



PRIVATISATION OF PUBLIC SERVICES AND THE IMPACT ON QUALITY, EMPLOYMENT AND PRODUCTIVITY

THE IMPACT OF LIBERALISATION AND PRIVATISATION ON LABOUR RELATIONS

Torsten Brandt and Thorsten Schulten

Wirtschafts- und Sozialwissenschaftliches Institut in der Hans-Böckler-Stiftung (WSI),
Düsseldorf

This is the second of a series Policy Papers to be produced for the EU-funded research project PIQUE (Privatisation of Public Services and the Impact on Quality, Employment and Productivity). It is based on a comprehensive research report on "liberalisation and privatisation of public services and the impact on labour relations", which includes a comparative study on the postal, hospital, local public transport and electricity sectors in six countries (Austria, Belgium, Germany, Poland, Sweden and the UK). The full-length report is available to download from www.pique.at.

1. INTRODUCTION

The promotion of liberalisation (and more indirectly also privatisation) of public services has been one of the core political projects of the European Union since the 1990s. It has been justified by the expectation that the creation of new markets would lead to greater efficiency and would promote both more economic growth and social wealth. Since 2000, the advanced liberalisation policy of growing parts of public services has also become a core element of the Lisbon strategy, which aims "to make the European Union the most competitive and dynamic economic area in the world - an economic area which is able to link sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and a stronger social cohesion."



While liberalisation, above all, is about the introduction of competition in formerly protected markets, the question of what parameters companies should compete on has widely been neglected in liberalisation and privatisation discourses. Although there are many different forms of competition, companies can essentially follow two different strategies: they can either compete on quality and innovation, which includes elements such as innovative products, high service quality, efficient and productive organisation of work and production (including a well trained and motivated workforce) etc., or they can compete on labour costs, by lowering wages, extending working hours or using special forms of employment linked with lower labour costs (e.g. self-employed workers, subsidised employment). The first approach can be described an innovation and quality-driven competition model that follows a *high-road strategy* to corporate success. The second approach tends to ensure a downward spiral with deteriorating wage and employment conditions resulting in a *low-road economic survival strategy*. Of course, if allowed to do so, companies will always try to lower their wage costs, especially in labour-intensive sectors with a high proportion of labour costs. Regulations, including industry-wide collective agreements that prevent companies from adapting a low-road strategy, are therefore all the more important.

The impact of liberalisation and privatisation on labour relations is thus of vital importance for the question of what strategy public-service providers follow in liberalised markets. As the services under discussion are public services, which means that they are essential for the well-being of many citizens, competition should not only focus on lowering prices, but also on facilitating innovation, improving quality and expanding accessibility. In order to avoid competition that is primarily carried out at the expense of the employees, liberalised markets need a strong labour regulation that creates a common level playing field for all competitors and makes it possible to follow a high-road strategy.

2. MAIN FINDINGS

Liberalisation and privatisation have far-reaching consequences for the established labour-relation regime (LRR), defined as coherent set of institutions (statutory regulations, collective bargaining and employee representation) regulating labour relations in a particular sector. With the creation of new markets and the transformation of former public entities into profit-oriented organisations, the companies affected are put under significant competitive pressure. Since many of the affected sectors, such as postal services, public transport or hospitals, are labour-intensive with labour costs making up two-thirds of total production costs, the reduction of labour costs is a core element in improving competitiveness. Labour costs can be reduced by rationalising production processes (substituting machines for workers) or by lowering wages, extending working hours or using cheaper forms of employment. In order to save labour costs, liberalised and privatised companies have tried to withdraw from the traditional more expensive LRR of the public sector and set up new forms of regulation. As a result we have seen the emergence of new LRRs which often have *no or only weak links to the old LRR of the public sector*. This includes far-reaching changes in collective bargaining, wage levels, and employment conditions.

