

How do hotels juggle hours across Europe?

Collective Bargaining and Internal Flexibility in European Hospitality: Comparative Evidence from Estonia, Greece, and Spain (2000-2025)

December 2025

Work package: 4

BARTIME

BARTIME

Most Collective Agreements (CBAs) fix pay levels based on a standard working week and typically include provisions for monetary rewards related to non-standard working hours. However, there is a lack of understanding of the specificities of these provisions across European countries. BARTIME examines the rewards for non-standard hours across 24 EU countries. BARTIME aims to contribute to the social dialogue in Europe by deepening the understanding of monetary rewards of non-standard working time arrangements and the related agreements in collective bargaining.

BARTIME is led by the WageIndicator Foundation and is joined in the project by University of Utrecht, Central European Labour Studies Institute (CELSI) and the University of Girona. The European Trade Union Institute (ETUI) is associate partner to the project.

WageIndicator Foundation

WageIndicator Foundation is a global, independent, non-profit organisation operating in 208 countries across the world that collects, analyses and shares information on Minimum Wages, Salaries, Living Wages, Living Income and Living Tariff, Labour Laws, Collective Agreements and Gig and Platform Work. It aims to improve labour market transparency for workers, employers and policy makers worldwide by providing accessible labour market information worldwide through 220 websites in 70+ national languages.

Utrecht University

University of Utrecht (UU), Department of Interdisciplinary Social Sciences, in the Netherlands is one of the largest Dutch universities with over 35,000 students. The Department of Interdisciplinary Social Sciences has a staff of more than a hundred professors, assistant professors, and PhD and post doc researchers. Its research covers issues such as discrimination in the job market, reintegration at work, growing up in a multicultural neighbourhood, developing your individual identity, high-risk behaviour in young people, growing inequality and the accessibility of care.

Central European Labour Studies Institute (CELSI)

Central European Labour Studies Institute (CELSI) is a non-profit research institute based in Bratislava, Slovakia. It fosters multidisciplinary research about the functioning of labour markets and institutions, work and organizations, business and society, and ethnicity and migration in the economic, social, and political life of modern societies. CELSI strives to make a contribution to the cutting-edge international scientific discourse.

University of Girona

The University of Girona's Department of Economics is affiliated to the Faculty of Economics and Business Sciences and offers teaching in several bachelor's and master's degree studies. The department is very active in research and its interests range from statistics, applied economics and health to public economics, services and industry. Its research covers issues such as labor economics, monetary policy, basic income, transition economies, and the impact of education on the labor market.

Funding



BARTIME is co-funded by the European Commission through its Social Dialogue Program SOCPL-2022-IND-REL-01 under project number 101126498. The project runs from January 2023 until December 2025.

Disclaimer: The information and views set out in this page are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the official opinion of the European Union. Neither the European Union institutions and bodies nor any person acting on their behalf may be held responsible for the use which may be made of the information contained therein.

Bibliographical information

Lindma, E. L., Palikidis, A., Rhône, M. (2025). How do hotels juggle hours across Europe? *Collective Bargaining and Internal Flexibility in European Hospitality: Comparative Evidence from Estonia, Greece, and Spain (2000-2025)*. BARTIME Report 7. WageIndicator Foundation, Utrecht University, Central European Labour Studies Institute, University of Girona.

Acknowledgements

The analyses for this report were possible by the hard work and expertise of everyone involved in the collection and coding of collective agreements included in the WageIndicator CBA Database. It would not have been possible without the database managers: Gabriele Medas and Daniela Ceccon. Nor indeed, would it have been possible without the dedicated work of the team of coders: Adib Ahmed, Jozefa Barreto, Janna Besamusca, Mariana Bikova, Szilvia Borbély, Daniela Ceccon, Armanda Cetrulo, Ceyhun Güler, Nina Holičková, Eva Lotta Lindma, Gabriele Medas, Engin Özcan, Gunjan Pandya. Serhii Shokha and Sandra Siniväli.

Contact

Eva Lotta Lindma, Lotta.lindma@outlook.com

Alexandros Palikidis, palikidisalexandros@gmail.com

Mateo Rhône, mateo.rhone@gmail.com

@ 2025. WageIndicator Foundation, Utrecht University, Central European Labour Studies Institute, University of Girona. All rights reserved.

1. Introduction

Across Europe's hospitality sector, a high reliance on internal flexibility (variable hours, irregular shifts, annualised working time, and on-call arrangements) enables employers to match labour input to volatile patterns of demand based on seasonality. They also generate unpredictable working lives for employees. For many hospitality workers, boundaries between work and private time are increasingly blurred; income depends on fluctuating hours; and days are structured around fragmented or last-minute schedules (Ioannou, 2023). The result is a form of precariousness that is not only contractual but profoundly temporal, a central analytical component of this report: workers experience uncertainty not whether they will have work, but when and at what rhythm work will occur. The report delves into how this fluctuating temporality is regulated, shedding light on managerial control over working time.

Hotels, restaurants, and tourist services operate under intense temporal volatility: demand fluctuates seasonally, weekly, and even hourly (Gómez-Martín et al., 2016). Employers, therefore, rely heavily on internal flexibility mechanisms reference-period systems for redistributing time across months (Pacelli et al., 2008). These practices allow firms to maximise labour utilisation without expanding the workforce, but they also erode workers' control over their time, destabilise incomes, and complicate life planning. Hospitality thus functions as a "stress test" for labour market institutions: when collective agreements regulate flexibility (by limiting split shifts, requiring advance notice, or compensating unsocial hours), precarity (Bourdieu, 1998) can be mitigated. Conversely, when protections are absent or weakened, precarious temporal conditions become embedded in everyday work (Weil, 2014).

This report is part of BARTIME, a two-year project on non-standard working time in industrial relations, co-funded by the European Commission's Directorate General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion (Project No. 101126498). In the context of the BARTIME project, this study investigates how legislative and collective bargaining institutions either curb or facilitate the reliance on time-related internal flexibility in the hospitality sector in three European countries: Estonia, Greece and Spain, ultimately mapping how these dynamics are codified in collective bargaining agreements (CBA).

This report examines how these dynamics have taken shape in three contrasting European countries, Estonia, Spain, and Greece, whose institutional trajectories offer instructive variation. All three have changed their approach to the regulation of work and working time under the broader framework of EU labour governance, following a distinct path of neoliberalisation (Baccaro & Howell, 2017; Scharpf, 2010), which signals different approaches to collective bargaining and non-standard working time. Estonia liberalised rapidly in the 2000s under EU-accession conditionalities, building a highly flexible labour market with minimal collective bargaining coverage. Greece underwent a dramatic restructuring of its industrial relations system during the post-2010 crisis years, when Troika programmes dismantled long-standing bargaining institutions and expanded employer discretion over working time (Koukiadaki, A., & Grimshaw, 2016). Spain experienced deep decentralisation through the 2010–2012 reforms, which weakened sectoral bargaining and empowered firm-level agreements. This was followed by partial recentralisation attempts after 2021 (Eurofound, 2016). Despite these different institutional

legacies, all three countries converged in expanding managerial control over working time during the 2010s, making them ideal cases for analysing how neoliberal reforms reconfigure the temporal regulation of labour. Moreover, these countries are usually understudied in industrial relations, given that much theorizing has focused on Germany, the United Kingdom, Sweden, and other Western and Northern European countries.

