

BARSERVICE

Towards smart bargaining in the commerce sector in Slovakia

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Executive summary

This report examines the current practice of collective bargaining in Slovakia's commerce sector. Evidence originates from the author's earlier research in 2013-2023, desk research conducted 2024, and three original interviews conducted in late 2024 (with the sectoral trade union in commerce, and two union representatives at the workplace in large retail companies). The aim is to identify the current state of bargaining as well as challenges thereto, with the aim to suggest how bargaining could be strengthened and improved. The report builds on the concept of "smart bargaining," aimed at improving the content of collective agreements, and raising bargaining coverage to meet European standards set by the Directive on Adequate Minimum Wages.

Sector-specific challenges to collective bargaining include three key issues. First, it is the high union fragmentation in commerce, with new unions emerging at workplaces, while these join sectoral union federations operating in other sectors than commerce. This blurs the sectoral orientation of unions and increases the operation of unions from other industries in the commerce sector. More union coordination at the sector level would be essential to reach smart bargaining in the commerce sector. Union coordination would help balancing the bargaining powers also at the company level, and contribute to higher bargaining coverage. The second challenge is the very limited scope of multi-employer bargaining, which does not cover the major retail firms. In the past, multi-employer bargaining was more common and bargaining coverage was higher. Third, the content of collective agreements beyond the company level could be better aligned. Besides the expansion of multi-employer bargaining onto the whole commerce sector, the content of multi-employer agreements could address common issues, including working time, shift work, night work, paid leave, training, and also minimum wage standards.



I. Sector identification and trends¹

The commerce sector in Slovakia, encompassing wholesale and retail trade, is a significant component of the national economy, employing a substantial portion of the workforce.

The sectoral definition focuses on SK NACE Rev.2 category 45, 46 and 47 under the broader category of *Wholesale and Retail Trade; Repair of Motor Vehicles and Motorcycles*. These categories include:

Category 45 - Wholesale and Retail Trade and Repair of Motor Vehicles and Motorcycles:

- Sale of motor vehicles (new and used).
- Maintenance and repair of motor vehicles.
- Sale, maintenance, and repair of motorcycles and their parts.

Category 46 - Wholesale Trade, Except of Motor Vehicles and Motorcycles:

- Sale of goods to retailers, industrial users, and commercial entities.
- Activities by agents or brokers for goods procurement and sales.

Category 47 - Retail Trade, Except of Motor Vehicles and Motorcycles:

- Retail sale in stores, stalls, and markets.
- Sale of goods by mail order or via the internet.
- Specific services such as pharmacies, convenience stores, and clothing shops.

In 2022, the service sector, which includes commerce, accounted for approximately 61.58% of total employment in Slovakia. The sector includes a mix of small businesses and large retail chains. The large chains are part of multinational corporations that dominate the retail landscape, with smaller entities often being regionally focused (Eurofound 2018).

The commerce sector's employment dynamics are influenced by factors such as market competition, consumer behavior, and economic conditions, which collectively impact hiring trends and wage levels. The retail sector in Slovakia continues to be dominated by multinational companies operating hypermarkets and supermarkets. These corporations rank among the largest employers in the country. In addition to

¹ Evidence originates from the author's earlier research in 2013-2023, desk research conducted 2024, and three original interviews conducted in late 2024 with trade union representatives: Odborový zväz pracovníkov obchodu a cestovného ruchu (OZPOCR), Trade union at Lidl affiliated to OZ Kovo, and Trade union at Kaufland affiliated to OZ Kovo. The author also engaged in written communication with the ECHOZ union regarding newly established unions in retail firms (Nay and Lidl) affiliated to ECHOZ.

these international players, domestic retailers maintain a significant presence, primarily through smaller, regionally dispersed stores.

The retail sector remains a significant employer in Slovakia. In the second quarter of 2024, employment in wholesale and retail trade increased by over 10,000 people, marking a 3.1% year-on-year rise after a previous quarter of decline (Slovak Statistics 2024a). However, in the first two months of 2024, there was a reported 1.6% decrease in the number of employees in both wholesale and retail trade (ibid.). Wages in the retail sector have shown positive trends. In July 2024, real wages in retail trade rose by 7.8% year-on-year, reflecting the sector's resilience and its response to economic conditions (Slovak Statistics 2024b).

