8. Striking the right balance between autonomy and assumption of responsibility: A way forward for social dialogue in Greece*

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1. INTRODUCTION

The world of work is changing rapidly. The certainty of dependent employment for life in the production of tangible goods is a thing of the past in a world in which employment relationships are taking new forms, individuals change jobs frequently and the service economy is taking over. In this new reality, which is expected to continue evolving, relationships between employers and employees do not remain static. There is still a need for dialogue between the social partners, and, given the challenges that continue to arise, this is now more essential than ever. Hence it is important that the conditions for effective dialogue between the social partners are put in place. The representativeness of the social partners, their autonomy from the government in shaping working conditions and mutual trust are important factors in realizing this outcome (ILO 2013).

Collective bargaining free from government influence has been a tradition for three decades in Greece. Despite this, there is no culture of sincere and wide-ranging social dialogue; collective bargaining instead takes the form of a series of concessions from the parties' starting positions, without a vision and a long-term strategy for the working relationship. Moreover, social dialogue should include a wider range of issues, such as digitalization and new forms of work, than those typically included in collective agreements. A long history of mistrust between the social partners could partly explain why social dialogue has not gained more popularity in Greece. In addition, the social partners are occasionally expected to shape policy guidelines, although the latter is a government responsibility. This has been the experience in the past decade, when Greece has been asked to undertake measures to improve its competitiveness in exchange for financial support from official creditors. Governments wishing to distance themselves from accepting the lending conditions shifted the responsibility to the social partners, expecting them to take a firm stance on them. Together with the other challenges the economy now faces following a decade-long recession, the challenge of digitalization looms large, as the economy currently lags behind in this.

The national social partners (employers' associations and unions) and the chair of the National Economic and Social Committee, the main body for tripartite dialogue, all appear to acknowledge the need to enhance the effectiveness of social dialogue. This

effectiveness appears to vary by level – national, sectoral or regional and at levels below the national – and by firm size.

The organizing framework for this chapter is the level at which dialogue takes place (national or below) and the recent financial crisis. Section 2 presents the future work challenges facing Greece, including the need for digitalization. While these are generally the same as those faced by other developed nations, there are a number of idiosyncratic factors, related both to structural features existing before the crisis and to the legacy of the crisis. Section 3 turns to the role of the social partners at national level, with a focus on their representativeness and degree of autonomy. The same issues, but for lower levels of dialogue, are presented in section 4. Section 5 deals with the issue of digitalization and the extent to which social partners have been involved in shaping the institutional framework for the digital organization of work. Section 6 presents an instance in which social dialogue appeared to take place, combating undeclared work. Section 7 concludes.

The chapter is based on the relevant literature, evidence on industrial relations developments and interviews with a number of key individuals on the topic. More specifically, I held discussions with representatives of the main social partners, the president of the Greek Economic and Social Council (OKE), the president of a bipartite body on health and safety matters, a representative of a sectoral employers' association and a senior International Labour Organization (ILO) specialist on tripartism who has also served as the ILO senior liaison officer for Cyprus and Greece.

2. WORK CHALLENGES MOVING AHEAD

Following an unprecedented decline in real gross domestic product (GDP), both by national and international standards, Greece is now trying to jump-start its economy. The task is Herculean, as the causes of the crisis have not been fully resolved and new challenges have emerged, not least the deep recession expected for 2020 as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. The economy experienced a cumulative loss of GDP in the order of 24 per cent between 2007 and 2018 (Figure 8.1) and had a huge 17 per cent unemployment rate in mid-2019 (Figure 8.2), including a high percentage of long-term unemployed (71 per cent in the second quarter of 2019). Furthermore, the country continues to be heavily indebted (180.2 per cent of GDP in the second quarter of 2019) and thus has limited room for fiscal expansion.

An important shortcoming of the Greek economy, even prior to the crisis, is its relatively low productivity (Figure 8.3). More specifically, in 2005, nominal GDP per hour of work in Greece stood at around 77 per cent of the 28 European Union countries' (EU28) average. In 2018 this was only 64 per cent.

Low productivity is attributable to, among other things, the composition of economic activity, the organization of work (one factor being, for example, the large share of self-employed, see Figure 8.4), the small size of firms, the low skill level of the workforce – as evidenced by the results of the Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC) (Figure 8.5) – and the percentage of individuals with low basic digital skills (Figure 8.6). Low productivity also reflects poor management practices (see, for example, Bloom et al. 2012) and, especially since the onset of the economic downturn in 2010, limited investment in physical capital. Prior to 2009, investment as a percentage

Source: Eurostat, National Accounts (accessed 18 October 2019, <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/national-accounts/data/database>).

Figure 8.1 Cumulative loss in GDP (in constant prices) starting 2007

Source: ELSTAT, LFS (accessed 13 December 2019 at <https://www.statistics.gr/en/statistics/-/publication/SJO01/->).

Figure 8.2 Unemployment rate, 2nd quarter of each year (percentage)

of GDP stood higher than the EU average, but this was mainly investment in housing (Bank of Greece 2007; ILO 2014). Post-2009 fixed capital expenditure declined rapidly, and for six years (2012–17) was around half the share it is in the EU28 or the Euro Area (Figure 8.7).

Note: EU28 = 100.

Source: Eurostat (accessed 12 December 2019 at https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/namq_10_lp_ulc/default/table?lang=en).

Figure 8.3 Nominal GDP per hour worked as a percentage of the EU28, 2005–18

Source: Eurostat (accessed 13 December 2019 at https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/lfsq_esgan2/default/table?lang=en).

Figure 8.4 Percentage of self-employed in Greece and the EU28

Source: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), PIACC database.

Figure 8.5 Percentage of individuals with each of five competence levels in literacy and numeracy, Greece and the OECD

Source: Eurostat (accessed 12 December 2019 at https://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=isoc_sk_dskl_i&lang=en).

Figure 8.6 Percentage of individuals with basic or above basic overall digital skills

Source: Eurostat (accessed 14 December 2019).

Figure 8.7 Total investment as a percentage of GDP

The inadequate digitalization of the Greek economy is evident from the Internet speed. Figure 8.8, with data from the OECD *Digital Economy Outlook 2017*, suggests that the average internet speed in Greece is lower than the OECD average (OECD 2017).

At these speeds it is unlikely that substantial digitalization can be accommodated. According to a number of indices constructed by the Hellenic Federation of Enterprises (SEV 2019), it seems that businesses are not digitally prepared. However, according to McKinsey estimates (McKinsey Global Institute 2017), around 20 per cent of jobs in Greece will be replaced by machines in the period from 2016 to 2030. A recent European Central Bank (ECB) survey among leading Euro Area companies suggests that the effect of digitalization on employment will depend on skill level (Elding and Morris 2018). While on balance the companies surveyed expect only a small negative impact on employment, they emphasized the need for retraining and the reassignment of workers to new tasks. Therefore, the importance of training in preparing for the future cannot be overstated.

