Social Partner Engagement and Effectiveness in European Dialogue - SPEEED

- Final report -

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Disclaimer:
Responsibility for the information, opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this report lies entirely with the authors.
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Thanks go to the participants of the SPEEED workshop for their helpful comments.
Executive Summary

Short description of action

In recent years, European social dialogue has increased in importance on the agenda of European public authorities; the goal of European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker to be ‘President of social dialogue’ is well-known. In this context, the importance of European sectoral social dialogue committees (SSDCs) has increased. The current study therefore examines the effectiveness of social dialogue in the 43 sectors in which SSDCs exist.

For analytical purposes, 39 SSDCs were selected for which both Eurostat NACE 2 ref data and Eurofound representativeness study data for trade unions and employer organizations in member states were available. The sectors not included are central government, regional and local government, extractive industry and professional football. In the qualitative research, two sectors (metal and hospitals) in five countries (DE, IT, PL, SE, UK) were investigated in depth.

A range of activities were undertaken in the course of the project. Following a series of initial meetings between project researchers, large-scale quantitative and qualitative research was carried out. Results were discussed at a dissemination workshop in Brussels in March 2018.

In terms of deliverables, multi-lingual newsletters were produced throughout the duration of the project. This report, aimed at policymakers and researchers, will also help advance knowledge of the manner in which SSDCs function. Finally, researchers working on the project will prepare multiple articles for publication in academic journals.

Main objectives of action

The project has four objectives: (1) to map and analyse the settings of ESSD, (2) develop a measurement framework to identify relevant indicators that foster or hamper effective social dialogue (3) to identify barriers to effective engagement in SSDCs, and (4) to analyse the engagement procedures of social partners. These objectives have generally been neglected by extant literature; investigation will therefore advance the knowledge of policymakers and researchers.

Quantitative research was based on secondary data including 39 representativeness studies by Eurofound, the social dialogue texts database and Eurostat data. The measurement
dimensions were the economic context of sectors and the institutional structure of social partner organisations in 39 SSDCs and the EU-28, and the characteristic of actors involved in social dialogue at the national and European sectoral level. This analysis focused on differential SSDC outcomes from 2008 - 2015, evaluating the relationship with a range of economic and industrial relations variables. Qualitative research was also undertaken in two sectors (hospitals and metal) and five countries (DE, IT, PL, SE, UK). A total of 40 semi-structured research interviews were carried out at member state and European level which attempted to establish the factors which account for effective social dialogue in SSDCs.

**Key results**

Our results support the assumption that SSDCs represented by homogenous enterprise size structures are more successful in concluding outcomes that entail any commitment from social partners at national level. Thus the more similar the challenges faced in a sector across the member states, the more likely cooperation and coordination of policies in SSDCs.

According to our research, the existence of sectoral bargaining structures in the member states fosters SSDC outcomes that entail follow-up commitments. With regard to the effectiveness of social dialogue, the presence of such structures in the member states are a prerequisite for the social partners to fulfil SSDC obligations, e.g. effective implementation of SSDC outcomes.

Our research shows a negative relationship between collective bargaining coverage and SSDC outcomes that entail any follow-up at national level. The question is if, because of the rather low governance capacity of collective agreements in the member states, social partners pursue the interests of their members at European level in SSDCs so as to compensate for this weakness.

With regard to the effectiveness of ESSD, our research indicates that SSDCs have multiple purposes. ESSD serves different purposes for different SSDCs and perceived effectiveness of social dialogue may vary depending on the sector in question. The relevance of the different types of topics tackled at EU level also varies between SSDCs; in some sectors social and workplace related topics (e.g. Art.153 TFEU) predominate whilst in others industrial policy issues (e.g. EU2020) are important.

From the qualitative cases studies we may conclude that the choice of topics on which to have dialogue, and the process through which topics are developed and chosen, is of high
importance for both engagement and effectiveness of the dialogue. The intention to engage in SSDCs depends on the relevance or importance of topics to the national affiliates. In addition, economic internationalisation and competition influence the function of SSDCs and the interest of trade unions and employers in different ESSD topics. For example, there is greater interest in industrial policy topics in the metal sector than in the hospital sector.

With regards to resources, analysis shows the importance of facilitation from the secretariats of the European social partner organisations as well as from the European Commission. Since two of the major obstacles to engagement from national actors are organisational resources (financial and human) and language competencies, translation services and financial support from the commission are of great importance. Access to information on ongoing and upcoming Commission initiatives, expertise provided by DGs, logistical and financial support to organise a sufficient number of SSDC meetings, as well as political support and access to EU institutions are important incentives to engage in SSDCs.

When focusing on actors, we find that for effective participation in SSDCs sectoral knowledge and familiarity with social dialogue processes and practices are important. The relevant knowledge, expertise and relationships with other participating actors are of central importance; this is the case with affiliates from other member states, the secretariats and the European Commission. Continuity in participation is not only important to gain relevant knowledge about dialogue processes and practices, but also to establish personal relationships which help build trust among actors and promote cooperation. As with national collective bargaining, stability and trust are important factors for social dialogue at the European sectoral level and can only be established over time. An important factor fostering effective dialogue is continuity of participation.

The understanding of what constitutes effective social dialogue is quite varied and broad among the national representatives participating in SSDCs. There is also an understanding of effectiveness in a less goal oriented sense, in that the SSDC does not always have to lead to formal outputs; dialogue is rather seen as fruitful in itself and likely to build trust between the participants and respect for differences between social partners.
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AGRIC</td>
<td>Agriculture 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AUDIO</td>
<td>Audiovisual 2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BANKI</td>
<td>Banking 2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CATERI</td>
<td>Catering 2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHEMI</td>
<td>Chemical industry 2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CIVIL</td>
<td>Civil aviation 2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CLEAN</td>
<td>Industrial cleaning 2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMME</td>
<td>Commerce 2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CONSTR</td>
<td>Construction 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EDUCA</td>
<td>Education 2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ELECT</td>
<td>Electricity 2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FOODD</td>
<td>Food and drink industry 2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FOOTW</td>
<td>Footwear 2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FURNIT</td>
<td>Furniture 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GAS</td>
<td>Gas 2008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GRAPH</td>
<td>Graphical industry 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HAIR</td>
<td>Personal services 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HOREC</td>
<td>Horeca 2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HOSPI</td>
<td>Hospitals 2009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INLAN</td>
<td>Inland waterways 2009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INSUR</td>
<td>Insurance 2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIVEP</td>
<td>Live performance 2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SUGAR</td>
<td>Sugar 2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MARIT</td>
<td>Maritime transport 2016</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 Year Eurofound representativeness study was published.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Industry/Service</th>
<th>Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>METAL</td>
<td>Metal industry</td>
<td>2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PAPER</td>
<td>Paper Industry</td>
<td>2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRIVA</td>
<td>Private security</td>
<td>2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PORTS</td>
<td>Ports</td>
<td>2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>POSTA</td>
<td>Postal services</td>
<td>2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RAIL</td>
<td>Railways</td>
<td>2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ROADT</td>
<td>Road transport</td>
<td>2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEAFI</td>
<td>Sea fisheries</td>
<td>2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SHIPB</td>
<td>Shipbuilding</td>
<td>2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STEEL</td>
<td>Steel</td>
<td>2009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TANNI</td>
<td>Tanning and leather</td>
<td>2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TELEC</td>
<td>Telecommunications</td>
<td>2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TEMPA</td>
<td>Temporary agency work</td>
<td>2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TEXTI</td>
<td>Textile and clothing</td>
<td>2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WOODW</td>
<td>Woodworking</td>
<td>2014</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1. Introduction

Recently, the European Commission celebrated the 30th anniversary of the European social dialogue, launched in 1985. Progress made so far was acknowledged, yet there were also calls for a ‘new start for social dialogue’ (European Commission, 2016) so as to fully develop its potential and contribution to EU policy making. European social dialogue refers to discussions, consultations, negotiations and other joint action by the social partners – i.e. employers and trade unions – on social and work-related issues. European social dialogue is supported and promoted by the European Commission for the reason that it is thought to play “a crucial role in promoting competitiveness and fairness and enhancing economic prosperity and social well-being” (ibid., p. 3). Social dialogue is thus viewed as an important part of the European social model and recognises and supports the social partners’ possibilities to influence social standards and the organisations of work, as well as to boost competitiveness and growth, create jobs and ensure workplace fairness (ibid).

Social dialogue on the EU-level is mainly bipartite and takes place at two levels, at the cross-industry level and the sectoral level. European social dialogue thus complements the social dialogue at the national level. Actors in the bipartite European social dialogue are organisations of industry and labour in the member states, coordinated by their European umbrella organisations with secretariats in Brussels to coordinate meetings and actions. On the Trade union side, social dialogue is coordinated mainly by the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) on the cross industry-level and by the European Trade Union Federations (ETUFs) on the sectoral level. On the Employer side, social dialogue is coordinated mainly by the employer organisations BUSINESSEUROPE and the European Centre of Employers and Enterprises Providing Public Services (CEEP) on the cross-industry level, and by European employer or business associations on the sectoral level.

The focus of our research is European sectoral social dialogue (ESSD), which takes place in up to 43 sectoral social dialogue committees (SSDC). Throughout the report, the terms ESSD and SSDC are used synonymously. The term ESSD can however be understood to be a broader term, encompassing one or several SSDCs. The 43 SSDCs have been officially recognised by the European Commission in the natural resources sector, the manufacturing and the service sector (see Appendix Table 1). It has been argued that, in recent years, SSDCs

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2 Tripartite forms of social dialogue at EU level include for instance the meetings between social partners and EU institutions in the run-up to the EU summits in autumn and spring.
have gained importance in practical and political terms in comparison with the cross-industry dialogue (Keller & Weber, 2011b). There is nonetheless huge variety in terms of the activities and types of outcomes produced across the 43 SSDCs. Outcomes can range from declarations to co-legislation according to the consultation and negotiation procedures outlined in articles 154 and 155 TFEU. In quantitative terms, however, such autonomous agreements and social partner directives accounted for only 2% of SSDC outcomes from 1978 to 2013 (Degryse, 2015).

In this context, in recent years there has been a shift in focus from analysing the supranational settings of SSDCs to investigating the interlinkage between the supranational and the national level. ESSD has been analysed as a form of multilevel governance (Keune & Marginson, 2013) or in terms of modes of governance (Keller & Weber, 2011a). More recent literature focuses on aspects of the implementation of ESSD results (Keller & Weber 2011b; Perin & Léonard, 2011). In the context of assessment of SSDC outcomes, scholars have also argued that the practical importance of a certain type of non-binding SSDC outcomes, so called “tools”, might be underestimated (Weber, 2013).

There is, however, still too little research done about what factors and processes that facilitate or hamper effectiveness and engagement in SSDC. This project therefore aimed to investigate factors that determine effective ESSD and SSDC outcomes and explain differences in the activity and outcomes produced by SSDCs.

1.1 Report Outline

The report is divided into six sections. Following the introductory section (I), which outlines the design of the study and central concepts and definitions, a section sets out indicators of effective European sectoral social dialogue on the basis of quantitative analysis (II). Specifically, a measurement framework is developed which identifies relevant indicators which foster or hamper effective social dialogue. The measurement dimensions are the economic context of sectors and the institutional structure of social partner organisations in 39 SSDC and the EU-28 and the characteristic of actors involved in social dialogue at the national and European sectoral level.
A section then sets out the qualitative case studies (III). An analytical framework is developed to assess the factors which hamper or foster successful social dialogue; these are (i) topics/content, (ii) resources/organizational context, (iii) actors/individuals and (iv) developing trust. Results are set out in the metal and hospital sectors, before a comparison of the two sectors is undertaken. The role of the Commission in SSDCs is also considered (VI).

A section then concludes the report (V). Settings for effective social dialogue are set out, before barriers to effective engagement in SSDCs are evaluated and practical implications are assessed. Finally, an appendix outlines the research design, elaborates data and provides further information about research interviews (VI).

1.2 Research design

This project has been informed by the following research questions:

A: What are the settings for effective ESSD?
B: What are the barriers to effective engagement in ESSD?

In order to identify factors that foster or hamper effective social dialogue we have performed comparative analysis combining quantitative and qualitative methods (Della Porta, 2008). The quantitative methods were used to identify economic and industrial relations indicators that facilitate effective SSDC outcomes. The qualitative case studies were used to investigate in detail dialogue through what processes and practices the actors engage in ESSD and what their understandings of effective ESSD are. The research process is illustrated in Graphic 1 in the Appendix.

1.2.1 Data selection for the quantitative research: sectors and countries

A total of 39 SSDCs\(^3\) were selected for quantitative analysis of data covering the economic structure and characteristics of industrial relations systems in the EU-28. Data on the

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\(^3\) The 39 SSDCs covered in the project are defined in terms of the classification of economic activities in the European Community (Nomenclature générale des activités économiques dans les Communautés européennes, NACE). The demarcation of SSDCs is set out in Eurofound representativeness studies. SSDCs not covered because of the lack of Eurostat Structural Business Statistic data for detailed NACE Rev. 2 classes are: Central Government Administration, Extractive Industries, Local and Regional Government, Professional Football.
structural characteristics of the 39 sectors are based on the Eurostat Structural Business Statistics (Eurostat sbs) for the EU-28 and the period 2008 - 2015. Data on the characteristics of industrial relations systems and trade unions and employer organisations affiliated to European sectoral social partner organisations for the 39 sectors and EU-28 are based on the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (Eurofound) Representativeness Studies (Eurofound, 2018). Data on the number of European sectoral trade unions and employer organisations representing SSDCs are drawn from the European Commission (2018), whilst information about the mandates of the European social partners are based on Eurofound (2016).

1.2.2 Case selection for the qualitative research: sectors and countries

The quantitative analysis of factors that foster or hamper effective engagement in ESSD was complemented by qualitative case studies, investigating in detail social dialogue processes and procedures used by social partners in SSDCs in the hospital and metal sectors. The case sample comprises trade unions and employer organisations affiliated to European level sectoral institutions in two sectors (Table 3). The sectors investigated are hospitals⁴ and metal⁵, and interviews were made with both European level actors and national representatives from five countries. The European level actors interviewed were experts of the respective Directorate-General participating in SSDCs in the hospitals and metal sector, and representatives for the sectoral trade unions and employer organisations (EPSU, HOSPEEM, IndustriAll, Ceemet⁶) participating. The national level representatives were from five countries: Germany (DE), Italy (IT), Poland (PL), Sweden (SE) and the United Kingdom (UK). This selection intended to promote understanding of the role of different industrial relations regimes and traditions for social partners’ interest and engagement in ESSD.

⁴ NACE hospital SSDC: Q86.1 - Hospital activities (previously ‘NACE 85.11’ - hospital activities in Eurofound, 2009).
⁶ SSDC hospital: European Public Services Union (EPSU), HOSPEEM (European Hospital and Healthcare Employers’ Association; SSDC metal: IndustriAll (IndustriAll European Trade Union), Ceemet (Council of European Employers of the Metal, Engineering and Technology-based Industries).
The hospital SSDC has been the subject of some previous investigation (Perin, 2014; Degryse & Pochet, 2011), while research on the metal SSDC have been more limited (Dufresne, Degryse & Pochet, 2006). Both sectors are of significant economic and social importance, justifying further investigation. Furthermore, these sectors are characterised by well-established industrial relations structures which are seen as a prerequisite to playing a key role in European sectoral dialogue (European Commission, 1998), and to achieve economic and social objectives and assume an important role in the ‘Europe 2020’ strategy and new ‘European semester’ system of governance (Meardi & Marginson, 2014).

Table 3. Sector selection criteria: SSDC in the hospital and metal sector.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>Hospital sector</th>
<th>Metal sector</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Competition</td>
<td>domestic, low</td>
<td>int./global, high</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trade union density</td>
<td>above national average</td>
<td>above national average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employer density</td>
<td>above national average</td>
<td>above national average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ownership</td>
<td>public &amp; private</td>
<td>private</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Typical company size</td>
<td>large</td>
<td>small and medium size</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Importance of sector</td>
<td>important employer</td>
<td>important employer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment development</td>
<td>increasing</td>
<td>decreasing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skills</td>
<td>professional skills</td>
<td>skilled, highly skilled</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workforce</td>
<td>female, ageing</td>
<td>male, ageing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EU social partners</td>
<td>1 trade union, 1 employer organisation</td>
<td>1 trade union, 1 employer organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total number of SSDC outcomes per year (2008-2015)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Share of type 1 and type 2(^7) outcomes as percentage of total outcomes (2008-2015)</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source:* Own compilation.

The metal and hospitals sectors are similar with regard to indicators characterising industrial relations systems (e.g. high membership density in the EU-28), but different with regard to tradition in industrial relations and the structural indicators characterising the sectors (e.g.

\(^7\) Type 1: agreement; type 2: process-oriented text (framework of actions, guidelines, code of conduct), follow-up report; type 3: Joint opinion, declaration, tool. Source: European Commission social dialogue texts database ([http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=521&langId=en](http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=521&langId=en)).
enterprise size, exposedness of sector, services and products produced). The SSDC in the metal sector was launched in 2008. To date, the social partners, IndustriAll and Ceemet have concluded a dozen joint texts, including two tools.

The SSDC in the hospital sector was launched in 2006 and has according to Lethbridge (2011) developed through three evolutionary phases. Since the 2006 launch, the social partners EPSU and HOSPEEM have concluded almost a dozen joint texts, including a social partner directive, a framework of action, guidelines, and a tool. These are complemented by several joint projects which have been undertaken by social partners.

As for observed outcomes, the two sectors produced the same number of outputs during the period 2008-2015 but their outcomes differ in nature and impact on the sector and its employees in the member states. Given the characteristics of the hospitals and metal sectors, they are thus well suited to allow for systematic comparison of factors that foster or hamper effective ESSD dialogue processes and practices and dialogue outcomes.

The selection of the five countries was based on that they represent different industrial relations systems, characterised by different power relations, modes of collective bargaining, degrees to which the social partners are involved in policy matters, and state intervention in union-employer relations (European Commission, 2008: 48). The countries selected thus represent the five main industrial relations systems in established classifications: social partnership (DE), state centred (IT), mixed systems (PL), Nordic or organised corporatism (SE), and liberal pluralism (UK). These differences in national industrial relations systems may be expected to affect the approach and process in ESSD. For example, countries with corporatist and social partnership industrial relations systems may be expected to support coordination of interests and autonomous agreements (DE, SE) while legal standards (directives) may be expected to be the preferred outcome for state centred and mixed-systems (IT, PL). The liberal industrial relations systems may be expected to produce lower interest in standard setting by law or collective bargaining. The five industrial relations systems covered in the country sample therefore represent different institutional traditions and arrangements. However, with regard to the legitimacy of representation (e.g. membership) and governance of bargaining outcomes (e.g. collective bargaining coverage) they are similar within sectors across countries (Bechter, Brandl & Meardi, 2011).

Thus, the selection of sectors and countries as outlined above allows a systematic comparison of the factors that foster or hamper effective dialogue whilst controlling for sector structure,
structure of industrial relations systems and the characteristics of ESSD actors involved in ESSD.

The qualitative study was based on semi-structured interviews. In total, forty interviews were conducted during March 2016 to March 2018. Thirty-one interviews were undertaken at the national sectoral level with the representative social partners in the two sectors (metal and hospitals) and five countries (DE, IT, PL, SE, UK). Nine interviews at the European level with sectoral trade unions and employer organisations (EPSU, HOSPEEM, IndustriAll, Ceemet) and experts of the respective Directorate-General participating in SSDCs in the hospitals and metal sector (see Table 17 in the Appendix).

The interview guidelines developed for the national and European level covered questions related to (see Table 14a-c in Appendix):

- SSDC work programmes and the selection of topics and agenda setting processes and practices
- Capacity of SSDCs to produce dialogue outcomes (e.g. mandating)
- Type of outcomes and the role of actors in reaching SSDC outcomes
- SSDC social dialogue practices and mode of engagement and dialogue between secretariats and national level
- Role of the European Commission
- Monitoring, impact and evaluation of outcomes
- Perceived effectiveness of social dialogue and dialogue outcomes

In addition, the interviews were complemented by participant observation at SSDC meetings (working group and plenary meetings) in the hospital and metal sectors during the period March 2016 to March 2018. A summary of the data sources (primary data collection and secondary data sources) is available in the Appendix (see Table 2).

1.3 Central concepts and definitions of ‘effective’ ESSD

The concept of effective engagement in SSDC needs to be defined in order to discuss what factors hamper or foster it. In the context of ESSD the term ‘effective’ is widely used, however a clear definition of what is meant by ‘effective’ social dialogue is missing and different actors involved in ESSD may have varying views. Regardless of the wide variation
in the interpretation and use of the terms, in this project the investigation and operationalisation of ‘effective dialogue’ and ‘effective’ engagement builds directly on the guidelines used by the European Commission. In this sense, the term ‘effective’ or ‘effectiveness’ in the context of European sectoral social dialogue is used by the European Commission (2010 b) for ‘effective’ representation of social partners engaging in ESSD and ‘effective’ participation in the sense that participants in ESSD have the capacity to negotiate outcomes (European Commission, 1998) and to respond ‘effectively’ to consultations on European Union (EU) policies and initiatives (European Commission 2010b: 6). The term ‘effective’ also appears in the context of ‘effective’ implementation and ‘effective’ impact referring to the capacity of national actors to implement ESSD outcomes and to enhance social dialogue at the national level, especially in the new member states (European Commission, 2010 b: 10). In the following analysis we will use this conceptualization which not only gives us a clear direction but also allows us to derive meaningful operationalisations of variables which we can test.

Accordingly, social partners engaging effectively in ESSD should have adequate structures to represent their members, respond to EU initiatives, identify relevant topics of common interest, negotiate agreements that are representative for several member states and implement outcomes so that they have some impact at national level. Therefore, the investigation aims to identify factors that foster or hamper effective social dialogue and considers a number of potential dimensions including: the economic and institutional structure of sectors and social partner organisations, i.e. trade unions and employer organisations in the European member states (EU-28), the characteristics of the actors engaging in dialogue at the national and European sectoral level, and social dialogue processes.

Hence the aim is to identify differences (variation) between sectors, actors and processes used in ESSD that constitute effective engagement in social dialogue. By engagement we mean any participation and involvement in policy exchange (Crouch & Pizzorno, 1978) between the European level social partner organisations and the respective secretariats and their national sectoral affiliates in the member states. Engagement incorporates any participation in interest representation and involvement in policy exchange that allows e.g. the exchange of information, sharing of good practice, communication and consultation on ESSD issues, and processes to reach common understanding and consensus on policy issues. Actors can engage in this dialogue/exchange process via email or in person at ESSD meetings in Brussels,
taking account of the fact that not all national affiliates of European social partner organisations make use of the opportunity to participate in these meetings.

When it comes to the relationship between effective dialogue and ESSD outcomes, a clear definition is also missing. The potential outcomes of ESSD can take a variety of forms. Depending on the origin and the topic of the initiative, together with the objectives and capacity of social partners to negotiate agreements, outcomes may take the form of:

- Agreements which are implemented either by means of a directive or by the social partners themselves (Article 154 and 155 TFEU),
- process-oriented texts which set out recommendations from the EU level partners to their members and measures to assess the follow-up and impact at the national level, and
- instruments that do not entail any implementation, monitoring and follow-up such as joint opinions providing input to the EU institutions and/or national public authorities, or declarations and tools, directed at the social partners themselves providing practical advice (European Commission, 2012).

References to effective dialogue often rank the different outcomes according to their potential to have an impact and make a difference at the national level (European Commission 2010a: 12). With regard to the effect and impact of ESSD outcomes for the national sectoral level, ‘the most tangible achievements of the EU-level social dialogue, from the point of view of the everyday working lives of employees and employers, are those agreements that have been made legally binding across the Union by Council directives’ (European Commission, 2012: 52). As far as outcomes produced by SSDCs are concerned, research mainly focuses on quantitative outcomes (Pochet, 2005; Degryse & Pochet, 2011; Degryse, 2015) referring to the number of outcomes produced by SSDCs in a certain period or since SSDCs were established. To account for differences in the number and impact of outcomes produced by SSDCs we use two different outcome measures. First, outcomes that entail any implementation, monitoring or follow-up procedures at the national level (type 1 and 2 texts summarised above). Second, the total number of outcomes (type 1 to 3) produced per year by SSDCs in a certain period to account for differences in the ‘effectiveness’ of committees.
2. Indicators of effective ESSD – quantitative analysis

The aim of the quantitative part of the project is to develop a measurement framework to identify relevant indicators that foster or hamper effective social dialogue. The dimensions used in this framework to investigate the effectiveness of ESSD are based on the concepts of effective dialogue set out by the European Commission (cf. 1.3). In addition to the industrial relations dimensions (e.g. industrial relations systems and actors) used by the European Commission we also analyse economic indicators to account for differences in the structure and characteristic of sectors represented in SSDCs. The measurement dimensions are: the economic context of sectors and the institutional structure of social partner organisations in 39 SSDCs and the EU-28, and the characteristic of actors involved in social dialogue at the national and European sectoral level. The research dimensions are operationalised by a set of indicators (cf. 2.1). While the role of the structure of industrial relations systems on effective European social dialogue has been subject to some research (Bechter, Brandl & Meardi, 2011; Bechter, Brandl & Prosser, 2017), the systematic investigation of sector characteristics (e.g. size and structure of sectors) and their role for effective ESSD is new.

