885 in the manufacture of FLTC sector). In Austria temporary workers in the manufacture of FLTC sector receive a 20 % surcharge on their wages for work that lasts less than a week (CA-AT-1935). In the Netherlands, employers must consult works councils when using a temporary employment agency. Also, a condition stipulates that temporary workers cannot work more than an average of 25 % of the number of hours per pay period worked by employees with an employment contract (CA-NL-1090, manufacture of

FLTC). In addition, a sector-level agreement in manufacturing (also covering the textile industry) in Norway includes an appendix that specifies a ‘guarantee scheme’ (*Garantiordningen*). It stipulates that, in companies where the average salary of adult workers in salary group 1 and salary group 2 (the lowest levels) is below 85 % of the industry average, they are entitled to a guaranteed salary supplement, differentiated for workers below 80 % (receiving the highest supplement), between 80 % and 82.5 % and between 82.5 % and 85 %. Companies must not provide a higher guaranteed supplement than is necessary to reach an average salary level of 85 % of the industry average (CA-NO-2612).

Escaping the low-wage trap

Workers can also improve their wages and remuneration by moving to better-paid positions (Box 2).

Box 2: Functional mobility and changes to job classification of employees – examples from Belgium, France, Italy, the Netherlands and Portugal

Collective agreements often specify how employees move up and down the career ladder, how they change their job classifications and what happens if they temporarily perform tasks other than those in their job description. Several clauses related to functional mobility (change of workers’ tasks) and changes to job classification are found in the collective agreements analysed. These are mostly coded under ‘terms of employment’ and often overlap with clauses on wages and remuneration and allowances and bonuses (e.g. when specifying a functional allowance).

- For example, according to a sector-level agreement in the dairy industry in the **Netherlands, if a worker transfers to a higher position** this results in reclassification to a corresponding salary scale. If the employee transfers to a lower position at their own request, this reduces their salary by half the difference between the two salary scales at zero years of experience. The employer has a right to place an employee on one scale lower than the scale of their position for a maximum of two consecutive years when they start working in the dairy industry due to insufficient knowledge and job experience (CA-NL-1091).
- A collective agreement in the **manufacture of FLTC sector in France** regulates that **downgrades to a job classification** proposed by the employer and accepted by the worker can happen due to economic, cyclical, structural or other reasons. In the first case, employees with at least six months’ seniority retain their previous effective hourly wage (excluding bonuses), with gradual adjustment to the new role’s pay scale. In the second case, employees can keep their previous salary for three months, excluding bonuses and allowances, and can also be entitled to ‘downgrading compensation’. Workers aged over 55 years and with more than 10 years of service who accept a downgrade retain their prior wage, excluding bonuses (CA-FR-2016).

Reclassification can also be temporary, for instance a temporary assignment of the worker to perform other duties.

- An agreement in the **manufacture of FLTC sector in Belgium**, for instance, includes a bonus for blue-collar workers who, by order of their employer, temporarily perform a function superior to their own; this bonus is equal to the difference between the two hourly wages (CA-BE-2623).
- Clauses on functional mobility in sector-level agreements in Portugal** specify that the employer may, in the company’s interest, temporarily entrust the worker with different functions as long as this does not imply a substantial change in the worker’s position. This change, however, cannot imply a reduction in remuneration, with the worker having the right to receive the advantages inherent to the activity temporarily performed (CA-PT-2165 in the manufacture of FLTC sector and CA-PT-2257 in the residential and social care sector).

Some categories of workers, however, have no clear job classification. This is the case for a specific category of workers in **Italy**, known as jolly workers.

- The agreement in the **manufacture of FLTC sector** defines a ‘jolly’ as a worker who is not assigned a specific task or role by the company, but instead is systematically deployed to perform various technically diverse tasks across multiple phases of the production cycle within the company (CA-IT-1884).

Emerging themes in new clauses on allowances and bonuses

All three low-paid sectors share some similarities in terms of emerging themes addressed by new clauses⁽³⁶⁾. First, there is a continuing emergence of new clauses that compensate for irregularity, work on weekends and public holidays and overtime work across all three sectors. In the retail sector, this includes the emergence of clauses that also compensate for cold, dirty or difficult working conditions. Second, the new clauses in all three sectors reward additional roles and tasks (functional allowance; see also Box 2). The sectors differ thereafter, however. In the manufacture of FLTC sector, some new clauses address allowances related to the transport of workers and personal training. In the retail

sector, new clauses address various flexible trade-offs to improve either the work–life balance or the earnings of employees, for instance through a leave-for-cash scheme or by providing the opportunity to convert financial bonuses to additional time off. In the care sector, agreements that previously did not reward work at short notice now include these benefits. In addition, agreements also include clauses that grant wage supplements for middle-income earners. Limited evidence also suggests that some agreements reward quality of work in care, as is the case of a sectoral agreement in Finland (Table 27). These developments suggest that collective agreements increasingly reward work–life balance, functional and physical mobility and new forms of flexibility, which may be especially important for workers in low-paid sectors.

Table 27: New emerging themes in clauses on allowances and bonuses

Sector	Main theme	Selected examples	Country
Manufacture of FLTC (44 references)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continuing emergence of new clauses that compensate for irregularity and work on weekends and public holidays 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A new article on a Sunday allowance that grants employees in artisanal bakeries an additional 50 % of their hourly wage for the first four hours and an additional 100 % thereafter, with pre-2014 workers retaining the right to higher allowances if they have consistently worked Sundays since then (CA-NL-1090) A clause on compensation for shift work on public holidays with a bonus of 100 % of the hourly wage. An additional 100 % is given for overtime work on public holidays. Employees can also be compensated in time off (CA-NL-1092) An allowance of an additional 10 % of the hourly wage for each full night hour worked (CA-ES-1208) Clauses on compensation for overtime in shift work (including a special protection for older workers (≥ 55 years), who are not obliged to work overtime (CA-NL-1092)) 	Austria, Belgium, Finland, the Netherlands, Norway, Slovakia, Spain
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rewarding additional roles and tasks (functional allowance) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A bonus for a blue-collar worker who, by order of their employer, temporarily performs a function superior to their own, equal to the difference between the two hourly wages (CA-BE-2623) Compensation or a bonus for the additional role of training or guiding other employees (CA-FI-2026) 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Addressing issues related to transport from/to the workplace (transport allowances) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A bicycle allowance scheme is extended to cover an indefinite period and an employer's contribution to the price of season's ticket for public transport (CA-BE-2622) An increase in allowance for private transport costs up to an average of 70 % of the price of a train ticket, to acknowledge that sustainable options are not always available (CA-BE-2624) 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bonuses to support training of employees 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A voucher of EUR 200 for personal training of bakery employees (CA-NL-1090) 	

⁽³⁶⁾ 'New' in this report is based on a comparison of the same agreement at two points in time. The older version is in most cases the 2015 version.

Sector	Main theme	Selected examples	Country
Retail (75 references)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continuing emergence of new clauses that compensate for irregularity, work on weekends and public holidays, work in difficult conditions and overtime work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An allowance of 100 % of the hourly wage for work on public holidays and 50 % for work on a Sunday if it is not a public holiday (CA-NL-1117) A night shift allowance of an additional 20 % of the base salary (CA-ES-1261) A premium of an additional 50 % for delivery workers working on Saturdays (CA-AT-1865 and CA-AT-1866) A premium for evening and night work for employees in customer support (between 20:00 and 22:00 = EUR 3.73 per hour; between 22:00 and 06:00 = EUR 4.93 per hour) (CA-AT-1865) A dirt allowance of various amounts (10–20 %) based on place of work and starting year of employment; a hardship allowance of 10 % for workers in the wholesale trade in iron and ironmongery, metals and metal goods, pipes and fittings and in the scrap and scrap metal trade, on top of the collectively agreed minimum wages. This is increased specifically for workers in Salzburg to 15 %. There is also an allowance for cold conditions (below 8°C) of EUR 0.76 per hour or a flat rate of EUR 127.04 per month (CA-AT-1866) Overtime allowance of 100 % after standard working time (12 hours) of a warehouse worker (CA-FI-2006) 	Austria, Belgium, Finland, France, the Netherlands, Spain
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rewarding additional roles and tasks (functional allowance) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compensation for the role of a first-aider/emergency responder (in Dutch <i>bedrijfshulpverlener</i> or <i>BHV-er</i>) of EUR 75 gross per year when obtaining or extending the certificate (CA-NL-1118) A 10 % allowance for team leaders in companies that sell wholesale iron and hardware, metal and metal goods, and pipes and fittings (CA-AT-1866) 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Various flexible trade-offs to improve either work–life balance or earnings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A clause allowing the conversion of annual leave to a cash payment (CA-FI-2006) A clause that allows the conversion of an anniversary bonus to additional time off, if requested by the employee (CA-AT-1865 and CA-AT-1866) 	
Residential and social care (65 references)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continuing emergence of new clauses that compensate for irregularity, work on weekends and public holidays, work in difficult conditions and overtime work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An allowance for Saturday work at 20 % of the gross hourly wage (CA-BE-2627) An overtime bonus of 30 % for up to 40 hours per week worked and 50 % for over 40 hours per week worked (CA-AT-2315) Evening and night allowances of NOK 28 (EUR 2.40 as at 5 November 2025) per hour for evening and night work (17:00–06:00), NOK 56 (EUR 4.80) per hour for shift work between 17:00 and 21:00, and at least NOK 65 (EUR 5.50) per hour or 25 % of the regular hourly wage for shift work between 21:00 and 06:00 (CA-NO-2617) An allowance for work on weekends of 20 % of the hourly wage (CA-NO-2617) An allowance for work on public holidays of 100 % of the hourly wage (CA-NO-2617) An allowance per hour (of various amounts depending on the time) for evening and night work (CA-NO-2617) 	Austria, Belgium, Finland, France, the Netherlands, Norway, Spain
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continuous compensation for work at short notice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A fixed shift allowance per hour. Allowances for standby or on-call duty from Monday to Friday between 06:00 and 00:00 of EUR 3.50 per hour. Allowances for work at short notice, on Saturdays, Sundays and public holidays and at night of EUR 7.00 per hour. In addition, an allowance of 25 % of the hourly wage and, if applicable, an irregularity allowance for on-call work (CA-NL-1210) Hours spent during a sleep shift are counted as half-working hours and are compensated in time (CA-NL-1211) An on-call supplement (<i>Complemento por Guardia</i>) compensates employees who, outside regular hours, voluntarily remain reachable by phone and available to work urgently within three hours, with specific rules on scheduling, exceptions, voluntary participation and limits on working time. A distinction is made between availability time and actual activation time as effective working hours (CA-ES-1326) An increase in the on-call allowance by 2.7 % since 2022 (CA-AT-2315) 	

Sector	Main theme	Selected examples	Country
Residential and social care (65 references)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continuous compensation for work at short notice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An allowance for flexibility of EUR 20.54 if an employee agrees to work on a non-duty day within three days' notice, and an additional EUR 10.27 if a second unplanned shift block is added to a planned shift (with at least 1.5 hours' break) under similar short-notice conditions (CA-AT-1871) Entitlement to at least a basic salary if an employer changes or cancels a shift for a particular category of workers (assistants) (CA-FI-2009) 	Austria, Belgium, Finland, France, the Netherlands, Norway, Spain
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rewarding additional roles and tasks (functional allowance) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compensation for additional work as an emergency response worker (<i>BHV-er</i>) (CA-NL-1210) A clause on salary supplements for various functions related to responsibility (unspecified amount), coordination (between EUR 500 and EUR 2 000) and project-related duties (unspecified), but only the highest applicable supplement is paid if multiple roles overlap (CA-ES-1326) An allowance for additional work at a flat rate of EUR 66.03 on top of normal compensation for 10 hours per day, and a night shift allowance, if applicable (CA-AT-1871) 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wage supplement for middle-income earners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Medium-income labour market supplement: as of 1 January 2022, employees in primary roles within salary scales 4 to 9 receive a 1.13 % labour market allowance to support middle income, which counts towards holiday pay, end-of-year bonuses, pensions and other salary-based entitlements. Exceptions require formal approval and justification if full implementation is not financially feasible (CA-NL-1213) 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limited evidence to reward quality work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An option to pay a quality bonus for particularly high-quality work (CA-FI-2009) 	

Source: CBBP Database 2025.

Box 3 provides an example of how salaries are calculated for different profiles of workers.

It is also an example of the type of summary information that can be presented when collective agreements are systematically coded and compared.

Box 3: Example of a salary calculator for different profiles of workers

The categorisation and coding of clauses in collective agreements enable data analysis and the creation of different scenarios and profiles for workers – for example, worker A who wants to maximise their earnings in the lowest job category, worker B who prefers work–life balance or worker C who wants to progress and move up the career ladder quickly. This kind of analysis could potentially help create a salary calculator for workers covered by the same collective agreement and contribute to transparent working conditions and predictability of wages and remuneration, which is especially important for workers in low-paid sectors. To illustrate this, two examples are offered below. The first is of a worker in the meat industry who is at the highest wage level; the second is of a worker in the retail sector who is at the lowest wage level.

Example 1: Profile of a worker in the meat industry (manufacture of FLTC sector) in Finland, based on a collective agreement in Finland (CA-FI-2029)

This worker has maximum earning potential in this agreement, is in a professional category of work in the fourth salary grade (janitor and heating engineer, professional worker capable of independent work), works night shifts (22:00–06:00), regularly works Saturdays and Sundays, accepts overtime (especially on weekends), works in freezer/cold rooms, participates in mandatory training, works long training days to claim meal compensation and takes all statutory holidays, receiving a holiday bonus. This worker can expect to receive the bonuses and allowances detailed in Table 28.

Table 28: High-earning worker profile in the highest salary group – meat industry (Finland)

Earning component	Condition	Bonus/addition
Base pay (fourth highest salary group)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Janitor and heating engineer who performs various maintenance tasks, with over five years of experience in the profession Professional worker capable of independent work, with over four years of experience in the profession 	~ EUR 15–18 per hour (depending on classification)
Long service bonus	Over 30 years of continuous duration of service	+ EUR 0.64 per hour
Multitasking and job requirement allowance	Installations, repairs, adjustments and maintenance of complex machinery and equipment and operating functions that require special familiarity and professional skills or special training	+ at least 5–20 % of fourth highest wage group
Night shift work	Working between 23:00 and 06:00	+ EUR 4.21 per hour
Evening shift work	Working between 16:00 and 23:00	+ EUR 2.11 per hour
Saturday work	Regular work performed on Saturdays	+ 50–100 % of hourly wage
Sunday or public holiday work	Work on Sundays or public holidays	+ 100 % of hourly wage (double pay)
Overtime (daily/weekly)	First two hours/eight hours extra	+ 50 % of hourly wage
	After two hours/eight hours extra	+ 100 % of hourly wage
Overtime on holidays	Any overtime work on holidays	+ 100 % of hourly wage
Freezer work bonus	Work at – 18 °C or colder	+ EUR 0.22 per hour
On-call or standby duty	Scheduled and compensated	Minimum 20 % of hourly wage or flat fee
Training new employees	Acting as mentor or trainer	+ EUR 0.56
Holiday pay	Regular statutory holiday wage	100 % of pay
Holiday bonus (<i>Lomaraha</i>)	Paid in summer, 50 % of holiday pay	+ 50 % of accrued holiday pay
Training time compensation		Training days with full pay (if mandatory)
Union member (optional)	Union representation	May access better grievance handling, advice

Example 2: Profile of a low-paid worker in the retail sector in Slovakia who earns the maximum possible wage, based on a higher-level collective agreement in retail (CA-SK-1958)

This worker can maximise their earnings and is probably a full-time shift worker, specifically working in a role that requires night shifts, work on weekends and work on public holidays. This worker should also be willing to work overtime and be available for on-call shifts outside their workplace. This worker can expect to receive the bonuses and allowances detailed in Table 29.

Table 29: High-earning worker profile in the lowest salary group – retail sector (Slovakia)

Earning component	Condition	Bonus/addition
Base pay	Lowest level of demand (not specified; wage supplement is not public)	No bonus
Overtime work	Monday to Friday	+ 30 % of average wage (or additional leave by agreement with the employee)
Public holiday work	Work on days of rest may be required of the employee only exceptionally, after discussion with the trade union representative	+ 100 % of average wage
Sunday work		+ 100 % of minimum hourly wage
Saturday work		+ 50 % of minimum hourly wage
On-call work	For each hour of inactive on-call time away from the workplace	+ at least 20 % of minimum wage entitlement

Earning component	Condition	Bonus/addition
Night work	Work between 22:00 and 06:00	+ at least 40 % of minimum hourly wage
Premium for dangerous work		+ at least 50 % of minimum hourly wage
Compensation for work in difficult conditions		+ at least 20 % of minimum hourly wage
Meal allowance		+ at least EUR 3.83 ^(a)

(^a) The employer's contribution to meal allowance is governed by law (at least 55 % of the cost of the meal). In 2022–2023, the minimum contribution according to legal regulations was below the level specified in this collective agreement.

Source: CBBP Database 2025.

Role of working time and leave provisions

Working time duration, while set by national and international legislation, can be negotiated at the individual, firm or sector level (OECD, 2019; Eurofound, 2021; ILO, 2022). Especially following the introduction of the hybrid work model during the COVID-19 pandemic, more collective bargaining agreements have included clauses pertaining to working time flexibility (ILO, 2022). In the 'negotiated working time regimes', mostly present in Scandinavian and northern European countries, Germany, Italy and Spain, it is sectoral collective agreements that build upon statutory legislation to define working time standards (Eurofound, 2016). According to recent studies, about 90 % of collective agreements in the retail and commerce sectors across Member States include discussions on weekly days and hours of work (OECD, 2019). Consequently, the usual working time in countries with negotiated and adjusted mandated working times was lower than that in unilaterally mandated regimes in Europe (Eurofound, 2016; Horecký et al., 2021). Unionised workplaces also tend to have more family-friendly practices, including parental leave, paid family leave (Eurofound, 2021) or job sharing, than their non-unionised counterparts (Bryson et al., 2017). Some authors point out that unsocial hours are most common among low-level service and labourer jobs (e.g. Presser (2003) and Henly et al. (2006), as cited in Riekhoff et al. (2019)). It is therefore crucial to look into how collective agreements regulate working time in the low-paid sectors.

Two EU directives are particularly important in the context of working time (Eurofound, 2023b): Directive (EU) 2019/1158 on work–life balance for parents and carers establishes that all workers who have an employment contract are entitled to take parental leave, paternity leave or carers' leave and to make use of flexible working schemes; and Directive (EU) 2019/1152 on transparent and predictable working conditions provides all workers with the right to information in writing on the essential aspects of their work, limits to the length of probationary periods, the

opportunity to take up jobs with other employers, information in advance about when work will have to be done, prevention of abuse of zero-hour contracts (contracts without a fixed amount of working hours) and free mandatory training.

Working time as a key determinant for low-paid workers

Working time is the second most frequent theme in collective agreements in our sample, and almost all agreements include a reference to it (90 of 94, or 95.7 %). Clauses on working time found in collective agreements address four main factors: stability, flexibility, irregularity/atypical working hours and mandatory rest. Table 30 presents a comprehensive overview of the number of references coded under the label 'working time' across 94 collective agreements from three sectors in 11 Member States and Norway.

Standard working time is by far the most regulated aspect found across 90.4 % of agreements and all countries. Almost all agreements in the retail sector include a reference to standard working time (Table 30). Beyond the standard main issues summarised in Table 30, agreements include sector-specific definitions of standard working time; for example, preparation time (referred to as 'child-free time') counts as standard working time for pedagogues in the residential and social care sector in Austria (CA-AT-1871). Clauses addressing flexibility and irregularity/atypical working hours are also very common, with some form present in almost 70 % of all agreements. Increasingly, health and safety considerations are seen to be included in the agreements when referring to shift work, night work or on-call work. One example is a sector-level agreement in the retail sector in Finland on regular health checks at the employer's expense (CA-FI-2006). A company agreement in Croatia replicates a similar obligation stipulated by law, which states that employers must provide regular health examinations for night workers (CA-HR-1146 in the manufacture of FLTC sector). Notably, references to flexible working time related to telework or home work are relatively scarce with only four references in four collective agreements.

References to resting periods are found in 74.5 % of all agreements, similarly distributed across the three sectors. As well as standard definitions, clauses on resting periods include special protections for some workers, such as those working on Sundays or those who are breastfeeding. Often, local agreement and/or

consultation with and consent from workers' representatives are required for on-call work or work on public holidays. In some instances, employees can refuse to work on public holidays, but there is a limit on how many times⁽³⁷⁾.

