

Trade unions & precarious work

The rise of the dual labour market:

fighting precarious employment through industrial relations

PRECARIR – VS/2014/0534

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June 20th 2016

Dublin

* Based on national reports and the analytical framework developed by M. Kahankova, A. Koukiadaki and A. Trif

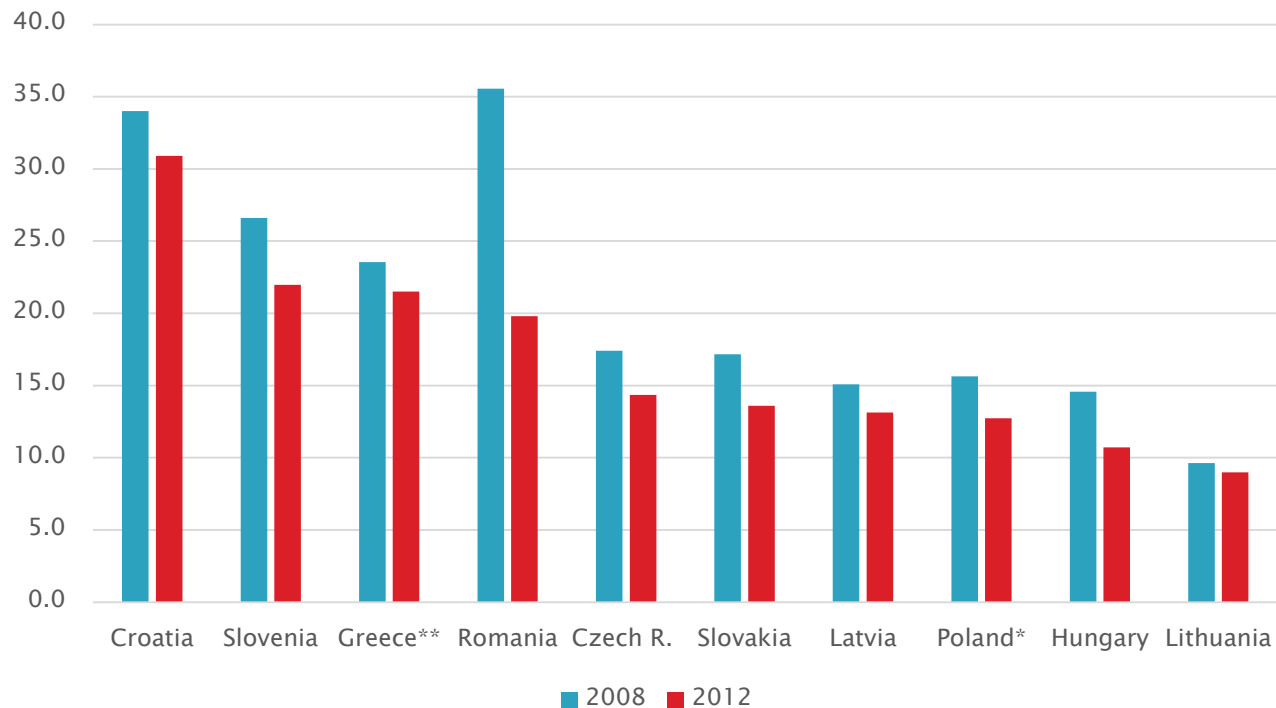
Outline:

Which conditions enable unions to address precarious work?

- ▶ **1. Background**
- ▶ **2. Analytical framework**
- ▶ **3. Findings: unions addressing precarious employment**
- ▶ **4. Conclusion**

Decline in union density after 2008

Trade union density (2008 & 2012)