2.1. The traditional labour-relations regime of the public sector

There are at least five main characteristics of the traditional LRR of the public sector: A *first* major characteristic has been the relatively strong position of trade unions in the public sector, with a trade union density considerably above the *average rate of organisation*. Trade unions traditionally have had a strong influence both at political as well as at workplace level, which ensured that the public employers would sit down at the negotiation table even if many public-sector unions did not have formal bargaining rights. In some countries, public-sector unions also



enjoyed additional co-determination rights that went beyond those granted in private-sector enterprises. Due to the extraordinary strength of their unions, public-sector workers were able to gain various additional benefits.

A *second* characteristic of the traditional public-sector LRR has been the relatively centralised collective bargaining structure. Hence, while in several European countries wages and working conditions were formally imposed by statutory regulations rather than collective agreements (e.g. Austria, Belgium, Poland and in Germany civil servants), through informal but comprehensive and highly centralised bargaining processes the unions nevertheless had a strong impact on the norms and standards that govern employment in the public sector. In several countries centralised collective bargaining has covered the entire public-service sector, including a wide range of sub-sectors.

Individual wage agreements, in contrast, have been virtually absent in the public sector. Wages were exclusively negotiated on a collective level and laid down in detailed wage schemes. The assignment to particular wage groups was based on objective criteria such as certified qualifications and seniority rather than on individual experience and the demand for specific skills. Performance-criteria or performance-based supplements, widely applied in private-sector companies, played no or only a marginal role in public-sector wage relations. Instead, wage differentials were based on seniority and on specific supplements attached to certain workplaces or tasks rather than on individual performances. Due to the absence of individual wage agreements and performance-based supplements, income inequality was much less pronounced in the public sector than in private companies.

The relatively low degree of wage dispersion has been a *third* major characteristic of the public sector LRR. While more qualified employees have usually earned less than their colleagues in private industry the opposite has often been the case for less qualified employees. The public sector therefore became a reservoir for decent jobs for low- and medium-qualified workers. The absence of performance criteria also had an important effect on working conditions. Working conditions were seen as an essential part of a complex set of formal and informal rules that governed the provision of public services. These rules, among other things, were meant to ensure that economic pressure would not compromise the quality and security of services and that each client would get exactly the same treatment. They also gave the public sector LRR an explicitly political character. Public-sector workers were subsequently less motivated by expected wage increases than by what is known as the public-sector ethos. On the other hand, the absence of individual incentives also meant that sometimes public sector workers *had a lack of motivation*.

A *fourth* main feature of the traditional public sector LRR has been the long-term nature of the employment relationship and the subsequent extraordinary degree of employment stability. Many public-sector workers had civil-servant status or the equivalent, in the sense that they could be dismissed only in very exceptional circumstances. In some cases, job protection went as far as requiring management to obtain the consent of the respective employee and/or works-council representative to re-assign workers to new posts within the same organisation or company. The high level of job security persuaded workers to take up public-sector jobs even if public-sector wages could hardly keep-up with those in the private sector.

Fifth and finally, the public sector was also seen as an important instrument of employment policy. Until the 1980s, many European governments used the extension of public services to compensate for cyclical job losses in the private-sector economy. Later on, the public sector in several countries became a forerunner in offering relatively well-paid part-time jobs and so became an attractive employer, in particular for women.

To sum up, the strength of public-sector unions and the comprehensive and centralised bargaining structures led to a relative stability and predictability of working hours, a high degree of wage equality and employment security, shorter working hours and lower retirement ages.



2.2. The emergence of a new labour-relations regime in the liberalised and privatised sectors

Liberalisation and privatisation of public services have fundamentally challenged the traditional LRR in the public sector. In liberalised markets, former public companies and monopoly suppliers have been forced to transform their entire organisation into a private for-profit business and have to compete with new private companies. The affected sectors and companies have been put under increasing competitive pressure to reduce labour costs, and they consequently try to transfer this market pressure to the workforce. As a result, new LRRs have emerged in liberalised and privatised sectors with no or only very weak links to the traditional public-sector LRR.