In the future, the main challenge to the Greek economy is the creation of highly productive jobs in the face of:

- globalization, which intensifies market competition for goods and services;
- automation, which leads to the replacement of low-skilled jobs;
- new forms of work organization that permit working across borders (gig economy, sharing economy);
- demographic challenges that could result in skill shortages and fiscal pressures. These challenges are especially pronounced in Greece. According to Eurostat data, at the beginning of 2018 Italy and Greece had the highest share of individuals aged 65 or older in the total population (22.6 per cent and 21.8 per cent, respectively),

Note: Mbps = megabits per second.

Source: Akamai (2016). Israel Disclaimer: The statistical data for Israel are supplied by and under the responsibility of the relevant Israeli authorities. The use of such data by the OECD is without prejudice to the status of the Golan Heights, East Jerusalem and Israeli settlements in the West Bank under the terms of international law.

Figure 8.8 Akamai's average speed, quarter 1, 2016

while between 2008 and 2018, the median age of the population increased by four years;¹

- the uncertainty regarding economic activity following the Covid-19 pandemic;
- the need to ensure adequate and well-paid jobs in sectors critical for the pandemic (such as health care, food production distribution and protective services); and
- environmental challenges that might, among other things, lead to a reallocation of labour across sectors.

This provides us with a succinct picture of the main challenges faced by the social partners at present. As the OECD argues, the future of work will depend to a large extent on countries' policy decisions and institutions (OECD 2019). Social dialogue is an important institution in this respect.

3. THE ROLE OF SOCIAL PARTNERS AT NATIONAL LEVEL: BEFORE THE CRISIS, DURING THE CRISIS AND TODAY

3.1 Collective Bargaining

In Greece, national-level collective bargaining has a long tradition. Currently, there are five national social partners on the employers' side: the Hellenic Federation of Enterprises (SEV), the Hellenic Confederation of Professionals, Craftsmen and Merchants (GSEVEE), the Hellenic Confederation of Commerce and Entrepreneurship (ESEE), the Greek Tourism Confederation (SETE) and the Federation of Industries of Greece (SBE). The first three have been established for a long time (over four decades), while the last two are recent additions. The SETE was recognized as a social partner in 2013, while the SBE was ratified as a social partner only in 2018. On the employees' side there is a single union for private sector employees, the General Confederation of Greek Employees (GSEE).²

The SEV is the leading (and oldest) business federation in Greece. It started life in 1907 with 200 members from large-scale industry and crafts. For several decades the SEV represented mainly industrialists. Over time, however, it has widened its net to cover firms across the business spectrum (including energy, transport, processing, the medical industry, the metal industry, food, banking, technology, the chemical industry, services and wholesale). It represents over 400 large and medium-sized enterprises, 50 sectoral and regional associations, as well as over 3500 indirect members (through these associations). Members of SEV account for about 50 per cent of business activity in Greece, 46 per cent of total turnover, 41 per cent of corporate profits and represent 10 per cent of private sector employees insured by the Unified Social Security Fund (EFKA). The SEV has been an institutionalized social partner from as early as the 1970s, participating in social dialogue and representing its members in collective bargaining at both national and sectoral levels.

In the first years of the crisis, SEV membership declined but since 2014–15 membership has increased substantially (60–70 per cent) as mainly large and medium-sized businesses joined. Several changes in the SEV's statute (for example, reduction in membership fees, and ex officio participation of regional associations in the board of directors) helped to increase the membership.

The GSEVEE was founded in 1919 and currently represents 78 federations (49 local, 28 sectoral and one of pensioners) and 1100 constituent unions with 140 000 members (entrepreneurs). The members of GSEVEE are self-employed, micro-enterprises (enterprises with fewer than ten employees and turnover of up to €2 million), small enterprises (enterprises with 49 or fewer employees and turnover of up to €10 million) and medium-sized enterprises (with fewer than 250 employees and turnover of up to €50 million). The crisis resulted in the GSEVEE losing many of its members as small and medium-sized enterprises were badly affected, so it is trying to attract additional members by expanding into new sectors of economic activity. Around 90 per cent of the new enterprises are active in the food service and entertainment business. The annual fee is only around €30, but the cost in time that participation in the GSEVEE involves is important for new businesses. For these new firms, business conditions are less favourable than in the past; prior to the crisis, businesses would on average operate for around five to seven

years, whereas currently the figure is only around three months. Thus, the turnover of potential GSEVEE members is much higher, making the expansion of membership more difficult.

The ESEE represents 14 federations, 283 commercial associations and five representatives of commercial associations. It covers the entire territory of Greece, even its smallest towns, and has a membership of over 270 000 enterprises. In its current form, the ESEE was established in 1994, although there has been a Coordinating Council of Commercial Associations since 1961.

The SETE was established in 1991 and currently represents 14 unions of tourism enterprises. It was given the status of national social partner in 2013.

The SBE is a national social partner with effect from mid-2018, following a decision by the Minister of Labour, Social Security and Social Solidarity.³ Formerly known as the Federation of Industries of Northern Greece, it was established in 1915 and represents industrial organizations and manufacturing companies.

The GSEE was established in 1918. It is a third-level trade union organization (confederation) which covers workers under private law contract, regardless of the sector in which they are employed in. Therefore, the GSEE does not have persons as direct members. Members come through a total of 148 second-level organizations: the 79 labour centres – local unions – and 69 sectoral federations (two of the 69 are federations of pensioners). The large number of second-level organizations reveals a fragmented trade union system, a feature resulting from, among other factors, political rivalries and lack of financial autonomy (see Ioannou 2005). The second-level organizations have only employees in dependent employment as members; that is, there are no self-employed members.

The representativeness of the above bodies is not questioned in a legal sense. Representativeness in substantive terms, however – that is, whether these bodies represent the interests of the labour force – is a different matter and not easy to settle; and even more so as hard data on the members of employers' and employees' organizations are not made publicly available. The GSEE argues vehemently that, while data on membership is available it should not be made public as it is sensitive and publishing even aggregate figures would be an infringement of confidentiality. Nevertheless, every three years, at the time of the GSEE Congress, figures are released on the number of registered members, members who have met their financial obligations and voting members. Inevitably, the three different sets of figures give different trade union density estimates. Employers' organizations have not been forthcoming with this information either. Consequently, the discussion here on trends in union and employer association membership is based on estimates.

