

PHS Employers' Organisations in Central and Eastern European Countries: Results of the PERHOUSE Project

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STRUCTURE



- PERHOUSE project
- CEE PHS employers' organisations – opinions and needs
- Good examples of organising PHS employers



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PERHOUSE PROJECT



- PERHOUSE: Personal and household services (PHS) in Central and Eastern European Countries: Improving working conditions and services through industrial relations
- EU co-funded project, 2022 – 2024
- Central and Eastern European Countries (CEE): 12 countries: **Poland, Estonia, Czechia, Slovakia**, Hungary, **North Macedonia**, Romania, Croatia, Lithuania, Latvia, **Slovenia** and Bulgaria.
- 6 beneficiaries (EASPD) + 4 Associated partners EFSI, EFFE, UNI Europa, EFFAT
- Aims of the project:
 - Address the **challenges of working conditions and services** in the PHS sector of CEE countries.
 - Deepen the **analysis of industrial relations and the potential of social dialogue** in the PHS of CEE countries.
 - Provide a comparative analysis of **national experiences in IR** and working relations in PHS and **explore the link to EU-level social dialogue** structures.
 - **Promote awareness of the industrial relations** practices related to the PHS sector.



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Challenges:

- Conceptualisation of PHS?
- Who is the employer? Depends on:
 - Type of PHS
 - Country regulations - who is the founder, funder
 - Labour status of the PHS care providers (self-employed carers)
 - Non-regulated direct hiring of care workers by the household (care receiver/family member)
- What employers' organisations are representing PHS employers?
- What does it mean to represent the interest of the PHS employers?

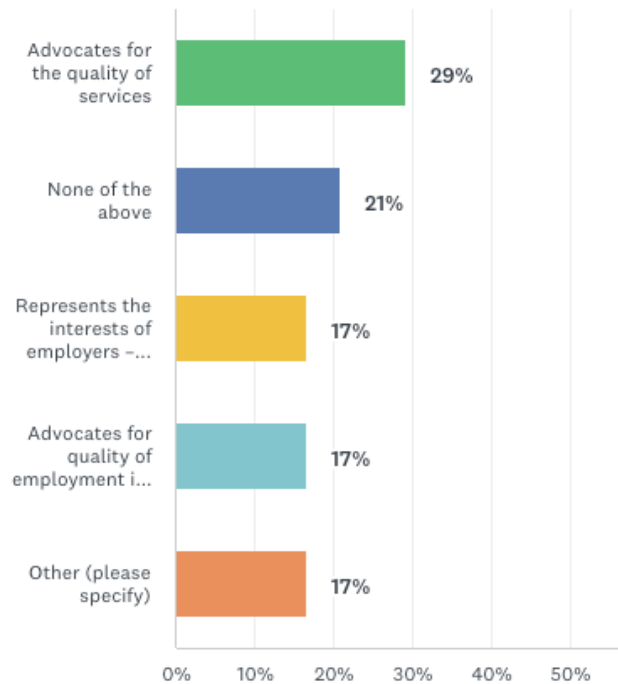


OPINIONS AND NEEDS

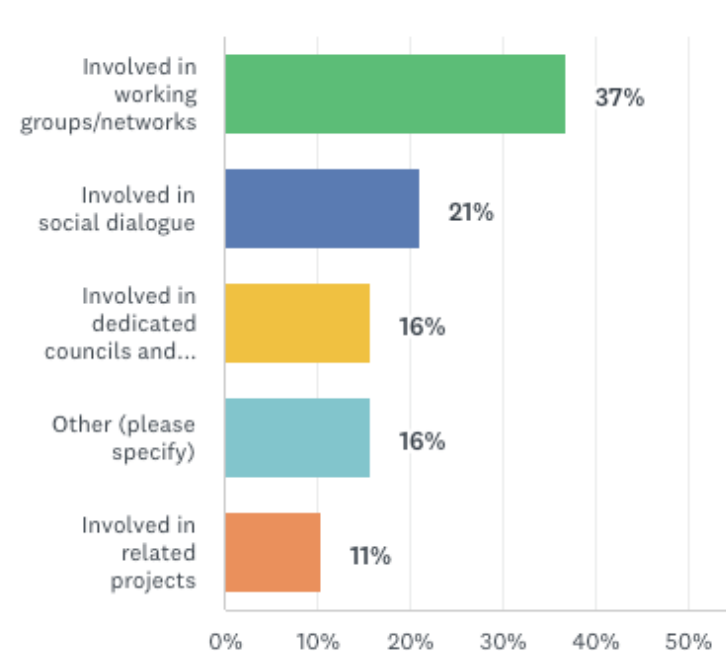


- Limited information
- PERHOUSE survey on social dialogue among PHS stakeholders in CEE: employers' organisations (5) + public/state authority (7) + founder of the company offering PHS services(12) = **24** relevant respondents (EE= 10, SI = 4, CZ = 3, NM = 3, PL = 2, HU = 1, SK = 1)

