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Innovation Recommendations for Czech Social Dialogue. Good Practices from Abroad.

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Innovative recommendation - Germany: Education

A study visit to Germany in September 2023 provided detailed insights into education within IG Metall (German Metalworkers' Union), specifically how the union systematically addresses education, the vocational system, and the resulting qualification needs.

Currently, many qualifications are becoming obsolete while new ones emerge. IG Metall operates in seven federal states. The union's activities differ by region due to historical and priority differences. For example, in Bavaria, there is a state agreement on qualifications. This grants the right to request education, but not a direct legal right enforceable in court. The union operates in education both at the national (political) level and the sectoral level, where negotiations with employers take place. For vocational qualifications, employers cover the costs and provide compensation for lost income.

Good practice from abroad:

- **Mentoring system for further education in companies**

In Germany, a project was launched to train mentors from among union representatives and members of works councils. Mentors identify qualification needs, help employees navigate educational opportunities, and connect them with training offers for further education. They act as intermediaries between companies, employment offices and employees. They significantly support the company's educational strategy. Key role: unions provide mentor training, take part in qualification development and actively contribute to modernizing work competencies.

- **National strategy for further education**

Germany's National Skills Strategy (2019) represents a long-term framework aimed at creating a 'new culture of skills' through systematic, accessible, and high-quality lifelong learning. The strategy connects the state, employers, unions, and educational institutions.

It focuses on:

- increasing participation of low-skilled and vulnerable groups,
- strengthening digital and basic skills,
- transparency of offerings and counselling,
- development of sectoral and company strategies.

Role of unions: they are key actors in the strategy – participating in policy creation and updates (e.g., mentor support, Mento project, BasisKomPlus), strategic negotiations with employers on educational rights and tools,

and transferring worker needs into systemic measures (e.g., via IG Metall's 'Transformation Atlas').

- **Social partnership in sectoral education**

In sectors such as chemistry and energy, there is deep cooperation between unions, employers, and the state. They jointly operate educational institutions (e.g., QFC institute) and implement sectoral training programs, including those for low-skilled workers. Key role: unions play an active role not only as employee representatives but also as co-creators of professional content and educational projects.

Potential for transfer into the Czech environment:

- **Establishing a system of company mentors under union supervision**

Introducing the role of educational mentors in Czech companies, ideally from union backgrounds. These mentors could provide counselling, map company and employee needs, and assist in preparing training. Role of unions: training, coordination, and oversight of the mentor network, cooperation with HR departments and employment offices, and advocating for inclusion of company mentors in collective agreements.

- **Cooperation in developing a National lifelong learning strategy**

Czech unions should initiate the creation of a long-term strategy for further education in cooperation with the state and employers, similar to Germany, aiming to embed lifelong learning as a standard part of working life and ensure access to education for low-skilled and older workers. Role of unions: participate in negotiating conditions (time, funding, content), influence educational policy direction, and help develop counselling and mentoring in companies. Be co-creators of content, guarantors of employee needs, and intermediaries between companies and educators.

A step in the right direction:

One step in the right direction was the creation of the document "[Proposal for a Concept of Further Education from the Perspective of Social Partners in the Czech Republic](#)", developed within the ESF project 'Social Dialogue and Society 4.0'. This project was implemented by the Czech-Moravian Confederation of Trade Unions in partnership with the Confederation of Industry of the Czech Republic between 2019–2022. One of the project's goals was to raise awareness of the necessity and usefulness of building a learning culture based on systematic support for lifelong learning and further professional education.

Innovative recommendation - Slovakia: Cooperation

A working visit to Bratislava enabled professional dialogue with colleagues from the Confederation of Trade Unions of the Slovak Republic (KOZ SR) and researchers from CELSI. The main topic was the quality and coverage of collective bargaining and the use of research data for trade union activities. The visit clearly demonstrated that cooperation between trade unions and the research sector is a key prerequisite for effective adaptation of trade unions to the challenges of the current labour market.