Although there are some significant national differences and variations, the main characteristics of these new LRRs can be described as follows (Table 1): Regarding collective bargaining, liberalisation has usually led to a two-tier system with relatively stable bargaining structures at the level of the incumbent and a rather decentralised and fragmented bargaining structure with a low bargaining coverage at the level of the new competitors. One of the first things former public-sector companies often do after privatisation is to withdraw from the central public-sector collective agreement in order to establish their own bargaining structures (mostly in the form of new agreements at company level). Furthermore, after liberalisation new competitors emerged, which in several sectors and countries are covered by no or different collective agreements and which profit from lower employment standards (lower wages and longer or more flexible working hours).

This two-tier system corresponds with a union density that is relatively high within the former public monopolists but often rather low within the new competing companies, so unions often simply do not have the organisational power to push for new collective agreements. Following this, the newly liberalised markets often lack any sector-wide regulation or coordination of labour issues that might limit or even prevent competition on wage costs.

However, liberalisation and privatisation has not only enforced a decentralisation and fragmentation of collective bargaining at sectoral level but has also led to a growing fragmentation of labour regulation within companies. Whereas under the public sector LRR the employees were treated as a relatively homogeneous workforce, within privatised companies there is a growing division between “old” and “new” employees and between the core and peripheral workforce. Long-standing employees are still covered by civil-servant statutes while more recently hired workers are employed as private-sector workers based on the private-sector employment statutes. As such they not only enjoy lower employment security but in many cases also receive lower salaries for the same job than they would have under the civil-servant regulations. Additional segmentations follow from the increase in contracting-out practices, which typically increase in liberalised and privatised companies and which often go along with new or even no collective agreements for the workers affected. The result is a two-tier workforce with significant differences regarding pay and working conditions. The same holds true for the level of job security, which remains relatively high for the shrinking core workforce of the incumbent, but is rather low for peripheral workers.

Table 1: Labour relations before and after liberalisation

	Public sector LRR (before liberalisation)	LRR after liberalisation	
		Incumbent (former monopolists)	New competitors
Collective bargaining	Centralised wage setting	Bargaining at company level	Decentralised, fragmented or no agreements
Bargaining coverage	High	High	Low
Union density	High	High	Low
Work status	Civil servants and public employees	Decrease in civil servants and increase in private sector employees	Private-sector employees, self-employed
Workforce	Relatively homogeneous workforce	Two-tier workforce (strong division between core and peripheral workers)	
Job security	High	Relatively high for the shrinking core workforce, increasing number of employees with temporary contracts	Low
Competition on wages and working conditions	Low	High	

Source: Torsten Brandt and Thorsten Schulten, Liberalisation and privatisation of public services and the impact on labour relations, December 2007. PIQUE Research Report. Available to download from www.pique.at.

2.3. Sector- and country-specific developments

The extent to which liberalisation and privatisation lead to competition on wages and labour costs with potentially negative effects on working and employment conditions depends basically on two factors. First, it depends on the degree of real market competition in the respective sectors. As has been shown in other papers in the PIQUE Project, liberalisation and privatisation have not always automatically led to more competition, and in some sectors and countries competition is de facto still rather limited.¹ However, companies in the affected sectors often already use the potential of higher competition to put pressure on wages and working conditions. The second factor, which strongly influences the degree of competition on labour costs, is nature of the national LRRs and their abilities to create a sector-wide regulation on working conditions in order to create a common level playing field.

Table 2 gives an overview about competition on labour costs in liberalised and privatised sectors and existing differences between incumbents/public companies and new competitors. It is noticeable that in countries with more centralised and comprehensive collective bargaining systems, such as Belgium or Sweden, the degree of competition on labour costs is still rather low, since a strong sector-wide regulation and/or coordination is able to ensure that wages and working standards are quite similar. In contrast, in countries with more decentralised collective bargaining systems, such as Poland or the UK, moderate or even strong competition on labour costs has emerged in many sectors. Finally, in Germany and to a lesser degree also in Austria, liberalisation and privatisation have contributed to a significant decentralisation and fragmentation of collective bargaining, leading to a moderate or even strong competition on

¹ Christoph Herrman and Koen Verhoest, Varieties and Variations of Public Service Liberalisation and Privatisation, PIQUE Policy Paper No. 1, February 2008.



labour costs. The most extreme case is the German letter market, where wage differences between the incumbent and the new competitors are up to 60%.