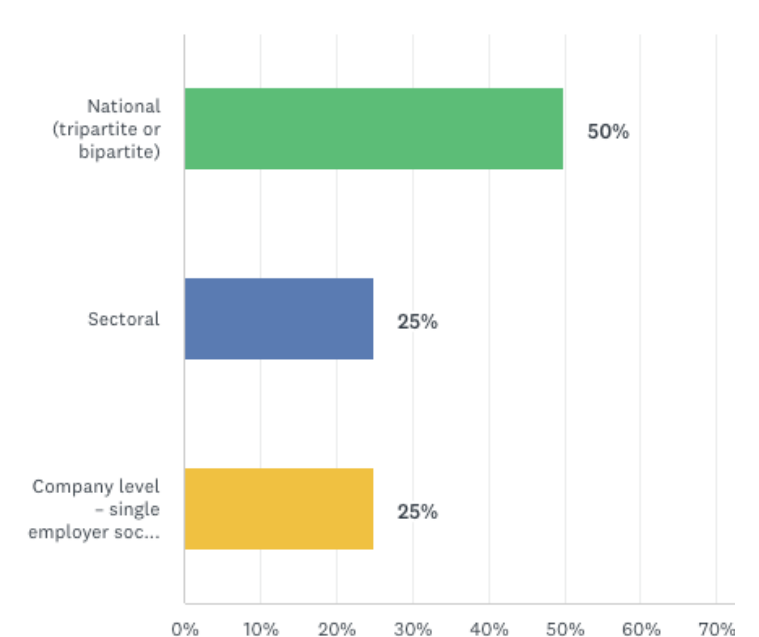
Role of the organisation in PHS(N= 24)



Ways of engagement of the organisation in PHS.(N= 24)



What level of social dialogue? (N= 4)



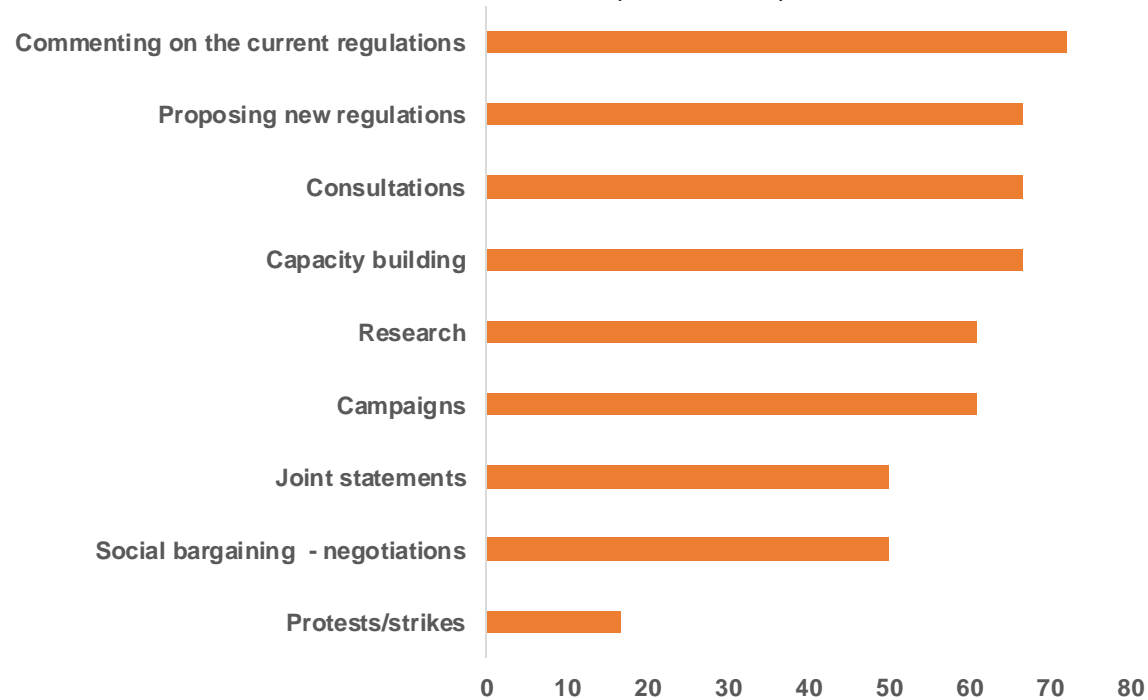
Source: PERHOUSE Survey on Social Dialogue in PHS