Good practice from abroad:

- **Institutionalized dialogue between trade unions and researchers**
Organizing a joint roundtable between ČMKOS, KOZ SR, and CELSI created space for deeper understanding of the needs of both environments. Regular sharing of research outputs and openness of trade union organizations to data strengthens mutual trust and increases the relevance of research for practice.
- **Joint search for response to European challenges**
Discussions on the implementation of the directive on adequate minimum wages revealed that similar problems—low coverage of collective bargaining and the risk of merely formal implementation—affect both countries. Cooperation thus offers the possibility to coordinate positions and jointly formulate proposals that carry more weight at the European level.
- **Open exchange of project experience**
Comparison of project management and internal processes (e.g., use of Power BI, digital invoice processing, work with Visio) provided inspiration for improving efficiency in both project management and daily operations.

Potential for transfer into the Czech environment:

- **Support for cooperation between trade unions and researchers as a tool for innovation**
Strengthening systematic cooperation between trade unions and research institutions can bring new solutions to current labour market and collective bargaining challenges.
- **Building a shared expert space between trade unions and researchers in central Europe**
Creating permanent cooperation formats (e.g., thematic roundtables, shared databases, working groups) can amplify the voice of trade unions and contribute to better advocacy for workers' interests on the European level.

- **Development of tools and competencies supporting effective cooperation**
Investments in digital tools, process management, and data analytics can significantly improve trade unions' ability to establish meaningful partnerships and respond to changes in the working environment.

A step in the right direction:

A positive example of implementing foreign inspiration into practice is the cooperation between the project department of ČMKOS and the think-tank České Priority, which led to [a pilot verification of new service design methods at ZO Tesla Pardubice union](#). The project delivered specific results in designing services aimed at foreign workers. Through empathetic research, workshops, and prototyping, new service proposals were developed — ranging from counselling to practical assistance with housing or resolving workplace injuries. This experience shows that combining trade union practice with a research-based approach produces effective solutions and strengthens the union's ability to respond flexibly to the changing needs of workers.

Innovative recommendation - Ireland: Campaigns and dissemination

As part of a study visit to Ireland, Czech trade union representatives became acquainted with the campaign „**Better in a Trade Union**“, implemented by the Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU). This campaign serves a modern example of how to communicate the benefits of trade union membership to the public in an innovative and systematic way. It is an inspiring showcase of how trade union movements can increase their visibility and credibility through campaigns and professional dissemination.

Good practice in campaigning and dissemination:

- **Unified branding and shared visual language across unions**
The “Better in a Trade Union” campaign uses a consistent visual style, featuring distinctive colours, typography, and logos. Importantly, it allows for co-branding — enabling individual unions to participate without losing the campaign’s unified message.
- **Strong presence on social media and in the digital space**
The campaign utilizes visually attractive templates for posts, online banners, digital badges, and authentic stories of real union members (e.g. a postal worker, teacher, or nurse). The content is easy to share and encourages engagement.
- **Linking the campaign to specific events and seasons**
Dissemination is not a one-time effort; its core is the annual **Trade Union Week**, culminating in Labour Day. This ensures a cyclical rhythm which connects the campaign to trade union reality and workplace activities.

Potential for transfer into the Czech environment:

- **Building a unified campaign enabling involvement of various unions**
Developing visual and content templates for a campaign that different unions can adapt to their needs could strengthen the coherence and nationwide reach of the trade union message.
- **Emphasizing authentic stories and digital communication**
Sharing personal experiences of real union members through videos, quotes, and photos builds trust and relatability.
- **Linking campaigns to key periods and active presence in public space**
Strategically planning campaigns around major anniversaries or events can help unions better time the visibility and maximize their impact.

A step in the right direction:

The campaign „**End of Cheap Labour**“, launched by ČMKOS in 2015, represents an important step towards greater professionalization and systematic trade union communication strategy and dissemination. Similar to the Irish initiative 'Better in a Trade Union', this campaign is based on a strong, clear message which has become the foundation for a broader public debate on low wages in the Czech Republic. Through it, ČMKOS successfully mobilized its members and increased trade union visibility. The campaign has become a powerful tool for strengthening the trade union brand and bringing it closer to the broader public.