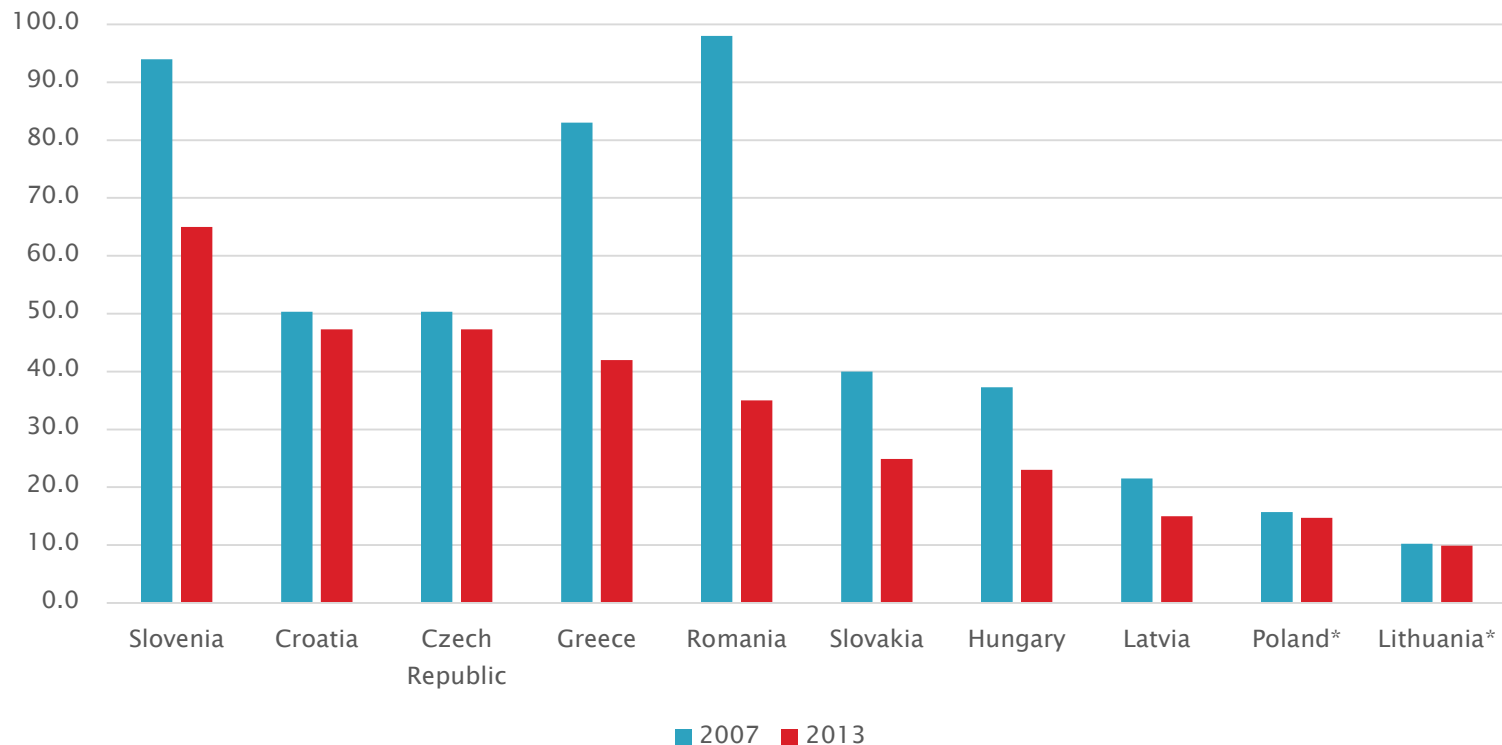


Source: Union density based on ICTWSS database (UD)

Note: Poland* data 2007; Greece** data 2013

Decline in collective bargaining coverage after 2008

Collective bargaining coverage (2007 and 2013*)



Source: Bargaining coverage based on ICTWSS database (AdjCov)

Note: * Data from 2012 instead of 2013

Analytical framework for studying the role of trade union in shaping precarious employment

WHY?

Rationales
for union action

WHAT?

Approaches
of unions to action

HOW?

Instruments
used for action

IMPLICATIONS

Purpose of action
regarding
precarious work

Trade union rationales for action

(adapted from Freeman and Medoff, 1984)

▶ Why?

- 1. Economic (flexibility => **efficiency**)
 - Accepted
- 2. Institutional=>Equality (**fairness**)
 - Support for 'outsiders' varies
 - Gr: do NOT accept members on contracts without social benefits
- 3. Social legitimacy: all countries
 - External & **internal**
- 4. **Organizational capacity**
 - survival or increase power

Trade union approaches to precarious workers and their implications

(Heery and Abbott, 2000; Heery 2009)

What?

Approaches

Inclusion

Separation

Exclusion



Implications for precarious work

Trade union instruments

(Keune 2011; Boonstra, Keune and Verhulp 2011)

How?

