

Involvement of Civil Society in Policy Development

Sustainable Governance Indicators 2024



Indicator **Effective Involvement of Civil Society Organizations (Capital and Labor)**

Question **To what extent does the government facilitate the participation of trade unions and business organizations in policymaking?**

30 OECD and EU countries are sorted according to their performance on a scale from 10 (best) to 1 (lowest). This scale is tied to four qualitative evaluation levels.

- 10-9 = The government is able to effectively involve trade unions and business organizations in policy development.
- 8-6 = Most of the time, the government is able to effectively involve trade unions and business organizations in policy development.
- 5-3 = The government is rarely able to effectively involve trade unions and business organizations in policy development.
- 2-1 = The government is not able to effectively involve trade unions and business organizations in policy development.

Austria

Score 9 Labor and business organizations – or as they are commonly referred to in Austria, the “social partners” – have played an extremely powerful and important role in postwar Austrian politics. Considering their exceptionally prominent role in Austrian politics and public policymaking, it is remarkable that this role, and the desire to maintain it, was constitutionally acknowledged only in 2008.

Compared to interest group politics or interest group/government relations in many other countries, the top labor and business organizations in Austria – the Austrian Economic Chambers (Wirtschaftskammern) and the Federation of Austrian Industry (Die Industriellenvereinigung) for business and employers; the Austrian Trade Union Federation (Österreichischer Gewerkschaftsbund) and the Austrian Federal Chamber of Labor (Arbeiterkammern) for employees; and the Austrian Chamber of Agriculture (Landwirtschaftskammer) for farmers – are not mere pressure groups seeking to exert influence on political decision-makers from the outside. Rather, they have been directly involved in public policymaking, sometimes formulating nearly complete laws themselves, which parliament then merely approves. This role has long been facilitated by the large share of MPs representing labor and business.

Further, the social partners have been involved in parliamentary deliberations of important bills at the committee stage. Additionally, like other interest groups, the social partners have had and used the opportunity to express their views during the institutionalized review in parliament, which marks a distinct stage in the legislative process in Austria.

To some extent, the notable power of the social partners has reflected the relative weakness – the internal split and disunity – of many Austrian governments (Rathgeb 2017). All else being equal, internally divided governments face a powerful incentive to share policymaking authority with the social partners.

While recent governments have not been significantly more divided internally than previous ones, the overall trend has been toward a long-term weakening of the social partnership as powerful players in the public policymaking process (Tálos and Hinterseer 2019). The reasons for this include the dramatically shrinking share of ministers with close personal ties to one of the social partners, the ideological distance to corporatist forms of governance of governing parties, and a shrinking membership of the trade unions. Still, while the long-standing special status of the social partners – or the social partnership for that matter – is largely gone, the recurrent recent crises facing Austria and many other countries have resulted in unexpected (re)gains in terms of influence.

Citation:

Tálos, Emmerich, and Tobias Hinterseer. 2019. *Sozialpartnerschaft: ein zentraler politischer Gestaltungsfaktor der Zweiten Republik am Ende?*. Wien: Studienverlag.

Paster, Thomas. 2022. "Sozialpartnerschaft und Arbeitgeber* innenverbände in Österreich." In *Sozialpartnerschaftliche Handlungsfelder: Kontinuitäten, Brüche und Perspektiven: Aktuelle Befunde*, eds. Wiesbaden: Springer Fachmedien Wiesbaden, 29-43.

Rathgeb, P. 2017. "Relying on Weak Governments: Austrian Trade Unions and the Politics of Smoothed Dualization." *OZP: Austrian Journal of Political Science* 45 (3): 45-55.

Denmark

Score 9

Denmark has a long-standing tradition of including trade unions and business organizations in the policy process, particularly through tripartite negotiations. During the legislative process, these social partners are routinely consulted and invited to provide information on proposals. More broadly, interest organizations also offer valuable information to politicians and civil servants. This practice is formalized through the Economic Council, where major organizations are represented.

Tripartite negotiations are likely the most important venue for exchanging information and developing policy involving trade unions and employer organizations. These negotiations are informal, as they are not regulated by law. This informality means there is no set schedule for when negotiations should occur; the government decides when to call them. Despite their informal nature, these negotiations are crucial and have been used to agree on issues such as wage compensation during the pandemic. They address various labor market issues, ranging from sexual harassment to long-term investment in lifelong learning and education (Ministry of Employment 2023).

The tripartite negotiations secure information flows between major stakeholders in the Danish labor market, both private and public, and ensure a high degree of legitimacy for proposals that the government can then turn into legislation or adopt in collective agreements. Some observers find that the tripartite negotiations are opaque and lack transparency. Nevertheless, these negotiations have proven useful in avoiding conflict between workers and employers and in securing stability in the Danish labor market.

Citation:

Ministry of Employment. 2023. "Trepartsaftaler." <https://bm.dk/arbejdsmraader/politiske-aftaler/trepartsaftaler>

Finland

Score 9

The principle of tripartite policy preparation is deeply rooted in Finnish political traditions. The government facilitates the participation of trade unions and business organizations in policymaking to a large degree, sometimes relegating the entire preparatory process to the social partners. These social partners play a crucial role in all stages of the policymaking process, including agenda-setting, policy formulation, deliberation and decision-making, policy implementation, and performance monitoring.

Tripartite negotiations are crucial for pension policies, as the principles and reforms of the earnings-related pension scheme are negotiated between the social partners and the state (Finnish Center for Pensions, n.d.).

The process of tripartite negotiations has a strong institutional framework supported by legislation and both permanent and ad hoc working groups. It also includes mechanisms that engage capital and labor in expert commissions, public hearings and performance monitoring. Communication is ongoing and involves all members of the private sector and labor. However, the process is not fully transparent to outsiders. For example, the working groups very seldom organize public hearings.

Members of organizations representing capital and labor sometimes express dissatisfaction with token participation in the policymaking process, especially regarding government plans to change the negotiation framework. However, the government generally succeeds in moderating disputes within and between labor and capital groups, and in balancing diverse opinions in practice.

Citation:

Finnish Center for Pensions. n.d. "Tripartite Negotiations." <https://www.etk.fi/en/finnish-pension-system/administration-and-supervision/tripartite-negotiations/>

Norway

Score 9

In Norway, both employees and enterprises are well-organized. On the labor side, the Norwegian Confederation of Trade Unions (LO) is the largest, while on the capital side, the Confederation of Norwegian Enterprises (NHO) dominates. Due to their historical roles and significance, these two organizations enjoy a privileged position with frequent, informal access to government and national policymaking. This is in addition to their formal roles, which they share with other organizations for capital and labor. Their privileged status is particularly evident in economic and industrial policymaking and wage determination.

The cooperation between these social partners and the government produces a less transparent tripartite system of consensus-oriented policymaking, frequently criticized by other, smaller trade unions and employer organizations. It is a solid norm that the government never expresses any opinion on internal conflicts within or between the organizations.

A separate regime for cooperation between the state and organized interests exists in the agriculture sector. Norwegian farmers and food production (excluding fish) are protected from international competition and imports, and a significant proportion of farmers' income comes from state subsidies. A consensus norm dictates that a man-year in agriculture should earn an amount equal to that in manufacturing. Each year there are negotiations between the government and farmers' organizations to determine the level of subsidies required to fulfill this norm.

Sweden

Score 9

Cooperation between the government and trade unions in Sweden is traditionally strong and has historically played a central role in shaping the country's policies and legislation. This cooperation is an expression of the Swedish model, which is based on a tripartite structure in which the government, employer organizations, and trade unions work together to resolve labor market issues. This approach is often referred to as the "Saltsjöbad spirit" (Elvander 1988). In 2022, the main agreement between labor, employers, and the government was renewed with modified rules and under political pressure (Kjellberg 2023a).

Union membership in most Western countries has declined over the past few decades, though Sweden and other Nordic countries seem somewhat sheltered from such trends. However, in the last two decades, even Sweden has exhibited both a decline in trade union membership and a less close relationship between the unions and their traditional political partners, i.e., Social Democratic Parties. Foreign-born workers are not unionized to the same extent as Swedish-born workers, which can be explained by the fact that workers not born in Sweden are mainly employed in sectors that are difficult to organize, especially in the service sector with low

qualification requirements. Despite this, around 90% of all workers are covered by collective agreements, i.e., mainly bilateral negotiations between labor and capital.

While the union density rate has remained relatively stable at 70% in recent years (with slight fluctuations), the density rate for private-sector employers is around 88%. In the public sector, the degree of organization is 100% for obvious reasons. This means that around 88% of employees work in companies affiliated with an employers' association (Kjellberg 2023b).

With regard to power resources and the strengthening of tripartite agreements, the integration of the interest groups of labor and capital has been implemented both intensively and comprehensively in Sweden. While cooperation between unions, employers' associations, and the government takes many forms, the most institutionalized policy feedback mechanism is the referral ("remiss") system (Government Offices of Sweden, n.d.).

Citation:

Elvander, Nils. 1988. *Den svenska modellen*. Stockholm.

Government Offices of Sweden. n.d. "Remisser." <https://www.regeringen.se/remisser/>

Kjellberg, Anders. 2023a. *Den svenska modellen ur ett nordiskt perspektiv: facklig anslutning och nytt huvudavtal*. https://lucris.lub.lu.se/ws/portalfiles/portal/148881382/Arena_Ide_2023_Kjellberg_4_juni_Slutvers.pdf

Kjellberg, Anders. 2023b. "Parternas organisationsgrad och kollektivavtalens utbredning." *Melingsinstitutets årsrapport* https://lucris.lub.lu.se/ws/portalfiles/portal/138623782/Parternas_organisationsgrad_2022_Kjellberg.pdf

Switzerland

Score 9

Policymaking in Switzerland is strongly based on public consultation with interest groups. Traditionally, in the Swiss liberal-conservative political system, business and employer interest groups have more influence and power than trade unions or non-producer interests. The latter, however, have recently enjoyed a significant increase in their political influence (Kriesi 1980; 1982; Häusermann et al. 2004; Armingeon 2011; Sciarini et al. 2015; Eichenberger 2020; Mach et al. 2020).

Within Switzerland's corporatist system, which links the state and organizations representing labor and capital, there are numerous pre-parliamentary procedures and committees focused on consultation with various societal groups. One of the main such mechanisms is the consultation procedure, which enables invited (communal and cantonal umbrella organizations, relevant interest groups) and uninvited parties to submit statements in the context of a preliminary legislative procedure. These instruments are designed to prevent government proposals from failing in parliament or in subsequent referendums, and to offer solutions that benefit all parties. However, authorities can synthesize and integrate these comments into the design of policy at their discretion.

Research shows that the degree of corporatist integration has declined in recent

years. This is in part attributable to the growing intensity of conflicts between the social partners, as well as to the influence of European integration and internationalization. If judged from a comparative perspective, the level of corporatist integration remains very high in Switzerland, but from a historical perspective it is low.

During the pandemic, corporatism proved to be a resilient and efficient instrument for swift socioeconomic policymaking, although this corporatist coordination happened very silently, while the mass media was more focused on lobbying efforts (Armingeon and Sager 2022). These neocorporatist features also gave the upper hand to economic actors with regard to influencing COVID-19 measures, to the detriment of other CSOs (Sager/Mavrot 2020). In any case, the direct democracy aspects of the system offer interest groups very significant influence, since they can threaten to trigger a referendum. This offers strong incentives for political elites to incorporate major interest groups in the policy-development process. On the other hand, the federal government has become stronger in the domestic political environment due to the consequences of European integration.

Citation:

Armingeon, Klaus. 2011. "A Prematurely Announced Death? Swiss Corporatism in Comparative Perspective." In *Switzerland in Europe: Continuity and Change in the Swiss Political Economy*, eds. C. Trampusch and A. Mach. London/New York: Routledge.

Armingeon, Klaus, and Fritz Sager. 2022. "Muting Science: Input Overload Versus Scientific Advice in Swiss Policymaking During the COVID-19 Pandemic." Unpublished paper.

Eichenberger, S. 2020. "The Rise of Citizen Groups within the Administration and Parliament in Switzerland." *Swiss Political Science Review* 26 (2): 206-227.

Fischer, Manuel, and Pascal Sciarini. 2019. "Die Position der Regierung in Entscheidungsstrukturen." In *Blackbox Exekutive. Regierungslehre in der Schweiz*, eds. Adrian Ritz, Theo Haldemann, and Fritz Sager. Zürich: NZZ Libro, 49-64.

Häusermann, S., Mach, A., and Papadopoulos, Y. 2004. "From Corporatism to Partisan Politics: Social Policy Making under Strain in Switzerland." *Revue Suisse de Science Politique* 11 (3): 33-59.

Kriesi, H. 1980. *Entscheidungsstrukturen und Entscheidungsprozesse in der Schweizer Politik*. Frankfurt am Main, New York: Campus.

Kriesi, H. 1982. "The Structure of the Swiss Political System." In *Patterns of Corporatist Policy-Making*, eds. G. Lehmbruch and P. C. Schmitter. London, Beverly Hills: Sage.

Lexicon of parliamentary terms. 2022. "Consultation procedure." <https://www.parlament.ch/en/%C3%BCber-das-parlament/parlamentsw%C3%B6rterbuch/parlamentsw%C3%B6rterbuch-detail?WordId=225>

MACH, A., VARONE, F., and EICHENBERGER, S. 2020. "Transformations of Swiss Neo-Corporatism: From Pre-Parliamentary Negotiations toward Privileged Pluralism in the Parliamentary Venue." In CAREJA, R., EMMENEGGER, P., and GIGER, N., eds. *The European Social Model under Pressure*. Wiesbaden: Springer Fachmedien Wiesbaden. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-658-27043-8_4

Sager, F., and C. Mavrot. 2020. "Switzerland's COVID-19 Policy Response: Consociational Crisis Management and Neo-Corporatist Reopening." *European Policy Analysis* 6: 293-304.

Sciarini, Pascal, Manuel Fischer, and Denise Traber, eds. 2015. *Political Decision-Making in Switzerland. The Consensus Model under Pressure*. Houndsmill, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Belgium

Score 8

Belgium is known for its strong culture of consultation and consensus, particularly in relation to socioeconomic policies. Pineda-Hernández et al. (2022) demonstrate that Belgium has both a high bargaining coverage (96% according to OECD data) and a high level of centralization.

In the Belgian political landscape, both trade unions and employers' associations hold significant representation within the decision-making process at the federal and regional echelons. Their ability to negotiate with each other and the government is bolstered by their representation of a substantial and stable proportion of employees and corporations. Their inclusion in a multitude of committees ensures that their viewpoints are effectively articulated to, and taken into account by, the authorities. Furthermore, they have the capacity to forge binding agreements among themselves, thereby exerting considerable influence over the entire economic terrain of Belgium. Nevertheless, there are instances where these entities engage in negotiations that result in unbalanced agreements, necessitating the Belgian government to intervene and bridge the ensuing financial disparity. Moreover, the occasional failure of trade unions and employers' associations to reach consensus can impede their capacity to shape public policy effectively. This highlights the complexities inherent in the decision-making process and the challenges faced by these entities in their pursuit of influencing policy.

Despite generally positive indicators and outcomes, there are underlying issues eroding the power of social dialogue and the dynamics of social partners. This is evident in the declining share of produced wealth going to wages, indicating a shift in the balance of power between labor and capital to the detriment of workers and trade unions (Hermans 2022).

Citation:

Pineda-Hernández, K., Rycx, F., and Volral, M. 2022. "How Collective Bargaining Shapes Poverty: New Evidence for Developed Countries." *British Journal of Industrial Relations* 60 (3): 895–928. <https://doi.org/10.1111/bjir.12693>
<https://stats.oecd.org/Index.aspx?lang=en&SubSessionId=ca458b88-af39-4929-a213-4719b63c342e&themetreeid=13>
<https://worker-participation.eu/national-industrial-relations/countries/belgium>
<https://www.etui.org/covid-social-impact/belgium/industrial-relations-in-belgium-background-summary>
Hermans, M. 2022. "Hoe sterk is het sociaal overleg nog?" *Samenleving & Politiek* 29: 36-41. Available at <https://www.sampol.be/2022/01/hoe-sterk-is-het-sociaal-overleg-nog>

Czechia

Score 8

The Council of Economic and Social Accord (Rada hospodářské a sociální dohody, RHSD) is the institutional mechanism for involving employers' and employees' representatives (trade unions) in negotiations with the government on significant economic and social development issues. Established in 1990, the RHSD operates

under Rules of Procedure that determine the regularity of meetings. In addition to plenary sessions and the Bureau, specialized working groups also convene. The frequency of these meetings depends on the government's attitude toward social dialogue during its term.

During the review period, the RHSD held regular plenary sessions, with meeting minutes and subsequent press conferences publicly available on the government website. In 2022, six regular sessions were held, along with one extraordinary session addressing the situation in Ukraine and its impact on the Czech Republic. In 2023, six sessions were also held. Additionally, tripartite meetings occurred at the ministry level to address specific sectoral issues, such as education and health. Tripartite meetings at the regional level also took place.

All three partners consider tripartite meetings crucial, but satisfaction with the results varies depending on how well views and demands are balanced. Examples include negotiations on minimum wage increases, guaranteed wage increases, and the so-called consolidation package. In the latter case, the government was unwilling to compromise.

Citation:
<https://vlada.gov.cz/assets/ppov/tripartita/Jednaci-rad.pdf>

Lithuania

Score 8

The government effectively involves trade unions and business organizations in policy development. The Tripartite Council serves as the main forum for regular discussions of new policy initiatives between government officials, business associations and trade unions. Additionally, representatives of trade unions and business associations are often invited to participate in ad hoc groups, such as those focused on reforms of the Labor Code or tax laws. The consultation processes are generally public and inclusive.

However, the involvement of business associations – and especially trade unions – in policy development tends to be uneven and varies with government cabinets. The center-right government that came into office in 2024 tends to favor business organizations over trade unions. This is evident from several recent key policymaking initiatives, such as the renewal of the activities of the State Progress Council to lead the development of the long-term Lithuania 2050 strategy and a series of tax reform proposals. In both cases the presence of business associations was strong, while trade unions were not represented.

Netherlands

Score 8 CSOs for both capital and labor are still firmly embedded in the culture and practices of “poldering” (see “Effective Civil Society Organizations (Capital and Labor)”).

Slovenia

Score 8 Slovenia’s neo-corporatist system positions business and labor representatives as key non-state actors in the policymaking process. The Economic and Social Council (ESC) institutionalizes the participation of the government, ministries, and business and labor representatives, where these parties discuss policy and consider the interests of both employers and employees. This involvement extends beyond labor legislation.

Coordination between the government and social partners within the ESC framework occurs through ESC meetings, meetings of the ESC college, and gatherings of negotiating groups and expert committees. The ESC college has been active since 2017, alongside the negotiating groups and expert committees.