Regarding membership of employers' organizations, estimates from the Visser database (Visser 2019) suggest that the percentage of employees working in private sector firms belonging to an employers' organization out of the total number of employees in employment in the private sector stood at 43.7 per cent in 2008 (58.4 per cent if we include all employers and not just those in the private sector) and 25 per cent in 2013.⁴ The European Social Survey (ESS) data for the years 2002–10 show that membership of people aged between 30 and 64 years of age is low and declining (see Figure 8.9). The four employers' contacted organizations acknowledged the need to expand their membership without, however, doubting that they are currently representative in the substantive sense

Source: OECD (2017).

Figure 8.9 Trade union density

mentioned previously. The main way of doing this is to enrich the services offered. They mentioned the need to clarify their role as not confined to signing the National General Collective Agreement, but also offering other services to their members (for example, legal advice, training and group insurance schemes). The interview with the GSEE brought into the discussion another aspect of employer association representativeness, relative representativeness. It appears that, although GSEVEE and ESEE membership is more typical of Greek business (micro enterprises and small and medium-sized enterprises), the five national social partners on the employers' side are of equal standing.

The GSEE also acknowledges the need to expand its membership to all vulnerable groups that could suffer from discrimination (for example, younger individuals, and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and intersex plus persons). Existing union density estimates, from the Visser database (Visser 2019), suggest that in 2012 union density in the private sector stood at 17.3 per cent, while in the public sector it was 47.1 per cent. Figure 8.9 shows data on overall (private and public) trade union density from the OECD for the period 1977–2016.

Existing evidence suggests that women are underrepresented both as members (Matsaganis 2007) in ESS data (Table 8.1) and in higher union positions (Varchalama et al. 2015). The same appears to be true for immigrants and younger individuals; the Visser data estimate union density for those aged 15–24 at 6.5 per cent in 2008 and 8.2 per cent in 2012 and the ESS data (Table 8.1) also show that union density is lower for young people.

The GSEE's penetration is higher in particular sectors (for example, banks, and utilities operated as state-owned enterprises) in which working conditions (such as remuneration and pensions) are more favourable than for the private sector as a whole. Furthermore,

Table 8.1 Union membership by age and gender among employed individuals in the market non-agricultural business sector in Greece, 2002–08

Year	Age	Men	Women	Total
2002	20–29	18.53	6.06	14.55
2004	20–29	19.60	3.51	12.21
2008	20–29	5.01	3.32	4.42
2002	30–44	19.72	14.73	17.98
2004	30–44	16.40	6.24	13.07
2008	30–44	11.64	12.55	12.01
2002	45–54	33.64	11.21	27.32
2004	45–54	35.97	14.28	31.07
2008	45–54	15.42	10.53	13.60
2002	55–64	27.30	22.39	26.90
2004	55–64	34.83	13.17	29.03
2008	55–64	16.84	12.02	15.47

Source: European Social Survey data, Rounds 1, 2 and 4.

the GSEE tries to maintain contact with the entire labour force (workers and unemployed) through interaction with its 148-member second-degree organizations, their affiliate first-level trade unions and their individual members. The GSEE's own expert structures (INE/GSEE, KANEP/GSEE), as well its Information Centre for Workers and the Unemployed (KEPEA) also help to obtain for the GSEE administration a vivid knowledge of the current labour environment and workers' needs. The task of expanding GSEE membership is made more difficult because there appears to be little trust in trade unions in Greece, although this is improving. Eurobarometer data (Figure 8.10) suggest that in spring 2019 the percentage of individuals with a positive view of trade unions (either very positive or fairly positive) is 44 per cent (29 per cent in autumn 2018), whereas in the EU28 the figure is 59 per cent (58 per cent in autumn 2018). As things stand, however, the most pressing issue for the GSEE are the competing party factions within the confederation itself (Panagopoulos 2019).

The government's introduction of the SBE as a social partner on an equal footing met with opposition from the other social partners (including the GSEE). Written correspondence between the four employers' organizations and the minister is critical both of the decision being made without consulting the existing social partners and of the decision itself; the SBE should not be given the standing of a national social partner in view of its regional (northern Greece) and sectoral (manufacturing) focus. 'This action', say the established employers' organizations, 'therefore constitutes a state violation of the autonomy of employers' and employees' unions, which could impede the legitimate operation and functioning of employers' and workers' unions'.⁵ The exchange also gave the four employers' organizations the opportunity to criticize the government's stance on social dialogue:

Finally, we must comment on your claim that you respect social dialogue and the actors involved. Practice to date does not illustrate this, as evidenced by most of the extremely serious

Source: Eurobarometer, Standard Eurobarometer, spring 2019.

Figure 8.10 Percentage of individuals with each view on trade unions

issues that have been legislated during your time as Minister, without any substantive updating or technical discussion and negotiation with the designated social partners, including your latest legislative initiative, which directly affects the freedom of collective bargaining by changing the composition of the institutional social partners.⁶

The introduction of the SBE has inevitably contributed to the already fragmented employers' side: there are now five employers' associations designated as national social partners.

The social partners have signed the National General Collective Agreement since 1975. It is, however, since the late 1980s that state interventionism started to subside (Ioannou 1999). Law 1876/1990 set out the framework for collective bargaining, explicitly introducing the right to bargain at sectoral and company level. It also introduced an independent mediation and arbitration body (OMED) to resolve bargaining impasses, replacing the custom of state intervention in resolving deadlocks. Figure 8.11 plots the cumulative number of National General Collective Agreements that have been signed without the involvement of an arbitration body in each year starting in 1975, together with the cumulative number of national agreements signed with the involvement of an arbitration body. While the signing of a national agreement continued through to 2018, there has been no recourse to arbitration since the late 1980s. However, the signature of a National General Collective Agreement is a lengthy process (see Figure 8.12) and this inevitably creates uncertainty for businesses and their employment decisions.

The absence of arbitration involvement in the process of signing the National General Collective Agreement implies that a minimum degree of consensus at national level does exist, a point confirmed by the social partners interviewed for this chapter.

Turning to the issues that a National General Collective Agreement can regulate, they

Source: Ioannou (1999); Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs.

Figure 8.11 Cumulative number of National General Collective Labour Agreements without and with arbitration

Source: Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, National General Collective Labour Agreements.

Figure 8.12 Months following start of the year to which the agreement refers

are determined by law (Law 1876/1990). They extend beyond the basic minimum wage and include other items of remuneration (for example, allowances and overtime pay), general terms and conditions of work (such as number of annual days leave, maternity and paternity leave, length of working week and dismissal compensation). Some of these are later ratified by law, at which point these clauses cannot be reversed by a National

Table 8.2 Recurrent themes with no decision in National General Collective Agreements, Greece, 2000–2019

Issue	Agreement in which issue first mentioned	Last agreement in which it still appears unresolved and indication of whether it has been solved
Need to reform the social security and pension system	2000–2001	Reappears in 2006–07 (unresolved)
Profit-sharing: social partners to ask for favourable tax treatment of employees' participation in profits	2000–2001	Reappears in 2010–12 (unresolved)
Need to reform training fund (Special Fund for Employment and Vocational Training, LAEK)	2002–03	Reappears in 2006–07 (unresolved) Reappears in 2008–09 (unresolved)
Need for a permanent social dialogue structure	2008–09	Reappears in 2018 with a more specific mandate and plan

Source: Author.