In wholesale, the largest organisation is METRO Cash and Carry SR, operating six wholesale locations. In 2022, METRO's turnover reached about 30 billions of EUR.² The key challenge for METRO, as highlighted by its CEO, is the continuous fight for talented and skilled employees. The company anticipates that the competition for talent will intensify in the near future and emphasizes the importance of employee satisfaction. The CEO claims to ensure that employees arrive at the workplace every morning with enthusiasm, a positive attitude, and a willingness to serve customers and meet their needs, rather than feeling reluctant or stressed.³ A trade union federation GINN, established in 2017, lists METRO Cash and Carry among companies with its union representation.⁴

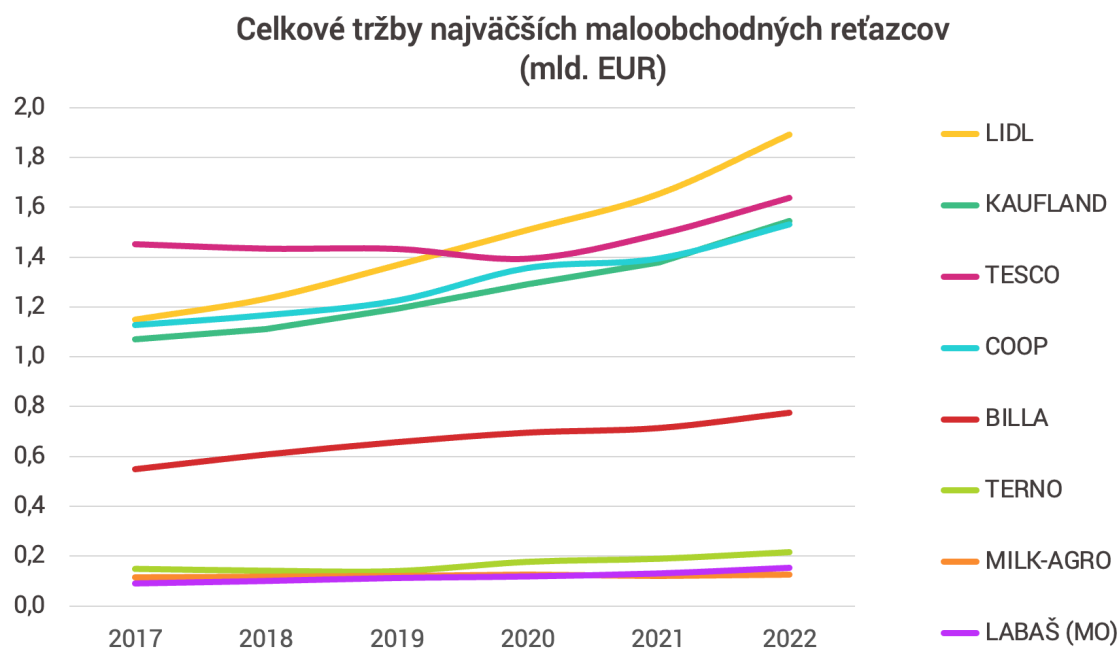
In retail, the largest retail chains recorded their fastest business growth in at least six years in 2022 (Finstat 2023). Their revenues increased by 11.2% to €7.7 billion, growing nearly twice as fast as in the previous year. Yet their growth rate was still below inflation, which reached 12.8% in 2022. In contrast, 2022 saw the revenues of the largest chains growing nearly twice as fast as consumer prices (3.2%) (ibid.). Unlike in largest retail chains, the fastest revenue growth was seen among smaller regional chains that focus on smaller towns or less affluent regions. Alongside Sintra and Koruna, this also includes the Humenné-based chain GVP, which operates 41 stores under the CBA franchise in eastern Slovakia (with a total of 600 employees), and transitioned into retail last year from wholesale operations (ibid.).

² Source: Metro Cash and Carry website, available at https://www.metro.sk/co-je-metro/o-metro-cash-carry-sr?itm_pm=cookie_consent_accept_button.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Source: GINN website, available at <https://www.ginn.press/odbory?pn=1>.