Since there is no single definition of ‘effective’ dialogue outcome available (cf. 1.3) we test the effect of economic and industrial relations indicators on two different types of SSDC outcomes based on the typology suggested by the European Commission (2012). First, the share of outcomes or text that entails any follow-up at national level as percentage of total outcomes in the period from 2008 - 2015. Second, we use the number of annual outcomes produced by SSDCs in the period from 2008 - 2015. While the former accounts for differences in the nature and type of texts produced by social partners in SSDCs the latter controls for the ‘activity’ of SSDCs over an eight year period. We investigate outcomes for the period from 2008 - 2015 taking into account multi-annual planning and work programmes of SSDCs.
2.1 Analytical framework for empirical analysis

2.1.1 Economic indicators

Economic indicators are included in the framework because globalization has facilitated structural change with different effects on employment and the presence of very large, often multinational companies in different industries (Bechter, Brandl & Meardi, 2011). Sectors not only differ in their structure (e.g. employment by enterprise size) but also their economic importance. The number of companies and employment varies between sectors and within member states (Eurostat, 2017; Eurofound, 2018). How the economic structure of sectors affects SSDCs is under-researched. To account for structural differences between sectors and member states we integrate this dimension into the analysis of effective SSDC outcomes.

Structural indicators that may affect ESSD are e.g. the size of sectors measured by the number of employers and employees in a sector. These indicators represent the membership base of trade unions and employer organisations which are key factors affecting power relations between those organisations (Bieling & Schulten, 2001). The size of sectors also influences the financial resource available to social partner organisations, and their legitimacy to represent interests at European level (Schmitter & Streeck, 1999). With regard to ESSD, we assume that the larger the sector and the greater the potential number of employees that are affected by EU policies and initiatives the more likely sufficient resources are (made) available to social partners to engage in SSDCs. A large workforce can promote economic growth and employment, and the size of sectors is also expected to influence the political power and impact of social partners (Ebbinghaus & Visser, 1996; Traxler, 2005). Furthermore, sectoral employment development, i.e. the increase or decline in employment, may also influence the power relations of social partners and potential ESSD outcomes (Hein & Schulten, 2004).

In internationally highly integrated and interdependent industries power relations are influenced by the amount of competition employer face. Especially social partners in small export dependent countries may feel greater need to engage in ESSD and policy making. For example, the Nordic countries, because they fear that European regulations may undermine their national bargaining autonomy, recognize the need for a common Nordic position with regard to European policies (Andersen, 2006: 29; Larsson et al., 2016). Thus, engagement in
ESSD is expected to be greater in exposed industries and industries affected by EU regulations compared to rather domestic industries (e.g. Leisink, 2002; De Boer, Benedictus & Van Der Meer, 2005).

There is striking variation in the size of enterprises and the concentration of employment in large enterprises across the 39 SSDCs and member states (Eurostat, 2017). The interests and problems faced by SMEs are different to those of large enterprises. Production in large companies is more capital intensive, they have easier access to capital and greater flexibility to move production abroad to take advantage of lower labour costs and favourable labour regulations (Traxler, 2005). Differences in the structure and composition of sectors, e.g. when SSDCs are composed of large and small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs), affect the effectiveness of social partners in representing the interests of their members (Behrens & Helfen, 2009; Traxler, 2005). Interest heterogeneity is assumed to be greater in sectors characterised by heterogeneous enterprise structures across the member states and may negatively affect the ability to formulate generally agreed positions in SSDCs. However, when a significant share of employment is concentrated on few enterprises (e.g. large MNCs) this is assumed to increase the capacity to lobby successfully for a policy outcome (Behrens & Helfen, 2009). Otherwise, heterogeneous size structure and economically weaker SMEs may be used as argument on the employer side why outcomes that entail any commitment at the national level are not visible (too ‘costly’) for a SSDC (ibid). Thus, the more homogenous the employment size structure of a sector and the more similar the challenges faced in a sector across the member states, the more likely is cooperation and coordination of policies in SSDCs between social partners (Baumann & Braendle, 2017).

2.1.2 Industrial relations indicators

The traditional industrial relations indicators used to measure the ability of social partners to conclude collective agreements at the national level are e.g. membership strength and fragmentation or potential conflict between social partners, bargaining level and coverage, and involvement of social partners in sector related policy issues (e.g. Traxler et al., 2001). The same indicators are hypothesised to be relevant at EU level (e.g. Keller & Sörries, 1998), especially for SSDC outcomes that entail any commitment from social partners at the national level (e.g. the implementation of SSDCs outcomes or any follow-up activities). With
regard to industrial relations indicators, the greater the homogeneity of sectoral industrial relations systems (e.g. mode of collective bargaining, collective bargaining coverage, number of trade unions and employer organisations) across the member states the greater the potential to coordinate policies at EU level (Bechter, Brandl & Meardi, 2011). Indicators measuring the capacity of social partners to coordinate interests and negotiate outcomes are the mode of collective bargaining used in a sector and collective bargaining coverage as measure for the governance of bargaining outcomes (Traxler & Brandl, 2011). The indicator mode of collective bargaining measures the relevance of single-employer bargaining (SEB) and multi-employer bargaining (MEB) in a sector (Traxler et al., 2001).

Hence, the indicators used to measure and compare engagement in social dialogue between actors at national and European level are: the number of trade unions and employer organisations engaged in collective wage bargaining at national level, the number of trade unions and employer organisations involved in policy decisions at national level, and the number of trade unions and employer organisations affiliated to European sectoral social partner organisations. To measure strength and legitimacy of social partners representing their members in SSDCs we use the share of trade union/employer organisations that are affiliated to European sectoral social partner organisations compared to the total number of trade union collective bargaining at the national level. This indicator is included into the analysis since not all social partners that engage in collective bargaining at national level are affiliated to the EU level (Eurofound, 2018) and those not engaged in ESSD may not feel bound by SSDC outcomes. Accordingly, we expect ESSD to be more effective if both sides, i.e. trade unions and employers of a country are engaged in ESSD and the share of trade unions and employers’ participating in SSDCs is more even. The capacity to define a common SSDC work programme and/or position on e.g. EU policies is assumed to be influenced by the experience of social partners in both collective bargaining and involvement in policy making at national level (Traxler et al., 2001).

Further indicators used in the analysis are the ‘sector-relatedness’ of the membership domain of social partner organisations (Eurofound, 2018) and the membership structure or composition of members represented by social partners in SSDCs (Traxler, 1993). The narrower the domain and the more homogenous the structure of social partner organisations the easier it is for their members to identify themselves with the organisations (Offe & Wiesenthal, 1980). The broader the domain and the less sector-related social partner organisations are the more heterogeneous the interests and the more difficult the articulation
and coordination of interests in SSDCs (Schmitter, 1981). It is assumed that a SSDC’s
capacity to formulate common policies depends on how fragmented and particularistic their
internal structures are. To summarize, the more homogenous the characteristic of social
partners engaging in SSDCs, and the more congruent or SSDC related the domain of social
partners (Keller & Sörries, 1998), the more effective we assume European sectoral dialogue
processes and outcomes to be.

2.1.3 European level indicators

In the case of European sectoral level actors, the indicators used to account for differences
between European social partner organisations and representation in SSDCs are the number
of European sectoral trade unions and employer organisations representing the affiliates in
the member states in SSDCs. The smaller the number of EU social partner organisations or
the lower the intra-sectoral fragmentation (competition) of EU representation the easier
unifying interests will be in SSDCs. Another indicator is the mandating mode used by those
organisations. Established mandating rules and processes are expected to support effective
dialogue in SSDCs (Eurofound, 2016).

2.2 Research dimensions and indicators

To measure the influence of the indicators outlined above on social dialogue outcomes, we
differentiate between two outcomes taking account of differences in the traditional
classification of texts (European Commission, 2010) and number of outcomes produced by
SSDCs. The aim is to test the relationship, as hypothesised above, between the indicators
(economic and institutional structure and characteristic of actors) and two different outcomes.
The first outcome measures the share of texts that entail any follow-up and commitment from
social partners at national level produced by SSDCs in the period 2008 - 2015. The second
outcome variable measures the ‘activity’ of SSDCs based on average\(^8\) annual outcomes

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\(^8\) Average annual outcome for an eight year period is used to take account of more recent developments in
SSDCs. Differences in the average annual outcome in the period from 2008 - 2015 and 1998 - 2015 are only
observed for five SSDCs. The average annual outcome was slightly higher for the SSDCs in FOOTW, GAS,
and GRAPH in the period from 1998 - 2015 and was lower in that period for INLAND.
produced by SSDCs in the period 2008 - 2015. Using the average output produced by SSDCs (i.e. any text) is appropriate since studies revealed that ‘there is no obvious gradual move towards more binding commitments in terms of follow-up’ (Dufresne, Degryse & Pochet, 2006: 94).

Building on the considerations on potentially relevant dimensions for the effectiveness of SSDCS (cf. 1.3) and their operationalisation (cf. 2.1) we were able to derive 22 indicators for our empirical analysis. See the list of indicators in the Appendix (Table 4) for details on each indicator and how the indicator is operationalised for the following empirical analysis.

In the derivation of the 22 indicators we adopted an explorative and open analytical process so that the potential relevance of any indicator a priori was not ruled out. This strategy on the consideration of indicators has the advantage that the likelihood of an important indicator being missed is minimized, but has the disadvantage that some factors may not necessarily be relevant for the European context of social dialogue. The identification of empirically relevant indicators is not only informed deductively by the guidelines for effective dialogue by the European Commission and literature but also inductively based on observations and exploratory data analysis. Given that the ESSD is (still) a largely unexplored territory of research, this open explorative research approach has considerable merits and seems particularly appropriate.

The aim is to test if differences in the structure of national social partners as defined by the European Commission (cf. 1.3) have an impact on effective ESSD. Indicators traditionally used to assess the strength and legitimacy of social partners are trade union density and employer density, in the ESSD context we use ‘number of social partners affiliated to the EU-level’ since only representative organisations which relate to a specific sector and are an integral part of national social partners systems as defined by the European Commission (1998), are entitled to engage in ESSD.

2.2.1 Summary of indicators

The dimension ‘structural characteristic of sectors’ is measured by indicators such as: size of sectoral employment in a country, heterogeneity of sectoral employment across countries (i.e. variation in the relative importance of a sector), change in employment in the sector (e.g. are
sectors increasing or declining in size), number of employers in the sector, share of large enterprises ($\geq 250$ employees) as percentage of total enterprises in the sector, and the heterogeneity in the size of establishments in the sector (i.e. whether most employees are employed in large enterprises or SMEs). To account for structural differences across the member states in sectors, we test the role of sector structure similarity on dialogue outcomes. Thus, similar structures and characteristics of enterprise size in the member states are expected to foster effective ESSD.

The indicators used to test the role of national sectoral industrial systems in the member states on effective social dialogue are: the number of trade unions engaging in collective bargaining in the member states, the mode of collective bargaining in the sector and collective bargaining coverage. To measure social partner engagement in ESSD we use the indicators: number of trade unions and employer organisations affiliated to European sectoral social partners in the sector and the share of trade unions and employer organisations as a percentage of total trade unions and employer organisations in a country affiliated at the EU-level. We also test if asymmetries in the representation of trade unions/employer organisations in SSDCs (measured as share of trade unions and employer engaging in SSDCs) do have an impact on effective social dialogue. Furthermore, we use ‘domain congruence’ to measure whether the domain of trade unions and employer organisations matches with the domain of a certain SSDC. Thus, we assume that the more congruent the domain of social partners and the domain of SSDCs, the more effective is the social dialogue.

With regard to the characteristics of European sectoral social partner organisations, the number of European sectoral trade unions and employer organisations are used to measure competition among organisations representing the sector in SSDCs, the mode of mandating measures the capacity of social partners to act as representative of affiliates in the member states. We assume that the lower the number of EU social partner organisations represented in SSDCs and when EU social partners have a legitimate mandate social dialogue is more effective.

We test the indicators that have the potential to foster or hamper effective ESSD for two outcomes. First, SSDC outcomes which entail any follow-up at the national level (agreements and process oriented text (e.g. framework of actions, guidelines, code of conduct), follow-up report or joint opinion, declaration, and tools which do not entail any implementation or follow-up at the national level (European Commission, 2012) in the period 2008 - 2015.
Second, we test the relationship between the above indicators and the number of outcomes produced by SSDCs per year in the period 2008-2015 to test the effectiveness of ESSD.

2.3 Empirical analysis and results

Against the background that our unit of analysis are the 39 SSDCs, the relatively large number of 22 potentially relevant indicators constrains the methods we can use in order to identify the indicators that matter and are most relevant. In order to make any meaningful inferences we applied a two stage analysis in order to reduce the number of potentially relevant indicators and identify those most important indicators and factors which may explain SSDCs outcomes.

We use an explorative research approach to identify relevant indicators. In the first step we use bivariate linear regression analysis to reduce the number of indicators. This is followed by a Principal Component Analysis (PCA) used to identify commonalities among indicators and to reduce the number of relevant indicators further. Finally, we applied a multivariate regression analysis in order to examine the conditional explanatory capacity of groups of indicators identified with the PCA for the effectiveness of ESSD and SSDCs outcomes.

2.3.1 Exploratory indicator analysis

In the first stage we make use of bivariate linear regression analysis in which we use our two effectiveness indicators (outcome variables) as our dependent variables and each of the 22 indicators as independent variables (e.g. Greene, 2012). All indicators which show a substantial relationship on the basis of a meaningful correlation (i.e. we use a correlation of at least 20% as selection criterion) are then selected for the further analysis. Thus, on the basis of this bivariate regression analysis, as a first step we identify and organise all indicators which are (empirically) unrelated with the two outcome variables. Using a ‘moderate’ selection criterion in the first step has the advantage that only indicators that are completely unrelated showing a very low potential of relationship are not considered in the further analysis. This first step reduction of indicators leads to a relatively high number of indicators.
and more sophisticated analyses are still problematic (e.g. a multivariate regression analysis). Therefore, a further reduction in the number of potentially relevant indicators is required. We aim to reduce the number of indicators further by applying a principle component (PCA) analysis (i.e. factor analysis) in order to identify redundancies among the indicators by grouping them into common underlying factors (e.g., Jolliffe, 2002). On the basis of this reduction we then run a multiple regression analysis in order to investigate further if there are any (sets) of indicators which can systematically explain the two outcome variables, Against the background that our unit of analysis are the 39 SSDCs and the number of observations is relatively low, we support our multivariate regression analysis with bootstrap tests (e.g. Greene, 2012) in order to investigate the robustness and reliability of our results and the conclusions we draw.

2.3.1.1 Results for outcome 1 ‘follow-up texts’ in the period 2008 – 2015’

As outlined above, the first step in our analysis is the bivariate regression analysis which we use to eliminate all indicators which are not (empirically) related to our dependent, i.e. outcome variables of effective ESSD. The results of this analysis are shown in Figure 1a-c and 2a-f for ‘follow-up outcomes’ and ‘annual outcomes’ (Appendix). In the Figures we report the indicators which are shown to be substantially related and meaningfully correlated, i.e. at least 20%.

- Insert Figure 1a-c (Appendix) about here -

Figure 1a-c reveals three indicators suggesting that only three indicators are substantially correlated with ‘follow-up outcomes’. The first indicator (a) is the heterogeneity in the size of establishments in the sector and across countries. As can be seen, the slope of the regression line is negative which indicates that the more heterogeneous the enterprise size in SSDCs, the fewer observed follow-up agreements. However, vice versa, this means that the more homogeneous or similar the structure of the companies is in terms of the number of employees employed in enterprises, the more follow-up agreements can be found. Sectors with follow-up agreements showing low heterogeneity of enterprise size in the sector across countries are e.g. inland water transport, hospitals, commerce, hairdressing, paper, telecommunication, audio-visual, railway, road transport and chemical.
The second indicator (b) is the predominant mode of collective wage bargaining in the sector which has a positive slope, meaning that the more important multi-employer bargaining (MEB) in the entire member states is the more follow-up agreements can be found. In all sectors for which follow-up outcomes have been concluded the combination of company and sector bargaining is typical. With regard to the relative importance of SEB vs MEB, in the catering, chemical, electricity, hairdressing, hospital, sugar, paper and railway sectoral or MEB bargaining enjoys greater importance than company level bargaining.

The third indicator (c) is the average (across countries) collective bargaining coverage of the sector. We observe a negative slope or correlation between coverage and follow-up outcomes, which means that the lower collective bargaining coverage at sectoral national level is the more follow-up agreements in SSDCs. Sectors with below average collective bargaining coverage are audio-visual, hairdressing, sugar, railway, sea fisheries, and telecommunication. The negative relationship between collective bargaining coverage and follow-up outcomes may be explained by the fact that social partners seek access to ESSD policy making so as to compensate for rather low governance of collective bargaining at the national level (Bechter, Brandl & Prosser, 2017).

2.3.1.2 Results for outcome 2 ‘annual number of texts in the period 2008 – 2015’

To summarise, the first step in our analysis showed that ‘only’ three indicators were identified to be empirically related with the number of ‘follow-up outcomes’. We proceed with our second outcome variable, i.e. the number of ‘annual outcomes’ for which the results are shown in Figure 2a-f (Appendix).

- Insert Figure 2a-f (Appendix) about here -

As can be seen in Figure 2a-f in this part of our analysis we were able to identify six indicators which are empirically related with ‘annual outcomes’, and therefore the number of indicators is higher than for ‘follow-up outcomes’. In more detail, we find that the average number of enterprises per sector (a), the average size of the sector in the member states (b), the average number of employers organisations in the sector engaging in collective wage bargaining (c), the average number of trade unions engaging in collective wage bargaining (d), the average number of trade unions which are members of a European Sectoral social
partner organisation (i.e. national trade unions affiliated to European sectoral level) (e), as well as the congruence of the domain of national trade unions with the scope of business of the SSDC (f) are positively related to the number of outcomes produced, i.e. ‘annual outcomes’ per year in the period 2008 - 2015.

The first indicator (a) average number of enterprises indicates the size and fragmentation of employer organisations which does increase with the number of employers. The most fragmented sectors are agriculture, commerce, construction, hairdressing, the food service industry preparing and serving food and beverages (horeca), metal, road transport and sea fisheries. With regard to (b), the size of employment in the sectors as share of total employment in the member states, construction is the largest sector with an average employment share of 7% in the member states, followed by agriculture, horeca and metal with 5%, road transport 3%, hospital and railway 2% and cleaning, electricity, hairdressing, private security, telecommunication and temporary agency work with 1%. With regard to indicator (c), average number of employers engaging in collective wage bargaining in the sector, in the sectors inland water transport, insurance, sugar, postal and courier services, railway, sea fisheries, ship building, tanning and leather and telecommunication the number of employers engaging in collective wage bargaining is below average. Not in all member states employer organisations do engage in collective bargaining (Eurofound, 2018). However, we observe a positive relationship between the number of employers engaging in collective bargaining in the member states and the number of annual SSDC outcomes produced in the period 2008 - 2015. As regards indicator (d), the average number of trade unions engaging in collective bargaining, the number of trade unions collective bargaining is highest in the sectors audio visual, civil aviation, education, hospitals, metal, ports, railway and telecommunication. Regarding indicator (e), average number of trade unions affiliated to European sectoral unions, the average number of affiliates in the member states is three or more in the sectors civil aviation, education, electricity, live performance, ports and road transport. As regards the indicator (f), the congruence of the domain of national trade unions with the scope of the business activity of SSDCs sectional overlap (i.e. the domain or scope of trade unions/employer organisations covers part of the sector as well as parts of one or more other sectors) is the predominant type of trade union domain and only in chemical; in civil aviation and education the category overlap (i.e. the domain or scope of trade unions/employer organisations covers the sector as well as parts of one or more other sectors) is more frequent. Though all indicators are positively related to the number of ‘annual
outcomes’ in the period 2008 - 2015 they are not significantly correlated with the outcome variable.

To summarise, we find that three indicators are substantially correlated with ‘follow-up outcomes’ and six variables with ‘annual outcomes’. Interestingly, there is no overlap between the two groups of indicators, although it might be possible that the same indicator is able to explain both variables. Given the fact that both outcome variables appear to be correlated by different sets of indicators provides us with some early initial evidence that the two outcome variables are different, in the sense that their determinants are not the same. This indicates that the reasons why in some SSDCs more (or fewer) follow-up agreements are produced, are different to those for the production of outcomes more generally.

2.3.2 Identifying commonalities among indicators

However, when looking at the different indicators, especially the six indicators in Figure 2a – f for ‘annual outcomes’, we see that some indicators refer to similar concepts, e.g. on the number of actors, which could imply that some of the indicators capture and explain a similar (common) sub-dimension. In order to investigate this further and to identify commonalities among the explanatory power of indicators and potentially reduce the number of relevant indicators further we applied, in a second step, a PCA. The aim of using the PCA is to combine related indicators (e.g. the number of trade unions), and focus on uncorrelated or independent indicators which then gives us a smaller and more focused set of indicators (i.e. factors) that explain the two outcome variables. Against the background that the number of observations is 39 (i.e. 39 SSDCs), a more insightful analyses will improve the interpretation of the key determinants of effective social dialogue and increase the quality of the estimation. Table 5 gives an overview of the results of the PCA.

As can be seen in Table 5, the PCA resulted in four different factors, i.e. groups of indicators. As a result of the PCA we are now able to reduce the number of potential relevant indicators to four main dimensions and groups of indicators (i.e. factors that foster or hamper SSDC outcomes). The first factor we identified maps the characteristic of employers and is composed of three indicators, i.e. by the average number of enterprises, average size of the sector and average number of employer collective wage bargaining. The second factor also
consists of three indicators, i.e. average number of trade union collective bargaining, average number of affiliated trade unions (affiliated to EU sectoral-level) and domain congruence of trade unions. This factor maps the characteristics of trade unions represented in SSDCs. The third factor consists of only one single indicator which is the homogeneity of employees employed in large enterprises which is an indicator completely uncorrelated with any other factor or indicators. The fourth factor consists of two indicators which both map characteristics of the national collective bargaining systems (i.e. mode of collective bargaining and collective bargaining coverage).

Table 5. Grouping of indicators according to common factors.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor 1</th>
<th>Factor 2</th>
<th>Factor 3</th>
<th>Factor 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Employer representation</td>
<td>Trade union representation</td>
<td>Homogeneity of establishments</td>
<td>Bargaining systems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Average number of enterprises per sector</td>
<td>• Average number of trade unions engaging in collective wage bargaining</td>
<td>• Homogeneity of the number of employees employed in large establishments in sector across countries</td>
<td>• Average collective bargaining coverage in sector</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Average size of sector in country (relative share in country)</td>
<td>• Average number of trade unions affiliated to European sectoral trade unions</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Predominant mode of collective wage bargaining in sector</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Average number of employers in sector engaging in collective wage bargaining</td>
<td>• Congruence of domain of national trade unions with the SSDC</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: Identification of the number of factors on basis of an eigenvalue of 1.

2.3.3 Model to analyse the explanatory capacity of indicators

On the basis of the information about the relevance of the four factors and from the bivariate regression we now proceed with our final step in the analysis and apply a multivariate regression analysis in order to consider the conditional explanatory capacity of groups of indicators for the effectiveness of ESSD and SSDCs outcomes. As regards our modelling
strategy we investigate a number of specifications for our two dependent variables, i.e. for ‘follow-up outcomes’ and ‘annual outcomes’ (Table 6).

We start our analysis for the number of ‘follow-up outcomes’ and then turn to ‘annual outcomes’. We know based on the bivariate regression (cf. section 2.3.1.1) that ‘heterogeneity of enterprise size’, ‘bargaining coverage’ and ‘bargaining mode’ are correlated with ‘follow-up outcomes’ and therefore all three variables enter our first model (I). However, we also know from the PCA that ‘bargaining mode’ and ‘bargaining coverage’ reflect the same phenomenon which we test in a second model (II) based on a reduced specification by using only ‘bargaining coverage’ which we found to be more highly correlated with ‘follow-up outcomes’ than ‘mode of bargaining’.

Testing a reduced and therefore more parsimonious model helps us to improve the estimation quality even though both models are already relatively parsimonious. In the next step we apply the same modelling strategy for ‘annual outcomes’ and test a model which includes all indicators found to be empirically correlated based on the bivariate regression (III). As this model includes six variables we also make use of the information provided by the PCA. In contrast to the model addressing ‘follow-up outcomes’, selecting a more parsimonious model makes sense as the six indicators represent two distinct groups, i.e. factors. Therefore, we select from each of the two factor groups the indicator which showed the highest correlation in the bivariate analysis and test this parsimonious model (IV). Table 6 shows the estimation results of models (I) to (IV).