During Prime Minister Cerar’s term, the ESC held 65 monthly meetings, averaging 1.35 meetings per month, each lasting about 3 hours and 2 minutes. Under Prime Minister Šarec, ESC members participated in 17 meetings, averaging 0.94 meetings per month, with each meeting lasting about 3 hours and 20 minutes. During Prime Minister Janša’s term, 16 ESC meetings were held until May 2021, averaging 1.10 meetings per month, with each meeting lasting about 5 hours and 6 minutes. After May 2021, the ESC ceased to meet due to the withdrawal of the trade unions. In July 2021, the president of the ESC wrote to council members, urging them to revive social dialogue and warning of the harmful consequences of inaction and lack of coordination.

ESC members met with Acting Prime Minister Golob for the first time on July 15, 2022, more than a year after the last meeting. During this meeting, the prime minister presented the government’s priorities for the 2022 – 2026 term. The ESC held 12 regular meetings until July 2023. However, since then, employers’ organizations, which had repeatedly expressed dissatisfaction and concern about the inadequate tripartite social dialogue over the past year, have withdrawn from the ESC until conditions for genuine tripartite social dialogue are guaranteed. In September 2023, the president of the ESC wrote to council members and the Prime Minister’s Office, urging the revival of social dialogue.

Citation:
Ekonomsko socialna svet. 2023. “Aktualno.” <http://www.ess.si/ess/ess-si.nsf/ekonomsko-socialni-svet/seja%20Ekonomsko-socialnega%20sveta>

Spain

Score 8

The Economic and Social Council (ESC) consists of employers' organizations, trade unions, and other societal representatives, as provided for in the constitution. Other government advisory bodies are established by specific policies. The ESC and other advisory bodies issue opinions on draft legislation, but these opinions are not binding on the government.

The extent of labor representatives' participation in executive policymaking varies with the governing party. Under the current left-wing executive, particularly since 2020, this cooperation has been limited. Between 2022 and 2023, trade unions, business organizations, and the government signed several agreements, including those related to temporary layoffs. The government has been successful in moderating disputes within employer organizations and trade unions and has supported agreements such as increasing the minimum wage. However, members of trade unions and employer organizations have expressed dissatisfaction with their participation in the policymaking process, indicating that the government does not always follow up on consultation talks or present policy initiatives before these talks begin.

Canada

Score 7

These two should be separated. Business associations are often consulted by Canadian governments. Trade unions are rarely consulted, if ever, outside of policies affecting training and worker education.

Canadian business associations are highly fragmented compared to those in most other industrialized nations, although they are similar to the disaggregated landscape of the United States. Representation is divided among various general business associations covering broad sections of the economy. For example, the Business Council on National Issues and the Canadian Council of Chief Executives represent large corporations; the Canadian Federation of Independent Business represents small businesses; and the Canadian Chamber of Commerce represents a wide range of businesses organized into local chambers. In the manufacturing sector, the Canadian Manufacturers' Association has merged into Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters. At a more specific level, numerous trade associations represent other industrial sectors, individual industries, and industry sub-segments. This extensive overlap makes it difficult to determine exactly which organizations are responsible for what functions, posing a challenge for Canadian governments trying to devise a coherent industrial strategy in consultation with business interests.

Trade associations perform five main functions in policymaking: (i) monitoring political developments relevant to the association's members, including policy

proposals, regulations, legislation, appointments, and the emergence of new issues; (ii) direct lobbying of proximate policymakers, involving personal contacts and representations before various government agencies at home and abroad; (iii) indirect lobbying – affecting policy indirectly by attempting to shape public opinion through media relations, advocacy advertising, public relations activities, etc.; (iv) building alliances with other groups to broaden the base of influence; and (v) research and policy analysis to provide a solid basis for advocacy.

In addition, trade associations can play an important role in policy implementation, such as administering product standards and labeling regulations. These political functions are easier to perform when an association's membership is relatively homogenous and drawn from a single industry or business segment. In this context, members' interests are more coherent and united, allowing for clear and forceful advocacy. Broader-based groups, on the other hand, must make policy compromises to accommodate a more diverse membership, which can attenuate their voices. However, broad-based groups have the advantage of representing a wider sector of the economy, making their input harder for policymakers to ignore (Stritch 2007 and 2018).

Labor today tends to intervene in the policy process at a general and political level, rather than a bureaucratic and specific one, and conducts its policy analysis activities accordingly. Between elections, the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC) is closely engaged with the parliamentary process, producing an annual pre-budget brief to the Standing Committee on Finance and frequently appearing before parliamentary committees considering legislation or holding general policy reviews. Some affiliates also participate in these processes. Engagement with ministers and public servants is less frequent but not uncommon. The CLC usually has ongoing contact with the ministers of labor and of human resources development (now human resources and skills development) regarding issues of worker training, workplace issues (including labor issues in the federal jurisdiction), and unemployment insurance. These relations tend to wax and wane depending on personal relationships between ministers and labor leadership.

On occasion, the depth of engagement has been considerable, particularly concerning training issues. In a handful of industries – notably steel and electronic products manufacturing – extensive training and adjustment programs were developed and delivered jointly by unions and employers in the early 1990s with government financial support. Despite the general demise of training boards, broad planning for labor needs continues today through bipartite national sector councils.

In addition, the autoworkers were heavily engaged with the government and business during the Canada – United States – Mexico free trade negotiations. However, that engagement tends to be sector specific and issue dependent.

Ultimately, labor engagement in social bargaining with employers and governments depends on the willingness of governments to promote such arrangements despite

employer indifference or hostility. This willingness has rarely been forthcoming (Jackson and Baldwin 2007).

Citation:

Stritch, Andrew. 2007. "Business Associations and Policy Analysis in Canada." In *Policy Analysis in Canada: The State of the Art*, eds. L. Dobuzinskis, M. Howlett, and D. Laycock, 242–59. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Stritch, Andrew. 2018. "Policy Analytical Capacity and Canadian Business Associations." In *Policy Analysis in Canada*, 297–317. Policy Press. <https://doi.org/10.1332/policypress/9781447334910.003.0014>

Jackson, Andrew, and Bob Baldwin. 2007. "Policy Analysis by the Labour Movement in a Hostile Environment." In *Policy Analysis in Canada: The State of the Art*, eds. L. Dobuzinskis, M. Howlett, and D. Laycock, 260–72. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Germany

Score 7

Trade unions and business organizations generally have only an advisory role in the political process in Germany. However, they still wield some political influence. These groups are part of the self-governing bodies of social security insurances. Representatives from both sides are often invited to participate in public hearings in parliament as experts or stakeholders. They also contribute to legislative initiatives on issues of central importance to capital and labor. Furthermore, representatives from unions and employers' organizations sit on numerous advisory boards and bodies that advise the federal government (Rütters/Mielke, n.d.).

One exception to the limitation on advising roles is the minimum wage commission, which is entitled to set the minimum wage. It is composed of three representatives each from the trade unions and business organizations, plus one chairman (Deutscher Gewerkschaftsbund, 2023). However, the new government elected in 2021 decided to set the minimum wage themselves and raised it to €12 per hour. After that, the usual process allowing the commission to decide the minimum wage was restored (Lesch et al., 2021, p. 194), at least for the time being.

There are no official, regular meetings between trade unions, business organizations, and government officials. However, certain ministers – first and foremost the minister of labor and the minister for economic affairs, and sometimes even the chancellor himself – meet regularly with representatives from capital and labor to discuss current affairs. It is difficult to determine how much the government acts upon these consultations.

In July 2022, Chancellor Olaf Scholz met with trade unions and business organizations for a "concerted action" (Konzertierte Aktion) but did not invite the federation of small and medium-sized businesses (Bundesverband der Mittelständischen Wirtschaft). This omission was heavily criticized by the federation (Mitteldeutscher Rundfunk, 2022). That being said, criticism of or dissatisfaction with too little participation in the political process is rare.

In Germany, wage bargaining operates autonomously. Trade unions and employers' organizations negotiate wages and working conditions without political intervention. Consequently, the government does not interfere in collective bargaining rounds and is typically not entitled to resolve disputes between unions and business organizations (Strünck, n.d.). Pleas from the government and other political institutions usually do not influence the collective bargaining rounds and are typically rejected by the negotiating parties swiftly. Additionally, there are no serious debates about limiting the function of autonomy in wage bargaining (Lesch et al., 2023: 26).

Citation:

Deutscher Gewerkschaftsbund. 2023. "Mindestlohnkommission: Aufgaben und Mitglieder." <https://www.dgb.de/schwerpunkt/mindestlohn/++co++916083ea-bd10-11e4-93f3-52540023ef1a>

Lesch, H., Bach, H., and Vogel, S. 2023. "Tarifautonomie in der Legalitätskrise." https://www.iwkoeln.de/fileadmin/user_upload/Studien/policy_papers/PDF/2023/IW-Policy-Paper_2023-Tarifautonomie-Legitimit%C3%A4tskrise.pdf

Lesch, H., Schneider, H., and Schröder, C. 2021. "Anpassungsverfahren beim gesetzlichen Mindestlohn: Argumente gegen eine politische Lohnfindung." *List Forum für Wirtschafts- und Finanzpolitik* 47 (2-4): 193-217.

Mitteldeutscher Rundfunk. 2022. "Entlastungen: Scholz trifft sich mit Arbeitgebern und Gewerkschaften." <https://www.mdr.de/nachrichten/deutschland/politik/kampf-gegen-inflation-scholz-treffen-arbeitgeber-100.html>

Rütters, P., and Mielke, S. n.d. "Gewerkschaften." Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung. <https://www.bpb.de/kurz-knapp/lexika/handwoerterbuch-politisches-system/202034/gewerkschaften>

Strünck, C. n.d. "Tarifpolitik/Tarifautonomie." <https://www.bpb.de/kurz-knapp/lexika/handwoerterbuch-politisches-system/202193/tarifpolitik-tarifautonomie/>

Greece

Score 7

Greece has established executive and legislative mechanisms that involve representatives of capital and labor in expert commissions and public hearings. Legislation adopted in 1990 and amended in 2021 requires that these representatives negotiate with the government on issues such as salaries, wages, and other aspects of labor relations. For example, the National General Collective Labor Agreement (EGSSE) was negotiated and signed by the national social partners in 2021 (Eurofound 2022), incorporating the European Social Partners Framework Agreement on Digitalization (2020). The social partners also established working groups to address digitalization issues, such as the right to disconnect and maintaining legal working hours for remote workers.

When draft legislation on labor issues is submitted to parliament, the "Permanent Committee on Social Affairs" is convened to debate the legislation. Representatives of employers and employees are invited to participate in these committee sessions.

In Greece, all members of the private sector and labor are involved in negotiations. These negotiations occur between associations representing employers – such as SEV (industrialists), ESEE (merchants), and GSEVEE (small firms) – and the General Confederation of Workers of Greece (GSEE). Similar negotiations take place between the government and the Confederation of Civil Service Unions (ADEDY) regarding public employee salaries.

Although organizational density in Greece is relatively low (approximately 19%; OECD 2021), collective agreements are extended to cover non-organized employers and employees. These agreements are periodically renegotiated, as they may last between one and three years. Additionally, sector-level negotiations between employers and employees are common.

In cases of labor disputes, the Mediation and Arbitration Agency (OMED), established in 1990, supports collective negotiations and intervenes between conflicting interests.

Since 2022, a new institutional mechanism, the “Council of Social Partners,” has involved representatives of capital and labor in consultations on employment policy. This council is attached to the national Public Employment Service (DYPAS) and can also be convened by the Minister of Labor.

During the economic crisis of the previous decade, the participation of social partners in policymaking was often nominal, with wages, salaries, and other labor-related issues being negotiated between the Greek government and representatives of Greece’s creditors (the “Troika”). However, participation is no longer merely tokenistic.

While the government can balance the interests of capital and labor, it is not obligated to act on the outcomes of consultation talks. The Ministry of Labor alone has the authority to decide on minimum wages and working hours, in line with relevant EU regulations and directives.

Citation:

Eurofound. 2022. “Collective Bargaining and Social Dialogue – Back to Normal in 2021?” [https://www.eurofound.europa.eu/en/resources/article/2022/collective-bargaining-and-social-dialogue-back-normal-2021#:~:text=In%20Greece%2C%20the%20National%20General,European%20social%20partners%20\(2020\)](https://www.eurofound.europa.eu/en/resources/article/2022/collective-bargaining-and-social-dialogue-back-normal-2021#:~:text=In%20Greece%2C%20the%20National%20General,European%20social%20partners%20(2020))

OECD. 2021. “Greece – Main Indicators and Characteristics of Collective Bargaining.” <https://www.oecd.org/employment/collective-bargaining-database-greece.pdf>

Sotiropoulos, D. A. 2019. “Political Party–Interest Group Linkages in Greece Before and After the Onset of the Economic Crisis.” *Mediterranean Politics* 24 (5): 605-625.

The legislation regulating collective agreements between capital and labor is 1896/1990. It was amended in 2021 through Law 4808/2021.

The website of the Hellenic Federation of Enterprises, i.e. the association of Greek industrialists (SEV), is <https://en.sev.org.gr/>

The website of the General Confederation of Workers of Greece (GSEE) is <https://gsee.gr/>

The website of the Confederation of Civil Service Unions (ADEDY) is <https://adedy.gr/>

The website of the Mediation and Arbitration Agency (OMED) is <https://www.omed.gr>

The website of the Hellenic Confederation of Professionals, Craftsmen, and Merchants (GSEVEE) is <https://www.gsevee.gr/en-us/about>

The website of the Hellenic Confederation of Commerce and Entrepreneurship (ESEE) is <https://esee.gr/en/home-en/>

The website of the Permanent Parliamentary Committee on Social Affairs is <https://www.hellenicparliament.gr/Koinovoulftikes-Epitropes/CommitteeDetailView?CommitteeId=583b7a49-8542-41c0-8e16-e1c22246bfa6>

The law adopted in 2022 on the Council of Social Partners is Law 4921/2022.

Ireland

Score 7

In the past decade, the central government has fostered the involvement of CSOs, including trade unions and business associations, in the policymaking process, with a special emphasis on economic dialogue. The tripartite social partnership of public and private employers and employees, which was nearly halted during the economic crisis, has re-emerged, albeit with less involvement from private sector stakeholders. O'Donnell (2021) found that the state created useful institutional governance structures to involve social partners – employers, unions, farmers and voluntary/community organizations – particularly through the National Economic and Social Council (NESC). NESC's early social partnership work was instrumental in enabling a strategy for development to overcome the national economic crisis of the 1980s (NESC 1986), playing a central role in its resolution. Since the social partnership process dissipated in 2010, the government has facilitated the participation of CSOs – such as trade unions, business associations and social and environmental groups – in policy dialogue. Ireland has a strong track record of consensus-building through social partnership and policy processes, once described as “a deliberative miracle” (Sabel 2000). This contributes to high levels of public trust, which, despite experiencing some decline, remain relatively strong. While both O'Donnell and Sabel note the successes of social partnership and dialogue, the extent and satisfaction of business and labor CSOs with policy participation remains unclear.

Citation:

Sabel, C. 2020. “Governance and Wicked Problems: Environment, Climate, Human Services and Quality Jobs.” Paper prepared for the Knowledge and Policy: Confronting Governance Challenges in the New Decade Conference, January. Dublin: NESC and Department of Sociology, Maynooth University.

O'Donnell, R. 2021. *The Social Partners and the NESC: From Tripartite Dialogue via Common Knowledge Events to Network Knowledge*. Bristol: Policy Press.

Japan

Score 7

Big businesses involved in the Japan Business Federation (Nippon Keidanren), the Japan Chamber of Commerce and Industry, and the Japan Association of Corporate Executives are engaged in planning policies. The chairpersons of big corporations are often invited to cabinet advisory bodies, and dominate among private-sector experts of the Council on Economic and Fiscal Policy, which prepares fiscal and economic policy guidelines and basic rules for budget compilation. The actual

influence of capital organizations on policy decisions, however, is largely dependent on the position of the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI) in decision-making. While Prime Minister Abe heavily relied on METI bureaucrats, Prime Minister Kishida represents a more balanced interministerial approach.

Trade union representatives as well as organized business have been taking part in advisory councils in the field of labor market policy at the Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare for decades. Until the 1990s, this was understood to resemble a veto right on many aspects of labor regulation. With the advent of cabinet-level councils in the 1990s and 2000s – to which trade unions were not invited or held a minority position – the influence of unions has waned somewhat, and policymaking has largely moved to the cabinet level, with organized business remaining influential. On the other hand, Prime Minister Kishida’s agenda of improving redistribution of wealth and the concept of growth based on domestic demand (so-called new capitalism) has made union demands for higher wages attractive even to LDP governments. Rengô has intensified contacts with the government and Rengô Chairperson Yoshino Tomoko is currently a member of the key cabinet advisory organ, which is composed mostly of CEOs from big corporations. In June 2023, the council issued the revised Grand Design and Action Plan for a New Form of Capitalism, which includes a range of labor market reforms, such as support for reskilling, the introduction of job-based wages tailored to individual company conditions and the facilitation of labor mobility to growth industries.

Citation:

Cabinet Secretariat. 2023. “Grand Design and Action Plan for a New Form of Capitalism: 2023 Revised Version.” https://www.cas.go.jp/seisaku/atarashii_sihonsyugi/pdf/ap2023en.pdf

OECD. 2021. “Main Indicators and Characteristics of Collective Bargaining.” <https://www.oecd.org/employment/collective-bargaining-database-japan.pdf>

Latvia

Score 7

The involvement of civil society organizations (CSOs) is facilitated through a structured approach in the policy development process within sectoral ministries in Latvia. This includes early CSO engagement in discussions, ensuring that various societal interests are represented in decision-making, and fostering open and responsible planning. The process is designed to ensure genuine collaboration between ministries and CSOs, constructive dialogue, and the inclusion of diverse groups in budget planning and oversight. However, the approach acknowledges the limited financial and human resources of CSOs and the non-remunerative nature of their participation. Thus, there is a need for further capacity-building of CSO organizations to ensure effective communication in the policymaking process.

The government has created opportunities for civil society organizations (CSOs) to participate in policymaking through online tools where policy proposals are accessible to the public and CSOs (e.g., the TAP portal). Additionally, 526 CSOs

signed the Memorandum between the government and CSOs in November 2023. Regular meetings of the Council of the Memorandum oversee the implementation of the cooperation memorandum. In 2023, the Memorandum Council discussed upcoming legislation on public participation in decision-making and local referenda.

The Free Trade Union Confederation of Latvia (LBAS), the Latvian Chambers of Commerce (LTRK), and the Employers Confederation of Latvia (LDDK) are the most significant CSOs representing labor and capital and capable of influencing policymaking processes as well as policy outcomes.