Considering this, the report asks: How do collective agreements in Estonia, Spain, and Greece regulate internal flexibility in the hospitality sector? How do provisions institutionalise/normalise employer discretion? The analysis focuses on collective agreements as meso-level institutions where flexibility is negotiated, contested, or conceded, albeit unevenly, and where macro-level reforms acquire concrete temporal form. To tackle that issue, the study was inspired by Baccaro and Howell (2017) and Boumans (2024) on employer discretion. Rather than treating legal reforms and workplace practices as separate spheres, the report links macro-level historical neoliberal transformations to the concrete wording of collective agreements, examining how clauses on scheduling, overtime, annualised hours, rest periods, and predictability translate reforms into temporal realities for workers, reflecting managerial control.

The contribution of this report lies in positioning collective agreements, alongside statutory regulations, as key institutional sites through which the temporal organisation of work is shaped. Here, they are approached as both agents of limitation and facilitation (Besamusca, 2025). By comparing three countries with sharply different bargaining structures, union capacities, and reform trajectories, the study shows how internal flexibility is institutionalised in divergent yet converging ways. The analysis suggests that internal flexibility should not be understood solely as an accidental by-product of hospitality work, but also as shaped by collective bargaining and legislation. In doing so, the report advances scholarship on precarious employment by foregrounding time as a central axis of regulation and control.

The report proceeds as follows. Section 2 outlines the theoretical framework on precarious employment, internal flexibility, and the institutional mediation of working time. Section 3 presents the comparative design, data, and analytical strategy. Section 4 examines trends in hospitality-sector collective agreements across Estonia, Spain, and Greece. Section 5 identifies the mechanisms through which internal flexibility contributes to temporal intensification and precariousness. Section 6 discusses theoretical, policy, and methodological implications. Section 6 concludes by reflecting on broader European patterns and potential avenues for future research.

2. Theoretical Framework

Bourdieu (1998) argues that unpredictability and precarity are on the rise in the labour market and that this manifest through widespread job insecurity. In the last decade scholars have expanded the concept to include a temporal dimension: the “precarious time” of unpredictable schedules, fragmented shifts, and intensified working rhythms; this is especially pronounced in the hospitality industry (Piasna, 2018; Adăscăliței, et al., 2021). This report adopts a comparative perspective, examining how internal flexibility provisions have been institutionalised in collective

agreements and legislation for the hospitality sector in Estonia, Spain, and Greece since 2000, and how these provisions shape both employer and temporal precarity.

2.1 Precarity in Employment & “Precarious Time”

Bourdieu (1998) defines precarity as a condition in which individuals experience a continual erosion of stable temporal and existential frameworks, making the future uncertain and undermining the ability to plan or act rationally. It manifests as widespread job insecurity and heightened competition for work, affecting both private and public sectors alike (Bourdieu, 1997). Ioannou (2023) extends this into the hospitality sector; exploring the concept of precarity within the hospitality sector defining it as a condition characterized by employment insecurity, instability, and limited access to social protections, where irregular contracts, low wages, and limited bargaining power are common. Piasna (2018) and Adăscăliței, et al., (2021) extend precariousness to time, where they discuss that workers face not only job instability but also temporal insecurity, including unpredictable schedules, fluctuating hours, unpaid waiting times, and compressed work periods that intensify labour demands without proportional compensation. Piasna (2018) demonstrates empirically that most adjustments departing from the standard working model of 35 – 40 weekly hours during daytime and weekdays is associated with increased work intensity; especially in combinations such as very short, unpredictable, and unsocial hours yield high intensity. This suggests that precarious time is not merely irregular; it is a mechanism of work intensification, whereby employers use temporal fragmentation to compress more labour into fewer secure hours.

2.2 Employer discretion and the institutionalisation of internal flexibility

Employer discretion stands for the degree of unilateral decision-making power employers have over key aspects of the employment relationship such as wage setting, personnel management, work-organisation, and hiring/firing (Baccaro & Howell, 2017; Boumans, 2024). Boumans (2024) operationalizes employer discretion across four dimensions: wage determination, personnel management/work organization, hiring/firing, and employee democracy. In hospitality, the second dimension being work organization and temporal flexibility is paramount. In hospitality, employer discretion manifests as: (a) unilateral control over shift timing and roster allocation, (b) ability to vary hours without compensation adjustments, and (c) use of reference periods that spread hourly requirements across the year. These are codified into collective agreements as flexibility and opt-out clauses, which transform unilateral discretion into contractual legitimacy (Boumans, 2024). Baccaro and Howell (2017) argued that as restraints on employers such as legal regulations, collective agreements, or institutional norms weaken, employer discretion increases. As flexibility is codified into the bargaining agreements or legislation employer discretion increases. When discretion is expansive, employers can rapidly adjust work patterns to match demand fluctuations without negotiating new contractual terms, thereby embedding flexibility directly into the employment relationship.

As the flexibility is embedded to the employment relationship, internal flexibility takes shape. Internal flexibility is the firm-level capacity to modify the organization, composition, and

conditions of its own labour force without turning to external sources of labour (Fukai et al., 2024). Contrarily, external flexibility relies on temporary or agency labour to fill the needs for flexibility (Fukai et al., 2024). While external flexibility expands the labour pool, internal flexibility concentrates the temporal burden on permanent staff

Internal flexibility operates through adjustable job design and task allocation, temporal and contractual levers, and in-house labour as a buffer (Fukai et al., 2024; Boumans, 2024). Thus, internal flexibility denotes the employer-controlled, intra-firm mechanisms that enable rapid re-organisation of tasks, schedules, and remuneration, providing the firm with “internal” adaptability to demand shocks without resorting to external labour markets (e.g., agency or dispatched workers). This results in lived temporal precarity in the form of unpredictable schedules, fragmented shifts, and compressed work rhythms.

[Institutionalisation through collective agreements](#)

Keune (2007) argued that collective agreements have become the key mechanism for institutionalising internal flexibility. Boumans (2024) agrees that over time collective agreements have been used to increase employer discretion over working hours and job allocation, turning CBAs into a “management instrument” rather than a protective standard. In many sectors, collectively agreed working time is now “little more than a reference figure” for pay calculation, while actual hours and schedules are set flexibly at company level within corridors and opt-outs (Keune, 2007). This study builds on the idea that regulation is often understood as constraining internal flexibility and employer discretion; however, they suggest that, rather than merely constraining these, regulation may instead codify them.