Table 30: Working time in collective agreements in the three low-paid sectors of interest

Type	Working time	Main issues	Manufacture of FLTC (42 CAs)	Retail (27 CAs)	Residential and social care (25 CAs)	Countries
Addressing stability	Standard working time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Weekly working hours Daily work schedules and limits Reference period for calculations Deviations and sector-specific adjustments 	Yes	Yes	Yes	Austria, Belgium, Czechia, Croatia, Finland, France, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Slovakia, Spain
			130 refs in 37 CAs (88.1 %)	106 refs in 26 CAs (96.3 %)	102 refs in 22 CAs (88.0 %)	
Addressing flexibility	Flexible working time arrangements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individual working time flexibility and customisation Flexitime models and core working hours Working time accounts and leave savings Conditions, approval processes and employer rights 	Yes	Yes	Yes	Austria, Belgium, Croatia, Finland, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain
			156 refs in 32 CAs (76.2 %)	81 refs in 16 CAs (59.3 %)	96 refs in 17 CAs (68.0 %)	
	Flexible working time related to telework/home work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minority (4 refs) of clauses on teleworking arrangements 	Yes	Yes	Yes	Belgium, Finland, Norway, Spain
			1 ref in 1 CA (2.4 %)	1 ref in 1 CA (3.7 %)	2 refs in 2 CAs (8.0 %)	
Flexible working time related to type of contract	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Part-time and reduced working time rights Temporary and fixed-term contracts Voluntary and individual agreements Specific groups (students, older workers) 	Yes	Yes	Yes	Austria, Belgium, Croatia, Finland, France, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Slovakia, Spain	
		45 refs in 16 CAs (38.1 %)	55 refs in 13 CAs (48.2 %)	30 refs in 10 CAs (40.0 %)		
Addressing irregularity/atypical working hours	Shift work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Definition and scope of shift work Compensation and allowances Scheduling, notification and changes Health and safety considerations Work-life balance and special protections 	Yes	Yes	Yes	Austria, Belgium, Croatia, Czechia, Finland, France, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal
			102 refs in 26 CAs (61.9 %)	11 refs in 7 CAs (25.9 %)	37 refs in 10 CAs (40.0 %)	
Night work	Night work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Definition and scope of night work Health and safety considerations Additional compensation or allowances Limitations and protections Voluntariness and reassignment rights 	Yes	Yes	Yes	Austria, Belgium, Croatia, Finland, France, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Slovakia
			53 refs in 25 CA (59.5 %)	34 refs in 15 CAs (55.6 %)	29 refs in 12 CAs (48.0 %)	

⁽³⁷⁾ One example is an agreement in the residential and social care sector in France that stipulates that employees can refuse to work on Sundays and public holidays a maximum of two times per year (CA-FR-2099).

Type	Working time	Main issues	Manufacture of FLTC (42 CAs)	Retail (27 CAs)	Residential and social care (25 CAs)	Countries
Mandatory rest	Resting periods/breaks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minimum daily and weekly resting periods Breaks during the working day Compensatory rest in cases of irregular or excess work Flexibility and deviations through agreement Special protections and considerations 	Yes	Yes	Yes	Austria, Belgium, Croatia, Czechia, Finland, France, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Slovakia, Spain
			113 refs in 30 CAs (71.4 %)	113 refs in 21 CAs (77.8 %)	73 refs in 19 CAs (76.0 %)	

Notes: There are no CAs from the residential and social care sector for Croatia and Czechia in the CBBP sample. Total number of references = 13 347. Total number of CAs = 94. CA, collective agreement; refs, references.

Source: CBBP Database 2025.

Other clauses on working time: complex and overlapping

During the coding process, it became apparent that the predefined categories for capturing clauses on working time were not sufficient and that many more options for the categorisation of working time clauses exist. Table 31 summarises all other clauses on working time that did not fall under the predefined codes. The references were clustered into two main categories: (1) clauses on procedures and rules, including working time scheduling, and (2) clauses addressing irregularity beyond the flexible working time categories described in Table 30. These categories overlap with what has been seen in allowances and bonuses, as they define overtime work, work on public holidays, weekend work (Sunday work, Saturday work) and on-call work.

Procedural clauses and clauses on rules (with at least 174 references) describe all clauses related to how working time is set up, calculated, scheduled, distributed over the work week and recorded. Clauses addressing irregularity/atypical working hours can be found in agreements in all sectors. Most frequently, they refer to overtime work (addressed in collective agreements from almost all countries), weekend work (including clauses separately governing Sunday work and Saturday work), work on public holidays and on-call work, together amounting to at least 277 references.

Weekend work, especially work on Sundays, is a significant topic for the retail sector (Eurofound, 2022). Some social partners declare their common position on the topic through the addition of a new article to the agreement; for instance, in Slovakia, such an article declares a mutual initiative to support the extension of the ban on retail work to Sundays and all public holidays in the relevant provision of the Labour Code (CA-SK-1958)⁽³⁸⁾. Unlike clauses on allowances and bonuses, which define financial entitlements for irregular work and atypical working hours, clauses under this code deal with the governance of work itself. While many agreements from Croatia, Czechia, Italy, Portugal, Slovakia and Spain refer to financial compensation for irregular work and atypical working hours, they rarely address the rules, procedural issues or definitions of such work.

⁽³⁸⁾ Currently, retail work is limited on Sundays and banned only during specific public holidays in Slovakia.

Table 31: Other working time-related provisions found in collective agreements

Type	Working time	Ranking	Manufacture of FLTC	Retail	Residential and social care	Countries
Addressing procedures and rules	Working time: rules	1	Yes	Yes	Yes	Austria, Czechia, Finland, Italy, Norway, Portugal, Spain
	Scheduling and rosters	6	Yes	Yes	Yes	Austria, Croatia, Czechia, Finland, Italy, the Netherlands, Slovakia, Spain
Addressing irregularity	Overtime work	2	Yes	Yes	Yes	Austria, Croatia, Czechia, Finland, France, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Slovakia, Spain
Addressing atypical working hours	Work on public holidays	3	Yes	Yes	Yes	Austria, Finland, France, Norway
	Weekend work (Sunday work, Saturday work)	4	Yes	Yes	Yes	Austria, Finland, France, the Netherlands, Norway
	On-call work	5	Yes	Yes	Yes	Austria, Finland, France, the Netherlands, Norway

Source: CBBP Database 2025.

Box 4: Cafeteria model – à la carte clauses in collective agreements in the Netherlands

The cafeteria model (*Cafetariaregeling* or *Cafeteriamodel*) allows employees to choose à la carte from a menu of certain items within an agreed package of employment conditions, tailoring their package to their personal needs. There are several exchange options, most commonly grouped into four main categories. Employees can exchange (1) money for time, (2) money for money, (3) time for money or (4) time for time (Delsen et al., 2006).

In this project, 12 clauses containing a direct reference to the phrase ‘à la carte’ were found in two collective agreements in the manufacture of FLTC sector (CA-NL-1092 and CA-NL-1105). For instance, the sector-level collective agreement in the fashion and textile industry (CA-NL-1092) offers employees a set of à la carte options where non-statutory vacation days and overtime compensation in time or money can be exchanged for pension contributions or additional (care) leave. Additionally, employees can buy or sell ‘ADV days’ (*ADV-uren*, short for *Arbeidsduurverkorting*, meaning reduction of working hours), subject to employer approval. ADV days allow workers to accumulate additional days off based on the number of hours worked⁽³⁹⁾.

Sources: Delsen et al. (2006) and CA-NL-1092.

Emerging themes in new clauses on working time

The three low-paid sectors share similarities in emerging themes in new clauses⁽⁴⁰⁾ on working time (Table 32). Common in all sectors is a continuous emergence of new clauses addressing flexible working time. In Finland, these include, for instance, clauses on flexible full-time work (in the retail sector) and variable working time and working time banks (in the care sector; see Box 5). In Austria, new clauses on additional

hours (*Mehrarbeit*) and overtime (*Überstunden*) appear in the newer version of a collective agreement in the care sector. In the Netherlands, a sector-level agreement in the residential and social care sector includes a definition of plus and minus hours, which reflects working less or more than agreed in an employment contract. In addition, new clauses address work-life balance and the well-being of employees, with examples from all three sectors. These include clauses that set limits on evening work, clauses on the right to disconnect and clauses on the interaction of working

⁽³⁹⁾ See, for example, <https://www.cnv.nl/themas/werktijden/arbeidsduurverkorting/>.

⁽⁴⁰⁾ ‘New’ in this report is based on a comparison of the same agreement at two points in time. The older version is in most cases the 2015 version.

time with leave, including the flexible use of leave days in hours, not just days. A further category includes clauses that increase protections for young or older workers, those with care responsibilities and female workers. Such clauses offer prolonged breastfeeding breaks or protection against overtime work for workers aged over 55 years, for instance. Several other new

clauses point to some emerging trends, but these are less common. For example, in the care sector, an agreement in Spain governs the use of a digital application for monitoring and scheduling work. In Austria, a new clause in 2023 reduced working time in the care sector from 38 to 37 hours per week, which is among the lowest working times in the country.

Table 32: New emerging themes in clauses on working time

New clauses: working time (239 references)			
Sector	Main theme	Selected examples	Countries
Manufacture of FLTC (33 references)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continuous emergence of new clauses addressing flexible working time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A new clause that sets a flexible full-time working standard of 36–40 hours per week, allowing companies or departments – through consultation with employee representatives – to define and adjust it (CA-NL-1092) A clause on a working time bank and its rules of implementation – work and leisure coordination arrangements introduced at the company or workplace level on flexible saving/borrowing of components (CA-FI-2026) 	Austria, Belgium, Finland, the Netherlands (all from agreement CA-NL-1092), Norway
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clauses that address flexible work organisation to cover all days necessary for production 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduction of a ‘bridging team system’ covering Saturdays, Sundays, statutory holidays, replacement days for statutory holidays and other days not covered by the standard teams (CA-BE-2622) An option to extend regular working time per day to 10 hours (maximum 50 hours per week) to address ‘sudden and unpredictable or exceptional production situation[s]’ (CA-FI-2026) A clause on ‘deviating working weeks’ (variable working time per week), averaging the full-time norm over 2–52 weeks (CA-NL-1092) 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attention to well-being of employees (longer meal breaks; coordination of working time with time off) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meal break in shift work available at the most convenient time (CA-FI-2026) Time off can also be taken in hours, not just in days (CA-AT-2305) A clause on the introduction, procedures and schedules of ‘time-for-time arrangement’ (<i>Tijd-voor-tijd-regeling</i>), allowing excess hours above 38 hours per week to be compensated with time off instead of pay (CA-NL-1090) 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some training initiatives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A clause that allows employers to provide up to eight hours of job-related or well-being training per year during paid working time, which may extend the working day by up to two hours or take a full day, but cannot occur on weekdays, and must follow union cooperation agreements (CA-FI-2026) 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased protections for older workers and breastfeeding employees 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An increase in breastfeeding breaks to three half-hour breaks per day for weekend-shift employees who work 12 hours a day (CA-BE-2623), and in another agreement an increase to three breaks per day (CA-BE-2624) Clauses on special protection for older workers (≥ 55 years), who are not obliged to work overtime (CA-NL-1092) 	
Retail (121 references)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work–life balance for retail workers, including breaks at work and right to disconnect 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A clause on the right to disconnect for workers in department stores (CA-ES-1258) A clause that sets a limit for evening work to two evenings per week, except in December, and a clause on the entitlement to one roster-free Saturday and Sunday per month (CA-NL-1118) A clause on rest days for employees working on Sundays, including mandatory rest of 48 consecutive hours every 8–12 weeks (CA-FR-2044) 	Austria, Belgium, Finland, France, the Netherlands, Spain
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continuous emergence of new clauses addressing flexible working time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A clause on irregular distribution of a working day to account for peak seasons (June/July and December), with a limit of 9 hours per day (CA-ES-1261) Clauses on ‘flexible full-time work’^(a) (applicable since 2021) under which an employee working less than 37.5 hours per week is paid a full monthly salary in exchange for flexible hours and shifts, which together correspond to full-time work (CA-FI-2006) 	

New clauses: working time (239 references)			
Sector	Main theme	Selected examples	Countries
Retail (121 references)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Protections for workers with care responsibilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A clause on a right to reduce the working day by half an hour for up to 14 days. This may be extended for categories of workers with care responsibilities, including care due to health-related issues (CA-ES-1261) ○ Clauses allowing workers to move to day jobs if they report risks to their health due to work after 20:00. For female employees working in the evenings, necessary care obligations for children (up to 12 years old) should be considered (CA-AT-1865) 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Replication of legislation content (e.g. online retail in Austria, night work and 'day package' in France) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A clause referencing the legal regulations on online retail, which is permitted on Saturdays between 13:00 and 18:00 (CA-AT-1865) ○ Clauses on overtime (mostly repeating legal regulations), which is limited to 180 hours per year, with a mandatory consultation with the social and economic committee if the number of overtime hours goes beyond 130 hours (CA-FR-2044) ○ Detailed instructions on the application of a 'day package' (<i>forfeit en jours</i>^(b)) for executives who have autonomy in the organisation of their time (these are also defined by a new clause), if there is no company agreement on the application of day packages (CA-FR-2044) ○ Clauses on night work (as defined by the law) and specific rules on organisation and duration, applicable if there is no company-level agreement (CA-FR-2044) 	
Residential and social care (85 references)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Continuous emergence of new clauses addressing flexible working time, including overtime and additional hours 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 35 new provisions in the Finnish agreement on flexible working time arrangements and rest – variable working time, working time bank, shift work and overtime (CA-FI-2009; see Box 5) ○ Rules on additional hours (<i>Mehrarbeit</i>) with a 30 % surcharge and overtime (<i>Überstunden</i>) with a 50 % surcharge (CA-AT-2315)^(c) ○ Definition of 'minus' and 'plus' hours (working less/more than agreed in an employment contract) and 'additional hours' (more than agreed but less than standard full-time), and definition of 'overtime' (more than 1 872 hours) (CA-NL-1210) 	Austria, Finland, France, the Netherlands, Spain
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Attention to work–life balance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Provisions on working hours and rosters with set weekly limits (e.g. maximum five days per week, 10 hours per shift), and the right to disconnect (CA-NL-1210) ○ A detailed clause on the use of balance leave, which is leave in addition to statutory holiday hours. The employee receives 57 hours of balance leave per calendar year on a full-time basis, which is accrued monthly and can be used, saved (for up to 10 years) or partially paid out (CA-NL-1211) 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Protections for young and older workers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Special protections for workers aged over 55 years or under 18 years (CA-NL-1210) ○ An option to request a reduction of working time for employees aged over 55 years with ≥ 15 years of service (CA-FR-2099) 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Digital monitoring of working time through mobile application 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A clause on the installation and use of specific mobile software (ONCE) for tracking working hours (CA-ES-1328) 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Reduction of working time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A reduction in normal working hours from 38 to 37 hours per week since 2023 (CA-AT-2315) 	

(a) Flexible full-time work can be implemented by agreement in each workplace. Employees can refuse flexible full-time work under certain conditions, and both employer and employee can terminate the contract observing a one-month notice period (CA-FI-2006).

(b) *Forfeit en jours* is defined in French labour law as a fixed-day work arrangement that allows certain employees to be paid based on the number of days worked annually, without specifying a standard working time. Safeguards need to be specified in a collective agreement and an arrangement agreed in the individual employment contract; see <https://travail-emploi.gouv.fr/les-conventions-de-forfait>.

(c) *Mehrarbeit* is within the legal limit of normal working hours (i.e. 37–40 hours per week). *Überstunden*/overtime work exceeds 40 hours per week (CA-AT-2315).

Source: CBBP Database 2025.

Box 5: Working time bank in Finland's collective agreement for the private residential and social care sector (2022–2024)

The collective agreement for the private social care sector in Finland (CA-FI-2009) includes **35 new clauses** on flexible working time arrangements, compared with the older version of the same agreement. Among other things, the agreement defines a set of detailed rules for a **working time bank** system, which, in Finland, is regulated by the Working Time Act (872/2019) and supplemented by sector-specific collective agreements⁽⁴¹⁾.

According to the agreement, a **working time bank** (*Työaikapankki*) is defined as a voluntary arrangement where additional and overtime work, hourly allowances or standby allowances are converted into free time. The employee must sign a voluntary agreement with the employer in writing and specify the period during which the working time is accumulated in the bank, which hourly wages and compensations are saved, and the maximum amounts of savings. Banked leave is fully paid and counts towards benefits such as annual leave. The working time bank system is intended to be used in addition to the locally agreed working time equalisation period or flexible working time system when trying to coordinate work and leisure time. The aim, according to the agreement, is to find the best possible coordination of work and free time for both workplaces and employees.

Source: CBBP Database 2025.

Taking time off: leave provisions in collective agreements

The option to take paid time off from work is another important factor relating to the well-being and job quality of workers. As shown in the subsection 'Overview of all coded clauses in collective agreements', leave is the fourth most frequent main theme (level 1 code) in collective agreements, with 1 487 coded references in 92 collective agreements (97.9 %). The large number of clauses on 'other leave provisions', found in 80.9 % of all agreements, suggests that many more aspects of this topic, beyond personal leave, sick leave, parental and maternity leave and special leave, may be governed by collective bargaining. These include, among other things, leave for a variety of life events, such as broader (other than personal) emergencies. Some leave provisions can be very generous: the agreements in the manufacture of FLTC sector in Slovakia grant special work leave (a maximum of half a day) during an employee's notice period to enable them to look for a new job before the end of the employment contract⁽⁴²⁾.

The leave provisions reviewed reveal several trends. First, many agreements go beyond statutory minimums and offer supplementary payments or full wage compensation during parental leave, bereavement leave or care leave, which may be critical for workers who cannot afford unpaid leave. Second, several agreements provide additional days off or flexible arrangements specifically for informal care duties, allowing workers to take partial days or extend eligibility to broader family. Third, agreements often acknowledge a variety of life events with paid time off, with differences among countries and sectors (see, for example, Box 4 and Box 6). The non-exhaustive list includes adoption leave, foster care leave, leave for international adoptions, leave for examinations, leave for relocation, leave for marriage, leave for wedding anniversaries, leave for fertility treatment, leave for the death of a relative/spouse, leave due to serious illness, leave for hospitalisation, additional leave for employees with disabilities, leave to accompany children during their first day at school, leave due to *force majeure* or leave due to disruption of public transport. Particularly interesting is a solidarity transfer of leave to another worker, granted in several sector-level agreements in Italy⁽⁴³⁾, which allows holidays accrued by one employee to be transferred to another employed by the same employer if they need it to care for children under the age of 14 years or for health-related issues.

⁽⁴¹⁾ See, for instance, <https://proliitto.fi/en/all-things-work/working-hours-bank>.

⁽⁴²⁾ CA-SK-2028 and CA-SK-2122, both in the manufacture of FLTC sector.

⁽⁴³⁾ In the sample, CA-IT-1885 in the manufacture of FLTC sector.

Box 6: Special leave provisions in agreements from the manufacture of FLTC sector in Croatia and Spain

Table 33 shows a comparison of paid leave provisions found in two collective agreements. One is a Croatian company-level agreement in the manufacture of FLTC sector and the other is a Spanish sector-level agreement from the meat industry (which falls under the manufacture of FLTC sector). These two examples illustrate the type of leave provisions offered in agreements. The table shows that the agreement in Spain provides more extensive time off for marriage, while the Croatian company-level agreement provides clearer provisions for blood donation, natural disasters and relocation. The Spanish example includes a detailed structure for travel-related extensions and cross-border family emergencies, while the Croatian example includes very broad family definitions and allows leave for union- or employer-supported education. Medical visits and minor leave cases are more regulated in Spain, with a cap on hours (i.e. 10 hours per year).

Table 33: Comparison of paid leave provisions found in two collective agreements

Leave type	Member State	
	Spain	Croatia
	Sector-level agreement: CA-ES-1207 (Article 50)	Company-level agreement: CA-HR-1146 (Article 61)
Marriage	15 calendar days	5 working days
Birth of a child	3 days only if the worker is not entitled to the standard financial birth benefit	5 working days
Death – immediate family	3 days (spouse or children) + up to 4 days with travel or if abroad	3 working days
Death – extended family	2 days (with travel up to 4 total); more time unpaid	2 working days
Serious illness – immediate family	2 days; extended with travel or up to 6 more unpaid days for cross-border events	4 working days
Natural disasters	Not specifically mentioned	5 working days
Relocation (same city/area)	1 day	1 working day
Relocation (different city/area)	Not specified	2 working days
Marriage of children, siblings	1 day	Not specified
Blood donation	Not mentioned	1 working day per donation (with rules about scheduling and informing employer) ^(a)
Public duty	Time required for mandatory public and personal obligations	Not specified
Union/staff representation	Right to paid union activity	Right to paid trade union activity – up to 9 days of paid leave Training or education for works council/union permitted (mentioned under employer-supported training)
Medical appointments	Up to 10 hours per year (e.g. for specialist visits or accompanying dependents)	Not mentioned
Other notable provisions	Leave days begin on working days and are continuous; clarifies leave if event occurs while abroad	Maximum of 7 working days annually for personal events unless otherwise agreed; broad definition of immediate and extended family

^(a) Blood donation leave in Croatia is granted by law; the agreement simply repeats this provision.

Sources: Company-level agreement CA-HR-1146 in the manufacture of FLTC sector and sector-level agreement CA-ES-1207 in the manufacture of FLTC sector (meat industry).