Figure 1 Total revenues of largest retail chains (bil EUR)



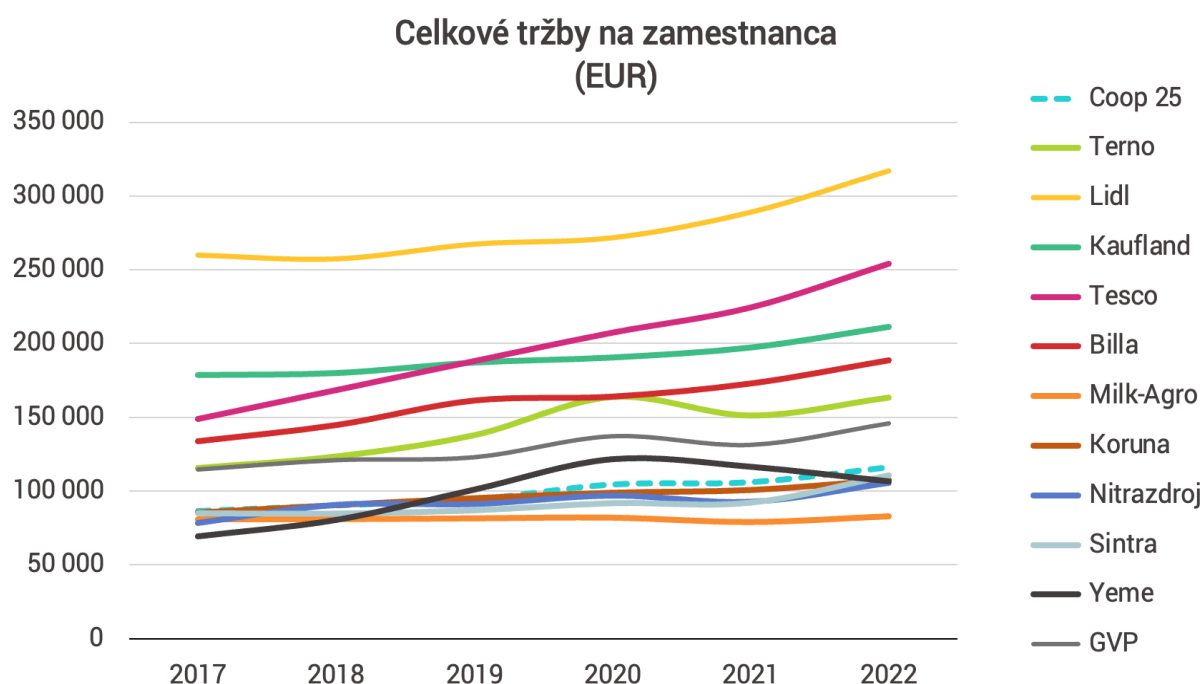
Source: Finstat (2023).

Thanks to their dynamic growth, three foreign-owned retail chains Lidl, Kaufland and Tesco surpassed the domestic chain COOP Jednota in revenue. COOP Jednota consists of 26 regionally focused consumer cooperatives and operates nearly 2,000 stores. It is a cooperative with roots tracing back to former consumer cooperatives established in 1967, remains a prominent domestic retailer. As of 2022, it operates 2,003 stores across Slovakia and reported a turnover of €1.62 billion in 2021 (ESM Magazine 2024).

Tesco and Billa maintained their positions in the market, while Prešov-based Milk-Agro remains at the bottom of the top seven. Milk-Agro's retail revenues grew modestly by 1.7%, reaching over €102.5 million. The chain operates nearly 200 stores and produces its own dairy products under the Sabi brand. In 2022, Milk-Agro focused on consolidating retail costs and implementing changes in production. Despite slower revenue growth, these measures significantly improved profitability (Finstat 2023).

The above-summarised revenues can also be understood in relation to the workforce size. Figure 2 shows the total revenues per employee. Largest revenue per employee was reached in Lidl, Tesco and Kaufland, and these positions were stable since 2019. This information is relevant in the context of trade union requests vis-à-vis the employer, where a massive conflict over annual bonuses emerged in Kaufland at the end of 2024 (see the section on collective bargaining below).