LDDK represents the interests of employers, usually advocating for business-friendly policies and engaging in social dialogue with government and labor unions. It often plays a crucial role in shaping Latvia's labor market policies and economic strategies. LDDK focuses on updates relevant to Latvian business environments and strategic priorities, including geopolitical, economic, social, and digital transformation challenges. It mentions the involvement of experts in more than 1,000 policy-planning activities and the integration of 64 directives into national employment regulations in 2022 (LDDK Gada Pārskats, 2023).

LTRK addresses the needs of small businesses by facilitating meetings with ministries and conducting education campaigns to amplify their voices. The Latvian Free Trade Union Confederation (LBAS) focuses on occupational safety, labor law, gender equality issues, the European Semester, education, youth employment, sectoral expert councils, social issues, international action, and the economy.

LTRK, LDDK, and LBAS are known as the big three and are usually present in working groups and at Cabinet of Ministers meetings. Several smaller CSOs exist, but they channel their opinions through the most prominent players in the field.

The National Tripartite Cooperation Council (NTSP) is a platform that brings together employers' associations, business associations, and trade unions. The council serves as a policy decision-making and implementation tool, particularly on labor markets, legislation, and social security issues. Over the years, it has proved to be an effective platform for uniting various interests.

Civil society organizations (CSOs) do not often express dissatisfaction with token participation in policymaking because they are usually included in important meetings. However, recent criticism has been directed at the government concerning the development of a government action plan. Critics note that not all ministries have sufficiently involved social partners in formulating growth-oriented government deliverables. Additionally, there has been criticism of the contents of the government declaration.

Citation:

Latvijas Darba devēju konfederācija. " <https://lddk.lv/en/about-lddk/more-about-lddk/>"

Latvijas Darba devēju konfederācija. "Gada pārskati." <https://lddk.lv/par-lddk/gada-parskati/>

Latvijas Tirdzniecības un Rūpniecības kamera. "Paveiktie darbi biedru interešu pārstāvībā."

<https://www.ltrk.lv/lv/content/5089>

Latvijas Brīvo arodbiedrību savienība. “Darbības virzieni.” <https://arodbiedribas.lv/darbibas-virzieni/>

Finanšu ministrija. 2020. “Nevalstisko organizāciju (NVO) iesaiste budžeta izstrādes procesā nozaru ministrijās.”

<https://www.fm.gov.lv/lv/media/1118/download>

Latvijas Pilsoniskā alianse. “In Latvian.”

https://nvo.lv/lv/musejie/biedri/#darba_deveju_organizacijas_arodbiedribas_profesionalas_biedribas_un_dibinajumi

Latvijas darba devēju konfederācija. 2024. “LDDK vērtējumā valdības rīcības plāna izstrādes procesā un satura kvalitātē trūkusi konsekvence.” <https://lddk.lv/aktualitate/jaunumi/lddk-vertejuma-valdibas-ricibas-plana-izstrades-procesa-un-satura-kvalitate-trukusi-konsekvence/>

Latvijas darba devēju konfederācija. 2023. “LDDK: valdības deklarācijā trūkst skaidra redzējuma un ambiciozu mērķu ekonomikā.” <https://lddk.lv/aktualitate/jaunumi/lddk-valdibas-deklaracija-trukst-skaidra-redzejuma-un-ambiciozu-merku-ekonomika/>

New Zealand

Score 7

Capital and labor are involved in the policymaking process through general institutionalized mechanisms for consultation. Select committees and government departments often hold public consultations and hearings, and invite submissions from stakeholders on topics related to specific pieces of legislation. Furthermore, the government conducts regulatory impact assessments before implementing regulations or policies, which involves consultations to evaluate the potential effects on stakeholders and the public. The government may also set up working groups to address specific policy issues by bringing together representatives from relevant sectors. For example, the Labour government under Ardern established a working group comprising business and trade union representatives to draw up the framework for the Fair Pay Agreements bill (Cooke 2022a).

In addition, there are specific institutional mechanisms to facilitate the participation of trade unions and business organizations in policymaking, perhaps the most significant being the Future of Work Tripartite Forum, convened by the Ministry of Business Innovation and Employment (MBIE). The Employment Relations Authority (ERA) and MBIE also offer mediation and arbitration services, providing a neutral platform for negotiation and resolution between employers and employees.

The frequency of engagement between government officials and representatives from capital and labor varies based on the nature of ongoing discussions and the political orientation of the parties in power.

The government plays a significant role in moderating disputes between labor and capital, although the extent of success can depend on several factors, such as the complexity of the issues and the willingness of stakeholders to engage in resolution processes. The Fair Pay Agreements bill is an example of failed dispute moderation: BusinessNZ – New Zealand’s largest employers’ representative – began to boycott the consultation process in 2022, hoping for a change in government in 2023 (Cooke 2022b).

Citation:

Cooke, H. 2022. “Government introduces Fair Pay Agreements bill, will exclude contracts, allow regional

differences.” Stuff, March 29. <https://www.stuff.co.nz/national/politics/300553017/government-introduces-fair-pay-agreements-bill-will-exclude-contracts-allow-regional-differences>

Cooke, H. 2022. “New Zealand has just passed a law that will revolutionise workers’ rights. It probably won’t last.” *The Guardian*, October 28. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/oct/29/new-zealand-has-just-passed-a-law-that-will-revolutionise-workers-rights-it-probably-wont-last>

United States

Score 7

There are many ways in which labor and businesses can influence government policymaking in the United States. The Department of Labor and the Department of Commerce operate as an institutional hub for contact between the federal government and labor and business, respectively (Bensman and Kesselman 2020). Both labor and business employ full-time lobbyists to advocate for their members and interests. They also have their own campaign organizations and participate in elections through fundraising, advertising, and donations. Labor and business are well-integrated into the party culture of both the Democratic and Republican parties, although labor has historically had, and continues to have, much closer links with the Democrats (Milkman 2019).

Federal agencies occasionally solicit input from labor and business groups during public consultations. For instance, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) seeks comments from various advocacy groups, including unions and businesses, on potential environmental regulations or standards. During the public comment period, unions and business organizations contribute to this process (Hertel-Fernandez 2019).

Various federal agencies also invite unions and business leaders to sit on advisory committees, task forces, and in behind-the-scenes meetings. For example, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) regularly invites representatives from labor and business to sit on its advisory committees concerning workplace health and safety (Schickler and Caughey 2011).

Citation:

Ruth Milkman. 2019. “The World We Have Lost: US Labor in the Obama Years.” In *Looking Back on President Barack Obama’s Legacy*, ed. W. Rich. Palgrave.

Alexander Hertel-Fernandez. 2019. “Asymmetric Partisan Polarization, Labor Policy, and Cross-State Political-Power Building.” *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*.

David Bensman and Donald Kesselman. 2020. “The Obama Administration’s Labor and Employment Legacy.” In *Obama’s Fractured Legacy*, ed. F. Verginolle de Chantal. Edinburgh.

Dorian Warren. 2014. “The Politics of Labor Policy Reform.” In *The Politics of Major Policy Reform in Postwar America*, eds. J. Jenkins and S. Milkis. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Eric Schickler and Devin Caughey. 2011. “Public Opinion, Organized Labor, and the Limits of New Deal Liberalism.” *Studies in American Political Development*.

Australia

Score 6

There is limited institutionalized involvement of capital and labor in policymaking processes. Businesses and trade unions influence policy through informal means, such as meetings with government officials and the movement of individuals between government and private sector employment. In the case of unions, influence is to a considerable extent confined to periods when the Labor Party is in power, noting that unions have significant input into the preselection of Labor candidates. Otherwise, informal mechanisms include meetings between government officials and the leaders of these private sector organizations, and the movement of individuals between government employment and employment in private sector organizations. While the latter may have some beneficial impact in terms of knowledge transfer between sectors, there has been concern that such movement may undermine governance in the public interest (for instance, because it may mean that the private firms which frequently recruit government employees may be able to draw on the connections of these persons to advance their firm's interests). This phenomenon has been described as the problem of the "revolving door" between government and the private (and especially corporate) sector (Centre for Public Integrity 2023).

The relationships between government, trade unions and business depend on the political complexion of the government. In general, the Liberal-National Coalition is regarded as being more pro-business and, as noted, Labor is closely associated with the union movement. However, these generalizations mask a large degree of consensus and important parallels between governments of all stripes in the Australian context. Most importantly in this regard, the Labor Party has generally been a strong defender of the fundamentals of the market economy, and therefore is open to business in a political sense. More radical left-leaning critics claim that business has often preferred Labor to form government because it is more able to keep the unions in check, thereby reducing the costs of industrial action (De 2023).

Citation:

Centre for Public Integrity. 2023. "Closing the Revolving Door." https://publicintegrity.org.au/research_papers/closing-the-revolving-door/

De, P. 2023. "Labor's Connection to Trade Unions – For Better or Worse?" Redflag. <https://redflag.org.au/article/labors-connection-trade-unions-better-or-worse>

Estonia

Score 6

Consultations with societal actors are regulated by government guidelines outlined in the Good Practice of Involvement (GPI), in place since 2012. Although not legally binding, the GPI prescribes detailed procedures for engaging social stakeholders in the policymaking process. All ministries employ an engagement coordinator to assist interested citizens and advocacy groups. The main focus is on consultations during

the preparatory phase, when a broad range of societal actors is typically involved. However, policymaking does not always entirely adhere to GPI principles. Additionally, engagement practices have not yet been fully incorporated into the policy implementation and policy evaluation phases.

The Estonian Trade Union Confederation's (ETUC) policy-formulation capacity is relatively weak, due both to low membership rates and fragmentation within the system (Kallaste 2023). Trade unions' ties with political parties were stronger during the early years of Estonian independence; recently, these links have diminished. However, in 2022, the general secretary of ETUC entered the government as a minister. The unions appear to be more involved when the Social Democrats are in power, although this involvement is more informal than institutional.

Social partners are formal partners of the government in tripartite social insurance funds, which constitute the main structural form of dialogue. Beyond this, the primary focus is on determining the annual national minimum wage. The shortage of teachers has heightened the salience of the Estonian Educational Personnel Union, which has been intensively demanding an increase in teachers' statutory salaries (a promise yet to be fulfilled by the government). This unmet demand led to a teachers' strike in January 2024 and increased public awareness of unions.

The Estonian Employers Confederation (EEC) has been active for a longer period, indicating both its greater legitimacy among previous governments and a better position in power relations. The number of policy proposals developed by the EEC and its analytical capacities have significantly increased in recent years. For example, the EEC was behind the Governance Reform Radar initiative, and is closely linked to the State Reform Foundation, which has produced a detailed list of reform proposals. However, the State Reform Foundation has been dormant since 2019.

Citation:

Epp, Kallaste. 2023. "Trade Unions in Estonia: Less than Meets the Eye." In *Trade Unions in the European Union*, eds. Kurt Vandaele, Torsten Müller, and Jeremy Waddington. Brussels, Berlin, Bern, New York, Oxford, Warsaw, Vienna: Peter Lang, 359–386.

Israel

Score 6

Generally, there are no institutionalized mechanisms for tripartite consultation. A roundtable of employer, labor union and government representatives was formed in 2009 as part of the coalition agreement based on a Labor Party demand. However, the roundtable was discontinued after that coalition dissolved (Bondy and Maggor 2023). Currently, any consultation with employers and unions occurs on an ad hoc basis.

Moreover, the government generally avoids such consultation unless the cooperation of labor or capital is required for policy implementation. This applies to collective

agreements in the public sector or when the government wishes to promote a reform in government-owned companies.

Unions participate in roundtables at the ministry level, alongside other stakeholder groups. For example, teachers' unions are invited to roundtables held by the Ministry of Education.

The consultation process is not transparent to the public and is often not inclusive. Some governments have attempted to promote various reforms without consultation or with limited consultation. Other governments have taken a more inclusive approach. However, consultations are not formalized and, therefore, depend on the minister or ministers in power. In many cases, the lack of inclusive consultation has resulted in strikes and hindered progress in the suggested reforms.

Usually, the government does not play an active or productive role in resolving conflicts between labor and capital.

Citation:

Bondy, A. S., and E. Maggor. 2023. "Balancing the Scales: Labour Incorporation and the Politics of Growth Model Transformation." *New Political Economy* 1–20. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13563467.2023.2217770>

Portugal

Score 6

The government facilitates the engagement of trade unions and business organizations through the Economic and Social Council (CES), a constitutional body for consultation and social concertation, allowing their participation in decision-making. For instance, during the Social Dialogue meeting in September 2023, employers' confederations presented their written opinions regarding considerations for the 2024 State Budget, specifically advocating for tax reductions for companies and workers.

However, critics argue that the involvement of business organizations and trade unions in public policymaking in Portugal is not substantial and tends to occur after the formulation of public policy proposals.

Citation:

Lusa. "Confederações patronais querem redução da carga fiscal em 2024." *Eco Sapo*. <https://eco.sapo.pt/2023/09/13/confederacoes-patronais-querem-reducao-da-carga-fiscal-em-2024/> (13.09.2023)

Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). "Indicators of Regulatory Policy and Governance EUROPE 2022 Portugal." <https://www.oecd.org/gov/regulatory-policy/Portugal-country-profile-EU-report-2022.pdf>

Frazão, J. P. 2023. "Cinco décadas de democracia em Portugal. 'Ponto mais negativo é a falta de participação da sociedade civil.'" *Rádio Renascença*. <https://rr.sapo.pt/noticia/politica/2023/04/24/cinco-decadas-de-democracia-em-portugal-ponto-mais-negativo-e-a-falta-de-participacao-da-sociedade-civil/328833/>

Conselho Económico e Social. 2021. "Acordo sobre formação profissional e qualificação: um desígnio estratégico

para as pessoas, para as empresas e para o país.” <https://ces.pt/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/acordo-2021.pdf>

Frazão, J. P. 2023. “Cinco décadas de democracia em Portugal. ‘Ponto mais negativo é a falta de participação da sociedade civil.’” Rádio Renascença. <https://rr.sapo.pt/noticia/politica/2023/04/24/cinco-decadas-de-democracia-em-portugal-ponto-mais-negativo-e-a-falta-de-participacao-da-sociedade-civil/328833/>

Conselho Económico e Social. 2021. Acordo sobre formação profissional e qualificação: um desígnio estratégico para as pessoas, para as empresas e para o país. <https://ces.pt/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/acordo-2021.pdf>

Slovakia

Score 6

The existing institutional mechanisms facilitate the active involvement of non-state actors in capital and labor policymaking and implementation. Legislation clearly defines the roles of key actors, including trade unions and employers’ associations.

The Economic and Social Council (ESC) serves as a consultative and coordinating body for the government and social partners at the national level. Meetings are held regularly according to a government plan, and all information from these meetings is published on the government’s website. The ESC and other institutional mechanisms, such as legislative rules, ensure a formal, inclusive process that allows participation from both private sector and labor representatives.

Non-state members of the ESC and other civil society organizations in this sector have a highly visible presence. Media coverage frequently highlights their satisfaction or dissatisfaction with their involvement in the policymaking process and its outcomes, as required by media law.

As a consultative body, the ESC’s recommendations are not mandatory for the government. For example, most comments from non-state members regarding the state budgets for 2022 and 2023 were not incorporated by the OĽANO-led governments. A notable aspect of the ESC’s activities is its role in negotiating between employers’ and employees’ representatives over the minimum wage (as per Law 663/2007 on the minimum wage). While negotiations for the 2022 minimum wage were unsuccessful and the state set the rate, agreements were reached for the 2023 and 2024 minimum wage levels.

Citation:

Zákon č. 103/2007 Z. z. o trojstranných konzultáciách na celoštátnej úrovni. 2007. <https://www.slov-lex.sk/pravne-predpisy/SK/ZZ/2007/103/>

Zákon 663/2007 Z. z. o minimálnej mzde. 2007. <https://www.slov-lex.sk/pravne-predpisy/SK/ZZ/2007/663/>

Poland

Score 5

Institutional mechanisms in Poland currently fall short of actively involving capital and labor organizations from the outset of policymaking processes. The use of expert commissions, public hearings and performance monitoring is infrequent and

irregular. The consultation process lacks transparency, hindering effective communication between government officials and representatives of capital and labor. The existing institutional setup provides only for limited inclusion of various private sector and labor stakeholders.

Under the PiS government, cooperation with major organizations depended on these group's ideological and political proximity, rendering the dialogue exclusive and not inclusive of all types of organizations. For example, Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki and Solidarity labor union Chairman Piotr Duda, who supported the PiS government, signed an agreement on June 7, 2023 introducing a series of changes advocated by this trade union, including pay raises for public sector employees. In contrast, arguments voiced by teachers' unions such as the Polish Teachers Union (Związek Nauczycielstwa Polskiego), which has been highly critical of changes in the educational system and the politicization of schools, were not acknowledged.

Representatives of the labor sector and the government gathered under the auspices of the president within the Social Dialogue Council, but real consultation and exchanges of opinion were limited. The most frequently cited problem by employers' organizations and trade unions was the difficulties arising from legal regulations and procedures (respectively 47.0% and 34.8% of survey respondents cited this issue). Employers' organizations often identified issues in their interactions with the public administration (33.2%), while trade unions pointed to challenges related to an insufficient number of volunteers for social work (31.4%) (GUS 2023).

Citation:

GUS. 2023. "Partnerzy dialogu społecznego – organizacje pracodawców i związki zawodowe w 2022 r." https://stat.gov.pl/download/gfx/portalinformacyjny/pl/defaultaktualnosci/5490/16/2/1/partnerzy_dialogu_spoleczne_go_-_organizacje_pracodawcow_i_zwiazki_zawodowe_w_2022_r.pdf

<https://www.worker-participation.eu/national-industrial-relations/countries/poland>

Italy

Score 4

As in other European countries, and perhaps more so in Italy, the relationship between the government and the representatives of capital and labor has deteriorated over time. Italy has experienced significant political disintermediation, meaning the government has only sporadically involved the main trade unions and the associations representing the primary manufacturers in the policymaking process. This trend has been evident under both the Draghi and Meloni governments.

The Draghi government held some consultations with major unions on tax and pension policies, but their impact on final policy decisions in these areas was minimal. Similarly, Meloni has consulted both sides in a very ritualistic manner. Notably, both the main unions and the primary manufacturers' association were highly critical of the budget law passed under the Draghi government for 2022, as well as the two budget laws passed under the Meloni government for 2023 and 2024.

In recent years, a trend has emerged characterized by a significant lack of consideration for the main demands of capital and labor. The Meloni government has focused more on approving segmented policies with clear beneficiaries, such as pensioners, employees, the self-employed, and other micro-interests.