Focus on training and skills development of workers in low-paid sectors

Technological change and the green transition have increased the need for specialised skills and knowledge, biased towards high-skilled workers benefiting from further on-the-job training (Eurofound, 2023c). Investment in training and skills development remains one of the core strategies for reducing employees' risk of low pay (European Commission: Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion et al., 2016). Having higher levels of skill acquired through education or training reduces the risk of low pay, but education and training themselves do not guarantee upward mobility from a low-paid job to a higher-paid job (European Commission: Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion et al., 2016). Employers often rely on public education for skills development and tend to invest in workers who are already skilled (Bahn, 2019). However, even when training is available, low-skilled workers – often outside collective bargaining coverage – show lower training engagement (Wotschack, 2020). Since collective bargaining has been found to lead to higher participation rates in further training, it plays a crucial role in helping workers expand their professional and social skills (Kriechel et al., 2014).

Training provisions in collective agreements: core mechanism for adapting to labour market transitions

The subsection 'Overview of the main topics in collective agreements' showed that the clauses on training, although relatively few in absolute terms (702 of 13 347 references), feature in 92.6 % of all collective agreements (87 of 94). Training clauses are neither among the top codes at the main aggregated level (see again Figure 8) nor among the top codes at the second level of our coding scheme (see again Figure 14). In fact, training as a topic is at the lower end of the distribution if counted by the number of references. None of the 12 countries had clauses on training among their most frequent, and this is also the case from the sectoral perspective. However, training clauses in each individual agreement are often very long and elaborate, as is the case in the Spanish collective agreement (CA-ES-1326) in the residential and social care sector, with its Article 43 on the sectoral training commission comprising separate sections labelled A to F. As coders were asked to code per each article, this is important to stress. In addition, as shown in Chapter 3, training is

almost exclusively⁽⁴⁴⁾ regulated through collective bargaining in all 12 countries, and hence collective bargaining remains a crucial mechanism for helping employees adapt to labour market transitions.

The sample of agreements shows that clauses on training account for the largest share of new clauses: 21.9 % of all coded clauses on training (154 of 702 references) are new compared with the previous version of the collective agreement from 2015 (or the closest year available). **Together with an additional 16.1 % of training clauses having undergone some changes to form and/or meaning, close to half of all training clauses are new or modified – the largest share out of all the main (13) topics.** Clauses on training thus reflect changing needs and preferences in the labour market more than other types of clauses do.

Table 34 summarises all clauses on training and skills development in the collective agreements from the three low-paid sectors of interest, which focus on the themes of early career development, training and skills development in terms of reskilling and upskilling, and continuous learning. Apprenticeships and internships is the most regulated topic, with references found in 74.5 % of all agreements, in the majority of agreements from the manufacture of FLTC sector (81 %) and the care sector (72 %), and in two thirds of the sampled agreements from the retail sector (66.7%). Attention to early career training plays a crucial role in the three low-paid sectors, as also shown later in the subsection 'Emerging themes in new clauses on training'. Clauses here regulate initial training at hiring (particularly in the care sector), general working conditions and protections, vocational training and transition pathways to full employment.

Clauses on training and skills development remain more general than specific, focused, for instance, on only training related to reskilling or upskilling. They often describe an employee's right to training and personal development (compulsory or voluntary), with equal access for full-time and part-time workers; types of training (including vocational training); hours dedicated to training (counted as working time or not); and specific training programmes or training initiatives.

As can be seen in Table 21, specific references to upskilling and reskilling are very rare. In Portugal, an agreement in the residential and social care sector includes a declaration on the promotion of professional requalification and conversion training due to health conditions of workers, the need for reorganisation of services, technological modifications or the unfeasibility of maintaining certain professional

⁽⁴⁴⁾ In eight countries, training is regulated mainly through collective bargaining. In four countries, training is regulated by both legislation and collective bargaining.

categories (CA-PT-2255). In Czechia, an agreement in the manufacture of FLTC sector simply mentions that employees aged over 55 years are given the opportunity to change careers (CA-CA-1974). In Slovakia, a reference to reskilling overlaps with clauses on collective dismissals in stating that one of the measures to mitigate the adverse consequences of collective dismissal of employees is to include discussion of employees' options for retraining (CA-SK-2028, in the manufacture of FLTC sector). In Italy, upskilling, reskilling and lifelong continuous training is mainly

regulated through collective bargaining and tailored in company-level agreements, which were not analysed in this project.

Clauses on 'other training provisions' include, for instance, a voucher for personal training (see Box 7), various transitional provisions, clauses on training for trade unions, clauses on promotion to obtain qualifications for categories of unskilled jobs and clauses on budget related to the training ('career budget').

Table 34: Clauses on training and skills development in collective agreements in the three low-paid sectors of interest

Type	Training	Main issues	Manufacture of FLTC (42 CAs)	Retail (27 CAs)	Residential and social care (25 CAs)	Countries
Early career training	Apprenticeships and internships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Definition and scope of apprenticeships/internships Duration and contractual basis Remuneration and benefits Working conditions and protections Vocational education Transition to employment and evaluation 	Yes	Yes	Yes	Austria, Belgium, Croatia, Czechia, Finland, France, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Slovakia, Spain
			125 refs in 34 CAs (81.0 %)	94 refs in 18 CAs (66.7 %)	62 refs in 18 CAs (72.0 %)	
Training and skills development	Training related to upskilling (aggregated)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employer support and financial contribution Right to paid training leave Training for career development and adaptability Joint oversight or agreement Training linked to company or sectoral needs 	Yes	Yes	Yes	Austria, Belgium, Czechia, Finland, France, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Slovakia, Spain
	31 refs in 16 CAs (38.1 %)	18 refs in 6 CAs (22.2 %)	9 refs in 6 CAs (24.0 %)			
	Training related to reskilling (aggregated)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employer support and funding Targeted groups and transitions Joint implementation and dialogue Use of external institutions and public schemes Integration into workforce planning 	Yes	Yes	Yes	Austria, Czechia, Finland, Portugal, Slovakia, Spain
	12 refs in 8 CAs (19.1 %)	1 ref. in 1 CA (3.7 %)	6 refs in 2 CAs (8.0 %)			
Continuity	Lifelong continuous learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employer support for lifelong learning Right to training leave or time allocation Relevance to job or career development Joint consultation and planning 	Yes	Yes	Yes	Austria, Belgium, Croatia, Czechia, France, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal
			36 refs in 13 CAs (31.0 %)	26 refs in 10 CAs (37.0 %)	23 refs in 8 CAs (32.0 %)	
Other clauses on training		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Access to training Employer obligations Paid training time Training related to job changes Certification and validation 	Yes	Yes	Yes	Austria, Belgium, Croatia, Czechia, Finland, France, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Slovakia, Spain
			44 refs in 21 CAs (50.0 %)	27 refs in 13 CAs (48.2 %)	47 refs in 12 CAs (48.0 %)	

Note: CA, collective agreement; ref., reference; refs, references.

Source: CBBP Database 2025.

Targeted support for low-skilled or unskilled workers

Some collective agreements specifically focus on the training development of unskilled workers. For instance, a collective agreement (CA-FR-2099) concluded for the residential and social care sector in France specifically mentions, among the priorities of the industry for the next three years⁽⁴⁵⁾, the promotion of qualifications obtainment for certain categories of unskilled jobs. In addition to ensuring that the skills development plans within organisations pay particular attention to training in favour of unskilled workers, the agreement also highlights the importance of raising the qualification level of employees with more than 10 years of experience who have not changed their job category. Among other specific measures mentioned are improving access to information on training options, including on personal training accounts (*compte personnel de formation*), and requiring employers to inform these workers of diplomas that allow access to higher qualifications for benchmark jobs (i.e. higher-category jobs). In Norway, social partners in the meat industry (in the manufacture of FLTC sector) must discuss every year whether there is a competence gap based on the company's needs and, if it exists, what arrangements can be made for unskilled workers to improve their skills through a vocational certificate (CA-NO-2613). In Spain's agreement in the residential and social care sector (CA-ES-1326), the Sectoral Training Commission (Comisión Sectorial de Formación) determines the training needs and sets up

the training plans for the companies. In the section on selection criteria for the attendance of training courses, the agreement specifically mentions that preference should be given to unskilled workers, workers in small and medium-sized enterprises, women and men aged over 45 years, those who only occasionally participate in training courses and those who hold jobs directly related to the courses (or will hold them in the near future).

Emerging themes in new clauses on training

New clauses on training appear in 8 out of 12 countries – Austria, Belgium, Finland, France, the Netherlands, Norway, Slovakia and Spain – and across all three sectors. In Croatia, Czechia and Portugal, clauses on training are unchanged compared with their earlier versions. For all three countries, this is often because collective agreements refer to legislation (i.e. stating that the law applies in relation to a specific topic). As a result, if the legal rules change, this will not necessarily be reflected in changes to the text of the agreements themselves.

Table 35 summarises the new emerging themes found in new clauses on training (154 references). As with other topics, there are similarities across all three low-paid sectors. First, clauses on personalised training appear in all three sectors, in the form of personal vouchers (manufacture of FLTC sector), a personal development budget (retail sector) and personal training accounts (care sector). Second, many new

Box 7: Investment in training to support workers – new clauses in collective agreements from the Netherlands

New requirement to invest in employee training in the Netherlands' DIY industry (retail sector)

The newly added article in the collective agreement from the DIY industry in the Netherlands (CA-NL-1120) has imposed a new obligation on employers (since mid-2022) requiring them to invest at least 1 % of the gross wage sum annually in employee training, excluding compulsory courses. Regarding changes from the previous version of the agreement, the time spent on training or exams outside normal working hours is considered working time, which was not the case before, but no additional compensation is given.

Personal training voucher in the manufacture of FLTC sector

A collective agreement in the manufacture of FLTC sector (CA-NL-1090) in the Netherlands set up a new voucher for personal training (*Persoonlijk opleidingsvoucher*). This is a temporary scheme for employees of bakeries, temporary employment agencies and payroll companies. The employees can use a personal training voucher of EUR 200.00 per year (pro rata for part-time employees) for labour-market-relevant courses and training. The analysed agreement sets out a validity period until 31 May 2021, after which social partners should have evaluated the scheme and decided on its continuation. The scheme is still valid in 2025.

Source: CBBP Database 2025.

⁽⁴⁵⁾ Note that the collective agreement was concluded at the end of 2011 but was later renewed and stayed valid until 2024.

clauses regulate apprenticeships and internships, placing value in early career development, vocational training and transition from internships to standard employment as the best recruitment strategy. Third, the agreements also include more clauses dedicated to budgets for training, days for training and training leave. In the manufacture of FLTC sector, agreements also focus on training for innovation and increased competitiveness and sector-specific plans on how to

achieve this. In addition, some agreements also provide training to temporary workers for permanent positions (Belgium). Agreements from the retail sector reference training committees or training groups, which approve and/or monitor training initiatives for employees. In the residential and social care sector, new clauses emphasise continuous, lifelong training or structured career paths to secure jobs in a higher category (Table 37).

Table 35: New emerging themes in clauses on training

New clauses: training (154 references)			
Sector	Main theme	Selected examples	Countries
Manufacture of FLTC (42 references)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Personalised training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New voucher for personal training of EUR 200.00 per year (pro rata for part-time employees) (CA-NL-1090) Employee's right to request a consultation on their training options individually with their manager (CA-BE-2624) 	Austria, Belgium, Finland, the Netherlands, Norway, Slovakia
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dedicated days for training and training leave 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Training leave either in time or paid in cash (CA-NL-1092) Requirement for an employer to provide, on average, five working days for training. Each worker has an individual training credit of an average of two days (CA-BE-2623) 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Focus on sectors' innovation and competitiveness and sector-specific plans 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commitment to 'develop, manage, maintain and distribute innovation, learning resources and training in the fashion, interior design, carpet and textile industries' (CA-NL-1092) In companies with 20 or more employees, a sector-specific training plan must be prepared and employee representatives consulted on it (CA-BE-2623) A clause that stresses 'even more emphasis' on high-risk employees, digitalisation, robotisation, language training and diversity (CA-BE-2623) A requirement to discuss the 'competence gap' in the meat industry in Norway every year (CA-NO-2613) A direct reference to the industry's future competitiveness, which 'depends on adaptation to new technology and the employees' knowledge and skills' and employees' 'influence on value creation, therefore the company's competitiveness' (CA-NO-2613) 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Focus on apprenticeships and internships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Various clauses related to apprenticeships, internships and summer internship programmes in the textile and fashion industry (CA-FI-2026) A declarative statement in which parties agree that a combination of an internship candidate scheme and the intake of apprentices is the best recruitment approach for skilled workers in the company (CA-NO-2615) 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limited evidence on increasing job security of temporary workers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Training for temporary workers to move to a permanent position (CA-BE-2624) 	
Retail (51 references)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Personalised training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A clause on the personal development budget (<i>Persoonlijk ontwikkelingsbudget</i>), which is a yearly budget of EUR 175 per employee per calendar year that can be spent on training (CA-NL-1117 and CA-NL-1119). One other agreement mentions a lower budget of EUR 150 (CA-NL-1118) 	Austria, Belgium, Finland, France, the Netherlands, Spain
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dedicated days for training and training leave 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Training initiatives in dual learning in Belgium, and a new obligation for the employer to provide an average of five days of training (CA-BE-2626) A comprehensive framework for employee training and skills development in a national collective agreement for retail and wholesale in France, including paid training leave, various training formats, support for career transition and access programmes for jobseekers, while ensuring managerial support, legal protections and financial compensation for both mandatory and voluntary training activities (CA-FR-2044) 	

New clauses: training (154 references)			
Sector	Main theme	Selected examples	Countries
Retail (51 references)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Focus on students, interns and on-the-job training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A clause declaring that vocational education is not only a crucial factor for improvement of the qualifications of workers in companies, but also their right. There are two types of training envisaged: mandatory (paid and compensated) and voluntary (unpaid) (CA-ES-1261) Various new clauses and appendices on compulsory internship (CA-AT-1865) Appointment of a workplace counsellor for each student attending on-the-job training (CA-FI-2403) 	Austria, Belgium, Finland, France, the Netherlands, Spain
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Various committees and/or training groups that monitor training initiatives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reference to a bipartite training monitoring committee that meets every two months and monitors initiatives in dual learning, lifelong learning and diversity and inclusion (CA-BE-2626) Reference to a training working group that approves training for employees based on jointly identified needs and informs unions of the training; unions subsequently inform employees at least two months in advance of the start date (CA-FI-2403) 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tailored training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A clause on specific training courses and their reimbursement, for example training in dealing with aggression; training courses in the fields of digitalisation, ergonomics and diversity; or sectoral mentor training (CA-BE-2626) 	
Residential and social care (61 references)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Focus on internships and training of employees in their early career; training contracts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A monthly allowance for interns and co-assistants of EUR 495 since January 2023 (CA-NL-1210) Detailed clauses governing training contracts ^(a) (<i>contratos formativos</i>) in Spain, which combine paid work with formal education or vocational training, including the eligibility criteria, duration, work hours, remuneration, individualised training plans, educational quality and fair labour conditions (CA-ES-1326) Clauses on internships and tutors appointed to mentor interns, as well as clauses on the professional training contract (<i>contrat de professionnalisation</i>), which is a work-study contract for young people aged under 26 years and jobseekers in general, designed to promote employment and skills development through alternating periods of work and formal training (CA-FR-2099) 	Belgium, France, the Netherlands, Spain
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Personal training development plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employers or employees can initiate periodic personal development interviews held with management (CA-NL-1210) Some new procedural provisions on personal training accounts (e.g. in relation to their supplementation or professional certification), which in France is mandated by law (CA-FR-2099) 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continuous, lifelong training and structured career paths for career change 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A clause providing a structured path for career changes to enter the social services field as educators/supervisors ^(b) through paid training tied to employment, while allowing employers flexibility if the training is not completed or no position is available afterwards (CA-BE-2627) Call for continuing, lifelong professional training, which constitutes a priority for the sector (CA-FR-2099) 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Designated budget for training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> At least once a year, an employer must provide a report on how a career budget is used in their company, upon the request of the works council or staff representatives (CA-NL-1213) 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Focus on more structured training with a defined training plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A training plan with designated training time, concluded at the company level and drawn up annually in consultation with the employer and the employee representatives (CA-BE-2627) 	

^(a) Specified by Spanish labour law in the Statute of Workers' Rights ([Estatuto de los Trabajadores](#)). Collective agreements can further specify their application.

^(b) Applies to employers and employees who fall under Joint Committee 319.01 for educational and housing institutions and services of the Flemish Community.

Source: CBBP Database 2025.

Provisions on occupational safety and health in collective agreements

This subsection summarises the findings on OSH clauses across the three low-paid sectors in 11 Member States and Norway. Employees' rights to safe and healthy working conditions are often well defined in the national legislation. At EU level, the OSH Framework Directive lays down the main principles for managing safety and health and defines the responsibilities of the employer, the rights and duties of the workers, and requirements for workplace health and safety representation. Almost all countries for which agreements were sampled indicated that OSH is mainly regulated through legislation (Austria, Croatia, Czechia, Finland, France, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Slovakia and Spain), and only in Belgium is OSH regulated through both collective bargaining and legislation. As a result, many collective agreements in these countries either directly refer to the legal regulations or, in some cases, repeat them verbatim.

Table 36 summarises the main codes in OSH in the three low-paid sectors. The codes tackle risk prevention and health protection, organisational structures and support, OSH-related training, employee well-being and other specific issues. Many clauses on OSH require some type of information exchange or approval by the shop stewards or workers' representatives and therefore overlap with codes on labour relations. Clauses aggregated under general health protection and prevention are the most frequent, found in 44.7 % of all

agreements, the majority of those from the manufacture of FLTC (76.2%) and retail sectors (74.1%) and 60% from the care sector. They include references to employees' and employers' obligations in the OSH field. For instance, in the Netherlands, an agreement in the manufacture of FLTC sector includes 13 new clauses on a 'vitality scheme' for employees in the bakery sector aged over 60 years, with measures supporting healthy ageing at work and prevention of early dropout of employees (Table 37). What stands out in the group of clauses on prevention and protection is the relatively small number of references to ergonomics, which appear in only two sectors (i.e. retail and care). Clauses on unforeseeable events and emergencies mostly include references to a Corona/COVID-19 premium (overlap with allowances), emergency leave (overlap with leave provisions) and working time regulation, listing the situations when employees can be excused from work (overlap with working time). Employee well-being, which groups clauses on work-life balance and psychosocial support, features more in agreements from the retail and care sectors than in agreements from the manufacture of FLTC sector. Among 'other' clauses, the references are diverse and include, for instance, job satisfaction (CA-NL-1120, in the retail sector), temporary incapacity to work (CA-ES-1261, in the retail sector), confidentiality (CA-FI-2029, in the manufacture of FLTC sector), work during pregnancy (CA-NO-2616, in the residential and social care sector) (overlap with clauses on work environment), issues related to drug addiction⁽⁴⁶⁾ and the use of alcohol⁽⁴⁷⁾.

Table 36: OSH clauses in collective agreements in the three low-paid sectors of interest

Type	OSH	Manufacture of FLTC (42 CAs)	Retail (27 CAs)	Residential and social care (25 CAs)	Countries
Risk prevention and health protection	General clauses on health protection and prevention (aggregated)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Austria, Belgium, Croatia, Czechia, Finland, France, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Slovakia, Spain
		192 refs in 32 CAs (76.2 %)	71 refs in 20 CAs (74.1 %)	63 refs in 15 CAs (60.0 %)	
	Workplace safety	Yes	Yes	Yes	Austria, Croatia, Finland, France, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Slovakia, Spain
		50 refs in 21 CAs (50.0 %)	22 refs in 12 CAs (44.4 %)	16 refs in 5 CAs (20.0 %)	
	Personal protective equipment	Yes	Yes	Yes	Austria, Czechia, Finland, France, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Slovakia, Spain
		39 refs in 23 CAs (54.8 %)	20 refs in 15 CAs (55.6 %)	10 refs in 9 CAs (36.0 %)	

⁽⁴⁶⁾ For example, in CA-ES-1324 in the residential and social care sector, and in CA-FI-2025 (Appendix 4, 'Recommendation on the prevention of drug problems, treatment of drug issues and treatment guidelines in workplaces') and CA-FI-2029 in the manufacture of FLTC sector.

⁽⁴⁷⁾ For example, in CA-PT-2167, CA-PT-2318 and CA-SK-2028 in the manufacture of FLTC sector.