Innovative recommendation - Slovenia: Counselling

As part of a study visit to Slovenia, a visit was made to the organization **Delavska svetovalnica** based in Ljubljana. This organization provides free labour and social counselling to employees whose position in the labour market is disadvantaged including individuals with low legal literacy or migrant workers. The experience demonstrated the importance of **accessible and practically oriented counselling** that connects the everyday needs of clients with broader efforts for systemic change.

Good practice in counselling:

- **Labor law counselling**
Delavska svetovalnica offers consultancy services focused on individual labour disputes including unpaid wages, dismissals, employment contracts, and discrimination. The counselling is available to everyone, regardless of origin or legal status, and can flexibly respond to the specific needs of clients.
- **Legal representation and support in handling specific cases**
The services include not only advice but also practical assistance: communication with employers, drafting complaints, filing with the labour inspectorate, or arranging legal representation. This model is particularly effective for foreign workers who often face more complex administrative barriers.
- **Broader societal impact of counselling**
In addition to individual support, Delavska svetovalnica also engages in public awareness, contributes to labour law analyses, and highlights structural deficiencies in the system.

Potential for transfer into the Czech environment:

- **Stable and professional counselling services as part of union strategy**
Developing or strengthening expert lifelong counselling within trade unions can build trust among members and the wider public, reinforcing the image of unions as true defenders of workers' rights.
- **Better interconnection between counsellors, lawyers, and labour protection institutions**
Strengthening cooperation between counselling services, labour inspectorates, and other actors can increase effectiveness in resolving labour disputes and simultaneously reduce the burden on individual institutions.

- **Focus on awareness and prevention as part of the counselling agenda**

Creating clear informational materials, training, and campaigns can help ensure that workers, including those from abroad, know their rights before they are violated.

A step in the right direction:

ČMKOS is currently developing a lifelong counselling system. This new system reflects a positive trend in response to workers' evolving needs. Counsellors are trained using the [Padlet](#) board and are beginning to provide individual support to their clients not only during job changes but also in upskilling or navigating the labour market. This approach is similar to the Delavska svetovalnica model, where emphasis is placed on accessibility, trust, and concrete assistance as key elements of effective counselling.

Innovative recommendation - Norway: Adaptation

A study visit to Norway in March 2025 provided deeper insight into how the Norwegian Confederation of Trade Unions (LO Norge) systematically works on engaging young people, transitioning to digital tools, and modernizing communication with members. The main theme was exploring how Norwegian unions approach **adaptation** to both youth needs and technological change, and how they anchor this in both daily practice and long-term strategies.

Good practice abroad:

- **Proactive work with youth as a form of trade union adaptation**
LO works with members under 35 through dedicated structures with their own mandates and budgets. This flexible approach allows unions to respond to evolving expectations of the younger generation and build long-term loyalty.
- **Summer field campaigns as a tool for information dissemination and communication adaptation**
LO's summer patrol is an example of how the form of union work can be adapted to young people and their work experiences. The emphasis is on dialogue and prevention, not confrontation.
- **Gradual digitalization as a thoughtful adaptation to new technologies**
LO introduces new digital tools step by step, with regard to data protection and user-friendliness. Adaptation to the digital environment is managed systematically with an emphasis on supporting union officials and transparent use of data.

Potential for transfer into the Czech environment:

- **Strengthening the unions' ability to adapt to young members' needs**
Creating flexible and open forms of engagement for the younger generation can support generational renewal and increase the attractiveness of membership.
- **Developing approaches that help unions to respond better to labour market**
Active collection of experiences from young workers in the field can serve as inspiration for shaping union priorities in the Czech Republic.

- **Gradual adaptation of digital tools with regard to users and data protection**

Digitalization should be understood as a long-term adaptation process, not a sudden change. Emphasis on simplicity, security, and transparency can help unions better manage the technological transition.