Further models have been tested. These tests included a larger set of indicators including indicators which were found to be associated with only one dependent variable. We also tested the effects of indicators which were excluded from the bivariate analysis based on the threshold set. These further tests were guided by theoretical considerations but also based on systematic stepwise bottom-up and top-down indicator inclusion/exclusion tests. In addition, we investigated the robustness of our results further by systematically excluding SSDCs in order to test if the results are driven or biased by one or a few sectors. All these further tests confirm the results reported in the Table 6 and therefore we concentrate in the following discussion on models (I) to (IV).
Table 6. The indicators of effective ESSD: multivariate regression results.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>(I)</th>
<th>(II)</th>
<th>(III)</th>
<th>(IV)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Constant</strong></td>
<td>.329** (.160)</td>
<td>- .026 (.093)</td>
<td>- .453 (.714)</td>
<td>- .119 (.432)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>[-.018; .816]</td>
<td>[-.157; .159]</td>
<td>[-2.367; 1.191]</td>
<td>[-1.264; .725]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Factor 3: Homogeneity of establishments</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘heterogeneity enterprise size’</td>
<td>-.532** (.240)</td>
<td>-.529** (.259)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>[-1.031; -.117]</td>
<td>[-.928; -.106]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Factor 4: Bargaining systems</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘bargaining coverage’</td>
<td>-.676** (.256)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>[-1.436; -.139]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘bargaining mode’</td>
<td>.425*** (.122)</td>
<td>.417*** (.131)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>[.091; .606]</td>
<td>[.036; .570]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Factor 1: Employer representation</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘number of enterprises’</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>.065 (.066)</td>
<td>.060 (.043)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>[-.123; .254]</td>
<td>[.015; .164]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘sector size’</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>.879 (8.307)</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>[-18.298; 18.448]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘number of employers bargaining’</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-.048 (.172)</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>[.517; .345]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Factor 2: Trade union representation</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘number of trade unions’</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-.040 (.108)</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>[-.358; .192]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘number of affiliated trade unions’</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>.299 (.246)</td>
<td>.267* (.134)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>[.301; .874]</td>
<td>[.055; .653]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘SSDC domain congruence of trade unions’</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>.283 (.380)</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>[.598; .917]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(R^2)</td>
<td>.382</td>
<td>.259</td>
<td>.163</td>
<td>.146</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Notes:** The number of observations is 39 and reflects the 39 SSDCs. OLS estimates of unstandardized coefficient. Standard errors in parenthesis and bootstrap lower/upper confidence interval in squared brackets. Bootstrap results are based on 1000 bootstrap samples (95 per cent confidence interval). * = significant at 90 per cent; ** = significant at 95 per cent; *** = significant at 99 per cent. Source: Own compilation.
As can be seen in Table 6 in models (I) and (II) we find significant estimates for all our indicators explaining ‘follow-up outcomes’. Three indicators, heterogeneity in enterprise size, the predominant mode of collective bargaining and average collective bargaining coverage in a sector are empirically correlated with ‘follow-up outcomes’. The significance of the indicators is also robust independent of whether we include both indicators which reflect factor 4, i.e. the characteristics of the collective bargaining system.

As regards our models for ‘annual outcomes’ we find no significant estimates for the indicators in model (III) which is based on all relevant indicators. Thus, not one single coefficient is significant while in the parsimonious model (IV), which is based on the indicator which showed the highest explanatory power in the bivariate regression, we find indicator ‘average number of affiliated trade unions’ to be significant and only if we are accepting a relatively low significance standard. By looking at the bootstrap confidence intervals the reliability of the significances is confirmed.

2.4 Discussion and Summary

Starting with the first outcome, a negative relationship is found between the measure for sector heterogeneity and outcomes produced in SSDCs that entail any follow-up and commitment from social partners at national level. Outcomes that entail any follow-up at national level have been concluded in sectors characterised by either SMEs (e.g. hairdressing) or sectors characterised by rather big employers (e.g. hospitals). Thus, the more heterogeneous the enterprise size across member states in SSDCs, i.e. the mix of employment in small and large enterprises, the less likely are outcomes that entail any follow-up at national level. Heterogeneity of enterprise size is high if the sector is composed of both SMEs and large enterprises and is low if the sector consists mainly of either SMEs or large enterprises. Our results support the assumption that SSDCs represented by homogenous enterprise size structures are more successful in unifying interests, i.e. reach consensus on goals and processes and concluding outcomes that entail any commitment from social partners at national level (Schmitter, 1981). The findings support the assumption that the more homogenous the employment size structure of a sector and the more similar the challenges faced in a sector across the member states, the more likely is cooperation and coordination of policies in SSDCs between social partners (Baumann & Braendle, 2017).
As shown in the bivariate regression analysis a significant positive relationship is found for the indicator *mode of collective bargaining* and SSDC outcomes. The bargaining mode observed in SSDCs with follow-up outcomes is a combination of SEB and MEB. The combination of SEB and MEB is the predominant bargaining mode in 50 percent of all SSDCs, the positive relationship between the indicator *collective bargaining mode* and *follow-up outcomes* supports the assumption that the presence of sector level bargaining has a positive effect on the type of SSDC outcomes, i.e. positive effect in so far as outcomes entail any follow-up and commitment from social partners at the national level. Thus coordination of interests between sectoral social partners in the member states positively affects the coordination of interests at EU sectoral level (Kohl & Platzer, 2003; Marginson, 2014). With regard to the effectiveness of social dialogue, the existence of sectoral coordination practices in the member states fosters SSDC outcomes that entail follow-up commitments of social partners in the member states.

Regarding the third significant indicator, we observe a negative relationship between *average collective bargaining coverage* in the sector and *follow-up outcomes*. Even though or because of the mix of SEB and MEB is the typical mode of collective bargaining in the sector average collective bargaining coverage and the governance of outcomes is rather low. The question is if, because of the rather low governance of collective agreements in the member states, social partners pursue the interests of their members at the European level respectively in SSDCs to compensation for this weakness (Bechter, Brandl & Prosser, 2017).

EU-wide coordination of fragmented, heterogeneous interests is burdened by considerable collective action problems (Olson, 2009). If heterogeneity of sectoral enterprise size is high, SSDCs may use SMEs as excuse e.g. for rejecting European policy initiatives or tackling issues in SSDCs. Outcomes that entail any follow-ups in the member states are usually opposed with reference to the different economic needs of SMEs and lack of resources to apply those regulations (Behrens & Helfen, 2009:10). In contrast, large organisations may oppose EU wide regulations referring to the greater integration of large companies in international/global markets and the need for flexibility (e.g. Marginson & Sisson, 1996). Large companies are often multinational firms, less interested in EU wide regulations since they are able to implement flexible work practices in host countries through their internal structure (Meardi et al. 2009).
With regard to the second outcome variable we did use to measure the ‘activity’ of SSDCs (i.e. annual SSDC outcome in the period 2008 - 2015) only one indicator was significant and only if we accept a relatively low significance standard. The results indicate that the indicator ‘average number of affiliated trade unions’ may facilitate ESSD.

Different to SSDC outcomes or texts that entail any follow-up and commitment form the social partners at the national reaching any text does not depend on any structural prerequisites. Only 10.46 percent of all texts produced in the period 2008 - 2015 (European Commission) entail any follow-up at the national level, and approx. 90 percent of the text are type three texts such as joint opinion, declarations or tools (ibid). Though structural indicators are able to explain differences in the nature of outcomes produced by SSDCs, industrial relations indicators are not able to explain differences in the ‘activity’ of SSDCs. The topics tackled in SSDCs and sector context may be better explanations for differences in the activity of SSDCs.

The number of texts produced in the period from 2008 - 2015 may depend on the topics tackled in ESSD. The more political the topics tackled in SSDCs (e.g. EU industry policies) the more likely member interests are realised at the European level (European Commission, 2017). Furthermore, the more political the topics covered by SSDCs the more attractive employer organisations may become to members and the greater the potential to attract new members (Streeck, 1990; Behrens & Helfen, 2009).

Economic conditions may often be the driving force behind coordination (Traxler et al., 2008). However, when outcomes matter consensus building in SSDCs is more difficult and interest differences assume more weight in heterogeneous (Streeck, 1990), especially when EU wide regulation of employment issues ought not to entail any competitive disadvantages for international companies which are more interest in policies that give rise to competitive advantage (Traxler, 1996).

The economic context will also affect trade unions interest in EU wide regulations. In sectors embedded in international, competitive markets for trade unions engaging in traditional business interests (e.g. production and trade policies) may become an important strategic choice (Streeck, 1990). From an employee perspective, the more political the topics tackled in SSDCs the more likely trade unions may be tempted to share business interests (i.e. interests of big employers) rather than the overarching interests of employees working in the sector (Streeck & Schmitter, 1991). In competitive sectors employees more likely will share
the product market or business interests of employers and not support any policies that have a negative influence on the competitiveness of their employer (De Boer, Benedictus & Van Der Meer, 2005). Generally, both trade unions and employers prefer less competition and a strong economy and these common interests may explain why trade unions and employer organisations lobby jointly governments or EU bodies for regulations that enhance the market power of employers e.g. by restricting competition (ibid).

There is a general power asymmetry between trade unions and employers since employers can choose where they prefer to realise their interests either at company level or, depending on their political influence, state or European level (Traxler, 1993). When a sector is characterised by large enterprises and concentration of employment, this can impact on the political power social partners can exert and their representation strategies (Behrens & Helfen, 2009:10). Hence, sectors characterised by (few) large enterprises are assumed to have greater capacity to lobby successfully for policy outcomes (ibid).

The empirical analysis showed that SSDC outcomes that entail any follow-up at national level depend on structural indicators such as homogeneity of employment size, collective bargaining mode and low bargaining coverage in the member states so to compensate for rather low governance of collective bargaining at the national level. In contrast a SSDCs ‘activity’ may be facilitated by the number of trade unions affiliated to the EU-level, but cannot be explained by structural indicators. Given the predominance of texts (approx. 90 percent) that entail no commitment and follow-up at national level knowledge about ESSD the impact of SSDC outcomes in the member states is rather low or absent at all.

2.4.1 Summary

The aim of the quantitative part of the project is to develop a measurement framework to identify relevant indicators that foster or hamper effective social dialogue. The dimensions used in this framework to investigate the effectiveness of ESSD are based on the concepts of effective dialogue set out by the European Commission (cf. 1.3). In addition to the industrial relations dimensions (e.g. industrial relations systems and actors) used by the European Commission we also analyse economic factors to account for differences in the structure and characteristic of sectors represented in SSDCs. While the role of the structure of industrial
relations systems on effective European social dialogue has been subject to some research (Bechter, Brandl & Meardi, 2011; Bechter, Brandl & Prosser, 2017), the systematic investigation of sector characteristics (e.g. size and structure of sectors) and their role for effective ESSD is new.

Since there is no single definition of ‘effective’ dialogue outcome available (cf. 1.3) we test the effect of economic and industrial relations indicators on two different types of SSDC outcomes. First, the share of outcomes or text that entails any follow-up at national level as percentage of total outcomes in the period 2008 - 2015. Second, we use the number of annual outcomes produced by SSDCs in the period 2008 - 2015. While the former accounts for differences in the nature and type of texts produced by social partners in SSDCs the latter controls for the ‘activity’ of SSDCs over an eight year period. We investigate outcomes for the period 2008 - 2015 taking into account multi-annual planning and work programmes of SSDCs.

In the derivation of the indicators we adopted an explorative and open analytical research approach to identify 22 indicators. In the first step we use bivariate linear regression analysis to reduce the number of indicators. This is followed by a Principal Component Analysis (PCA) used to identify commonalities among indicators and to reduce the number of relevant indicators further. Finally, we applied a multivariate regression analysis in order to examine the conditional explanatory capacity of groups of indicators identified with the PCA for the effectiveness of ESSD and SSDCs outcomes.

To summarise the result of the quantitative analysis, we were able to identify two main factors and three indicators. The indicators identified in the literature which were expected to foster the effectiveness of SSDCs and promote outcomes that entail any follow-up in the member states are the economic structure of sectors measured by the homogeneity of enterprise size sector wide bargaining in the member states and when bargaining coverage is low. As regards the indicators and factors that were proposed to explain differences in the ‘number of outcomes’ our analysis showed that there seem to be no indicators or factors identified in the literature which are able to explain systematically the activity of SSDCs measured by the annual number of texts produced by SSDCs in the period 2008 – 2015. There is only weak evidence that ‘average number of affiliated trade unions’ might be one indicator which potentially has a positive effect on the number of outcomes. Apart from the latter our analysis clearly showed that the number of texts produced by SSDCs does not
appear to be driven or influenced by any of our indicators even though we considered a high number of potentially relevant indicators.

Independent from the results for the outcome variable ‘annual number of SSDC outcome’ used to measure ‘activity’ of SSDCs it has to be underlined that our outcome variable ‘follow-up outcomes’ can be considered to be more relevant for the effectiveness of ESSD and we were able to identify three indicators that are important: 1) ‘the heterogeneity of enterprise size’ across member states in SSDCs, 2) ‘mode of collective bargaining’ and 3), the negative relationship between ‘bargaining coverage’ in the sector and follow-up outcomes, which gives hope that social partner may use ESSD to compensate for national weaknesses in the governance of bargaining outcomes.

2.4.2 Examples of non-significant indicators

Below we discuss indicators that were identified in the literature as potential indicators for effective social dialogue but did not proof to be significant in the empirical analysis. We start with the indicator congruence between the membership domain of social partner organisation and the scope of business activities of SSDCs. The assumption that greater congruence between the membership domain of social partner organisations and the scope of business activities of SSDCs positively influences SSDC outcomes is not the case in this study. Our data show that the most common type of trade union/employer organisation domain of the 39 SSDCs is sectional overlap i.e. the domain covers only parts of the business activities and employees of the sector as well as parts of one or more other sectors.

The indicator average number of European trade unions or employer organisations representing SSDCs was also not significant. The theoretically interesting case that e.g. more than one EU organisation competing for affiliates in the member states representing members with rather particular interests does not explain differences in the observed outcomes.

We also expected mandating rules of European social partner organisations to influence effective dialogue since clear rules and authorities provide secretariats with sufficient flexibility to respond timely to European initiatives and develop positions (Eurofound, 2016). However, for the activities in which SSDCs engage degree in freedom to act on behalf of the member does not make a difference.
Balanced representation with regard to the number of affiliated trade unions and employers participating in SSDCs was another indicator expected to play a role. The assumption was that when the number of trade unions and employer organisations participating in SSDCs is rather balanced this will help to assure the greater encompassingness of interests represented on both sides and a fairer articulation of interests in SSDCs. Empirical results indicate that neither the dominance of trade unions nor employer organisation in SSDCs does have any impact on the outcomes produced.

2.5 Practical implications of findings

- ‘Heterogeneity of enterprise size’ - The findings indicate that interest heterogeneity between SMEs and large companies hampers effective ESSD, e.g. heterogeneity may encourage opportunistic behaviour and undermine dialogue in good faith (Streeck, 1990; Bieling & Schulten, 2001). The findings can inform decision on the demarcation of SSDCs i.e. the identification or selection of ‘homogenous’ sectors or business activities covered by a SSDC.

- ‘Sectoral bargaining in the member states’ - The results highlight the importance of the presence of multi-employer bargaining (MEB) in the member states for effective ESSD and any activities strengthening or renewing MEB structures in the member states e.g. in the southern European member states. As well as refraining from imposing any rules or recommendations made to member states counterproductive to the above mentioned objective (e.g. Schulten & Müller, 2012; Marginson, 2015).

- ‘Number of trade unions affiliated to EU-level’ – Even though the indicator ‘number of trade unions affiliated to European sectoral trade unions’ showed only low significance, the results highlight the importance of trade unions on effective ESSD. On average approx. 61% of the trade unions collective bargaining at national sectoral level are affiliated to the European level and approx. 49% of the employer organisations (Eurofound, 2018).

- ‘National sectoral collective bargaining coverage’ - The findings indicate that social partners pursue the interests of their members at the European level respectively in SSDCs to compensate for national sectoral weakness (Bechter, Brandl & Prosser, 2017).
3. Case studies – qualitative analysis

3.1 Sectoral background metal and hospital sector

We will introduce the case studies of ESSDC by giving a general background overview over the similarities and differences between the five countries and the two sectors as regards the main national level dimensions of the indicators of effective ESSD presented above. First, we will discuss the economic contexts of the two sectors of metal and hospital within the five countries focused in the case studies: Germany, Italy, Poland Sweden and the UK. Second, we will discuss the national industrial relations structure and actors in the two sectors in these countries. In addition, we will also connect this discussion to the conceptual framework in Graphic 1, by reconnecting to the themes of topics, actors and resources on national level.

3.1.1. Economic context

The metal sector

In all five countries focused, the metal sector has a strong standing historically, and makes up an important part of their manufacturing industries. As regards the size of the sector in terms of employment, Table 7 shows that Germany has the largest sector of the countries and in Europe both in absolute and relative figures. The metal sector provides around 10 percent of the employments in the Germany, which is far above the EU 28 average of 6 percent. Italy, Sweden and Poland are quite close to the EU 28 average in terms of the size of the sector, whereas the UK metal industry in size is below the European average.
Table 7. Metal sector. Total number of employees and relative size of sector in relation to total number of employees in country (20-64 years) 2015.


The German metal sector is not only very large. It is also doing very well in that it has seen increases in both the number of enterprises and the number of employees during the period of 2008 - 2014 (see Table 8). Poland is doing moderately well, with an increase in the number of companies and with an overall stability in number of employees. Poland also seems to have kept some competitive advantage by having comparatively low labour (Bechter et al., 2018). The situation has been somewhat more problematic in Sweden and UK, which have seen decreases in both number of companies and number of employees. It is in Italy, however, that the metal sector has had the most problematic development of the five countries studied, with not only a strong decrease in number of jobs but also in number of companies and in terms of productivity. Italy has lost around a third of its production capacity in the sector since the beginning of the European economic crisis some ten years ago. During the same time, there has also been large increases in unit labour costs (ibid).
As regards the structural composition of the metal sector; we find some further important differences between the countries that accentuates the development discussed above. Germany has the strongest concentration of employment in large companies as compared to the others (UK is second) – with Italy being on the polar opposite with quite a strong concentration of employment in SMEs (ibid). Given these figures, it is not surprising that Germany has a very dominant position within the metal sector, even though Italy, Poland and the UK are also important at the European level. Sweden is for obvious reasons a relatively small actor in the context of the ESSD if discussed in terms of size. However, as we will see below, the Swedish organisations have developed a compensatory strategy by coordinating their approach to the European level dialogue with their Nordic neighbours, not least on the trade union side in which staffed Nordic sectoral trade union organisations exist and are used to coordinate approaches toward EU-level activities (Larsson et al., 2016).

The metal sector overall is under strong pressure from international competition, and is highly integrated in European market. Thus, it is no surprise that important topics raised in the sector concerns industrial policy issues and competitiveness. Beside core trade union issues such as wages, working time, and health and safety, topics such as skills and digitalization are high on the agenda in the sector.
The hospital sector

Just as the metal sector, the hospital sector is an important one in Europe. Among the five countries focused, the size of the sector in terms of expenditure as percent of total GDP is largest in Sweden, followed by Italy, UK and Germany, with Poland at the bottom end (see table 9). If approaching size in terms of number of persons employed in the sector in relation to the total number of employees in country, we get a slightly different picture, however – though data is missing for Poland and Sweden. As compared to the data for the metal sector, we find that the hospital sector is even larger than the metal sector in the UK, whereas it is slightly less than half the size of the metal sector in Germany and Italy.

Table 9. Hospital sector. Expenditure on hospital 2014 and relative size of sector in relation to total number of employees in country (20-64 years) 2015. Percent

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>% of GDP 2014</th>
<th>% of employees 2015</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DE</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>3.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IT</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>2.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PL</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SE</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UK</td>
<td>4.59</td>
<td>2.88</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: OECD 2017; Eurostat 2017.

There are important differences between the countries in that there are tax based health care systems in the UK, Italy and Sweden, whereas Germany and Poland have insurance based systems. However, at a more general level there seems to be a common trend in that there are increases in the number of private providers and/or a strengthening of quasi market solutions within the healthcare sector in these countries. There are also some common topics that are high on the agenda within the sector. Among them, we find quality of care in relation to aging populations and staffing issues, and in connection to that also recruitment, qualification
and training as well as working conditions and health and safety, not least because of staff shortages (Bechter et al., 2018).

3.1.2. National industrial relations structures and actors

The selection of countries to include in the cases studies of the two sectors of metal and hospital was in part influenced by an established classification of regimes of national industrial relations in Europe (Visser et al., 2009; cf. Van Rie et al., 2015; Eurofound, 2017). We expect that the engagement of the partners in dialogue, and their resources and relations to employer organisations and state, are related to more general factors of their industrial relations system. As is well known, these factors vary not only between individual trade unions and employer organisations, but also across Europe as well as across sectors within countries (Bechter et al., 2012; Gumbrell-McCormick & Hyman, 2013). The classification of different regimes of national industrial relations in Europe (see Table 10 in the Appendix) may thus be taken as a point of departure for a discussion of the national industrial relations in the metal and hospital sector in the five countries focused in our case studies.

3.2 Perceived ‘effectiveness’ of SSDC

In section 1.3, we did introduce the definitions of effectiveness and effective ESSD we did use for the quantitative study which are based on guidelines used by the European Commission (EC) in ESSD documents. The understanding of effectiveness found in EC documents is strongly related to SSDC outcomes, especially texts that entail any follow-up requirements. However, we assume that different actors, such as social partners in different countries, may differ in what effective SSDC means to them.

Therefore, we took up that issue in the context of our case studies. In our interviews conducted with social partner respondents at both the national level (affiliates) and the EU level (EU secretariats), we asked about ‘effectiveness’ of SSDC. The Commission respondents, too, have been asked about their understanding of effectiveness in the context of SSDC. What do respondents perceive as ‘effective’ or ‘non-effective’, and what do they observe may be factors hindering or fostering the ‘effectiveness’ of SSDC? Where do they
see room for improvement? The answers we received can be broadly related to the following aspects:

- Interactions between levels in the context of SSDC,
- actors in SSDC,
- outcomes of SSDC,
- topics within SSDC,
- resources available for SSDC.

These aspects will be explored more in detail in the following. Respondents refer to the issue of effectiveness when it comes to the interaction between levels. First and foremost, vertically between the EU and the national level. Here, some social partner respondents from both sectors (metal and hospital) and from both levels (EU and national) regard the possibility to bring the national point of view to the EU level as effective in the context of SSDC. Similarly, some of the national social partner respondents in the metal sector think that strong channels of information and access between affiliates and EU secretariats are crucial for effectiveness. In the hospital sector, EU social partner respondents feel that the direct access to the Commission affiliates have via SSDC, constitutes an effective element of SSDC. In the hospital sector, some national trade union respondents also mentioned take home messages and the use of SSDC outcomes in the national setting as effective. From a European perspective, the employer side in this regard sees the effectiveness related to affiliates willingness to follow-up at national or local level. More horizontally, some respondents from both sectors and both levels see another effective element of SSDC: According to them, the interaction of affiliates from one country within the SSDC can help them for their interaction ‘back home’, fostering exchange and making interaction less conflictual.

In that context, respondents elaborated on actors on both levels, i.e. the EU secretariats, national affiliates, but also the Commission. They refer to existing good and trustful relationships as factors fostering the effectiveness of SSDC – between the EU secretariats, but also between national affiliates (both aspects highlighted more in the hospital SSDC and by trade union respondents). It was also explicitly referred to the positive effects continuity in persons and a sound knowledge and understanding of both the sector and social dialogue in building that element of effective SSDC. A national respondent regards a low number of affiliates participating in SSDC meetings as a sign of perceived ineffectiveness of the SSDC.
When it comes to the Commission, some social partner respondents observe unclear (political) signals towards SSDC. Some national respondents from the trade union side feel that a more active part by the Commission could enhance the effectiveness of SSDC.

These statements on the Commission seem in turn to be highly related to the types of SSDC outcomes. Overall, respondents in both sectors and at both levels regard a result-oriented and problem-solving perspective as crucial when it comes to SSDC outcomes. Accordingly, joint outcomes have to be in the interest of both the trade union and the employer side. They have to be useful for national affiliates, and this is not bound to a certain type of outcome. Rather, the type of text is not regarded as a means in itself, but a means to give support in solving a problem. Classically, national trade union respondents refer to the improving of working conditions and establishing a level playing field as a problem to solve. In this context, and not surprisingly, trade union respondents refer to legally binding SSDC outcome as effective, whereas employer respondents, above all in the metal sector, express reservations. However, both trade union and employer respondents in both sectors also emphasize other types of outcome as effective elements of SSDC. These include on the one hand exchange, sharing of good practices, and mutual learning, and on the other hand influencing in the sense of joint lobbying. Interestingly, it is perceived highly effective to prevent things from happening at the EU level. This has been highlighted first and foremost by national trade union respondents. An interpretation would be that trade union goals and positions are more challenged by (planned) EU policies. Coming back to exchange, sharing of good practices, and mutual learning, this related to getting (more) familiar with other industrial relation systems and actors’ interests (mentioned above all by Swedish and UK respondents), but also learning about topics and problems-solving approaches (mainly brought up by respondents in the hospital sector). Overall, exchange, sharing and learning has been explained as an effective element of SSDC by respondents in both sectors and from both sides. Finally, respondents on both sides are rather sceptical about attempts to classify or measure SSDC outcomes.

With regard to perceived effectiveness, our respondents put content before format. That means that there is an understanding that first, the topic should be relevant for national affiliates in terms of problem-solving. Second, the type of outcome is considered. The type of outcome, for instance a legally binding one, is not considered as an end in itself. (This has however also be seen in the context of resource-related issues discussed below.) In that respect, respondents in the hospital SSDC regard the topic continuous professional
development and lifelong learning as an effective one. Potentially, the topic digitalisation could experience a similar development in the metal SSDC.

Last but not least, some of the ineffective elements perceived by respondents, and possible room for improving the effectiveness of SSDC, is related to the question of resources dedicated to SSDC. Trade union respondents in both sectors raise the issue of employer mandate as an important resource, where they see room for improvement. There are also worries on weak employer structures in some countries, mentioned by respondents from both sides. National respondents on the employer side claim that affiliates should dedicate more resources in terms of human resources. Language skills as a barrier for some national affiliates, which means in practice English language skills, are regarded as a barrier to effective SSDC. Finally, resources provided by the Commission for SSDC are mentioned. Some of the respondents find that the overall reduction in meetings does not enhance the effectiveness of SSDC, and in the same vain, some respondents, mainly in the metal sector, are critical about the Commission’s project-based approach for extra-funding.

In conclusion, our case studies reveal that respondents only partly agree with the understanding of ‘effectiveness’ outlined as a starting point in section 1.3. Although SSDC outcomes play an important role for the perceived effectiveness of SSDC for our respondents, they at the same time have a much broader understanding of effectiveness. This includes ‘softer’ aspects such as mutual learning and exchange, but also influencing European institutions in the sense of joint lobbying via the SSDC. To this point, we could conclude that for the vast majority of our respondents effective SSDC means that

- A joint outcome (of any type, including exchange of views) [outcome]
- on a topic relevant for affiliates (in the sense that it may help solving a problem) [content]
- has been reached by (actively and encompassingly) involving affiliates [process].