Table 2: Competition on labour costs in liberalised and privatised sectors

Country	Sector			
	Post services (letter market)	Electricity	Local Public Transport	Hospital
Austria	Strong	Low	Moderate	Moderate
Belgium	Low	Low	Low	Low
Germany	Strong	Moderate	Strong	Moderate
Poland	Moderate	Low	Strong	Low
Sweden	Low	Low	Moderate	Low
United Kingdom	Low	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate

Source: Torsten Brandt and Thorsten Schulten, Liberalisation and privatisation of public services and the impact on labour relations, December 2007. PIQUE Research Report. Available to download from www.pique.at.

POSTAL SERVICES

In most countries the liberalisation and privatisation of postal services led to a massive reduction in employment. The former state-owned postal companies are typically no longer part of the public-sector agreements. Instead, the former monopoly providers now have their own company agreements. Labour relations in the newly established postal companies vary from country to country. In countries that traditionally have a rather comprehensive collective bargaining system with a strong regulation at sectoral level (e.g. Belgium or Sweden) the liberalisation of postal services has had rather different effect than in countries with a more decentralised and fragmented bargaining system. In the Swedish postal sector there are different company agreements for the incumbent and the main new competitor, which are, however, closely coordinated by the trade unions and therefore contain no major differences in substance. In contrast to Belgium and Sweden, all the other countries have a rather fragmented bargaining structure with agreements at company level only or no agreements at all. Without sectoral regulation there is a strong potential for wage dumping. Such practices can be found in the German letter market, where employees with the new competitors have substantially lower wages and more flexible working hours, but also in Austria, where the majority of the workforce in the new competitors are self-employed and therefore lack the coverage of any form of employment standards or protection. In Germany there are also growing differences within public companies, with new entrants being offered worse employment conditions than the more senior staff. As a highly labour-intensive industry, there is a strong downward competition on labour costs within the German postal sector.

Table 3: Collective bargaining in the postal sector (letter market)

	Austria	Belgium	Germany	Poland	Sweden	UK
Incumbent	Company agreement	Company agreement	Company agreement	Company agreement	Company agreement	Company agreement
Competitors	Various sectoral and company agreements. No bargaining for self-employed deliverers	Sectoral agreement	No agreements; sectoral-level minimum wage regulation	No agreements	Company agreements	Some company agreements

Source: Torsten Brandt and Thorsten Schulten, Liberalisation and privatisation of public services and the impact on labour relations, December 2007. PIQUE Research Report. Available to download from www.pique.at.

LOCAL PUBLIC TRANSPORT

All these countries have seen some formal and (partial) privatisations of local public-transport companies and outsourcing measures. There has also been a tendency for privatised companies to withdraw from public-sector collective agreements. Private transport companies (e.g. in Germany, Poland or the UK) have tried to gain competitive advantages over their public competitors through a strategy of wage dumping on the basis of no collective agreements or separate ones that provide much lower wages and working conditions. Wage dumping is also possible on the basis of collective agreements (e.g. in Germany). Again, in countries with a more comprehensive collective bargaining system, such as Belgium or Sweden, such a strategy has been limited by strong sector-wide regulation. In Belgium the consideration of labour conditions has partly been included in the public tenders, and in Sweden self-employed drivers are not covered by collective bargaining and special labour regulations.

In the local public-transport sector, liberalisation and privatisation has not only led to a fragmentation of bargaining structures and pronounced differences between public and private providers. In addition, there are also growing differences within public companies, with new entrants being offered worse employment conditions than the more senior staff.

