

33. Industrial relations in central government

Industrial relations refer to the relationship between unions and employers, and have the goal of including employee representatives in the decision making process on workforce policies. Unions are involved to varying degrees in HRM decisions on compensation elements, working conditions, statutory employment provisions, code of conduct, right to strike, introduction of new management tools and government restructuring. In the wake of the economic crisis, good industrial relations between civil servants and governments are a particularly useful asset in terms of facilitating sustainable solutions to adapt workforce conditions and organisations to the changing social and economic environment. Well managed, healthy industrial relations are also useful in anticipating future changes and reducing associated costs of reforms.

The funding arrangements of central government unions are important especially for transition economies where the foundations for social dialogue are still being built. In nine responding OECD countries and one non-member country, central government unions are partially funded by public funds. Only two member countries indicated that unions are funded mostly by public funds: Spain and Hungary. In the far majority of OECD countries (22) public sector unions receive no public funding.

Collective negotiations on working conditions, wages and overall remuneration take place both mandatorily and voluntarily. Some agreements are binding by law, others are political commitments, and still others are voluntary collective agreements as illustrated in Table 33.1. Union agreement for compensation and performance pay is mandatory in 11 and 10 OECD countries respectively. Indeed, in Canada, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Israel, Italy, Mexico, the Netherlands, Norway, Slovenia and Sweden union agreement over basic salary and social benefits is mandatory. Likewise, the right to strike, working conditions and statutory employment rules are further issues where consultation with public sector unions is required by law and/or where agreement is mandatory. In the cases of changes to the Code of Conduct or the introduction of new management tools, consultation with unions is mostly voluntary (16 and 15 OECD countries respectively).

In contrast, public sector unions are not normally involved in the process of government restructuring. With the exception of the Russian Federation, none of the respond-

ing countries require mandatory agreement with the unions on such issues. In the Czech Republic, Finland, France, Italy, Norway, Slovenia and Switzerland, however, unions must be at least consulted on restructuring. There are also great differences across the countries in the ability of unions to influence employment conditions, with the Nordic countries leading in this regard.

Methodology and definitions

Data refer to 2010 and were collected through the 2010 OECD Survey on Strategic Human Resources Management. Respondents were predominately senior officials in central government HRM departments, and data refer to HRM practices in central government. The survey was completed by all OECD member countries except Luxembourg. Definitions of the civil service, as well as the organisations governed at the central level of government, differ across countries and should be considered when making comparisons. The involvement of unions in the daily management of individual staff is not measured in the survey. The terms public and civil service/servants are used interchangeably throughout this chapter. See Annex E for further country-specific information.

Further reading

European Commission (2008), *Industrial Relations in Europe*, Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, Luxembourg.

OECD (2010), *OECD Reviews of Human Resource Management in Government – Brazil 2010: Federal Government*, OECD Publishing, Paris.

Table notes

See Annex E for further country-specific information as well as details on the methodology and factors used in constructing the index.

Information on data for Israel: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888932315602>.

VII. HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT PRACTICES


33. Industrial relations in central government

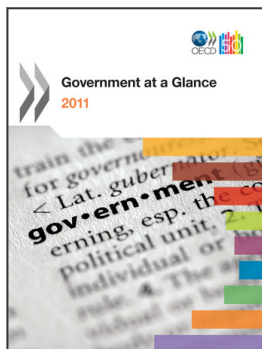
33.1 Extent of union involvement in HRM issues and sources of financial support (2010)

	Base salary/social benefits	Additional remuneration and performance pay	Right to strike/minimum service	Work conditions (number of working hours, part time work)	Employment framework (statutory rules, etc.)	Code of conduct	Introduction of new management tools	Government restructuring (delegation, institutional change, changes to the budget process)	Funding of civil service unions
Australia	■	■	■	■	●	○	●	○	No public funding
Austria	●	○	n.a.	○	●	●	○	○	No public funding
Belgium	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	○	Partial public funding
Canada	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	n.a.	No public funding
Chile	●	●	n.a.	○	●	●	●	n.a.	No public funding
Czech Republic	■	■	■	■	●■	●	●	■	No public funding
Denmark	●	●	●	●	●	●	○	○	No public funding
Estonia	●	○	n.a.	●	●	●	●	○	No public funding
Finland	●■	●■	●●	●■	■	●■	●	●■	No public funding
France	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	Partial public funding
Germany	■	■	n.a.	●	●	●	n.a.	n.a.	No public funding
Greece	●	○	■	■	●	●	○	●	Partial public funding
Hungary	■	●	●	■	■	●	●	○	Mostly public funding
Iceland	●	●	●■	●	●■	■	○	○	No public funding
Ireland	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	○	Partial public funding
Israel	●	●	●	●	■	○	■	●	No public funding
Italy	●	●	■	■	■	■	●	■	Partial public funding
Japan	■	■	n.a.	■	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	No public funding
Korea	●	●	○	●	○	○	○	○	No public funding
Mexico	●	●	■	■	●	■	■	●	No public funding
Netherlands	●	○	○	■	●	○	○	○	Partial public funding
New Zealand	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	No public funding
Norway	●	●	●■	●■	●■	●	●■	■	Partial public funding
Poland	■	■	■	■	■	■	n.a.	●	Partial public funding
Portugal	■	■	■	■	■	●	■	n.a.	No public funding
Slovak Republic	■	○	○	■	●	○	○	○	No public funding
Slovenia	●	●	■	■	■	●	■	■	No public funding
Spain	n.a.	n.a.	■	■	■	■	○	○	Mostly public funding
Sweden	●	●	●	●	●	○	●	○●	No public funding
Switzerland	■	■	■	■	■	●	●	■	No public funding
Turkey	■	■	○	●	●	●	●	●	No public funding
United Kingdom	■	■	●	■	●	●	●	●	No public funding
United States	○	○	○	●	●	○	●	●	Partial public funding
Brazil	●	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	No public funding
Russian Federation	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	●	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	●	Partial public funding
Ukraine	■	■	○	■	■	■	■	■	No public funding
Total OECD33									
● Agreement with union is mandatory	11	10	8	7	7	1	0	0	No public funding: 22
■ By law, union must be consulted	14	12	14	19	14	8	7	7	Partial public funding: 9
● Consultation with union is voluntary	6	4	3	6	12	16	15	9	Mostly public funding: 2
○ Union not normally involved in negotiation process	1	6	5	2	1	7	8	13	

n.a.: Not available.

Source: 2010 OECD Survey on Strategic Human Resources Management in Central/Federal Governments.

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