Agreement. It is thus evident that the scope of the agreement is not restricted to remuneration. In several instances, however, the terms beyond remuneration are not really dealt with, although there is an acknowledgement by all parties that the issue is important and that it should be resolved in the future. This applies to a number of issues (for example, acknowledgement of the need to revamp the social security system, acknowledgement of the need to design common actions for the upgrading of lifelong training and education and awareness of the need to deal with the environmental footprint of businesses), but these are left, notwithstanding their significance or perhaps because of it, to be dealt with in the future. Table 8.2 lists a few issues that have never been settled but keep coming up in each round of negotiations.

The most prominent example of the social partners failing to reach agreement with the government was the attempt at a radical reform of the pension system in 2001. International organizations had been calling for reforms since the early 1990s (OECD 2002, 2005), but what reforms were introduced were not sufficiently bold (Zambarloukou 2006). The consequences of this failure contributed to the derailment of public finances, which led to the recent severe recession. The causes of the failure have been discussed in the literature (Matsaganis 2002; Featherstone 2003). Some of the arguments put forward are that the union movement appears mainly to defend the rights of individuals affiliated to very well-off pension funds (banking sector and state-owned enterprises) instead of the rights of the typical worker or pensioner, and the unreliability of particular employers as social partners (Zambarloukou 2006; Matsaganis 2007). The way the issue was handled by the government, the lack of trust between the social partners and the absence of a legacy of dialogue also contributed to failure (Zambarloukou 2006; Matsaganis 2007).

Notwithstanding all the above, there are some long-term issues (such as dealing with

BOX 8.1 EXAMPLES IN WHICH SOCIAL DIALOGUE IN THE CONTEXT OF THE NATIONAL GENERAL COLLECTIVE AGREEMENT RESULTED IN COMMON POSITIONS BY THE SOCIAL PARTNERS

On the following issues some social dialogue appears to have taken place and a common position to have been agreed. This sets a precedent for future social dialogue.

1. Establishment of the Hellenic Institute of Occupational Health and Safety (ELINYAE), a body governed by a nine-member board representing all national social partners. The board meets on a regular basis. According to its constitution the objectives of the ELINYAE are:
 - (a) to detect, record, process, analyse and investigate the various hazardous agents and conditions in the working environment and their effects on the health and safety of the employees;
 - (b) to elaborate regulations, rules and pertinent legislation;
 - (c) to monitor international developments and experiences and promote documentation of related matters;
 - (d) to promote information, communication and education of both social partners on issues of occupational health and safety;
 - (e) to contribute to the investigation and solution of problems, arising from the interaction between the working environment and its conditions, on one hand, and the general environment and living conditions, on the other;
 - (f) to study the possible impact of the application of new technologies and of new preventative measures on occupational risks; and
 - (g) to serve as a body of experts on issues of occupational health and safety, if asked by either social partner (employers or employees).
2. Creation of a permanent platform for social dialogue in the 2008–09 National General Collective Agreement. The platform, however, has not yet been activated.
3. The completion of a common action consisting of four projects to restore confidence and empower effective participation in social dialogue. These include a project investigating the effectiveness of social dialogue structures, a project on strengthening the procedures and effectiveness of sectoral-level bargaining, a project on issues of vocational education and training and a project on combatting labour market discrimination.
4. Undeclared work – social dialogue to reach a commonly agreed action plan (see section 6 in this chapter).

health and safety issues at work) that eventually have led to agreement on a common action plan. Box 8.1 presents a few good practice examples.

We have provided an overview of the extent to which dialogue between the social partners takes place and on which issues in the context of the National General Collective Agreement. However, this does not reflect developments that took place during the period 2010–18, however, and it also does not discuss other contexts in which social dialogue takes place.

In May 2010, Greece asked for international financial assistance as it was unable to tap into the international bond markets (see Tzannatos 2014 for details of the first stages of the crisis). The financial assistance was provided by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and by EU member states, and demanded strict conditionality in exchange. Reforms were insisted on in a few areas (fiscal, product markets and the financial sector), including the labour market. During 2010–12, the Minister of Labour invited

the social partners to consultations on potential reforms a number of times (ILO 2014; Yannakourou 2015). Any dialogue that took place, however, did not bring about reforms as the social partners appeared not to be prepared to give in. As mentioned in the introduction to this chapter, the social partners might not, be solely responsible for this deadlock; successive governments were not willing to assume ownership of the memorandum of understanding between Greece and its partners, and thus were not giving clear guidelines.

Early in 2012 the government took a clear stance and called for a reduction of the minimum wage in order to improve the country's competitiveness. The social partners were not willing to consider any curtailment of the basic wage while certain partners appeared ready to discuss only temporary abolition of seniority allowances and a reduction in non-wage labour costs. This stance of the social partners in Greece was manifestly different from that in other countries hit by the crisis (Cyprus, Ireland, Italy, Portugal and Spain) where tripartite agreements were reached. Had the first governments taken a clearer stance on the reform measures, it is possible that the social dialogue would have progressed more.

The government had to act on its own; the minimum wage was reduced by 22 per cent for those aged 25 or above and by 32 per cent for younger workers (Law 4093/12). In addition, according to Law 4172/13, a change in the way the minimum wage was to be determined was introduced. More specifically, a statutory minimum wage was introduced; henceforth it would be set by the Minister of Labour following consultation with the social partners and a number of research institutes and organizations, including the Bank of Greece. This was to be with effect from the end of the financial assistance programme. All national social partners expressed their opposition to the change from a negotiated to a statutory minimum wage.

A number of strikes (and national strikes) were organized by the GSEE in response to the measures introduced; 445 in 2011 (four national strikes), 439 in 2012 (six national strikes) and 443 (five national strikes) in 2013 (Katsaroumpas and Koukiadaki 2018).

As expected, given that the financial assistance programme ended in August 2018, the basic minimum wage increased soon afterwards. With effect from 1 February 2019, following consultations among the Minister of Labour and the social partners, research institutes and other organizations, the minimum wage was increased by 11 per cent. The social partners interviewed generally took the view that although the letter of the law was observed in this procedure, the spirit was not. The consultation was just a formal information procedure rather than a substantive discussion. As far as the actual increase was concerned, the GSEVEE, the SETE and the SEV explicitly expressed reservations; the three social partners claimed that although an increase in the minimum wage was advisable, this should be accompanied by mitigating measures to reduce labour costs for businesses and to increase employees' disposable income. The GSEE refused to participate in the consultations as this would have legitimized a process for setting the minimum wage to which they are opposed.