Configurations between these three elements may vary, as all three of them could be regarded as continua and need further elaboration. Our interviews show that different groups of actors have different perceptions and concepts of effectiveness in the context of SSDC. To some extend this will also be taken up in our two case studies (cf. sections 3.4 and 3.5). The question of effective social dialogue can hardly be discussed without considering the different actors’ goals and their contextual setting (‘effective’ for whom? To reach what?). Thus, more
in-depth case study research, including sectors and countries we could not investigate, will be helpful to understand the different elements, to add new findings to our exploration of the meaning and perception of ‘effectiveness’, and to build a more and more sophisticated empirical model of perceived effectiveness in the context of SSDC. Some of the factors identified above – topics, resources, actors, and trust – will be explored more in depth for our two cases in the sections 3.4 and 3.5 when we focus on SSDC practices and processes.

3.3 Conceptual framework: Factors that foster or hamper effective dialogue

Qualitative research is used to complement the quantitative analysis on the relationship between indicators characterising the structure of sectors, sectoral industrial relations systems and the actors engaging in European sectoral social dialogue. To account for differences between SSDCs and how social dialogue takes place, qualitative research is used to collect data on the processes and practices used by actors engaging in SSDCs. The conceptual framework used to analyse dialogue processes and engagement practices focuses on national sectoral social partner organisations affiliated to the European sectoral level and the actors responsible for European issues and representation in SSDCs within those social partner organisations.

The qualitative study analyses the role of SSDC topics, organisational resources and actors on dialogue processes and practices. The investigation into the capacity of sectoral social partner organisations to engage in ESSD focuses on European social partner organisations and the respective sectoral secretariats and their national affiliates. At the actor level, we investigate the characteristics of trade union and employer representatives engaging in ESSD and their capacity (e.g. information, knowledge, power and mandate) to negotiate and engage in the development of outcomes on non-wage issues at the European level. A related important issue is if and how those actors coordinate ESSD issues between the European and national sectoral level, and to what effect. This issue addresses the variation in how social partners themselves perceive ‘effective social dialogue’, and the factors, in their opinion, that hamper or facilitate effective dialogue. Finally, we analyse the possible implications of the variation in interest coordination practices and processes on effective social dialogue.

As discussed in the interviews, EU level engagement and cooperation is more likely when social partners are affected by similar challenges and when topics tackled in SSDCs are of
high relevance to social partners in the member states. Thus, when social partners in the member states appreciate that they are affected by EU policies, e.g., by the implementation of the European Working Time Directive, the more likely they want to influence the direction and outcome of policies. Hence, the national relevance of EU initiatives and policies (or EU topics more generally) and the information and knowledge about the potential impact of EU dialogue outcomes on the national level are motivating factors for social partners to want to engage in ESSD and influence SSDC outcomes. The factors explaining social dialogue processes and practices in SSDCs described in Graphic 2 are derived inductively from the national and European level interviews.

Graphic 2. Conceptual framework of effective ESSD. The role of topics, actors, resources, and trust.

As outlined earlier, the (perceived) relevance of EU topics for national level actors is important in generating the intention to engage at the European level and tackle certain topics/problems (jointly) in SSDCs. The perceived relevance of certain topics such as e.g., health and safety at work, for example, varies between sectors characterised by different working conditions (e.g., the construction and insurance sectors). Social partner organisations with an established EU function, clear responsibility for EU agendas and communication of EU issues within the organisation, as well as within EU secretariats, are generally better informed about EU policies and the potential impact of EU outcomes at the national level. The decision to take action and engage in SSDCs is influenced by financial and personnel
resources enabling social partners to make informed judgments about the relevance of the topics, and the (potential) impact of outcomes at the national level.

With regard to resources, being affiliated to the European sectoral social partner organisation is a prerequisite for receiving information about topics tackled in SSDCs. Furthermore, access to research, expertise, and persons working on EU issues, etc. are important resources that help social partners to understand the potential impact of EU policies and to reach a common position. Social partner organisations having an EU function and persons in place for consultation with the EU secretariats (e.g. sharing information, exchanging good practice and knowledge and for consultations on working programme and EU initiatives etc.) are more engaged in EU policy coordination in SSDCs. Generally, core actors in SSDCs are representatives from organisations with access to financial and human resources. Hence, effective communication between secretariats and affiliates and their consultation on EU agendas is heavily dependent on functioning representation structures of affiliates in the member states.

Based on the interviews, factors that determine effective engagement of actors participating in SSDCs have been identified. On the actors’ side, the capacity of a person representing the interest of an organisation in SSDCs to engage effectively in EU policy making is determined by: the person’s knowledge about the sector and topics tackled, continuity in participation, knowledge of European social dialogue and experience in interest coordination, a mandate to speak for an organisation, and English language skills. The more resources available to organisations (e.g. knowledge, expertise, personnel resources) and the greater the capacity of actors (e.g. experience, mandate, continuity) engaging in SSDCs the greater the potential scope and impact of social partners on SSDC outcomes.

The intention to engage in SSDCs depends on the relevance or importance of topics to (most) affiliates in the EU-28. When actors identify relevant topics of common interest and goal congruence (e.g. solving problems) within and between social partners, this increases the motivation to influence and tackle a certain topic in the SSDC and produce joint outcomes. Goal congruence is more likely when trade unions and employers are able to articulate their goals in terms of (shared) ‘values’ (e.g. patient safety) rather than conflicting ‘interests’ (Provis, 1996). In the health sector for example, ‘patient safety’ and ‘quality of care’ represent such shared values that allow trade unions and employer organisations to work together to find solutions to staffing problems, high workloads, and stress at work. In contrast
to distributive bargaining at the national level where e.g. employers aim to meet demand facing spending constraints, and trade unions to lower e.g. high workload/nurse ratios, or increase wages to compensate for pressures, collaborative problem solving and consensus building in SSDCs is more likely if shared values are identified. Values such as ‘quality of services/care’ are supportive of patient safety as well as the reasonable workloads and if workforce is sufficiently well-trained (EPSU, 2017).

The intention to cooperate with actors representing different countries in SSDCs is influenced by the perceived trustworthiness of the actors’ participating in the work of committees (Lewis & Weigert, 1985). In the case of trust building in SSDCs, among participants we differentiate between cognitive and affectual trust (McAllister, 1995). The cognitive concept of trust includes the extent to which an actor can expect predictability in the behaviour of other actors in terms of what is expected of a person engaging in SSDCs in good faith (Mayer, Davis & Schoorman, 1995). Thus, cognitive trust reflects the belief about an actor’s capacity to engage and negotiate in a way that is likely to yield an outcome. While cognitive trust is based on the experience that actors do share information, good practice and expertise, and a mandate to engage in SSDCs the affective foundation of trust is based on personal relationships. Thus, affectual trust exists between actors as a result of a social exchange and interpersonal relationships. With regard to social dialogue in SSDCs, trust among core actors built over time plays a mediating role on dialogue processes and outcomes. Key actors are characterised by sufficient resources (e.g. financial and human resources), established ESSD infrastructures and continuous engagement in the work of SSDCs. Trust among those actors has been built over time and SSDC settings characterised by high trust among actors influences positively the effectiveness of social dialogue processes and outcomes. Not all social partners affiliated to EU level participate in SSDCs in Brussels their interests are represented by the secretariats. This form of indirect participation in SSDCs is based on trust in the secretariats that the interests of affiliates are adequately represented by them.
3.4 Case 1: METAL SSDC

3.4.1 Topics/content – national and EU-level

In terms of topics, interviewees were asked about domestic priorities. Though all concerns were by no means shared in all contexts, there were some important issues which arose:

- Concern was expressed about digitalization; this topic has key implications for the future of employment in the sector. In Germany, Sweden and UK, interviewees identified the topic as a key domestic challenge.

- Though other issues identified by respondents were quite eclectic, many of them concerned the management of processes of change in the sector. In Italy and Sweden, there was a preoccupation with the restructuring of the sector and the associated challenge of downsizing. In Germany, respondents mentioned working-time flexibility.

- Aside from this, there were also issues which were tied to specific national contexts. In Britain, social partners were concerned about the effects of Brexit. In Poland, a trade union interviewee expressed concern about the development of the sector; this is associated with the developing profile of the Polish economy, which lags behind Western European rivals.

Output of the metal SSDC partly reflects such concerns. In recent years, output has concerned issues such as skills, digitalization and industrial policy; these topics have been the subject of a series of non-legally binding texts, which have been concluded by the metal SSDC since 2008. Particularly notable was a 2016 declaration, *the impact of digitalisation on the world of work in the metal, engineering and technology-based industries*, which addressed the topic of digitalization. The tendency of the SSDC to concern itself with topics such as this was recognized by interviewees. In Germany, a trade union respondent noted the preoccupation of the metal SSDC with topics such as digitalization and skills.

Despite congruence between the stated interests of national social partners and the agenda of the metal SSDC, in national systems the metal sector is particularly associated with robust social dialogue over the determination of wages and working time; this is related to the
exposed profile of the industry and higher rates of trade union density. At European-level, the concern has been expressed that quality social dialogue will not be replicated (Keller, 2003); this is related to collective action problems and the embedded nature of national industrial relations systems, which mean that national social partners are reluctant to forfeit national competences.

There have been demands for output on ‘harder’ topics. This is particularly evident in Italy and Poland; two countries which historically have a more peripheral role in European social dialogue. In Italy, two trade union interviewees called for focus on topics concerning wages. Wage-levels and the wages of companies operating across Europe were cited by one respondent, whilst a second interviewee mentioned the need for a European minimum wage and basic income. In Poland, unions have also called for the discussion of wages at European-level (Prosser, 2018). In the Polish case, there is an associated belief that the European social dialogue concerns ‘advanced’ topics which have some pertinence in Western Europe, yet are of limited relevance in the less developed Central and Eastern European context.

Though employers did not specifically express their opposition to dialogue on ‘harder’ topics, this is a position which they have long taken at European-level. Associated with the issue of ‘softer’ topics is the problem of ‘softer’ implementation routes. Employers did not voice opposition to non-legally binding forms of output; this is consistent with their preference for flexibility. Surprisingly, this issue was rarely mentioned by unions. A Swedish trade unionist nonetheless expressed scepticism about the value of common statements and the verdict of a German trade unionist, who expressed scepticism regarding the value of the metal SSDC, is related to this issue.

Notwithstanding occasional scepticism about the use of non-legally binding implementation routes, perspectives on outcomes were rather diverse. Among employers, approval of outcomes which involved a mere exchange of views was consistently expressed. An interviewee from a German employers’ association asserted that the sharing of experiences was particularly valuable and contended that a more active Commission could endanger social partner autonomy. In the UK, an employers’ association interviewee contended that the benefit of meetings was often just the exchange of different views. Though unions were sceptical that this alone entailed decent outcomes, the value of the sharing of experiences was
recognized; a respondent from a Swedish union asserted that there was value in merely meeting counterparts face-to-face.

According to EU level respondents, topics in SSDC metal are informed by the EU policy agenda and the preferences of affiliates. There is a growing emphasis on strengthening the link between SSDC topics and the agenda of affiliates. Concerning the EU agenda, industrial policy topics play a major role for the metal SSDC. Social partners regularly respond jointly to initiatives and upcoming debates on the EU agenda (‘joint lobbying’). They also engage in debates about the special role of social dialogue and social partners (cf. Table 15 in the Appendix). According to respondents, the topic of digitalisation has been brought in by affiliates, above all German and Swedish social partners. The metal SSDC links the topic of digitalisation to skills, which might also help to unite European and national agendas. Whereas the EU sets out a ‘new skills for new jobs’ initiative, metal sector social partners emphasize their expertise and experience with VET and work based training. Overall, topics can be orientated both to the short-term and long-term. Whereas the former includes reactions to EU policy initiatives, the latter relates to the development of new topics within the SSDC setting, such as the joint statement on the impact of digitalisation on the world of work. More topics mentioned by EU level respondents are listed in Table 11.

Table 11. Topics in Metal SSDC (EU interviews).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topics in SSDC metal</th>
<th>Corresponds with thematic area of</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mentioned by all EU level respondents</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competitiveness/industrial policy</td>
<td>EU2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Digitalisation</td>
<td>EU2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health and safety</td>
<td>Art. 153 TFEU, (a)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brexit</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mentioned by some EU level respondents</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Digitalisation and skills</td>
<td>EU2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education and training, VET</td>
<td>EU2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Migration/refugees</td>
<td>Art. 153 TFEU, (h)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>European Semester / economic governance</td>
<td>EU2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>European pillar of social rights</td>
<td>Com initiative, EU2020</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Own compilation.
Topics dealt with are also set out in joint work programmes. The structure of the work programme(s) corresponds with the annual meeting structure developed in the metal SSDC. There is one plenary meeting, which can be regarded as the political forum with high-level participants, and two working groups, bringing together experts. The 2010-11 joint work programme sets out five possible topics for further discussion:

- anticipating skills requirements
- managing an ageing workforce
- international competitiveness
- worker mobility
- research and development and innovation

Furthermore, the 2010-2011 work programme names seven topics for the education and training (E&T) working group. For the competitiveness and employment (C&E) working group, it is noted that the group will establish a flexible work programme. A C&E work programme for the years 2011-2012 sets out four topics:

- research and innovation
- ageing and demographic challenge
- adaptability
- flexible forms of work

A 2017 work programme lists digitalisation and exchange on new forms of work for the C&E working group, and four actions and possible outcomes for the E&T working group.

The work programmes in the metal SSDC do not outline concrete steps or timelines for the topics. On the one hand, this could allow for flexibility, on the other hand, lack of operationalisation of steps may negatively impact the efficient handling of topics.

Whereas EU social partner respondents note that their affiliates are involved in setting up the SSDC work programmes and that there is much transparency, contrasts with the views of certain national social partners are conspicuous; some national respondents feel that the work programme is primarily negotiated and developed by the EU secretariats.

The employer side highlighted a set of selection criteria for SSDC topics:

- topics must be relevant for both sides
- topics must be interesting
- topics must be important
• topics must be urgent
• topics must add value

In the employer side’s experience, the topics at stake in SSDCs are the crucial factor (others being things like resources) which influence affiliate engagement in SSDCs. It was nonetheless admitted that the social partners, or more concretely the EU secretariats, might not have always been successful in attracting affiliates. This is confirmed by national respondents who also observed small numbers of participants in SSDC meetings. Therefore, it was reported that social partners have undertaken evaluations to better adapt and develop the attractiveness of topics for national affiliates.

A possible way to reach this goal could be the development of a common perspective. This could open a space for ‘balanced’ topics, which are of relevance for affiliates and have the potential to make a difference for them (whilst avoiding harm to affiliates). It remains to be seen if the topic of digitalisation (or more concretely, digitalisation and skills) could be such a common perspective. On the employer side, the focus is on competitiveness and skills. On the trade union side, there is concern about jobs, decent working conditions and personal development. Under the umbrella of digitalisation and skills, both sides could bring together their concerns. A starting point has been the joint declaration mentioned above. This could imply that the metal SSDC will also add more longer-term topics (‘routine monitoring’, Carammia et al., 2016; cf. also section 3.6 CROSS-SECTOR) to the – often prevailing – upcoming, ‘hot’ topics, such as sector policy issues (‘selective targeting’, Carammia et al., 2016; cf. also section 3.6 CROSS-SECTOR).

3.4.2 Resources/organisational context – national and EU-level

Across Europe, metal sector social partners are typically better resourced than counterparts in other sectors. Despite this tendency to be well-resourced, analysis nonetheless reveals significant resource differences between social partners in different European countries. Most saliently, there are discrepancies between northern European countries and southern and central and eastern European countries. These differences are apparent in other SSDCs, including in the hospital sector; the metal sector is therefore representative in this regard.
Particularly remarkable discrepancies were evident in terms of financial resources. In interviews, respondents from Germany, Sweden and UK seldom referred to financial barriers to participation. This was not the case in Italy and Poland. The issue of costs was mentioned by a trade union interviewee in Italy, whilst financial resources were a major impediment to participation in Poland. In the country, in which social partners do not play an active role in the metal SSDC, higher costs were one of two factors (the other being language) which prevented participation in the SSDC. An official from the OPZZ union emphasized that whilst the union was able to participate in European projects which were financed by the European public authorities, the absence of such funding for SSDC meetings meant that the union was unable to participate.

A similar pattern was evident with respect to language. In interviews, respondents from Germany, Sweden and UK did not refer to linguistic barriers to participation. In Italy and Poland, language was a significant barrier to participation. In Italy, a trade union interviewee stated that language was a particular impediment to the participation of many; this was particularly the case given that different staff participated in different meetings, depending upon availability and expertise. The problem of language was even more considerable in Poland. In the country, no interviewed respondent in the metal sector spoke English; this was associated with the older age of union officials. In combination with the problem of financing, this meant that social partners were unable to attend SSDC meetings. On the other hand, it must be remembered that there are staff in Polish unions who speak English. This raises the question of extent to which unions prioritize engagement, which may be related to the quality of SSDC output.

The perception of resource challenges faced by social partners in other countries also emerged as a key issue in interviews. It was generally perceived that participation followed the pattern outlined above; countries in the north of Europe, in which finance and language issues were less challenging, participated extensively; countries in southern Europe and Central and Eastern Europe, in which challenges were more prevalent, participated less often. A Swedish trade unionist stated that representatives from some countries (Denmark, Sweden, UK, France and Finland) appeared often, that representatives from other countries (Spain, Portugal and Denmark) appeared occasionally and that representatives from other countries (Italy, Poland, Hungary, Bulgaria and Norway) appeared less often. Such patterns of participation are confirmed by academic analysis of SSDCs (Prosser & Perin, 2015). A
German trade unionist drew a link between the strength of national social dialogue and levels of participation in the SSDC.

It was also stated that different national social partners had different cultural approaches to participation; a German trade unionist noted that there were different approaches to speaking in meetings, regarding the division of time, among French and Italian unions. The respondent also noted that organizations from central and eastern European countries had a tendency to stress the developing character of their systems, asserting that they were not ready for certain SSDC initiatives.

EU level respondents in the metal SSDC also mentioned financial resources and language proficiency. The employer side appreciates the Commission’s reimbursement of travel and accommodation expenses for affiliates and noted that, from a purely financial point of view, it was therefore easy to attend SSDC meetings. The Commission as a source of resources for social partners was highlighted by both social partner and Commission respondents (cf. also section 4 on the role of the Commission). In terms of the question of availability of human resources and language proficiency, affiliates from the Central and Eastern European countries were mentioned. According to the employer side, language proficiency is not only an issue for the trade unions, but also for some of their own affiliates. Both trade unions and employers referred to scarcity of resources in more general terms, but also to working time and human resources for both affiliates and EU secretariats. In EU secretariats, human resources dedicated to SSDC vary; for instance, the number of SSDCs a policy officer is responsible for or if there is support by further persons (cf. also section 3.4.3 on individual actors). In this context of available organisational resources, but also in relation to topics at stake, respondents noted that the metal SSDC rather constitutes a sub-sector. They therefore feel that in some cases it might be an advantage to join forces with other sectors, for instance with the shipbuilding sector.

Two further notions of resources emerged from the interviews with EU level respondents: Firstly, there are resources the EU secretariats receive from their affiliates in terms of human resources / involvement in working structures or in terms of information and input from the national level. In general, the bigger affiliates have more human resources, experts and networks they can dedicate and bring into SSDC work (preparatory work, giving presentations etc.). Secondly, the SSDC can be seen as a resource for affiliates in terms of access and first-hand information at the European level, which can also be used at the
national level. Information exchange and lobbying therefore motivate affiliates to engage in the SSDC. Another form of resource in this context is awareness. This can refer to (lack of) awareness of the EU level and the SSDC at the national level. In the case of the metal SSDC, however, another form of awareness seems to be at stake here; both social partner and Commission respondents note that the metal sector is regarded as a high-profile sector due to its economic importance. For the metal SSDC this means awareness of and good access to institutions such as the European Commission.

3.4.3 Actors/individuals – national and EU-level

In the metal sector, it was found that actors had a variety of ways of presenting topics at European-level and that this was contingent upon factors such as their organizational structure and mandate. Findings were consistent with the multi-level governance approach to industrial relations, which emphasizes the extent to which European processes result from vertical and horizontal patterns of social partner engagement (Marginson & Sisson, 2004).

National social partners made reference to the vital role of European social partners in coordinating European social dialogue in the metal sector. A UK trade unionist underlined the constant dialogue which takes place with European confederations concerning the agenda of SSDC meetings and emphasized the mandate which IndustriAll possessed to speak with employers outside of formal meetings. On the other hand, mandate transfer was sometimes more complicated. An interviewee from a German employers’ association stated that the organization did not have a mandate to conclude European collective agreements, given that it merely coordinated the position of its members within Germany; it was stated that the situation was similar in other European countries.

Aside from formal SSDC meetings, more informal meetings at which actors undertook vital groundwork were also emphasized by respondents. A respondent from a UK trade union outlined the manner in which unions engage in pre-meetings; at these meetings, problems were shared and common issues were identified. A representative from a UK employers’ association also referred to meetings between ‘core’ Ceemet members, i.e. countries such as UK, Germany, France and Italy, which were vital in setting agendas for social dialogue. A German trade unionist was nonetheless pessimistic about attitudes of national social partners
towards the metal SSDC, stating that meetings were not taken seriously by some national affiliates; this was associated with the difficulties which SSDCs faced achieving agreements and producing robust output.

An Italian trade union representative also referred to the collaborative work which took place among Italian and southern European trade unions. At a recent IndustriAll congress, one Italian trade unionist had represented other Italian and southern European trade unions (countries such as Italy, Cyprus, Greece, Malta and Turkey were mentioned). This trend can be associated with the language and financing problems which are discussed above. It was nonetheless conceded that coherent representation of southern European unions was problematic, given discrete socio-economic challenges within countries in the region. The finding that forms of regional coordination exist is reflected in the hospital sector; in this sector, it was found that Nordic and UK-Irish networks exist. On the other hand, it is important to state that European social partner organizations primarily set agendas for metal SSDC meetings. A representative from an Italian employers’ association stated that ‘mostly the choice of topics is made by IndustriAll and Ceemet, though of course we have an exchange of emails and communication almost daily with them’.

In the hospital sector, reference was made to the dilemma of ‘whom to send’ to SSDC meetings; some organizations reported having to choose between officials who had particular expertise in a matter and officials who spoke English. In the metal sector, reference was made to this issue by an Italian trade unionist. It was stated that the union relied upon whoever was available and expert in the particular topic. Owing to the existence of problems with English-language competence, referred to above, the choice of the union was further constrained. The dilemma of ‘whom to send’ was not referred to by German, Swedish and UK respondents; this likely reflects more plentiful resources in these contexts. In Poland, this problem was nonetheless not resolved; social partners did not participate in the SSDC.

Reference was also made to the challenge of ‘downloading’ issues from European level to domestic affiliates of national social partners. A representative from a German employers’ association emphasized that there was an organizational intranet which disseminated information about SSDCs and stressed how information about developments was conveyed to members. Though it was acknowledged that the interviewee’s organization could not force members to use SSDC output in any particular way, related to the need to respect the
autonomy of affiliates, it was stated that there had been recent interest in output and that a
text on digitalization had been requested several times.

In the hospital sector, cleavages were identified in the constituencies represented by social
partners; there were (i) differences between general and professional unions and (ii)
occasional dissimilarity between those unions which engaged in national collective
bargaining and those who participated in the dialogue. These differences did not emerge to
the same extent in the metal sector. Distinct groups of workers are represented by sectoral
unions, a point made by a respondent from a UK union, and there are discrete union
organizational models in different countries. Despite these differences, weaker occupational
identities within the metal sector, when compared to the hospital sector, may account for the
non-emergence of such tensions.

There were also different perspectives on the role of the European Commission. In line with
the expectations of literature (Keller, 2003), employers generally desired less interference
from the Commission whilst trade unions advocated greater intervention. In Germany, a trade
unionist argued that the Commission should rather adopt a ‘shadow of the law’ approach,
involving pressure upon social partners to conclude agreements. A representative of the
employers’ association disagreed with this, arguing that the organization had been unhappy
with increased pressure from the Commission. In other countries, other dimensions of the
role of the Commission were emphasized. An Italian trade unionist stressed the importance of
the role of the Commission, whilst a British trade suggested that the Commission could do
more to support social partner representatives in countries which participated less.

In the hospital sector, respondents commented on the limited role of national states in
European sectoral social dialogue. This issue was not mentioned by respondents in the metal
sector. This can be associated with the more limited role of the state in the metal sector, when
compared to the hospital sector, though also reflects long-term challenges facing the
European social dialogue; owing to the propensity of the dialogue to produce non-legally
binding output, there is little role for state participation. This contrasts with the 1990s, in
which national public authorities played an important role in the implementation of legally-
binding output.

In terms of perceptions of social dialogue effectiveness, actors adopted quite different
perspectives. This was particularly the case amongst unions. Despite a traditional tendency
for trade unions to equate effective social dialogue with the production of legally binding
Within the EU secretariats in the metal sector, persons with experience in industrial relations and SSDC and knowledge of the metal sector are actively involved in the metal SSDC. A lack of such a background on the side of Commission officials in DG EMPL and other DGs was criticized by interviewees (cf. section 4 for a discussion of the role of the Commission). Whereas on the employer side the organisation deals with only one SSDC, on the trade union side there is responsibility for several SSDCs. The official responsible for the metal SSDC is also engaged in further three SSDCs. Interview partners on both the trade union and the employer side notice that the metal SSDC constitutes rather a sub-sector. This aspect has been also raised in relation to resources (cf. section 3.4.2). Furthermore, EU social partner respondents report a good and stable work relationship between the EU secretariats. They find it however sometimes difficult to identify information on upcoming Commission initiatives concerning their domain or to react adequately or jointly to short-term information. Furthermore, they feel that they have to make further efforts to receive input and feedback from their affiliates, for example concerning best practices and follow-up at national level.