Type	OSH	Manufacture of FLTC (42 CAs)	Retail (27 CAs)	Residential and social care (25 CAs)	Countries
Risk prevention and health protection	Ergonomics	Yes	Yes		Austria, France, Norway
		2 refs in 2 CAs (4.8 %)	2 refs in 2 CAs (7.4 %)		
	Occupational injury	Yes	Yes	Yes	Austria, Czechia, Finland, France, Italy, Portugal, Slovakia, Spain
		18 refs in 11 CAs (26.2 %)	20 refs in 14 CAs (51.9 %)	8 refs in 7 CAs (28.0 %)	
	Unforeseeable events and emergencies (e.g. COVID-19)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Austria, Czechia, France, Norway, Portugal, Slovakia, Spain
11 refs in 4 CAs (9.5 %)		5 refs in 5 CAs (18.5 %)	3 refs in 3 CAs (12.0 %)		
Organisational structures and support	OSH committees	Yes	Yes	Yes	Finland, France, Italy, Portugal, Slovakia, Spain
		27 refs in 13 CA (31.0 %)	25 refs in 4 CAs (14.8 %)	37 refs in 7 CAs (28.0 %)	
	Occupational service/physicians	Yes	Yes	Yes	Austria, Czechia, Finland, France, the Netherlands, Portugal, Slovakia, Spain
		17 refs in 13 CAs (31.0 %)	7 refs in 6 CAs (22.2 %)	7 refs in 5 CAs (20.0 %)	
Training	OSH-related training	Yes	Yes	Yes	Austria, Czechia, Finland, France, Italy, Portugal, Slovakia, Spain
		29 refs in 13 CAs (31.0 %)	4 refs in 3 CAs (11.1 %)	6 refs in 4 CAs (16.0 %)	
Employee well-being	Work-life balance	Yes	Yes	Yes	Austria, Czechia, Finland, France, Italy, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain
		12 refs in 7 CAs (16.7 %)	24 refs in 10 CAs (37.0 %)	6 refs in 5 CAs (20.0 %)	
	Psychosocial risks and support	Yes	Yes	Yes	Austria, Belgium, Finland, France, Norway, Portugal, Spain
		2 refs in 2 CAs (4.8 %)	3 refs in 3 CAs (11.1 %)	12 refs in 7 CAs (28 %)	
Other	Other clauses on OSH	Yes	Yes	Yes	Austria, Croatia, Finland, France, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Slovakia, Spain
		50 refs in 16 CAs (38.1 %)	14 refs in 9 CAs (33.3 %)	15 refs in 12 CAs (48.0 %)	

Notes: Only sectors and countries with these types of OSH clauses in collective agreements are reported in the table (i.e. flagged with 'Yes'). CA, collective agreement; refs, references.

Source: CBBP Database 2025.

In addition, collective agreements include many references that influence health and safety at work and overlap with other main topics identified in this report, such as clauses on the protection of vulnerable workers

under the main topic 'work environment'. Box 8 illustrates such a clause from a collective agreement in the manufacture of FLTC sector in Croatia.

Box 8: Protection of vulnerable workers – example from a company-level agreement in the manufacture of FLTC sector in Croatia

A company-level agreement in the manufacture of FLTC sector in Croatia prohibits overtime work by minors and provides protections for certain groups of employees. The following employees may work overtime only if they submit written consent: a pregnant woman, a parent with a child three years of age or under, a single parent with a child six years of age or under, a worker who works part-time for several employers, a worker who works full-time for an employer and whose employer has approved the conclusion of an employment contract with another employer, and an employee who works full-time for several employers and whose employer has approved the conclusion of an employment contract with another employer. This consent must be submitted for each instance of overtime and is not required in cases of *force majeure* (unforeseeable emergencies). The employer is responsible for requesting this written statement before introducing overtime.

Source: CA-HR-1146.

Supporting the mental health of workers in low-paid sectors

Only 17 references across 12 collective agreements from Spain (6), Belgium (4), Austria (3), Finland (1), France (1), Norway (1) and Portugal (1) were identified as clauses on psychosocial risks and support for workers. Often, these topics overlap with workplace safety or topics coded under the main theme of work environment, such as harassment. In Belgium, a collective agreement in the retail sector, for instance, addresses ‘safety and aggressiveness’ in the stores, acknowledging the importance of ‘an effective safety policy in stores, so that employees can perform their work in a quiet environment’, and declares the commitment of social partners to focusing on a positive awareness campaign for customers (CA-BE-2626). Another agreement in the residential and social care sector grants employees the use of services of a confidential counsellor, psychosocial prevention advisor, burnout coach or stress coach (CA-BE-2627). In Spain, a collective agreement for the preserves and salted fish and seafood sector includes a very detailed protocol for prevention and action in cases of harassment, which was not included in the previous version of the agreement valid in 2015 (CA-ES-1209). In Austria, an agreement in the residential and social care sector stipulates that workers in emotionally demanding roles (e.g. social workers, therapists, teachers) are entitled to structured professional support (supervision) during their paid working time, with the details – such as limits, access and funding – negotiated at the company level (CA-AT-2315). In France, an agreement in the residential and social care sector includes an article on ‘prevention of psychosocial risks’. The article mentions that the sector’s social partners intend to favour the principles of primary prevention, but that it is also imperative to

have social dialogue at the company level. The agreement also lists numerous risk factors specific to the sector, for instance too heavy or insufficient workload, dangerous tasks, atypical and unpredictable schedules, work on Sundays and public holidays, aggression from the public (users, families, colleagues), few prospects for career development, unplanned imposed mobility and many others (CA-FR-2099).

Emerging themes in new clauses on occupational safety and health

Table 37 summarises new emerging themes in clauses on OSH. First, work–life balance emerges as an important theme across two sectors, retail and residential and social care, and includes provisions on the right to disconnect and reconciliation of family and work life. Second, some clauses on health and safety committees or representatives are newly added to agreements from the manufacture of FLTC and residential and social care sectors. Third, several sector-specific themes emerge. In the manufacture of FLTC sector, new clauses address protections related to physically demanding and/or dangerous working conditions. Some attention is also paid to protections for older workers. In the retail sector, new clauses address temporary incapacity to work and related social security in agreements from Finland and Spain. In the residential and social care sector, work intensity, high pressure and stressful work emerge as new themes, with clauses addressing the reduction of stress or burnout, aggression in the workplace and other psychosocial risks at work. The new clauses appear in only a handful of agreements from selected countries, reflecting that OSH as a topic is the second most stable after labour relations, with the majority of clauses unchanged (71.4 %), as shown in the subsection ‘Overview of the main topics in collective agreements’.

Table 37: New emerging themes in OSH

New clauses: OSH (124 references)			
Sector	Main theme	Selected examples	Countries
Manufacture of FLTC (42 references)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Addressing physically demanding or dangerous working conditions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Worker’s right to refuse work in the case of an imminent danger to their life or health, and company’s commitment to reassigning long-term shift workers in difficult conditions to less harmful stable jobs when possible (CA-HR-1149) Commitment of social partners to pay attention to topics of work pressure, ergonomics, welfare and health policy, and physically demanding conditions and shift work in their company-level collective agreements (CA-BE-2623) Company agreements should include clauses to improve ‘workability’ and apply measures, including those in the field of OSH, such as adapting workload (through additional recruitment), ergonomics and reduction of physically demanding working conditions (CA-BE-2623) 	Austria, Belgium, Croatia, the Netherlands, Slovakia, Spain

New clauses: OSH (124 references)			
Sector	Main theme	Selected examples	Countries
Manufacture of FLTC (42 references)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New clauses on health and safety committees or representatives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A set of new clauses on health and safety at work in a company-level collective agreement, including clauses on risk assessment, training in health and safety at work, and monitoring through the worker's commissioner for health and safety (CA-HR-1149) Clause on preventive healthcare, in which a company commits to offering age-specific medical examinations, optional discounted check-ups and paid vacations for up to 10 workers every year to support their health and work capacity, based on joint assessments with safety and medical representatives (CA-HR-1149) A new article requires employers to appoint employee health and safety representatives at a ratio of 1 per 20 employees, unless a lower risk justifies fewer representatives (CA-SK-2122) 	Austria, Belgium, Croatia, the Netherlands, Slovakia, Spain
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Protections for older workers and healthy ageing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 13 new substantive and procedural clauses in the bakery sector on the vitality scheme (in Dutch <i>Vitaliteitsregeling</i> ^(a)), which offers employees aged 60 years or over the option to work 80 % of their time for 90 % pay (vitality wage) and 100 % pension accrual, under a regulated structure with financial and procedural guarantees to support healthy ageing at work. The aim is to prevent early dropout of employees, while adapting to the increasing retirement age (CA-NL-1090) 	
Retail (44 references)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clauses declaring the importance of healthy working conditions and healthy workplaces 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Statements on the importance of preserving and improving workplace health (shared priority of employers and employees) requiring joint action based on respect, transparency and social dialogue. Active participation in various health and safety committees is sought (CA-FR-2044) Declarative statement that employees must be able to work in a healthy way and discuss overburden with their employer (CA-NL-1120) 	Austria, Finland, France, the Netherlands, Slovakia, Spain
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work-life balance, including the right to disconnect 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A clause on work-life balance states that a study will be conducted to investigate the flexible working time arrangement (adjusting the 35 % bandwidth) and also the preferences of younger generations (CA-NL-1118) A clause on the right to disconnect, coded under work-life balance, with detailed instructions on its application in daily work (CA-ES-1258) A clause on reconciliation of family and work life, including breastfeeding leave; leave related to various medical emergencies (premature birth, hospitalisation, serious illness); leave for care for minors and dependants; and protections for victims of gender violence or terrorism (CA-ES-1261) If working after 20:00 poses a health risk, employees have the right to transfer to daytime work if feasible, and employers must consider essential childcare responsibilities for female employees with children aged 12 years or under (CA-AT-1865) 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Temporary incapacity to work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A newly added clause on social security related to temporary disability, which complements legally established sickness and accident benefits (CA-ES-1261) A clause on employees with a partial capacity to work due to illness or injury, who may perform modified or substitute work or participate in training instead of taking sick leave (CA-FI-2006) 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Substantial modifications 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A new comprehensive occupational protection cooperation agreement for companies in the Finnish commerce sector on structure and responsibilities for workplace health and safety cooperation. It defines, among other positions, an OSH manager and OSH representative, or OSH committees, which must draw up an annual action plan (CA-FI-2006) 	

New clauses: OSH (124 references)			
Sector	Main theme	Selected examples	Countries
Residential and social care (38 references)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work–life balance, including the right to disconnect 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A clause on the balance budget, which is a leave-saving scheme allowing employees to save time to temporarily work less or not at all across the phases of their career, with the aim of achieving a better work–life balance (CA-NL-1210) A clause on the right to disconnect (CA-NL-1212) 	Austria, Belgium, Finland, the Netherlands, Spain
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Addressing work pressures, work intensity and psychosocial support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A clause on work pressure, which states that the employer is obliged to recognise, identify and discuss signals of work pressure with the employees and agree on measurable actions to address it. Employees can also discuss and consult the health and safety catalogue, which details the most common occupational risks (CA-NL-1210) A general intersectoral framework agreement that provides principles for the prevention and reduction of stress, burnout, aggression and other psychosocial risks at work, and principles for reintegration and progressive return to work after illness or accident. Additionally, a new clause also states that institutions should develop a proactive (and adjustable) policy focused on prevention in these two areas (i.e. preventing stress and other psychosocial risks and arranging reintegration and return to work after illness or accident) (CA-BE-2627) Employees can seek the support of confidential counsellors, psychosocial prevention advisors and burnout or stress coaches, who can help address workplace tensions or stress (CA-BE-2627) 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New clauses on health and safety committees or representatives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A clause on health and safety committees (which are mandated by law in Spain) (CA-ES-1328) 24 new clauses related to the agreement on health and safety representatives, which supplements the legal regulations on OSH and defines their rights, roles and working conditions, including their election, duties, cooperation with employers and use of time and resources. It encourages local agreements to adapt OSH practices to workplace-specific needs, while ensuring employee participation and safeguarding their statutory rights (CA-FI-2009) 	

(^a) Another agreement refers to the generation pact scheme (*Generatiepactregeling*), which is similar.
Source: CBBP Database 2025.

Sound social dialogue and labour relations in the workplace

Labour relations was found to be the fourth most frequent main topic in the sample, present across 88 of 94 collective agreements (93.6 %) and with a share of 11.3 % (1 506) of all coded clauses. As shown in the subsection ‘Overview of all coded clauses in collective agreements’, labour relations is among the most frequent topics addressed by collective agreements in some Member States (Czechia, Finland, France, Italy, Portugal and Slovakia). Sound social dialogue is especially important in low-paid sectors as these tend

to be less unionised. For example, only 1.8 % of low-wage workers in the food service industry are members of a labour union (Sorensen et al., 2019).

In general, predesigned categories on labour relations sufficiently cover the main topics covered in collective agreements, that is, **collective representation** covers clauses on the role of trade unions and trade union security, the role of non-union employee representation/works councils, and employer roles and commitments; **joint roles** covers clauses on participation in joint committee meetings; and **monitoring and conflict management** covers clauses on dispute resolution and compliance and monitoring.

Almost all clauses in collective agreements across many different topics, but especially procedural clauses, include a reference to a requirement for trade unions/works councils/workers' representatives to consult on a certain issue or agree on a certain issue in writing. For instance, substantive clauses on working time in Austria almost always include a reference to the role of workers' representatives.

The following applies to companies without a works council: [t]he personal entitlement to overtime [i.e. one hour above the collectively agreed full working hours – previously 38 hours instead of the newly negotiated 37 hours] for full-time employees is only possible if a) there is an agreement between the company and the union that i.) in matters of personal entitlement to overtime, the supervising union is given the function of the works council (especially the right to information and advice), ii) in this context, the supervising union secretary is allowed to enter the company and iii) the information and data transfer is guaranteed, and b) the employee agrees to be cared for by the union in this context while exercising his or her personal right to overtime. This also requires consent to pass on your name and contact details. Forms are developed together for a) and b). The union can also delegate its role to works councils of other Caritas organizations in the diocese.

(CA-AT-2315)

Another example is from a collective agreement in Belgium, which highlights the importance of consultation and social dialogue.

Social consultation and dialogue – [a] good policy is only possible if there is sufficient broad support for it, and it is therefore important that this is not imposed from above, but that there is sufficient consultation between employer and employees from the start in a constructive manner, through the existing bodies such as the committee for prevention and protection at work or, in their absence, the trade union delegation together with the employer.

(CA-BE-2627)

Many agreements include a commitment to social peace (peace clause) during the duration of agreements, for example in agreements from the manufacture of FLTC sector in Croatia and Slovakia (CA-HR-1149, CA-SK-2028 and CA-SK-2122). Some Finnish agreements specifically prohibit all industrial action (CA-FI-2006, CA-FI-2009 and CA-FI-2403), while others require advance notice of political or sympathy industrial action (CA-FI-2025, in the manufacture of FLTC sector). In Italy, workers are compensated if social partners fail to negotiate second-level bargaining on performance-based bonuses (Box 9).

Importantly, agreements across all sectors embed their labour relations in broader national legislation, which secures a right to organise and right to collective bargaining. In Italy, collective labour relations are regulated primarily through intersectoral national-level agreements – 'interconfederal agreements' – which consist of framework agreements shaping the functioning of industrial relations. In this sense, collective labour relations at the interconfederal, sectoral, territorial and company levels are self-regulated by their primary actors, and this prerogative stems from the freedom of trade unionism provided for by the Constitution of the Italian Republic. In Portugal, the Labour Code determines that the rights of workers' representatives (unions and works councils) cannot be altered by collective agreements, unless they set better conditions for the workers.

Clauses on labour relations also include many new references (10.7 %) – 161 new clauses in absolute terms. Most of the new clauses regulate non-union employee representation (61 references, or 37.8 %) and the role of trade unions (34 references, or 21.1 %), followed by participation in joint committees and compliance monitoring. In Finland, an agreement in the manufacture of FLTC sector includes a new appendix on application guidelines for trade union training in small and medium-sized enterprises (CA-FI-2026). In Belgium, a new clause specifies an annual trade union premium for syndicated workers of EUR 145, which is not payable in the case that a peace clause is broken (CA-BE-2622, in the manufacture of FLTC sector).

Box 9: Compensation for failure at second-level bargaining – example from Italy

In Italy, a collective agreement in the food and beverage industry (CA-IT-1885, in the manufacture of FLTC sector) includes a new clause on compensatory payments to employees in the case that social partners fail to negotiate second-level bargaining on performance-based bonuses. In this example, these payments vary by job level and parameter, ranging from EUR 21.90 to EUR 50.37 per month, and are to be paid for 12 months, starting on 1 January 2023. These provisions were not prompted by legislation but are the result of negotiations among social partners. In line with the recent cross-sectoral trends to decentralise collective bargaining in Italy, they represent a way to incentivise the conclusion of company-level agreements.

Source: CBBP Database 2025.

Understanding change and innovation in collective agreements

The collective agreements analysed in this project exhibit both stability and responsiveness to change, but are collective agreements innovative? In 2022, Eurofound concluded that ‘innovation in collective bargaining requires further exploration, since conceptual approaches and definitions are mostly absent or underdeveloped’ (Eurofound, 2022). This project contributes to studying the innovative power of collective agreements.

National correspondents did not evaluate the selected examples of collective agreements as being particularly innovative. Only 15 of 13 347 clauses were identified as innovative, found in nine agreements from six Member States (Czechia, Finland, France, Italy, the Netherlands and Spain). These 15 innovative clauses reflect a shift towards more flexible, inclusive and socially responsible employment relations.

The following are selected examples of the innovative clauses.

- **A directional employment contract in the Netherlands (*regie-arbeidsovereenkomst*).** This contract is introduced as a pilot in the Dutch collective agreement in the care sector to reduce reliance on temporary workers and self-employed people without staff (*zonder personeel* or *zzp'ers*). It aims to combine the flexibility of self-employment (in scheduling and location of work) with the security of a regular employment contract, as the salary is paid every month based on the number of hours agreed on an annual basis, irrespective of the number of hours worked that month.
- **Subrogation contracts in Spain.** The main idea of these contracts is to establish a mechanism for the transfer of employees from one company to another when a contract is changed or terminated, ensuring continuity of employment and rights for workers (CA-ES-1326 and CA-ES-1324).
- **Children’s camps.** This clause supports the potential for employers to set up summer and winter children’s camps in agreement with the trade union (CA-CZ-1974).
- **Two new protocols in the Italian manufacture of FLTC sector agreement.** Protocol No 9, ‘Sustainable development and corporate social responsibility’, and Protocol No 10, ‘Participation’, have been introduced. The latter promotes worker participation in company decision-making (CA-IT-1884).
- **Two new protocols in the Italian footwear industry agreement.** Protocol No 13, ‘Declaration on international trade’, which highlights the importance of respect for human rights and labour standards in international trade agreements, and Protocol No 18, ‘Corporate social responsibility’, have been introduced (CA-IT-2569).
- **A clause on improving productivity in the French manufacture of FLTC sector agreement.** The main idea of this clause is to improve productivity in businesses while ensuring that said productivity leads to benefits for employees, such as improved working conditions and purchasing power (CA-FR-2016).

5 Job quality of low-paid workers: Connecting the evidence from collective agreements to the seven dimensions of job quality

This chapter aims to connect the evidence from the collective agreements to Eurofound’s seven dimensions of job quality. First, it discusses how collective bargaining improves the job quality of low-paid workers and, second, it places the role of collective bargaining in the context of a systemic approach to studying job quality and quality of working life.

Conceptual link between collective bargaining and job quality

Eurofound has been a pioneer in studies on the job quality of workers. In 2012, it developed a methodology to study job quality, which fed into the monitoring of improvement of working conditions in Europe through the European Working Conditions Survey (Eurofound, 2021). Eurofound’s seven dimensions of job quality are (1) physical environment, (2) work intensity, (3) working time quality, (4) social environment, (5) skills and

discretion, (6) prospects and (7) earnings. Each dimension has subdimensions, and all study job quality at the job level (Eurofound, 2021).

Collective bargaining is one of the regulatory tools that can influence working conditions at the job level (Eurofound, 2021). This part of the report therefore investigates how the content of collective agreements matches these seven dimensions. One aim is to understand the relationship between regulatory aspects (collective agreements) and job quality and to connect these two aspects. A further aim is to see how the outcomes of voluntary negotiations between social partners influence job quality.

As a starting point, the codes developed for this project have been matched to the corresponding dimensions of job quality (Figure 34). As can be seen in Figure 34, there is no perfect overlap between the codes designed for the CBBP project and these seven dimensions, largely because there are 120 level 2 codes. Several level 1 codes are completely missing and cannot be matched

Figure 34: Eurofound’s seven dimensions of job quality with the indicators composing each dimension and corresponding codes from the CBBP Database



Sources: Eurofound (2021) and CBBP Database 2025.

to the job quality dimensions: terms of collective agreements, leave, social protection and social security, and other clauses. Some of these are naturally not fit for purpose (e.g. terms of collective agreements), while others – such as social protection and social security – influence quality of working life⁽⁴⁸⁾ rather than job quality. Importantly, the coding scheme developed for this project was not designed to fit these seven dimensions of job quality.

How negotiated outcomes match the seven dimensions of job quality

This section offers an example of how analysing the content of collective agreements can be instrumental in understanding the regulatory mechanism that shapes the job quality of workers and how collective bargaining can influence the subjective well-being of employees.

The link between the conceptual framework and the content of collective agreements is as follows: collective agreements regulate a broad range of issues that influence the job quality of workers. If employees score low on certain dimensions of job quality, for instance if they consistently report dissatisfaction with the quality of their working time, social partners may look into how working time is regulated in collective agreements and adjust these provisions to better reflect the needs of workers. Taking into account the results of this project, this has indeed been on the social partners' agenda, as is reflected in sections that describe the emergence of new topics in collective agreements (see Chapter 4).