A step in the right direction:

The “[World of Work](#)” web platform represents an important move towards the systematic **adaptation** of union and social dialogue topics into secondary education. Similar to Norway, where union topics are a fundamental part of civic education, concrete tools for teaching are also being developed in the Czech context, including background materials, lesson plans, and pilot lessons. The project responds to the need to present the role of unions to the younger generation in an understandable way. This approach not only supports awareness but also fosters respect for the values of social dialogue from an early age.

Innovative recommendation - Hungary: Vocational Education

As part of a study visit to Hungary, Czech representatives of the Confederation of Industry and Transport of the Czech Republic became acquainted with practical tools for vocational education, specifically in the construction sector, implemented by **Tudásépítő-Team Ágazati Képzőközpont Nonprofit Zrt.** directly on a residential and office complex construction site. It was an inspiring approach to practical training for both students and adults in the context of retraining.

Good practice in education:

- **Everything under „one roof“**

The training facility centralizes all vocational classrooms, workshops, simulators (e.g., a crane), and practical training sites in one area. Students learn both basic and specialized professions directly on site. Key role: the employer (or their association) organizes the training at their training facilities and subsequently at real production sites or actual contract locations.

- **Targeted and centralized promotion of the sector**

Promotion of the sector and targeted motivation of students to study is carried out through the local employers' association (Confederation of Hungarian Employers and Industrialists), in direct cooperation with vocational schools and employers. All available means are used to inform the professional public dealing with the education of young people and adults interested in construction. Key role: the umbrella employers' organization centralizes activities aimed at promoting the sector. It can thus better reach the public and communication media to raise awareness and interest in the specific sector than schools and companies could individually.

- **Certification and full recognition of education**

The mentioned educational facility issues graduates a professional certificate with the possibility of immediate employment at a cooperating construction company. The graduate thus has a guarantee of direct employment after completing the education. Key role: the professional certificate guaranteed by the employers' association enables direct employment of the graduate in cooperating or other companies in the given sector.

Potential for transfer into the Czech environment:

- **Development of training centres with a wide range of fields / specializations**

Development of the offer and creation of new vocational training centres established by employers or their associations, using the possibility of dual education in offering targeted practical education in the given sector, a wide range of specializations due to the centralization of training. Role of employers: promoting the principles of dual education into law, encouraging the creation of training centres, certification of workplaces for dual education, offering workplaces also for further vocational education of employees in the sector.

- **Greater promotion of vocational education with an emphasis on the relevance of scarce qualified positions**

Creating a centralized system for promoting sectors through their employers' associations (in cooperation with trade unions as well), better utilize resources, and more targeted marketing of the sector aimed at pupils/parents and primary schools, ensure broader media outreach, and enable a rapid response to current labour market needs. Role of employers: Coordinate and pool resources/grants, implement programs and collaborate with other partners, evaluate the outcomes and impacts of these programs.

- **Certification of institutions ensuring recognition of education certificates including practice**

Creating a system of certified vocational workplaces functioning within the dual education system, linking vocational training with the possibility of obtaining a qualification certificate (National Qualifications Framework), adjustments to framework educational programs to include preparation for obtaining a qualification certificate. Role of employers: encouraging the creation of company workplaces, their certification, involvement in the adjustment of Framework Educational Programs (together with trade union representatives), direct involvement in the updating and development of the National Qualifications Framework.

A step in the right direction:

The long-term efforts of the Confederation of Industry and Transport in cooperation with the Chamber of Commerce and with the support of the Czech-Moravian Confederation of Trade Unions to create a (voluntary) dual education system in the Czech Republic based on models from Germany, Austria, and Slovakia. After piloting in 34 school and company partnerships (2017–2022), results, methodologies, and legislative amendment proposals were submitted to the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports. Currently, a legislative amendment enabling dual education (with certain modifications) for companies and schools is under discussion in the Czech Parliament, with expected implementation in 2026.