From the interviews with the EU secretariat representatives and national respondents and observations of SSDC meetings, we conclude that on the employer side, the role of the EU secretariat seems to be more pro-active on behalf of the affiliates. On the trade union side, the role of the EU secretariat is interpreted as a much more administrative role. It was emphasized that the affiliates constitute the SSDC and that they are ‘the social partner’. Some core actors among the affiliates, in the sense that they actively engage and provide input, were identified by respondents. They include France, Germany, and the Nordic countries. There are chairs for the working groups and the plenary meeting, a function fulfilled by affiliates from these countries. According to the respondents, affiliates from Eastern European countries are largely missing (except for the Czech Republic, on the trade union side). This was attributed to lack structures, resource problems and interest in more basic industrial relations topics.
3.4.4 Developing trust – national and EU-level

On the one level, the case of the metal SSDC indicates quite significant levels of trust between participants. Despite the non-conclusion of legally binding output, the SSDC is marked by considerable collaboration between social partners. This takes place on horizontal and vertical levels and there is also a trend towards regional collaboration, e.g. between southern European countries and between those ‘core’ countries which are crucial to the functioning of the SSDC. Generally, relations between the two sides of industry appear to be reasonably constructive. A representative from a UK employers’ association asserted that relations between unions and employers were good, leading to the sharing of information and frank discussions in meetings. A natural advantage appears to be the comparatively coherent profile of sectoral social partners. In the hospital sector, the diverse profile of social partners acts as a potential barrier to the development of trust (see Graphic 1).

On the other hand, there are problems associated with the metal SSDC which may be indicative of lower levels of trust. Levels of participation in the dialogue are low among social partners in certain countries. As mentioned earlier, a German trade unionist also expressed scepticism regarding the value of the output of the metal SSDC, which might be an impression which is held among other social partner organizations.

In order to build trust among participants who may be sceptical about the value of the metal SSDC, there appear to two viable options. Firstly, as advocated by certain respondents, the European Commission could increase funding available to participants; this would improve levels of participation, particularly among social partners in southern European and Central and Eastern Europe (CEE). Secondly, the European Commission might apply more pressure on participants to reach agreements. Though employers are opposed to this, an issue which must be taken in account, if SSDCs were to conclude more legally-binding agreements trade union interest in the institutions would increase.

In interviews conducted at EU level, trade unions referred to established interpersonal relationships over time in SSDC which might foster the development of affective trust. According to the trade union respondent at EU level, the SSDC can also help to build trust at national level between the respective affiliated social partner organisations. Therefore, there is a (positive) spill-over effect through personal interaction in the SSDC.
Moreover, the fact that the metal sector is an internationalized sector could potentially foster close cooperation in the setting of SSDC. However, two aspects were mentioned which could also potentially have a negative effect on building trust between actors in SSDC. Both social partner respondents as well as the Commission respondent emphasized that the metal sector is a high-profile sector and therefore receives a lot of attention, at both EU and national level. According to the union respondent, this makes employers in SSDCs even more cautious when it comes to joint outcomes. According to the Commission respondent, the complexity of processes and topics and the high number of affiliates (and therefore interests) may also hinder developments in the metal SSDC.

There are some observations which seem to impact social partner trust in the Commission and other European institutions. Social partner respondents mentioned several problems regarding the role and autonomy of social partners. They feel that there is a rather weak knowledge or understanding of social dialogue and the role of social partners among Commission representatives. This is said to be the case partly in DG EMPL, but mainly in other DGs.

On the employer side, there are reservations about the interpretation of representativeness criteria and the recognition of trade associations as social partners. Both trade union and employer respondents criticized what they described as an attempt to interfere in national wage setting via the European Semester and worried that it would endanger national social partner autonomy. Another area which was criticized, which was also mentioned by some national respondents, is the broad public consultations approach which is undertaken by the Commission. Here, social partners point to the special role the treaties foresee for them. Finally, the overall reduction of SSDC meetings by the Commission was criticized, although it was acknowledged that this is related to scarce resources. Overall, there seems to be a feeling of inconsistency of signals which social partners receive from the Commission and other European institutions (for instance the Commission’s initiative called a new start for social dialogue on the one hand, and the problems of incorporating social partner agreements such as the hairdressers’ agreement on the other hand, cf. section 4.3). Therefore, there seem to be doubts of the will to support social partners (and their autonomy) and social dialogue not only rhetorically, but also in practice.
3.4.5. Summary Case 1

Owing to the important role of the metal sector in national systems of social dialogue, the metal SSDC is extremely significant and much can be learnt from its case. Though the inability of the metal SSDCs to conclude an agreement is disappointing, the majority of sectors have also failed to reach agreements. Achievements of the metal SSDC, including its capacity to address issues of relevance to social partners and draw inspiration from vertical and horizontal sources, are likely to have been mirrored in other sectors. The output of other sectors, which includes multiple texts which fall short of agreements, suggests that such processes are occurring.

Core properties of the metal sector provide clues about the extent to which challenges are likely to be replicated in other SSDCs. The metal sector is characterized by (i) well-resourced social partners, resulting from the prominent role of the sector in national systems, and (ii) higher levels of internationalization, resulting from the exposed profile of the sector.

These properties suggest that certain problems which are apparent in the metal sector may be more considerable in other sectors. This is particularly the case in terms of language and financial resources. If metal sector social partners have difficulty in these spheres, it is likely that problems will be more considerable in other sectors. On the other hand, the metal sector is fairly heterogeneous, incorporating a series of sub-sectors. In sectors in which commercial profiles are more homogenous, it may be that there is a greater capacity to reach agreement. This might explain the conclusion of agreements in sectors such as maritime transport and inland waterways, yet raises the question of the output of a sector such as shipbuilding; in this sector, output has been sparser than the metal sector.

Notwithstanding its peculiarities, the metal sector is a representative sector which demonstrates many of the challenges faced by private sectors which engage in European social dialogue. The hospital sector, which this report now addresses, demonstrates challenges in a public sector context.
3.5 Case 2: HOSPITAL SSDC

3.5.1 Topics/content – national and EU-level

We asked interviewees in the five countries of our study about the topics that were most relevant in both the negotiations ‘at home’ and the topics that they see as important to discuss in the European Sectoral Social Dialogue.

As far as domestic priorities were concerned, despite the different national settings of our cases, there were some common and recurrent themes.

- A widespread concern for all counties interviewed was certainly that of staffing and increasing challenges in recruitment. This was explicitly linked to the decreasing attractiveness of the nurse job, particularly in the UK, Sweden and Germany;
- Understaffing, as a result, leads to more stressful working conditions which further affects retention. Adverse working conditions were identified in workloads, work-life balance and overtime, bogus self-employment;
- Some countries pointed at the underfunding of public health as the main cause. In Poland and Italy, in particular, hiring and collective bargaining freeze are not uncommon and were referred to as the main challenges that union organisations have been facing in the past years;
- Interests’ organisations in all countries, finally, are engaged at national level in wage negotiations.

When asked about the topics that participants have engaged in or see as relevant to discuss at the ESSD, a core, common theme emerged. While there was a shared understanding that wages were a ‘no-go’ area of discussion at the ESSD, the social partners at national and European level agreed on quality of care as a theme of genuine interest to all involved – workers, employers and patients. Unions seek better working conditions for their members and employers’ organisations want to deliver good service while contain costs, avoiding staffing and retention problems. In other words, the underpinning principle that “better working conditions for staff = better provision of care” became a shared, controversy-free, common ground. It was in this spirit, for example, that several interviewees referred to the focus of one of the Work Programmes on musculoskeletal stress as a success.
This is relevant for a number of reasons: first of all, the identification of common ‘principles’ is likely to facilitate agreements on the work programmes (WP). This will in turn strengthen the motivation for participation and, ultimately, effective engagement itself.

We find that this is strictly linked to the care nature of the sector. While costing and volume of ‘output’ are of course major concerns for hospitals and employers, the vocational nature of healthcare is likely to affect the choice of topics differently from what we can expect in more competition-driven industries. It is no coincidence that the safety of patients is often mentioned in relation to the problem over-stressed workforce.

With regards to the process that leads to the choice of a specific topic instead of another for the Work Programme, the interviews highlighted an indirect role of the European Commission. Both TUs and employers’ organisations agreed that the topics are chosen in continuity with themes of relevance to the European Commission. References were made, for example, to the need of the ESSDCs to feed into the ongoing discussions on the working time directive or the revision of the services directive. Several interviewees pointed at the key financial function of the EC and the consequent need to seek their approval.

There are, however, also internal dynamics at play in the process of selection of themes for the WP that our research uncovered. Three in particular are interesting to note:

The role of the European social partners’ secretariats, EPSU and HOSPEEM, were unanimously praised for:

- their scrupulous and efficient approach to the selection of possible themes,
- the consultation with their members and the consideration of all inputs from national level organisations,
- the engagement in the EPSU-HOSPEEM dialogue to find a common ground.

When comparing the data we collected in the different countries, there was consistency across all members of such recognition. The finding is interesting in that it could provide an example of good practices for other SSD committees and relevant secretariats in terms of procedures, staff involved expertise.

- For EPSU and HOSPEEM this can be an occasion to self-assess the extent to which such skills are not only ‘person-specific’ but also ‘role-specific’ in order to ensure sustainability in the long term of such a good heritage; Digging further, it was sometimes
stressed how EPSU plays a more proactive role in the proposal of topics, while HOSPEEM tends to react, i.e. act more defensively. From the interviews to national SPs it emerged that there seems to be greater concern in the latter to avoid topics that might be controversial for employers and that might, even more importantly, imply additional costs for them. There was therefore reference to a ‘EPSU proposes, HOSPEEM responds’ type of dynamic at play; While there are various ways to look at this, perhaps unsurprising, point, one aspect that emerges is the diverse types of organisations that HOSPEEM includes. As a TU representative said, for unions it is easier to agree that ‘decent work is the goal’, whereas having organisations that are representative of both public and private hospitals, or that are mainly involved in the national level negotiations than in work-organisation of healthcare, means that there might less overlapping in the underpinning logics of action.

- Though well–organised and eventually effective, the process of the selection of the topics for the WP is not flawless nor straightforward. This is where the cross-country comparison allowed insight into the relationship between national members. The interviews to unions in particular often refer to the role of some ‘key players’ from both TUs and employers’ sides. Some refer to the Germans, the UK and the Scandinavian countries as particularly influential in steering the debate. With varying nuances, several interviewees referred to alliances amongst partners, which we could define as ranging from rather strong ones (engaging in separate, private talks to build ‘coalitions’ against arguments proposed by other countries) to more informal and less assertive ones (Italy for example referred to past closer relations to other Southern European countries which however faded away since the crisis and the decline in their participation in the ESSD).

The overall consensus on the topics of the work programmes seemed to broadly coincide with a consensus on the desirable outcomes of such work programmes. The research provided a good insight into the variety of meanings of ‘outcomes’. While obviously open to any results, as researchers we started with certain categories of outcomes, mainly confined to the traditional literature on industrial relations and the likely products of negotiations – binding/non-binding agreements, guidelines, soft-hard regulations, etc. The research unravelled a much more nuanced understanding of outcomes. These can include exchanging good practices, gaining new arguments to use in national level negotiations, opportunity to show case good practice of the country of origin, learning how to deal with disagreement,
being exposed to varying styles of negotiations. Outcomes are therefore both ‘collective’ – agreements, good practices – but also ‘individual’ – a professional development as a representative of interests. The ‘no-go’ topics are jointly recognised, so nobody expects wages to be negotiated at the ESSD. However, there are union organisations, such as Italy, that hinted at ideally ‘working towards something more concrete’. This is a relevant finding in that it shows how multi-level governance in employment relations can have different meanings in different industrial relations model. If northern countries are wary of yet another layer of regulations, countries like Poland, where the governance of ER is being defined and negotiated, or Italy, where partly European-imposed austerity measures led to a collective bargaining freeze in the health sector since 2009, have different, more substantial expectations from a European level of employment relations.

The topics dealt with in the SSDC hospital are laid down in the joint work programme. EU social partner respondents feel that increasingly the joint work programmes reflect and include the affiliates’ agenda and priorities. Whereas, according to the European social partner respondent on the employer side, the first work programmes had initially been more focussing on and dedicated to the EU agenda. EU level respondents claim that the perceived relevance of topics for the national level encourages the (active) participation of affiliates in SSDC. EU secretariats are eager to involve their affiliates and respondents emphasize that it should not be the EU secretariats who run the SSDC ‘show’. In this regard, respondents from the EU secretariats take the stable and high number of affiliates engaging in SSDC issues and partaking in SSDC meetings as a positive sign. According to the respondents, they have no problems to find enough affiliates to engage in working groups and joint projects. In the same vein, the Commission respondent observes a very active engagement of affiliates during SSDC meetings.

Concerning the design of the joint work programme, the SSDC Hospital can be seen to provide a good example, for instance in terms of detailed and interlinking content. The social partners in the Hospital SSDC issue multi-annual joint work programmes (2006-2007; 2008-2010; 2011-2013; 2014-2016; 2017-2019). Since 2011, the work programmes define clear steps and a time frame for each of the actions envisaged. In addition, there have also been annual (2012, 2013, 2017) or bi-annual (2014-2015) overview reports by the social partners summarizing the ‘main activities and outcomes’ of their SSDC. In 2016, the social partners celebrated 10 years of SSDC and issued an overview of their activities and outcomes from 2006 to 2016.
In the SSDC hospital, respondents emphasize the involvement of affiliates in the identification and selection of topics for the joint work programme. EU secretariats are looking for and receive input from their affiliates. During the first step of identification of SSDC topics, affiliates are asked to add topics. Within the second step of the selection of topics, affiliates are asked to prioritize topics from a final list of topics. There seems to be a good level of transparency and involvement into the development of the work programme. This is confirmed by our national respondents. However, EU social partner respondents also recognised that the work programme is not only aimed at the social partners, but is somewhat also directed towards the Commission – to show their commitment and activities.

Table 12. Topics in SSDC Hospital (EU interviews).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topics in SSDC hospital</th>
<th>Corresponds with thematic area of</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Topics mentioned by all EU level respondents</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education and training (e. g. continuous professional development and lifelong learning)</td>
<td>EU2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health and safety (e. g. needlestick agreement, musculoskeletal disorder, stress at work)</td>
<td>Art. 153 TFEU, (a)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>European Semester / economic governance</td>
<td>EU2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public health</td>
<td>DG SANTE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Topics mentioned by some of the EU level respondents</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>European pillar of social rights</td>
<td>EU2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recruitment and retention</td>
<td>EU2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ageing workforce</td>
<td>EU2020 / Art. 153 TFEU, (a), (h)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Migration / integration of refugees into the labour market</td>
<td>Art. 153 TFEU, (h)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Own compilation.

From our interviews at the EU level, we conclude that there are two major sources for the topics at stake or dealt with formally (or in an initial state also in informal pre-discussions) in the SSDC hospital. First, topics are derived from the EU agenda, for instance priorities and initiatives by EU institutions. Second, national affiliates’ topics can also be brought to SSDC.
It is rather difficult to trace back which topics have been brought up by affiliates. However, many of the topics referred to in the interviews can be linked to the EU’s 2020 strategy (cf. Table 12). Some of the topics are also listed in Article 153 TFEU which broadly specifies areas where the social partners can, via the cross-sectoral or sectoral social dialogue at EU level, act as (co-)legislators. The topic ‘public health’ can be seen as rather related to DG SANTE.

Social partners in the SSDC hospital have been rather active in successfully applying for extra-funding for joint projects financed by the Commission (cf. also section 4). Topics dealt with in these projects include capacity building (2007-2008 new Member States and candidate countries; 2010-2011 Baltic countries), health and safety (2012-2013 implementation of the needlestick directive 2010/32/EU; 2014-2016 musculoskeletal disorders and psycho-social risks and stress at work), continuous professional development and lifelong learning (2017-2018), and recruitment and retention (2017-2019). In April 2018, the SSDC hospital celebrated the 10-year anniversary of their Code of Conduct on ethical cross-border recruitment and retention and in a joint press release; the social partners explicitly framed it in the context of the European Pillar of social rights.

Topics that are returning to the agenda, or longer-term goals of the SSDC, are illustrated by the joint work programmes (‘routine monitoring’, Carammia et al., 2016). However, these longer-term topics and goals can be amended on short-term notice, due to upcoming ‘hot’ topics, such as sector policy issues. Here, the social partners involve themselves, often by issuing joint statements (‘selective targeting’, ibid). Such sector policy issues are perceived to be of great importance to affiliates, i.e. topics for joint positions or ‘joint lobbying’ activities. In the case of the SSDC hospital, such action is most often directed towards DG SANTE. Overall, the topics dealt with can be more short-term, such as reacting to recent new policy initiatives, or more long-term, e.g. developing and elaborating new approaches. Whereas the first type of topic is often driven by the EU agenda, the second is more connected to the joint work programme (cf. also Table 16 in the Appendix).

Social partner respondents at the EU level refer to a set of criteria for the selection of topics. These have to be ‘balanced’ in the sense that they

- must be of relevance for at least one country,
- must not harm the interests of one single affiliate,
- must have the potential to make a difference for affiliates.
Identifying such balanced topics seems to be easier for the social partners if they have been able to find a common perspective, some ‘shared understanding’ on a topic impacting or challenging the sector. In the case of the SSDC hospitals, ‘patient safety’ (at a micro-level) or ‘quality of care’ (at a more macro-level) can be identified as such a shared understanding. This allows actors on both sides to cover their main concerns and goals, but to also find a topical overlap to bind their goals together. In the case of patient safety, we identify on the employer side the concern about staff shortages and problems of recruitment and retention of staff. The trade union side is concerned about working conditions caused by staff shortages and solidarity aspects in the case of recruitment from other countries.

Both sides are therefore also able to position themselves as guardians of the quality of health, for instance vis-à-vis European institutions, but also in relations to other actors such as the World Health Organisation. In this context, they can to some extent act as advocates for services of general interest. This could also be a distinctive feature of the structure of the SSDC hospital and the social partner organisations involved. Although there are varying, and in some cases considerable, degrees of privatisation, the affiliates represent the public (sub-) sector of the hospital sector.

3.5.2 Resources/organisational context – national and EU-level

A focus on the material resources that participant organisations need/can rely on to effectively take part in social dialogue has been revealing of mainly country, rather than workers-employers, differences.

A first, jointly acknowledged barrier that can hamper an effective participation in ESSD was the language. There are, as expected, various degrees of English skills amongst the participants. The provision of interpreters is indeed appreciated and recognised as a key tool to facilitate dialogue. However, two additional aspects emerged from the research: 1) while it is important that the meetings in Brussels provide simultaneous translation, the preparatory work of reading, drafting, contributing to discussions via email and to documents in writing accounts for possibly an even larger share of the work involved in the ESSD for which language is a barrier; 2) there is understanding (‘respect’, as someone called it) for those who are less fluent, however, the limited capacity to intervene - even for those who do understand
it without need of translation, but are not ‘active’ speakers of the language - has been referred to as a ‘political problem’. Being able to fully participate and intervene confidently is something that is felt differently by different social partners because of the language. The British representatives interviewed never acknowledged their advantage, while non-native English speakers did.

Additional languages might be spoken by the participants, but not necessarily English. Here is where, once again, the mediating role of the secretariats was felt as pivotal, as it can allow the time to collect and then assemble positions from the various members states, taking into account different ‘pace’ of contributions.

Financial resources were an equally important element of the discussion around what can practically hamper or foster an effective participation in the ESSD. Once again, the was recognition of the fact that some resources are made available by the EC via the reimbursement to a given number of participants. The Italian and Polish trade unions expressed concerns about the problems of finding time and human resources to participate in the Brussels meetings. Interviewees in other countries too, Germany for example, expressed concern about the time that this commitment entails while not being entirely, if at all, recognised in their workload.

Certainly important, travel costs were not the only financial difficulties that some encounter. At an organisational level, the fact that some unions are members of a TU confederation meant that they pay multiple affiliation fees. There were hints at the fact that some mergers of union organisations were planned so that, for example, hospitals and local administration unions could share the EPSU affiliation fees. In another sectors (not in the healthcare one), it was alluded, some trade unions declared less members than the actual number in order to pay a reduced affiliation fee.

The implications of resource-related problems mentioned in the interviews had mainly to do with the lack of continuity in participation not only in the ESSD, but also in the EPSU/HOSPEEM meetings. Some suggested that while there are obvious limitations in the resources that the EC can allocate to SSD meetings, those committees who are more active could be entitled to more resources to finance their work, as opposed to a budget that is the same for all SSD committees regardless of their volume of activity (meetings, outcomes, etc).
Availability of own resources can also affect the preparation to meetings, in that it can allow members to take time off to prepare and contribute to the documents, for example, or allocate extra time to meet with fellow participants from other countries, usually regionally based before or after the ESSD committee meetings. Overall, the ‘resources’ dimension allowed us to uncover varying degree of recognition of the participation in the ESSD by the organisations themselves. Allocating financial resources, putting a person in charge of the participation in the ESSD, have the effect of legitimising such activity and role.

**EU level respondents** in the hospital SSDC mirrored similar views regarding availability of financial resources and language proficiency. However, both aspects seem to be more relevant for the trade union side. According to the trade union side, language proficiency together with resources more in general plays a certain role for the (self-)selection of affiliates into SSDC working structures. As mentioned by the national partners too, a good command of English is necessary for instance in working groups where there is no interpretation.

EU secretariats rely on their affiliates as a resource in SSDC. The bigger affiliates have more experts and networks they can bring into SSDC work, such as preparatory work, giving presentations in SSDC meetings etc. EU level respondents from the hospital sector regard this engagement and input by their affiliates as an important resource. However, related to the issue of information from affiliates, social partner respondents sometimes find it difficult to receive information from their affiliates, for instance on follow-up at national level. Therefore due to the lack of information, EU social partners might not be aware of the impact of SSDC texts at national level.

**SSDC as resource for affiliates** is a twofold issue, which was brought up mainly by the trade union and Commission respondents. First, access to European institutions and first hand information from Commission officials, for instance in SSDC meetings, are seen to create real added value for affiliates. Second, EU respondents note that some social partners are able to use SSDC agreements as a resource at national level. For instance, social partners in some countries could use SSDC texts as arguments in national bargaining or used the implementation of the needlestick agreement to engage with specific actors and to be involved in bodies where this had not been the case before.

**Awareness of SSDC** as a (potential) resource is also an issue for EU secretariats – internally, towards affiliates, and externally, towards European institutions. Internally, in the hospital
SSDC, SSDC seems to be explicitly integrated into committees and bodies existing within EU social partner organisations. This might increase awareness among the affiliates and lead to more inclusiveness. Furthermore, according to observations made by the Commission respondent, social partners in the hospital SSDC also use conferences in the framework of their joint projects to raise awareness for SSDC among affiliates and in several countries. Externally, according to the social partner respondents, a higher level of awareness for the hospital SSDC has been reached in the last years, for instance within DG SANTE (cf. also section 4 on the role of the Commission). Overall, the Commission as an important source of resources for social partners has been highlighted by both social partner and Commission respondents. For instance, the SSDC hospital is quite active in applying for additional project-based funding.

3.5.3 Actors/individuals – national and EU-level

When looking into the role of actors and the characteristics/practices that can hamper or foster their role in the ESSD, we found both differences and similarities between the experiences of both trade unions and employers’ organisations.

A first point of attention is in the constituencies represented by social partners. With references to the trade unions, in the different countries we have interviewed both professional organisations, such as nurses organisations in the UK, as well as general trade unions or professional unions that represent various professions, for example in Sweden. Though the assumption is that the goal for both these types of organisation is to give voice to their members and improve their working conditions, the emphasis on professional related aspects, such as for example professional qualifications, as opposed to broader topics beyond the immediate remit of their constituencies, such as health and safety, might have a different relative value when approached at the European level.

Another important ‘cleavage’ might be between trade unions that are actively involved in national sector level bargaining, but are not affiliated to EPSU. This is the case for some organisations in Poland and Italy, which could be linked back to the resources issues. This is worth consideration also if we link it to the motivation aspect mentioned by several participants across different countries. It was reported that often the efficacy in participating was ‘measured’ by the extent to which one can then use arguments and discussion of the
ESSD back ‘at home’, in national level negotiations. In other words, those participating in national level negotiations are more likely to see and gauge the importance of actively participating also in the European level of SD.

The relationship between the national and European levels of SD, though, was perceived differently by the various actors interviewed. In general, and perhaps unsurprisingly, the ‘European affairs’ were perceived as particularly remote in the case of Italy and Poland though, together with Germany they all recognised the European dimension to employment relations as increasingly important. In the case of the UK, continuity of what has been a very active commitment since the beginning of the ESSD is uncertain and will depend on the outcomes of the Brexit negotiations. The Swedish interviewees were overall more concerned about the risk of seeing their home standards deteriorated by a European level.

The nature of the organisation and the participation in national sector negotiations were dimensions that affected employers’ organisations too. In Germany, for example, employers represent mainly public hospitals while the growing sector of private hospitals is not involved. Similarly, to represent the Italian employer there is a collective bargaining agency, and not actual hospital employers. These were raised as concerns by trade unions in terms of, respectively, legitimacy and expertise.