Figure 2 total revenues per employee in retail, in EUR

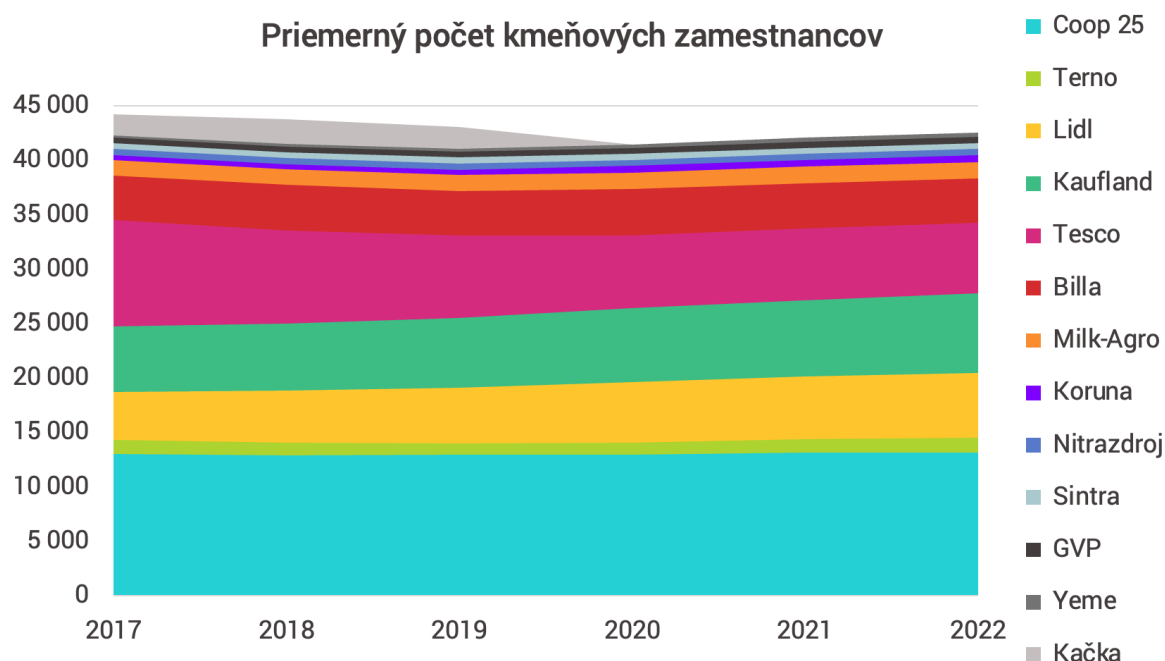


Source: Finstat (2023)

The commerce sector is also relevant for the Slovak economy because several commerce firms (mostly in retail) belong to the largest employers in the country (see Figure 3). Lidl and Kaufland, both owned and controlled by German entrepreneur Dieter Schwarz, operated in total 239 stores (164 Lidl and 75 Kaufland) at the end of February 2023). Together, they employed nearly 13,300 persons, marking a 4.4% year-on-year increase. Only smaller networks Koruna and Yeme experienced faster employment growth. Other retailer companies saw a decline in their core workforce, while the company Kačka, with almost 2,000 employees, went bankrupt (Finstat 2023). In 2015, the largest commerce employer was Tesco Stores SR with 10,016 employees, followed by Kaufland with 6,045 employees (Finstat 2017). Tesco's total employment gradually decreased then, while Kaufland (together with its siste-organisation Lidl) expanded (see Figure 3).

In 2022, the German chains Lidl and Kaufland dethroned the domestic chain COOP Jednota as the largest employer in Slovak retail — a position it had held for many years. Moreover, foreign retail chains have consistently paid higher wages than their domestic counterparts, largely because they operate in larger cities with higher purchasing power and living costs. For example, staff expenses per employee at Tesco climbed to nearly €25,000, while at COOP Jednota, they remain below €19,000 (ibid.).