[Implications for precarious time](#)

Recent research highlights the temporal dimension of precariousness, such as unpredictability, fragmentation, intensification of time as the main mechanisms of worker subordination and employer discretion (Piasna, 2018; Adăscăliței, et al., 2021). Both external and internal flexibility are common in hospitality, but this study concentrates on internal flexibility because it drives temporal intensification; the speeding up, fragmenting, and unpredictability of work schedules that shape workers’ sense of “precarious time.” Legal reforms and collective-agreement clauses that grant managers greater discretion over shift timing, rest periods, and roster allocation are therefore central to our analysis. Seasonal contracts, high turnover, and casual hiring give employers the leeway to push internal flexibility harder.

Internal flexibility is a deliberate outcome of bargaining institutions that amplifies employer discretion. In hospitality, it drives the temporal intensification of work schedules, shaping workers’ everyday experience of precariousness.

[2.3 Political-Economic Context & EU Regulatory Landscape](#)

Over the past few decades Estonia, Greece and Spain have each faced mounting pressure to reshape the regulatory framework governing internal flexibility in their labour markets. Although

their EU accession timelines differ: Estonia joined in 2004 while Spain and Greece have been members since the early 1980s; the common thread between the three is the EU-driven push for greater flexibility. In Estonia this drive was closely tied to its accession agenda and the post-communist transition, whereas in Greece and Spain it resurfaced decades later during the post-2008 economic crisis, when Troika-imposed austerity forced governments to rethink employment structures. Each nation's labour law culture and the interpretation and application of the EU Working Time Directive are shaped by these disparate historical legacies: long-standing welfare state customs versus post-communist reform. Together, they illustrate how EU policy has steered all three nations toward more adaptable, yet often precarious, labour arrangements.

The European Union Working Time Directive (2003/88/EC) has set out a regulatory landscape for working time. It requires EU member states to guarantee the following rights to all workers: a 48-hour weekly limit (with opt-out possibilities), minimum daily and weekly rest periods (11h between shifts, 24h uninterrupted rest per week, paid annual leave, and enhanced safeguards for night work). All three states are obliged to transpose these provisions into national law. A regulatory gap can be spotted within The Working Time Directive as it guarantees a 48-hour weekly ceiling but permits member states to establish reference periods within which hours are calculated. According to this directive employers can legitimately demand 60-hour weeks in peak seasons (e.g., summer tourism) provided hours average 48 across the reference period (typically 3–12 months). This system is further institutionalised in the labour laws and collective agreements, which allow employers to make unpredictable demands while spreading compensation across quiet periods. The result is that temporal precarity persists within the directive. This illustrates Baccaro et al.'s (2017) argument that regulatory flexibility creates space for employer discretion to expand.

Since the turn of the millennium, all three countries have experienced a neoliberal turn in industrial relations policy, which is characterised by deregulation, decentralisation of collective bargaining, and a shift toward market driven labour market governance (Baccaro & Howell, 2017; Boumans, 2024). The EU's Working-Time Directive, while guaranteeing a formal ceiling on weekly hours, does not prohibit the use of reference periods that effectively spread overtime. Consequently, the neoliberal policy environment creates a space where the Directive's protective intent is neutralised by employer driven internal flexibility; a pattern that aligns with the "precarious time" literature (Piasna, 2018; Adăscăliței et al., 2021).

2.4 Institutional Mediation via Collective Bargaining

A key question in the discussion of work intensification is what mechanisms serve to regulate or limit it. Adăscăliței et al., (2021) argue that labour market regulations and collective bargaining can act as constraints on the process, but this depends heavily on how strong and well-enforced those protections are in practice. Piasna (2018) takes a slightly different view, pointing out that work intensity is rarely addressed directly in employment contracts or collective agreements. As a result, it remains largely informal and difficult to monitor or challenge, even in contexts with otherwise robust labour protections.

In the hospitality sector, CBAs mediate how time is organised at work, not only constraining employer control but also creating opportunity structures for specific temporal

arrangements. CBAs can protect workers by setting fixed shift lengths, advance notice requirements, or minimum rest periods, yet they can also facilitate temporal intensification by legitimising annualised hours, variable rosters, or split shifts framed as “flexibility” (Baccaro & Howell, 2017; Boumans, 2024). The strength of this mediation depends on institutional factors such as bargaining coverage, union density, and the legal hierarchy between sectoral and firm-level agreements (Koukiadaki & Grimshaw, 2016).

3. Methods and Data

The study employs a qualitative, cross-national comparative design. The analytical framework is guided by Baccaro, et al., (2017) theoretical framework on employer discretion as employer’s unilateral control over decision-making on working time. It focuses on the hospitality sector in Spain, Greece, and Estonia to capture regime diversity, and examine how neoliberal labour market dynamics produced varied forms of employer discretion. Hospitality was chosen because it constitutes a highly vulnerable and unique sector, due to its dependence on seasonality, labour intensity, and exposure to flexibilization pressures. The EU member states under study were selected to trace how neoliberalization is unfolding in distinct institutional legacies: Spain illustrates a mixed model with provincial/sectoral structures and major reforms in 2012 and 2021-22; Greece demonstrates a crisis, Troika-influenced restructuring with strong state intervention in bargaining; and finally, Estonia has a post-communist liberalizing regime with weak collective bargaining structures. The comparison of these diverse institutional paradigms will help us observe similar or distinct patterns and pressures towards flexibilization in different regulatory environments.

The empirical strategy integrates document analysis of CBAs, and semi-structured interviews. The document analysis includes national, regional and firm-level sectoral agreements created and used between 2000 and 2025, allowing for a longitudinal assessment of how working-time regulation, scheduling provisions, non-standard employment, and mechanisms of internal flexibility have evolved during periods of liberalization and crisis. In each country, selected CBAs were followed over time to study changes in provisions related to internal flexibility. The sampling strategy differed across the three countries due to differences in bargaining traditions. For Spain and Greece, where bargaining culture is well established and many CBAs were openly accessible through the WageIndicator website and official national websites, we purposively selected agreements that were still in force at the time of data collection, based on criteria of longevity, which allows us to track changes over time, and representativeness, specifically including examples of regional-, national, and firm-level agreements. By contrast, in the case of Estonia, where such an option was not available, the sample selection relied exclusively on data availability.

In Spain, the final sample consisted of three regional CBAs (2004, 2007; 2014, 2016; 2017, 2019), two firm-level CBAs (2019, 2021; 2024, 2026), and ALEH, the national legal framework for the hospitality sector (2002, 2007, 2015, 2023, 2024). In Greece, we selected two regionals from Rhodes (2008, 2012, 2014, 2020, 2025) and Chania (2008, 2012, 2014, 2017, 2019, 2021, 2023, 2025), one national (2018, 2019, 2020, 2022, 2025) and one firm-level agreement (2024). In Estonia, where collective bargaining is rare and the few existing agreements are considered company secrets, one firm-level agreement was coded (Lindma, E. L., & Siniväli, S., 2024). Clauses on the agreements

were analysed using a structured codebook, inspired by Saskia Boumans' (2024) operationalization of employer discretion, through the indicators exhibited in *Table 1*. The codebook was adjusted to our research questions, focusing explicitly on working-time regulations and internal flexibility.