The dilemma about ‘whom to send’ to Brussels was shared by both TUs and employers’ organisations. While some countries have a well-resourced European office (e.g. the Scandinavian SPs), many others reported having often to choose between sending to the SSDC meetings officials that had the expertise relevant to the topic under discussion or someone who speaks English (such as those employed in the ‘international office’ of the organisations), or those who are involved in direct negotiations at national level. In some organisations, these roles are often covered by different persons, hence the ‘dilemma’.

As for the employers, though in all national case studies there were long established representatives participating in the HOSPEEM and ESSD-related activities, there were references to the state as prominent by its absence. In most countries, the healthcare sector is publicly financed but the state, either in the form of Ministry of Health or of the organisations that are more directly involved in managing personnel in hospitals. In either case, these are mostly absent and silent about – when not entirely unaware of - the ESSD. While the presence of more state-relevant actors might not be easy to address, the concern that this point raises has to do with the perception of HOSPEEM of being unable to channel the
messages/outcomes of the ESSD towards the state but also towards individual employers themselves. In other words, the results of the ESSD activities risk to remain in a drawer if the members of HOSPEEM themselves are not the best placed to then share information with relevant hospital employers.

For both employers and TUs, *continuity* in the participation in the ESSD is the greatest asset. This allows to get to know ‘the rules of the game’, to ‘be prepared’ for the future, to strengthen relations with other participants and to establish practices of reporting back/communication in the home organisation. Continuity was particularly lacking in the TUs, as opposed to employers’ organisations, according to our cases, and in the Italian and Polish cases in particular.

This point is especially important as it is related to another aspect emerged from the interviews, which is the *recognition* of the role played in the ESSD. Interviewees from both TUs and employers’ representatives in all countries reported a rather limited awareness of their respective colleagues about the ESSD itself. Some referred that highly specialised medics, or other active members of the unions entirely ignored what the ESSD is; some other reported comments from colleagues mocking their ‘trips to Brussels’ as an occasion to have ‘tea and a chat’ with others. A greater, more consistent legitimation from one’s own organisation, therefore, is essential in ensuring continuation in the participation, but also motivation and more effective communication of the outcomes and initiatives of the ESSD.

As mentioned, often there may be alliances in the supporting of a certain topic rather than another or, as one interviewee said ‘sometimes you have to bring in a topic indirectly’. There are indeed various negotiation skills at play, as well as time and resource commitment that need to be recognised by the organisations.

The insight into the role of actors showed varying degrees of *regional coordination*. For example, the TUs representatives interviewed referred to a network of the Nordic countries. Similarly, the UK and Ireland also mention separate meetings in view of the ESSD committee. The Eastern and Southern European cases did not refer to currently active networks in their respective regions. There seem to be informal, *ad hoc* exchanges of good practices amongst different countries but unrelated from the ESSD. There seemed to have existed a Southern European network which however was discontinued. After the economic crisis in particular there were repercussions in the industrial relations in these countries (hiring freeze, CB freeze) and in their involvement in the ESSD was also ‘suspended’ as a
consequence. Some indeed referred to the inconsistency between certain policies of the European Union – a recurrent example would be that of Greece - and the rhetoric on the importance and centrality of social dialogue.

The dimension of a regional coordination can have different implications: on one hand it might foster stronger links between countries and further collaborations; it can provide a form of ‘training’ in supra-national exchanges and opportunities to meet. On the other hand, it might also have the effect of exacerbating regional divides, preventing a wider exchange of good practices, limiting the possibilities of ‘dialogue’ amongst different members and perhaps to reinforce political alliances. The regional blocks identified above are, for different reasons, wary of too great an influence of the European level in their home affairs.

It would be interesting to explore how, if any, EPSU and HOSPEEM secretariats are in the position to address issues of unbalance of representation amongst members, or increase participation from more silent but important country representatives? A recurrent theme in the hospital sector across Europe, confirmed in the interviews too, is that of occupational migration and many of the ‘sending’ (often Eastern European) countries are experiencing huge problems of staffing in their hospitals. Could the ESSD become a forum to generate solutions in the long term?

Within the EU secretariats in the hospital sector, persons with experience in industrial relations and SSDC and knowledge of the hospital sector are actively involved in the hospital SSDC. A lack of such a background on the side of Commission officials in DG EMPL and other DGs has been criticized by interviewees (cf. section 4 for a discussion of the role of the Commission). Whereas on the employer side the organisation deals with only one SSDC, on the trade union side there are several. However, the trade union side seems to dedicate more human resources to the SSDC hospital than the trade union equivalent in our first case, the SSDC metal. From the interviews with the EU secretariat representatives and national respondents and observations of SSDC meetings we conclude that the role of the EU secretariats on both sides seem to be equally (pro-)active and steering on behalf of the affiliates. The work between the EU secretariats is observed by both social partner and Commission respondents to be built on a good and trustful relationship between the EU secretariats and the acting persons. When it comes to Commission representatives, social partners note some difficulties. They have on the one hand to deal with DG EMPL representatives with expertise in SSDC but without sector knowledge, and on the other hand with officials from other DGs where there is expertise in the sector but no SSDC knowledge.
(cf. also section 4 on the role of the Commission). Concerning national affiliates, EU level respondents acknowledge that it takes some time to understand SSDC. This could be one reason why there is a core group of affiliates active in SSDC (for instance, the UK, the Nordic, France, the Netherlands and Germany have been mentioned). However, especially the trade union side states that engagement of affiliates is also dependent on the (human) resources and language skills available (cf. also section 3.5.2). EU social partner respondents furthermore feel that they disseminate a lot of SSDC information but sometimes have difficulties to receive feedback from some of their affiliates. Both EU secretariats claim that they make a lot of effort to involve their affiliates, to elicit their active engagement. This is also observed by the Commission respondent. Social partner respondents regard the active engagement of their affiliates as crucial and the conditio sine qua non for SSDC to make sense.

3.5.4 Developing Trust – national and EU-level

The research highlighted that there are already some solid foundations to the ESSD in the hospital sector. Certainly, one of the most important, is the shared agreement on what can be at the centre of the social dialogue and what topics are not (e.g. pay). The experiences portrayed with the interviews show that most actors do feel that there is a space for dialogue and that the SSDC is inclusive, thanks in particular to the role of the European level secretariats. The decision to participate and engage is then left to the national level organisations. We know though that not all decisions are deliberate. Our research has highlighted resources constraints that hamper good/effective participation and this can in turn slow down the development of trust amongst participants.

What seems especially important is the process of mutual exchange of practices and the trust in the ESSD. There are different cultures or styles of negotiations, of intervention in the meetings that take time to overcome. Continuity in the participation is certainly a great asset to improve an effective participation and further motivate social partners. Language is regarded as a barrier, but it is also acknowledged that there can be ways to address it – for example allowing members more time to review documents and prepare their contributions, or, in the long term, focus the selection of participants so that this is less of an obstacle.
Legitimacy of the actors involved is also another aspect that was raised. This is to be read in two directions. On one hand it was raised that there needs to be relevant actors involved (see examples of key private healthcare providers in some cases, or actual organisations of employers, not only negotiation agents). This affects the extent to which what is discussed in Brussels is effectively fed back home, to the relevant actors and rank and file members of the organisations. On the other, legitimacy should be given to the individual participants by organisations themselves, i.e. there needs to be a shared, organisation level awareness of the importance of participating in the ESSD.

The EU social partner respondents from both sides describe the relationship between the EU secretariats and more in general between the social partners in the SSDC hospital as a very trustful one. According to one of the respondents, a sign of trust can for instance be seen in the fact that there is “no inconsistency” in what the employer side and the trade union side (i.e. representatives of the EU secretariats) say in meetings, they have jointly developed a common line of argument beforehand. As an important factor for trust building and the level of trust, one of the respondents points to continuity in acting persons and a core group of (actively engaged) participants. This regular, interpersonal interaction therefore helps to build affective trust. However, some respondents express their disappointment about the regular turnover of DG EMPL representatives.

Another aspect mentioned for both the increasing involvement and increasing trust is that both sides know that they need each other. We conclude from our qualitative data for the SSDC hospital, that this last statement could either relate to joint lobbying activities vis-à-vis European institutions (social partners jointly with a stronger voice than separately) or, rather addressing social partners themselves, a higher joint problem-solving capacity when acting jointly (e.g. reaching joint agreements) to meet the challenges social partners have identified for the sector (cf. also the section 3.5.1 on topics).

According to the trade union respondent at EU level, the SSDC can also help to build trust at national level between the respective affiliated social partner organisations. There is ‘evidence’ or comments by some interviewees hinted at the fact that SPs at national level tend to be less confrontational in negotiations when they expect to meet again at the SSDC. Therefore, there is a (positive) spill-over effect by the interaction and time spent together in the context of the SSDC.
As potentially quite helpful for building trust in the SSDC setting, one of the social partner respondents mentions *experience* in SSDC. Experiences in SSDC working methods, knowledge of core group actors’ positions and the SSDC’s legacy (such as common positions that have been reached in the past) may shape the belief in the ability and capacity to cooperate and conclude joint outcomes. This could also imply that (positively) experienced affiliates are able to support the SSDC and newer participants in building cognitive-based trust. In the context of experience in SSDC, social partner respondents find it difficult to deal with Commission officials – in other DGs, but also in DG EMPL – who only have weak knowledge of social dialogue in general and understanding of the role of social partners at the EU level.

As an overall observation in our two case studies, there seem to be some issues of declining confidence and trust by social partners towards the Commission and other European institutions. From our interviews and personal communication in the SSDC hospital we conclude that social partners have become somewhat cautious concerning the political support by the Commission. There is much disappointment about some recent developments, for instance concerning the social partner agreement that had been reached in the personal services SSDC (hairdressers) but has not been incorporated into a directive. Similar recent developments occurred in the central government administration SSDC. Moreover, there seems to be some frustration about the *rhetoric versus reality* gap, e. g. around the new start for social dialogue announced by the Commission (cf. section 4.3). However, the Commission respondent explicitly referred to the importance of a trustful relationship between the Commission and the social partners in the context of SSDC.

3.5.5 Summary Case 2

To summarise, our findings on topics, resources, actors and the building of trust led us to identify some important differences with the metalworking sector, as well as similarities.

With references to the topics, we saw how the identification of a common, controversy-free theme was achieved in the health SSD and both employers and trade unions’ representatives agree that the ‘quality of care’ is a shared interest. More specific topics are then selected in virtue of, often, their continuity with the European Commission agenda but also following
thorough consultations facilitated by the European social partners’ secretariats. While this should not overshadow the role played by some particularly active national members, especially from the workers’ representatives, none of our interviewees pointed at topics that were ‘censored’. All are clearly aware of the fact that wages are a ‘no-go area’ and while some stressed how pay could actually be included as a topic in the ESSD (Italy and Poland), there was no expectation for it to enter the agenda. An aspect that marked a difference between countries, as well as employers and workers, was related to the function of the participation in the ESSD and in the selection of topics. Countries like Sweden were very explicit about the need to be involved in order to avoid a watering down of the ‘home’ labour and care standards, whereas others like Italy and Poland expressed a desire for the ESSD to be more consistent with the rhetoric of the enhanced value and ‘new start’ to SD for European policies more in general and to actually enter more prominently in the national agendas.

As far as the analysis of the resources is concerned, in continuity with previous research, we too found that language can constitute a barrier to an effective participation from all members. However, what emerged was that it is not necessarily at the SSDC meetings that language is perceived as a barrier – though of course many stressed how understanding the working language, English, is different from being confident enough to intervene – but even more so language was perceived as an obstacle in the preparation activities of the SSDC. Engaging with requests for information from the European secretariats, contributing to online/email discussion in view of a meeting, translating documentation were all activities that for non-native English speakers were time consuming and, in situations of already limited human and financial resources, this could often put off active participation from members. There is, unsurprisingly, a geographical divide in the perception of language as a barrier, with Poland and Italy, amongst our cases, being more explicit about it. In the case of Italy, the varying degree of language skills was described as a ‘political problem’, an issue that includes and excludes. This is partly linked to the financial resources, which was an aspect highlighted by both national and European members. Travelling to meetings, taking time off from daily activities to contribute in writing to debates and exchanges via email in view of a new Work Programme were considered as resource intense by some organisations. The insight into the European social partners highlighted their awareness about the reliance on national level resources of the participants and their uneven distribution across member states.
The focus on the actors was particularly revealing and characteristics so far unexplored by the literature on ESSD emerged. The main actor-related aspect is that of the constituency of reference of the various national organisations involved. This applies to trade unions as well as employers’ organisations. We find great variety of workers’ organisations which include professional organisations, like that of nurses or midwives, for example; general trade unions where a sub-group or a ‘federation’ represents public sector workers (which can in turn include hospital workers); local and regional organisations as opposed to national ones. All these organisations might or might not be involved in national level collective bargaining, depending on the national regulatory framework. We found that this makes a critical difference in the perception of participants to be involved in the ESSD. Those active in national level negotiations have shown to be more interested and engaged in the ESSD as it can affect dialogue at national level, and vice versa, those involved in national SD can feed to the European level relevant debates and national positions regarding specific topics – as well as the motivation to participate. In other words, being key actors at national level facilitates engagement and effective participation in the European social dialogue. This applies to the employers’ organisations too. Here a key distinction is between private and public employers. While most of the countries we analysed have a predominantly public provision of healthcare, several stressed the increasing presence of non-public providers (Germany is an example). Again, the ‘real’ employers need to be present at the ESSD to ensure legitimacy, expertise but also investment in an effective participation. How to include diversity of representation or how to ‘select’ the ones that can more effectively participate in the ESSD and use it to influence national negotiating tables is something that the European secretariats might want to consider in the future.

Partly linked to the above, is another ‘dilemma’, as someone called it, around ‘whom to send to Brussels’. The selection criteria can vary and generally include expertise over the topic under discussion or language skills. These do not always coincide. What emerged as important, though, is the continuity in the presence of possibly the same person(s), to get to know others, establish relations and get to know the rules of the game. Those representatives who have been constant in their participation over the years have consistently reported some frustration about the lack of recognition within the home organisations and colleagues of their role in the ESSD.

Trust in the hospital ESSD already shows some good foundations. Actors involved know what are the topics that can be included, some relations have been established for a long time
and overall the perception is that of an inclusive network. What is worth highlighting in this brief overview is perhaps the need to engage the national organisations beyond the representatives that do participate in the meetings. This will increase motivation of the participants, but also will make dialogue itself more effective in reaching a broader range of actors within relevant organisations.

A point of unanimous consensus was on the effective role played by the European level secretariats. If this has been a positive learning experience for many interviewees, it is indeed to be praised on the coordination role played by EPSU and HOSPEEM. Looking at the future, long term, however, there is a final point worth raising with reference to this case study: the expectations that different countries – and different industrial relations models – have with regards to the European level of social dialogue. While there are countries that tend to participate to limit the damage, others would push for the ESSD to have a concrete impact on home relations and working conditions. This is possibly the most difficult challenge for the ESSD in any sector.
3.6 CROSS-SECTOR comparison – metal SSDC and hospitals SSDC

Table 13. Comparison metal SSDC and hospitals SSDC

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Metalworking SSDC</th>
<th>Hospital SSDC</th>
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Factors FOSTERING Effective Engagement in European Dialogue

- Choice of topics of high relevance to all affiliates, i.e. both TU and EO in all MS (e.g. industrial policies in metal);
- Resources made available by the EC (e.g. financial resources, expertise, information on upcoming initiatives, EU-level policy developments more generally);
- Opportunity to exchange positions and share information, and benchmark in order to learn from each other;
- Long-term relationships and good sector knowledge and understanding of industrial relations in the EU

- Topics strongly acknowledged as important for both parties (and do not create conflicting interest): e.g. quality of care;
- Secretariats and how SSDCs are managed;
- Contribution and cooperation of affiliates in the member states;
- Continuity of ‘core’ (national) actors in the work of SSDCs (e.g. DE, FI, FR, NL, SE, UK);
- Resources made available by the EC (e.g. financial resources, expertise, interpreters, information about EU-level policy developments);
- Access to information, learning about developments in the EU-28, sharing good practice, access to and exchange with related DGs in the EC

BARRIERS to Effective Engagement in European Dialogue

- If topics are selected by pro-active affiliates (e.g. digitalisation was selected by DE and SE), countries dominated by SMEs and facing a significant decline in employment since the economic crisis (e.g. southern European member states) may not be prepared for the topic since they lack the necessary resources for such investments and are occupied with topics promoting economic recovery at home.
- Too ‘advanced’ topics also hamper effective ESSD. When it comes to

- If organisations lack resources – persons and time dedicated to work on ESSD issues.
- Language skills – especially lack of English language skills of the person that would have the adequate sector or industrial relations knowledge to participate in the work of SSCs.
- Actors lack the requisite knowledge of the sector.
- Actors lack the requisite knowledge of the issues tackled in SSDCS.
- A lack of representatives for Private
selecting SSDC topics secretariats need to strive for balance in how difficult or easy topics are for their affiliates. For central and eastern European member states where collective bargaining is poorly developed topics that go beyond bear minimum standards are already perceived as too advanced while such topics are not advanced enough and don’t represent an incentive for e.g. Nordic countries (mainly concerned about securing their standards at home) to engage in SSDCs.

- Thus too ‘unadvanced’ topics may be hampering effectiveness, i.e. when things are of less relevance ‘at home’ since the situation is dealt with through own reg/CB, then it may be a bit ‘boring’ as one respondent said to work with it – and there will of course not be much interest in implementation or follow-ups, since there is not much to say…(this also in hospital)

- In SSDCs top down agenda setting may not be helpful in identifying and selecting topics that are supposed to provide an incentive for as many affiliates as possible to participate in SSDCs.

- Joint presentations given by trade unions and employer organisations aimed at promoting national interests may not support interest cooperation and coordination between social partners across the member states. (Or if trying to ‘export’ one’s own model; On the other hand joint presentations may help building trust between national social partners).

- Lacking length and continuity of participation to understand ESSD and how SSDCs work.

- If working groups or committees within SSDC initiate work without clear mandate or guidelines on what to accomplish – or work on topics and form of output that some member define as ‘no-go-area’

- Ambiguous signals sent by the EC – e.g. hairdressing agreement.
4. The role of the European Commission

In the context of our case studies, we explicitly took up the role of the European Commission. The interview guidelines (cf. Tables 13a-c in the Appendix) therefore included a small set of interview questions dedicated to this actor. However, the actor European Commission and its role turned up throughout the different parts of many of our interviews. Therefore, we conclude that the European Commission plays a major role for SSDC in our cases. Many comments, not surprisingly above all from our EU level respondents, but also from national respondents except from Poland, highlight the, sometimes double-edged, relationship to and view of ‘the Commission’. References to the Commission have already been made in both our cases, the metal SSDC (section 3.4) and the hospital SSDC (section 3.5) regarding for instance topics and resources. In the following, we concentrate on

- The role of DG EMPL, including the policy officers responsible for SSDC,
- The role of other DGs of relevance for the two SSDCs,
- The Commission as a source of resources,
- The role of the Commission more in general with regard to social dialogue and social partner involvement.

4.1 The role of DG EMPL and other DGs

In the hospital SSDC, national respondents on the trade union side from Sweden and Germany commented on the role of the policy officer responsible for the SSDC. They attest a rather administrative role and welcome the information given on policy initiatives and developments. Some of our respondents regret that the policy officer is hardly involved in the talks during SSDC meetings but see a possible reason in lacking sector knowledge.

More in general, national respondents on both the trade union and the employer side acknowledge the important role of information input by DG EMPL. Some trade union respondents on both the EU and the national level note that DG EMPL has also own bureaucratic interests and therefore seeks to inform and involve social partners. However, trade union respondents also stated that even in DG EMPL the involvement of social partners
is seen rather critically by some Commission officials. Overall, social partner respondents refer to the importance of social partner autonomy vis-à-vis DG EMPL.

The DG EMPL respondent noted that the role of the Commission is to support social partners in terms of money, logistics, and information but to respect the autonomy of social partners. The respondent further noted very good relations to and exchange with the EU secretariats on both sides. The Commission respondent elaborated on the difficult balance between supporting the social partners but respecting their autonomy, which may change case by case. From the respondent’s point of view, it is not always easily obvious for the Commission which kind of support social partners wish to get.

In the metal SSDC, again national respondents from Sweden and Germany, on both social partner sides, had remarks on the role of DG EMPL and the policy officer responsible for the SSDC. Like in the hospital SSDC, the role is seen as very helpful and supportive (e.g. invites speakers form other DGs) but neutral or rather passive during SSDC meetings. Whereas employer respondents are very satisfied with this role which they regard as a sign of the respect of social partner autonomy, on the trade union side some respondents called for a more proactive role. In their view, DG EMPL should push social partners more towards binding outcomes of SSDC. However, trade union respondents also emphasized the importance of social partner autonomy and rejected a more guiding role of the Commission. This corresponds with the self-interpretation of the role of the Commission respondent: to remember the social partners that they have the possibility to conclude binding agreements, but to not at all pushing them in that direction. A social partner respondent mentioned, that the social partners in the metal SSDC have to discuss more political questions, such as the role and meaning of social partner autonomy, with higher-level representatives. This view is confirmed by the Commission respondent who notes that the metal sector is a high-profile sector due to its economic importance. The metal social partners therefore have access to high level Commission representatives, and the SSDC’s outcomes, such as a joint statement on digitalization, receive considerable attention.

The role of other DGs

For the hospital sector, DG SANTE is a crucial player. Representatives of DG SANTE regularly attend SSDC meetings. Respondents noted a positive development of the relationship to DG SANTE, where they see, after a long and difficult process, recognition of their expertise and involvement, for instance via the health workforce expert group. Some
respondents criticized that responsibilities between DG EMPL and DG SANTE are not clear and that social partners in some cases felt bypassed. Other DGs mentioned include DG CONNECT, DG MARKT, DG GROW, DG RTD. Here, certain topics at stake in the hospital SSDC imply one of these DGs, for instance CONNECT when it comes to digitalization or MARKT when it comes to mobility in connection with the recruitment and retention issue. National respondents highlighted the value added to access the different Commission services via SSDC and receive first-hand information. Respondents on both sides and at both levels see joint lobbying – DG SANTE but also other DGs – as an important aspect of SSDC.

In the metal SSDC, DGs like MARKT, CONNECT, EAC have been mentioned besides DG EMPL. Respondents mention lobbying efforts, jointly or separately. Overall, social partner as well as Commission respondents claim that in the various DGs, the concept of social dialogue or social partner involvement is not very well-known, but that progress in understanding has been made by several individuals in different DGs. Whereas EU level social partner respondents call for more transparency and coordination of Commission initiatives across the various DGs (e. g. concerning the topic of digitalization), the Commission respondent sees progress in increasing transparency and in involving social partners, but still room for improvement. In this context, the European Governance is also mentioned. However, what the Commission might regard as involving social partners at the national level, seems to be understood by social partners (at both the EU and the national level) as an interference of the Commission into national social partner autonomy.

4.2 The Commission as a source of resources (access to resources)

The role of the Commission as a source of resources for social partners and their SSDC is widely recognised by respondents in the hospital case. Resources are understood in a broader sense, including information, logistics, and financial and political support. First, an important resource for social partners is information on ongoing and upcoming Commission initiatives provided by representatives of DG EMPL and other DGs. In this context, respondents highlighted the support by the DG EMPL policy officer in organizing experts from other DGs to come to SSDC meetings. This door-opener function is very much appreciated. Second, the rather administrative role of DG EMPL concerning SSDC meetings includes logistical support and interpretation services. Interpretation is welcomed especially by trade union
respondents. Third, the financial support by the Commission, i.e. reimbursement for national affiliates, is appreciated. Smaller organisations nonetheless may have trouble to attend meetings, due to lack of human resources. Furthermore, the hospital SSDC is rather active in applying for extra-funding through joint projects. The Commission’s project-based approach receives however mixed responses. Finally, the Commission respondent also explained the political support the social partners receive from DG EMPL, the special role social partners and social dialogue play. However, this is partly challenged by social partners who detect rather inconsistent signals from the Commission regarding their role (see section 4.3).

In the metal SSDC, reference is also made to the financial support and logistics, including interpretation. Interpretation is regarded a real value added of the Commission’s involvement in SSDC and for affiliates on both the trade union and the employer side to be able to actively involve themselves in the discussions. The project-based extra funding approach is no matter of concern for the respondents in the metal sector. The actors in the metal SSDC seem to be fine with the number of three regular SSDC meetings per year. The information exchange with the Commission seems to be a bit less important for the metal SSDC. A reason could be the reported relatively easy access due to the high profile of the sector.

In both sectors, social partner respondents express their understanding that the Commission has to legitimize the resources spent for SSDC. However, respondents express some doubts about the measurement of SSDC and SSDC outcomes. They question if the outcomes of SSDC should be evaluated at all by the Commission (social partner respondents), or how that should be done without overemphasizing quantitative or neglecting qualitative aspects of SSDC (social partner and Commission respondents). Social partner as well as Commission respondents judge the hospital SSDC as one of the well-performing ones in both quantitative (e.g. number of joint texts, number of joint projects) and qualitative terms (e.g. participation of affiliates, content and bindingness of outcomes).

4.3 The Commission and social partner involvement

Overall, social partner respondents note that there are inconsistent signals they receive from Commission services concerning the political weight given to social partners and social dialogue. Two aspects have been mentioned in particular in this context. On the one hand, the
Commission’s initiative for “a new start for social dialogue” promised to give new impetus to social dialogue at EU level (European Commission, 2016). The aims include

- “more substantial involvement of the social partners in the European Semester,
- a stronger emphasis on capacity building of national social partners,
- a strengthened involvement of social partners in EU policy- and law-making,
- a clearer relation between social partners’ agreements and the Better Regulation agenda” (ibid., p. 9).

Moreover, it is stated that the Commission’s efforts would follow two principles:

1) “EU social dialogue cannot deliver without a well-functioning and effective social dialogue at national level. This requires a conducive institutional setting.