Following the change from a bargained minimum wage to a statutory minimum wage, the National General Collective Agreement deals only with non-pecuniary issues. A national agreement was signed every year between 2013 and 2018. The SEV refused to sign the agreement in 2013, as it considered it to be void. The role of the ILO in persuading the SEV to return to the negotiating table must be acknowledged. The ILO's role at

this time was wider than just persuading the SEV. In September 2014, the ILO Director-General facilitated a discussion between the national social partners. The discussion was the trigger for a series of joint papers by the social partners on the principles for effective social dialogue, the extension of sectoral collective agreements, combating illegal discrimination at the workplace and vocational education and training.

3.2 Tripartite Cooperation

Social dialogue is not restricted to the National General Collective Agreement. There are a few issues that call for social dialogue and there are a few institutions established for this purpose. The main institution is the OKE established in 1994 and, from May 2001, constitutionally recognized by the Greek state. Its structure follows that of the Economic and Social Committee (ESC) of the European Union, representing employers (eight organizations), workers (two organizations representing private and public sector employees) and other employed individuals and citizens in general (15 organizations representing, among others, farmers, self-employed, consumers, environmental protection organizations, disabled peoples' confederation, gender equality organizations and local government). The OKE has a well-specified governance structure and its president is appointed by the Minister of Finance, following a proposal by the OKE plenary, for a four-year term. The OKE plenary selects, in rotating order, from each of the three groups (employers, workers and wider society) forming the OKE, individuals of recognized standing, adequate academic training and wide social acceptance. The OKE's role is consultative: it provides opinions to the government on legislative proposals. However, the OKE also serves as a platform to enhance social dialogue with the aim of formulating mutually acceptable positions on issues of concern to society or to specific social groups. The OKE plenary meets twice a year while the OKE's Executive Committee meets, typically, once every two months. During the 2010–14, however, meetings were not as frequent and state funding for its operations was cut back (Yannakourou 2015). While the OKE seems to be doing satisfactorily in meeting the criteria set out by the ILO (ILO 2013) on the effectiveness of social dialogue, it appears, at least to parties not directly involved in the dialogue, that in a number of instances the dialogue has only led to a documentation of the different opinions rather than a synthesis of the various views to reach a common position. The President of the OKE, when asked during our interview to identify the reasons for the failure of social dialogue in Greece, expressed the view that the preference of social partners to negotiate with the government directly, each defending the interests of its members, instead of consulting within the framework of OKE, which represents society as a whole, was mainly to blame. In addition, the limited tradition of dialogue in the country, especially between those involved in public administration, also contributes to the absence of dialogue. The period during which Greece was under a financial assistance programme dealt a final blow to social dialogue, according to the OKE President. Asked whether the lack of a tradition of social dialogue could lie behind the government's unilateral decision to take measures during the financial assistance programme, the OKE's President stated that it was difficult to identify cause and effect. He emphasized that self-interested behaviour on the part of social partners was to be distinguished from a mutual lack of trust, which he does not believe exists. The social partners, he went on, are used to dealing directly with the political parties and the government, and not engaging in

dialogue with each other or with the groups they represent. He suggests a restructuring of the OKE, with a broadening of its membership to encompass civil society, as currently a number of social groups are not represented adequately or at all. Remodelling the OKE along the lines of the Dutch ESC was one option, according to the OKE's President.

The institutions for tripartite social dialogue in Greece include 15 bodies operating at national level (the National Employment Committee, the National Social Protection Committee, the National Council for Competitiveness and Growth, the National Planning Council, the National Tourism Council, the National Education Council, the National Agricultural Policy Council, the National Water Council, the National Exports Council, the National Shipping Policy Council, the National Committee for Gender Equality, the National Committee for the Social Inclusion of Immigrants, the National Council against Tax Evasion, the National Consumer and Market Council, and the Government Employment Council). In addition, a number of committees have been established at regional level: the Prefectural Economic and Social Committees. Finally, a number of bodies have been established in which representatives of the social partners participate, their role being to consult with the government (for example, the Supreme Labour Council, including the Committee on Undeclared Work, the Council for Social Control of Labour Inspection, the Council for Occupational Safety and Health, the Social Insurance Council, and the Coordinating Council for Health Provision). The lack of social dialogue cannot thus be due to the absence of committees and for a, as also stressed by the social partners themselves in the common position papers produced in 2015 as part of the common action project mentioned in Box 8.1.

The social partners interviewed were all critical of their role in the legislative process; it was deemed that their contribution was merely formal and that their opinions were not properly taken account of when shaping the legislation. The SETE member interviewed was more specific on the role of the different social dialogue committees listed above. First, he stated that only two committees actually meet (the Council for Occupational Safety and Health and the Committee on Undeclared Work), and second, he mentioned that it would be no exaggeration to say that dialogue takes place only in the Council for Occupational Safety and Health.

In addition to the National General Collective Agreement, collective bargaining takes place at sectoral, regional and firm levels. It is to the issues of representativeness and autonomy at these levels that we turn next.

4. THE ROLE OF SOCIAL PARTNERS BELOW THE NATIONAL LEVEL: BEFORE THE CRISIS, DURING THE CRISIS AND TODAY

In addition to national-level bargaining, bargaining in Greece also takes place at levels below national. Sectoral', occupational', regional' and firm-level bargaining were explicitly established with Law 1876/1990. Until 2012, most firms followed the sectoral-level collective agreement of the sector to which they belonged (Figure 8.13) as in any event most of these agreements were extended to the whole sector, beyond the signatory employers' organization(s). The boundaries between sectoral and occupational agreements are not always clear, and the legal classification of collective agreements as

Note: Each column contains the sum of collective agreements signed with and without arbitration.

Source: Ioannou and Papadimitriou (2013); Katsaroumpas and Koukiadaki (2018); Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs.

Figure 8.13 Collective agreements by type, 1990–2019

occupational or sectoral is in some instances a matter of dispute. In addition, as sectoral agreements might not cover the full range of occupations in a sector, in several instances firms have to follow a few collective agreements. A number of changes that took place under the financial assistance programme, however, led to a decline in the number of sectoral-level agreements signed. Between 2011 and 2018 firms followed, in general, either the national agreement or a firm-level agreement.