United Kingdom

Score 4

The notion of “social partners” as actors in governance is not well entrenched in the UK, in contrast to several continental European countries. Unions exercised substantial power in the third quarter of the 20th century, and institutions of corporatism were established. However, after Margaret Thatcher came to power, a succession of legislative acts curbed union power, and the decline of heavily unionized sectors such as mining and steel-making led to a sharp decrease in union influence. While certain individual unions and employer organizations maintain influence in specific areas, neither the Trade Union Congress (TUC) nor the Confederation of British Industry (CBI) routinely shape public policies. In fact, the CBI has faced scandals in the past two years that have undermined its authority, leading to the resignation of some major companies. Other employer organizations may have gained influence from the CBI’s disarray, but none have emerged as powerful alternative voices of business. The devolved Scottish and Welsh governments have shown more commitment to the idea of social partnership as part of more consensual “policy styles,” but they do not oversee many of the policy sectors traditionally associated with tripartism (Cairney 2019).

The past two years have seen a resurgence of tensions in industrial relations, particularly in the health and transport sectors. Although the UK government funds nearly all of the National Health Service and provides large subsidies for transport, it has largely stood back in resolving disputes. In health, the government’s rationale is that pay review bodies should set pay, while in the railways, it has sought to portray disputes as being between private owners and the unions.

One noteworthy exception to the limited involvement of social partners is the Low Pay Commission, which recommends annual changes in the minimum wage.

Citation:

Cairney. 2019. “Policy Styles in the UK: Majoritarian UK versus Devolved Consensus Democracies?” In *Policy Styles and Policy-Making: Exploring the National Dimension*, eds. Michael Howlett and Jale Tosun. London: Routledge.

Hungary

Score 3

To consolidate its control over public narratives and remove limits on its authority, the governing administration has sought to undermine and suppress groups in society

that maintain ideological and financial autonomy from the governing party. This approach has escalated the likelihood of societal discord, as opportunities for mediating and resolving divergent viewpoints have been increasingly reduced. Consequently, the Orbán governments have rarely and selectively consulted with societal actors. Trade unions and social and environmental groups have had little influence in the policy process. The two main exceptions have been the representatives of large multinational firms, upon which the Hungarian economy depends, and the churches, which have aligned closely with the government. In addition, the government has organized so-called national consultations and fake referendums based on letters to citizens containing misleading and manipulated questions. The actual function of these letters is to keep Fidesz voters in a state of perpetual mobilization, partly by making it possible to compose lists of those who have answered these letters.

Additionally, trade unions and employers' associations struggle due to the government's disregard of tripartite interest reconciliation, with the exception of trade unions that have been co-opted by the government. For instance, the Hungarian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (HCCI), whose annual meetings are often attended by the prime minister and members of his cabinet, is frequently used as a source of legitimation for unpopular economic measures. Collective bargaining is highly decentralized. The National Economic and Social Council (NGTT) serves as the central social dialogue platform, and includes representatives of employers, employees, churches, civil society, academia and the arts. However, the government does not participate in these discussions, thus relegating the body to a consultative role. Even in this capacity, the government does not utilize the expertise available via the NGTT.

The reduction of state involvement in labor relations, as seen in the labor code reform, enhances the negotiation partners' autonomy. However, this relationship is skewed in favor of employers. In this context, it is unsurprising that unions and employers' associations are rarely consulted in the context of policy formulation. The government did not consult business organizations before adopting its controversial October 2021 decree, which allowed employers to mandate COVID-19 vaccinations for employees. This decree prompted extensive legal debates and interpretations, resulting in chaos. The government eventually withdrew it quietly, which was at least a minor success for employers. Overall, the neoliberal stance of the Hungarian government positions employers' associations as the government's natural partners. These associations have some influence if they support the government's general policy direction. This influence, however, does not extend to unions. By intentionally reducing institutionalized patterns of social dialogue, the government has widened the gap between the state and society. "The lack of an autonomous social dialogue supports anti-pluralist trends, a characteristic feature of populist governance," as Hungler (2022: 114) correctly stated.

Citation:

Hungler, S. 2022. "Labor Law Reforms after the Populist Turn in Hungary." *Review of Central and East European Law* 47(1): 84-114.

France

Score 2

The need to involve capital and labor organizations more regularly in policymaking processes has been discussed for decades. Over the past two decades, governments have sought the consultation of interest groups more systematically, and these practices have to some extent been adopted as legal obligations, creating institutional mechanisms of concertation between government, business organizations and trade unions. Moreover, the rules of social negotiations were modernized, notably by the Larcher law of 2007. This law required the government to present plans for social and labor legislation to the social partners, giving them an opportunity to negotiate and agree on possible solutions that could then be transformed into law.

This attempt to rejuvenate social dialogue and social concertation produced limited results. The problem is twofold: First, only some of the trade unions (the CFDT, UNSA) seek a constructive role in negotiating social reforms with the government; others (CGT, FO) tend to reject this sort of negotiation, sticking to their role of mobilizing social forces against governmental plans. Second, governments have not regularly sought social concertation, and often have not taken the positions of the capital and labor organizations into account.

If President Macron, who came to power in 2017, seemed to follow this approach at the beginning of his first mandate, it gradually became clear that he was particularly reluctant to concede the social partner organizations a role in the policymaking process. Regarding these organizations as defenders of the status quo, and thus hostile to his reform ideas, he often relied on his parliamentary majority to pass his reform bills without real social consultation. For instance, during his first mandate, he ignored an unemployment insurance agreement that had been negotiated by the social partner organizations and adopted a government bill instead (2021). The pension reform in 2023, which was submitted to parliament without previous social consultation, led to months of protests and created a rare united front among trade unions. The government was able to overcome resistance on the streets and in parliament only by forcing the bill through parliament, resorting to the 49.3 procedure (see "Effective Cross-Party Cooperation"). This attitude by Macron has led the majority of capital and labor organizations to express their deep dissatisfaction with this "solitary" method of governing without allowing a voice to the representatives of civil society.

In summary, the government does not involve capital and labor CSOs strongly in policymaking processes, and does not seek to moderate disputes between capital and labor. If attempts to enhance the consultation process are made after deep social unrest (JDD 2023), they remain piecemeal.

Citation:

Luc Rouban. 2018. La double fracture du dialogue social. https://www.sciencespo.fr/cevipof/sites/sciencespo.fr/cevipof/files/Dialogue_social_Luc_Rouban_note1-5.pdf

Rapport Chertier. 2006. "Pour une modernisation du dialogue social. Rapport au Premier ministre." <https://www.vie-publique.fr/rapport/28224-pour-une-modernisation-du-dialogue-social-rapport-au-premier-ministre>

Gilbert Cette, Guy Groux, and Richard Robert. 2023. "Une démocratie sociale hésitante." telos-eu. <https://www.telos-eu.com/fr/societe/une-democratie-sociale-hesitante.html>

Duval. 2023. "Pourquoi la France est-elle incapable de passer des compromis sociaux et comment en sortir?" Fondation Jean Jaurès, June 18. <https://www.jean-jaures.org/publication/pourquoi-la-france-est-elle-incapable-de-passer-des-compromis-sociaux-et-comment-en-sortir/>

JDD. 2023. "Emmanuel Macron appelle les syndicats à un « dialogue social responsable »." lejdd.fr June 5. <https://www.lejdd.fr/politique/emmanuel-macron-appelle-les-syndicats-un-dialogue-social-responsable-135440>

Indicator **Effective Involvement of Civil Society Organizations (Social Welfare)**

Question **To what extent does the government facilitate the participation of leading social welfare CSOs in policymaking?**

30 OECD and EU countries are sorted according to their performance on a scale from 10 (best) to 1 (lowest). This scale is tied to four qualitative evaluation levels.

- 10-9 = The government is able to effectively involve leading social welfare CSOs in policy development.
- 8-6 = Most of the time, the government is able to effectively involve leading social welfare CSOs in policy development.
- 5-3 = The government is rarely able to effectively involve leading social welfare CSOs in policy development.
- 2-1 = The government is not able to effectively involve leading social welfare CSOs in policy development.

Austria

Score 8 As with other interest groups, the major social welfare CSOs have mostly had the opportunity to present their views on scheduled bills during the institutionalized review process in parliament. Most, but not all, bills are subject to public review, usually at the discretion of the government itself. There have also been strong ties between MPs and individual social welfare groups.

Given Austria's established tradition of an advanced welfare state, the agendas of such groups are very present in the public arena and cannot easily be ignored by political decision-makers. As a result, the interests represented by these groups are likely to shape government activities more generally, beyond individual key decisions.

Recent literature characterizes the collaboration between Nonprofit Human Service Organizations and different levels of government as a "welfare partnership" (Meyer et al. 2023).

However, even more than at the level of labor and business organizations, the political status and influence of social welfare CSOs have been shaped by the party complexion of governments. Different governing parties have advanced different policies, reflecting their broader views on society as well as strategic considerations concerning their likely supporters at the level of the electorate (see Fischer & Giuliani 2023).

Citation:

Michael Meyer, R. Millner, M. Mehrwald, and P. Rameder. 2023. "A Test for the Welfare-Partnership: Austria's Nonprofit Human Service Organizations in Times of Covid-19." *Human Service Organizations: Management, Leadership & Governance*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/23303131.2023.2186556>

Fischer, T., and Giuliani, G. 2023. "The Makers Get It All? The Coalitional Welfare Politics of Populist Radical Right Parties in Europe. The Case Studies of Austria and Italy." *European Political Science Review* 15 (2): 214-232.

Belgium

Score 8

As referenced under "Effective Civil Society Organizations (social welfare)," various CSOs in Belgium significantly impact policy. Numerous associations, not primarily driven by economic interests, receive government funding and have the ability to suggest and shape policy. The principle of consociationalism ensures that key societal decisions are made efficiently. This is largely due to the dominance of political parties. Associations and groups that are funded often establish or evolve to have favorable political ties with political parties or government officials. This suggests that social groups, associations, and to a certain extent, publicly funded schools, often maintain long-term relationships with a political faction. This creates a strong motivation for noneconomic interest groups to suggest policies and ensure their proposals are well-argued, given the high likelihood of these proposals being discussed in parliament. A downside of this structure is the reliance on public funding, which politicians can use strategically.

This system may limit the ability of organizations that are truly independent of political parties to participate in policymaking. However, these organizations are not idle and employ various methods to influence political decisions, such as active involvement in public works inquiries, parliamentary interventions, legal challenges against government decisions, and organizing presentations and debates.

Lastly, as highlighted by Pineda-Hernández et al. (2022), social partners play a crucial role in unemployment benefit schemes. They are involved through bipartite social dialogue regarding policy designs or reforms and through direct participation in establishing general rules and managing the unemployment benefits system. This is true even for the Ghent system, whereby unions collect and distribute unemployment benefits. Belgium, however, only has a hybrid or "quasi-Ghent" system, whereby the government is the main provider, but unemployed workers can ask to deal with their union instead of the official unemployment office.

Citation:

Pineda-Hernández, K., Rycx, F., and Volral, M. 2022. "How Collective Bargaining Shapes Poverty: New Evidence for Developed Countries." *British Journal of Industrial Relations* 60: 895-928. <https://doi.org/10.1111/bjir.12693>
<https://cbcs.be/societe-civile-et-pouvoirs-publics-1313/>
<https://www.bruzz.be/stedenbouw/werken-vastgoedproject-brouckr-opnieuw-voor-langere-tijd-geblokkeerd-2023-10-10>
<https://www.bruzz.be/stedenbouw/wegwerparchitectuur-en-afleidingsmanoeuvres-vrees-voor-gentrificatie-noordwijk-niet-weg>

<https://www.bruzz.be/stedenbouw/protest-tegen-movehub-project-aan-zuidstation-houdt-aan-meer-groen-mindertorens-2023-12>
<https://www.bruzz.be/mobiliteit/dont-look-down-mini-documentaire-kritisch-over-bouw-metro-3-2022-03-22>
https://www.standaard.be/cnt/dmf20180715_03615174

Denmark

Score 8

In Denmark, the inclusion of civil organizations related to social welfare in policymaking processes is very common. Organizations in this policy area have the same access to the legislative process as other organized interests. These organizations are consulted and provide information to the legislative process, making the consultation ongoing and frequent. The same applies at the municipal level, which is responsible for implementing large parts of social welfare policies. Local branches of the major peak organizations are included in decisions made by the city council. At this level of government, the consultation is also frequent and ongoing.

In many areas of social welfare, regulation and initiatives originate from tripartite negotiations involving the state, unions and relevant employers' organizations. These negotiations are informal, but their results are often converted into law when required or adopted in collective agreements.

This process is rather inclusive, but there is a bias toward larger organizations having easier access to the decision-making process, partly because they represent broader constituencies and partly because they provide more legitimacy to the process. Consequently, some areas in which the level of organization is low and in which the users of social services are socially weak do not have the same access to decision-makers. One example of such an area is the topic of homeless, for which few organizations exist (Christiansen et al. 2022).

Citation:

Christiansen et al. 2022. Politik og forvaltning. 5. udg. København: Hans Reitzel.

Netherlands

Score 8

CSOs in most social welfare domains are still more or less firmly embedded in the culture and practices of “poldering” (see “Effective CSOs (Social Welfare)”).

Norway

Score 8

In the social welfare sector, it is important to distinguish between organizations that provide services within a contractual relationship with the public sector and organizations that represent the consumer and client side of the services (“users”). Most legislation regulating (tax-financed) welfare services grants users the right to be heard and to partake in the development of new policies. In expert committees,

hearings, and performance monitoring, CSOs are well represented. In public opinion, user organizations hold high “moral authority,” which provides legitimacy to social welfare services. Critiques of services, often voiced in alliance with professionals working in the services, are taken seriously and may significantly impact policy decisions. Disputes between different CSOs are rare; if they occur, governments are careful not to express any opinion.

Sweden

Score 8

In Sweden, the government has traditionally worked to facilitate and promote the participation of leading social welfare CSOs in decision-making. Through various forms of consultation, dialogue and participation in committees and councils, these organizations have the opportunity to influence policy and legislation related to social issues. The government often sees CSOs as important partners and recognizes their expertise and commitment to welfare issues, making it natural to involve them in the decision-making process. These bodies can be composed of representatives from both the government and CSOs and aim to gather different perspectives and expertise to shape social policies. CSOs have the possibility to provide policy feedback in the institutionalized process of referral.

At the same time, there are challenges and criticisms regarding the degree of participation and influence that CSOs actually have in decision-making. Some organizations feel their opinions and proposals are not always taken seriously enough or that they are not given sufficient time and resources to participate fully. Additionally, issues of transparency and openness in the decision-making process can impact the ability of organizations to participate meaningfully.

A recent report focuses on collaborations between CSOs and regions. More specifically, it addresses a power imbalance between civil society and the regions. The regions are in a much stronger financial position and have significantly more employees, which means they can independently make the necessary decisions for collaboration and perform the essential tasks. Additionally, collaboration is overly dependent on the individuals involved and lacks sufficient structure. The risk of an overly personal collaboration is that uncertainty arises as soon as an individual is replaced, and it can be more difficult for the collaborating organizations to achieve a common understanding of the work. There is a need for formalized collaboration arrangements to ensure they endure the often high personnel turnover (MUCF, 2023).

Citation:

MUCF. 2023. “Samverkan mellan civil samhället och Sveriges regioner – det finns.”

outnyttjad potential. <https://www.mucf.se/sites/default/files/2023/12/samverkan-civilsamhallet-och-regionerna.pdf>

Australia

Score 7

Social welfare organizations are regularly consulted on social policy development through engagements with parliament and executive agencies. The effectiveness of this engagement varies, depending on factors like the governing party's manifesto and public opinion. The CSOs in this area frequently have so-called peak bodies that actively lobby governments in order to highlight their concerns with government action (or inaction). Social welfare CSOs have been prominently involved in Royal Commissions, which are large resource-intensive investigative efforts that follow formal processes and normally yield extensive recommendations. Recent Royal Commissions in this area include the Royal Commission into the Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability, and the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety.

Royal Commissions have been established to investigate major policy dilemmas and their conclusions and recommendations are usually taken seriously, informing the future debate and long-term development of policy in that area. These commissions provide social welfare CSOs with a significant opportunity to contribute their views as witnesses. Consider, for example, the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety, which presented its final report, entitled "Care, Dignity and Respect" in March, 2021. The commission received statements from more than 600 individuals and organizations, with many of these contributions coming from those involved in the aged care sector through CSOs (Royal Commissions 2023).

The issue of aged care had been a long-standing policy problem. However, the commission report helped keep the issue prioritized in the political agenda, with both parties issuing significant reform proposals in advance of the federal election in 2022 that were aligned with the commission recommendations. While the social welfare CSOs that actively participated in the influential Royal Commission were able to shape policy development through this mechanism, there have also been problems. To begin with, the Royal Commission has been criticized for giving insufficient weight to the views of the community sector. One such organization, Aged Care Crisis, which submitted a lengthy position paper to the Royal Commission, argued that the commission was too narrow in its approach to the sector's problem. In particular, it didn't give serious thought to challenging the dominance of private sector players in aged care provision (Aged Care Crisis 2023). This CSO believes that a community-sector-led approach is necessary to address some of the sector's fundamental problems.

CSO influence is further diluted when commission recommendations are translated into policy proposals by political parties. For instance, while the commission produced nearly 150 recommendations, the Labor Party presented a five-point plan for aged care during the election. Although Labor's commitments incorporated several of the Royal Commission's recommendations, their proposal fell short of the

comprehensive vision advanced by the Royal Commission. Additionally, this vision itself did not fully meet the expectations of several CSOs in this sector. As one commentator put, these “five points alone won’t undo decades of neglect, nor will they encompass the sweeping changes the royal commission recommended” (Holland-Batt 2023).

Citation:

Royal Commissions. 2023. “Aged Care Quality and Safety.” <https://www.royalcommission.gov.au/aged-care>

Aged Care Crisis. 2023. “Aged Care Crisis and the Royal Commission.” <https://www.agedcarecrisis.com/resources/make-aged-care-accountable/aged-care-crisis-and-the-royal-commission>

Holland-Batt, S. 2023. “A five-point plan alone won’t undo decades of neglect for Australia’s aged care sector.” *The Guardian* June 10. <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2022/jun/10/a-five-point-plan-alone-wont-undo-decades-of-neglect-for-australias-aged-care-sector>

Canada

Score 7

CSOs have many opportunities to present briefs to legislative committees and government agencies and are often consulted. However, the impact on government decision-making remains very unclear. In some areas, formal “Councils” exist to facilitate dialogue, but their influence on subsequent legislation is uncertain, as evidenced by the Canadian Council on Social Development, which has been wound down.

At the federal level, other activities include programs like the Social Development Partnerships Program, which funds CSOs and requires CSO-government collaboration in areas concerning families and children. Similarly, the Voluntary Sector Initiative brought together CSOs, government, and stakeholders to strengthen relationships in the non-governmental and charitable sectors.

Other venues, like the National Advisory Council on Poverty, help the government of Canada stay accountable to Canadians for lowering poverty. The Advisory Council advises the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development on poverty reduction, reports annually on the progress made toward meeting the poverty reduction targets, engages Canadians in discussions about poverty, and undertakes activities specified by the minister (Phillips and Brock 2003).