OPINIONS AND NEEDS

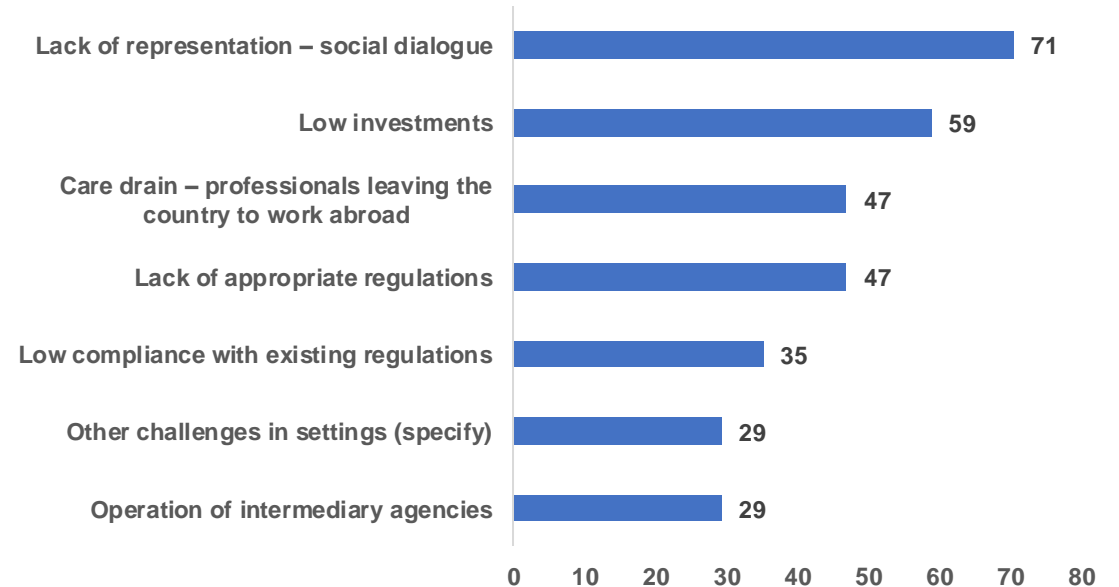


- Only 4 organisation affiliated to an EU-level social partner or any other international organisation
- 78% of organisations plan to be more active in PHS in the future

Activities related to PHS (% , N= 18)



PHS challenges related to general settings (% , N= 17)