Dimension	Indicator	Time-Oriented Definition	CBA-Based Data Source
Contractual Working-Time Flexibility	Non-standard scheduling options	Presence of clauses allowing or restricting variable arrangements such as on-call shifts, split shifts, rotating shifts, or compressed workweeks.	Clauses on scheduling structures, shift patterns, and employment arrangements.
Extra Hours & Overtime Control	Employer discretion over overtime	Extent to which overtime is mandatory or voluntary, how it is triggered, and whether the employer unilaterally assigns it.	Overtime clauses regulating assignment, approval requirements, and compensation.
Night and Weekend Work	Employer authority to schedule outside standard hours	Provisions specifying employer ability to assign night, weekend, or holiday shifts; conditions for consultation; and additional compensation requirements.	Clauses on unsocial hours, supplements, and exemptions.
Scheduling Autonomy	Unilateral vs. negotiated scheduling	Degree of managerial discretion in determining rosters, shift lengths, start/end times, and notice periods for changes.	Clauses on work rosters, notice periods for schedule changes, and worker consultation rights.
Internal Flexibility Mechanisms	Annualized/ averaged hours and working-time accounts	Rules for redistributing hours across weeks/ months, existence of working-time banks, and whether adjustments require worker/union consent.	Clauses on averaging periods, flexi-time, and working-time accounts.
Derogation Within the CBA	Employer capacity to bypass working-time protections	CBA provisions that allow suspension or modification of time-related protections (e.g., exceeding weekly limits, derogations during crises).	Derogation or crisis-management clauses within the CBA.

Table 1. Operationalisation of employer discretion

Because provisions in CBAs provide limited insights into the extent to which they are used in practice, or whether they effectively benefit employers at the expense of employees, semi-structured interviews with experts were conducted to contextualize the document analyses. The semi-structured setting was chosen to give space for interviewees valuable insights and contributions while maintaining our focus on to research question. Two sets of interview guides were used. Guide A targeted CBA coders who participated in the writing of Spanish, Estonian and Greek agreements database for WageIndicator focusing on their experience coding working-time clauses, difficulties encountered with ambiguous phrasing, and their observations regarding cross-country differences. These interviews provided insight into how textual ambiguities are navigated, how coding categories correspond to real clauses, and how coding practices reveal temporal and institutional shifts in the regulation of working time.

Guide B was used with experts including union representatives, employer association officers, academics, and employers. These interviews explored how CBAs function in practice, how scheduling and flexibility are managed on the ground, and how national institutional contexts shape bargaining dynamics. Experts discussed the roles and strategies of unions and employers, the practical application of working-time rules, and the pressures generated by seasonality, tourist flows, productivity demands, and national reforms. Country-specific modules addressed distinctive institutional tensions and topical dialogues based on latest news and literature. All interviews were purposively sampled to capture individuals with first-hand expertise on the coding, negotiation or/and interpretation of hospitality sector CBAs. The final sample consisted of four interviews for Estonia, three for Spain, and one for Greece. The combination of experts from unions, employer organizations, and employers ensured institutional pluralism and allowed the study to capture diverging understandings of discretion and regulation reforms.

4. Findings: Collective Agreements and Internal Flexibility

Estonia:

Estonia's hospitality sector relies on a rigid statutory regime, resulting in employer-driven flexibility that heightens precarious employment.

Estonian labour relations heavily rely on the Employment Contracts Act (2025). This act replaced a more fragmented old system and set a more stable, transparent foundation for employer-employee relations. Employers interviewed for the study in the hospitality sector brought up that the current labour law does not work well with the flexible nature of the sector. They described it as perfect for designed for office-type jobs. This results in a gap between the legal framework and the operational needs of a 24/7 sector like hospitality. According to trade unions and employers this has resulted in employers having to use external flexibility or result to grey-labour practices, such as retroactively changing contracts. In 2025 the government has tried to introduce a new amendment which would allow for further flexibility thus fixing the grey labour relations, however they have yet to pass.

The key provisions affecting flexibility in Estonia are summarised working time, and future and retroactive contract changes. Employers expressed that they rely heavily on the four-month

summarised reference period for working hours, this is the maximum allowed by law, however if bargained for in a CBA this could be a 12-month period. The summarised working time allows employers to distribute hours worked unevenly across the four-month period. At the end of the calculation period if one has worked more, or less hours than stated on their contract overtime or undertime pay must be paid. Secondly, all interviewees conveyed that due to that practice employers make retroactive changes to contracts to avoid paying extra.

According to the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions done in 2020, Estonia has a collective bargaining coverage of 6%. The collective bargaining system is very decentralised, and the dominant level of bargaining happens on the firm level. In the hospitality sector there are only two collective agreements in Estonia, both are firm-level and located in Tallinn. According to the CBA and interview with an employer those hotels collective agreements do not regulate flexibility, which shows that Estonia has weak institutionalisation of internal flexibility; its main characteristics are its high reliance on the labour law and low bargaining rates.

According to interviewees unions have moved away from bargaining in the hospitality sector and resulted to state-level lobbying, this is also reflected in the lack of bargaining within the sector. Estonia's bargaining coverage is 6% (European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions, 2020), the hospitality sector has no sector level bargaining, and according to the interviewees only firm level bargaining exists in this sector. As they are only active on the firm level the employer conveyed that trade unions have very limited influence at the workplace level. According to the trade unionist it is difficult to collectivise people as people have expressed fear in front of the employers. As a result, the Estonian Service and Commercial Workers' Union have shifted towards lobbying the state rather than negotiating sectoral agreements. This helps to explain why collective agreements have not reached the hospitality sector or evolved to address flexibility or working time.

Employers exploit the four-month summarised period to smooth occupancy, but this creates income insecurity for staff. Summarised working time, from the employer's side it makes it possible to shift hours across months, reduce overtime and undertime pay, and deal with fluctuations in occupancy. Both employers and trade unionists confirm that this is a standard practice in the sector. The trade unionist brought up that the summarised working time amplifies income insecurity as employees are paid hourly and not monthly pay. When monthly hours fall short, workers earn less that month. When hours rise, employers often try to "balance" hours within the four-month period so that overtime pay does not accumulate. The trade unionist argued that this structure built into the law directly links flexibility to income instability for workers. However, they understand the employers, as the summarisation periods help keep hotels afloat, as labour law requires working hours to be clearly stated in the job contract, and employers must still pay for those hours even if they are not fully worked.