Category	Target groups of union action	Instruments
Information	Precarious workers	Informal campaigns, service-oriented instruments, empowerment
	Precarious workers	Identity politics
	Public	Media
	Public, employers, other trade unions	Shaping benchmarks on employment standards
Consultation	Precarious workers, other unions	Services for empowerment
	Government, employers	Consultation and advice on legislation
Negotiation	Government, political parties, other unions	Political lobbying
	Employers	Collective bargaining
Organizing and industrial action	Precarious workers	Litigation
	Precarious workers, the public	Organization
	Precarious workers, other unions	Mobilization

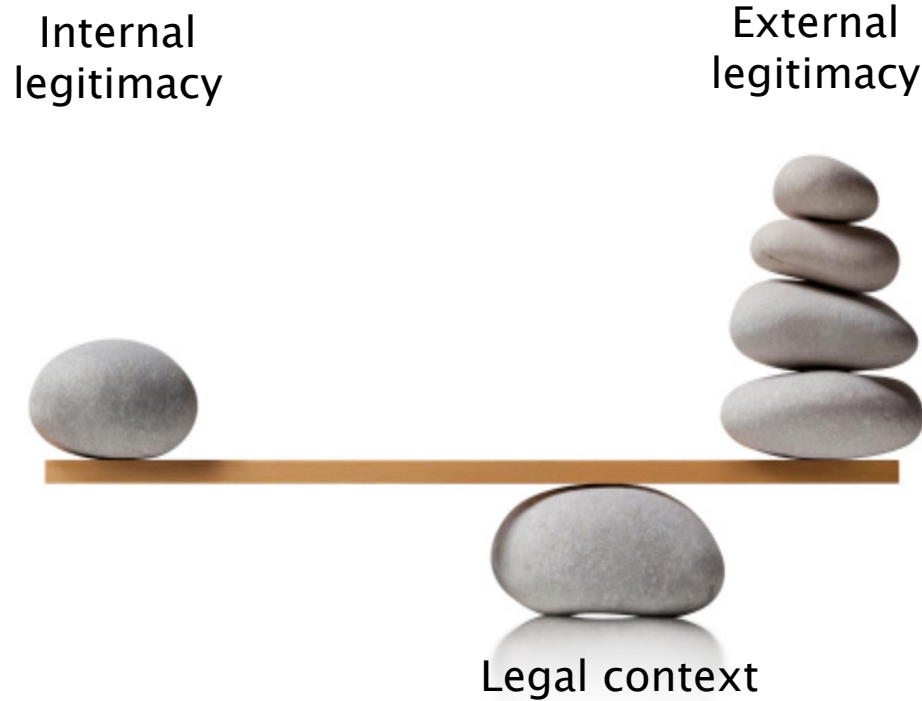
Key factors affecting the effectiveness of trade unions in fighting against precarious work across countries

Union strategies and actions	Enablers to fight precarious work	Inhibitors to reduce precarious work
Legal framework	Employment protection legislation (EPL) + collective rights Social partners involved in legal changes Capacity to enforce laws	Low EPL Unilateral govt decisions Weak capacity to enforce legislation
Organizational capacity	Strong unions (density, mobilization + CB) Internal legitimacy Charismatic union leaders Cooperation amongst unions	Weak or no unions Reliance on external legitimacy Intimidation of union officials Fragmentation/divisions
Other rationales (economic + fairness)	Joint action with employers Perception of unfairness	Employers opposition to unions' initiatives Acceptance of non-standard contracts
Approaches	Inclusion/ Separation	Exclusion
Instruments	'Hard' actions: protests, mobilization, organizing, CB	No action