Matching the content of collective agreements to the seven dimensions of job quality yields the following results. First, only parts of the coding scheme match the dimension '**physical environment**', which focuses on physical hazards and the physical conditions under which work is performed. It includes ergonomics, which, as shown in the subsection 'Provisions on occupational safety and health in collective agreements', is not very prominent in the collective agreements sampled (only present in 4.3 %). Workplace safety is, however, governed in 40.4 % of all agreements and personal protective equipment in 50 %.

Second, '**work intensity**' is the dimension least covered by the collective agreements. Some evidence comes from two codes in this project, the code on 'productivity and performance' and the code on 'surveillance and AI'. In general, collective agreements rarely address issues related to workload, although limited evidence suggests the growing importance of this subject. For example, in the Netherlands, employees are entitled to a

performance review with their employer or manager once a year to discuss, among other things, their working conditions and workload (CA-NL-1212, in the residential and social care sector). Some reference to equitable distribution of workload is found in a clause on working time in a Spanish retail sector agreement (CA-ES-1258). In Italy, a clause on teleworking refers to workload when stating that the workload and performance levels of teleworkers are equivalent to those of comparable workers carrying out the activity on the company's premises (CA-IT-1884, in the manufacture of FLTC sector). In Belgium, the article on improvement of workability includes among the list of possible measures adjustment to the workload through, for instance, additional recruitment (CA-BE-2623, in the manufacture of FLTC sector).

Third, the dimension '**working time quality**' and all of its subdimensions are regularly reflected in collective agreements through provisions on working time. The sample shows that clauses on working time are the second most frequent main category of codes, present in 95.7 % of all agreements.

Fourth, the '**social environment**' dimension overlaps with numerous codes in the project's database. These include clauses on labour relations, which partially overlap with the 'management quality' subdimension, and clauses on work environment, which partially cover the subdimensions on adverse social behaviour and social support. However, as this dimension also captures relationships and interactions with colleagues, collective agreements only marginally affect this dimension, mostly by preventive and punitive clauses on adverse social behaviour (e.g. anti-discrimination, prevention of harassment in the workplace).

Fifth, the '**skills and discretion**' dimension matches the codes on training, with its subdimensions covered by a variety of other codes in this project. For instance, as this dimension measures the latitude of workers to make decisions and worker participation in organisational decision-making, clauses that influence this might be found in clauses on labour relations (employee and employee representatives' role), work organisation (particularly in relation to reorganisation and restructuring or surveillance in the workplace) or in clauses on work transitions.

Sixth, the dimension '**prospects**' measures career prospects, employment status, job security and downsizing. Clauses on these issues can be found under the topic 'terms of employment', but also under 'work reorganisation and restructuring'. Job security as a term

⁽⁴⁸⁾ This is a broader term and includes other aspects of working life, not only job quality.

is not directly mentioned in collective agreements, but the evidence presented shows some attempts to address the job security of vulnerable workers, as shown by the example of tailored training for temporary workers to ease their transition to permanent positions (see again Table 35 and Box 2 on functional mobility).

The seventh dimension on '**earnings**' is the most common dimension addressed through collective bargaining. This dimension corresponds to the codes on wages and remuneration and allowances and bonuses. The agreements not only define collectively agreed minimum wages but also go beyond wages and include a great variety of (mostly financial) bonuses, referenced in 97.9 % of all agreements analysed.

6 The added value of comparative information on the content of collective agreements across Europe

Balancing qualitative and quantitative perspectives in a comparative analysis of collective agreements

A comparative analysis of collective agreements across different Member States and sectors has tremendous added value for workers, social partners, policymakers and researchers. This project analysed qualitative data that were quantitatively summarised to offer comparability among countries and sectors. It is important to highlight that by averaging these data the qualitative perspective and country- or sector-specific details may be lost. Similarly, looking at collective agreements only from the qualitative perspective does not allow quantitative comparisons, which are often needed for a broader perspective. Importantly, collective agreements can only be fully understood when read as one whole piece of regulation. The underlying meaning and context of the qualitative data on collective agreements must always be carefully considered.

There are several parts of this report that offer examples of what is possible when text is classified and coded into categories that can be compared, for example the salary calculator presented in Box 3 and the comparative information on leave allowances in Box 6. The scope of this project limits what can be presented in the report, but further research can investigate specific topics of interest in more detail.

Use of AI in content analysis of collective agreements

Comparing qualitative data from collective agreements requires substantial labour and financial resources, if done solely by humans. Therefore, the use of AI was also explored. The development of the conceptual framework for this project started in 2023, when language-processing models such as ChatGPT were not yet widely used among researchers. Nevertheless, AI was tested and used for several parts of this project, particularly:

- AI-powered language translations of collective agreements into English;
- (some aspects of) the comparison of two documents to see which parts of the text have been altered (see subsection ‘Missing clauses’).

AI offers promising tools for enhancing the content analysis of collective agreements, particularly given their complex and often lengthy textual nature. AI-powered natural language processing can assist in identifying, classifying and extracting key themes, such as working time, allowances, training and health provisions, across a large number of agreements. Machine learning models can be trained to distinguish between descriptive and substantive clauses or detect emerging topics, helping researchers focus on clauses with regulatory or transformative potential. Moreover, AI can support the harmonisation of multilingual data, reducing inconsistencies in cross-country studies.

However, certain factors pose challenges for the interpretation of data solely through AI, such as the particularities of collective agreements in the context of their national industrial relations landscape, their textual complexity and their format (e.g. scanned PDFs or text formatted in two columns with two languages, as in the Netherlands). Human expertise therefore remains essential for the nuanced and correct interpretation of the content of collective agreements.

7 | Conclusions

The evidence presented in this report is based on the analysis of 94 collective agreements from three low-paid sectors in 11 Member States and Norway. While some trends observed are likely to be universal for collective agreements in all sectors – consistent with findings from other research on the content of collective agreements – whether what has been seen in these three low-paid sectors is reflective of other sectors needs to be investigated further. Given that this project alone generated 13 347 coded clauses, expanding the analysis to include additional countries and sectors would require substantial time and research resources.

Wages and bonuses remain a priority for collective agreements

The findings of this research clearly show that collective agreements continue to prioritise wages, remuneration and additional financial rewards in the form of allowances and bonuses. Wages are addressed in every collective agreement sampled, highlighting their central importance to workers and companies. At the same time, supplementing the basic wage is also very important, especially for low-paid workers. Collective agreements provide this kind of supplement through a wide range of individual-based, job-based and group-based allowances and bonuses, tailored to specific sectors and the needs of workers in those sectors. This highlights the role of collective bargaining in improving the take-home pay of workers in low-paid sectors.

Attention to well-being and work–life balance is evident

Working time and provisions on labour relations were also among the most frequent topics addressed in the collective agreements. Flexibility of working time still plays an important role, but, increasingly, both employers and workers are also paying attention to the well-being of employees and their work–life balance. This is related to an emerging focus on the protection of vulnerable groups of workers. Some evidence from collective agreements shows the inclusion of clauses that protect older workers and also young workers entering the workforce.

There is untapped potential for the inclusion of new topics in non-wage bargaining

Several topics beyond pay are not yet fully addressed in collective agreements. Issues such as work intensity, the green and just transitions, the ageing workforce, and health and safety in the digital age are not yet systematically regulated through collective bargaining. Including these themes could enhance the relevance of collective agreements, making them more responsive to evolving labour market dynamics and societal priorities. Expanding the scope of non-wage bargaining would strengthen its role as a comprehensive regulatory tool.

Collective bargaining is both a stable and adaptable regulatory mechanism

Collective bargaining remains a stable regulatory mechanism that can, however, adapt to change. The majority of clauses in the collective agreements remain unchanged over time (63 %), ensuring continuity and predictability for both employers and workers. At the same time, the introduction of new clauses (12 %) and revisions of already existing clauses (18 %) in specific areas show that agreements are responsive to emerging challenges, particularly those linked to skills development. Sectoral differences further highlight this adaptability. Retail is the sector with the largest share of new clauses (almost 18 %), while the manufacture of FLTC sector shows a high degree of stability with almost 78 % unchanged clauses. Similarly, some topics are dealt with in a more dynamic way than others, such as training, which has the largest share of new clauses (22 %). This suggests a higher responsiveness to changes related to skills and development needs. This balance between stability and adaptability reinforces collective agreements as a flexible yet reliable regulatory instrument.

Agreements in the three low-paid sectors mirror national industrial relations models

There are significant country differences in the shares of descriptive and substantive clauses in collective agreements, reflecting the specificities of national industrial relations systems. Countries with more-developed industrial relations systems tend to have lengthier and more text-rich collective agreements, governing a larger spectrum of issues, than countries with less-developed systems. In addition, countries that rely on collective bargaining as the main regulator for some thematic areas tend to regulate these topics in more detail and with more substance. Country specificities in national industrial relations systems shape the type and form of content seen in collective agreements far more prominently than the sectors they govern do.

Collective bargaining is key to negotiating quality jobs

Collective bargaining is a key mechanism for negotiating quality jobs and improving the overall quality of working life. Linking collective agreements to the job quality framework highlights the systemic nature of job quality, where issues under different dimensions of job quality, such as earnings, working time quality and career prospects, are shaped by regulatory mechanisms, labour laws and collective agreements. The findings demonstrate that collective bargaining can significantly enhance job quality, particularly in low-paid sectors, by addressing both traditional and emerging issues. A systemic approach to studying job quality and quality of working life is therefore essential to fully capture how collective bargaining contributes to better working lives and promotes more inclusive and sustainable labour markets.

Accessing and comparing information on collective agreements across Europe remains a challenge

Collective agreements in many Member States are still not easily and widely accessible. Collective agreement texts also vary in reader-friendliness across countries and sectors: some are still only accessible as scanned PDF versions; some are not published as a consolidated version and employees only see changes compared with the previous version of the same agreement; and some extensively refer to labour law, which hinders easy navigation for workers. The lack of accessible and comparable information on collective agreements across Europe poses significant challenges for achieving transparent and predictable working conditions. To address this, an EU-wide database of collective agreements is essential. Such a database would provide a centralised platform for storing and sharing information on collective agreements, enabling researchers, policymakers and stakeholders to access and compare data. This would facilitate the identification of best practices, trends and areas for improvement, ultimately contributing to more effective labour market policies and social dialogue.

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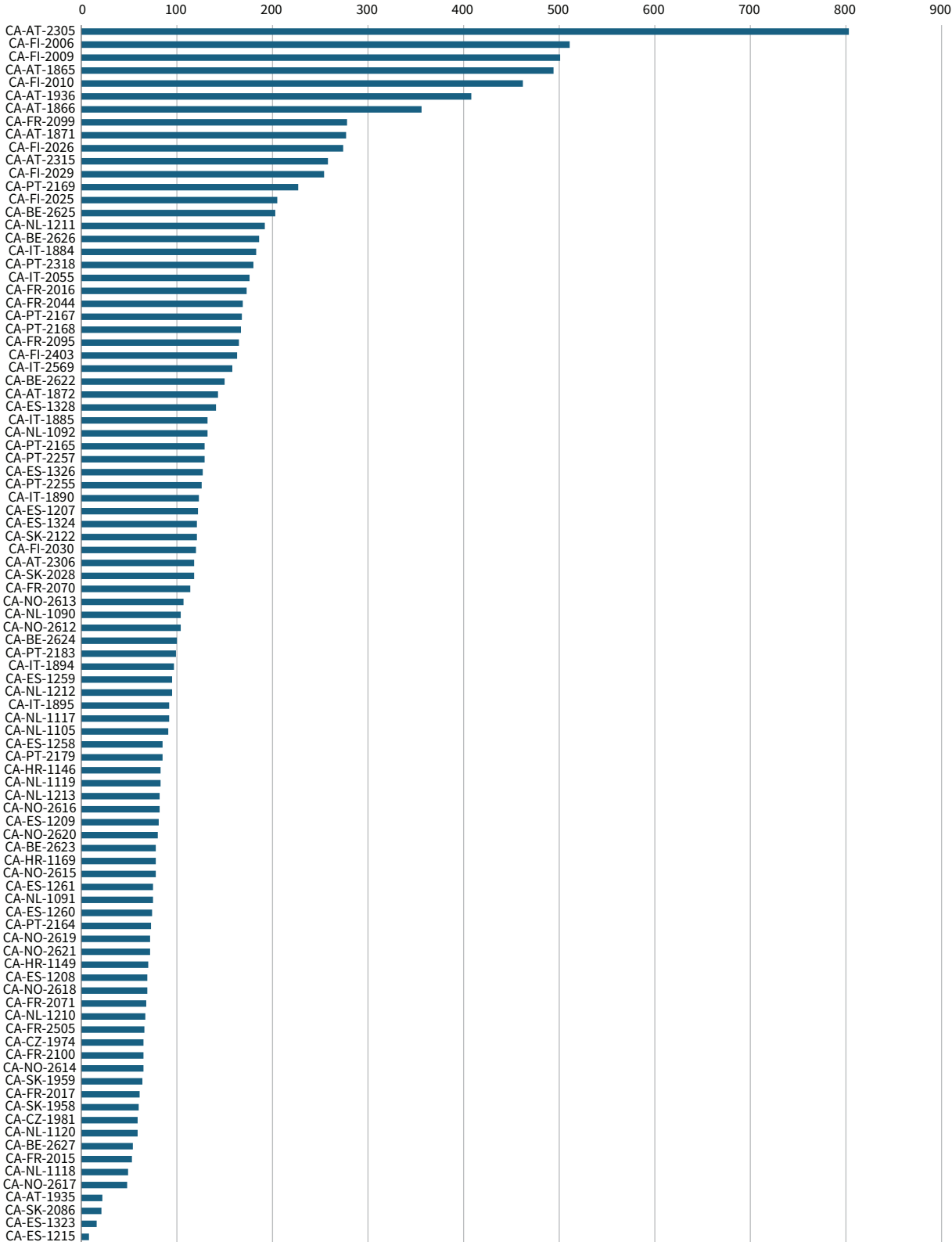
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Annexes

Annex 1: Sample characteristics

Figure A1: Number of clauses by collective agreement



Note: Total number of coded clauses = 13 347.
 Source: CBBP Database 2025.

Table A1: Number of coded clauses per agreement, sector and country with bargaining level and estimated coverage

Bargaining level	Collective agreement identifier	Number of clauses	Country	Sector	Estimated coverage
National industry/ sector level	CA-AT-1872	143	Austria	Manufacture of FLTC	12 000
	CA-AT-2305	803	Austria	Manufacture of FLTC	20 000
	CA-AT-2306	118	Austria	Manufacture of FLTC	20 000–21 000
	CA-AT-1866	356	Austria	Retail	85 000
	CA-AT-1871	277	Austria	Residential and social care	80 000
	CA-AT-2315	258	Austria	Residential and social care	15 000
Regional industry/ sector level	CA-AT-1935	22	Austria	Manufacture of FLTC	3 000
	CA-AT-1936	408	Austria	Manufacture of FLTC	4 000
	CA-AT-1865	494	Austria	Retail	250 000
National industry/ sector level	CA-BE-2622	150	Belgium	Manufacture of FLTC	—
	CA-BE-2623	78	Belgium	Manufacture of FLTC	—
	CA-BE-2624	100	Belgium	Manufacture of FLTC	—
	CA-BE-2625	203	Belgium	Retail	—
	CA-BE-2626	186	Belgium	Retail	—
	CA-BE-2627	54	Belgium	Residential and social care	—
Enterprise/ company or establishment level	CA-HR-1146	83	Croatia	Manufacture of FLTC	550–575
	CA-HR-1149	70	Croatia	Manufacture of FLTC	280–300
	CA-HR-1169	78	Croatia	Retail	2 200–2 300
National industry/ sector level	CA-CZ-1974	65	Czechia	Manufacture of FLTC	3 500
	CA-CZ-1981	59	Czechia	Retail	55 000
	CA-FI-2025	205	Finland	Manufacture of FLTC	7 500–9 900
	CA-FI-2026	274	Finland	Manufacture of FLTC	2 000
	CA-FI-2029	254	Finland	Manufacture of FLTC	5 200
	CA-FI-2030	120	Finland	Manufacture of FLTC	2 800
	CA-FI-2006	511	Finland	Retail	103 000
	CA-FI-2403	163	Finland	Retail	3 400
	CA-FI-2009	501	Finland	Residential and social care	67 000
	CA-FI-2010	462	Finland	Residential and social care	180 000
	CA-FR-2015	53	France	Manufacture of FLTC	30 900
	CA-FR-2016	173	France	Manufacture of FLTC	57 806
	CA-FR-2017	61	France	Manufacture of FLTC	27 606
	CA-FR-2505	66	France	Manufacture of FLTC	49 522
	CA-FR-2044	169	France	Retail	747 332
	CA-FR-2070	114	France	Retail	389 066
	CA-FR-2071	68	France	Retail	109 729
	CA-FR-2095	165	France	Residential and social care	360 364
	CA-FR-2099	278	France	Residential and social care	215 627
	CA-FR-2100	65	France	Residential and social care	475 611
	CA-IT-1884	183	Italy	Manufacture of FLTC	150 000–155 000
	CA-IT-1885	132	Italy	Manufacture of FLTC	200 000–210 000
	CA-IT-2569	158	Italy	Manufacture of FLTC	40 000–45 000
	CA-IT-1890	123	Italy	Retail	2 140 000–2 150 000

Bargaining level	Collective agreement identifier	Number of clauses	Country	Sector	Estimated coverage
National industry/ sector level	CA-IT-2055	176	Italy	Retail	77 000–80 000
	CA-IT-1894	97	Italy	Residential and social care	315 000–320 000
	CA-IT-1895	92	Italy	Residential and social care	155 000–156 000
	CA-NL-1090	104	Netherlands	Manufacture of FLTC	25 245
	CA-NL-1091	75	Netherlands	Manufacture of FLTC	5 997
	CA-NL-1092	132	Netherlands	Manufacture of FLTC	8 777
	CA-NL-1105	91	Netherlands	Manufacture of FLTC	6 545
	CA-NL-1117	92	Netherlands	Retail	228 616
	CA-NL-1118	49	Netherlands	Retail	114 631
	CA-NL-1119	83	Netherlands	Retail	97 806
	CA-NL-1120	59	Netherlands	Retail	19 375
	CA-NL-1210	67	Netherlands	Residential and social care	380 679
	CA-NL-1211	192	Netherlands	Residential and social care	151 425
	CA-NL-1212	95	Netherlands	Residential and social care	72 816
	CA-NL-1213	82	Netherlands	Residential and social care	39 476
Enterprise/company or establishment level	CA-NO-2619	72	Norway	Residential and social care	49 500–51 000
National industry/ sector level	CA-NO-2612	104	Norway	Manufacture of FLTC	1 100–1 200
	CA-NO-2613	107	Norway	Manufacture of FLTC	6 000
	CA-NO-2614	65	Norway	Manufacture of FLTC	6 700
	CA-NO-2615	78	Norway	Manufacture of FLTC	3 000
	CA-NO-2620	80	Norway	Retail	43 000–49 000
	CA-NO-2621	72	Norway	Retail	6 000–7 000
	CA-NO-2616	82	Norway	Residential and social care	454 000
	CA-NO-2617	48	Norway	Residential and social care	2 000–2 300
	CA-NO-2618	69	Norway	Residential and social care	27 900
	CA-PT-2164	73	Portugal	Manufacture of FLTC	2 737
	CA-PT-2165	129	Portugal	Manufacture of FLTC	2 886
	CA-PT-2167	168	Portugal	Manufacture of FLTC	15 036
	CA-PT-2168	167	Portugal	Manufacture of FLTC	28 900
	CA-PT-2169	227	Portugal	Manufacture of FLTC	29 722
	CA-PT-2318	180	Portugal	Manufacture of FLTC	5 122
	CA-PT-2179	85	Portugal	Retail	152 119
	CA-PT-2255	126	Portugal	Residential and social care	40 176
	CA-PT-2257	129	Portugal	Residential and social care	20 328
Regional industry/ sector level	CA-PT-2183	99	Portugal	Retail	19 682
Cross-sectoral national level	CA-SK-2086	21	Slovakia	Residential and social care	230 000–250 000
Enterprise/company or establishment level	CA-SK-1958	60	Slovakia	Retail	12 000–14 000
National industry/ sector level	CA-SK-2028	118	Slovakia	Manufacture of FLTC	308
	CA-SK-2122	121	Slovakia	Manufacture of FLTC	1 150
	CA-SK-1959	64	Slovakia	Retail	120 000

Bargaining level	Collective agreement identifier	Number of clauses	Country	Sector	Estimated coverage
Enterprise/company or establishment level	CA-ES-1259	95	Spain	Retail	86 100
	CA-ES-1328	11	Spain	Residential and social care	23 259
National industry/sector level	CA-ES-1207	122	Spain	Manufacture of FLTC	44 775
	CA-ES-1209	81	Spain	Manufacture of FLTC	31 899
	CA-ES-1215	8	Spain	Manufacture of FLTC	29 800
	CA-ES-1258	85	Spain	Retail	233 073
	CA-ES-1323	16	Spain	Residential and social care	200 000
	CA-ES-1324	121	Spain	Residential and social care	180 000
	CA-ES-1326	127	Spain	Residential and social care	150 000
Regional industry/sector level	CA-ES-1208	69	Spain	Manufacture of FLTC	40 000
	CA-ES-1260	74	Spain	Retail	65 000
	CA-ES-1261	75	Spain	Retail	51 250
Total	94	13 347			10 027 903–10 101 348