Figure 3 Average number of core employees (excluding agency workers) in largest retail chains, 2017-2022



Source: Finstat (2023)

II. Current state of collective bargaining

Bargaining in the commerce sector encompasses both company-level and multi-employer bargaining. Company-level bargaining and the conclusion of collective agreements is exercised in a number of large retail chains, including Tesco, Billa, COOP Jednota and Lidl. These agreements are strictly confidential and the author did not success in getting access to them. There are also two higher-level collective agreements, negotiated between the sectoral trade union federation of commerce and tourism workers (*Odborový zväz pracovníkov obchodu a cestovného ruchu, OZPOCR*) and the Association of employers of the COOP Jednota group (*Organizácia zamestnávateľov skupiny COOP Jednota*, with a collective agreement currently valid for 2023-2025) and the Federation of Trade of the Slovak Republic (*Zväz obchodu SR, ZO*, with a collective agreement currently valid for 2023-2024). These employer associations, joined by the Slovak Alliance of Modern Commerce (*Slovenská asociácia moderného obchodu, SAMO*) represent a significant portion of the commerce sector (Eurofound 2018).

The COOP Jednota organizes 26 cooperatives, operating retail shops mostly in smaller towns and municipalities. ZO had 86 members in December 2024, not only from the fields of commerce and services but also expanding its membership base to include representatives from manufacturing, academia, and education. It closely cooperates with other employer associations, professional and industry organizations of business entities, particularly in agriculture and food production. The goal is to increase the share of domestic agricultural and food commodities in the offerings of Slovakia's internal market.⁵

Another important player, albeit currently not involved in multi-employer bargaining, is SAMO. Its members include Billa, dm Drogerie Markt, Kaufland, Lidl, METRO Cash&Carry, Terno, TESCO. Established in 2014 by five key industry players, it has since expanded to include additional companies that represent modern retail. SAMO member companies collectively employ over 30,000 persons across Slovakia and indirectly support hundreds of thousands of jobs in supply sectors, including farming, food production, technology suppliers, transport, logistics, and security services. The primary goal of SAMO is to protect the interests of its members, enabling them to enhance their offerings and services for Slovak customers. SAMO lists its core values as follows, focusing on policy makers, the business environment, and customers, not explicitly mentioning employees:

- Advocate for and safeguard the interests of modern commerce for the benefit of the entire sector.
- Ensure adherence to formal and ethical trade practices, contributing to the sector's development, sustainability, and improvement of products and services.
- Independently and in collaboration with other business associations, provide positions on political, economic, social, and environmental issues affecting modern commerce in Slovakia.
- Promote the prestige of commerce through constructive dialogue with both the professional and general public, fostering the further development of modern commerce in Slovakia.⁶

The companies currently organised in SAMO were previously ZO members and thus covered by multi-employer bargaining. Upon the creation of SAMO, the OZPOCR was surprised to see these companies splitting off from ZO to set up a new association, however under a different legal form, not obliged to engage in collective bargaining (source: interview with OZPOCR 2024).

The fragmentation of social partners is however much more significant on the trade

⁵ Source: ZO website, [www. <https://www.biznis.sk/article/clenovia-zo-sr/5a9d4499bbec1cflc368739e>](https://www.biznis.sk/article/clenovia-zo-sr/5a9d4499bbec1cflc368739e).

⁶ Source: SAMO website, <https://www.modernyobchod.sk/>.



union side. Initially, only OZPOCR member organisations were operating in commerce companies. Gradually, several company-level unions emerged that are not affiliated to OZPOCR, but to other sectoral federations previously not covering commerce in their sector-level bargaining and/or social dialogue. These include the following unions:

- Trade union at LIDL Slovakia affiliated to the metalworkers' union OZ KOVO (a company-level collective agreement is concluded at Lidl with this union)
- Trade union at LIDL Slovakia affiliated to the Energy-Chemical trade union federation ECHOZ (did not yet negotiate a collective agreement)
- Trade union at Kaufland affiliated to OZ Kovo (aims to start collective bargaining for the first time in 2025, currently Kaufland does not have a company-level collective agreement)
- Trade union at an electronics retail chain NAY affiliated to ECHOZ (did not yet negotiate a collective agreement)
- Trade union at IKEA, but rather in its production division than in commerce, affiliated to the sectoral union federation IOZ representing construction, transport and industry
- Trade union at METRO Cash&Carry affiliated to the trade union federation GINN (not a member of the Slovak Trade Union Confederation)