The impact of these initiatives on the content of subsequent legislation and policy, however, is not clear.

Citation:

Phillips, Susan D., and Kathy L. Brock. 2003. “In Accordance: Canada’s Voluntary Sector Accord from Idea to Implementation.” In *Delicate Dances: Public Policy and the NonProfit Sector*, 17–61. Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press.

Czechia

Score 7

The policymaking process in Czechia is relatively open, with a broad spectrum of social and economic actors consulted during the legislative process. Representatives from the nonprofit sector and civil society are members of several government advisory bodies. However, these often allow only formal consultations, with material submitted late and comments frequently ignored.

In July 2021, the Czech government approved the Strategy for Cooperation between Public Administration and Nonprofit Organizations (NGOs) for 2021–2030, formulating objectives and setting tasks concerning the nonprofit sector. The strategy's implementation is regularly evaluated through monitoring reports. According to the 2022 report, two-thirds of the measures have been only partially implemented.

NGO work has significantly influenced life in the Czech Republic. In 2023, thanks to NGO activity, a redefinition of rape was incorporated into legislation. In the field of social welfare, NGOs pressured the government to increase subsidies for personal assistants for disabled citizens. Additionally, pensioners' organizations are actively involved in policy formulation, as discussed in a previous section.

Patients' organizations also play a crucial role, assisting patients with serious illnesses and communicating with government officials to help patients secure their rights.

Citation:

<https://vlada.gov.cz/cz/ppov/rnno/dokumenty/strategie-spoluprace-verejne-spravy-s-nestatnimi-neziskovymi-organizacemi-na-leta-2021-az-2030-189753/>

Finland

Score 7

The Finnish government does not facilitate the participation of leading social welfare CSOs in policymaking to the same extent as it does for business and labor CSOs. Social welfare CSOs are not customarily involved across the various stages of the policymaking process, including agenda-setting, policy formulation, deliberation and decision-making, policy implementation, and performance monitoring. Their participation is more sporadic and ad hoc, since there are no institutional mechanisms to ensure their active involvement beginning with the initial stages of policymaking on issues central to the sector. However, on a case-by-case basis, social welfare CSOs do participate in expert commissions, public hearings and performance monitoring

In a small country, communication with the government and the CSOs active in the field of social welfare – for instance, SOSTE – is intense. The consultation process is

transparent, involving several CSOs. A special issue concerning the interaction between CSOs and the government is that CSOs are largely financed through gambling monopoly receipts, which are governed through the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health. This means many CSOs in the social welfare field rely on government funding. Members of major CSOs active in social welfare express dissatisfaction with the token nature of their participation in the policymaking process, but their financial ties with the ministry may silence some of the criticism.

The impact of consultations with CSOs in the social welfare field on actual policies is quite limited. Most important decisions are made between the parties in the cabinet and written in the cabinet program. The government does not seek to moderate disputes within and between major social welfare CSOs or to balance diverse opinions in practice.

Citation:

SOSTE Finnish Federation for Social Affairs and Health. n.d. "Briefly in English." <https://www.soste.fi/en/etusivu/>

Germany

Score 7

Social welfare associations and initiatives can highlight certain issues in the public eye, draw attention to political problems, and build pressure for change. However, their political role in Germany is primarily advisory.

After the publication of a draft law, organizations such as chambers, churches, and civil society organizations (CSOs) are free to comment on it before it is discussed in the Bundestag, the German parliament. They thus have the opportunity to shape discussions about upcoming laws, both in public and within the Bundestag. Sometimes, organizations are specifically invited by the responsible ministry to comment on a draft law. These comments are made public on the website of the ministry responsible for the draft law (Bundesministerium für Finanzen, n.d.).

The current government has shortened the official period for commenting on draft laws many times recently. This has left associations and experts with too little time to fully understand and react to proposed legislation. This practice has been heavily criticized by some organizations (RedationsNetzwerk Deutschland, 2023).

CSOs are sometimes consulted by the Bundestag or certain ministries. While this has historically been limited, there has recently been an increase in consultation opportunities for CSOs. The involvement of social welfare CSOs in decision-making and the development of draft laws varies greatly among different ministries. These organizations mainly use lobbying to gain political influence. Certain recognized associations have the Right of Association (Verbandsklagerecht) to take legal action on behalf of the public (Hummel et al., 2022: 3, 71). Apart from that, social welfare CSOs do not participate in the policymaking process, and there are no serious discussions to extend their role.

Free welfare work in Germany is primarily organized under six main organizations, such as the Red Cross, Caritas, and Diakonie. These social welfare CSOs perform numerous social tasks, caring for sick or disabled people, the elderly, and youth. Additionally, they operate many hospitals and residential homes for the elderly and disabled (Bundesregierung, 2020). Consequently, they assist the government in caring for the most vulnerable in society, which makes them politically powerful and influential. Without them, the German welfare state would collapse.

The six free welfare head organizations participate in various advisory councils in federal ministries, particularly in the Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs and the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth (Bundesregierung, 2019).

Another example of organizations consulted in policymaking are churches. Both the Protestant and Catholic churches of Germany have official plenipotentiaries at the Bundestag. They are consulted in legislative processes and draw attention to grievances in various fields of politics, such as social, labor, asylum, and family policies (Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland, n.d.). Social welfare CSOs like Caritas and Diakonie perform similar functions but do not have official offices in the Bundestag. Additionally, these organizations often make suggestions for new laws or amendments to existing laws. However, these are merely suggestions, and the Bundestag and the federal government are not obliged to consider them. Similar to citizens, organizations have the opportunity to start a petition. If it reaches 50,000 signatures, the Bundestag must discuss it (Deutscher Bundestag, n.d.).

Criticism or dissatisfaction with having too little influence in Berlin or too little participation in the political process seems rare among social welfare CSOs.

The free welfare organizations are funded mainly through social insurances and governmental grants. However, they are independent associations; therefore, the government is not entitled to moderate disputes between major CSOs (Schmid, n.d.). The six free welfare head organizations come together in the Federal Working Group of Free Welfare Care (Bundesarbeitsgemeinschaft der Freien Wohlfahrtspflege,).

Citation:

Bundesministerium für Finanzen. n.d. "Gesetze und Gesetzesvorhaben." https://www.bundesfinanzministerium.de/Web/DE/Service/Gesetze_Gesetzesvorhaben/Gesetze_Gesetzgebungsvorhaben.html

Bundesregierung. 2019. "Antwort der Bundesregierung auf die Kleine Anfrage der Abgeordneten Christoph Meyer, Christian Dürr, Renata Alt, weiterer Abgeordneter und der Fraktion der FDP, Drucksache 19/7912." <https://dserver.bundestag.de/btd/19/084/1908448.pdf>

Bundesregierung. 2020. "Antwort der Bundesregierung auf die Kleine Anfrage der Abgeordneten Otto Fricke, Christian Dürr, Grigorios Aggelidis, weiterer Abgeordneter und der Fraktion der FDP, Drucksache 19/17329." <https://dserver.bundestag.de/btd/19/177/1917764.pdf>.

Deutscher Bundestag. n.d. "Öffentliche Petitionen, Mitzeichnung und Quorum." <https://epetitionen.bundestag.de/epet/service.???rubrik.oeffentlichePetition.html>

Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland. n.d. "Kirchendiplomatin" der EKD. <https://www.ekd.de/Bevollmaechtigterder-EKD-14070.htm>

Hummel, S., Pfirter, L., and Strachwitz, R. G. 2022. Zur Lage und den Rahmenbedingungen der Zivilgesellschaft in Deutschland: ein Bericht. Berlin: Maecenata Institut für Philanthropie und Zivilgesellschaft. <https://nbn-resolving.org/urn:nbn:de:0168-ssoar-76997-7>

RedaktionsNetzwerk Deutschland. 2023. "Ärger über die Ampel: Verbände wehren sich gegen Turbogesetze." <https://www.rnd.de/wirtschaft/kritik-an-der-ampelregierung-verbaende-wehren-sich-gegen-turbo-gesetze-4LC5PYFG6NDBZGUS4NXDEZTY6Q.html>

Schmid, J. n.d. "Wohlfahrtsverbände." Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung. <https://www.bpb.de/kurz-knapp/lexika/handwoerterbuch-politisches-system/202214/wohlfahrtsverbaende/>
<https://www.bagfw.de/>

Ireland

Score 7

Public trust in the government and public sector in Ireland remains strong compared to the EU-27, a phenomenon Sabel (2020) has termed a "deliberative miracle." This strong social partnership, based on consensus-building, leads to healthy participation of CSOs in policy processes from inception to implementation. The main venue for participation is the Citizens' Assemblies, which have recently become open to any adult resident of Ireland. The latest assembly in October made recommendations on drug use. In 2015, as part of the Civil Service Action Plan (DPER 2014), Open Policy Debates were introduced to include experts and CSOs in the early stages of policy drafting. Additionally, the Constitutional Convention allows citizens and CSOs to contribute to proposed changes to the Constitution. Departmental communication offices actively engage with the public. More than a decade ago, Murphy (2011) raised concerns that decades of partnership arrangements might have served to silence ideological debate and alternative political discourse, effectively co-opting civil society through corporatism.

Citation:

Citizens Information. 2023. "Citizens' Assembly." <https://www.citizensinformation.ie/en/government-in-ireland/irish-constitution-1/citizens-assembly/>

Sabel, C. 2020. "Governance and Wicked Problems: Environment, Climate, Human Services and Quality Jobs." Paper prepared for the Knowledge and Policy: Confronting Governance Challenges in the New Decade Conference, January, Dublin: NESC and Department of Sociology, Maynooth University.

Murphy, M.P. 2011. "Civil Society in the Shadow of the Irish State." *Irish Journal of Sociology* 19 (2): 170-187.

Israel

Score 7

Many welfare services in Israel are provided by NGOs and for-profit businesses (Paz-Fuchs et al. 2018). As a result, these entities are deeply involved in many stages of the policymaking process. The social ministries (education, welfare and immigration) often conduct roundtables with both for-profit and nonprofit organizations, where these organizations provide input on the discussed policies. Additionally, the ministries frequently use data provided by these social organizations and rely on their expertise. These organizations participate in many professional committees, are invited to Knesset meetings (usually by members of the Knesset rather than the ministries) (e.g., Gal & Weiss-Gal 2010) and issue numerous policy papers used by the government.

The consultation process lacks transparency, making it unclear whether a plurality of voices is represented or if the same organizations maintain a monopoly on specific fields due to their expertise. Consequently, it is challenging to determine the inclusivity of the process. There is no formal directive regarding who should be invited to the consultation; this is typically at the discretion of the department in charge.

The PMO hosts a roundtable that regularly consults with social organizations. However, there is no formal directive on the frequency of these consultations and no assessment of their actual effect on the policies implemented.

Social organizations express their dissatisfaction with government policy primarily when there are budget cuts or significant policy changes. Additionally, critique arises if a major scandal or severe problem is uncovered by the media. Given that social services in Israel have faced retrenchment over the past two decades, such critique has become more frequent. The government is minimally involved in resolving disputes within major organizations.

Citation:

Paz-Fuchs, A., Mandelkern, R., and Galnoor, I., eds. 2018. *The Privatization of Israel: The Withdrawal of State Responsibility*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
<https://www.palgrave.com/gp/book/9781137601568#otherversion=9781137582614>

Gal, J., and Weiss-Gal, I. 2010. "Social Policy Formulation and the Role of Professionals: The Involvement of Social Workers in Parliamentary Committees in Israel: Social Policy Formulation and Professionals." *Health & Social Care in the Community* (no-no). <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1365-2524.2010.00955>

Lithuania

Score 7

Most of the time, the government effectively involves leading social welfare CSOs in policy development processes. The Ministry of Social Security and Labor organizes standing platforms for dialogue and funding to engage CSOs and strengthen their capacity to provide policy advice. The government also aims to include stakeholders, including CSOs, in consultations during the drafting of new legal initiatives and through the Open Government Initiative. For example, guidelines for public consultations are prepared and available on the government website, with the goal of facilitating consultation with relevant stakeholders for line-ministry officials drafting new laws.

In the view of CSOs, the government led by Ingrida Šimonytė has been more willing than its predecessors to involve CSOs in consultations. Yet, in many cases, the views and solutions offered by CSOs are not reflected in final policy decisions, suggesting that the consultation process is frequently passive. On the other hand, CSOs themselves still lack the capacity to provide timely and evidence-informed policy advice.

Citation:

Ministry of Social Security and Labor. "NGO." <https://socmin.lrv.lt/en/useful-links/ngo>

The Government of Lithuania. "About public consultations (in Lithuanian)." <https://epilietis.lrv.lt/lt/atvira-vyriausybe-3/apie-viesasias-konsultacijas>

New Zealand

Score 7

While various institutional mechanisms exist to involve social welfare CSOs in the policymaking process, such as formal consultation processes, public submissions and working groups, it is ultimately up to the government to decide whether to utilize these mechanisms.

The Labour governments under Ardern and Hipkins (2017 – 2023) followed a policy agenda that prioritized social welfare and regularly engaged with relevant CSOs. For example, they worked through the Child Wellbeing and Poverty Reduction Group, set up within the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet in 2018, and the Mental Health and Wellbeing Commission, which was launched in 2021. Labour also established the Welfare Expert Advisory Group in 2018, which includes representatives from CSOs involved in social welfare.

The Ministry for Women also collaborates with the National Advisory Council on the Employment of Women, an independent advisory body established in 1967. This council regularly advises the minister for women on matters regarding women's employment and has done so since the Ministry's establishment in 1985.

Engagement in the policymaking process does not guarantee that governments will act on consultations with social welfare CSOs. One illustrative example is the Labour government failing to implement any of the 42 "urgent" recommendations put forward by the Welfare Expert Advisory Group in its 2019 Whakamana Tāngata: Restoring Dignity to Social Security report (Neilson 2023).

The new National-led coalition under Luxon has announced plans to roll back social welfare programs (Cheng 2023). Consequently, government engagement with social welfare CSOs in the policymaking process is expected to decrease significantly.

Citation:

Cheng, D. 2023. "Election 2023: Child poverty at issue as National, Labour vie over fiscal holes, welfare changes." *New Zealand Herald*, September 30. <https://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/politics/election-2023-child-poverty-at-issue-as-national-labour-vie-over-fiscal-holes-welfare-changes/2T6Q2AMNJ5AWHJFSVUVUL34ZQI/>

Neilson, M. 2023. "WEAG Welfare Overhaul Update, Govt Defends \$14.6b Programme While Anti-poverty Campaigners Say 'Woefully Slow.'" *New Zealand Herald*, March 21. <https://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/politics/weag-welfare-overhaul-update-govt-defends-146b-programme-while-anti-poverty-campaigners-say-woefully-slow/HYL5CB5O7ZHFXMBQDQHG2E4N34/>

Slovenia

Score 7 Including civil society organizations in social welfare is not as systematic as including representatives of capital and labor. Instead, representatives of social welfare organizations are often included in government working groups established for specific topics.

In the last two years, several new working groups have been formed. In October 2022, the Working Group for the Preparation of the Strategy in the Field of Migration was established. This was followed in February 2023 by the Committee for Monitoring the Program of the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund, the Program of the Fund for Internal Security, and the Program of the Instrument for Financial Support for Border Management and Visa Policy under the Integrated Border Management Fund. In May 2023, the Working Group for the Preparation of the Strategy in the Field of Integration of Foreigners was set up. Additionally, in April 2023, the Council of the Republic of Slovenia for Children and Family was established as a permanent advisory body to the government. Its members include representatives of non-governmental organizations and professional institutions active in the field of children and families, as well as representatives of the government.

Citation:

Republika Slovenija. 2024. "Delovna telesa Vlade." <https://www.gov.si/zbirke/delovna-telesa?start=0>

Spain

Score 7 Government officials and CSOs frequently engage in social welfare, though this role varies across policy areas depending on decentralization and the governing parties. For example, in youth policies, CSOs' participation is channeled through the Council of Youth. However, the frequent use of emergency legislation has limited CSOs' effective participation in legislative proposal preparation.

The government has also convened numerous meetings with social stakeholders to structure and monitor the implementation of the RRP. According to Eurofound, while the outcomes and overall satisfaction of social partners were positive, there were complaints about insufficient preparation time and lack of timely background information. The government did not provide the necessary background information in a timely manner. As a result, the social partners often found it challenging to prepare for work sessions. The government's involvement in moderating disputes among CSOs or following up on consultation talks is less compared to its role with unions and employers. The Minister for Social Affairs, appointed in 2022 and 2023, ranked low in terms of meetings with CSOs, having held only nine meetings according to their public agenda.

Citation:

Eurofound. 2022. *Involvement of Social Partners in the National Recovery and Resilience Plans*. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union.

Switzerland

Score 7

Historically characterized by neocorporatism, the Swiss political system has seen a gradual shift toward a more pluralistic approach in which a variety of interest groups, including social welfare CSOs, have gained increased access to the policymaking process. This transition reflects a move away from a system that was predominantly dominated by major economic umbrella associations.

Eichenberger (2020) notes that the legal framework in Switzerland has evolved to mandate “balanced representation” in decision-making bodies, ensuring the inclusion of diverse interests. This legal evolution is evident in the participation of social welfare CSOs in extra-parliamentary committees and in these organizations’ responses to consultations, in which the share of access granted to citizen groups has increased in both administrative and legislative venues.

However, major economic groups, including business interest associations and trade unions, continue to hold a dominant position, particularly in the domains of economic and social policies (Mach, Varone and Eichenberger, 2020).

Citation:

Eichenberger, S. 2020. “The Rise of Citizen Groups within the Administration and Parliament in Switzerland.” *Swiss Political Science Review* 26 (2): 206-227.

Mach, A., Varone, F., and Eichenberger, S. 2020. “Transformations of Swiss Neo-Corporatism: From Pre-Parliamentary Negotiations toward Privileged Pluralism in the Parliamentary Venue.” In *The European Social Model under Pressure*, eds. Careja, R., Emmenegger, P., and Giger, N. Wiesbaden: Springer Fachmedien Wiesbaden. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-658-27043-8_4

United States

Score 7

The extent to which the U.S. federal government facilitates the participation of leading social welfare civil society organizations is contingent on a variety of factors, including the political affiliation of the presidential administration, the type of policy area, and the differing structures and reputations of the CSOs.

Federal agencies welcome input during public comment periods as they revise rules and practices. This process provides opportunities for civil society organizations (CSOs) to contribute. For example, a housing charity or campaign group might participate in a public comment period initiated by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) or the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS).