Table 4: Collective bargaining in the local public-transport sector

	Austria	Belgium	Germany	Poland	Sweden	UK
Incumbents	Sectoral and company agreements	Company and sectoral agreements	Sectoral and company agreements	Company agreements	Company and sectoral agreements	Company agreements
Competitors	Sectoral agreement		Company or no agreements	Company or no agreements	No bargaining for self-employed	

Source: Torsten Brandt and Thorsten Schulten, Liberalisation and privatisation of public services and the impact on labour relations, December 2007. PIQUE Research Report. Available to download from www.pique.at.



ELECTRICITY

Liberalisation measures have, for the most part, led to a decline in public ownership and higher market concentration by large private suppliers. Reorganisation measures and mergers have led to massive job reductions. Nevertheless, compared to the other sectors, in the electricity sector changes in bargaining structures have been rather modest. These changes are mostly the result of the outsourcing of certain services. In addition, there is a tendency for wage differentials to increase, with wages being still comparably high in the production segments but lagging behind in the retail part of the electricity supply chain. In sum, however, bargaining structures remain largely intact and bargaining coverage is still extensive.

Table 5: Collective bargaining in the electricity sector

	Austria	Belgium	Germany	Poland	Sweden	UK
Incumbent	Unilateral state regulation	National agreements	Sectoral and company agreements	Sectoral and company agreements	Sectoral and company agreements	Company agreements
Competitors	Company and sector agreements	Company agreements	Company agreements	Sectoral and company agreements	Sectoral and company agreements	

Source: Torsten Brandt and Thorsten Schulten, Liberalisation and privatisation of public services and the impact on labour relations, December 2007. PIQUE Research Report. Available to download from www.pique.at.

HOSPITAL SECTOR

In the hospital sector liberalisation has taken the form of a general commercialisation of health services. So far, Germany is the only European country that has shown a strong tendency towards the full material privatisation of public hospitals and their sale to private for-profit hospital corporations. All private German hospital companies have withdrawn from the public-sector collective agreements and made their own arrangements. In other countries the dominant form of privatisation the hospital sector is still the contracting out of services such as cleaning, catering, laundry, security or administrative services. For the employees in these sectors, outsourcing usually means that they are no longer covered by the public-sector agreements and have to accept a significant deterioration of wages and working conditions. However, labour relations in public hospitals are usually still part of the public-sector labour-relations regime. There are sectoral agreements for private hospitals in Austria, Belgium and Sweden. In the other countries, private hospitals are either covered by company agreements or not covered at all. Depending on the national labour market situation, wages and working conditions in private hospitals can be either lower or higher than in public clinics.

Table 6: Collective bargaining in the hospital sector

	Austria	Belgium	Germany	Poland	Sweden	UK
Public hospitals	Unilateral state regulation/ company agreements	National public sector agreement	National public sector agreement	Unilateral state regulation	National public sector agreement	National agreement
Private for profit hospitals	Sectoral agreements	-	Company or no agreements	Company or no agreements	Sectoral and company agreements	Company or no agreements

Source: Torsten Brandt and Thorsten Schulten, Liberalisation and privatisation of public services and the impact on labour relations, December 2007. PIQUE Research Report. Available to download from www.pique.at.

3. CONCLUSION: NEED FOR SOCIAL REGULATION!

The liberalisation and privatisation of public services has led to a fundamental transformation of the established labour-relations regimes in the public sector with far-reaching consequences for employment and working conditions. The consequences are most obvious in those liberalised sectors that have already achieved a high degree of market competition and where wage costs are a crucial element in the competitive position of the individual company. The German letter market is a prime example where the competitive strategy of new competitors is mainly based on wage dumping and relatively poor working conditions. In most other sectors and countries the competition on wage costs is still less pronounced, due to a much lower degree of market competition. However, this may change in the future.

