



Break up to get back together (BreakBack) VS/2019/0079

*The impact of unionisation through innovative service provision
on union membership and industrial relations*

Intermediate Technical Report - Activities Update (1st March 2019 - 29th February 2020)

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General content

The **BreakBack** Project focuses on “**service provision**” as a strategy through which unions aim to enhance their membership, to “revitalize” action and to relaunch the role of an inclusive and innovative social dialogue, by reaching groups and individuals who are often excluded from protection.

The research regards employees commonly identified as “vulnerable” (non-standard employment, digital workers, etc.). BreakBack deals with self-employed workers, the I-pros and freelancers.

The purpose of BreakBack is to assess how unions respond to individualisation and to evaluate the impact of service provision on membership.

The project hypothesis is that in the attempt to reach workers whose interests are fragmented and who are less keen on becoming union members, unionists are widely experimenting a “customisation” of their offer. Understanding how this process can coexist with the core values of the unionism is our main aim.

The research hypothesis is that it may be necessary to “**break up**” some rigidity in the protection of work as a way to strengthen personalized support instruments.

As the Coronavirus crisis has confirmed, these forms of protection cannot fail to “get back” to the **collective solidarity** that is a crucial point of industrial relations and union history.

Service provision is one of the possible forms that unions undertake to achieve **inclusive labour markets** against the backdrop of deregulation and welfare retrenchment.

Sector- and company-level collective bargaining are increasingly related to the **territorial dimension of the actors**.

In the European context, also due to the difficult sustainability of welfare systems, collective bargaining deals with the growing centrality of **non-wage welfare instruments** (often tax incentives), also provided by private companies and joint bodies, managed by the social partners.

Due to the swirling processes of **digitization** and **labour market volatility**, collective bargaining finds itself confronted with “**new generation**” **protections**, which are the evolution of institutions that have existed for decades, and relate to very relevant topics.

<p>Aims</p>	<p><i>The action has three main aims:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to assess how trade unions respond to the processes of individualisation in society; • to observe the impact of innovation in service provision as a trade union strategy to enhance its membership; • to focus on service provision as an instrument to reach those social groups and individuals who are often excluded from union protection (e.g. non-standard forms of employment, digital workers, partially and totally autonomous workers, I-pros, freelancers, workers with multiple employers, sub-contracted and posted workers, consultants, etc.).
<p>Objectives</p>	<p><i>The main project objectives are:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to assess what strategies trade unions adopt to overcome worker disaffection with active participation in interest representation practices; • to collect and describe the variety of services provided in five EU Member States, in terms of diffusion, degree of innovativeness, main targets, their governance and the possible presence of assessment plans; • to evaluate the effectiveness of this strategy of membership revitalization.
<p>Research Questions</p>	<p><i>Some research questions:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How the trade unions, at national and sectoral levels, cope with the decrease in union membership? • Are they experimenting specific revitalization strategies? • Are those strategies related to the provision of any kind of services intentionally designed to affiliate service users to the trade unions? • What kind of services do trade unions provide? What are their main features? Are they of an innovative or a traditional kind? • What is the impact of these services on membership and participation? • Are some services more effective than others in increasing the chance for union membership? Are they more effective vis-à-vis other more traditional revitalization strategies? • Do the trade unions evaluate the impact of their strategies?

Workplan	<p>Project Workplan</p> <p>The Project will last 24 months; it was started on the 1st of March 2019 and will end on 28th of February 2021, unless there is a possible extension granted by the European Commission following the Covid 19 emergency.</p>
Partnership	<p>The project partnership is comprises six applicants (one trade union organization and five universities/national study centers), one study center foundation as an affiliated organisation (to the applicant) and one associated European trade union organisation as associated organization (to the applicant).</p> <p>Applicant: CISL (ITALY)</p> <p>Co-Applicants: LSRC - Lithuanian Social Research Centre (LITHUANIA) UAB - UNIVERSITAT AUTÒNOMA DE BARCELONA (SPAIN) DSPS-UNIFI - Università degli Studi di Firenze (ITALY) FAOS - Employment Relations Research Centre, Department of Sociology, University of Copenhagen (DENMARK) DIESIS coop scr-l-fs (BELGIUM)</p> <p>Affiliated organisation: Fondazione Ezio Tarantelli Centro Studi Ricerche e Formazione, (ITALY)</p> <p>Associated organisation: European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC, EUROPEAN UNION)</p>
Project Phases Level of realization	<p>The project is organised in 4 phases related to five work packages.</p> <p>The first two phases have been completed almost entirely (95%) while, as expected, the third phase has been partially completed (30%).</p> <p><u>The Covid 19 emergency has delayed some activities but only after the deadline of 29th February related to this intermediate activity report.</u></p>

PROGRESS OF THE ACTIVITIES

State of the art and project activities documents

PHASE I

1st of March 2019 - Start of the Project

March-April (2019) Preliminary set up of **research tools** (WP A)

- Research assistant recruitments.

DONE

Research tools have been preliminarily set up. Research assistants (internal and external) have been selected/recruited.