In some cases, CSOs might be welcomed by the federal government to become formal or informal advisers or even partners in the delivery of certain programs. For example, Feeding America is the largest hunger relief charity in the United States. It runs over 200 food banks across the country and collaborates with the U.S. Department of Agriculture in several areas (Handforth et al. 2013). Feeding America's food banks are used by the USDA's TEFAP (The Emergency Food Assistance Program) to distribute federally funded food packages to those in need (Levedahl et al. 1994). Equally, Feeding America works with FEMA (the Federal Emergency Management Agency) to provide food packages to individuals who might be affected by short-term loss of resources due to a disaster, such as a hurricane or tornado.

The federal government also provides a range of grants to support the work of social welfare CSOs (Balio 2023). For example, the Department of Health and Human Services' Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) funds social welfare CSOs involved in alleviating poverty (Spar 2008). This support might include job training, childcare, counseling, and housing assistance.

Citation:

Karen Spar. 2008. "Community Services Block Grants: Funding and Reauthorization." Congressional Research Service.

Casey Balio, Stephanie Mathis, Margaret Francisco, Michael Meit, and Kate Beatty. 2023. "State Priorities and Needs: The Role of Block Grants." Public Health Reports.

William Levedahl, Nicole Ballenger, and Courtney Harold. 1994. "Comparing the Emergency Food Assistance Program and the Food Stamp Program: Recipient Characteristics, Market Effects, and Benefit-Cost Ratios." Agricultural Economic Report.

Becky Handforth, Monique Hennink, and Marlene Schwartz. 2013. "A Qualitative Study of Nutrition-Based Initiatives at Selected Food Banks in the Feeding America Network."

Estonia

Score 6

The policy-formulation capacity of noneconomic interest groups varies across fields of interest and with the scope of the intended impact. Generally, the capacities of social welfare civil society organizations (CSOs) are even more limited than those of unions or employer associations. Most CSOs are small and possess limited financial and human resources. However, in the realm of social welfare, the situation has improved, and a more genuine involvement of welfare experts has been taking root.

In 2023, the Welfare Development Plan 2016 – 2023 (WDP) was approved by the government. This process started in 2021 and involved many stakeholders. Consultations and discussions took place in bodies related to the well-being performance area of the state budget and the steering committee of the previous Welfare Development Plan during the drafting process. A steering committee was convened, and 11 thematic working groups were set up under the leadership of officials from the Ministry of Social Affairs.

Broad-based discussions took place in the well-being area of the 2021 Opinion Festival, a wider public engagement event very popular in Estonia. Discussions on

the objectives of the development plan occurred throughout the event. WDP 2016 – 2023 is one of the sub-programs of Estonia 2035, the Estonian government’s long-term strategic action plan.

Latvia

Score 6

Social welfare CSOs are primarily involved in social service delivery, but their ability to participate in policy development varies. The Society Integration Foundation (SIF, a public agency) was established in 2001 to foster CSO involvement in social development policy. SIF aims to support and advance societal integration, managing and allocating resources for projects that foster the integration and development of the public and NGO sectors.

Throughout 2022 SIF consistently provided essential sustenance and material aid across Latvia, advancing social inclusion with diverse initiatives. With support packages totaling more than €769,000 distributed, CSOs also conducted events to educate on discrimination and promote equality, culminating in the multi-year “Openness is a value” campaign (Sabiedrības Integrācijas Fonds, 2023). The projects financed by the foundation thus strengthen the capacity of CSOs in both policy design and service delivery. However, CSOs often face sustainability challenges after implementing these projects.

Many CSOs participate in the advisory councils under the Ministry of Welfare, bringing sector-related expertise to the ministry. However, the cooperation process is poorly organized, with infrequent meetings and limited information exchange.

Major CSOs generally participate in the policymaking process without much dissatisfaction regarding their involvement. They are often invited and heard in parliamentary committee meetings, with no reported cases of denial if they are interested in participating. During the COVID-19 crisis, leading CSOs were involved in cabinet meetings and allowed to express their views. However, CSOs most commonly express dissatisfaction when their opinions, especially on contentious issues, are not considered in final decisions, even though they have had the opportunity to present their views.

CSOs active in social welfare often voice dissatisfaction with policy outcomes in their sector. In 2020, this discontent was evident when 15 leading NGOs in the social services sector signed a letter criticizing the Ministry of Welfare. They expressed frustration with the ministry’s failure, over the past 10 – 15 years, to effectively support the welfare sector’s interests. This criticism encompassed issues related to social service provision, social insurance, child rights protection, and the deinstitutionalization process.

Citation:

Sabiedrības integrācijas fonds. 2023. “Sabiedrības integrācijas fonda 2022. gada publiskais pārskats.”

<https://www.sif.gov.lv/lv/media/4938/download?attachment>
 Labklājības ministrija. 2021. "Senioru lietu padome." <https://www.lm.gov.lv/lv/senioru-lietu-padome>
 Labklājības ministrija. 2020. "Sadarbības partneri." <https://www.lm.gov.lv/lv/sadarbibas-partneri>
 Tiesībsargs. 2022. "Darbs pie 2022. gada Eiropas Komisijas Ziņojuma par tiesiskumu." https://www.tiesibsargs.lv/wp-content/uploads/migrate_2022/content/ek_tiesiskums_kopsavilkums_1648193765.pdf
 Latvijas pilsoniskā alianse. 2020. "15 vadošās sociālo pakalpojumu nozares organizācijas nosūtījušas prasības Labklājības ministrijai." https://nvo.lv/lv/zina/15_vadosas_socialo_pakalpojumu_nozares_organizacijas_nosutijusas_prasibas_labklajibas_ministrijai

Portugal

Score 6

Leading CSOs in social welfare participate in the policymaking process through the Economic and Social Council (CES), particularly within the Permanent Commission for Social Concertation (CPCS). This constitutional body serves as a platform for negotiation and dialogue among sovereign bodies, economic entities, and social agents, contributing to the formulation and decision-making of policies. Article 92 of the Constitution of the Portuguese Republic outlines the dual competencies of the Economic and Social Council: advisory and social concertation.

In accordance with Law No. 108/91, the CPCS incorporates representatives from diverse civil society organizations specializing in social welfare (Article 3), thereby strengthening the engagement of these organizations in the policymaking process. It is noteworthy that employer and trade union confederations, recognized as social partners, hold significant responsibilities in discussing major options in economic, labor, and social policy, albeit in a consultative capacity (Almeida et al. 2016).

However, both the CPCS and CES have faced criticism for excessive government influence on their agendas and a perceived lack of representativeness (Almeida et al., 2016). Concerns have been raised about the unclear selection process for representatives from both employers and employees, with some viewing this structure as a form of "selective corporatism" (Sá, 1999).

Furthermore, implementing public policies often involves the collaboration of other social agents, including specialized bodies, universities, and research centers. Despite this, there is considerable potential for broader engagement in this domain, allowing for the inclusion of a more diverse array of representatives from society in the development of executive measures.

Citation:

Conselho Económico e Social (CES), <https://ces.pt/conselho-economico-e-social/>

DRE. 1991. Law n° 108/91. Série I-A, n° 188, August 17. 4199. <https://diariodarepublica.pt/dr/legislacao-consolidada/lei/1991-58928557>

Luis. 1999. "Concertação Social e 'corporativismo selectivo' e Questões Laborais." 14: 162-173.

Almeida, J. R., Silva, M. C., Ferreira, A. C., Costa, H. 2016. Concertação Social: A actividade da CPCS DE 2009 A 2015 – ecos das políticas europeias. Centro de Estudos Sociais, Universidade de Coimbra. https://www.ces.uc.pt/observatorios/crisalt/documentos/cadernos/Caderno_9_Concertacao_Social.pdf

Slovakia

Score 6 In addition to labor issues, the Economic and Social Council of the Slovak Republic addresses welfare matters. The Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs, and Family of the SR (Ministry of Labor) has several other councils that handle different welfare areas, such as senior citizens, families and differently abled individuals. Each council includes several members representing prominent CSOs in their respective regions. According to council statutes, CSOs should normally be consulted during the ex ante assessment of all draft laws in the area (legislative rules). Mechanisms allow social welfare CSOs to engage in expert commissions, public hearings, and performance monitoring. All official documents, including meeting minutes, voting records, and resolutions, are available on the Ministry of Labor's website. However, not all aspects of the consultation process are fully transparent.

The quality of consultations and the results depend on the specific conditions and actors involved. The OĽANO governments from 2020 to 2023 often made decisions independently of other stakeholders' positions due to their limited capacity for participative decision-making (see Malý and Nemeč, 2023). Trade unions and other primary CSOs in the welfare area are publicly visible, and the media report criticism regarding the quality of their participation in policymaking and policy implementation processes. Besides government councils, there are no visible formal mechanisms to organize disputes within and between major social welfare CSOs or to balance potentially diverse opinions in practice.

Citation:

Malý, I., and J. Nemeč. 2023. "'Non-Standard' Political Parties and The Capacity to Govern in Turbulent Times: Slovakia 2020-2022." *Transylvanian Review of Administrative Sciences* Special issue: 101-117.

Greece

Score 5 The involvement of prominent social welfare CSOs in the initial stages of policymaking on key issues is limited.

Greece maintains an official national registry of social welfare CSOs, managed by the National Centre for Social Solidarity (EKKA), a branch of the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs. However, the registry's primary purpose is to accredit local social welfare CSOs authorized to carry out welfare tasks, such as childcare and elderly assistance, rather than to facilitate policy consultation. The board of trustees of EKKA includes a representative of the national confederation of persons with disabilities (EKKA 2024). Although government officials sometimes consult social welfare CSOs informally before drafting legislation, formal consultations are infrequent.

There is, however, a legislative mechanism for consultation in Greece. CSOs and interested citizens can participate in the electronic deliberation required before any

ministry submits draft legislation to parliament. Ministries, such as the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs and the newly established Ministry of Social Cohesion and Family (2023), are mandated to upload draft legislation to their official websites and invite public feedback before finalizing the bill for submission to parliament. Following this process, the “Permanent Committee on Social Affairs” is convened to debate the legislation, with representatives of CSOs and social welfare experts invited to participate. Despite these mechanisms, the involvement of leading social welfare CSOs in policy development remains less than desirable.

Citation:

EKKA. 2024. “<https://ekka.org.gr/index.php/en/>”

The website of the “Permanent Committee on Social Affairs” is <https://www.hellenicparliament.gr/Koinovouleftikes-Epitropes/CommitteeDetailView?CommitteeId=583b7a49-8542-41c0-8e16-e1c22246bfa6>

Italy

Score 5

Italian legislation (Legislative Decree 117/2017) mandates that public administrations ensure the active involvement of third-sector entities to uphold the principles of subsidiarity, cooperation, effectiveness, efficiency, economy, homogeneity, and financial and asset coverage. This involvement should be incorporated through co-programming, co-planning, and co-signing as public administrations exercise their planning and organizational functions at the territorial level.

The third sector in Italy comprises 375,000 institutions, including associations, foundations, and social cooperatives – an increase of 25% compared to 10 years ago. The production value of the third sector is estimated at €80 billion, representing almost 5% of the gross domestic product. There are more than 900,000 employees, 70% of whom are women, and 4 million volunteers.

Eighty-five percent of third-sector institutions are associations; the remaining 15% are social cooperatives, foundations, trade unions, or organizations. Two-thirds of nonprofit organizations (65%) are active in culture, sport, and recreation, followed by social welfare and civil protection (9%), trade unions and business (6%), religion (5%), education and research (4%), and health (4%).

The involvement of social welfare CSOs takes place mainly at the regional and local levels, as welfare services are attributed to the regions and municipalities. The national level is less involved. Available data show that at the regional and local levels, especially in North-Central Italy, the involvement of CSOs in the provision of social services is significant and extensive.

Thus, interactions between governments and CSOs are deep and stable at the subnational level. At the central level, however, they are weak, except for the role

the Ministry of Labor plays in addressing and promoting third-sector activities and in planning, developing, and implementing initiatives related to EU Structural Funds for integrating social and active labor policies.

Citation:

Natoli, G., and A. Turchini, eds. 2023. *L'offerta di servizi sociali del Terzo settore. IV Indagine sui servizi sociali realizzati dal non profit*. Roma: Inapp. <https://oa.inapp.org/xmlui/handle/20.500.12916/3924>

Fondazione Sussidiarietà. 2022. *Rapporto Sussidiarietà e... sviluppo sociale*. Milano. https://www.astrid-online.it/static/upload/rapp/rapporto_sussidiarieta__21-22.pdf

France

Score 4

Social welfare CSOs play a critical role in France. They participate significantly in the implementation of welfare programs, and several major associations are relatively powerful. This includes the French Red Cross, Emmaus and the Secours Catholique. Historically, some associations, such as the Fondation Abbé Pierre on housing rights and anti-poverty policy, have been able to exercise an effective influence on policymaking. This is, however, exceptional. Generally speaking, CSOs in this area – especially the most visible ones – are sometimes able to raise awareness of certain issues and thus influence public opinion. For instance, Restos du Coeur, a very popular CSO that provides free food to the needy, has regularly drawn attention to the issue of poverty. In the context of rising inflation in recent years, it regularly signaled that the organization's projects were overwhelmed by demand, and unable to keep up. In 2003, its director announced that the organization was close to bankruptcy, leading to considerable public reactions but no major political initiative.

However, there are no institutional mechanisms ensuring active involvement of welfare CSOs in policymaking. Governments do not usually bring any of these CSOs into the policymaking process, even if they may be part of advisory groups or participate in parliamentary hearings. They have been influential only on specific occasions, for example when they attract considerable media attention, as illustrated by a recent study on access to healthcare for migrants by Pursch and colleagues (2020).

Citation:

Pursch, Benita, et al. 2020. "Health for all? A qualitative study of NGO support to migrants affected by structural violence in northern France." *Social Science & Medicine* 248: 112838.

Lafore, Robert. 2010. "Le rôle des associations dans la mise en œuvre des politiques d'action sociale." *Informations sociales* 2010/6 (162): 64-71.

Gallois, Florence. 2023. "Les associations du secteur social et médico-social: une analyse par les médiations institutionnelles." *Revue de la régulation* Spring 2023. Retrieved 7 March 2024 from <https://journals.openedition.org/regulation/22081>

Japan

Score 4

Most welfare civil society organizations are small in size and limited in their policy outreach. Often, they cooperate closely with state institutions and focus on providing specific services rather than representing specific interests. As a result, their

representatives are rarely invited to cabinet advisory bodies. Moreover, despite the large number of pensioners, they cannot be considered a powerful lobby group. The public pension insurance is reviewed every five years by experts on actuarial grounds. This leads to technocratic adjustments of pension benefits and contributions, which affect millions of citizens. On the other hand, public hearings create an opportunity for NGO representatives to express their opinions on issues such as the social security system.

According to the revised Grand Design and Action Plan for a New Form of Capitalism, issued in June 2023, the Kishida cabinet plans to utilize public-private partnership platforms to expand governmental support for NGOs working to solve local social issues. This aligns with previous policy to limit public spending by encouraging volunteering and non-state provision of services. Particular emphasis is put on cooperation with organizations that address loneliness and isolation, and promote human resources in rural areas and cities.

In February 2022, the Public-Private Collaboration Platform to Combat Loneliness and Isolation was established under the Cabinet Secretariat to encourage cooperation among more than 150 organizations in the field. There were no representatives of social welfare NGOs in the Experts' Council for the Promotion of Measures for Loneliness and Isolation, which is composed exclusively of university professors. Ten meetings of the Forum on Loneliness and Isolation were held in 2021 to hear the opinions of NGOs, which were partly reflected in government policy.

Citation:

Cabinet Secretariat. 2023. "Grand Design and Action Plan for a New Form of Capitalism: 2023 Revised Version." https://www.cas.go.jp/seisaku/atarashii_sihonsyugi/pdf/ap2023en.pdf

Cabinet Secretariat. "Kodoku Koritsu Taisaku Kanmin Renkei Purattofômu" [Public-Private Collaboration Platform to Combat Loneliness and Isolation]. https://www.cas.go.jp/seisaku/kodoku_koritsu_platform/index.html

Shinkawa, Toshimitsu. "The Politics of Pension Reform in Japan: Institutional Legacies, Credit-Claiming and Blame Avoidance." In *Ageing and Pension Reform Around the World: Evidence from 11 Countries*, eds. Giuliano Bonoli and Toshimitsu Shinkawa, 157-181. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar.

Poland

Score 4

As with other civil society organizations (CSOs), the role of social welfare organizations in policymaking under the PiS government was limited to irregular, nontransparent consultations at various levels. Between 2019 and 2023, only four public hearings during parliamentary commission proceedings were held. The PiS government favored organizations that promoted conservative values and traditional family roles, especially those linked to the Catholic Church. In contrast, well-established initiatives like the Science Festival – the largest and one of the most prestigious events promoting science in Poland – took place without any financial support from the Ministry of Education and Science for the first time in 2023.

Attempts to deepen the politicization of education were blocked twice by presidential veto, and the Senate faced extended critique from pupils and parents' organizations due to a lack of social dialogue. In general, 2023 was marked by higher involvement of youth organizations in public discourse and actions. This led to a very high turnout rate among young people in the October 2023 parliamentary elections. After the elections, 80 of the most important Polish social organizations published a statement to the new liberal government on the need to strengthen social dialogue and use the knowledge of the third sector to restore the rule of law and build a progressive, responsible state (Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights 2023).

Citation:

Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights. 2023. "Statement by civil society organizations after the 2023 parliamentary elections." <https://hfhr.pl/en/news/statement-by-civil-society-organisations-after-the-2023-parliamentary-elections>

United Kingdom

Score 4

As explained in the answers to the questions "Effective Civil Society Organizations" and "Effective Involvement of Civil Society," if major CSOs are understood to be social partners in a corporatist sense, then their involvement in social welfare policy is limited. However, the UK has a wealth of NGOs, think tanks, and research institutes focused on various aspects of social welfare, making them valuable contributors to policymaking. Bodies like the Migration Advisory Council, mentioned in the answer to "Sustainable Inclusion of Migrants," also play a role. While formal consultation procedures exist, they do not capture the full range of input from these sources. Informal contacts between civil servants or ministers and social welfare experts, public events, and occasional commissions – such as those by the Centre for Social Justice, as mentioned in indicator "Effective Civil Society Organizations" – are all avenues for influence. Additionally, All-Party Parliamentary Groups facilitate interactions between the government and other organizations, further enriching the policymaking processions.

