



First quarterly report on Covid-19 impact on industrial relations

Methodology

BARCOVID

The BARCOVID project aims to improve knowledge about the content of collective agreements in Europe and to undertake research activities to enhance the collection of comparative information on collective bargaining outcomes. The project takes in account the Covid-19 impact on industrial relations in Europe, which is approached from different angles, such as government measures and occupational health and safety. Lead partner is the University of Amsterdam/AIAS. The Central European Labour Studies Institute (CELSI), Sant'Anna School of Advanced Studies and WageIndicator Foundation are the project's key actors.

University of Amsterdam/AIAS-HSI

AIAS-HSI is an institute for multidisciplinary research and teaching at the University of Amsterdam (UvA), the largest university in the Netherlands. AIAS-HSI has as its objective the coordination, implementation and stimulation of interdisciplinary research into the practice of labour law and social security law. Therefore it combines insights from the social sciences, legal dogmas and legal theories in its research.

Central European Labour Studies Institute (CELSI)

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

Sant'Anna School of Advanced Studies

Sant'Anna School of Advanced Studies is a public university institute - with special autonomy - working in the field of applied sciences: Economics and Management, Law, Political Sciences, Agricultural Sciences and Plant Biotechnology, Medicine, and Industrial and Information Engineering. The School promotes the internationalization of didactics and research with innovative paths in the fields of university education, scientific research and advanced training.

WageIndicator Foundation

WageIndicator Foundation collects, compares and shares labour market information through online and offline surveys and research. Its national websites serve as always up-to-date online libraries featuring (living) wage information, labour law and career advice, for employees, employers and social partners. In this way, WageIndicator is a life changer for millions of people around the world.



Funding

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Research Question

The first research question we address within the BARCOVID project is the following:

How have the Covid-19 crisis, the state-imposed measures and their consequences affected the industrial relations landscape in EU27 and 5 candidate countries?

To provide an answer, text data will be collected from social partners' press releases and newsletters across the 27 EU countries and five Candidate countries and further analysed. Approximately, 50 items will be stored each month throughout the two-year project. A database of around 1200 items will be then analysed combining text-mining techniques, and quantitative and qualitative text analysis (including manual reading and coding). The goal of the analysis is to explore how the industrial relations landscape has evolved because of the explosion of the Covid-19 pandemic, resorting directly to the official and updated sources from national social actors.

Method of analysis

The methodology mainly consists of the text mining techniques (using Python), and qualitative and quantitative text analysis (using both Python and Dedoose). First, webpage links to newsletters and press releases published by social partners and other relevant actors at national level and EU level (e.g., ETUI, WI, BusinessEurope) have been collected and stored in the structured list. Second, a list of words considered highly relevant is identified. Words are included into the list whether they relate directly to new or specific issues that entered the debate during the pandemic (i.e., green pass) or whether they refer to the mechanisms through which social actors interact (i.e., collective bargaining, social dialogue). Third, the script in Python for web scraping (based on using keywords) is developed to extract relevant text data from the web sources.

After the extraction of the text data from the relevant webpages, further analysis of the extracted text is carried out. To be more specific, (1) the frequencies with which they occur in the text are computed and then compared with pre-pandemic documents published in 2019 (where possible). Then, (2) a comparative analysis on the most frequent topics is performed to identify potential differences across countries in the construction of the public discourse and in the set of policy measures adopted during the pandemic, with specific reference to the world of work and industrial relations. This analysis will be replicated in different periods, to distinguish between different pandemic waves (e.g., March-June 2020 compared to September 2020-January 2021). Additionally, (3) relation extractions and keywords matches will be explored to find out what themes are associated with each other and how these associations change over time.

Regarding the qualitative text analysis, once the text extractions are stored in the excel sheets, they will be uploaded into the Dedoose software that allows to code the text and conduct qualitative text analysis. The findings of this qualitative analysis will serve as complementary to the quantitative findings and will provide with the further context and details about the changing industrial relations and evolving anti-pandemic policy measures.

Keywords

The list of keywords is organised in six main sections: (1) Covid-19; (2) Policy responses (mitigating exposure to the virus); (3) Policy measures (labour market); (4) Impact of the pandemic; (5) Industrial Relations; (6) Other.

Since text-analysis will be performed on original documents published in 27 European countries and five Candidate countries, the list of keywords has been translated into 26 different national languages (Albanian, Bulgarian, Czech, Croatian, Danish, Dutch, English (for Malta), Estonian, Finnish, French, German, Greek, Hungarian, Italian, Latvian, Lithuanian, Macedonian, Polish, Portuguese, Romanian, Serbian, Spanish, Slovak,

Slovenian, Swedish, and Turkish). Translation has been checked by native speakers to ensure its accuracy, especially with respect to specific words that were coined during the pandemic.

List of keywords

1. **Covid-19:** pandemic, corona, COVID-19, COVID, vaccine, vaccine refusal, vaccination, virus, syndemic, patent waiver, green pass.
2. **Policy responses (mitigating exposure to the virus):** masks, sanitisers, closure, distance measures, protective clothes, protective equipment, disinfectant, antibacterial, thermometer, test, testing,
3. **Policy measures (labour market):** green pass, kurzarbeit, short-time work, remote work, telework, work from home, flexible work arrangements, online work, hybrid work, sick leave, ergonomic tools, training, liquidity loan(s), loan(s), stimulus package, income support, income maintenance, wage subsidies, subsidies, employment protection, job retention, occupational health, health and safety, childcare, grace period, tax break, tax exemption, tax deferral, helicopter money, emergency payment/one-off payment, self-isolation, coronacheck, 3G, QR code.
4. **Impact of the pandemic:** bankruptcy, job losses, quarantine, understaffed, burnout/burned out;
5. **Industrial relations:** trade unions, employers, employer's association, social partners, industrial relations, collective bargaining, wage bargaining, salary bargaining, tripartite, social dialogue, labour union, social impact;
6. **Other:** self-employed, parents, sick workers, health care workers, essential workers, female workers, education, quarantine workers.