The above trend has several implications. On the one hand, it shows that dissatisfied workers are able to establish trade unions in previously unorganised workplaces. At the same time, it shows union fragmentation and the spread of worker representation in the commerce sector across several sectoral union federations. OZPOCR sees this trend critically, claiming that trade unions should cooperate and ideally belong to the same umbrella federation operating in the sector, instead of competing with each other (interview with OZPOCR 2024). From the point of view of the two unions affiliated to OZ KOVO, these unions joined the strongest sectoral federation that has the most advanced strategies to support company-level unions and capacities to provide union training, expertise and advise (the author interviewed both OZ KOVO unions, at Lidl and Kaufland, in 2024). Finally, the point of view of the ECHOZ federation is that each time when ECHOZ receives a membership request from another sector, in this case from commerce, it advises the union to join the respective sectoral federation in commerce. However, the unions prefer to join ECHOZ due to its expertise and support.⁷

⁷ Source: written exchange of the author with representatives of ECHOZ, December 2024.

The case of Kaufland recently sparked attention in the media, when the trade union handed to the employer a petition signed by about ¾ of all employees requesting the payment of an annual bonus, given the companies' good market situation and improved turnover. This occurred in December 2024, before collective bargaining at Kaufland started at all. The employer responded that bonuses would not be paid, and the union should have first consulted the employer about this request. It is questionable what will be the effect of such high organising capacity of workers, under a recently established union, on further developments in collective bargaining at this company and on the trust relationship between the union and Kaufland.

To sum up, current bargaining in the commerce sector is developed and practiced both at the single-employer and the multi-employer level. However, it faces several barriers that also hinder a potential increase in bargaining coverage. This is mainly the fragmentation on the union side, even some intra-union competition, that would need to be overcome in the framework of multi-employer bargaining. Currently the concerned companies are not subject to multi-employer bargaining, being affiliated to SAMO, an association not engaged in coordinated collective bargaining.

III. Challenges to collective bargaining

Key challenges for bargaining in the commerce sector can be categorised in the following points:

- **Fundamental cleavage between foreign-owned and domestic retail chains that caused the break of sectoral bargaining** These cleavages emerged already a decade ago when large foreign retail chains were still organised on ZOČR and engaged in multi-employer bargaining. The key point of discontent was on working time and opening hours on Sundays. While foreign chains preferred long opening hours, domestic chains fought for closed shops on Sunday.
- **High trade union fragmentation, lack of union cooperation, and blurring of sectoral boundaries of trade union operations:** recent years saw on the one hand and emergence of new company-level unions in various retail chains, at the same time, these organisations did not join the sectoral union OZPOČR active in the commerce sector, but other sectoral union federation (namely, the metalworkers' union OZ KOVO and the chemical-technological union federation ECHOZ). Some of these fragmented affiliations emerged from the fact that the company operates both in industry and commerce, while the trade union was first established in the industrial part and only later embraced also the commerce

workers.⁸

- **Partial coverage of higher-level collective agreements only applicable to 'domestic' commerce employers:** Cleaveages between domestic and foreign retail firms escalated and led to the split of foreign chains from ZOČR and the establishment of a new association SAMO, which however does not engage in multi-employer bargaining. In result, the coverage of multi-employer bargaining significantly decreased and currently covers only employers affiliated to ZOČR and to COOP Jednota.
- **Limited bargaining scope of multi-employer collective agreements:** current higher-level collective agreements often focus on non-financial stipulations, leaving wage bargaining fully decentralised to the company level.

IV. Towards Smart Bargaining

Based on the evidence provided above, this section attempts to propose strategies that would help to establish and promote bargaining in the commerce sector. The concept applied is the one of *smart bargaining* - defined as a kind of bargaining that effectively facilitates two aspects in bargaining (Kahancová 2024):

- Improving the quality and content of collective bargaining
- Raising bargaining coverage to meet the threshold recommended by the Directive on Adequate Minimum Wages.

Rather than pre-defining the concept of 'smart bargaining' before empirical research, the approach adopted is more inductive by letting the author and the stakeholders in the sector directly identify what smart bargaining means in their sector. This concept is rather novel in the industrial relations literature, and by this modified approach the author seeks to contribute also to practical policy goals. Developing the concept of smart bargaining based on research findings is also a practical input for strengthening bargaining procedures and equipping social partners with the right (smart) strategies in their specific empirical contexts.