Annex 2: Number of clauses per country

Figure A2: Number of clauses coded under level 1 main topics in Austria

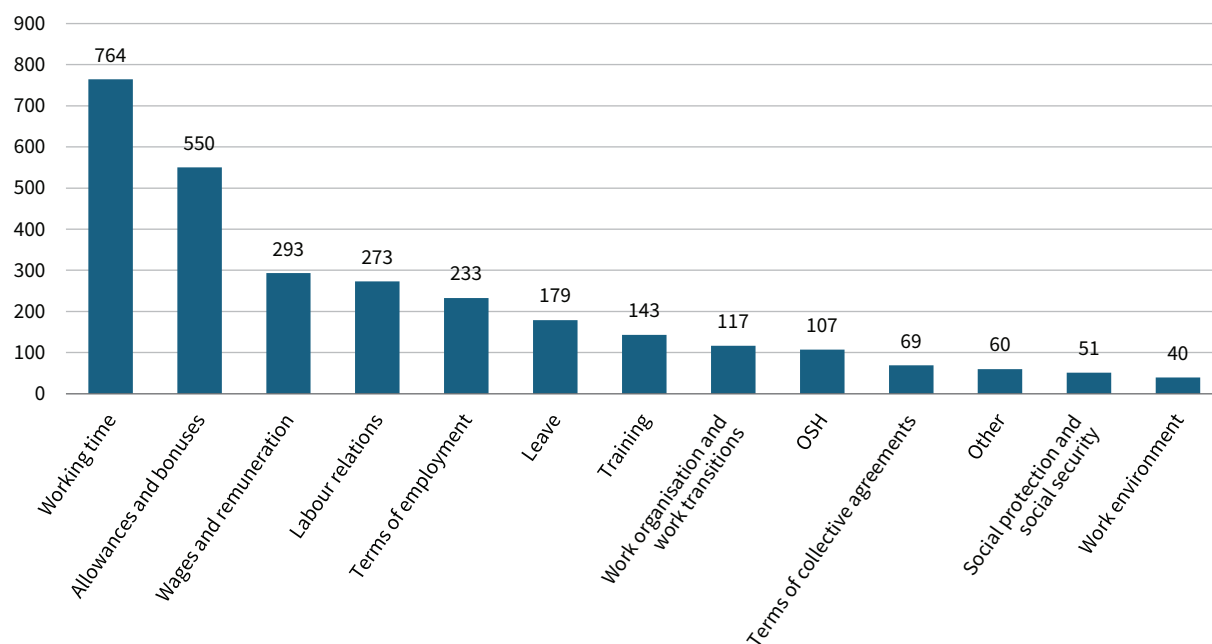


Figure A3: Number of clauses coded under level 1 main topics in Belgium

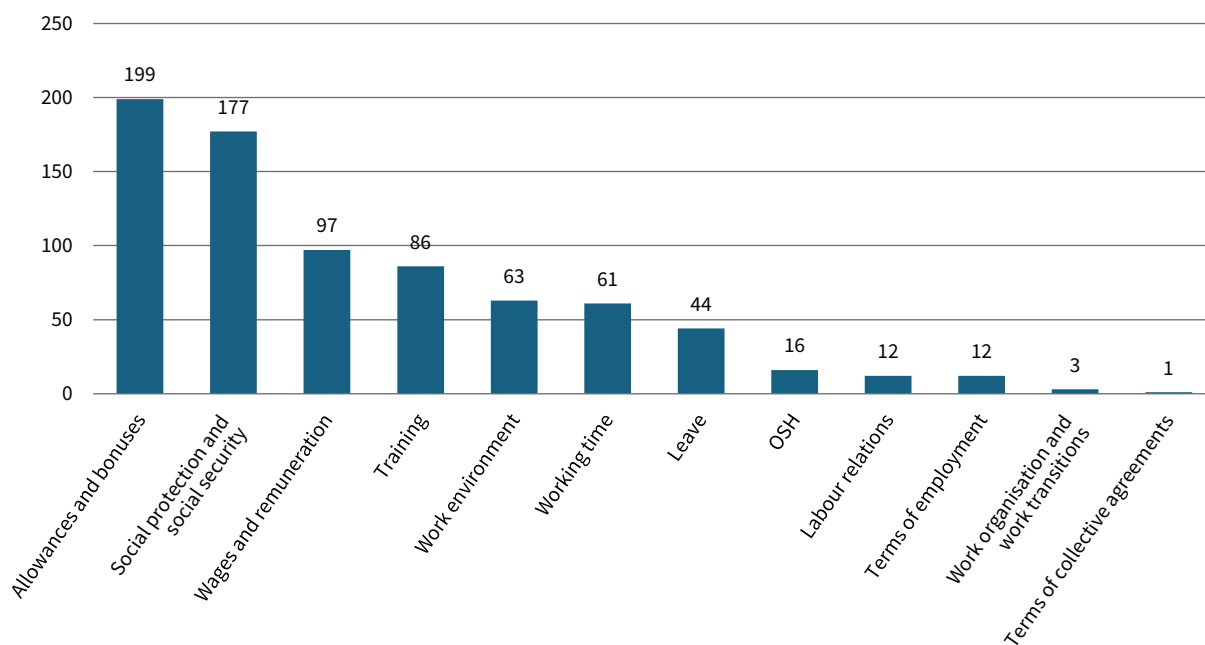


Figure A4: Number of clauses coded under level 1 main topics in Croatia

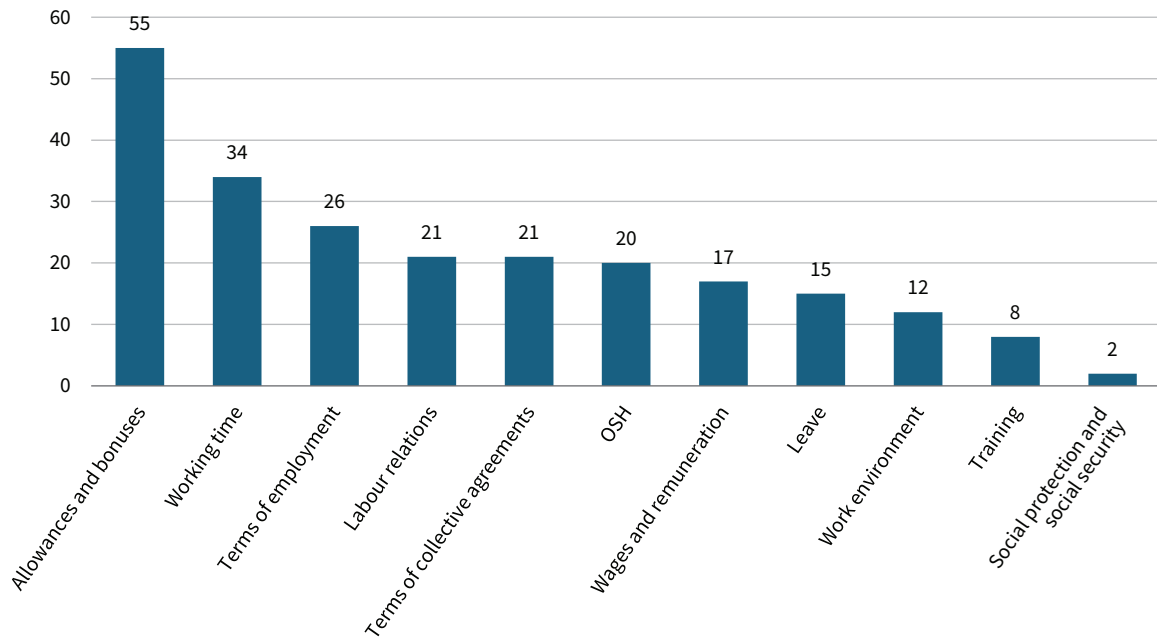


Figure A5: Number of clauses coded under level 1 main topics in Czechia

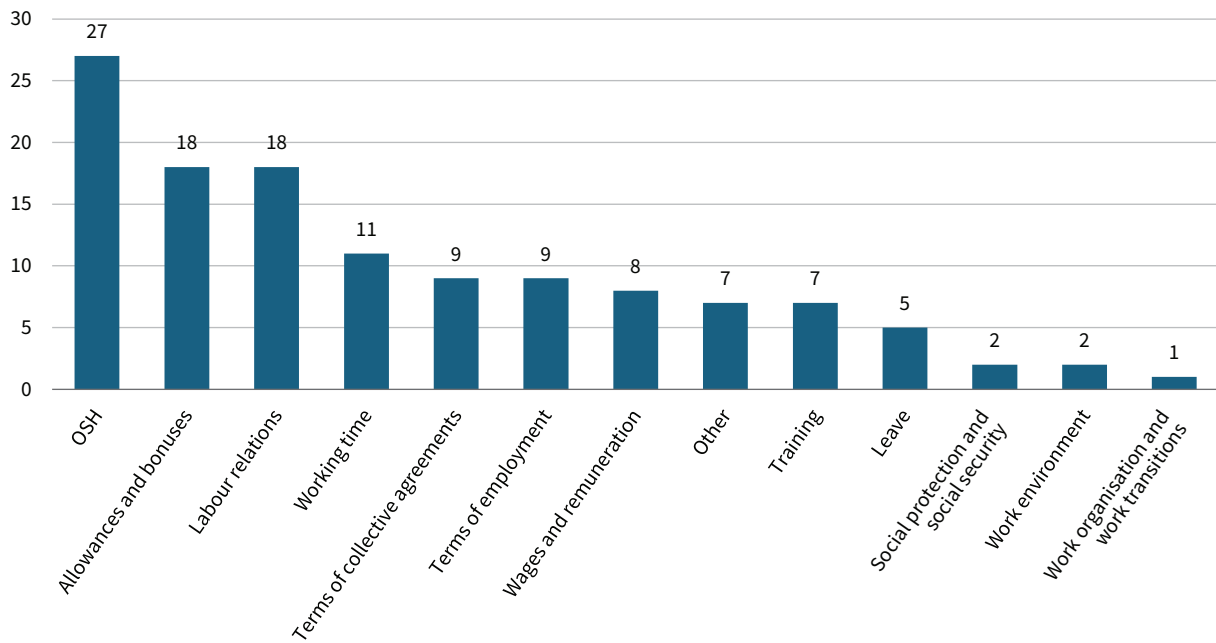


Figure A6: Number of clauses coded under level 1 main topics in Finland

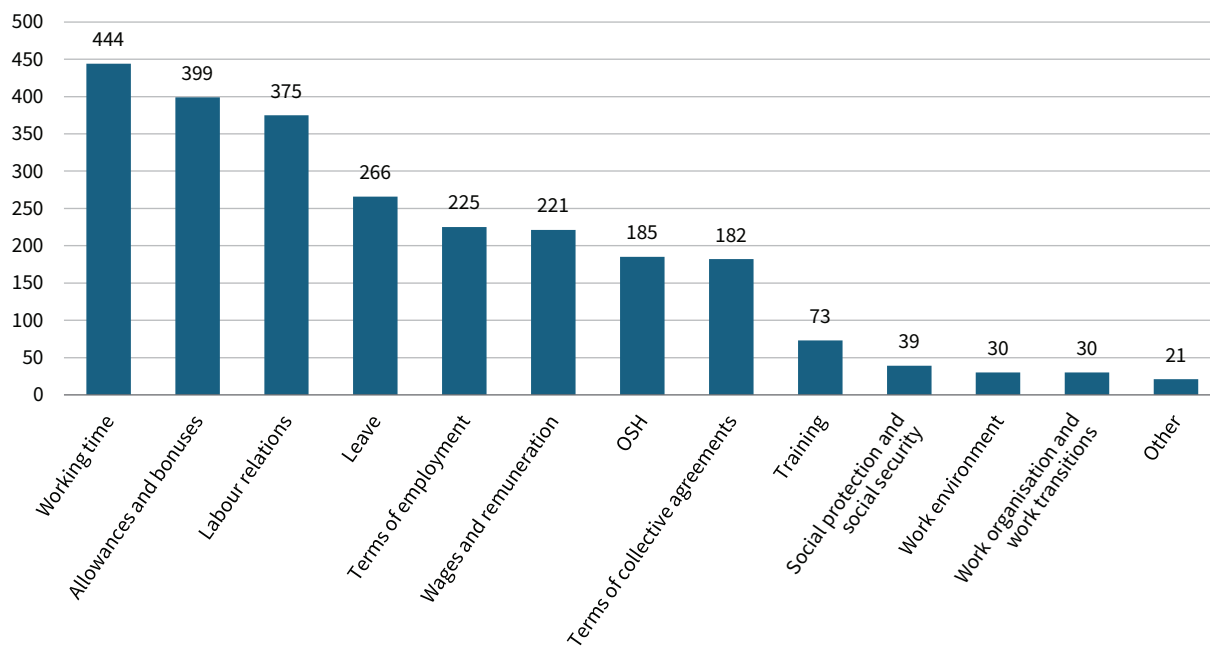


Figure A7: Number of clauses coded under level 1 main topics in France

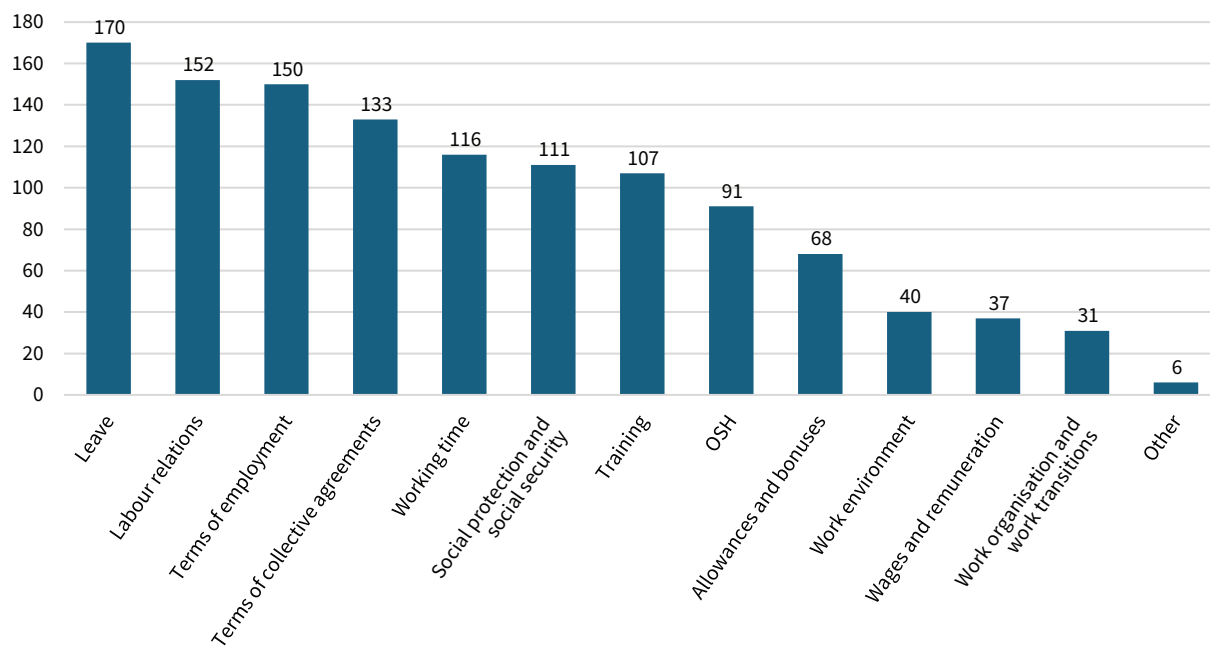


Figure A8: Number of clauses coded under level 1 main topics in Italy

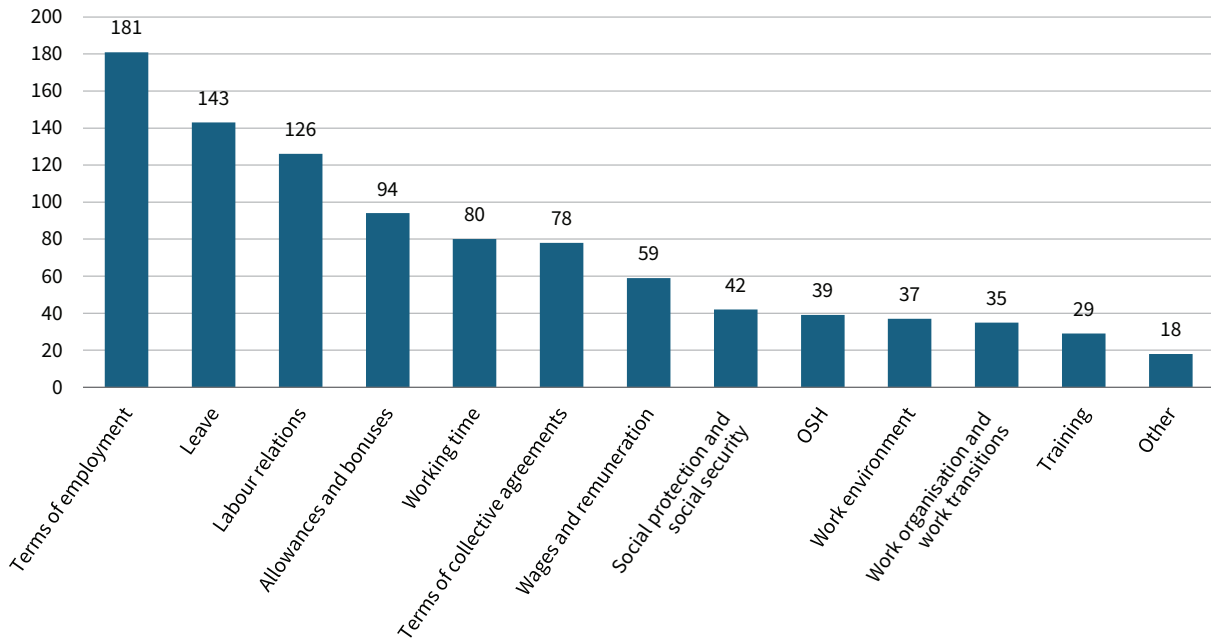


Figure A9: Number of clauses coded under level 1 main topics in the Netherlands

