

Sheet 3: Bargaining actors

A variety of actors are involved in collective bargaining. Where bargaining takes place at the national level, the actors involved are trade union confederations, employers' organisations (in Slovenia the employers are represented at the national level by the Chamber of Commerce and Industry), and often also the government.

At the sectoral level bargaining takes place between sectoral or industrial union organisations and sectoral or industrial employers' organisations (in Austria and Slovenia this is the chamber of commerce).

At the company level individual employers represent themselves. Employees are represented by a variety of actors. In most countries local trade union organisations and delegates engage in collective bargaining. In other countries elected employee representatives (often the works council) are the bargaining partner. Also, in some countries shop stewards, i.e. voluntary representatives elected only by union members, are bargaining partners. In certain countries more than one of these actors can participate in collective bargaining.

Company level bargaining actors on the employee side:

- Local trade union organisations and delegates: Belgium, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia, Sweden, United Kingdom
- Works council and other employee representatives: In **Austria** and **Spain** the works council is the single company level actor on the employee side. In **Latvia** and **Lithuania**, works councils can conclude collective agreements if there is no trade union. In **France**, in the absence of trade union delegates and if the collective agreement at the branch level allows for it, works councils or, in small companies, non-unionized mandated workers have the right to bargain. In **Germany** works councils are not allowed to conclude collective agreements; they can however reach agreements with individual employers on issues not covered by the collective agreement, as well as on how the terms of the collective agreement will be applied in practice. In **Italy**, the employer negotiates with the RSU, a committee representing the employees; in the private sector two-thirds of the members of the RSU are elected by the employees and one third are appointed by the unions, whilst in the public sector all RSU members are elected by the employees.
- Shop stewards: Ireland, United Kingdom.