The changes introduced during the financial assistance programme included:

1. The suspension of extensions. Prior to October 2011 sectoral collective agreements could be extended by ministerial decision following a request by either of the negotiating parties, if the employers' associations negotiating the agreement employed 51 per cent or more of the employees in the sector. Between October 2011 and August 2018 extensions were suspended. Extensions, with the same criterion, were reinstated in August 2018. Since then, 18 sectoral collective agreements have been extended (10 in 2018 and eight in 2019).⁷
2. The abolition of the favourability principle. From October 2011, the favourability principle, according to which firm-level agreements have to improve sectoral-level agreements, was abolished. Firm-level collective agreements could thus negotiate terms inferior to the sectoral agreement, but not the general collective agreement (or the legislated minimum wage). The favourability principle has been reinstated with effect from August 2018, that is, from the reinstatement of extensions of sectoral agreements. More recent legislation (Law 4635/2015), however, gives

- firms the right to opt out of the sectoral agreement if they are in a dire financial position.
3. A threshold for the maximum duration of collective agreements was established. Since October 2011 the maximum duration of collective agreements is three years. There was no threshold beforehand.
 4. Shorter binding force for a previous collective agreement. A limit of three months' (instead of six) extension of the binding force of the previous collective agreement was given for the negotiation of a new agreement. According to a further restrictive provision on the after-effect of collective agreements, subsequently, if no collective agreement has been reached, only the basic wage and four allowances (education, tenure, children and onerous working conditions) remain in effect.
 5. The ability to sign a firm-level collective agreement. Prior to 2011, signing a firm-level collective agreement in a firm with fewer than 20 employees was possible only through the intermediation of a sectoral union. With effect from late 2011, however, firm-level agreements can be signed in firms with as few as five employees provided at least three-fifths of them have formed an association of persons (AoP) that signs the agreement on their behalf.

It is evident that the changes introduced during the financial assistance programme led to the decentralization of wage bargaining. The social partners disagree on whether the above measures enhance collective bargaining or not. With particular reference to the ability of an AoP to represent workers at the firm-level, the employees' side claims that this creates conditions for bogus, not proper social dialogue. The SEV and other employers' organizations, however, argue that AoPs could enhance collective bargaining and social dialogue. They assert that establishment of AoPs is in accordance with ILO standards and that attempting to introduce conditions specific to trade union sections in small companies would be considered a violation of the autonomy of the social partners. The ILO Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations (CEACR), after the One-hundred and Eighth International Labour Conference (ILC) session in June 2019, asked the government about the possibility of trade union sections being formed in small enterprises, while acknowledging that by 2017 only 37 per cent of all firm-level agreements were being signed by AoPs and the rest by trade unions (compared with 72.4 per cent in 2012).

The social partners appear in principle to be in favour of the extension of sectoral collective agreements if a significant mass of firms is already covered; there is a common position paper attesting to this. However, there are a number of qualifications relating to the representativeness of those covered by the initial agreement. The issue of representativeness can only be judged with sufficient data on economic activity and employment by detailed sector of economic activity. The lack of these data can cause disputes, as an incident in 2019 attests. More specifically, in July 2019 an employers' organization (the Greek Mining Enterprises Association, SME) appealed to the Council of State to annul the extension granted, in February 2019, by the Minister of Labour to apply the collective agreement signed by the SME and the Greek Miners' Federation (OME), in August 2018, to all firms in the mining industry, irrespective of them not being members of the SME. The extension of the agreement also implies that workers in occupations covered by the initial agreement but working in activities outside mining and not members of OME, are also covered if

they are working in SME members but in activities other than mining. The SME argues that the data used to determine the coverage of employees is wrong as the agreement only covers the employees working in particular lines of business. As sectoral boundaries are very elusive, especially now that firms are active in a number of business lines, it is not clear how the threshold of 51 per cent coverage of employees by the signatories of a collective agreement will be verified. Furthermore, the SME claims that only 27 large firms belong to the sector, while 120 small firms in the sector do not belong to the SME and might not be able to pay the wages agreed. The possibility of an opt-out for firms in a poor financial situation was only introduced recently. In October 2019, the GSEE made a public intervention to the Council of State against the SME and in favour of extending the August 2018 agreement.

The discussion on the extension of sectoral agreements brings about the issue of free-riding (see, for example, Visser 2018): firms and employees that know they will be covered by an agreement regardless of whether they belong to the employers' association or the union are likely to free ride. Furthermore, it is unclear whether the principles specified by the ILO Collective Agreements Recommendation (No. 91) in extending agreements – such as the need for an extension request from one of the parties to the agreement or an opportunity for the employers and workers to whom the agreement is to be extended to submit their observations – are met in general.

Union density differs significantly between sectors of economic activity in the private sector. Thus, in certain sectors union density is very low and union representativeness is an important issue. This is also clear from the excessive fragmentation of sectoral bargaining; until 2010 there were too many sectoral agreements.

Employers' organizations also claim that there is a lack of transparency in sectoral bargaining when non-representative bodies can sign collective agreements. More specifically, only rival organizations can dispute the representativeness of an organization and only within 10 days of the organization issuing an invitation to the other party to bargain. As the call for negotiations is not made public, however, rival organizations do not know when to appeal. The GSEE disputes the claim that there is a lack of transparency, arguing that the case of a non-representative body asking to sign a collective agreement could arise only in the event of new collective agreements as existing agreements are renewed after their expiration. Thus, any organization that wishes to dispute representativeness would be on the lookout for a call to bargaining.

With the aim of increasing transparency regarding the identity of the negotiating parties, recent legislation provides for the creation of a registry of unions and a registry of employers' associations. Information on, for example, the number of members that voted in the last leadership election, the statute of the organization, the number of employees employed by each member of the employers' association, and financial statements will also be included in the registry. The GSEE expressed reservations since they believe that having to provide this information infringes confidentiality of personal information. The ESEE also raised doubts regarding the feasibility of creating this registry, given the way their members (physical persons and companies) are registered.

Another feature of the Greek collective bargaining system is the disproportionate recourse to mediation and arbitration at sectoral level. This has inevitably led to less bargaining because mediators and arbitrators tend to be called in when a disagreement arises. This system is not conducive to social dialogue (see Box 8.2).

BOX 8.2 IS SYSTEMATIC ARBITRATION COMPATIBLE WITH COLLECTIVE BARGAINING?

The system of mediation and arbitration in Greece has itself been a reason for dispute for a long time.⁸ Employers have long been opposed to the provisions of Law 1876/1990, which gives workers unilateral recourse to compulsory arbitration. The ILO has acknowledged in a number of instances (2003, 2018) that unilateral recourse to arbitration is inconsistent with the principle of free and voluntary collective bargaining and has expressed concern with the decision of the Council of State to find suppression of unilateral recourse to compulsory arbitration unconstitutional. Unilateral recourse to compulsory arbitration is also against the EU European Charter of Fundamental Rights. Despite the above, the legal provisions have not been revised in Greece as the courts have concluded that they are compatible with the Constitution.

