



# Belgian social dialogue

**Short presentation of the organisation and the principles  
of the Belgian social dialogue**



# Elaborated system of social dialogue

- At all levels
  - Cross-sectorial level
  - Sectorial level
  - Company level
  
- Different socio-economic fields
  - Economic policy
  - Social policy
  - Occupational safety and health



# Elaborated system of social dialogue

- Informal dialogue
  - Cross-sectorial agreement amongst the social partners
- Formal dialogue



# STRUCTURE OF NATIONAL SOCIAL DIALOGUE

	SOCIAL	ECONOMIC	HEALTH & SAFETY
<b>NATIONAL</b>  ACV, ABVV, ACLVB VBO, NCMV, UCM, BB, CSPO	National Labour Council	Central Economic Council	High Council for health and safety on the working place
<b>BRANCH</b>  Branch organisation trade unions Branch federation employers organisation	Joined committees	Consultative committees	Joined committees
<b>ENTERPRISE</b>  Trade unions and employers in the enterprise	Enterprise council Shop stewards	Enterprise council Shop stewards	Committee for health and safety on the working place



# National Labour Council

(Established in 1952, consists 24 members, bipartite)

- Advising federal Government
- Collective labour agreement
  - Minimum wage
  - Bridging pension (prepension)
- Reports
- [www.cnt-nar.be](http://www.cnt-nar.be)



# Central Economic Council

(Established in 1948, 50 members, bipartite)

- Formulate recommendations to Belgian Government and Belgian parliament
- Elaborate reports concerning economic problems
- Forum for exchange of ideas between social partners
- [www.ccecrb.fgov.be](http://www.ccecrb.fgov.be)



# High Council for health and safety on the working place

- Advice to the government on matters of health and security at work
- [www.werk.belgie.be](http://www.werk.belgie.be)



# Joint Committees

- Are working at the branch level
- Specialized in social matters (collective agreements)
- Also dealing with matters of health and safety policy at the branch level





# Consultative Committees

- Working within the Central Economic Council
- Dealing with specific branches



# Enterprise level

- Works council (100)
- Safety and health committee (50)
- Trade union delegation



# Social elections

- Every 4 years
- Works councils: +100
- Health and safety committees: +50
- Shop stewards designated by the trade unions
- Representatives unions elected by all workers
- Indication of importance: distribution of mandates on national level



# Social elections

## Results 2016 – works council

- ACV: 55,85%
- ABVV: 33,80%
- ACLVB: 8,83%
- Others: 1,52%



# Characteristics of the Belgian social dialogue model

1. Autonomous representative social partners
2. Bi-partite system + informal tripartisme
3. Multi-level collective bargaining system
4. Institutionalized model
5. Role of government
6. Collective agreement = important legal tool
7. Erga omnes extension



# 1. Representative social partners

- 100% autonomy
- Legal conditions of representativeness
- Intersectorial and sectorial organizations
- Some 200 employers' organizations
- 3 trade unions + branch unions
- High union density (+/-70%)



## 2. Bi-partite system + informal tripartism

- Social dialogue is an issue of the most representative employers' organizations and trade unions
- Social partners negotiate in an informal way with government about public policy in the field of social, economic, health and budget affairs



### 3. Multi-level collective bargaining system

Social dialogue at cross-industry, sectorial and company level

- **Sector = main level**
- Evolution to a coordinated system (sector/company)





## 4. Institutionalized model

- Social dialogue mainly takes place in bodies established by government or under the law
- Sectorial social dialogue takes place in 170 joint bodies, each competent for a branch of industry
- These 170 joint bodies are composed of +/-5000 representatives of employers' organizations and trade unions and sits +/-2000 times per year



## 5. Role of government

- Subsidiarity: government leaves the initiative in the field of employment and working conditions to social partners
- Government takes action mainly at request of social partners
- Government supports social dialogue in different ways



## 6. Collective agreement = important legal tool

- 70% labour law laid down in collective agreements
- Collective agreements can be concluded at cross-industry, sectorial and company level
- Extension of the binding force of intersectorial and sectorial collective agreements to all employers and employees
- 1200 intersectorial/sectorial agreements, 3500/400 company agreements



## 7. Erga omnes extension

- Binding force of intersectorial and sectorial collective agreements can be extended by government
- Collective agreement becomes a regulation
- Supervision of the Labor Inspectorate
- Fines and penalties in case of no-compliance
- >90% of collective agreements receive Erga omnes extension (makes collective agreements generally binding)