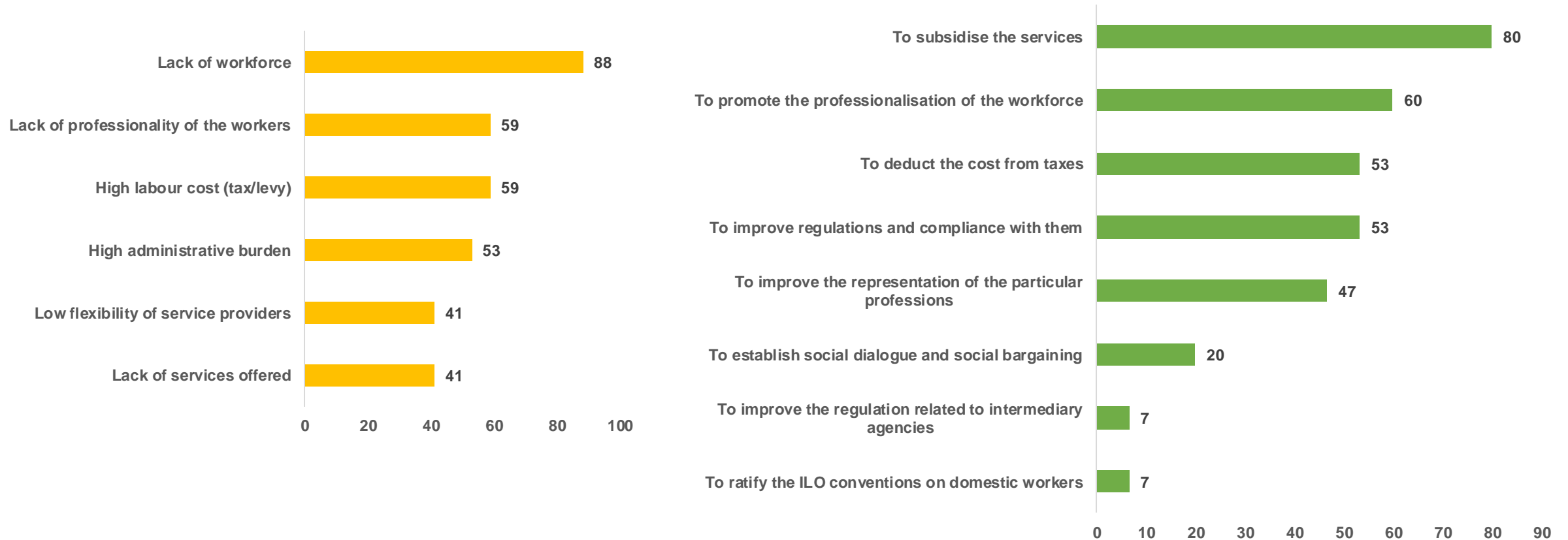


Source: PERHOUSE Survey on Social Dialogue in PHS

OPINIONS AND NEEDS



PHS challenges related to service quality (% , N= 17) **Ways to address/prevent the challenges considering the national context. Three most relevant (% , N= 15)**



Source: PERHOUSE Survey on Social Dialogue in PHS

GOOD EXAMPLES



Estonian case: Employers (companies) are more interested in being organised than workers, but small businesses lack of resources to be organised:

- Membership in a professional association provides individuals with someone to consult with
- When engaging with politicians or officials, it is more advantageous to demonstrate alignment among several companies, as individual dealings with officials may be perceived as potentially involving corruption.
- Finding resources (time, fee, energy) for unionisation can be as challenging for small businesses.
- Companies may question whether the membership fee yields sufficient results.
- Investing in counselling from only two individuals may not appear worthwhile when struggling for survival each day.
- Entrepreneurs find it exceedingly difficult to analyse legislation to contribute at the sector level, mainly when there is no guarantee their proposals will be taken into account, making their efforts to comprehend the laws futile.

“...and they believed that a union could also be formed for the cleaning sector. But that also involved a fee, which would actually take motivation away, not only from me but also from others who were already struggling to survive. So, I asked what we would get for this fee; and what we would get was counselling from two individuals. So, again, I think that might not be enough.” (INT4)

Conclusion: Estonian employers' efforts to be organised and engage in social dialogue must pay off—clear benefits need to be demonstrated.

GOOD EXAMPLES - CZECHIA



The Association of Social Care Providers (APSS)

- Represents only public-sector services, specifically home healthcare and home social care, including personal assistance.
- It brings together service providers, operates as a professional or expert organisation, and influences and impacts the system's character, including reimbursement conditions or working conditions in general, either within the legislation framework or outside of it.

APSS is a member:

- Of the Union of Employers' Associations in Czechia
- APSS is an active member of various expert working groups, collaborating on funding and the Social Services Act amendments. For instance, APSS works closely with the Government Council on the Elderly and Ageing, a platform where many activities are initiated, consulted, or discussed.
- Involved in the Social Economic Agreement Council.

Impact:

- In 2016, APSS, in collaboration with trade unions, significantly increased salaries, resulting in a substantial 33% rise in basic salaries.
- During the COVID-19 pandemic, some activities, such as subsidy programs, were conducted related to rewards and support for working employees and providers.
- It organises activities such as the National Social Services Award—Caregiver of the Year or Czech Social Services Week.

Conclusions: The PHS employers serve multiple roles, not just representing the employers' standpoint but also aiming to enhance the sector as a whole, including improving working conditions and acknowledging care services.

SUMMARY



- Organising employers in PHS in CEE – the same **limits and challenges** as in other EU countries
- Based on the PERHOUSE survey on social dialogue, the PHS employers:
 - Advocate for the **quality of the services**
 - More involved in various **working groups** than official social dialogue process
 - If involved in social dialogue, then at the national level
 - 78% of organisations plan to **be more active in PHS in the future**
 - The most frequent activity: engaged in **commenting on the current regulations**
 - The most frequent challenges to general PHS settings: **lack of representation – social dialogue on PHS**
 - The challenge to **service quality: lack of workforce**
 - The best ways **to address the challenges: subsidise the services and promote professionalisation**
- Good practice in organising employers based on their needs:
 - Estonia: **articulate clearly the benefits of being organised**
 - Czechia: **promote the multiple roles of the employers to advance PHS in all its dimensions**



**THANK YOU FOR YOUR
ATTENTION!**

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PERHOUSE project: <https://www.celsi.sk/en/perhouse/>

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