Hungary

Score 3

The illiberal government under Prime Minister Orbán filters civil engagement through an ideological lens. The inclusion of CSOs is determined by whether organizations share the governing party's worldview. As a result, substantial sectoral and topic-based differences have emerged. For instance, in family matters, the government promotes traditional family structures while opposing modern forms of engagement. Generally, the government epitomizes "populist policymaking," which means that interest groups, experts and intermediary groups are rarely consulted (Bartha et al. 2019). During the COVID-19 pandemic, the government occasionally consulted societal actors, but continued to do so selectively and without transparency. In the case of older people, a group particularly hard-hit by the

pandemic, the government refrained from engaging with traditional interest associations representing this demographic. Instead, it referred to “negotiations” with the Council of the Elderly People, a body comprising 12 members loyal to Fidesz and chaired by Prime Minister Orbán himself. Vulnerable social groups such as the Roma are underrepresented in social dialogue. The discourse on the social welfare of migrants is particularly problematic, with experts being criminalized through various legal instruments rather than consulted. The government’s anti-feminist stance creates hurdles to consultations on gender issues, and entities pursuing LGBTQ+ rights are demonized as well. Advocacy in these areas has been interrupted due to government ideology. The government uses a multitier strategy to tackle feminist and family-oriented issues with a differentiated approach toward the CSOs involved in policymaking. Organizations that support the conservative, traditional narrative of the government are usually co-opted, and may receive funding for projects. Another strategy includes the organization of mergers, the creation of GONGOs, and the establishment of or fusion with CSOs close to the government. In contrast, CSOs that push a modern, feminist agenda are excluded and may quickly become victims of smear or othering campaigns. The situation somewhat resembles the famous cultural policy of György Aczél during the communist period, where the mechanisms of being forbidden, tolerated or supported (*tiltott, türt, támogatott*) were used in the cultural sphere (Geró et al. 2023).

Citation:

Bartha, A., Boda, Z., and Szikra, D. 2020. “When Populist Leaders Govern: Conceptualising Populism in Policy Making.” *Politics and Governance* 8(3): 71-81.

Geró, M., Fejős, A., Kerényi, S., and Szikra, D. 2023. “From Exclusion to Co-optation: Political Opportunity Structures and Civil Society Responses in De-democratising Hungary.” *Politics and Governance* 11(1): 16-27.

Indicator **Effective Involvement of Civil Society Organizations (Environment)**

Question **To what extent does the government facilitate the participation of leading environmental CSOs in policymaking?**

30 OECD and EU countries are sorted according to their performance on a scale from 10 (best) to 1 (lowest). This scale is tied to four qualitative evaluation levels.

- 10-9 = The government is able to effectively involve leading environmental CSOs in policy development.
- 8-6 = Most of the time, the government is able to effectively involve leading environmental CSOs in policy development.
- 5-3 = The government is rarely able to effectively involve leading environmental CSOs in policy development.
- 2-1 = The government is not able to effectively involve leading environmental CSOs in policy development.

Sweden

Score 9 Consultation with societal actors has historically been a strong feature of Swedish democracy. Public consultation remains a core component of the Swedish policymaking process. In this corporatist arrangement, the government consults with key societal partners on a wide range of issues, including those concerning the environment and climate action. Stakeholders are thus given an opportunity to influence public policy from the early stages of the policy process until implementation.

Public inquiries and participation in various committees and councils are among the forms of consultation. The government often recognizes the expertise and commitment of environmental NGOs in addressing environmental issues, viewing them as essential actors in achieving sustainability goals and promoting environmental protection.

The center-right minority government elected in 2022 has taken a permissive stance on environmental policy, eliciting criticism from environmental CSOs in print media, television, and their websites. The Swedish Climate Policy Council, an independent interdisciplinary organization tasked with evaluating Swedish climate policy against the possibility of achieving its goals, posits that the current policy will increase emissions and prevent Sweden from meeting its targets (Klimatpolitiska rådet, 2023).

Citation:

Klimatpolitiska rådet. 2023. "Handlingsplan otillräcklig – ytterligare styrmedel behövs för att nå klimatmålen." <https://www.klimatpolitiskaradet.se/pressrummet/handlingsplanen-otillracklig-ytterligare-styrmedel-behovs-for-att-na-klimatmalen/>

Denmark

Score 8

The increasing focus on climate and environmental challenges has boosted the profile of a number of civil organizations, including established ones like the Danish Society for Nature Conservation and Greenpeace Denmark, as well as various grassroots organizations.

The traditions in this area are not as strong as in other policy areas, but organizations are routinely listened to when environmental policies are prepared. They also play an important role in agenda setting. Organizations representing agriculture have been very active and vocal, since environmental and climate policies may have significant implications for the sector.

The Ministry of the Environment routinely incorporates these organizations into hearing processes related to environmental policy (Ministry of the Environment 2023).

Citation:

Ministry of the Environment. 2023. "Hearing List." <https://hoeringsportalen.dk/Hearing?Authorities=Milj%C3%B8ministeriet>

Netherlands

Score 8

Most CSOs in the domain of the environment are still embedded in the practices and culture of "poldering" (see "Effective CSOs (Environment)"). Some practice venue shopping by turning to the judiciary as a means of avoiding the delays and sluggishness of the "poldering" style of governance.

Finland

Score 7

The Finnish government does not actively involve leading environmental organizations (EOs) in policymaking to the same extent as business and labor organizations. EOs are not routinely engaged across the various stages of the policymaking process such as agenda-setting, policy formulation, deliberation and decision-making, policy implementation, and performance monitoring.

Participation tends to be sporadic and ad hoc due to the absence of institutional mechanisms ensuring the active engagement of prominent environmental organizations beginning from the initial stages of policymaking on issues of central importance to this sector. However, on a case-by-case basis, environmental

organizations participate in expert commissions, public hearings and performance monitoring.

Due to the small size of the country, communication between the government and environmental organizations, such as the Finnish Association for Nature Conservation (FANC), is intense. The consultation process is transparent, involving several environmental organizations.

The impact of consultations with environmental organizations on actual policies is relatively limited. Most significant decisions are made within the cabinet, negotiated among parties and outlined in the cabinet program. The government does not actively attempt to mediate disputes within and between major environmental organizations or to balance diverse opinions in practice.

Citation:

Finnish Association for Nature Conservation (FANC). n.d. "Resource Title." <https://www.sll.fi/en/>

Germany

Score 7

Environmental CSOs are highly respected and trusted in German society, making them well-suited to raise awareness about environmental issues and inform the public about environmental protection issues. The federal government supports environmental CSOs, such as BUND, NABU, and DNR, in their efforts and projects. These associations collaborate with the government and public administration to implement projects related to nature and the environment (Bundesregierung, 2023).

The federal government and the Bundestag, the German parliament, can consult environmental CSOs. The involvement of CSOs in the decision-making and development of draft laws varies greatly among the different federal ministries. CSOs primarily use lobbying to gain political influence. Recognized associations have the Right of Association (Verbandsklagerecht) to take legal action on behalf of the public, particularly in cases related to environmental protection, nature conservation, and animal welfare (Hummel et al., 2022: 3, 71). Any organization can comment on recent draft laws before they are discussed in the Bundestag, allowing them to shape the discussion about environmental laws both publicly and in parliament (Bundesministerium der Justiz, 2024).

Environmental CSOs contribute to the development and enhancement of the national sustainability strategy (Bundesregierung, 2023). Like German citizens, they can start a petition. If a petition reaches 50,000 signatures, the Bundestag is obliged to discuss it (Deutscher Bundestag, n.d.). Apart from these avenues, environmental CSOs do not participate directly in the policymaking process, and there are no serious discussions underway to extend their role.

There are no regular, official meetings between environmental organizations and government officials. While certain ministers and sometimes even the chancellor

often meet with trade unions and business organizations, this does not seem to be the case with environmental CSOs. However, the Expert Council on Climate Issues (Expertenrat für Klimafragen, ERK), founded in 2020, consists of five experts in innovation and climate. Its main task is to monitor German carbon emissions and highlight any overshooting of sector-specific emission goals. The Bundestag and the federal government can request special reports from the ERK on climate topics, in addition to a mandatory report on carbon emissions and climate goals every two years (Expertenrat für Klimafragen, n.d.).

Environmental CSOs frequently criticize the federal government's plans and actions and sometimes file lawsuits against the government. For example, in November 2023, the Bund für Natur- und Umweltschutz (BUND) and the Deutsche Umwelthilfe filed a suit against a governmental program of immediate action. The government had to develop this action plan due to overshooting carbon emissions in the building and transportation sectors. The court ruled in favor of the environmental organizations, stating that the program lacked short-term policies to immediately address the excess emissions (Energiezukunft, 2023). This is not the only case of an environmental CSO or a group of such organizations filing a suit against the federal government.

Major environmental CSOs are independent associations, and the federal government is not entitled to moderate disputes within or between them.

Citation:

Bundesregierung. 2023. "Die Deutsche Nachhaltigkeitsstrategie, Ein Kompass für die Zukunft." <https://www.bundesregierung.de/breg-de/themen/nachhaltigkeitspolitik/deutsche-nachhaltigkeitsstrategie-318846>

Hummel, S., Pfirter, L., and Strachwitz, R. G. 2022. Zur Lage und den Rahmenbedingungen der Zivilgesellschaft in Deutschland: Ein Bericht. Berlin: Maecenata Institut für Philanthropie und Zivilgesellschaft. <https://nbn-resolving.org/urn:nbn:de:0168-ssoar-76997-7>

Bundesministerium der Justiz. 2024. "Bundesregierung und Bundesministerien im Gesetzgebungsverfahren." https://www.bmj.de/DE/rechtsstaat_kompakt/entstehung_gesetz/regierung_ministerien/regierung_ministerien_node.html

Deutscher Bundestag. n.d. "Öffentliche Petitionen, Mitzeichnung und Quorum." <https://epetitionen.bundestag.de/epet/service.???rubrik.oeffentlichePetition.html>

Expertenrat für Klimafragen. n.d. "Expertenrat für Klimafragen." <https://www.expertenrat-klima.de/ueber-uns/>

Energiezukunft. 2023. "Klimaschutzprogramm der Bundesregierung ungenügend." <https://www.energiezukunft.eu/politik/klimaschutzprogramm-der-bundesregierung-ungenuegend/>

Ireland

Score 7

The inclusion of CSOs and advocacy groups is heralded as one of the most successful aspects of the Convention and Citizens' Assembly processes. Many CSOs are taking positions in emerging and established governance arrangements, such as the National Economic and Social Council (NESC), to influence policy and decision-

making processes. The Irish Citizens' Assembly, addressing "how to make Ireland a leader in tackling climate change" has positioned Ireland as a pioneer in citizen participation. The Assembly's report was brought to the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Climate Action (JOCCA), which incorporated most of its suggestions – except for the tax on GHG emissions from agriculture – into its 42 priority recommendations, including elevating climate action to the same level of importance as finance and budgetary matters (Houses of the Oireachtas 2019). This report formed the basis for the interministerial Climate Action Plan of 2019 (Harris 2021). The Bioeconomy Action Plan for 2023-2050, published at the end of 2023, includes proposals for different governance arrangements at both vertical and horizontal levels. A forum and an expert advisory group are to be set up to allow input from experts and environmental organizations. The success of these new arrangements is currently being studied by the Institute of Public Administration (IPA) (Country Brief 2023 Ireland). It is important to note that the growing interest in evidence-informed policymaking (EIPM) has somewhat shifted the focus toward professional experts at the expense of community knowledge. This has led to a preference for governmental bodies to work with larger organizations rather than advocacy CSOs. An environmental CSO report card on the progress of government commitments has noted some improvements, but overall progress on environmental issues remains inadequate given the scale of the challenges (Friends of the Earth 2023).

Citation:

European Commission. 2023. European Public Administration Country Brief 2023: Ireland.

Houses of the Oireachtas. 2019. "Joint Committee on Climate Action Debate." https://www.oireachtas.ie/en/debates/debate/joint_committee_on_climate_action/2019-11-06/2/

Harris, C. 2021. "Democratic Innovations and Policy Analysis: Climate Policy and Ireland's Citizens' Assembly (2016-2018)." In *Policy Analysis in Ireland*, eds. J. Hogan and M. P. Murphy, 219-234. Bristol: Policy Press.

Friends of the Earth. 2023. "Programme for Government Report Card on the Status of Environmental Commitments Made in Ireland's 2020 Programme for Government." https://www.friendsoftheearth.ie/assets/files/pdf/2023_pfg_report_card_on_climate__environment_.pdf

Lithuania

Score 7

The government is largely effective in involving leading environmental CSOs in policy development. Environmental CSOs have become increasingly active in debates addressing the preservation of forests and other natural resources. They have developed analytical capacities through their international links, which they then use to advocate particular policy proposals. The government has also involved environmental CSOs in discussions of specific policy initiatives. For example, environmental CSOs have played a significant role in drafting the long-term Lithuania 2050 strategy. They are also active in public hearings and expert committees.

As noted by the OECD in its 2021 report, "Despite environmental authorities' outreach to non-governmental actors in drafting high-profile laws and policies, there is no active dialogue with civil society on key environmental policy priorities,

particularly at the local level. Environmental awareness of the population is below the EU average, partly due to the lack of a consistent approach to environmental education. Most environmental information is accessible to the public but is fragmented across different authorities' websites, making it more difficult to find and use." Lithuania was advised to "consolidate public sources of environmental information and ensure regular reporting on the state of the environment. It should also provide open public access to compliance-related information about individual polluting installations."

Citation:

OECD. 2021. OECD Environmental Performance Reviews: Lithuania 2021. Paris: OECD Publishing. <https://doi.org/10.1787/48d82b17-en>

Norway

Score 7

Civil society organizations (CSOs) frequently participate in relevant public hearings. Expert and other public commissions typically consist of individuals who collectively provide both expert knowledge and representation from central interest groups. However, there are no strict formal requirements for the composition of these bodies, except on the basis of gender. The Norwegian bureaucracy and policymaking environment is generally open and accessible, and the involvement of CSOs (environmental and others) is perceived as enhancing legitimacy in policymaking. The consultation process is transparent, though it is important to note that Norway is a small country with relatively flat hierarchies and a mix of formal and informal arenas.

It is challenging to distinguish between CSOs' discontent with "token participation" in the policymaking process and their dissatisfaction with the current outcomes of decision-making on contentious political issues. Examples of the latter include continued oil and gas exploration, wind power stations – where the state lost a case in the Norwegian supreme court in 2021 – and wolf hunting.

Environmental organizations are generally critical of government central plans, regardless of whether the government is center-left or center-right. These organizations often sue the state because they believe the environmental consequences will be more serious than previously thought and that the knowledge base about these consequences has not been sufficiently investigated. Additionally, youth organizations often encourage boycotts of products and industries that damage the ecosystem. For example, salmon farming in Norway is believed to pose significant environmental challenges.

Citation:

Supreme Court of Norway. 2021. "Licences for wind power development on Fosen ruled invalid as the construction violates Sami reindeer herders' right to enjoy their own culture." <https://www.domstol.no/en/supremecourt/rulings/2021/supreme-court-civil-cases/hr-2021-1975-s>

Slovenia

Score 7

When the government passed and enforced restrictive legislation during the COVID-19 pandemic targeting civil society organizations working for environmental rights, these organizations quickly responded with protests and lobbying activities. Nevertheless, the government succeeded in adopting new criteria for civil society organizations to challenge decisions on environmental issues. For example, civil society organizations had to have at least 50 active members in the previous two years. As a result, many organizations were excluded from this procedure.

After the elections, when the center-left parties formed a coalition, civil society organizations prepared a law to counteract the previous government's detrimental measures. This law, passed in July 2022, eliminated the impossible conditions for environmental civil society organizations to participate in administrative and judicial proceedings under the Nature Conservation Act.

In June 2023, the government established the Climate Council as the nation's independent scientific advisory body for climate policy. In accordance with the Environmental Protection Act, the government adopted the rules of procedure for the Climate Council in 2022, regulating its functioning, and issued the decree on its establishment in 2023, thus creating the conditions for the first Slovenian scientific advisory body for climate policy.

Members of the Climate Council serve six-year terms and provide scientific advice through expert opinions and recommendations on established and proposed climate policy measures, ensuring their compliance with ratified international treaties and the EU legal order on climate change. Another key task of the council is to participate in developing climate change legislation. In 2023, the council met three times.

Candidates for the Climate Council are independent experts in climate change mitigation and adaptation, representing the natural and technical sciences as well as the social sciences and humanities.

In November 2022, the government established the Interdepartmental Working Group for International Climate Issues, comprising representatives from various ministries. The group's tasks include developing draft positions for international climate negotiations. Representatives of non-governmental organizations are not regularly included in this interdepartmental group. In April 2023, the government established an interministerial working group to support Slovenia's comprehensive strategic project of decarbonization as part of the transition to a circular economy.

Citation:

Republika Slovenija. 2024. "Podnebni svet." <https://www.gov.si/zbirke/delovna-telesa/podnebni-svet/>

Republika Slovenija. 2024. "Medresorska delovna skupina za usmerjanje Celovitega strateškega projekta razogljičenja Slovenije preko prehoda v krožno gospodarstvo." <https://www.gov.si/zbirke/delovna->

telesa/medresorska-delovna-skupina-za-usmerjanje-celovitega-strateskega-projekta-razogljudenja-slovenije-preko-prehoda-v-krožno-gospodarstvo

Republika Slovenija. 2024. "Medresorska delovna skupina za mednarodne podnebne zadeve." <https://www.gov.si/zbirke/delovna-telesa/medresorska-delovna-skupina-za-mednarodne-podnebne-zadeve>

Spain

Score 7

Leading environmental groups and CSOs have gained technical competence and are increasingly engaged by the government in expert commissions, public hearings, and performance monitoring. Governmental objectives for climate change and energy transition are discussed with CSOs. The Ministry of Ecologic Transition has established an online platform listing all ongoing consultations, allowing CSOs to participate before regulatory development and during the draft regulation stage. Environmental CSOs express satisfaction with their participation, with limited criticism.

During the review period, the frequent use of emergency legislation has limited CSOs' effective participation in legislative proposal preparation. However, the current Minister for Environment ranks seventh in frequency of meetings with civil society representatives among ministers appointed between 2012 and 2023, with 72 meetings.

Austria

Score 6

As with other groups, major environmental CSOs have the opportunity to present their views on scheduled bills during the institutionalized review process in parliament – if such a review occurs. A more natural method for these groups, however, is public protest, which implies a more diffuse and not necessarily less effective form of influence. Overall, the presence and influence of these groups in the policymaking arena tend to be considerably lower than those of social partners and many social welfare associations.

A particular challenge for environmental CSOs is that the environment and related issues are not as neatly defined as other policy fields. While this challenge is present in all countries, it is compounded in Austria by the complex multilevel nature of the Austrian polity, with split competencies across different levels. More specifically, some observers suggest that Austrian-style corporatism contributes to the intricate actor constellation and poses an additional obstacle to substantive policy progress. The predominance of other groups and their agendas tends to fuel the perceived conflict between economic growth and the job market versus climate change mitigation.

The recent chapters of government-environmental CSO relations have been shaped by the transition from SPÖ-led federal governments to ÖVP-led governments. In

particular, the ÖVP-FPÖ coalition, in office from 2017 – 2019, significantly influenced the relationships between the government and civil society organizations, both in the environmental sector and beyond. Some observers have referred to these developments, characterized by strong polarization and widespread defamation of many groups, as “autocratization” (Simsa 2019). The Greens’ inclusion in the government alongside the ÖVP in 2019 marked a positive change. However, the concrete impact on government-environmental CSOs and their role in public policymaking appears to have been more limited than expected.