Turning to the impact of this provision on collective bargaining, we note that a very high percentage of sectoral and occupational agreements are signed following an arbitration decision (Figure 8.14). More specifically, during the period 2000–10 (1990–99) just under one-quarter (24.2 per cent) of national sectoral and occupational agreements arose from arbitration decisions, as did around 17 per cent (25.7 per cent) of local occupational agreements and 4.7 per cent (5.2 per cent) of company-level agreements.

The implication of this frequent recourse to arbitration is that social partners avoid sitting around a table to negotiate, that is, arbitration undermines the culture of social dialogue. A second implication is that arbitration in effect replaces strikes. While this might be beneficial for business and employees alike, it has come at the expense of wage increases that are not compatible with preserving or improving external competitiveness, as evidenced by unit labour cost developments over the previous decade.

Revision of the mediation and arbitration system is an area in which social dialogue has not taken place, despite several attempts. One aspect that further complicates matters in resolving what appears to be OMED interference in free collective bargaining is the feeling that mediators and arbitrators are not impartial (Ioannou 2011).

Source: Ioannou and Papadimitriou (2013).

Figure 8.14 Percentage of collective agreements settled by arbitration decision, 1990–2012

Recent legislation (Law 4635/2019) tries to partially rectify the asymmetry in access to arbitration by introducing a few prerequisites for unilateral recourse. It remains to be seen to what extent mediation and arbitration will be used from now on.

5. SOCIAL DIALOGUE TO MEET THE CHALLENGES OF DIGITALIZATION AND NEW FORMS OF WORK

As discussed in section 2 of this chapter, the Greek economy is not adequately digitalized. One of the reasons for this is insufficient market competition in the area of digital services (Rewheel 2020). Despite limited digitalization, some social dialogue on the matter and its impact on the workplace took place as long ago as in 2006, when a framework for teleworking was adopted as part of the 2006 NGCLA. Since then, however, there has been little social dialogue on digitalization issues.

In November 2015, however, the national social partners (GSEE, SEV, GSEVEE, ESEE and SETE), realizing the importance of training in the future, produced a policy paper emphasizing the need for social dialogue on vocational education and training. The paper acknowledges the absence of a national strategy on the matter, and calls for the establishment and activation of a central institution dedicated to vocational education and training (VET) consultation and social dialogue under the aegis of the Ministry of Education and in cooperation with other competent ministries and state authorities. Furthermore, the paper acknowledges the need to establish a monitoring and evaluating mechanism for continuous education and training. While this common position paper is a step in the right direction, it is too general and little progress has since been made in developing a strategy or a road map.

More recently, the SEV, through a number of studies and events, has been trying to evaluate the impact of the forthcoming automation and to raise awareness. The other social partners have not shown particular awareness in this field; a very recent survey by the Research Branch of the GSEE on the impact of digital transformation on the labour market is an exception (Lapatsioras et al. 2020).

In addition to digitalization, new forms of work will substitute for existing employment relationships. The gig economy, an umbrella term used to capture work transacted remotely or via platforms, already exists in Greece. Greece has a tradition of self-employment and freelance workers and as early as 2000 the National General Collective Agreement contained a provision on non-discrimination against other types (non-dependent) of employment relationship. Nevertheless, the gig economy has a number of features that differentiate it from traditional self-employment.

The pandemic has forced business, educational establishments, individuals and the public sector to work digitally, when possible. The appropriate legislative framework was introduced in order to provide for this possibility. While teething problems do exist, and notwithstanding that these measures were introduced urgently and with a short-term horizon in mind, using them to overcome obstacles brought about by the pandemic implies that infrastructural shortcomings in the future might not be that great.

The gig, or sharing, economy is currently to be found mainly in the hospitality industry, and less so in the transport industry (taxis). According to an Institute of the Association of

Greek Tourism Enterprises study (INSETTE 2019) home-sharing (for example, Airbnb) now accounts for around 10 per cent of total revenues from tourist accommodation: it generated some €1.15 billion between June 2018 and May 2019. Employers in the tourism industry are concerned, as they face unfair competition from this unregulated and untaxed segment of their market, whereas their segment is over-regulated and over-taxed. Competition from these unregulated segments of the market could perhaps explain why hotel workers' wages have declined to a similar extent to those of other sectors of the Greek economy, which were hit much more severely by the financial crisis (Papadopoulos and Lyddon 2020). Despite the constant pleas from employers in the tourism industry for regulation of the gig economy, little has been done, apart from some tax revenue measures. Moreover, there has been no dialogue between the social partners on this matter. Employers view these new forms of work as a threat and are trying to confront them through their links with the government, not in cooperation with the unions (Mexi 2019), confirming the concerns of the President of the OKE, as presented in section 3.2 of this chapter.

An encouraging step towards better preparation for the future of work was taken recently by the Ministry of Education. The Secretary General for Vocational Education, Training and Lifelong Learning met with representatives of the social partners and established a permanent committee in which social partners and the government participate to draw up a strategic cooperation plan on vocational education and training for the former to follow. This appears to be a positive sign for social dialogue in an area that, as the GSEE noted, has been marred with difficulties in the past, as traditionally the Ministry of Labour and the Ministry of Education – the two ministries with a pivotal role in training and education – have had a tense relationship, jeopardizing the possibility of common actions. While representatives from the Ministry of Labour do not seem to participate currently in the Committee, formation of the Committee appears to be a step in the right direction.

6. CASE STUDY: SOCIAL DIALOGUE WITH A MISSION TO COMBAT UNDECLARED WORK

6.1 Extent

The underground economy in Greece is substantial (25 per cent of GDP in 2010, according to Schneider 2013). Not only does part of the output not appear in official national accounts, but part of the input used for its production is also not registered. This is because individuals work as self-employed without paying social security contributions, or neither individuals themselves nor their employers pay social security contributions, or the employee is a family worker. Furthermore, during the crisis the extent of undeclared work has increased (explanatory memorandum to Law 4554/2018). Undeclared work leaves workers unprotected, firms face unfair competition and state revenues are forgone. The occurrence of undeclared work suggests that there is a gap between state morality and citizen morality (ILO 2016). The reasons behind this gap are more difficult to identify and there is disagreement on their importance. In a more descriptive mode we can associate undeclared work with formal institutional voids, weaknesses, inefficiencies and uncertainties. Lack of trust between the state and its citizens and among citizens also plays a role.