From an employee's point of view there is a strong belief that liberalisation and privatisation primarily threaten established standards and lead to a significant deterioration of pay levels and working conditions. The PIQUE Project may indeed have found some evidence for such a view. Especially the new competitors, which emerged after liberalisation, often provide much worse working conditions than the incumbent or the remaining public companies. Under competitive pressure the latter also started to change their working conditions, e.g. through the establishment of two-tier wage structures and a growing divisions between a core and a peripheral workforce.

With the trend towards decentralisation and fragmentation, collective bargaining has often lost its capacity to create a level playing field and to take wages and working conditions out of competition. In order to avoid a downward competition at the expense of the employees and to focus on a more innovation and quality-oriented model of competition, there is a pressing need for social (re-)regulation in liberalised and privatised sectors. Since the policy of the European Union has a major impact on the liberalisation process, social regulation requires political action at both national and European level.

3.1. Social regulation at national level

At national level there are already a number of "good practices" that have been established to limit wage competition. In Belgium and Sweden the trade unions have mostly been able to guarantee similar working conditions for employees at the incumbents and the new competitors through the established systems of sectoral coordination, even if both are covered by different collective agreements. In Germany and Austria the trade unions are also trying to coordinate



their bargaining policy at sectoral level while using the public-sector conditions as a benchmark. However, due to the lack of union members in the newly established companies this has not always been very successful.

A strategy for a sector-wide social regulation could be supported by the state through the extension of collective agreements, the determination of sector-wide minimum wages and standards or through the linking of public procurement and collectively agreed standards. The latter has been the case, for example, in the Belgian local public-transport sector, where public tenders include a special clause referring to certain working conditions in the public sector, which have to be guaranteed by the private contractor too. In Germany, various federal states (*Länder*) have legal provisions under which public contracts can be awarded only to companies that have declared that they use a certain collective agreement. Similar forms of regulation linking public procurement with the promotion of certain social standards can be found in Austria, Sweden and the UK.

In contrast to many other EU member states, none of the countries covered in the PIQUE project has a strong mechanism to extend collective agreements to the whole sector. However, in autumn 2007 the trade unions and some employers (mainly those related to the incumbent) in the German letter market signed a collective agreement on minimum wages, which the Ministry of Labour later extended to the whole sector - in the face of protests from the main competitors.

A further major challenge related to liberalisation and privatisation is to overcome regulations that create a two-tier workforce. The latter is systematically undermining the basis for solidarity among employees and creates a permanent threat even to the relatively well-situated core workforce. It has also clearly negative consequences for the motivation and productivity of the employees. In the UK, for example, the unions have been running a "fair wage campaign" to end two-tier workforce systems in the hospital sector and have demanded the same wages and working conditions for hospital employees working in the National Health Service as well as for hospital employees working for private sub-contractors. As part of the 2005 "Warwick Agreement" the unions and the Labour government reached a commitment in principle to end the two-tier workforce in public services. In the same year the unions and the Department of Health concluded an agreement with private contractors that employees such as hospital cleaners, porters and catering staff would, in future, receive the same pay and working conditions as NHS staff.

Another strategic point of regulation might be the policy of the regulatory agencies, which could also contribute to strengthening social regulation in liberalised markets and to providing "fair competition" that is not run at the expense of the employees. The German post law, for example, contains a "social clause" according to which companies will only receive a licence to provide postal services if they guarantee the conventional working conditions in the sector. The intention of this clause was to avoid wage dumping, although in practice it has not been used by the German regulatory agency.

3.2. Social regulation at European level

Since there is a growing awareness of the (potentially) negative effects of liberalisation and privatisation for employees, the social regulation of liberalised markets has also become an important policy issue at European level too. Considering the recent EU regulation on public transport in 2007, for example, there is a provision according to which public authorities are free to impose certain social standards in order to "ensure transparent and comparable terms of



competition between operators and to avert the risk of social dumping.”² There is a similar passage in the new EU directive on postal services, which explicitly emphasises that “social considerations should be taken into account when preparing the opening up of the postal market.”³ Moreover, according to the EU directive on public procurement, public authorities are always free to define certain social standards in public tenders.⁴

In contrast to these provisions, which explicitly enable social regulation in liberalised markets at national level, some recent decisions of the European Court of Justice (the Laval, Viking and Ruffert cases) have argued that certain national regulations on the protection of workers violate the principle of economic freedom as laid down in the European Treaty. The ECJ judgement in the Ruffert Case, for example, stated that the legal provisions in Germany, which link the award of public contracts to the use of collective agreements, infringe the freedom to provide services.