2) Tripartite concertation, involving public authorities, needs to build upon a strong bipartite social dialogue. This is valid at the EU level as well as in the Member States.” (European Commission, 2016a: 7)

However, from the point of view of social partners and observers the “clearer relation between social partner agreements and the Better Regulation agenda” and the (non-) involvement of the public authority European Commission in the context of social partner agreements have resulted in two suspicious situations around two social partner agreements concluded in the SSDC personal services (‘hairdressers’ agreement’ on health and safety issues) and the SSDC central government administration (agreement on information and consultation rights). In both cases (the hairdressers’ agreement had even been revised by the social partners), social partners requested the Commission to propose a directive to the Council to make the social partner agreement legally binding. This request has been denied, the hairdressers’ agreement being the first time ever (for more details on the hairdressers’ case see Bandasz, 2014 and Degryse, 2015: 17; for the latest developments in the central government administration see EPSU, 2018).

In our case studies, social partner respondents at both levels were confounded by these developments around the two, and in fact rather rare, sectoral social partner agreements. Further developments remain to be seen, however, these incidents seem to have frustrated social partners. They identify a rhetoric versus reality gap on the overall acknowledgement

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9 The big launching event on 5 March 2015 with prominent speakers may have also contributed to raise high expectations by some social partners. For a documentation of the event consult the Commission’s website http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=88&langId=en&eventsId=1028
and importance of the role of social partners foreseen by the Treaties. Moreover, such developments may threaten the overall perspective of ESSD, at least in terms of more binding outcomes.

Coming back to our two case studies, social partner respondents in the SSDC hospital state that they successfully managed to be recognised as relevant actors with expertise in the sector, for example in DG SANTE. It is valued that the Commission supported the role of the social partners (e.g. vis-à-vis the European Parliament) as guardians of their needlestick agreement. The hospital social partners report they are also quite satisfied with high-level contacts they could establish. From the point of view of the EU secretariats, for instance talks with Commissioners about endorsing on of the SSDC’s non-binding agreements signals affiliates the importance and recognition of SSDC. The EU secretariats in this context regard themselves as a facilitator for affiliates to access the ‘European arena’ and European actors, above all the Commission, and to give them a voice. Overall, the Commission is therefore an important target of social partner activities, i.e. joint lobbying. However, social partners notice that their role is challenged by some officials in DG EMPL and widely unkown in other DGs. According to the respondents, this is highly individual and might be also related to the background of the Commission officials, their (missing) experience with and knowledge of social dialogue in general. Therefore, there is also a feeling of social partners at best serving as fig leaf or being reduced to a legitimizing role. Suspicion about Commission official statements on the importance of social dialogue and the special role for social partners has risen with the case of the hairdressers’ agreement which faces problems of endorsement by the Commission and is regarded by social partners as a violation of social partner autonomy.

Similarly, in the metal SSDC there is some frustration among social partners about neglection of their experience (for instance in vocational training issues) and a notion of a rather rhetoric importance of SSDC and social partner involvement more in general which is challenged by Commission practice. Respondents from the metal sector observe a growing weight of public consultations and see their special role endangered. They call for more transparency and feedback after consultations. A national respondent criticized the time-consuming answering of the consultations and fears it could even be a waste of time. In the context of the role of social partners, employer respondents in the metal sector were quite critical on the issue of representativeness. Moreover, as a national employer respondent noted, although there has been the new start for a social dialogue initiative and a Commissioner for social dialogue has
been installed, it is not obvious for social partners that social dialogue and social partner involvement would be more on the political agenda at EU level. Overall, respondents in the metal sector referred much more to the issue of social partner autonomy and mandate than in the hospital sector. A possible interpretation could be, that the metal sector sees itself more under pressure to conclude also a more binding agreement. This is supported by the feeling of several respondents that the Commission is interested in more binding agreements. However, in addition to the above-mentioned Commission practices, the problems with the endorsement of the hairdressers’ agreement has of course been noticed also in the metal sector.

4.4 Summary

As a short summary, the main points our case studies reveal on the role of the Commission are the following:

- The Commission is as an important source of resources. The Commission’s support in terms of information, reimbursement, logistics, and DG EMPL’s function as door-opener to other DGs is very much appreciated.
- The Commission is therefore an important source of information and also a target of SP activities (joint lobbying). EU secretariats regard themselves as a facilitator for affiliates to access the ‘European arena’ and European actors (Commission) via SSDC and to give them a voice.
- However, EU social partner respondents find it difficult to identify information on upcoming Commission initiatives concerning their domain or to react adequately / jointly to short-term information. They would like to see more coordination and transparency on various Commission initiatives e. g. concerning digitalization.
- In addition, respondents find it difficult to deal with DG EMPL representatives with expertise in SSDC but without sector knowledge and with other DGs where there is expertise in the sector but no SSDC knowledge. Some respondents are disappointed about the regular turnover of DG EMPL representatives.
- Respondents understand that the Commission has to justify the money spent for SSDC. However, response to the project-based approach for additional funding is mixed.
• Furthermore, trust in the Commission and Commission’s political support of SSDC and social partners more in general has been challenged by inconsistent signals (e. g. hairdressers’ agreement).

• With regard to the perceived role of the European Commission, procedural and material support is seen a key enabler of effective dialogue. Access to information on ongoing and upcoming Commission initiatives, expertise provided by DGs, logistical and financial support to organise a sufficient number of SSDC meetings, as well as political support and access to EU institutions are important resources but also incentives to engage in ESSD.
5. Conclusion

The aim of the quantitative part of the project was to develop a measurement framework to identify relevant indicators that foster or hamper effective social dialogue. The dimensions used by this framework to investigate the effectiveness of ESSD were based on the concepts of effective dialogue set out by the European Commission. The term ‘effective’ or ‘effectiveness’ in the context of European sectoral social dialogue is used by the European Commission (2010 b) for ‘effective’ representation of social partners engaging in ESSD and ‘effective’ participation in the sense that participants in ESSD have the capacity to negotiate outcomes (European Commission, 1998) and to respond ‘effectively’ to consultations on European Union (EU) policies and initiatives (European Commission 2010b: 6). The term ‘effective’ also appears in the context of ‘effective’ implementation and ‘effective’ impact referring to the capacity of national actors to implement ESSD outcomes and to enhance social dialogue at the national level, especially in the new member states (European Commission, 2010 b: 10).

When it comes to the relationship between effective dialogue and ESSD outcomes, a clear definition is missing. The potential outcomes of ESSD are agreements which are implemented either by means of a directive or by the social partners themselves (Article 154 and 155 TFEU), or by process-oriented texts or texts that do not entail any follow-up or commitment from social partners at national level (European Commission, 2012). Since there is no single definition of ‘effective’ dialogue outcome available we use the typology suggested by the European Commission (2012) to test the effect of economic and industrial relations indicators on two different types of SSDC outcomes.

- First, the share of outcomes or texts that entails any follow-up or commitment form the social partners at national level as percentage of total outcomes in the period from 2008 - 2015.
- Second, we use the average number of annual outcomes produced by SSDCs in the period from 2008 - 2015.

While the former accounts for differences in the nature and type of texts produced by social partners in SSDCs the latter controls for the ‘activity’ of SSDCs. We investigate outcomes for the eight-year period from 2008 - 2015 taking into account multi-annual planning and work programmes of SSDCs.
The measurement dimensions are: the economic context of sectors and the institutional structure of social partner organisations in 39 selected SSDCs and the EU-28, and the characteristic of actors involved in social dialogue at the national and European sectoral level. The research dimensions are operationalised by a set of indicators (Table 4 in the Appendix). In addition to the industrial relations dimensions used by the European Commission in their concepts for effective social dialogue we also analyse economic factors to account for differences in the structure and characteristic of sectors represented in SSDCs. While the role of the structure of industrial relations systems on effective European social dialogue has been subject to some research (Bechter, Brandl & Meardi, 2011; Bechter, Brandl & Prosser, 2017), the systematic investigation of sector characteristics (e.g. size and structure of sectors) and their role for effective ESSD is new. For a detailed discussion of the selection of indicators see 2.1.

5.1 Quantitative research findings

Against the background that our unit of analysis are 39 SSDCs, the relatively large number of 22 potentially relevant indicators constrains the methods we can use in order to identify the most relevant ones. In order to make meaningful inferences we applied a two stage analysis to reduce the number of potentially relevant indicators. We first used bivariate linear regression analysis and then Principal Component Analysis (PCA) to reduce the number of relevant indicators and sort them into dimensions. We the applied a multivariate regression analysis to examine the conditional explanatory capacity of the groups of indicators identified with the PCA for the effectiveness of ESSD and SSDCs outcomes.

Results for the outcome variable ‘follow-up outcomes’ for the period 2008 - 2015

As regards the variation in number of outcomes from SSDCs entailing follow up commitments our analyses points to three explanatory factors. A first result from the analyses is that variation in the average share of SSDC outcomes or texts that entail any follow-up at national level is partly explained by the heterogeneity of enterprise size of sectors. There is striking variation in the size of enterprises and the concentration of employment in large enterprises (≥ 250 employees) across member states in the 39 SSDCs (Eurostat, 2017). Differences in the structure and composition of sectors, e.g. when SSDCs are composed of
large and SMEs, affect the effectiveness of social partners in representing the interests of their members (Behrens & Helfen, 2009; Traxler, 2005). The interests and problems faced by SMEs are different to those of large companies (Traxler, 2005). Interest heterogeneity therefore was assumed to be greater in sectors characterised by heterogeneous enterprise structures across the member states. Hence, the more heterogeneous the interests the more difficult the articulation and coordination of interests in SSDCs and unifying interests i.e. reach consensus on processes and dialogue outcomes (Schmitter, 1981). The findings support the assumption that the more homogenous the enterprise size structure of a sector and the more similar the challenges faced in a sector across the member states, the more likely is cooperation and coordination of policies in SSDCs between social partners (Baumann & Braendle, 2017). Sectors with follow-up agreements showing low heterogeneity of enterprise size in the sector across countries are e.g. inland water transport, hospitals, commerce, hairdressing, paper, telecommunication, audiovisual, railway, road transport and chemical (Table 18).

A second result is that the share of SSDC outcomes or texts that entail any follow-up at national level is also in part explained by the predominant mode of collective wage bargaining across SSDCs. We did observe a significant positive relationship between average bargaining mode in the member states and follow-up texts produced by SSDCs. In all sectors for which follow-up outcomes have been concluded the combination of company and sector bargaining is the typical average mode of bargaining. With regard to the relative importance of SEB vs MEB, in the catering, chemical, electricity, hairdressing, hospital, sugar, paper and railway sectoral or MEB bargaining enjoys greater importance than company level bargaining. This supports the observation that the coordination of interests between sectoral social partners in the member states positively affects the coordination of interests at EU sectoral level (Kohl & Platzer, 2003; Marginson, 2014).

With regard to the effectiveness of social dialogue, according to our research the existence of sectoral coordination practices in the member states fosters SSDC outcomes that entail follow-up commitments of social partners in the member states. The presence of sectoral bargaining structures in the member states represent a prerequisite for the social partners to fulfil SSDC obligates, e.g. ‘effective’ implementation of SSDC outcomes (European Commission, 2010 b: 10) or voluntary commitments. Adequate bargaining structures may also represent a prerequisite to achieve economic and social objectives and a prominent role

A third result is that also average collective bargaining coverage of sectors (across countries) has an effect on the variation of outcomes entailing follow-ups, and is thus part of an explanation. We observe a negative slope or correlation between average bargaining coverage of sectors and follow-up outcomes, which means that the lower collective bargaining coverage at sectoral national level is the more follow-up agreements can be observed in SSDCs. Sectors with below average collective bargaining coverage are audiovisual, hairdressing, sugar, railway, sea fisheries, and telecommunication. The negative relationship between collective bargaining coverage and follow-up outcomes may be explained by the fact that social partners seek access to ESSD policy making so as to compensate for rather low governance of collective bargaining at the national level (Bechter, Brandl & Prosser, 2017).

Regarding the effectiveness of dialogue outcomes, collective bargaining coverage is used as measure for the governance of bargaining outcomes (Traxler & Brandl, 2011). With regard to the EU level and SSDC outcomes and their implementation or follow-up at national level state support in the form of e.g. extension practices may help to compensate for low governance of SSDC outcomes. Low governance of SSDC outcomes may also be caused by the fact that not all trade unions and employer organisations involved in bargaining at national level are also affiliated to the EU level (Eurofound, 2018) and therefore may not feel obligated nor committed to implement SSDC outcomes.

Results for the outcome variable ‘average annual outcome’ for the period 2008 - 2015

As regards the variation in average number of outcomes in SSDCs results of our analyses are more difficult to interpret. We find that the average number of enterprises per sector (a), the average size of the sector in the member states (b), the average number of employers organisations in the sector engaging in collective wage bargaining (c), the average number of trade unions engaging in collective wage bargaining (d), the average number of trade unions which are members of a European sectoral social partner organisation (i.e. national trade unions affiliated to European sectoral level) (e), as well as the congruence of the domain of national trade unions with the scope of business of the SSDC (f) are positively related to the number of outcomes produced, i.e. ‘annual outcomes’ in the period 2008 - 2015 (Figure 2a-f in the Appendix). However, even though all six indicators are positively related
to the annual number of outcomes, they are not significantly correlated with the number of ‘annual outcomes’ produced by a SSDC in the regression analyses (Table 6).

To summarise, we find that three indicators are substantially correlated with ‘follow-up outcomes’ and six indicators with ‘annual outcomes’. Interestingly, there is no overlap between the two groups of indicators. Given the fact that both outcome variables appear to be correlated by different sets of indicators provides us with some evidence that the two outcome variables are different, in the sense that their determinants are not the same. This indicates that the reasons why in some SSDCs more (or fewer) follow-up agreements are produced, are different to those for the production of outcomes more generally. Furthermore, based on the two outcomes variables we derived following classification of SSDCs (Table 18).

Table 18. Summary of outcome 1 and 2 in period 2008 – 2015 for 39 SSDCs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OUTCOME 1</th>
<th>#Text &gt; 0</th>
<th>#Text 0</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>OUTCOME 1</strong></td>
<td>CATERI, HAIR, HOSPI, SUGAR, RAIL, TELEC</td>
<td>AGRIC, BANKI, CIVIL, CLEAN, CONSTR, EDUCA, FOODD, FOOTW, FURNIT, GAS, GRAPH, HOREC, INSUR, LIVEP, METAL, PRIVA, PORTS, POSTA, SHIPB, STEEL, TANNI, TEMPA, TEXTI, WOODW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>high</td>
<td><strong>low</strong> AUDIO, CHEMI, COMME, ELECT, INLAN, MARIT, PAPER, ROADT, SEAFI</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The share of outcomes or texts that entail any follow-up at national level as percentage of total outcomes in the period from 2008 - 2015.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OUTCOME 2</th>
<th>#Text ≥ 1</th>
<th>#Text &lt; 1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>high</strong> CIVIL, CHEMI, CONSTR, ELECT, FOODD, LIVEP, RAIL, ROADT, SEAFI</td>
<td><strong>low</strong> CATERI, COMME, HOSPI, SUGAR, METAL, PAPER, TEMPA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The number of annual outcomes produced by SSDCs in the period from 2008 - 2015 is used to measure the ‘activity’ of SSDCs.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Own compilation. SSDCs are listed in alphabetical order.
Table 18 summaries the 39 SSDCs based on the two outcomes produced by social partners in the period 2008 - 2015. The classification highlights the different or multiple purposes of social dialogue for groups of SSDCs. Furthermore, SSDCs groups not only vary with regard to the purpose of dialogue but also in their rather proactive versus reactive behaviour. The SSDCs in black & bold did conclude the highest share of outcome that entail any follow-up at national level and a comparatively moderate overall number of texts in the eight year period (CATERI, HAIR, HOSPI, SUGAR, RAIL, TELEC). This group of SSDCs scores high with regard to outcome 1 and moderate to low on outcome 2. We call this group of SSDCs the ‘proactive social dialogue group’. SSDCs held in grey & bold did conclude a rather low proportion of texts that entail any follow-up at national level but rank high on the average number of texts produced in the period 2008 - 2015 (CHEMI, COMME, ELECT, PAPER, ROADT, SEAFI). This group of SSDCs scores moderately high with regards to outcome 1 but high on outcome 2. We call this group of SSDCs ‘flexible dialogue group’. Part of this group are also SSDCs characterised by rather few outcome 2 (AUDIO, MARIT, INLAN). This group ranks low on outcome 1 and also low on outcome 2. We call this group of SSDCs ‘sponsored dialogue group’ since follow-up outcomes by this group might not have been concluded without institutional help of e.g. the International Labour Organisation. The group of SSDCs in italic & black did not conclude any follow-up outcome in the period under investigation however they rank high with regard to average number of texts (CIVIL, CONSTR, FOOOD, LIVEP, METAL, TEMPA). Since this group of SSDCs scores zero with regard to outcome 1 (i.e. follow-ups at national level) but high on outcome 2 (e.g. joint statements directed to the Commission) we call this group ‘proactive industrial dialogue group’. The final group are SSDCs that did neither conclude follow-up outcomes nor are they very active with regard to texts produced in SSDCs in the eight years under investigation (AGRIC, BANKI, CLEAN, EDUCA, FOOTW, FURNIT, GAS, GRAPH, HOREC, INSUR, PRIVA, PORTS, POSTA, SHIPB, STEEL, TANNI, TEXTI, WOODW). This group of SSDCs scores zero with regard to outcome 1 and low or very low on outcome 2. Based on this observation we call the group ‘reactive dialogue group’ (e.g. responses to policy changes, liberalisation).

10 In the period from 2008 – 2015 only 10.5 percent of the total number of texts produced by SSDCs did entail any follow-up at national level. Average annual outcome for an eight year period is used to take account of more recent developments in SSDCs. Differences in the average annual outcome in the period from 2008 - 2015 and 1998 - 2015 are only observed for five SSDCs. The average annual outcome was slightly higher for the SSDCs in FOOTW, GAS, and GRAPH in the period from 1998 - 2015 and was lower in that period for INLAND compared to 2008 - 2015.
Discussion

With regard to effectiveness or effective ESSD Table 18 shows the multiple purposes of SSDCs. ESSD serves different purposes for different SSDCs. With the different purposes also the relevance of different type of topics tackled at EU level varies between SSDCs. Accordingly the dominance of social and workplace related topics (e.g. Art.153 TFEU) and/or industrial policy issues (e.g. EU2020) and the role of annual vs. multi-annual agenda and work programme formation (Carammia, Princen & Timmermans, 2016). Thus, interest in different type of outcomes may also vary depending on the issues tackled in SSDCs.

Interest in certain outcomes of SSDCs also depends on the structure and composition of sectors. Interest heterogeneity is greater in sectors characterised by heterogeneous enterprise structures across the member states and according to our analysis negatively affect the ability to formulate generally agreed positions in SSDCs. When SSDCs are composed of large and small and medium sized companies, and the interest represented are very heterogeneous this affects the effectiveness of social partners in representing the interests of their members (Behrens & Helfen, 2009; Traxler, 2005). Our analysis indicates that homogeneity of enterprise size has a positive effect on SSDC outcomes, i.e. follow-up outcomes are more likely in sectors characterised either by SMEs or by large companies but not in mixed sectors.

If a significant share of employment is concentrated on few enterprises (e.g. large MNCs) this increases the capacity of social partners to lobby successfully for a policy outcome (Behrens & Helfen, 2009). Alternatively, in SSDCs characterised by heterogeneous size structure the economically weaker SMEs may be used as argument on the employer side why policies should not be coordinated at EU level (e.g. they are too costly, too bureaucratic to implement in SMEs). Outcomes that entail any follow-up in the member states are often opposed with reference to the different economic needs of SMEs and lack of resources to apply those regulations (Behrens & Helfen, 2009:10), while large organisations may oppose EU wide regulations referring to the greater integration of large companies in international/global markets and the need for flexibility (e.g. Marginson & Sisson, 1996).

Investigating the economic structure of sectors and composite of SSDCs provides insight into the complex constellation of interests and different needs of SSDCs. By investigating sector indicators and their role for effective ESSD the project provides new insight into the relationships between economic and industrial relations indicators and SSDC outcomes. While industrial relations indicators are relevant for follow-up outcomes, according to our
analysis they are not relevant for outcomes that entail no follow-up at national level. The only indicator that may facilitate SSDC outcomes is average number of trade unions affiliated to the EU level, and only if we accept a low significance standard.

The usual indicators used to map collective bargaining at national level (e.g. bargaining mode and coverage) only apply to outcomes that entail any commitment from social partners at national level. There is a general power asymmetry between trade unions and employers since employers can choose where they prefer to realise their interests either at company level, state or European level depending on their political influence (Traxler, 1993). Power relations between social partners in SSDCs depend on how sectors are structured. Sectors characterised by large enterprises and concentration of employment have greater capacity to lobby successfully for policy outcomes.

5.2 Qualitative research findings from case studies

The qualitative case studies focused on the understanding of dialogue engagement and effectiveness from actors from different countries and with different engagement in the SSDC. The aim of the in-depth qualitative research was to investigate dialogue processes and practices in sectors and countries characterised by different economic structures and traditions of industrial relations. The sectors chosen for in detail case studies were the SSDCs in metal and hospital, for which we interviewed European level actors from the European sectoral organisations and experts from the relevant Directorate-General, as well as representatives for national trade unions and employer organisations in five countries: Germany, Italy, Poland, Sweden, and the UK (see Table 17 in the Appendix). Thereby the qualitative part complements the quantitative part of the project by bringing in softer contextual factors, as well as factors within the organisation and processes of SSDC, in the analysis of effectiveness. The factors explaining social dialogue processes and practices in SSDCs are derived inductively from the national and European level interviews. The conceptual framework focuses on the role of topics, actors, resources and trust for understanding effective SSDCs (see Graphic 2).

Topics, resources, actors, trust
From the qualitative case studies we may conclude that the choice of topics on which to have dialogue, and the process through which topics are developed and chosen, is of high importance for both engagement and effectiveness of the dialogue. The intention to engage in SSDCs depends on the relevance or importance of topics to the national affiliates. In addition, economic internationalisation and competition influence the function of SSDCs and the interest of trade unions and employers in different ESSD topics. There is e.g. greater interest in industrial policy topics in the metal sector than in the hospital sector, where employment related topics are more widely covered.

In order to engage, topics must according to our analysis be seen as relevant on national level for most participant organisations on both the trade union and employer organisations. Establishing shared interest among actors representing different countries and tradition of interest coordination is more likely if trade unions and employers are able to articulate their goals in terms of (shared) ‘values’ rather than conflicting ‘interests’. Examples of such topics that are seen of value from both employers and trade unions in the hospitals sector is ‘quality of care’, which relates both to employer organisation interests, and trade unions interests. In the metal sector ‘digitalization’ has to some extent a similar standing, since it connects to both working conditions and competitiveness. However, digitalization does not (yet) seem to have as strong relevance for all as quality of care has in the hospital sector, since by some digitalization is seen as a bit of ‘advanced’ topic pushed for by pro-active organisations from members states in which this is most topical. In addition, these two highly valued topics, is something which is also high on the agenda of the European Commission, which is another factor beside national relevance that is important for a topic to engage since the SSDC are influenced by and adjusting on the agenda of the European Commission.

There are however, just as the agenda of the European Commission can be seen as both inspiring and challenging on the national level, two ways how social partners can engage with topics, of which only one leads to effectiveness: proactive engagement is connected to the actors’ willingness to achieve improvements in accordance with the general role of social dialogue: ‘promoting competitiveness and fairness and enhancing economic prosperity and social well-being’ (European Commission 2016, p.3). Reactive engagement which is aimed at stopping or softening emerging policy developments that are unwanted on the national level. Such engagement is rare, but has existed in certain instances in the two sectors studied. This defensive engagement seems to be related to harder outcomes, such as regulation unwanted by employer organisations - e.g. regulation that decreases social partner autonomy - or
developments of standard that may be unwanted on both sides. Regularly though, since consensus about topics is the general rule, such topics would be avoided in the development of the work programs - the typical examples of such being wage related issues which are not tackled in SSDCs. Finally, if topics are less engaging, e.g. for the reason that the issues are not relevant or already handled in what is perceived as a better way on the national arena, the effectiveness decreases since such topics are perceived as being not worth putting a lot of effort into.

As regards resources, the analysis shows the importance of facilitation from the secretariats of the European social partner organisations as well as from the European Commission for effective social dialogue to realize. Since two of the major obstacles to engagement from national actors are organisational resources (financial and human) and language competencies – mainly from CEE and southern affiliates – translation services and financial support from the Commission is of great importance. In addition, good information from the secretariats, and well organised internal preparations and coordination in the European umbrella organisations of trade unions and employers, are important factors fostering both effectiveness and engagement in dialogue. It seems also that more informal coordination prior to SSDC meetings can foster effectiveness since some groundwork in establishing consensus is made. The typical example of that seem to be the Nordic countries, in which different trade unions communicate – at times also with employer organisations – on national level, and then coordinate with organisations in neighbouring countries before European level-preparations for SSDC. In that way, they may get a stronger and clearer voice. Some tendencies of similar if more loosely informal collaborative work or alliances are seen in other regions, and between different countries. However, such strategy may have a backside in creating regional division in SSDC adding to the cultural communicative difficulties mention by some.

