

# 20 years after: perspectives on industrial relations in Central and Eastern Europe since the 2004 EU enlargement

## ETUI conference

Dates                    **7 November 2024**  
Venue                    **Residence Palace, Brussels**

In 2004, eight Central and Eastern European (CEE) countries (Czechia, Estonia, Lithuania, Latvia, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia and Hungary) joined the European Union, together with Cyprus and Malta. This was the largest 'big-bang' enlargement in the EU's history. It was followed by the accession of Bulgaria and Romania in 2007 and Croatia in 2013. These successive 'eastern' enlargements nearly doubled the number of EU Member States; and posed a significant challenge to the EU's internal economic and social cohesion and to the variation in industrial relations across the Member States of the enlarged EU. Twenty years on and, despite respectable levels of GDP growth, the social and wage gap persists, and industrial relations in the region remain fragmented and unstable.

Earlier this year, *Transfer, the European Review of Labour and Research* has published a special issue providing a comprehensive picture of the developments in industrial relations and trade union movements across the region under the influence of EU enlargement. The issue revisits the early hopes and expectations of this process and analyses its impact on industrial relations in the 'new' CEE Member States. Drawing on this special issue, this conference brings together social partners, researchers, experts and interested stakeholders to discuss how the EU has shaped post-enlargement CEE industrial relations. It will focus on how social partners from the region perceive their roles and relationships after 20 years of EU membership, and what lessons can be learned from these 20 years of experience for EU-level social dialogue, the latter being especially relevant for Candidate Countries expecting to join the EU in the future.

## Programme

09.30 – 10.00    Arrival of participants

### 10.00 – 10.10    Welcome and introduction

**Bart Vanhercke**, Director of the ETUI Research department

**Adam Mrozowicki**, University of Wroclaw and coordinator of the *Transfer* Special issue

### 10.10 – 11.00    Session 1 – 20 years after: Presentation on the *Transfer* Special Issue

*Chair – Bart Vanhercke, ETUI*

20 years after. Changing perspectives on industrial relations in Central and Eastern Europe two decades after EU enlargement: from transition to transformation, **Jan Czarzasty**, SGH Warsaw School of Economics

Weathering intermediated temporary labour mobility: social partners in Central and Eastern Europe after EU enlargement, **Tibor T Meszmann**, Central European Labour Studies Institute

One-way street to the European Union? Between national and EU-level social dialogue 20 years after eastward EU enlargement, **Marta Kahancová**, Central European Labour Studies Institute

Governing neo-nationalism, trade unions and industrial relations: the cases of Hungary and Poland, **Joachim Becker**, WU Wien

Q&A

11.00 – 11.30    Coffee break

**11.30 – 12.20 Session 2 – A response from EU-level social partners: Lessons for EU-level social dialogue 20 years after the EU Enlargement**

*Chair – Maarten Keune, University of Amsterdam*

Panel discussion:

**Elena Crasta**, ETUC

**Maxime Cerutti**, Business Europe

**Jörg Tagger**, DG Employment, European Commission

Q&A

12.20 – 13.20 **Lunch break**

**13.20 – 14.20 Session 3 – The CEE perspective**

*Chair – Philippe Pochet, Sant'Anna, Pisa*

Solidarność

The mirage of Europeanising industrial relations – Introduction by **Sławomir Adamczyk**, NSZZ

Panel discussion:

**NN**, TBC

**Kristina Krupavičienė**, Lithuanian Trade Union "Solidarumas"

**Martina Sirhalova**, Association of Employers' federation AZZZ in Slovakia

Q&A

14.20 – 14.40 **Coffee break**

**14.40 – 15.40 Session 4 – Lessons from the EU enlargement for social dialogue in the Candidate Countries**

*Chair – Jane Parker, ETUI*

Panel discussion:

Ukraine)

**Yana Simutina**, University of Bristol and the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine (on

**Anil Duman**, Central European University Vienna (on Türkiye)

Bosnia, Serbia)

**Tibor T Meszmann**, Central European Labour Studies Institute (on the Western Balkans -

**Bela Galgoczi**, ETUI (on SEER)

Q&A

**15.40 – 16.00 Summary of key points and closing**

**Vera Ščepanovic**, Leiden University and coordinator of the Transfer Special issue

**Bart Vanhercke**, Director of the ETUI Research department