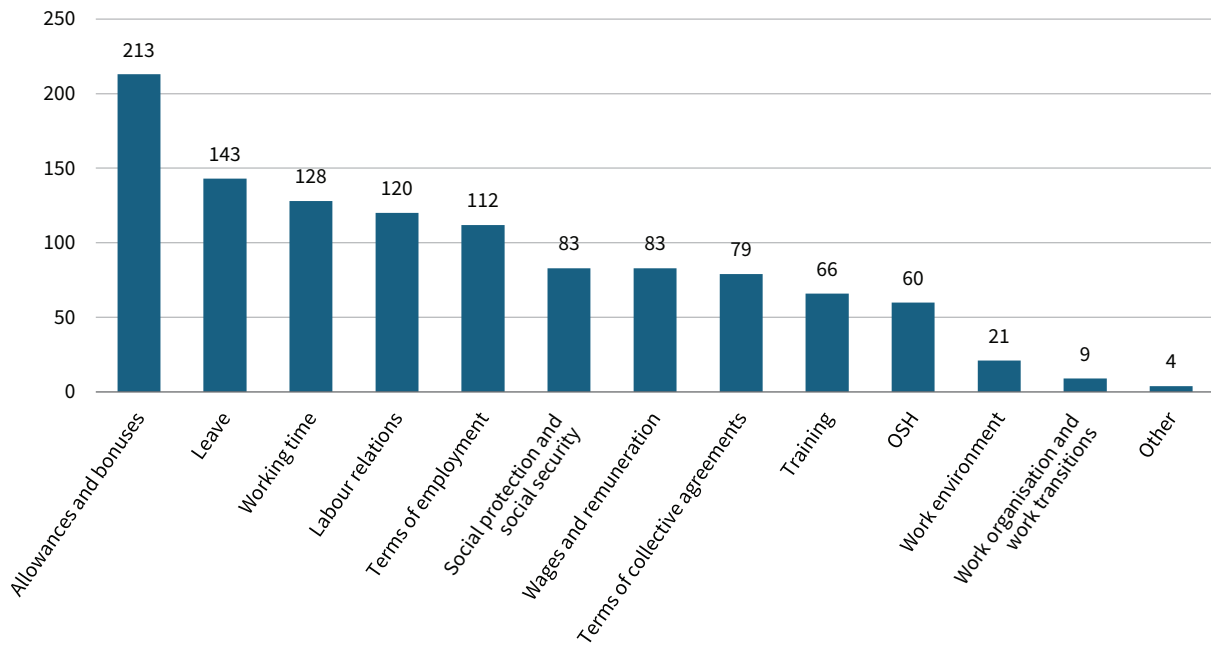


Figure A10: Number of clauses coded under level 1 main topics in Norway

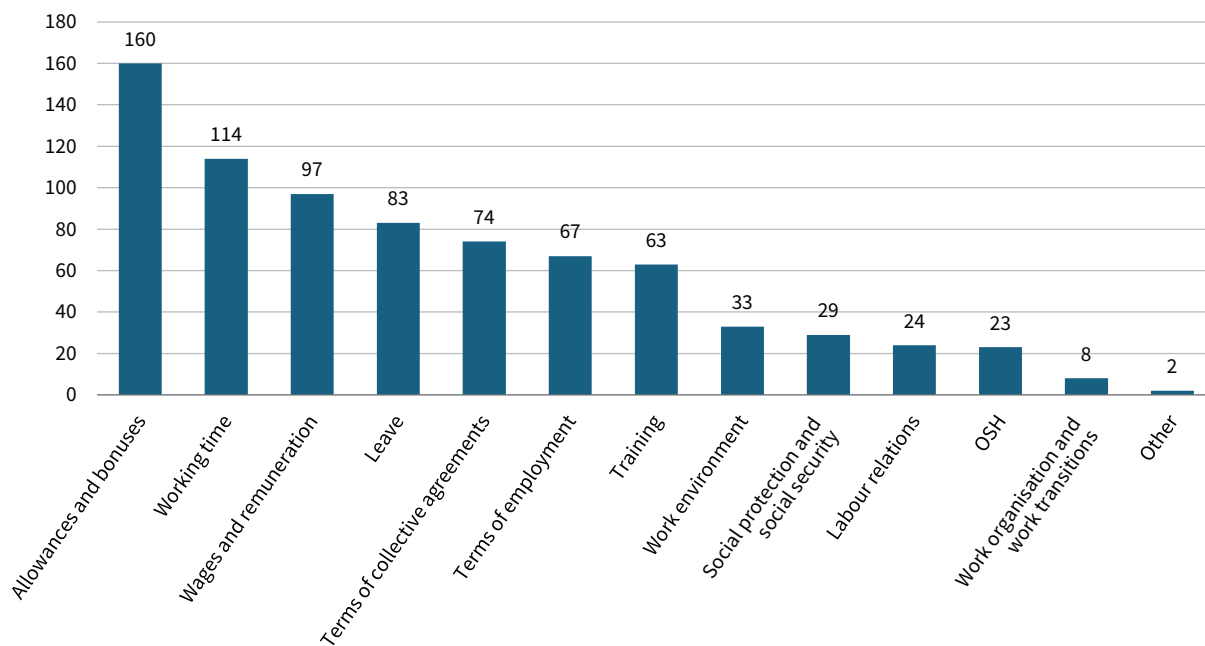


Figure A11: Number of clauses coded under level 1 main topics in Portugal

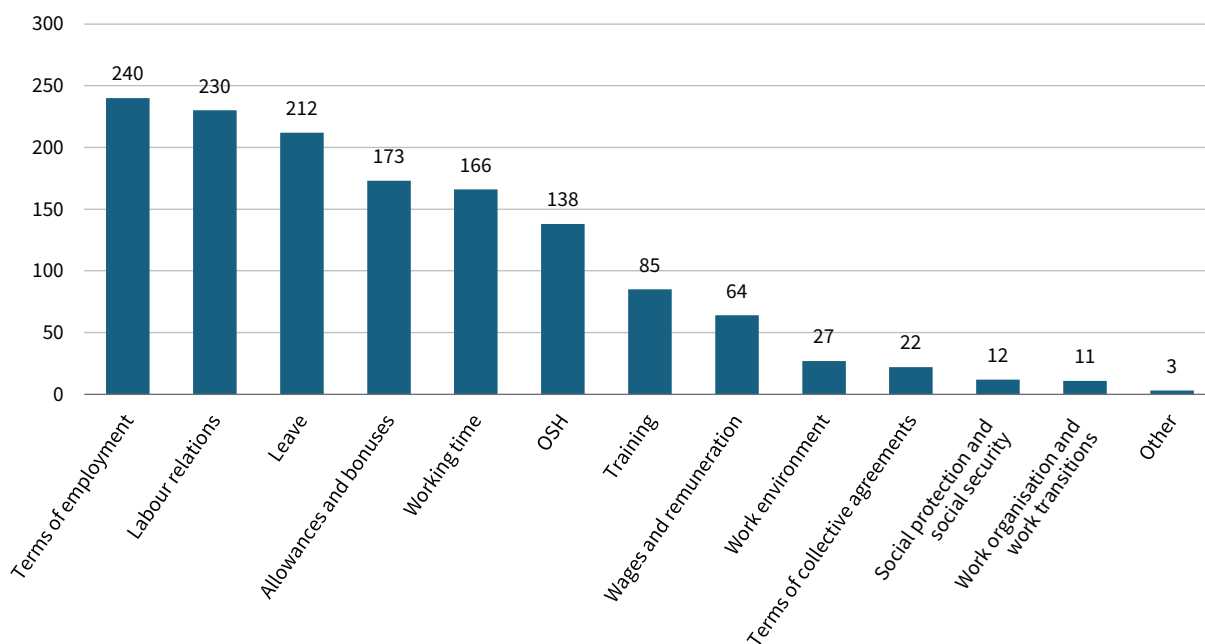


Figure A12: Number of clauses coded under level 1 main topics in Slovakia

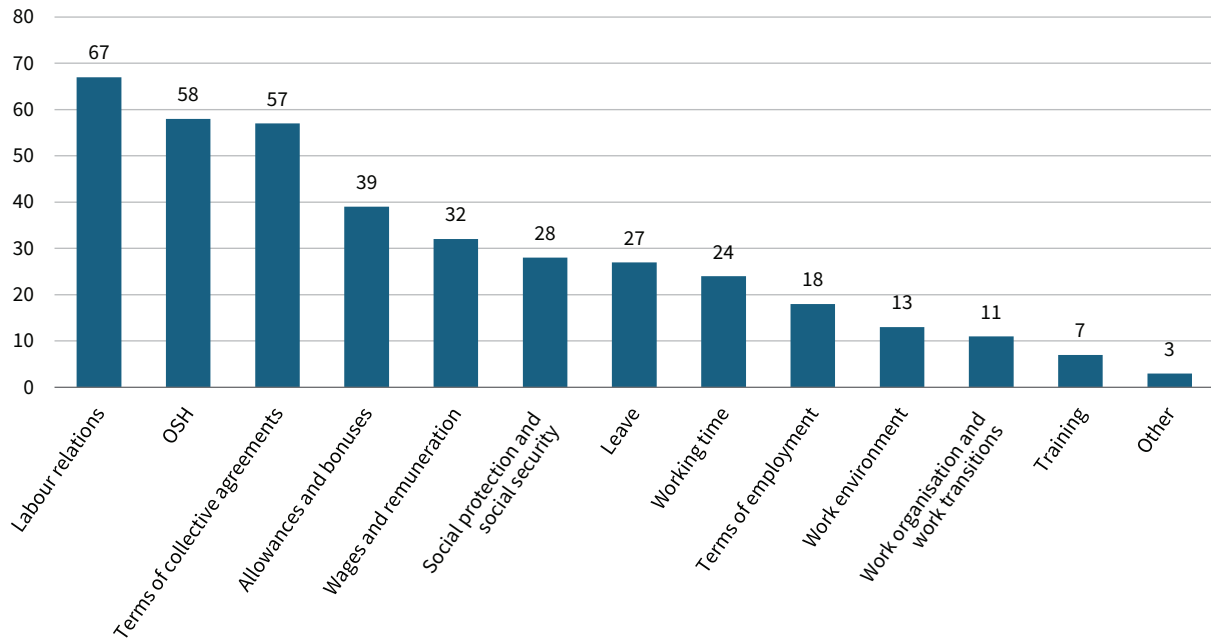
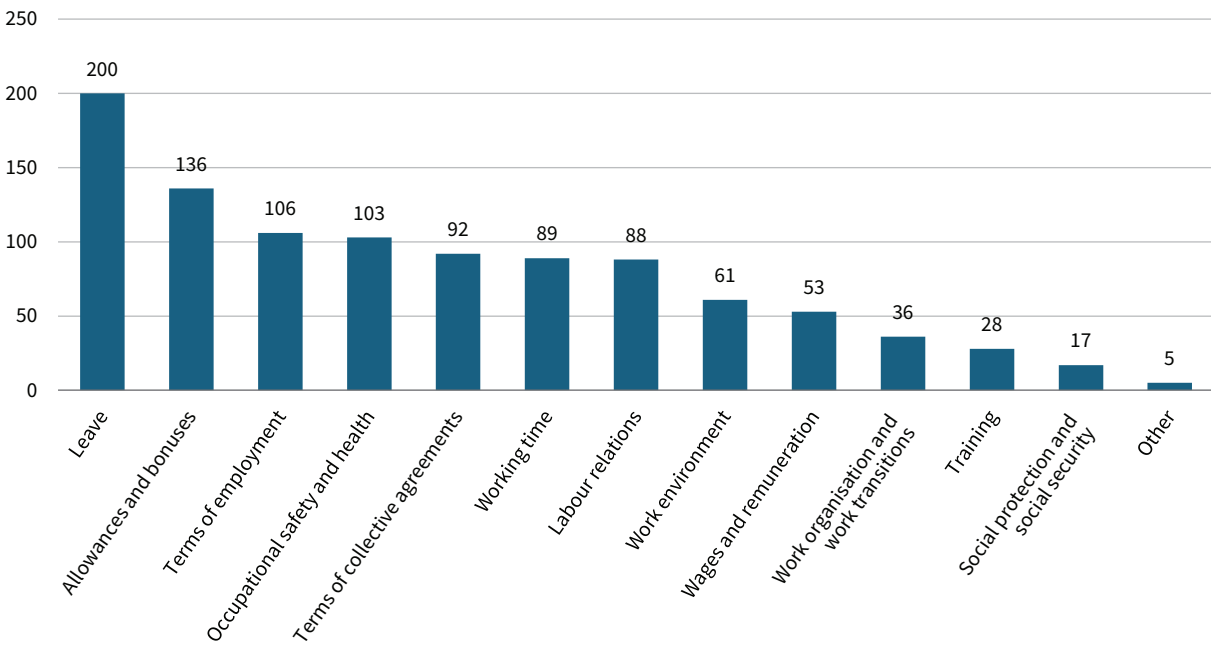
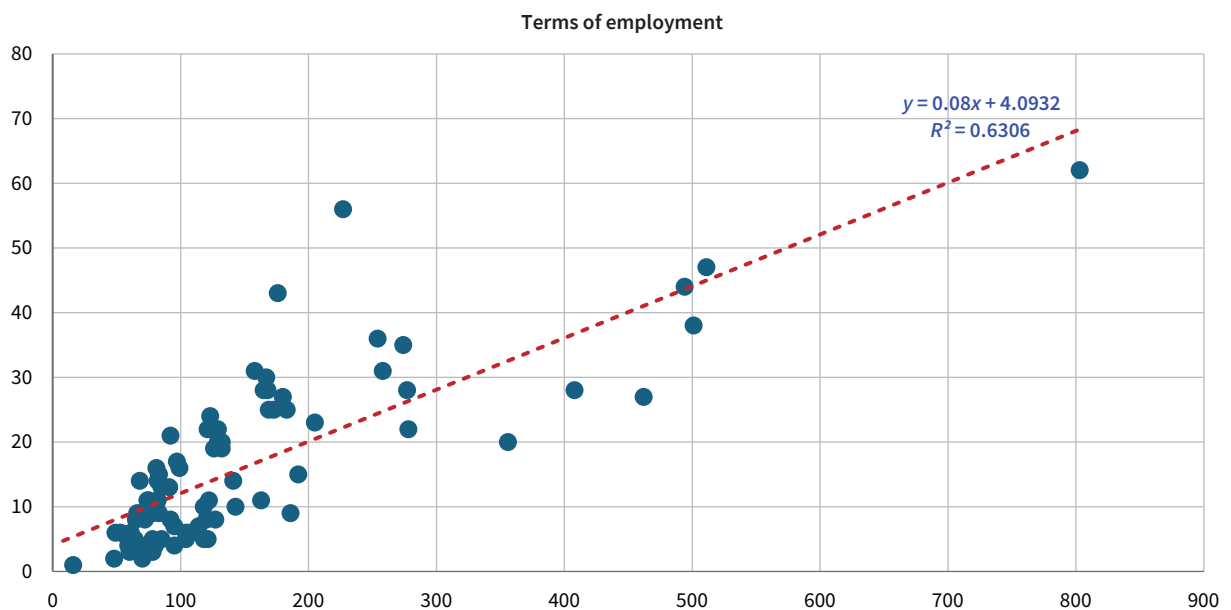
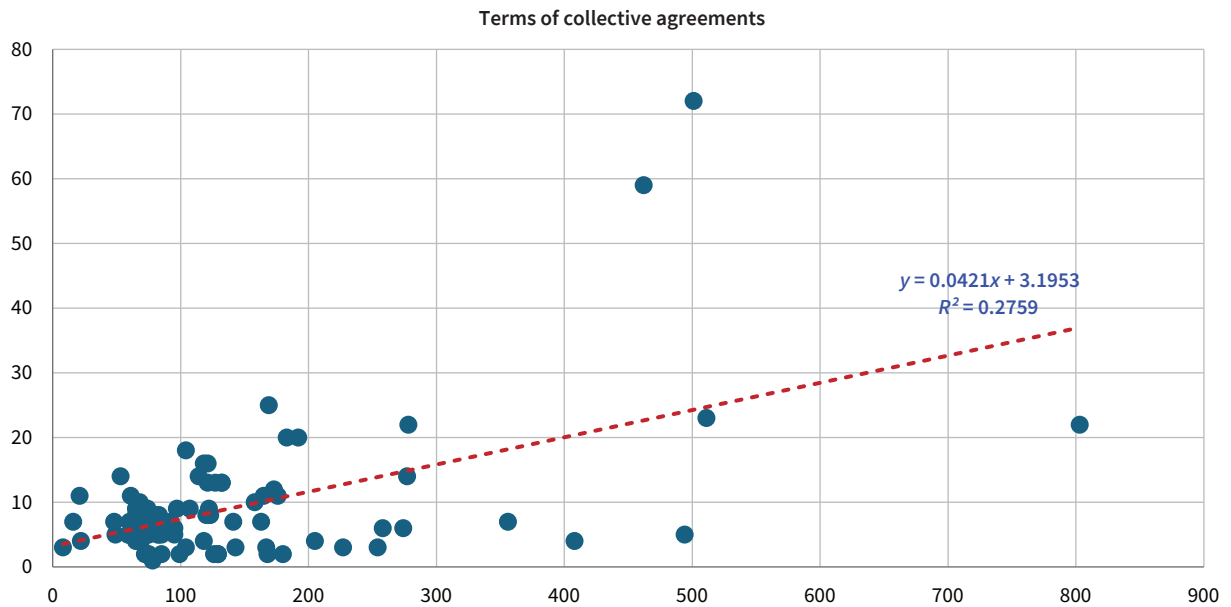


Figure A13: Number of clauses coded under level 1 main topics in Spain

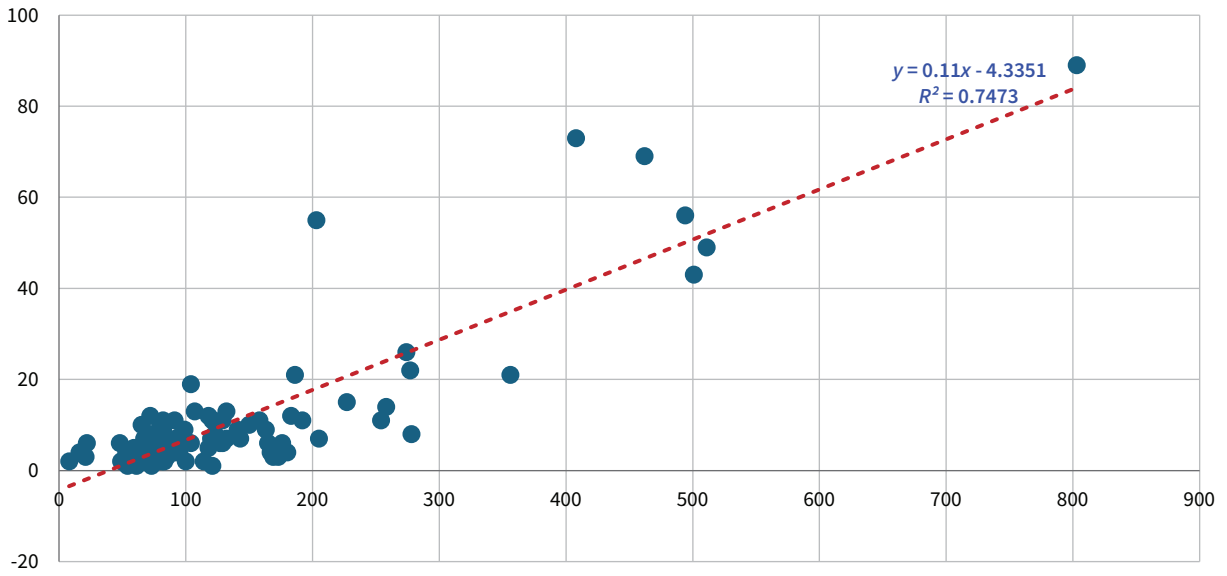


Annex 3: Relationship between the total number of clauses and the number of clauses per code

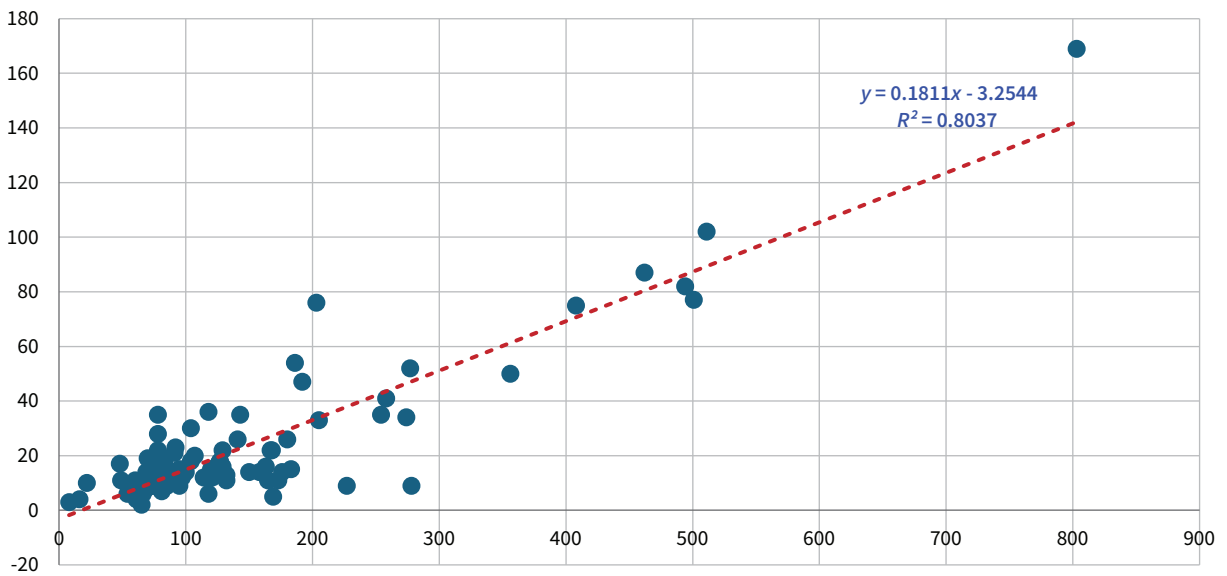
Table A2: Scatter plots on the relationship between the overall number of coded clauses and the number of clauses per each main code