⁸ This is notably the case of unions in IKEA, where the trade union has been established in IKEA components, where it also negotiated a collective agreement. The base union organization at IKEA components is associated to the sectoral union federation IOZ. Source: Trade Union Confederation KOZ SR, available at <https://www.kozsr.sk/2018/10/04/iba-vdaka-clenom-odborov-vieme-byt-uspesni/>.

Smart bargaining relates on the one hand to the bargaining process, and on the other hand to the contents of bargaining. In the bargaining process. The possible strategies to develop smart bargaining in the commerce sector include:

a. Stronger union presence at the workplace

The interviewed trade union representative at Lidl reported that the weak presence of unions at the workplace could be strengthened by granting additional benefits to workers only if a trade union is active at the workplace. Also, employers could actively promote cooperation with unions, especially at workplaces where the union is weak or lacks bargaining capacities. This emerges from a complete revision of thinking about social partnership as a constructive mechanism, rather than seeing the employer and unions as enemies (source: interview with ZO OZ KOVO Lidl).

b. Better coordination between trade unions to overcome fragmentation

The fragmented landscape of unions, especially in one of the largest retail chains Lidl, could be overcome by union cooperation within the single company, and also a cooperation of sectoral unions. Currently, different workplace unions in commerce are affiliated to three different sectoral federations (OZPOCR, OZ KOVO and ECHOZ), broadening the focus of sector-level unions and overcoming sectoral barriers.

c. Building trust in single-employer bargaining

Another issue is the development of trust as a foundation for collective bargaining. This is particularly relevant for newly emerged trade unions that do not yet engage in collective bargaining (e.g. the union at Kaufland associated to OZ KOVO, the union at Lidl associated to ECHOZ and the union at NAY Electro associated to ECHOZ). The recent event at Kaufland, a petition signed by the majority of employees and organized by the trade union to request annual bonuses for employees can be understood as an escalation of the relationship before collective bargaining even started. The employer might see this step (e.g. as claimed, the fact that the union did not consult beforehand its attempt to hand in a petition) as a breach of very fragile trust in the making between the employer and the union. It is questionable if, in conditions of high power asymmetry, a collective agreement can be concluded in 2025. Currently Kaufland does not yet have a company-level collective agreement.

d. Expanding the scope of multi-employer bargaining to sector-wide bargaining

Another possibility to reach higher bargaining coverage is motivating or coercing the existing associations of commerce employers currently not engaged in bargaining to bargain a multi-employer collective agreement. This is namely relevant for the SAMO association. This step may possibly emerge from the recent transposition of the Directive on Adequate Minimum Wages to Slovak legislation. One of the most

important changes emerging from the transposition of the EC Directive on Adequate Minimum Wages is the perception of associations that have been established as voluntary associations but not as employers' associations, claiming to lack mandate to serve as an employer association. The new legislation establishes that all organisations, if members of a recognized higher-level employers' associations, are seen also as employers' associations that can engage in collective bargaining. This expectation is likely to apply also to SAMO. SAMO is member of EuroCommerce and of the National Union of Employers (*Republiková únia zamestnávateľov, RÚZ*). RÚZ is a member of national tripartite committee and also of sectoral social dialogue committees.

Regarding the scope of bargaining, the reestablishment of sectoral collective agreements, or broadening of multi-employer bargaining onto currently not covered companies, could address broader working conditions, while wage conditions could remain in the scope of company-level bargaining. This is also the preference of unions. The existing multi-employer agreement between ZO and OZPOCR for 2023-2024 established basic rules on union recognition and bargaining processes, as well as minimum standards for working time, overtime pay, health and safety and the workplace, as well as processes to bargaining on wages at the company level. It does not include factual stipulations on wages in the multi-employer agreement. The multi-employer agreement between OZPOCR and COOP also includes a wage stipulation, namely that employers organized in the COOP group guarantee an annual growth of average wages in the company of at least 5% for 2023. This figure can be revised on an annual basis.