As the labour law requires working hours clearly to be stated in the labour contract this puts employers in a difficult position due to the unpredictable nature of the sector. Due to this, employers have resulted to making changes to the labour contract. Estonian law has a clause which allows changes to the job contract when both parties agree, however it is only legal if it is

done for future employment. Nevertheless, trade unionists and employers have stated that retroactive changes are made to contracts at the end of the summarised period. This usually involves reducing the total agreed hours for the period so that hours don't count as overtime. While such changes are formally based on "agreement" between employer and employee, in practice workers may feel they have little room to refuse. These adjustments can lead to lost wages and reflect a grey area between legal flexibility and pressure-driven "agreement." Lastly, zero-hour contracts are prohibited, so some hotels outsource to rent-firms that can offer more flexible contracts, shifting precarity onto agency workers.

The summarised working-time system often leads to irregular and demanding schedules, especially during peak periods. Legally the only limitation is that the break between two work-shifts needs to be 11 hours. A luxury hotel that previously operated with 12-hour shifts switched to 8-hour shifts a few years ago. Employers reduced long shifts as they wanted client facing people to look refreshed. Employees however sometimes prefer these longer shifts because they enable compressed workweeks (e.g., four-day weeks). This creates tension between operational needs, legal requirements, and worker preferences.

In Estonia, internal flexibility is not negotiated or jointly regulated; it is driven by legislation and employer practices. The combination of a rigid legal framework, lack of sectoral bargaining, and extensive use of the summarised working-time system produces a form of informal, employer-led flexibility. This flexibility is closely linked to precarious employment, especially through unstable income, retroactive adjustments, and irregular schedules. In sum, Estonia's hospitality sector relies on a rigid statutory framework and weak collective bargaining, forcing employers to engineer flexibility through summarised working-time periods and retroactive contract adjustments; practices that deepen income insecurity and underscore the urgent need for legislative reform and stronger sector-wide representation.

Spain:

Spain's hospitality sector offers an instructive case of how neoliberal restructuring, labour market reforms, and institutional reconfigurations have shaped the emergence of precarious employment and intensified working time. Since 2000, Spain has navigated significant shifts in collective bargaining structures, welfare institutions, and labour regulations that together have facilitated the expansion of employer discretion and the normalisation of internal flexibility. These dynamics unfold within a broader political-economic context defined by Spain's position as a Mediterranean or mixed market economy (Molina & Rhodes, 2007; Amable, 2003), and by the country's heavy reliance on tourism, which increases pressures for temporal adaptability and labour cost minimisation.

Prior to the financial crisis, Spain's industrial relations regime was characterised by sectoral bargaining, coordinated wage-setting, and automatic extension of collective agreements. This arrangement provided relatively robust institutional protections, even if embedded within a structurally dual labour market marked by insider-outsider divisions (Allmendinger & Schwander, 2013). After 2008, however, austerity-driven restructuring fundamentally altered this equilibrium. Reforms in 2010 and particularly the 2012 labour reform shifted the hierarchy of norms, granting

primacy to company-level agreements over sectoral ones and enabling derogations in core areas such as working hours, overtime compensation, and shift scheduling (Eurofound, 2016). These reforms aligned with broader patterns of neoliberal transformation identified across Europe (Baccaro & Howell, 2017), strengthening managerial authority while weakening collective institutions that traditionally mediated working time.

At the macro level, these reforms reflect Spain's broader trajectory of neoliberal restructuring, shaped by EU governance mechanisms and internal policy choices (López & Rodríguez, 2011; Guillén & León, 2011). Scholars argue that Spanish neoliberalism progressed through selective decentralisation, flexibilisation of contracts, and erosion of collective bargaining, processes that intensified after the crisis and legitimised employer discretion in the name of competitiveness (Lopez Andreu, 2019). This institutional weakening allowed employers across tourism and hospitality to reorganise time more intensively. The resulting temporal precariousness became a functional adaptation to Spain's tourism-heavy economy, where fluctuating demand encourages flexible scheduling, split shifts, and the compression of long working days.

Internal flexibility mechanisms became particularly salient in hospitality, where the workforce is largely composed of women, migrants, and young workers, groups disproportionately exposed to precarious and unpredictable schedules (Anderson, 2010; Fernandez-Macias et al., 2012). The sector is also structurally fragmented, comprising more than 50 provincial hospitality agreements, each with varying provisions concerning hours, time banks, overtime organisation, and notice periods. This fragmentation increased after 2012 when company-level agreements gained precedence, enabling firms to bypass sectoral standards and negotiate local arrangements more aligned with managerial priorities. Empirical studies of the sector describe intensifying workloads, longer hours, and expanding responsibility per worker, particularly in housekeeping and catering roles (Ioannou, 2023).

The 2022 labour reform partially reversed earlier decentralisation by restoring the supremacy of sectoral agreements in wage-setting. However, the reform did not alter the underlying institutional context that promotes flexibility in scheduling and staffing. While sectoral agreements regained influence, structural dualisation and uneven union presence continue to limit sector-wide improvements. CBAs in hospitality frequently contain ambiguous provisions around variable hours, annualised time, or shift rotation, leaving scope for managerial discretion consistent with Boumans' (2024) analysis of how collective agreements can embed liberalisation.

Time intensification is also associated with the Spanish welfare state's structural weaknesses. This weak social safety net amplifies the effects of unpredictable working time by making workers more dependent on fluctuating earnings and vulnerable to sudden schedule changes. Labour market duality similarly reinforces temporal inequality: stable insiders generally enjoy predictable schedules, while outsiders—especially temporary and part-time workers—face volatile working hours and last-minute adjustments (Allmendinger & Schwander, 2013; Bentolila et al., 2012).

From a political-economic perspective, the Spanish case confirms arguments that neoliberal labour reforms reconfigure rather than dismantle institutions (Streeck & Thelen, 2005; Thelen, 2014). The restructuring of collective bargaining shifted coordination downward, enabling firms to negotiate schedules, overtime, and working-time distribution more flexibly, even while preserving the formal architecture of agreements. Employer discretion over time thus expanded through institutional conversion and derogation rather than explicit deregulation.

Finally, resistance to precarious temporal regimes emerged from social movements such as Las Kellys—hotel housekeepers campaigning against outsourcing and workload intensification. Their activism highlights how intensified working time is experienced as embodied strain and gendered injustice, aligning with intersectional analyses of precarity (Anthias, 2013).

Overall, Spain's hospitality sector illustrates how neoliberal reform, institutional fragmentation, and sector-specific vulnerabilities combine to produce intensified temporal precariousness. While recent reforms strengthened parts of the bargaining structure, deep-rooted dualisation, decentralisation, and managerial discretion continue to shape the organisation of working time in ways that sustain precarious employment.

Greece:

The internal flexibility rules found in Greek collective agreements reveal a framework in which seasonality, operational necessity and managerial discretion play a decisive role. Across the material, a common thread emerges while the legal standards related to working time apply universally, collective bargaining tends to introduce a series of exceptions, derogations and special arrangements that operate on the borderline between regulated flexibility and unilateral employer authority. A central observation is that explicit working-time regulation is often absent or presented in highly general terms in the Greek CBAs. Even in the more detailed agreements, the provisions leave significant space for the employer to adjust working schedules internally, with compensation, consent requirements, or protective clauses appearing inconsistently. This tendency becomes clearer when examining how rest days, split shifts, overtime, daily rest derogations and seasonally intensified periods are negotiated and appear across different agreements.