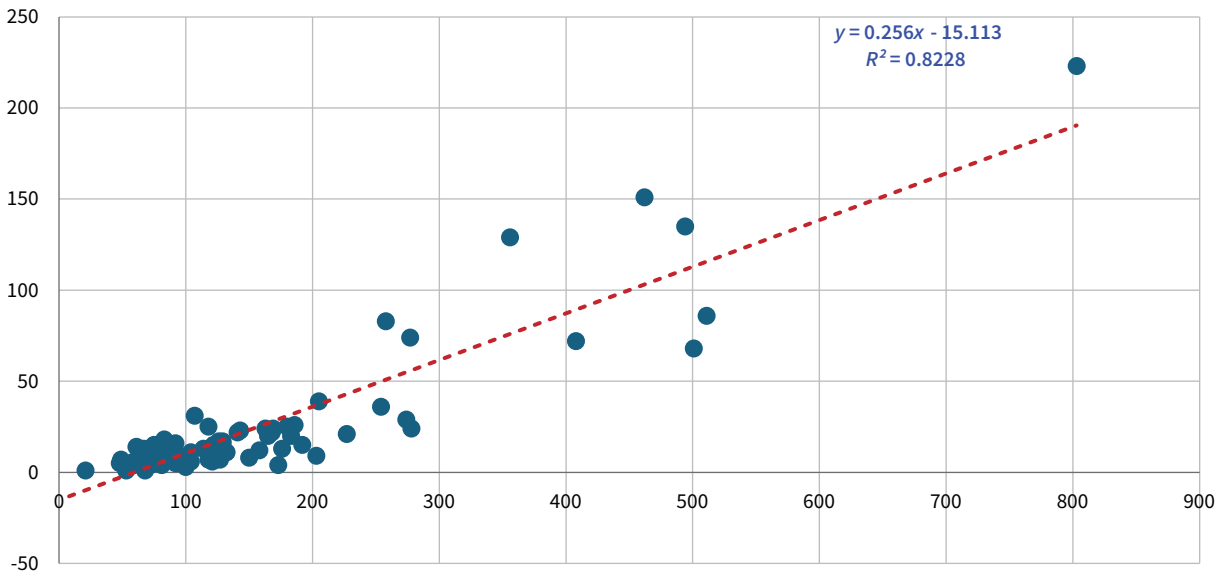
Wages and remuneration

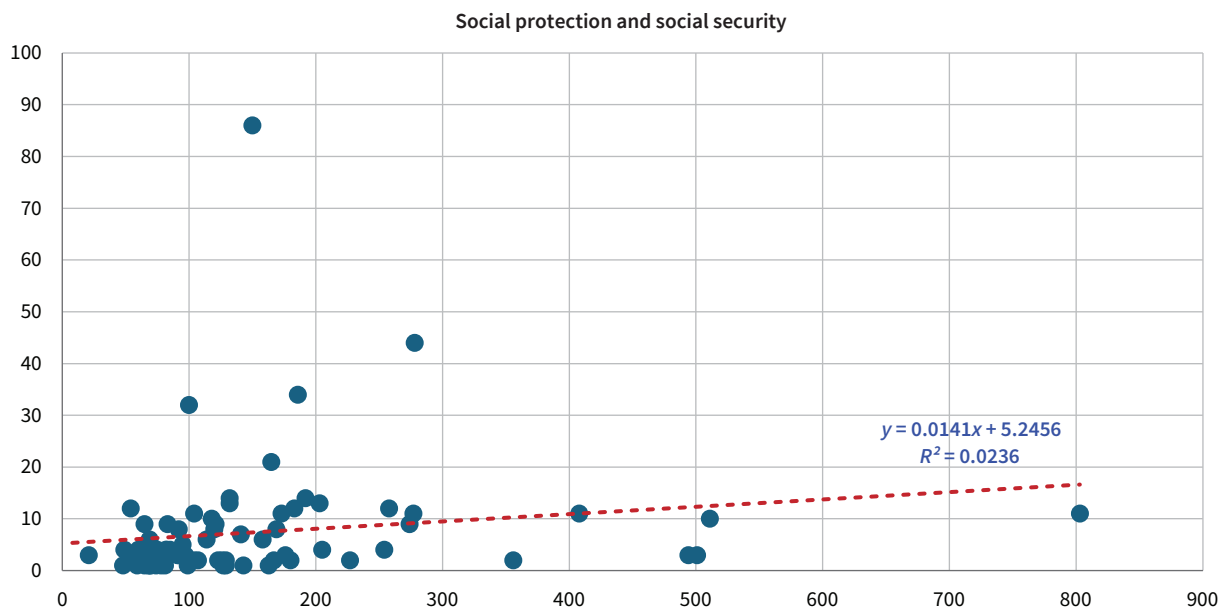
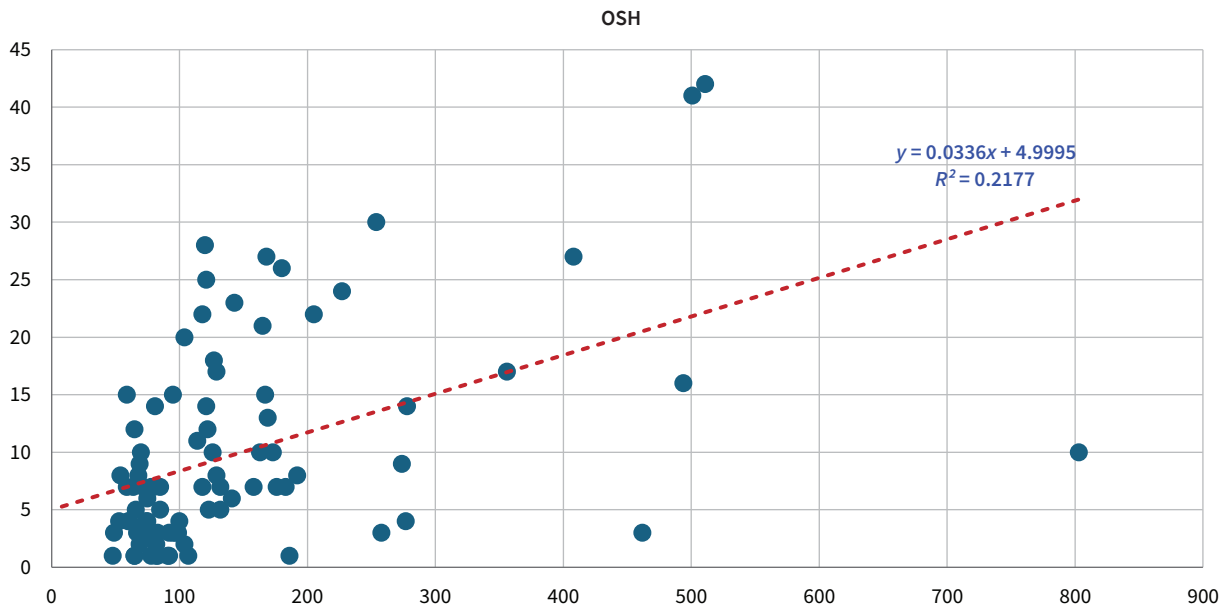
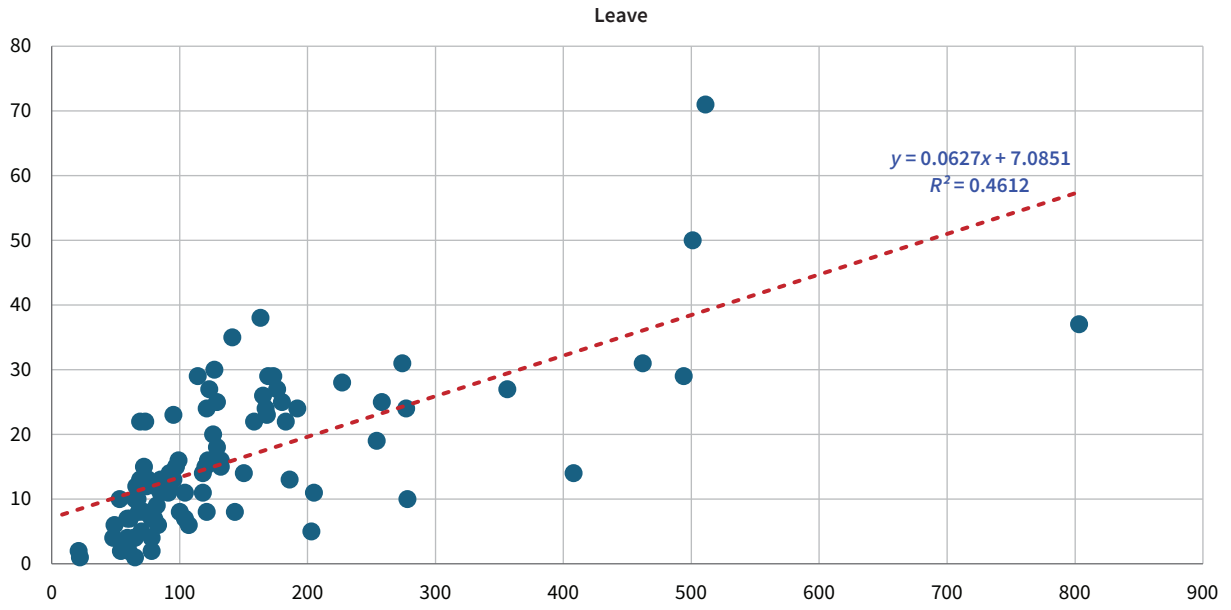


Allowances and bonuses

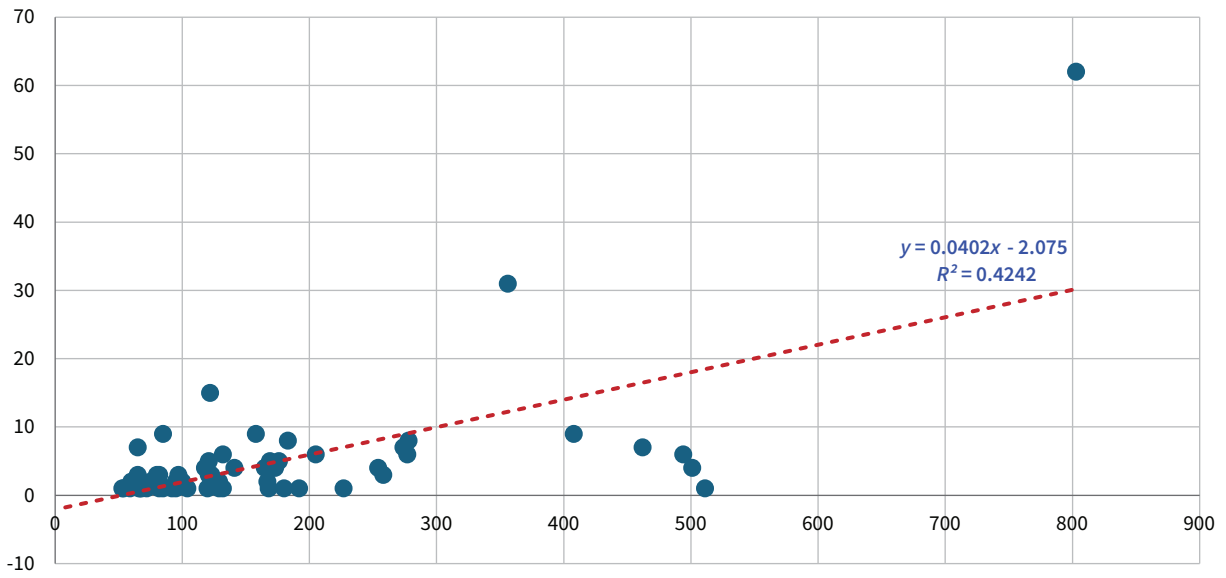


Working time

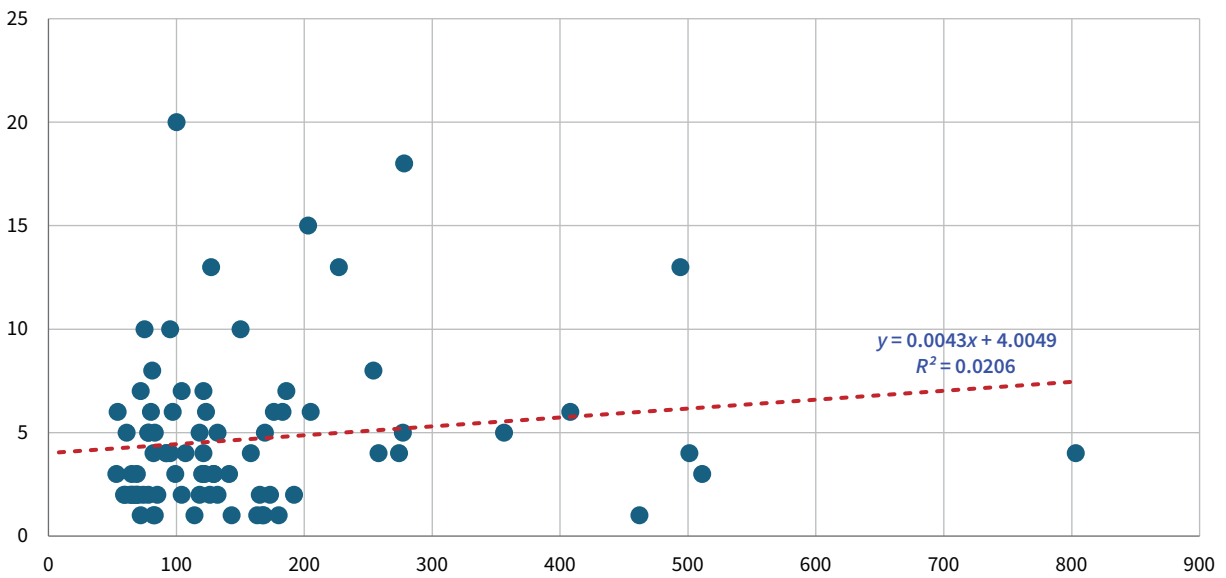




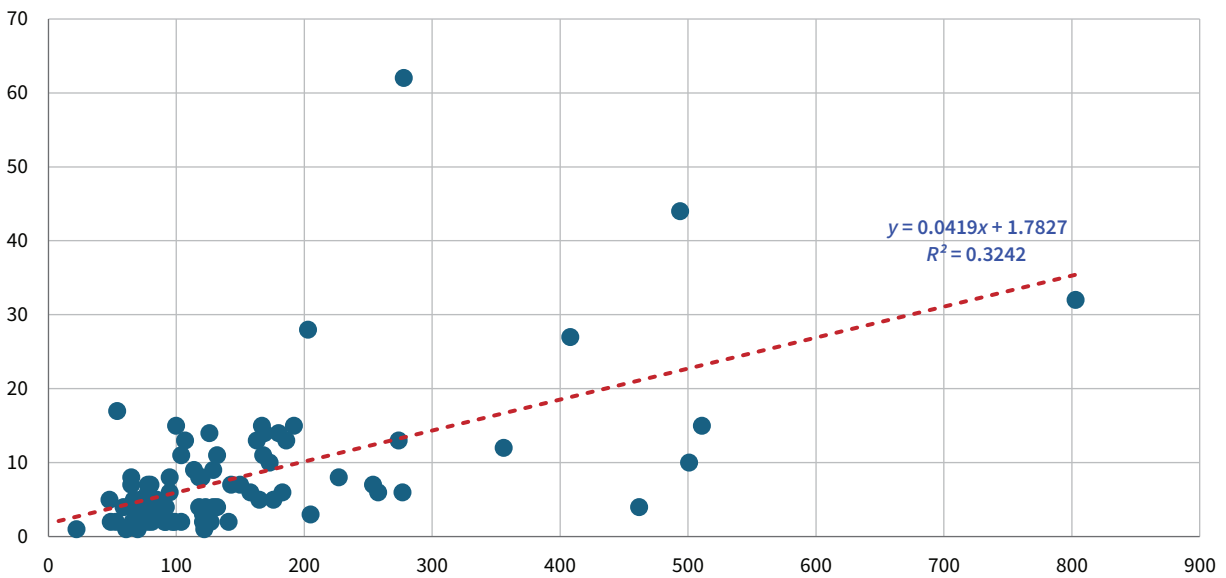
Work organisation and work transitions

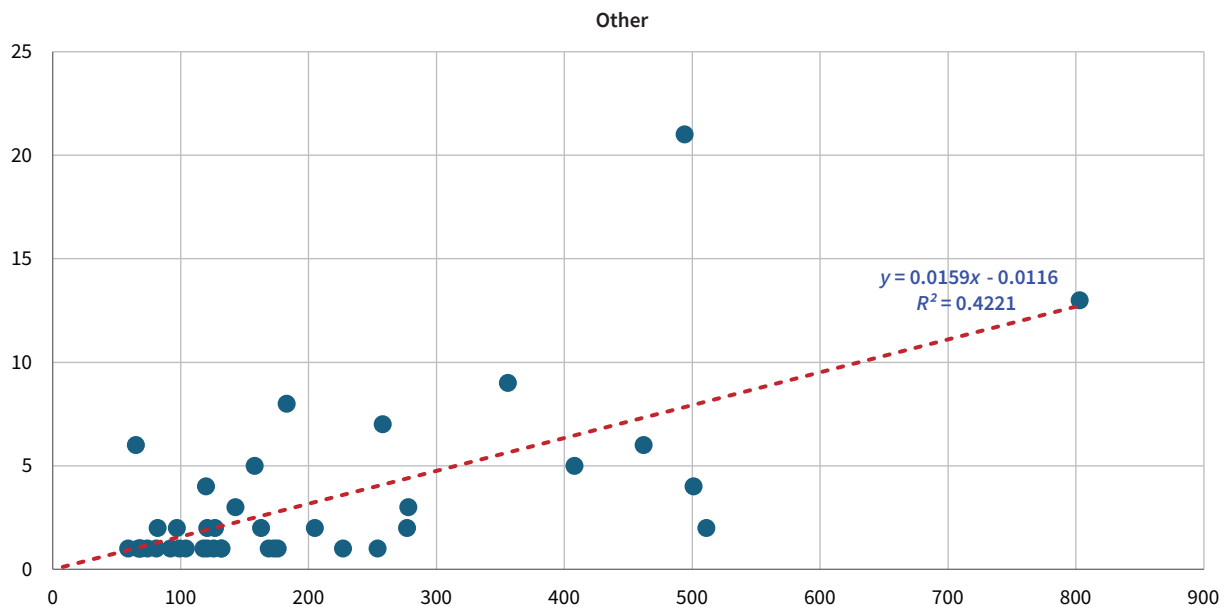
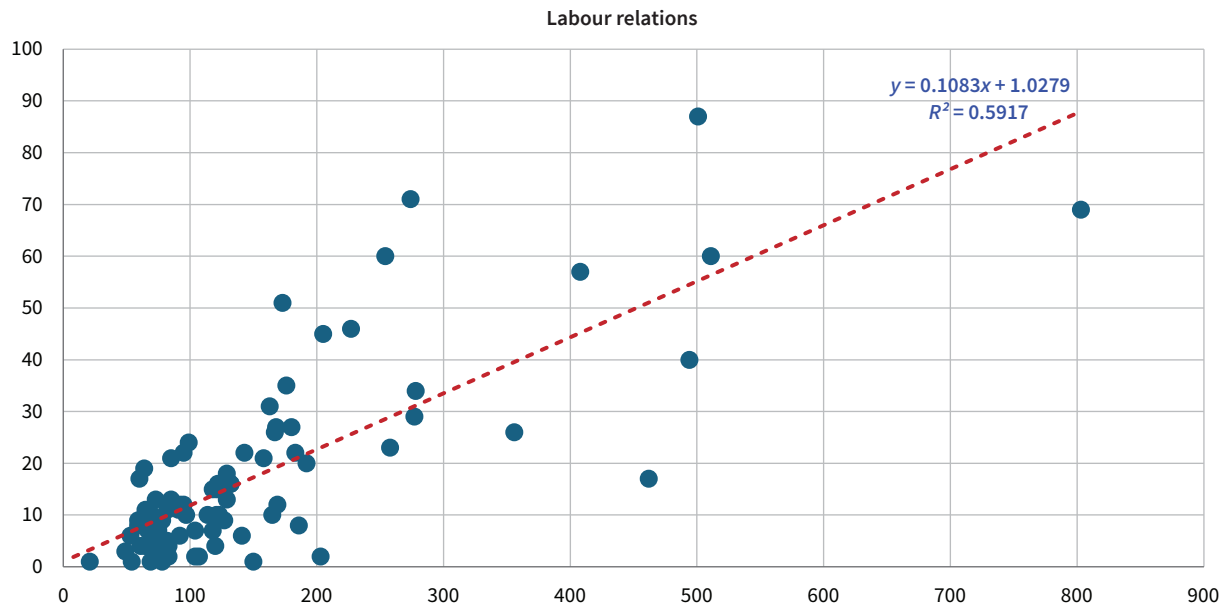


Work environment



Training





Notes: x = total number of coded clauses per each agreement (overall 94); y = number of coded clauses per each main code. The poor fit (low R^2) indicates that the relationship between variables is probably not meaningful in a linear sense.

Annex 4: List of national contributors

Table A3: List of contributors from the Network of Eurofound Correspondents

Country	Contributor(s)	Institution
Austria	Bernadette Allinger	Working Life Research Centre (FORBA)
Belgium	Dries Van Herreweghe	HIVA Research Institute for Work and Society, KU Leuven
Croatia	Željko Mrnjavac	Faculty of Economics, Business and Tourism (FEBT), University of Split
Finland	Elina Härmä, Mikael Lundqvist and Vera Lindström	Oxford Research
France	Frédéric Turlan	IR Share
Italy	Marco Seghesio	(Formerly) Eurofound
Netherlands	Thomas de Winter	Panteia
Norway	Balder Blinkenberg and Kristin Alsos	Fafo
Portugal	Maria da Paz Campos Lima and Paula Carrilho	Centre for Studies for Social Intervention (CESIS)
Spain	Alejandro Godino	Sociological Research Centre on Everyday Life and Work (QUIT), Autonomous University of Barcelona (UAB)

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This report analyses and compares the content of 94 collective agreements in three low-paid sectors – manufacture of food, leather, textiles and clothes; residential and social care; and retail – across 11 EU Member States and Norway. The report examines how collective bargaining regulates working conditions beyond wages and how these topics have evolved between 2015 and 2022. The findings show that collective agreements improve the job quality of workers in low-paid sectors beyond their pay. In addition to securing higher earnings, through additional bonuses and allowances for example, agreements also provide non-monetary benefits and opportunities for career advancement. The report finds that collective agreements focus increasingly on the well-being of employees, work-life balance or special protection for both younger and older workers.

The European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (Eurofound) is a tripartite European Union Agency established in 1975. Its role is to provide knowledge in the area of social, employment and work-related policies according to Regulation (EU) 2019/127.