23rd and 24th April 2019 - **Kick-off meeting** with the Project partners, in Fiesole, Firenze (Italy), Cisl National Study Center

DONE

The **kick-off meeting** of the project took place on April 24th and 25th 2019 at the CISL National Study Center of Florence, as planned in the work programme. Representatives of the partners, responsible for different activities of the project, participated in the meeting.

Participants: Francesco Lauria, Luigi Lama, Ilaria Carlino, Vilma Rinolfi, Ettore Innocenti (Cisl); Marco Betti (Fondazione Tarantelli); Alberto Gherardini, expert; Andrea Bellini (University of Florence); Oscar Molina, Alejandro Godino (Uab-Quit); Trine Pernille Farsen (Faos, by skype); Inga Blazienie, Boguslavas Gruzevskis (Dsti); Melinda Kelemen (Diesis).

The meeting started on the 23th of April at 13.00 and finished the 24th April 2019 at the same time

The **first day** was dedicated to welcome and presentations, introduction and timeline of the project, national cases and meaningful experiences (Lithuania, Spain, Denmark, Belgium).

The **second day** included the presentation of an Italian case and the discussion of the project phases and methodologies. After this first part, the meeting analyzed the project's future deliverables and issues linked to administrative tasks.

See the complete **minutes of the meeting**, **project presentation**, and **project administrative tasks presentation**:

https://www.centrostudi.cisl.it/attachments/article/459/Minute_BREAK-BACK_def1.pdf

https://www.centrostudi.cisl.it/attachments/article/459/01Lauria_Presentazione%20del%20Progetto.pdf

<https://www.centrostudi.cisl.it/attachments/article/459/slides%20CISL%20%20administrative%20VS%202019%200079.pdf>

See **attendance list**:

<https://www.centrostudi.cisl.it/attachments/article/459/AttendancelistBreakBackFlorence.pdf>

April - June (2019) - Collection of general information **on national industrial relation systems**

Desk research on membership trends of main national trade unions

Collection of information on **labour market occupational structures**.

DONE

See materials related to the **countries** involved in the project:

LITHUANIA

https://www.centrostudi.cisl.it/attachments/article/459/02Blaziene_Trade%20unions%20in%20Lithuania.pdf

BELGIUM

https://www.centrostudi.cisl.it/attachments/article/459/03Kelemen_Industrial%20relations%20in%20Belgium.pdf

DENMARK

https://www.centrostudi.cisl.it/attachments/article/459/04Larsen_the%20Danish%20IR-model.pdf

ITALY

https://www.centrostudi.cisl.it/attachments/article/459/05Bellini_Industrial%20Relations%20in%20Italy.pdf

21st of May 2019 - Participation in the **Commission's Networking day in Brussels**

DONE

Ilaria Carlino (CISL), member of the project staff actively participated in the Commission's Networking Day in Brussels.

May – August (2019) - Drafts of the part of country reports on industrial relations systems

DONE

The draft of part of the overall comparative report on industrial relations systems has been delivered. The final version have been definitely approved during the project meeting of 4th – 5th February 2020 in Barcelona (Spain).

See the **synthesis of the comparative analysis** (presented in the project meeting of Barcelona):

[https://www.centrostudi.cisl.it/attachments/article/459/\[Barcelona%204_5%20February\]%20Comparative%20analysis_Andrea_Bellini.pdf](https://www.centrostudi.cisl.it/attachments/article/459/[Barcelona%204_5%20February]%20Comparative%20analysis_Andrea_Bellini.pdf)

Launch of the Project website and of social network profiles (Twitter, LinkedIn, Facebook, YouTube, etc.)

DONE

See Break Back **official web site**: www.breakback.cisl.it

Break Back official profiles has been opened to the following social networks:

- **Research Gate**: <https://www.researchgate.net/project/BreakBack-Break-up-to-get-back-together-the-impact-of-unionisation-through-innovative-service-provision-on-union-membership-and-industrial-relations>
- **Facebook**: <https://www.facebook.com/BreakBackProject/>
- **Twitter**: <https://twitter.com/BreakbackP>
- **You Tube Channel**: will be opened over the next months

PHASE II

Beginning of September (2019) - Skype **conference call** with the Project partners

DONE

The **Skype meeting** between project partners took place on **Friday, 13th September 2019**.

The meeting discussed the contents of national reports on industrial relations systems and unionisation and the use of databases for the collection of quantitative data.

The main database selected for the analysis of union density was the **ICTWSS database** (<http://uva-aias.net/en/ictwss>), at least for the main indicators (aggregated union membership and density), to be integrated with country-specific sources.

A draft logo for the project was presented during the Skype meeting. The final version of the logo was chosen through a poll within the partnership.