One of the most illustrative categories concerns work on the day off. In the national agreement for non-primary tourist accommodations, the employer is explicitly entitled to employ staff on their day off between mid-May and mid-October. While this initially appeared as a unilateral possibility, later versions introduce some written protective measures: employee consent, legal surcharges, and the guarantee that a refusal does not constitute grounds for dismissal. Local sectoral agreements present a similar rationale, where working during the 6th or 7th day of the week is repeatedly framed as a result of "seasonality and increased workload", accompanied by the normative statement that this functions "in favour of the worker", as it increases monthly earnings, and is not considered a violation of the five-day system. These formulations demonstrate a spread rhetoric of necessity, where seasonal peaks justify additional work while its legitimacy is maintained through financial compensation or protective framing.

Another recurring theme is the treatment of rest periods and exceptions to legally mandated hours. In Rhodes, the provisions allowing breaks between split shifts to exceed five (5) hours or daily rest to fall below eleven (11), down to a minimum of eight (8), illustrate a model of regulated deviation: written consent is required, the conditions are labelled “exceptional”, and new obligations such as updating occupational risk assessments appear when compensatory rest cannot be provided. These elements signal a move toward a European style “regulated flexibility”. Regarding exceptional employment, another commonly seen regulation is the “70% rule”, according to which agreed rest periods and institutionally established rights can be waived if the hotel occupancy exceeds 70%. However, this rule seems to change the last few years. Specifically, a systematic downward trend is witnessed in Chania, where this criterion, that has been in force since 2008, is reduced to 68% in 2019 and to 60% in 2023. The case of Heraklion followed a different trajectory, as the expected occupancy was 70% in 2019, dropped at 50% in the agreement of 2023, and rose at 60% in 2025. This threshold-based “70% rule” (adjusted downwards to 60% in recent years) legitimizes flexibility based on seasonality needs, while said shift in thresholds shows that the mechanisms triggering flexibility tend to widen rather than narrow over time.

Split shifts form another major practice in the hospitality sector of Greece. The Rhodes agreement is the clearest example, granting employers exclusive managerial authority to distribute split shifts, while balancing this with bonuses scaled by frequency. It is interesting to notice that said bonus was temporary abolished during the financial crisis, which is demonstrated in the agreement of 2014 in which it is explicitly stated that “split shifts cannot under any circumstances justify the payment of any additional remuneration, allowance, etc.” The selective prohibition of split shifts for part-time workers also shows an attempt to limit the reach of flexibility in specific cases. Across agreements, split shifts appear as an accepted form of internal flexibility that relies heavily on managerial judgment, mitigated by financial compensation rather than structural participation rights. Furthermore, the firm-level agreement illustrates an even more hierarchical and rigid approach. It makes no provision for employee-initiated scheduling arrangements, treats overtime as a matter of “operational necessity”, and allows managerial decision-making in “exceptional and unforeseeable” cases without requiring formal employee consent. References to timely notice are vague, and disciplinary sanctions for delays or non-attendance seem to reinforce the overall top-down model. Whereas sectoral agreements tend to at least provide compensation, this agreement presents an example of administratively controlled working time, where internal flexibility exists almost exclusively as an employer prerogative.

Across all Greek agreements, explicit internal flexibility mechanisms that are common in Central and Western Europe (such as annualized hours, working-time accounts, flexitime, or banking) are absent. Instead, Greek CBAs rely on derogations, exceptions, threshold triggers, and seasonally based adjustments. These constitute a different model of flexibility: rather than reorganizing time systematically over long reference periods, flexibility is introduced through short-term deviations justified by operational needs. This creates a framework that is flexible but fragmented, and heavily dependent on managerial interpretation. The interview material supports this picture. The expert stressed that sectoral agreements rarely regulate working-time arrangements, focusing instead on wages and allowances, while the legal framework (Law 4808/2021 and Law 5239/2025) forms the regulation standards. Under this system, possibilities such as ten-hour days or extended reference periods are legally available but seldom activated

through collective bargaining. The expert's reference to the newly introduced 13-hour shift in the Rhodes agreement further underlines how exceptionality becomes institutionalized, especially when tied to national-level legislative updates. The sector's characteristics (seasonality, understaffing, 24/7 operation) intensify pressures on rest periods and lead to frequent deviations from the theoretical 11-hour daily rest. The situation of migrant workers and the link between staff shortages and increased flexibility demands reinforce the structural imbalance between employer discretion and employee protection.

Overall, the agreements show a system where flexibility exists, but mostly on the employer's terms. Financial compensation, written consent or protective clauses sometimes limit this discretion, yet these safeguards do not change the overall power imbalance. Instead of long-term tools such as annualized hours or working-time accounts, Greek CBAs rely on short-term exceptions, rules activated by occupancy or seasonality, and frequent references to "operational needs". This means that internal flexibility is not a shared or participatory process, but a set of adjustments shaped by the pressures of tourism and justified through urgency or exceptional circumstances. In practice, flexibility is therefore fragmented, reactive, and strongly influenced by managerial authority, rather than being the result of stable and negotiated planning.

5. Comparative patterns

The hospitality industry across Estonia, Greece, and Spain faces a common challenge: the organization of work time is governed primarily by national legislation rather than collective bargaining, leaving employers with broad discretion over scheduling, shift allocation, and workload distribution. To understand how this legal dominance translates into everyday practice, we first examine the institutional environment in the countries.

Institutional context

Across Estonia, Greece and Spain a clear pattern emerges collective agreements play a limited role in regulating internal flexibility, confirming theoretical expectation that temporal organisation of work remains primarily under managerial control. Despite large differences in bargaining structures, employers in all three countries ultimately determine day-to-day scheduling, shift allocation, and workload distribution. This demonstrates that internal flexibility operates as an employer-driven mechanism of temporal intensification, rather than a negotiated or institutionally constrained process. The limited bargaining coverage we document reflects the expansion of employer discretion highlighted by Baccaro and Howell (2017) and operationalised by Boumans (2024).

National law, rather than collective bargaining, is the primary source of working-time flexibility. In Estonia and Greece, working time is almost entirely determined by legislation designed for standard 9-5 employment, which creates loopholes when applied to a sector with irregular demand. In Spain, even with dense multi-level bargaining, CBAs tend only to formalise flexibility already enabled by national law rather than constrain it. This aligns with the theoretical argument that legal framework set the parameters for temporal reorganisation, while sector bargaining rarely provides binding limits on employer discretion. Our observation that collective

agreements merely echo statutory flexibility aligns with Keune (2007) and Boumans (2024), who argue that CBAs now serve as management tools rather than protective standards.