When focusing on actors, we find that for effective participation in SSDCs sector knowledge and familiarity with social dialogue processes and practices are important. The relevant knowledge, expertise and relationships with the other actors participating are of central importance: both with affiliates from other member states, the secretariats and the European Commission. Continuity in participation is not only important to gain relevant knowledge about dialogue processes and practices, but also establish personal relationships which help to build trust among actors and promote cooperation. As with national collective bargaining, stability and trust are important factors for social dialogue at the European sectoral level.
Expertise and trustful relations can only be established over time, and thus an important factor fostering effective dialogue is continuity of participation. In addition, participation from key actors (both in terms of organisations and representatives who are sent) at national level facilitates engagement and effective participation in the European social dialogue. It seems that there is quite some variation in how national organisations select and mandate their representatives, and in some cases the process is quite unclear. Lack of adequate representative mandate, and marginal organisational positions in national collective bargaining were mentioned as factors reducing the joint effectiveness in social dialogue. It seems from our analyses that whereas the hospital SSDC is large in terms of number of participants, it is also a bit more fragmented than the metal SSDC. There is a greater variety of more encompassing trade unions and professional or occupational trade union organisations, and between different kinds of (public and private) employer representatives among the participants in hospital SSDC – and not all of them are involved in national collective bargaining. The metal SSDC seems a bit more concentrated both in terms of number of participants and the centrality of their positions at home.

Perceptions of effectiveness

The understanding of what constitutes effective social dialogue is quite varied and broad among the national representatives participating in SSDC. Generally, it seems possible to analytically distinguish between experiences of effectiveness in social dialogue and effectiveness from social dialogue. This corresponds loosely to the effectiveness concepts as defined by the European Commission (see part 1.3).

Effectiveness in social dialogue has to do with ‘effective representation’ and ‘effective participation’, and social partners ability to ‘respond effectively’ to European Commission policies and initiatives (European Commission 1998, 2010b). However, effectiveness in social dialogue not only concern the partners’ capacity to represent members, coordinate interests, and negotiate outcomes. The participants take a broader view and emphasise that there are more and less effective ways to organise the meetings and work in SSDC in general. Examples of that is that SSDC gets more effective if the information sent out by the secretariats is well structured and easy to select from in terms of more and less central documents, and if preparations in the European umbrella organisations are working well. Examples of particularly ineffective instances are events such as SSDC working groups
developing ideas without being given clear delimitations for mandate or clear aims, whereas everything that leads dialogue and work forward is part of effective dialogue, according to some. There is also an understanding of effectiveness in a less goal-oriented sense, in that the SSDC not always have to lead to formal outputs, but that the dialogue is fruitful in itself and builds trust between the participants and familiarity and hopefully even respect concerning ones differences – which leads us to the theme of effectiveness from social dialogue.

Also effectiveness from social dialogue corresponds to definitions by the European Commission, but has more to do with the discussion of ‘effective implementation’ and ‘effective impact’ in the sense that outcomes produced are brought home and implemented in a way that makes a difference at national level (European Commission, 2010b). However, the perception of the effectiveness of social dialogue is broader and more nuanced than that among the participants. Surely, hard outcomes with follow-up – e.g. the “needlestick” agreement in hospital – is seen by many as the most effective output in the sense of implementation and effects on national level. However, many participants are a bit sceptical about discussing effectiveness in terms of a ranking of types of outcomes, or measurements of number of outcomes – particularly from employer organisations and particularly in the metal sector. A contrasting view expressed is that effectiveness from social dialogue has to do with the partners achieving something by themselves that they find important and possible to do by without forced implementation. This might sound as a defensive strategy, but also has to do with expectations on social dialogue as something different from collective bargaining. In addition, there exists a common baseline from which effectiveness from social dialogue is discussed – regardless of what one thinks about different outcomes and implementation models – and that is that effective social dialogue should result in something that makes a difference in that it is of use or value, or that is beneficial for participants or their members. This does not have to have to be achieved through the kind of direct effects that hard outcomes produce, however. It may as well be effective in a much more indirect way. Thus, also learning through benchmarking or good practices to bring home, and the communication and increased mutual understanding and respect of differences between partners and countries, may be seen important parts of effective dialogue. In addition, joint statements and presentation from the sector aimed at the outside actors – and to lobby for or against important issues in relation to the European Commission – is also seen as part of an effective dialogue, even though they may not have a direct effect for the members on national level.
6. References


EPSU (2017) HOSPEEM-EPSU EU-funded project “Promoting effective recruitment and retention policies for health workers in the EU by ensuring access to CPD and healthy and safe workplaces supportive of patient safety and quality care” (2017–2018).


### Appendix

Table 1: Overview of SSDCs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Natural resources sectors</th>
<th>Agriculture</th>
<th>Extractive industry</th>
<th>Sea fisheries</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Chemical industry</td>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>Electricity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Food and drink industry</td>
<td>Footwear</td>
<td>Furniture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gas</td>
<td>Paper Industry</td>
<td>Metal industry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Shipbuilding</td>
<td>Steel</td>
<td>Sugar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tanning and leather</td>
<td>Textile and clothing</td>
<td>Woodworking</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Manufacturing sectors</th>
<th>Audiovisual</th>
<th>Banking</th>
<th>Catering</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Central government administrations</td>
<td>Civil aviation</td>
<td>Commerce</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Education</td>
<td>Graphical industry</td>
<td>Horeca</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hospitals</td>
<td>Industrial cleaning</td>
<td>Inland waterways</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Insurance</td>
<td>Live performance</td>
<td>Local and regional government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Maritime transport</td>
<td>Personal services</td>
<td>Ports</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Postal services</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Private security</td>
<td>Professional football</td>
<td>Railways</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Road transport</td>
<td>Telecommunications</td>
<td>Temporary agency work</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: European Commission, 2016: 11
Graphic 1. Map of the research design of the SPEEED Project.

- **Literature Review**
- **QUALITATIVE PART**
  - Goal: in-depth study of ESSD processes
  - Guideline development for interviews at national and European level
  - (Primary) data collection and analysis
  - Validation of conceptual framework
- **QUANTITATIVE PART**
  - Goal: mapping ESSD context and actors
  - Development of analytical framework for Effective Engagement Indicator (EEI)
  - Secondary data collection and analysis
  - Validation of analytical framework
- **Validation of data**
  - *e.g. participatory observations, follow-up interviews, triangulation of qualitative and quantitative data.*
Table 2: Summary of data sources: primary and secondary data sources.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Primary data</th>
<th>Secondary data</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Interviews with SPs at national level</em></td>
<td>DE: 2 TU &amp; 1 EMPL HOSP; 2 TU &amp; 1 EMPL MET. IT: 2 TU &amp; 2 EMPL HOSP, 2 TU &amp; 1 EMPL MET. PL: 3 TU HOSP, 2 TU MET. SE: 3 TU &amp; 1 EMPL HOSP, 1 TU &amp; 1 EMPL MET. UK: 3 TU &amp; 1 EMPL HOSP, 1 TU &amp; 1 EMPL MET.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Interviews with SPs and EC at EU-level</em></td>
<td>EU-TU 1 HOSP &amp; 1 MET; EU-EMPL 1 HOSP &amp; 1 MET, DG EMPL: 1 MET, 1 HOSP.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Follow-up interviews</em></td>
<td>EU-TU 1 HOSP &amp; 1 MET EU-EMPL 1 HOSP</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Participation in SSDC meetings</em></td>
<td>Observations: Working Group (WG) hospital; WG and Plenary metal.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>European Commission</em></td>
<td>CIRCABC Social dialogue text data base.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Eurofound Representativeness Studies</em></td>
<td>39 SSDCs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Eurostat Structural Business Statistic data</em></td>
<td>39 sectors</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>OECD Health Statistic</em></td>
<td>Hospital sector</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Eurofound 2016</em></td>
<td>The concept of representativeness at national, international and European level</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>European Commission 2010</em></td>
<td>European Sectoral Social Dialogue Recent developments</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Total TU HOSP: 13. Total EMPL HOSP: 6. Total TU MET: 8. Total EMPL MET: 4 DG EMPL: 2; EU-TU 1 HOSP & 1 MET; EU-MET 1 HOSP & 1 MET. Three follow-up interviews to validate data.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicators</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Average and Standard Deviation* (n=39)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of enterprises</td>
<td>Average number of enterprises in the sector. Operationalized by using logarithm.</td>
<td>7.954 (2.178)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Size of sector</td>
<td>Average number of employees in the sector as a share of total number of employees in country. The higher the indicator the more employees employed in the sector compared to all other sectors.</td>
<td>0.013 (0.017)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heterogeneity size of sector</td>
<td>Heterogeneity of the size of the sector across EU member states. The indicator reflects differences across the EU member states in the size of the sector. The higher the indicator the more heterogeneous, i.e. different, is the size of the sector in terms of how many employees are employed within the country. Higher values of the indicator reflect that the size of the sector is different across countries with some countries in which the sector is very important in terms of the number of employees while in other countries the sector is small with relatively few employees. Vice versa if the indicator is low the size of the sector is similar in all EU member states in the sense that either the sector is small, medium or large in all countries. Thus the lower the indicator the more homogenous the sector size and the larger the more heterogeneous.</td>
<td>0.008 (0.010)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment development</td>
<td>Average percentage change, i.e. development, of employment in the sector.</td>
<td>0.833 (0.197)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Large enterprises</td>
<td>Average share of large enterprises (≥ 250 employees) as percentage of total enterprises in the sector.ian number of small and medium size enterprises in the sector as a share of total number of enterprises in the sector.</td>
<td>0.086 (0.121)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Heterogeneity across member states with regard to the number of employees employed in large enterprises (≥ 250 employees).** The indicator reflects differences across the EU member states in the size of enterprises in the sector. The higher this indicator the more heterogeneous, i.e. different, is the size of enterprises in the sector across the EU member states in the sense that in some countries the majority of employees is employed in large enterprises while in other the majority of employees is employed in small enterprises. Vice versa if the indicator is low the structure of employment in large, medium or small companies is the same. Thus the lower the indicator the more homogenous the employment structure and the larger the more heterogeneous.

Data: Eurostat SBS, NACE 2 Rev. (division, group, classes).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Heterogeneity enterprise size</td>
<td>Data: Eurostat SBS, NACE 2 Rev. (division, group, classes).</td>
<td>0.221</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(0.110)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trade union bargaining</td>
<td>Average number of trade unions engaged in collective wage bargaining in the sector.</td>
<td>3.192</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Data: Eurofound Representativeness Studies.</td>
<td>(1.594)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employer bargaining</td>
<td>Average number of employer organisations engaged in collective wage bargaining in the sector.</td>
<td>1.535</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Data: Eurofound Representativeness Studies.</td>
<td>(0.819)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bargaining mode</td>
<td>Average mode of collective wage bargaining in the sector.</td>
<td>0.531</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1.00 = multi-employer bargaining (MEB)</td>
<td>(0.102)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0.75 = predominance of MEB</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0.50 = single employer bargaining (SEB) and MEB</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0.25 = predominance of SEB</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0.00 = no collective wage bargaining</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Data: Eurofound Representativeness Studies.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bargaining coverage</td>
<td>Average share of collective bargaining coverage in the sector (as percentage).</td>
<td>0.564</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Data: Eurofound Representativeness Studies.</td>
<td>(0.154)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affiliated trade unions</td>
<td>Average number of trade unions affiliated to European trade union organisations in the sector.</td>
<td>1.977</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.691)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Measure</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Value</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Share affiliated trade unions</td>
<td>Average share of national trade unions affiliated to European trade unions</td>
<td>0.612</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Calculation: Number of trade unions affiliated to European sectoral trade</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>unions as a share of total number of trade unions.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affiliated employer organisations</td>
<td>Average number of employer organisations affiliated to European employer</td>
<td>0.989</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>organisations in the sector.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Share affiliated employers</td>
<td>Average share of national employer organisations affiliated to European</td>
<td>0.522</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>sectoral employers as a share of total number of employers.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domain congruence trade unions</td>
<td>Average domain congruence of trade unions affiliated to European trade</td>
<td>1.477</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>unions in the sector. The indicator shows whether the domain of national</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>trade unions in the sector match the domain of the relevant SSDC. The</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>scores of congruence are:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4 = congruence</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3 = Sectionalism</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2 = Overlap</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 = Sectional overlap</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0 = not declared</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domain congruence employers</td>
<td>Average domain congruence of employers affiliated to European employers</td>
<td>1.524</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>in the sector. The indicator shows whether the domain of national employers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>in the sector match the domain of the relevant SSDC. The scores of</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>congruence are:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4 = congruence</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3 = Sectionalism</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2 = Overlap</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 = Sectional overlap</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0 = not declared</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indicator</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Value</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trade union participation in SSDCs</td>
<td>Average share of trade unions participating in SSDC as percentage of total SSDC participants.</td>
<td>0.433 (0.093)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employer participation in SSDCs</td>
<td>Average share of employer organisations participating in SSDC as percentage of total SSDC participants.</td>
<td>0.567 (0.089)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trade union representation in SSDCs</td>
<td>Average number of European trade unions representing SSDCs.</td>
<td>1.256 (0.751)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Data: European Commission.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employer representation in SSDCs</td>
<td>Average number of European employer organisations representing SSDCs.</td>
<td>1.487 (1.097)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Data: European Commission.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trade union mandating</td>
<td>Average mandating mode of European trade unions representing SSDCs. The scores for mandating rules are:</td>
<td>3.794 (0.695)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4 = statutory</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3 = non-statutory</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2 = ad hoc / other</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 = mixed (e.g. when there are more than one organisations)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0 = no</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Data: Eurofound 2016.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employer mandating</td>
<td>Average mandating mode of European employer organisations representing SSDCs. The scores for mandating rules are:</td>
<td>1.974 (0.811)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4 = statutory</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3 = non-statutory</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2 = ad hoc / other</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 = mixed (e.g. when there are more than one organisations)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0 = no</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Data: Eurofound 2016.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outcome variables:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Follow-up outcomes</td>
<td>Average share of type 1 and type 2 texts as percentage of total texts produced by SSDCs between 2008 and 2015.</td>
<td>0.105 (0.197)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Type 1 texts: agreement</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Type 2 texts: process oriented text (framework of action, guidelines, code of conduct), follow-up report</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Type 3 texts: joint opinion, declaration, tool  
Data: European Commission.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Annual outcomes</th>
<th>Average number of texts produced per year by a SSDC between 2008 and 2015, or since SSDCs were established for SSDCs set up after 2008 (Food &amp; Drink, Paper, Ports).</th>
<th>0.884 (0.603)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Data: European Commission.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: * Column “Average and standard Deviation” shows averages and standard deviations across SSDCs. Averages of indicators are taken over all EU member states. All indicators which are based on Eurostat Structural Business Statistics (sbs) refer to period averages from 2008 - 2015. ** SSDCs for which NACE data are not available are AGRIC, HOREC, SUGAR, PORTS, SEAFI respective data for these SSDCs are calculated on basis average company size quartiles. All indicators from Eurofound Representativeness Studies refer to the period or year indicated in the relevant representativeness study which falls within the Eurostat SBS period. All indicators which are based on data from the European Commission refer to the average over the periods given in the table.
Figure 1a - 1c. Scatter plot of indicators which correlate with the ‘follow-up outcomes’

(a) ‘heterogeneity of enterprise size’

(b) ‘bargaining mode’

(c) ‘bargaining coverage’

Note: Y-axis shows ‘follow-up outcomes’ for all indicators and X-axis shows indicators. Dotted line indicates fitted regression line. SSDCs with no follow-up outcomes in the period 2008 - 2015 are: AGRIC, BANKI, CIVIL, CLEAN, CONSTR, EDUCA, FOODD, FOOTW, FURNIT, GAS, GRAPH, HOREC, INSUR, LIVEP, METAL, PRIVA, PORTS, POSTA, SHIPB, STEEL, TANNI, TEMPA, TEXTI, WOODW.
Figure 2a – 2c. Scatter plot of indicators which correlate with ‘annual outcomes’

(a) ‘number of enterprises’

(b) ‘size of the sector’

(c) ‘employer bargaining’

Note: Y-axis shows annual outcomes for all indicators and X-axis shows indicators. Dotted line indicates fitted regression line. SSDCs that did produce no (FOOTW) or maximum 1 text every 4 years are: BANKI, GAS, GRAPH, INSUR, SHIPB, TEXTI.
Figure 2d - 2f. Scatter plot of indicators which correlate with ‘annual outcomes’

(a) ‘trade unions bargaining’

(b) ‘affiliated trade unions’

(c) ‘domain congruence of trade unions’

Note: Y-axis shows annual outcomes for all indicators and X-axis shows indicators. Dotted line indicates fitted regression line. SSDCs that did produce no (FOOTW) or maximum 1 text every 4 years are: BANKI, GAS, GRAPH, INSUR, SHIPB, TEXTI.
Table 10. Industrial relations regimes in Europe.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Social partnership (Cont.)</th>
<th>Polarized/state-centred (South)</th>
<th>Organized corporatism (North)</th>
<th>Liberal pluralism (Angl.)</th>
<th>Fragmented/state-centred (East)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Union density</strong></td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Social partner organization</strong></td>
<td>Both sides strong</td>
<td>Variable</td>
<td>Both sides strong</td>
<td>Both sides strong</td>
<td>Both sides weak</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Power balance</strong></td>
<td>Balanced</td>
<td>Alternating</td>
<td>Labor oriented</td>
<td>Employer oriented</td>
<td>Employer oriented</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Main level of bargaining</strong></td>
<td>Sector</td>
<td>Variable</td>
<td>Sector</td>
<td>Company</td>
<td>Company</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bargaining style</strong></td>
<td>Integrate/d/coordinated</td>
<td>Confictual/uncoordinated</td>
<td>Integrated/coordinated</td>
<td>Confictual/uncoordinated</td>
<td>Acquiescent/uncoordinated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>State Role in IR</strong></td>
<td>Shadow of hierarchy</td>
<td>Frequent intervention</td>
<td>Limited/mediating</td>
<td>Non-intervention</td>
<td>Limited/Transition oriented</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Partners role in public policy</strong></td>
<td>Institutionalized</td>
<td>Irregular/politicized</td>
<td>Institutionalized</td>
<td>Rare/event-driven</td>
<td>Irregular/politicized</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Sources: Visser et al., 2009; Van Rie et al., 2015; Eurofound, 2017*
**SPEEED interview guidelines**

Three interview guidelines have been used for the field research:

- **a)** an interview guideline designed for interviews with representatives of social partner organisations at the European level
- **b)** an interview guideline designed for European Commission interviewees
- **c)** an interview guideline designed for interviews with national social partner representatives (DE; IT; PL; SE; UK)

The three guidelines address a set of dimensions identified as the relevant ones for the study. The guidelines only differ slightly in order to match the respective group of respondents. The guideline developed for EU social partners served as a starting point.

Based on the English version of each of the guidelines, the field researchers translated the guideline into German, Italian, Polish, and Swedish. Detailed questions and wording had been adapted either to the hospital or to the metal sector setting. The topics and aspects addressed during the interviews with the three groups of respondents are summarized below.

a) Interview guideline EU social partners

Table 14a. Appendix Interview guideline EU social partners.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>1) SSDC work programme</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Selection of topics and objectives (process)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Criteria / factors that influence which topics / objectives are included in the work programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Involvement in the identification and selection process of SSDC topics / objectives (of affiliates, different actors)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>2) Capacity of SSDCs to produce dialogue outcomes</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Mandate from affiliates to produce SSDC texts / outcomes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Perception and experience of the current regulation / mandating</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3) Type of SSDC outcome

- Factors that determine outcomes of the work of SSDCs
- Role Commission / other EU institutions in producing different outcomes
- Type of outcomes organisation aims to achieve
- Organisation want to achieve with different outcomes/texts?

4) SSDC - Social dialogue practices

- Information sharing with affiliates / communication channels
- Affiliates engaged in working groups and / or plenary meetings etc.
- Factors for / against active participation by affiliates
- Work between EU social partners (including decision-making; role of trust)
- Factors that hamper / foster consensus building in SSDC

5) The role of the Commission in SSDC

- Support by Commission
- Role of DG EMPL
- Role of other DGs

6) Monitoring and compliance

- Monitoring of SSDC texts (process and experiences)
- Impact of SSDC texts at different levels, concrete measures / examples
- Room for improvement
- Evaluation by Commission

7) ‘Effectiveness’

- Meaning of “effective dialogue” (for different actors)
- Factors that allow dialogue to be “effective” / that hinder the “effectiveness”
- Aspects of SSDC judged as “effective” / “ineffective”
- Overall assessment of SSDC / room for improvement

8) AOB

- Any other aspects concerning European (sectoral) social dialogue

Source: Own compilation.
### 1) Work programmes

- Selection of topics and objectives for the work programme of the Commission and DG EMPL
- Implications for DG EMPL and social dialogue / SSDC work programme
- Role of SP in this process

### 2) The function of the Commission in ‘promoting’ social dialogue

- Commission support for SSDCs (promote dialogue in practice)
- Changes in support provided (how, why)
- SP expectations towards Commission
- Commission role in case of consultations vs. autonomous dialogue
- Commission information about content and progress of SSDC
- Discussion / information exchange within DG EMPL

### 3) Monitoring and compliance

- Evaluation of SSDC functioning and outcomes (process, criteria)
- Impact of the SSDCs / SSDC texts
- Meaning of “impact” (for different actors / levels)
- Concrete measures regarding the follow-up and implementation of SSDC texts at national level
- Monitoring approaches of SSDC texts / room for improvement

### 4) ‘Effectiveness’

- Meaning of “effective dialogue” (for different actors)
- Factors that allow dialogue to be “effective” / that hinder the “effectiveness”
- Aspects of SSDC judged as “effective” / “ineffective”
- Overall assessment of SSDC / room for improvement

### 5) AOB

- Any other aspects concerning European (sectoral) social dialogue

Source: Own compilation.
Table 14c. Interview guideline national social partners.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1) National situation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Most important/most discussed topics and core issues in organisation / work programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Membership and role of organisation for the sector</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Involvement in collective bargaining (main level etc.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Involvement in policy-making / consultation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2) SSDC - Social dialogue practices</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Involvement in SSDC (organisation / interviewee) – since when, how</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information sharing, support by EU social partner organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation in meetings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dissemination of information on SSDC (horizontally, vertically)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>3) SSDC Work programme</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Selection of topics and objectives (process)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Criteria / factors that influence which topics / objectives are included in the work programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Involvement in the identification and selection process of SSDC topics / objectives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Topics you / your organisation would like to see in the WP</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>4) SSDC outcomes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mandate given to EU social partner organisation to produce SSDC texts / outcomes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perception and experience of the current regulation / mandating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type of outcomes organisation aims to achieve</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Factors that determine outcomes of the work of SSDCs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>5) SSDC - Social dialogue practices (work in the SSDC)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Affiliates engaged in working groups and / or plenary meetings etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Factors for / against active participation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work within and between EU social partners (including decision-making, process until joint outcome; role of trust)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Factors that hamper / foster consensus building in SSDC</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
- Coordination with other national affiliates

5) The role of the Commission in SSDC

- Role of DG EMPL
- Role of other DGs

6) Monitoring and compliance

- Monitoring of SSDC texts (process and experiences)
- Impact of SSDC texts at different levels, concrete measures / examples; difficulties
- Overall assessment; room for improvement

7) ‘Effectiveness’

- Meaning of “effective dialogue” (for different actors)
- Factors that allow dialogue to be “effective” / that hinder the “effectiveness”
- Aspects of SSDC judged as “effective” / “ineffective”
- Overall assessment of SSDC (development, value added) / room for improvement

8) AOB

- Any other aspects concerning European (sectoral) social dialogue

Source: Own compilation.
Overview of SSDC outcomes (joint texts) hospitals and metal SSDC

The following tables 15 and 16 give an overview of jointly reached outcomes (texts) in the SSDCs metal and hospitals. The tables list the title and date of the joint texts. Furthermore, the type of text is indicated. The typology of texts and all other data has been derived from the Commission’s social dialogue texts database.

Please note as an amendment for the SSDC in the metal sector, that Ceemet and the predecessors of IndustriAll, EMCEF and EMF, have also signed the multisectoral autonomous agreement “Agreement on Workers Health Protection through the Good Handling and Use of Crystalline Silica and Products containing it” in 2006. More information on the agreement is available at [http://www.nepsi.eu/](http://www.nepsi.eu/).

a) Case 1 Metal: Overview of SSDC outcomes (texts)

Table 15. SSDC Metal outcomes (texts).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title of the joint text (EN)</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Type of text</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>19/06/2017</td>
<td>Joint opinion</td>
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<td>IndustriAll-CEEMET Statement on the 60th anniversary of the Treaty of Rome</td>
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<td>The impact of digitalisation on the world of work in the metal, engineering and technology-based industries</td>
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<td>Recovering and strengthening competitiveness and safeguarding sustainable employment</td>
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Case 2 Hospital: Overview of SSDC outcomes (texts)

Table 16. SSDC Hospital outcomes (texts).

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<tr>
<th>Title (EN)</th>
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<td>Joint Declaration on Continuing Professional Development (CPD) and Life-Long Learning (LLL) for All Health Workers in the EU</td>
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<td>Framework of Actions on Recruitment and Retention – Follow-up report</td>
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<td>Guidelines and examples of good practice to address the challenges of an ageing workforce</td>
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<td>Use and implementation of the EPSU-HOSPEEM Code of Conduct on Ethical Cross-Border Recruitment and Retention in the Hospital Sector</td>
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<td>Implementing the Framework Agreement on prevention from sharp injuries in the hospital and healthcare sector concluded by HOSPEEM and EPSU</td>
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Table 17. List summarising interviews conducted for the SPEEED project.

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Participatory observations:

| P1  | SSDC      | Working group meeting       | Hospital | 2017     |
| P2  | SSDC      | Working group meeting       | Metal    | 2017     |
| P3  | SSDC      | Plenary meeting             | Metal    | 2017     |
| P4  | SSDC      | Working group meeting       | Metal    | 2018     |

Interview name indicating level / country. Date indicating month and year. Duration indicating hours and minutes.*Interview by phone. ***three interviewees. **two interviewees.