6.2 Details on the Action Taken

Starting from the premise that improving institutional weaknesses would reduce undeclared work, national tripartite social dialogue, under the guidance of the ILO and funded by the European Commission, took place in Greece between 2015 and 2018 (Malagardi 2018). This involved producing diagnostic reports on undeclared work in Greece (ILO 2016), including a business survey to understand the obstacles faced by small and medium-sized enterprises in creating formal jobs and a diagnostic report on bogus self-employment, the design of a three-year road map by a tripartite team and a pilot programme of targeted inspections. The road map evolved into an operational instrument following active social dialogue at the level of the Supreme Labour Council. This involved reaching a consensus on a new system of fines (now legislated in Law 4554/2018) and implementation of the road map by the Supreme Labour Council (a tripartite body). The roadmap contains several interrelated actions to unfold between 2017 and 2019. The role of social partners in the implementation of the fight against undeclared work involves the establishment of a Tripartite Committee with equal representation under the Supreme Labour Council. This tripartite committee is responsible for steering and monitoring the implementation of the roadmap, and involving social partners in the design and execution of economic, employment and social policy. The road map being validated by a tripartite body ensures that there is a solid political commitment to the actions provided. An awareness-raising campaign on the negative impact of undeclared work has been launched (information brochure, campaign in schools, website and social media) and a protocol of cooperation has been established between the Labour Inspectorate, the Unified Social Security Institution (EFKA), the Financial Police and the Financial and Economic Crime Unit (SDOE).

All this is evidence that social dialogue can produce tangible results in relation to an important problem for the Greek economy. The action against undeclared work being a product of tripartite work gives it more weight, as all parties will be willing to support its implementation.

7. CONCLUSIONS

There is only a limited tradition of social dialogue in Greece. This was made evident during the recent financial crisis, in which dialogue could have contributed to a speedier design of better measures than those implemented. The crisis, however, might have planted the seeds of change. There is some evidence to this effect: the extensive tripartite work on combating undeclared work, the series of common projects by the social partners in 2014–15, and the willingness stated in the 2018 National General Collective Agreement to revive social dialogue and take joint action on a number of pressing issues: occupational pension funds, actions to reignite private sector growth, and effective collective bargaining are signs that cannot be ignored. The tripartite work on combating undeclared work (see case study in section 6 of this chapter) is an important indication of how, through social dialogue, the social partners can arrive at a consensus to combat a problem that has implications not only for state revenues and competition between firms, but more importantly for the safety, rights and well-being of workers. The action plan,

agreed through dialogue, has more chance of being implemented than a government plan would.

Going further, those experienced in what social dialogue needs in order to succeed – including the ILO – emphasize the need to ensure the representativeness of social partners, to expand the social dialogue agenda beyond narrow wage-related topics to issues such as technology, demography/migration, climate change and globalization, and to include civil society in this process.

NOTES

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1. [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=File:Population_age_structure_by_major_age_groups_2008_and_2018_\(%25_of_the_total_population\).png](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=File:Population_age_structure_by_major_age_groups_2008_and_2018_(%25_of_the_total_population).png) (accessed 12 December 2019).
 2. Civil servants are covered by the Confederation of Civil Servants' Trade Unions (ADEDY). The confederation does not bargain over pay. This chapter does not deal with the dialogue between ADEDY and the government.
 3. Government Gazette, vol. B, issue 4860 (31 October 2018).
 4. The data including the public sector employers and employees are not available for 2013.
 5. Letter by SEV, GSEVEE, ESEE and SETE to the Minister of Labour, dated 6 June 2018 (http://www.sev.org.gr/uploads/Documents/syn2_6718.pdf, accessed 12 December 2019).
 6. Letter by SEV, GSEVEE, ESEE and SETE (http://webcache.googleusercontent.com/search?q=cache:VWE0BoWuHS4J:www.sev.org.gr/uploads/Documents/syn4_6718.pdf+&cd=2&hl=el&ct=clnk&gl=gr&client=firefox-b-d, accessed 28 July 2020) to the Minister of Labour dated 14 June 2018 in reply to the letter by the Minister on 12 June 2018.
 7. Until mid-December 2019.
 8. Ioannou (2011) and Katsaroumpas and Koukiadaki (2018), on which this box draws, provide excellent descriptions of OMED's workings and shortcomings.

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APPENDIX

A. Questionnaires Used for the Semi-structured Interviews

Unions

- (a) What is your general assessment of social dialogue in recent years? Compared with the past have any changes taken place in the frequency of dialogue, the issues covered, the trust between the parties and so on?
- (b) Were you consulted when the government raised the minimum wage in January 2019?
- (c) How did you assess the government's action to introduce a new social partner: SBE? Does introducing a regional social partner not enhance representativeness as there would be a more balanced (at least regionally) view on the issues facing the Greek economy?
- (d) The introduction of the possibility of negotiating a collective labour agreement with an association of persons meant that many more firms had the opportunity to sign an agreement which fitted their circumstances better. This could perhaps be regarded as more representative bargaining. What is your position on this?
- (e) The percentage of firms that sign a firm-level collective agreement is not high. Do you think this is related to the possibility that was given to opt out of sectoral collective agreements?
- (f) What is your estimate of union membership and union density/coverage? Do you have hard data?
- (g) What actions have you taken to increase the number of your members?
- (h) How do you consult your members in order to ensure that you capture the pulse of your members' demands?
- (i) What are the main reasons you can identify for the decreasing number of union members?
- (j) Does the decreasing number of union members pose a financial threat to the trade unions?
- (k) In other countries (for example, Germany) there appears to be more trust between the social partners and between individual employers and their employees. What do you think is the main factor hindering the development of trustworthy relations in the case of Greece?
- (l) What signal should the employers give to persuade you that they are trustworthy (investment, training)?
- (m) What challenges do you think digitalization is creating for trade union membership and collective bargaining? Have you started discussing these with your members? Have you started discussing them with the employers' side?

Employers

- (a) What is your general assessment of social dialogue in recent years? Compared with the past, have any changes taken place in the frequency of the dialogue, the issues covered, the trust between the parties and so on?
- (b) What are the main services you offer your members today?
- (c) How aligned are the interests of your members?
- (d) Are there enterprises that are not your members but are free-riding on your actions?

- (e) How did you evaluate the government's introduction of a new social partner? Does introducing a regional social partner not enhance representativeness as there may be a more balanced view on the issues facing the Greek economy?
- (f) The introduction of the possibility of negotiating a collective labour agreement with an association of persons meant that many more firms had the opportunity to sign an agreement which fitted their circumstances better. This could perhaps be regarded as more representative bargaining. What is your position on this?
- (g) In other countries (for example, Germany) there appears to be more trust between the social partners and between individual employers and their employees. What do you think is the main factor hindering the development of trustworthy relations in the case of Greece?
- (h) If you provided your employees with more training you undertook more investment would employees not show more trust in you?
- (i) How frequently do you inform employees about the true financial situation of the company?
- (j) Do you think that if the government consulted with the employers before setting the minimum wage it would improve the overall competitiveness of the country?
- (k) How can the government be prevented from using the minimum wage as a tool for electoral purposes?
- (l) What challenges do you think digitalization is creating for employer representation in employer associations? What are their implications for collective bargaining? Have you started discussing these with your members? Have you started discussing them with the employees' side?