



Varieties of Industrial Relations in Aviation Lockdown

MINUTES OF THE MEETING Seville, 6-8 April 2022

VIRAL. Varieties of Industrial Relations in Aviation Lockdown.

Participants:

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Lukasz Sienkiewicz and **Izabela Florzak** (University of Lodz – UL, Poland);
Patrocínio Rodríguez Ramos and **Jesus Cruz Villalon** (Universidad de Sevilla – USE, Spain);
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Rafael Gomez Gordillo (Universidad Pablo de Olavide, Spain);
Michael Doherty and **David Mangan** (National University of Ireland, Maynooth – NUIM);
Steen Navrbjerg and **Mikkel Krogh** (University of Copenhagen - FAOS, Denmark).

The second meeting of the project “*VIRAL. Varieties of Industrial Relations in Aviation Lockdown*” VS/2021/0188 was held in Seville, on 6-8 April 2022.

The co-applicant University of Seville (USE) opened the meeting introducing the agenda. After the presentation of the programme of the two days, the Working Group (WG) started the discussion and the presentation of the economic and national reports.

Firstly, the SGH Warsaw School of Economic (Poland), in charge of the WP2, presented its report regarding the framework and the economic context of industrial relations in the European air transport sector and its value chain, made up of: aircraft manufacturers, leasing suppliers, aviation related service providers, airports, and airlines, both passenger and cargo. The report, available on the project website, describes and analyses the factors that influence the economic operating conditions, both for the sector as a whole and for its individual components. After a discussion on the economic situation, the project partners give a power point presentation of their reports –



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according to the framework proposed by German and Denmark units - on the national industrial relations system in Italy, Spain, Germany, Denmark, France, Ireland and Poland, in the period before the advent of the Covid-19 pandemic.

All national reports are available on the project website.

During the presentation of the industrial relations systems in the countries involved in the VIRAL project, the discussion emerged on the existing differences about the regulation of the labour market at national level and on the voluntaristic nature of the collective bargaining. In particular, the Danish labour market is primarily regulated through collective agreements signed by the social partners, while legislation plays a more discrete role in the area of wages and working conditions. As such, the industrial relations system is dominated by a high degree of voluntarism and cooperation: trade unions and employers negotiate solutions to various challenges through collective agreements. On the contrary France and Spain are mainly regulated by legislation, while the partners highlighted that it is possible to consider different level of voluntarism in the national collective bargaining, for example, in the Italian system the non-implementation of the article 39 of the Constitution, makes possible to consider the system as voluntaristic in that it is based just on the freedom of association principle, while the legislation, as the Spanish unit pointed out, establishes a framework within which collective bargaining is realized. Also, in France the system is highly regulated and the erga omnes effects of collective bargaining agreements are provided by law. In Germany, if collective agreements are the expression of the majority of employees, it acquire erga omnes effects, but this kind of procedure are not very used.

Finally, to conclude the presentation of the reports as outcomes of this first research stage, the coordinator of University of Pescara presented the framework of the European social dialogue, both general and sectoral, considering that the regulation of the air transport sector is predominantly European. It was also highlighted some interesting Court of Justice case law in the civil aviation sector. In conclusion of the presentation of the pre-covid economic and industrial relations framework, the WP2 coordinators ask the partners to carefully check and eventually integrate the data on the national measures put in place during the covid, both general and sectoral, while the WP3 coordinators ask them to summarize the salient features of national industrial relations systems in the civil aviation sector, as emerged in the debate, in order to facilitate the comparison.

The partners then move on to discuss the content of the WP4, regarding the impact of Covid-19 pandemic on working conditions and industrial relations in the air transport sector in Europe. University of Seville and University of Maynooth will oversee the organization and the structure of this working package, that will be presented during the next meeting scheduled in September. The goal is to analyze the effects of the pandemic emergency on employment relationship, working conditions and industrial relations in the air transport sector and its value chain in Europe and in the project partner countries. At this regard, will be scheduled an online meeting in late May-early June to better define the content of the item “working conditions” to be considered.



Varieties of Industrial Relations in Aviation Lockdown

The partners plan to set the 3rd International Plenary Conference on **28-30 September in Poland (Warsaw)**: place to be confirmed in relation to the evolution of the current war situation in Ukraine. Meanwhile is recalled that, as foreseen in the detailed work programme, each national partner will hold at least one seminar or meeting with the social partners in order to give a more realistic profile to the reports. All units are therefore asked to organize and communicate the dates of local events, which should be included in the project brochure.

The third day of the meeting is dedicated to the seminar “*Industrial relations challenges in the air transport sector after lockdown: a European and Spanish perspective*”. The seminar, chaired by Professor Cruz-Villalòn from USE, started with the presentation of the VIRAL project and the report by Professor Guerrero Lebron on the incidence of the health crisis on some areas of aeronautical regulation and the economic consequences for the industry (report available on the project website). After the break, the seminar continued with a round table and discussion between some relevant Spanish stakeholders: Carolina Herrero from the Airline Association (ALA), which encompasses 85% of the of air traffic in Spain; Oscar Orgeira, from the Spanish Airline Pilots Union (SEPLA), Jon Herrera, General Secretary of the air sector and tourist services Federation of citizen services (FSC-CCOO) and José Manuel Pérez, Federal Secretary of the air transport FeSMC-UGT. The presentations are available on the project website www.viralproject.eu.

The seminar triggered an enriching debate on the main challenges faced by the civil aviation sector in Spain during the pandemic, underlying the fundamental role played by the Spanish model of social dialogue in shaping new instruments to protect employment and incomes as well as airlines competition during the health emergency (i.e. ERTE mechanism “due to force majeure” to compensate for work suspensions or reductions in working time, widely used in civil aviation during the pandemic, not in the public sector and airports, where other measures such as remote working, public aid and salary renegotiation for air traffic controllers were used), despite the fragmentation of collective bargaining at company and craft level and the uncertainty of the current situation regarding a full recovery in the sector and its value chain (the tourism and travel agency sector has great difficulty in recovering the pre-covid situation).

At the same time, the change underway at Ryanair, which until now has been hostile to social dialogue and submission to the Spanish regulatory framework, was emphasized. The social partners present at the meeting stressed two important aspects in this respect: the influence of national and European case law and the close coordination of trade union actions at European and international level. These aspects will be further investigated during the project.

The seminar held in Sevilla opened the series of national meetings aiming at integrating the point of view of the social partners in the framework of the national reports on the contribution of industrial relations to overcoming the pandemic crisis in the air transport sector.