In order to avoid the negative consequences of liberalisation and privatisation, the EU should not undermine the national competences for social regulation. After the recent ECJ judgements it seems to be necessary to clarify the basic interpretation of the European Treaty in order to ensure that economic freedom is not placed above social protection, for example through the introduction of a “Social Progress Clause” as recently proposed by the European Trade Union Confederation.⁵

Finally, there should be a regular monitoring of the impact of liberalisation and privatisation on labour relations and working conditions at EU level. Here is also an important role for the European social dialogue between trade unions and employers’ associations in the affected sectors, which could help to identify good national practices for the social re-regulation of liberalised markets.

To sum up, liberalisation and privatisation have so far promoted a model of competition that is largely based on the reduction of wage costs and not on the improvement of quality and innovation. As long as liberalisation is widely associated with the deterioration of working conditions it will continue to lack support and legitimacy among large sections of the employees affected. The alternative is a social (re-)regulation of liberalised markets that protects and improves working standards and so puts the focus on a high-road strategy in order to achieve both better work and better services.

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² Regulation (EC) No 1370/2007 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 October 2007 on public passenger transport services by rail and by road and repealing Council Regulations (EEC) Nos 1191/69 and 1107/70, OJ L 315, 3.12.2007, 1-13.

³ Directive 2008/6/EC of the European Parliament and the Council of 20 February 2008 amending Directive 97/67/EC with regard to the full accomplishment of the internal market of Community postal services, *Official Journal of the European Union* L 52, 27 February 2008, OJ L 52, 20.02.2008, 3-20.

⁴ Directive 2004/18/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 31 March 2004 on the coordination of procedures for the award of public works contracts, public supply contracts and public service contracts, OJ L 134, 30.4.2004, 114-240.

⁵ European Trade Union Confederation, ETUC response to ECJ judgements Viking and Laval. Resolution adopted by the Executive Committee of the ETUC at its meeting of 4 March 2008 in Brussels.

PROJECT INFORMATION

The PIQUE project (“Privatisation of Public Services and the Impact on Quality, Employment and Productivity”) explores the impact of liberalisation and privatisation strategies in public services on employment, working conditions, labour relations, productivity and service quality. Focussing on the sectors of postal services, local public transport, electricity and healthcare/hospitals, the research covers six European countries: Austria, Belgium, Germany, Poland, Sweden and the UK.



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PARTNERS

AUSTRIA	Forschungs- und Beratungsstelle Arbeitswelt (FORBA), www.forba.at
BELGIUM	K. U. Leuven, Hoger Instituut voor de Arbeid (HIVA), www.hiva.be K. U. Leuven, Instituut voor de Overheid, www.soc.kuleuven.be/io/eng
GERMANY	Wirtschafts- und Sozialwissenschaftliches Institut in der Hans-Böckler-Stiftung (WSI), www.wsi.de
POLAND	Unwersytet Warszawski, Instytut Socjologii, www.uw.edu.pl
SWEDEN	Göteborgs Universitet, Institutionen för Arbetsvetenskap, www.gu.se
UNITED KINGDOM	Working Lives Research Institute, London Metropolitan University, www.workinglives.org

COORDINATION

Forschungs- und Beratungsstelle Arbeitswelt (FORBA)
Working Life Research Centre
Aspernbrückengasse 4/5, A 1020 Wien
Tel.: +43-1-21 24 700
Fax: +43-1-21 24 700-77
office@forba.at, www.forba.at

CONTACT AND FURTHER INFORMATION

www.pique.at

pique@forba.at

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