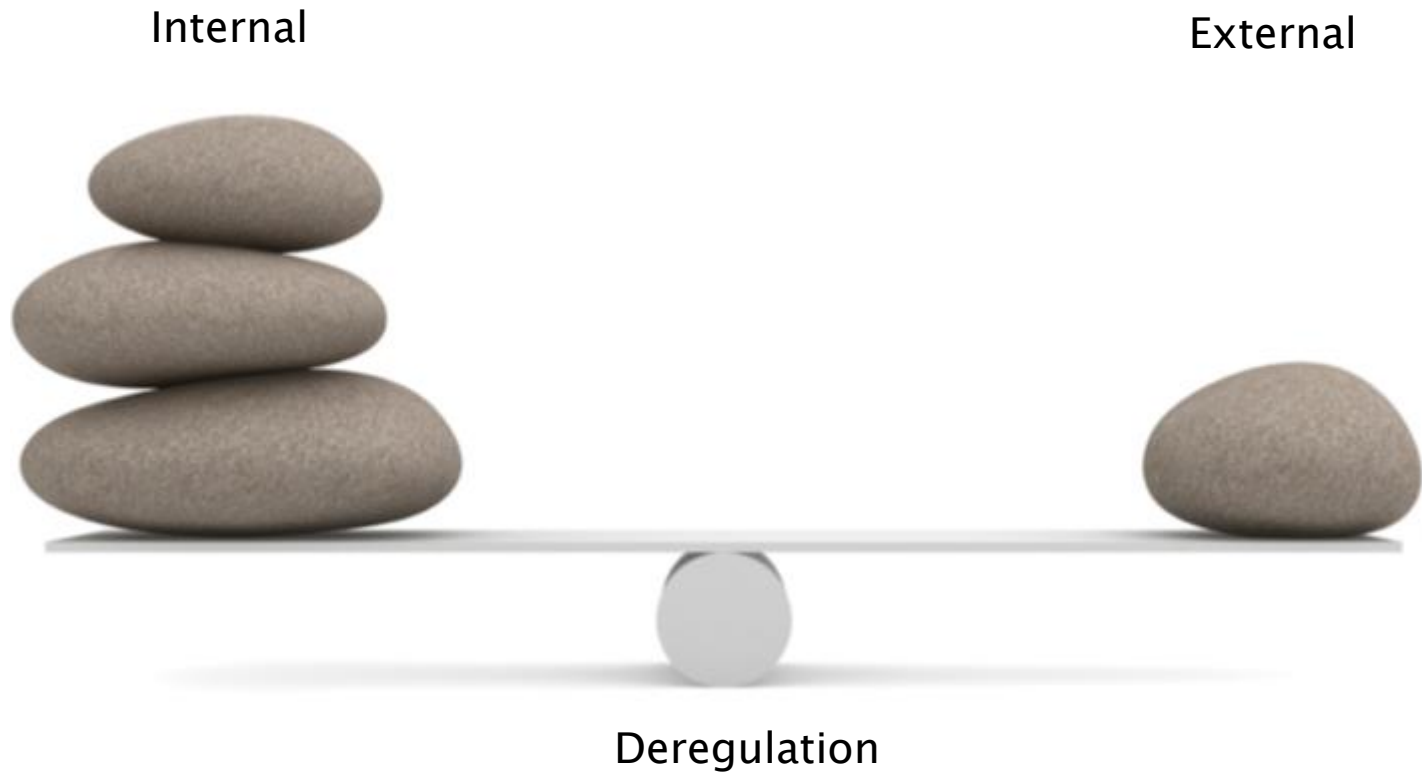
Key factors affecting the effectiveness of trade unions in fighting against precarious work across sectors

Union strategies and actions	Enablers to fight precarious work	Inhibitors to reduce precarious work
IR institutional context (sectoral inst.)	High union density Tradition of MEB Specialized bipartite fora International support for organizing workers/EWC	No unions Limited or no collective bargaining Illusory bi/tripartite social dialogue/CB
Labour market context	Labour shortages Low labour turnover Dominance of standard employment contracts	High unemployment High labour turnover Dominance of atypical forms, unless extreme/perceived unfair
Level of skills	Highly skilled labour force	Low skilled labour force
Size of firms	Large companies	SMEs

Legislation and trade unions



Re-balancing internal and external legitimacy



Impact of unions' actions on reducing the level of precarization in CEEs + Greece

(1) High impact (complementary)

- protests/**mobilization**, organizing (high union density) + negotiation

(2) Moderate impact: involvement in legal changes

- Specific legal changes may reduce precariousness
 - but difficult to implement

(3) Limited impact: soft instruments

- often important preliminary stage for getting to (1) and (2)

Unintended consequences?

Policy implications for trade unions

- **Legislation double edge-sword**
 - (a) legislation on fundamental employment rights + enforcement
 - (b) But EPL uncertain
 - Contingent on political orientation of govts + links with EU/Troika/MNCs
 - + EPL => perception of no need for unions?
- **Improving organizational capacity**
 - Increasing internal legitimacy
- **Better use of international networks**
 - More international cooperation/communication/support
 - EWC/International works councils