A track for the interviews addressed to peak-level key informants have been approved (the track will be translated into national languages by partners if necessary)

September – End of December (2019) - Interviews addressed to peak-level key informants

- Desk analysis on **innovative services** provided by trade unions

DONE

4th 5th of February (2020) - **Two-days coordination meeting with the Project partners, in Barcelona (Spain)**

DONE

Venue: Palau Macaya – Aula 2, Passeig de Sant Joan, 108, Barcelona

Participants: Francesco Lauria, Ilaria Carlino, Luana Petrillo, by Skype, Manuela Mansueti, by Skype, (CISL), Alberto Gherardini (external expert), Andrea Bellini, Vincenzo Marasco (University of Florence); Oscar Molina, Alejandro Godino, Isabel Hernandez (Uab-Quit); Trine Pernille Farsen, Emma Steffensen Bach (Faos),; Inga Blazienie, Boguslavas Gruzevskis (Dsti); Melinda Kelemen, Karolien Lenaerts (Diesis).

Minutes:

The meeting started at 9.30 A.M of 4th of February and finished at 1.30 pm of 5th of February.

The **first day** the comparative report about national industrial relation systems and unionization have been presented by Andrea Bellini (University of Florence) and discussed among partners.

The main contents of the comparative report are related to: unemployment crisis, temporary employment, strictness of employment protection, re-regulation process, decentralization of collective bargaining, level of wages.

Another very relevant point is related to different models of labor market and industrial relation and their recent developments.

An important point discussed among partners were the affidability of databases related to unionization and collective bargaining coverage; the effect of "union competition" inside the

countries of the project and the link between the administration of services by unions and the increasing of membership.

Another important research question has been considered regarding the union density in weak categories (union problems with young people in all the project countries with the exception of Belgium).

Oscar Molina (Quit): expressed the weakness of unions in order to provide services targeted to young people; Trine Pernille Farsen (Faos) and Boguslavas Gruzevskis (Dsti) noted the need to use European data and national data on union membership.

Alberto Gherardini (external expert) have proposed that the comparative report will have two parts: one will deal with the differences between industrial relations systems and the other will be more related to membership trends linked with project research questions (membership trends and strategic actions/services for trade union renewal).

Deadline for validation of the comparative report have been fixed for the 15th of March.

Every partner has presented the state of the research in his national context, the results of the in depth interviews with national union leaders and topic experts and express his opinion about guidelines for the case studies selection.

Every presentation have been followed by a debate among the partnership.

The **second day** of the meeting partners discussed about case studies selection, methodological decision linked in particular to the web survey aimed at assessing the approval of union services, and questions related to Gdpr rules.

Ilaria Carlino (Cisl) explained the project dissemination strategy through the project web site, social networks, video and infographics.

Future academic publications and future academic dissemination strategies have been also discussed among partners.

Administrative issues have been exposed and commented through a skype connection with the Cisl administrative department in Rome with a particular focus regarding the partners tasks related to the project intermediate technical report.

The following international meeting of the project have been fixed for **mid September 2020** in Copenhagen (Denmark).

See **meeting agenda:**

https://www.centrostudi.cisl.it/attachments/article/459/Agenda_meeting_Bcn_Final-def.pdf

See **attendance list:**

https://www.centrostudi.cisl.it/attachments/article/459/0402_Atending%20list-BREAKBACK-Barcelona.pdf

See **comparative report:**

[https://www.centrostudi.cisl.it/attachments/article/459/\[Barcelona%204_5%20February\]%20Comparative%20analysis_Andrea_Bellini.pdf](https://www.centrostudi.cisl.it/attachments/article/459/[Barcelona%204_5%20February]%20Comparative%20analysis_Andrea_Bellini.pdf)

See **national presentations:**

ITALY

https://www.centrostudi.cisl.it/attachments/article/459/Barcelona_4_5_February_%20Italy_presentation.pdf

SPAIN

https://www.centrostudi.cisl.it/attachments/article/459/Barcelona_4_5_february_Bcn_Spain.pdf

BELGIUM

[https://www.centrostudi.cisl.it/attachments/article/459/Barcelona_4_5_February_Belgium%20\(1\).pdf](https://www.centrostudi.cisl.it/attachments/article/459/Barcelona_4_5_February_Belgium%20(1).pdf)

LITHUANIA

https://www.centrostudi.cisl.it/attachments/article/459/Barcelona_4_5_February_Lithuania_.pdf

DENMARK

https://www.centrostudi.cisl.it/attachments/article/459/Barcelona_4_5_February_Lithuania_.pdf

February 2020

- **Set up** of all the **research tools**
- **Case studies** selection

DONE

See related documents:

Research methods:

https://www.centrostudi.cisl.it/attachments/article/459/06Gherardini_A%20proposal%20on%20research%20methods.pdf

Case studies interview grid:

https://www.centrostudi.cisl.it/attachments/article/459/BreakBackcasestudiesGrid_DEF_EN.pdf

List of case studies selected by project partners (and short summaries of case studies):

<https://www.centrostudi.cisl.it/attachments/article/459/CASE%20STUDIES%20summariesgrid.pdf>

PHASE III

January – March (2020) - Case studies (interviews, collection of quantitative data on service users and on union membership) (WPD)

- **Translation of the web survey questionnaire** in BreakBack countries national languages
- Collection of e-mail addresses to be used in the **web survey**
- **Design** of the web survey

ON GOING.

Florence, 19th May 2020

Project Reference Vs2019/0079

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