



# **Agreement**

## **A Green Mentality for Collective Bargaining**

### *Summary of the Hungarian report*

by Balázs Rossu

Based on the legal texts available and observable in Hungary, there is no normative obstacle set up by any form of legal regulation that would deny trade unions and employers the possibility to include norms or regulations regarding the topic of environmental protection, environmental consciousness and sustainability in their respective collective agreements, but unfortunately they rarely do in practice.

In Hungary the dominant level of the process of collective bargaining and execution of collective bargaining agreements is by far the local or corporate level, thus making Hungary a country with a decentralized structure for bargaining and sectoral level collective bargaining is incredibly underused in Hungary due to several reasons. Currently, political lobby activity became a necessary (if not the most necessary) tool of a trade union (confederation) in order to achieve anything on a wider scale (nationally speaking) according to trade union activists and experts alike. Social partners are well aware that this practice naturally makes the influence of any trade unions involved fragile, but they also know that in the same time this serves as the only gateway (in numerous cases) towards effective work.

Some employers' representations do act supportive of environmental actions on a local level as well, but those of the employees are mostly focusing on labour related questions exclusively, placing environmental protection and related issues to be discussed somewhere in the future and in most cases place in separate policies, not collective bargaining agreements. When asked directly they give a positive response regarding its importance but in practice they rarely (if ever) include it during the actual negotiation process as one of their requests or demands.

Hungary seems to be only in the beginning of a (much needed) paradigm change towards environmentally conscious thinking and only at the starting point of the process of actually considering to shift to the utilization of renewable energy sources. Thanks to social and cultural customs taken up by society throughout the country's history, the actual fundamentals of a proper industrial relations system are lacking in many cases. These include the tendency to overuse resources or the possibility to think collectively and placing the needs of the employees as a group before that of the given individuals.

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