V. European Perspectives

The EU-level Directives, such as the Directive on Adequate Minimum wages, are relevant for the commerce sector both from the minimum wage perspective as well as from the point of view of increasing bargaining coverage. The transposition of the Directive establishes that voluntary associations that are members of recognised employers' associations are also perceived as employers' associations with a mandate to bargain. This is one of the legislative tools through which the Slovak government aims to meet the criteria on bargaining coverage as stipulated in the Directive on Adequate Minimum Wages. This new stipulation may be relevant of the SAMO association, which is a member of EuroCommerce and of RÚZ – the latter being a representative social partner in national tripartism.

However, the trade union federation OZPOCR also expressed concerns regarding the Directive's effects:

"The Directive on one hand is very appealing, when it says, 'Please increase collective bargaining coverage in Central and Eastern Europe, because your coverage is quite poor.' You have just over 20% coverage, and that's it. And simply, imagine that things could be better. But how can you achieve this if you want it? How can you make it happen? Just by establishing unions and starting collective bargaining? And when, at the same time, the employer forms 'yellow unions,' they completely undermine all your efforts. And even more so when they start targeting the union leader, throwing obstacles in their way. And this makes our union work so much harder and essentially, we cannot achieve anything in this area. Anyone can just copy-paste (Ctrl C) something and call it a collective agreement. The Labour Code is put into some pamphlet called a collective agreement, bargaining coverage is higher, and that's it." (Interview with OZPOCR, 2024).

The citation reveals that not only bargaining coverage, but also the content of collective agreements is important, as well as transparency and cooperation among the highly fragmented trade union scene in the commerce sector, with several unions that do not cooperate extensively with each other.

Other potential European influences emerge via membership of both sides of social partners in EU-level sectoral federations that participate in EU-level social dialogue. SAMO is member of EuroCommerce and OZPOCR is member of UNI Europa. Efforts at harmonisation of interests across the commerce sector in the EU could motivate SAMO members to return to bargaining and coordination of basic working conditions at the multi-employer level.

Finally, due to the extensive presence of large foreign retail chains, Slovak worker representatives are likely to be integrated also to the operation of European Works Councils in such companies.

VI. Conclusions

This report examines the working conditions and collective bargaining in Slovakia's commerce sector, focusing on the challenges for improving collective bargaining practices. It introduces the concept of "smart bargaining," aiming to improve collective bargaining coverage and align with European standards, such as those in the Directive on Adequate Minimum Wages.

Slovakia's retail sector is characterized by the coexistence of dominant multinational chains and robust domestic retailers like COOP Jednota. The sector continues to be a major employer, with employment and wage trends indicating both growth and volatility in response to broader economic factors.

The commerce sector's employment dynamics are influenced by factors such as market competition, consumer behavior, and economic conditions, which collectively impact employment trends and wage levels. The retail sector in Slovakia continues to be dominated by multinational companies operating hypermarkets and supermarkets. These corporations rank among the largest employers in the country. In addition to international players, domestic retailers maintain a significant presence, primarily through smaller, regionally dispersed stores. In wholesale, a mix of foreign and domestic companies operate, with significantly lower employment levels than in the large retail chains.

The commerce sector in Slovakia practices both single-employer and multi-employer collective bargaining, but it faces numerous challenges that limit its effectiveness and bargaining coverage. One of the primary issues is the fragmentation of trade unions, including intra-union competition, which complicates efforts for unified multi-employer bargaining. A significant historical divide exists between foreign-owned and domestic retail chains, particularly regarding issues like working hours and Sunday closures. This divide led to the withdrawal of several important foreign chains from multi-employer agreements, significantly reducing bargaining coverage. Currently, large companies affiliated with SAMO, an organization not engaged in coordinated collective bargaining, are excluded from sector-wide agreements.

Strategies for improving collective bargaining, under the concept of "smart bargaining," include several measures. Strengthening union presence at workplaces and fostering better coordination between fragmented unions could address the existing gaps. Building trust in single-employer bargaining is critical, especially for new unions, as demonstrated by strained relationships in companies like Kaufland. Expanding multi-employer bargaining to include previously excluded associations like SAMO is another potential solution, especially given recent legislative changes requiring recognized employer associations to engage in collective bargaining upon the transposition of the Directive on Adequate Minimum Wages. Sector-wide agreements could focus on broader working conditions, leaving wage specifics to company-level discussions. For example, current agreements with COOP Jednota

guarantee a 5% annual wage growth, showcasing the potential of targeted multi-employer agreements.

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