Weak enforcement consistently undermines formal protections; despite the EU Working-Time Directive (2003/88/EC), our evidence of lax enforcement shows how national practice diverges from the EU minimum regulatory standards. Estonia's limited collective bargaining regulation allows widespread grey-zone practices, while the new reform is expected to intensify this trend. Greece combined strong legal rules with derogations linked to seasonality, understaffing, and long-hour norms. Spain contains some of the most detailed CBAs, yet inspection capacity remains weak, especially in SMEs. This aligns with the theoretical claim that institutional mediation and amplify rather than buffer precarity when enforcement is weak. The divergent impact of collective agreements across the three countries illustrates Weber and Dăscălițe (2021) claim that CBAs can both limit and facilitate temporal intensification. Given this regulatory backdrop, employers rely on a set of flexible scheduling tools that we outline next.

Core flexibility mechanisms

Spain and Estonia heavily on reference-period systems such as summarised or annualised hours to manage seasonality. These mechanisms enable employers to distribute hours across months, avoid overtime compensation, and maintain highly variable schedules. Greece however deals with seasonality through flexibility in contracts; with clauses like short-term derogations, threshold-based triggers, split shifts, overtime and res-period derogations. Although the specific legal configuration differs, the effects converge: unstable hours, blurred overtime boundaries, and compressed peak-season overloads. These findings support the conceptualisation of temporal insecurity as a core dimension of precarious employment, demonstrating how institutional flexibility tools translate into fragmented and unpredictable working time. These patterns of unstable, fragmented hours exemplify the 'precarious time' described by Bourdieu (1998) and later refined by Piasna (2018 and Weber and Dăscălițe (2021).

Flexibility is further reinforced by variable shift systems, overtime banks, and time-banking arrangements, which permit employers to reallocate hours according to fluctuating demand. In practice, these tools often blur the boundary between regular and overtime hours, normalise unpaid or deferred compensation, and result in irregular schedules.

Contractual forms such as part-time, fixed-discontinuous, or flexible-hour contracts also function as mechanisms for adjusting labour supply to seasonal peaks, even when formally regulated. However illegal methods such as retroactive adjustments to labour agreements, difficulty with complying with rest-time provisions and chronic understaffing intensify time pressures and contribute to the unpredictability of working hours.

These tools are adopted precisely because the hotel sector is characterised by intense seasonal swings and round-the-clock service demands.

Sector Level vulnerabilities

The hotel sector is defined by inherent structural vulnerabilities that make it inherently susceptible to unstable temporal arrangements. The essence of the sector can be characterised by seasonal demand, vulnerable workforce, and the informality which make hospitality prone to unstable time

arrangements. Seasonal demand creates cyclical pressures for employment relationships as a result it also normalises flexible and irregular working hours as a central organisational principle in the sector.

The sectors tendency towards informal practices such as unrecorded hours, variable workloads and blurred boundaries between contracted and actual working time contribute to temporal instability. These practices emerge from competitive pressures, cost-minimisation strategies and weak monitoring or enforcement. Workers who occupy less secure positions, such as young workers, part-timers, and migrants are disproportionately exposed to these conditions because the sectors structural dynamics limit their bargaining power and access to stable scheduling.

As a result, irregular and intensified time regimes become organisationally embedded, shaping both employer practices and workers' daily experiences. When such tools become routine, they shape workers' everyday experiences of time.

Precarious time becomes normalised

In hospitality precarious time has become a structural norm as there is high variability in shift length, unpredictable rest periods, and short notice for the schedule changes intensify temporal pressures. Workers must remain highly adaptable to irregular rhythms of demand. Over time, this normalisation of temporal insecurity reinforces broader dimensions of precarity, including income instability, limited access to social rights, and reduced capacity to plan future employment or personal commitments. The cumulative effect of these practices is reflected in a range of adverse outcomes for staff, which we detail below. The normalisation of irregular shifts and compressed working rhythms we describe is precisely the temporal intensification identified by Piasna (2018) and Weber and Dăscălităi (2021).

Systemic outcomes of temporal flexibility

Across all three countries, internal flexibility has systemically produced forms of precariousness: income instability especially in Estonia, irregular and fragmented schedules, long peak-season hours that are frequently unpaid, reliance on multi-jobholding in Spain, and heightened vulnerability among migrant workers in Greece. Although the institutional pathways differ, the outcomes are remarkably similar, illustrating how temporal intensification emerges as a shared structural response to sectoral volatility. The income instability and high turnover we observe echo Ioannou's (2023) characterisation of hospitality-sector precarity. Finally, we situate these empirical findings within the broader theoretical debate and draw out policy lessons.

Theoretical & Policy implications

Sectoral characteristics: seasonality, 24/7 operations, chronic understaffing further intensify internal flexibility. These pressures reduce the protective capacity of CBAs and legal frameworks and reinforce managerial discretion. This supports theoretical insights that service sector precarity is rooted not only in institutions but also in the structural features of the production process.

Despite divergent institutional configurations, all three countries have moved toward greater employer discretion since the early 2000s. Estonia combines legal rigidity with growing

informal flexibility; Greek flexibility expands through exceptions and employer-led deviations; Spain's decentralisation reforms (2010-12) shifted negotiation to the firm level, with subsequent reforms only partially reversing the trend. The trajectory aligns with the broader theoretical narrative of neoliberal labour market transformations, in which flexibility mechanisms become increasingly institutionalised while worker protections remain static or weaken. The shift toward greater employer discretion that we trace mirrors the neoliberalisation narrative advanced by Baccaro and Howell (2017) and Bouman (2024).

6. Conclusion

This study explored how internal flexibility in hospitality is regulated through collective bargaining agreements in Estonia, Spain, and Greece. Despite differences in bargaining culture, institutional histories and legal structures, the analysis demonstrates some significant emerging patterns: internal flexibility operates as employers' unilateral control over time, facilitated through vague, permissive or weakly enforced collective agreements. Across all three countries, practices such as reference periods, split shifts, exceptions to rest, and variable scheduling achieve to intensify employer discretion and translate into temporal precariousness for workers. Regarding its theoretical contribution, the study adds on debates on precarity by showing how institutionalized flexibility produces similar outcomes of unpredictable, fragmented and intensified working time; whether operated through legal rules in Estonia, multilayered bargaining in Spain, or seasonality-based derogations in Greece.

The study faces important limitations concerning contextual gaps and technical difficulties. In Estonia, the particularly limited bargaining culture, combined with secrecy around firm-level arrangements, resulted in the analysis of only a single CBA, restricting further study on different paradigms within the country and possible comparative patterns. Likewise, in Greece, despite extensive effort to approach multiple actors and organizations, a climate of limited trust and hesitancy among them reduced significantly our access to different perspectives and knowledge of lived practices in the sector. Said limitations reflect broader structural features, such as weak social dialogue in Estonia and mistrust within the Greek industrial relations system, which are themselves indicative of how flexibility is institutionalized in the case countries under study.

Future research could address these gaps by developing trust-building research strategies in contexts where interview participation, particularly in online settings like the one we applied in our study, is difficult. Longitudinal ethnographic research could also deepen our understanding of how temporal precarity is experienced, negotiated, or/and resisted on the ground, complementing the institutional analysis presented here. Additionally, future research could expand beyond expert contributions to include the perspectives and experiences of workers regarding informal practices and industrial norms in different regions.

References

- Adăscăliței, D., Heyes, J., & Mendonça, P. (2021). The intensification of work in Europe: A multilevel analysis. *British Journal of Industrial Relations*, 60(2), 324–347.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/bjir.12611>
- Allmendinger, J., & Schwander, H. (2013). *Labour market dualization and insider-outsider divides: Why this new conflict matters*. *Social Indicators Research*, 114(1), 129.
- Amable, B. (2003). *The diversity of modern capitalism*. Oxford University Press.
- Anderson, B. (2010). *Migration, immigration controls and the fashioning of precarious workers*. *Work, Employment and Society*, 24(2), 300–317.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0950017010362141>
- Anthias, F. (2013). *Intersectional what? Social divisions, intersectionality and levels of analysis*. *Ethnicities*, 13(1), 3–19. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1468796812463547>
- Baccaro, L. & Howell, C. (2017). *Trajectories of Neoliberal Transformation: European Industrial Relations since the 1970s*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Bentolila, S., Dolado, J. J., & Jimeno, J. F. (2012). Reforming an insider-outsider labor market: the Spanish experience. *IZA Journal of European Labor Studies*, 1(1).
<https://doi.org/10.1186/2193-9012-1-4>
- Besamusca, J. (2025). *How the standard disappeared from standard working time: A scoping review of literature on collective bargaining regarding standard and non-standard working times in Europe*. WageIndicator Foundation, Utrecht University, Central European Labour Studies Institute, University of Girona.
- Boumans, S. (2024). Employer discretion: The role of collective agreements in the liberalization of industrial relations. *ILR Review*, 77(2), 227–250.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/00197939231220049>
- Bourdieu, P. (1998). La précarité est aujourd’hui partout. In *Contre-feux. Propos pour servir à la résistance contre l’invasion néo-libérale* (pp. 95–100). Liber — Raisons d’agir.
- Employment Contracts Act (Töölepingu seadus), RT I, 07.03.2023, 5 (Estonia). Retrieved from <https://www.riigiteataja.ee/en/eli/530102013061/consolide>
- Eurofound, & Cedefop. (2020). *European Company Survey 2019: Workplace practices unlocking employee potential*. Publications Office of the European Union.
<https://doi.org/10.2806/030551>
- Eurofound. (2016). *Spain: Developments in working life 2016*. European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions.
- Eurofound. (2016). *Working time developments in the 21st century: Work duration and its*

- regulation in the EU* (Report No. EF1573). European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions.
- European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions. (2020). *European Company Survey 2019: Workplace practices unlocking employee potential* (Flagship report). Eurofound.
- European Parliament & Council of the European Union. (2003). *Directive 2003/88/EC concerning certain aspects of the organisation of working time. Official Journal of the European Union*, L 299. <http://data.europa.eu/eli/dir/2003/88/oj>
- Fernandez-Macias, E., Hurley, J., & Storrie, D. (Eds.). (2012). *Transformation of the employment structure in the EU and USA*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Fukai, T., Kawaguchi, D., Kondo, A., & Yokoyama, I. (2024). How do firms attain internal and external flexibility of employment? *Labour Economics*, 91, 102628. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.labeco.2024.102628>
- Gómez-Martín, M. B., Armesto-López, X. A., & Martínez-Ibáñez, O. (2016). Yearly, monthly and weekly seasonality of tourism demand: A decomposition analysis. *Tourism Management Perspectives*, 18, 12–23.
- Greece. (2021). Labour protection law (Law No. 4808/2021). <https://www.taxheaven.gr/law/4808/2021>
- Greece. (2021). Fair Work for All (Law No. 5239/2025). <https://www.taxheaven.gr/law/5239/2025>
- Guillén, A. M., & León, M. (2011). The Spanish welfare state in European context. In M. Guillén & M. León (Eds.), *The Spanish Welfare State in European Context: Historical, Structural and Comparative Perspectives*. Ashgate.
- Ioannou, G. (2023). Trapped in contradiction: Precariousness and the ideological orientations of younger workers in hospitality-related occupations. *Economic and Industrial Democracy*, 45(3), 891–913. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0143831X231201276>
- Keune, M. (2007). *Collective bargaining and working time in Europe: An overview*. European Trade Union Institute for Research, Education and Health and Safety.
- Koukiadaki, A., & Grimshaw, D. (2016). *Evaluating the effects of the structural labour market reforms on collective bargaining in Greece*. International Labour Organization.
- Lindma, E. L., & Siniväli, S. (2024). Discretion and (de)centralization in wage bargaining in the construction, hospitality, urban transport and waste management sectors: A Study on Estonia. BARWAGE Report 6. Amsterdam: WageIndicator Foundation.

<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.13239270>

- Lopez Andreu, M. (2019). *Neoliberal trends in collective bargaining and employment regulation in Spain, Italy and the UK: From institutional forms to institutional outcomes*. *European Journal of Industrial Relations*, 25(4), 309–325.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0959680118810294>
- López, I., & Rodríguez, E. (2011). The Spanish model. *New Left Review*, 69, 5–29.
- Molina, Ó., & Rhodes, M. (2007). *The political economy of adjustment in mixed market economies: A study of Spain and Italy*. In B. Hancké, M. Rhodes, & M. Thatcher (Eds.), *Beyond varieties of capitalism: Conflict, contradictions, and complementarities in the European economy* (pp. 223–252). Oxford University Press
- Piasna, A. (2018). Scheduled to work hard: Non-standard working hours and work intensity among European workers (2005–2015). *Human Resource Management Journal*, 28(1), 167–181. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1748-8583.12171>
- Pacelli, L., Devicienti, F., Maida, A., Morini, M., Poggi, A., & Vesan, P. (2008, September 23). *Employment security and employability: A contribution to the flexicurity debate*. Eurofound.
<https://www.eurofound.europa.eu/hr/publications/all/employment-security-and-employability-contribution-flexicurity-debate>
- Scharpf, F. W. (2010). The asymmetry of European integration, or why the EU cannot be a “social market economy.” *Socio-Economic Review*, 8(2), 211–250.
<https://doi.org/10.1093/ser/mwp031>
- Streeck, W., & Thelen, K. (2005). *Beyond continuity: Institutional change in advanced political economies*. Oxford University Press.
- Thelen, K. (2014). *Varieties of liberalization and the new politics of social solidarity*. Cambridge University Press.
- Weber, T., & Adăscăliței, D. (2021). *Tackling labour shortages in EU Member States*. European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (Eurofound). Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg. ISBN 978-92-897-2181-3; doi:10.2806/363602.
- Weil, D. (2014). *The fissured workplace: Why work became so bad for so many and what can be done to improve it*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.