Citation:

Jansesberger, Viktoria, and Gabriele Spilker. 2023. “Umwelt-und Klimapolitik.” In M. Senn et al., eds., *Handbuch Österreichische Außenpolitik*, 345-363. Wiesbaden: Springer VS.

Steurer, Reinhard, and Christoph Clar. “The Ambiguity of Federalism in Climate Policy-making.” how the political system in Austria hinders mitigation and facilitates adaptation; in: *Journal of Environmental Policy & Planning*: 20:2 (2018), 252-265

Simsa, Ruth. 2019. “Civil Society Capture by Early Stage Autocrats in Well-Developed Democracies—The Case of Austria.” *Nonprofit Policy Forum* 10 (3).

Simsa, R., F. Mayer, S. Muckenhuber, and T. Schweinschwaller. 2021. *Rahmenbedingungen für die Zivilgesellschaft in Österreich*. Berlin: Maecenata Institut für Philanthropie und Zivilgesellschaft. <https://nbn-resolving.org/urn:nbn:de:0168-ssoar-73615-2>

Belgium

Score 6

In the context of climate change, dialogue is less institutionalized and hence less effective. As mentioned under “Effective Civil Society Organizations (environment),” the civil society movement addressing climate issues can be broadly categorized into two main groups. The first group, which enjoys support from politicians across the spectrum, is largely consensual. The second group, often disavowed by politicians, is more radical.

Despite the involvement of the more consensual groups, neither group actively participates in the formulation of relevant policies. Their involvement is typically on an ad hoc and case-by-case basis. For instance, the official website (climat.be) still highlights a series of academic seminars organized in 2018. A stakeholder workshop was also arranged prior to COP 28, providing an opportunity for them to express their views and concerns. However, none of these activities are binding for the authorities.

Nevertheless, recent improvements are worth emphasizing. In the summer of 2023, the federal parliament passed a federal law on climate policy governance by a large majority. This law introduced a committee of independent scientific experts with a consultative role, among other things. Moreover, a coalition of civil society and activists lodged a formal complaint for climate inaction. The justices sentenced the governments to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions by at least 55%.

As a result, civil society organizations (CSOs) are advocating for more consultation and for their opinions to be more effectively considered in the upcoming elections..

Citation:

<https://www.revuepolitique.be/le-mouvement-climat-doit-assumer-son-aile-radicale/>

<https://climat.be/politique-climatique/belge/nationale/gouvernance-climatique>

<https://climat.be/actualites/2023/le-parlement-federal-approuve-la-loi-relative-a-la-gouvernance-de-la-politique-climatique-federale>

<https://klimaatoalitie.be/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/20231011-FR-Coalition-Climat-Elections-2024-1.pdf>

The website of the Climate Case: <https://affaire-climat.be/en>

Canada

Score 6

Environmental groups often have a contentious relationship with governments, which they view as being influenced by big businesses, especially environmentally degrading resource companies (Wilson and Boardman 1992). While there are opportunities for presenting briefs, these interactions are frequently antagonistic and have historically resulted in matters being routinely settled in court (Elgie 1993).

Environmental interests are advocated by interest groups or “pressure groups,” which sometimes operate through “peak associations” or overarching networks of various kinds. Members of the public organize these groups to act on their behalf to influence the political agenda of governments. Strategies of pressure groups include lobbying elected political representatives, educational campaigns aimed at influencing politicians and the general public, protests, and “direct action,” where members may engage in non-sanctioned activity.

Some environmental groups focus on general objectives, while others form in response to specific issues or conditions. Some are short-term and issue-specific; others have been active for decades.

Fund-raising mechanisms differ among groups, as do leadership and procedural questions, strategies and objectives.

In the resource and environmental policy sector, environmental groups have the capacity to organize and mobilize resources outside the political arena, subsequently bringing pressure on existing political forces to work toward enhanced environmental protection. Environmental organizations have been particularly successful in their educational activities, which are a fundamental component of policy formation. Many groups form linkages with other groups to address issues with large-scale impacts.

A Canadian success story is the Pulp Pollution Campaign in Vancouver, which was mobilized in the late 1980s by the West Coast Environmental Law Foundation and other groups. It included over 50 environmental and other public interest groups, whose public education and lobbying efforts have effectively tightened pulp pollution regulations in British Columbia.

However, smaller, issue-specific groups are also adept at maneuvering in anticipation of and response to industry edicts and government proclamations. The often local or grassroots composition of environmental groups sends a political message to both politicians and project proponents.

Environmental non-government organizations (ENGOS) have several advantages in resource and environmental policymaking that are not enjoyed by more indirect means of representing the public interest.

The use of the media to expand a base of public support is one example. The strategic use of the media by groups such as Greenpeace, for instance, has been especially effective in mobilizing public support for actions such as tanker moratoriums on the West Coast.

Yet environmental organizations, while representing a means by which the public can initiate and influence the policy process, are also limited by several factors. The uncertainty of funding, the temporary and issue-specific nature of many groups, and organizational instability restrict the success of environmental groups in dealing with other established political and economic network actors. Struggles among and within ENGOS have often dissipated activists' morale and energy and diminished funding and public support.

The lack of direct power and formal access to the policy process, while providing groups with ideological enthusiasm and logistical freedom, means their activities must be self-motivated, adversarial, and often response-driven. Rather than playing a proactive role in the policy process, many public interest groups are typically reactive, responding to specific projects or problems. Furthermore, the consequences of their activity are rarely clear. While there is symbolic and educational value to their activity, the ability of groups to penetrate the corridors of political power and to have a voice in the policy formation or decision-making process remains limited (Hessing et al. 2005).

It is important to note that the government of Canada provides program funding to organizations and individuals focused on environmental goals and the protection of the environment. Under the Impact Assessment Act (S.C. 2019, c. 28, s.1, 75 (1)), there is also an obligation to fund participants in an impact assessment – or in a “possible impact assessment” or in relation to “follow-up” activities required under the act.

Citation:

Wilson, J. 1992. “Green Lobbies: Pressure Groups and Environmental Policy.” In R. Boardman, ed. *Canadian Environmental Policy*, 109–25. Toronto: Oxford University Press.

Elgie, S. 1993. “Environmental Groups and the Courts: 1970-1992.” In G. Thompson, M. L. McConnell, and L. B. Huestis eds. *Environmental Law and Business in Canada*, 185–224. Aurora: Canada Law Book.

Hessing, Melody, Michael Howlett, and Tracy Summerville. 2005. *Canadian Natural Resource and Environmental*

Policy: Political Economy and Public Policy. 2nd ed. Vancouver: UBC Press.

<https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/services/environmental-funding.html>

Czechia

Score 6

In 2023, thanks to pressure from NGOs such as the DUHA Movement, an amendment to the Energy Act was approved, introducing community energy. Environmental NGOs are integrated into formal policymaking structures through membership in the Council for Sustainable Development under the Ministry of the Environment and various subcommittees. The council includes a representative from the Green Circle, a coordinating body of environmental organizations that comments on and seeks to influence national and EU legislation. One of the Green Circle's recent concerns involves plans to build high-speed train lines, which the government began discussing in 2017 and prioritized in March 2023. The Green Circle argues that alternatives might be more effective for achieving the goal of decarbonizing transport.

The DUHA Movement prides itself on its independence from the government as it monitors legislation. Its judgment on the Fiala government's first two years was mixed, welcoming proposals to reduce carbon dependence while arguing for more support for renewable energy and less reliance on nuclear energy, for which costs were judged to have been underestimated. Its relatively sympathetic assessment of the government reflects the latter's adherence to EU rules and the sympathies of the relevant minister within the coalition government.

A further controversy involving environmental organizations related to a proposed change to planning rules aimed at speeding up the approval of infrastructure projects. Adapted from EU law, this change responded to complaints in Czechia that environmental organizations were delaying approvals – particularly for motorway construction – by raising individual complaints at multiple stages of a project, sometimes for up to 20 years. The proposed changes would require a decision on building permits within four years and limit objections on environmental grounds. The law was approved on November 3, 2023. However, crucial changes were incorporated a few weeks beforehand without allowing space for public discussion. It remains to be seen whether environmental organizations and others will complain to the Constitutional Court, as they have threatened.

Citation:

https://hnutiduha.cz/sites/default/files/publikace/2023/10/priloha_tiskove_zpravy_hodnoceni_vlady_v_polocase.pdf

Estonia

Score 6

Environmental groups have traditionally operated on a local level, but their actions are becoming increasingly visible and coordinated. One organization that supports environmental participation in policymaking is SEI Tallinn, an Estonian branch of

the Stockholm Environmental Institute. SEI Tallinn aims to bridge science, policy and practice, focusing on environmental and development challenges. In 2022, SEI Tallinn founded the Estonian Association for Environmental Management and began to develop new partnerships at both the EU level, such as the European Energy Research Alliance, and regionally (SEI 2023). As of January 2023, when the annual report was compiled, there were 26 projects in process.

Citation:

SEI Tallinn. 2023. "Annual Report." 2022. <https://www.sei.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/seit-annual-report-2022-eng.pdf>

Israel

Score 6

The main formal mechanism for the involvement of environmental organizations is the Law of Representation of Public Environmental Organizations (2002). According to this law, every statutory committee handling environmental issues (e.g., water, land and planning) must include a representative from an environmental organization. This ensures that these organizations can express their opinions and have them considered, as they are full members of the committee. Although the decisions of the committees are transparent, the deliberations are not. In most cases, the minister of environmental protection selects the organizations that send representatives. Typically, environmental organizations agree among themselves on which organization will participate in which committee to prevent disputes and ensure inclusiveness.

In addition, environmental organizations are very active on planning issues, especially at the local level but also at the national level, particularly with regard to policymaking processes in the Ministry of Environmental Protection and the Ministry of Energy. Environmental organizations are regularly consulted on various policy issues, and can provide input through both formal and informal channels.

Moreover, environmental organizations often express their dissatisfaction with government policy in Knesset committees and through the media. Because environmental issues are not high on the government's agenda, politicians usually do not pay much attention to them.

Latvia

Score 6

The Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development is attempting to build a comprehensive approach for incorporating CSO insights into environmental matters. CSOs are invited to participate in task forces and advisory councils, outlining the mechanisms for their involvement in regional development and environmental protection. The ministry's webpage provides a list of lobbying CSOs and serves as a resource for understanding the current landscape of

environmental civil society organizations and their active engagement in governmental processes.

The State Audit Office conducted an audit on the involvement of CSOs in the agriculture sector in 2019. The audit revealed that an unorganized lobbying framework hinders access to information on critical decisions for various interest groups. The Law on Transparency of Interest Representation, which entered into force in January 2023, is expected to improve interest transparency.

Environmental civil society organizations (CSOs) often voice their dissatisfaction with policy outcomes in their sector. For example, environmental organizations in Latvia have expressed concerns about the government's policies drifting away from sustainable development principles. These key environmental CSOs frequently express dissatisfaction with their level of involvement in policymaking. They feel their participation is often superficial and does not significantly influence policy decisions, particularly in environmental protection and sustainability.

Environmental CSOs expressed strong opposition to the appointment of the current Minister of Climate, Energy, and Environmental Protection before his appointment in 2023. Their concerns focus on the potential negative impact this appointment could have on the country's environmental policies and sustainability efforts. This opposition underscores the critical role of ministerial appointments in shaping national environmental strategies and public trust in environmental governance. Despite these concerns from environmental organizations, the minister's appointment was confirmed.

Citation:

Vides aizsardzības un reģionālās attīstības ministrija. 2021. "Sabiedrības līdzdalība." <https://www.varam.gov.lv/lv/sabiedribas-lidzdaliba>

Vides aizsardzības un reģionālās attīstības ministrija. 2023. "Padomes un komisijas." <https://www.varam.gov.lv/lv/padomes-un-komisijas>

Vides aizsardzības un reģionālās attīstības ministrija. 2023. "Interesu pārstāvības organizāciju saraksts." <https://www.varam.gov.lv/lv/media/37536/download?attachment>

Saeima. 2022. Law on Transparency of Interest Representation. <https://likumi.lv/ta/en/en/id/336676-law-on-transparency-of-interest-representation%20>

Valsts kontrole. 2019. "Nevalstisko organizāciju iesaiste Zemkopības ministrijas nozarēs aiz neaurskatāma aizsega." https://www.lrvk.gov.lv/lv/getrevisionfile/uploads/reviziju-zinojumi/2018/2.4.1.-14_2018/Revi%CC%84zijas%20zin%CC%A7ojums_03.07.2019.pdf

Latvijas Dabas fonds. 2022. "Vides organizācijas pauž bažas par politikas attālināšanos no ilgtspējīgas attīstības principiem." <https://lvportals.lv/dienaskartiba/339611-vides-organizācijas-pauz-bazas-par-politikas-attalināšanos-no-ilgtspējīgas-attīstības-principiem-2022>

Latvijas Dabas fonds. 2023. "Latvijas Vides Organizācijas Kategoriski Iebilst Pret Melni (ZZS) Klimata, Enerģētikas un Vides Aizsardzības Ministra Amatā." <https://lvportals.lv/dienaskartiba/354831-latvijas-vides-organizācijas-kategoriski-iebilst-pret-melni-zzs-klimata-enerģētikas-un-vides-aizsardzības-ministra-amata-2023>

New Zealand

Score 6

Environmental CSOs have historically achieved notable successes in shaping environmental policy. However, these successes were primarily achieved through legal means (e.g., by bringing claims before the Waitangi Tribunal) or through direct

protest action and civil disobedience (Kurian et al. 2022). Formal institutional mechanisms designed to involve CSOs in the policymaking process – such as public consultations, submissions or working groups – have been less important avenues for influencing environmental policy outcomes.

Governments have employed institutional mechanisms to engage with CSOs on environmental policy. For example, the Labour-led coalition under Ardern actively involved environmental CSOs in developing and drafting the Zero Carbon Act. Passed in 2019, the Act sets a framework for New Zealand to transition to a low-emission, climate-resilient future.

Formal consultation mechanisms do not guarantee that input from civil society organizations (CSOs) will be adequately considered or implemented. For instance, during the drafting of the Zero Carbon Act, environmental CSOs like Greenpeace expressed concerns about setting softer reduction goals for dairy and agricultural gases such as methane. These concerns were ignored by the government (Morton 2018).

Citation:

Kurian, P. et al. 2022. “Social Movements and the Environment.” In J. L. MacArthur and Maria Bargh, eds., *Environmental Politics and Policy in Aotearoa New Zealand*. Auckland: Auckland University Press.

Morton, J. 2018. “Greenpeace Want Agricultural Greenhouse Gas Emissions in Carbon Act.” *New Zealand Herald*, June 7. <https://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/greenpeace-want-agricultural-greenhouse-gas-emissions-in-carbon-act/VSRXUTAN4TF76VUXD6IGFL3CXE/>

Portugal

Score 6

Environmental civil society organizations, along with those focused on social welfare, are represented in the Economic and Social Council. However, in this constitutional entity, only a single representative from national environmental associations is present among its 56 members. This structure offers a forum for dialogue and enables environmental groups to engage in the political decision-making process, yet their representation is notably limited, which presents a significant challenge.

In the domain of environmental matters, numerous investment projects undergo public evaluation and discussion for a set period. For instance, consider the agroforestry venture in the municipality of Alcácer do Sal, in the Alentejo region of southern Portugal. This initiative aims to establish avocado orchards and involves creating 34 wells for water extraction. The public consultation phase for this venture concluded at the end of January 2024, with the Participa portal recording 341 submissions. Data indicate that the Alentejo and Algarve regions in southern Portugal are experiencing water scarcity.

A coalition of environmental organizations is voicing concerns about the project’s ecological ramifications. ZERO, a prominent environmental CSO, warns that the

project may jeopardize local water resources. The transformation of conservation areas – such as through agricultural intensification – is at odds with objectives to protect nature. The potential effects on water quality and availability in an already water-scarce region are alarming. Consequently, ZERO opposes the agroforestry project due to the risks it poses to the environment.

Citation:

Law n° 108/91. Diário da República, n° 188, Série I-A, p. 4199. <https://diariodarepublica.pt/dr/detalhe/lei/108-1991-674430>

RTP. 2024. “Plantação de 722 hectares de pera-abacate em Alcácer do Sal em consulta pública.” https://www.rtp.pt/noticias/economia/plantacao-de-722-hectares-de-pera-abacate-em-alcacer-do-sal-em-consulta-publica_n1541176

SAPO. 2024. “Zero diz que plantação de abacates em Alcácer do Sal pode ser ‘machadada’ na conservação.” <https://greensavers.sapo.pt/zero-diz-que-plantacao-de-abacates-em-alcacer-do-sal-pode-ser-machadada-na-conservacao/>

Participa. (n.d.). “Portal <https://participa.pt/pt/consulta/projeto-agricola-de-producao-de-abacates>”

Switzerland

Score 6

Historically, the Swiss neocorporatist regime was dominated by major economic umbrella associations, which were central political actors in the pre-parliamentary phase of decision-making, including in extra-parliamentary committees and consultation procedures (Mach, Varone & Eichenberger 2020). Since the 1990s, however, there has been a significant reconfiguration toward a more pluralist system in which interest groups, including environmental CSOs, have actively sought to influence the parliament (Mach, Varone & Eichenberger 2020; Eichenberger, 2020). This shift is attributed to factors such as the declining role of the pre-parliamentary phase, the revalorization of the parliament and the increasing role of media in politics (Mach, Varone & Eichenberger 2020).

Eichenberger (2020) notes that the share of access granted to noneconomic interest groups, including environmental CSOs, has increased in both the administrative and legislative venues across all federal departments and most legislative committees in Switzerland. This change suggests an adaptation of the Swiss system of interest intermediation to the growing significance and organizational consolidation of these groups.

Noneconomic interest groups are very heterogeneous in Switzerland. Nevertheless, some environmental groups, undertaking cooperative efforts with academic bodies, offer reasonable proposals and hold considerable capacity for political mobilization. Recent research emphasizes the growing importance of environmental CSOs such as the WWF (Eichenberger 2020; Mach et al. 2020).

The revalorization and growing professionalization of the Swiss parliament have made the parliamentary venue more hospitable to citizen groups defending general

causes and objectives. Nevertheless, economic interest groups have also adjusted their political strategies and expanded their presence within the parliamentary venue, indicating a nuanced strengthening of citizen groups (Mach, Varone & Eichenberger 2020).

Citation:

Eichenberger, S. 2020. "The Rise of Citizen Groups within the Administration and Parliament in Switzerland." *Swiss Political Science Review* 26: 206-227.

Mach, A., Varone, F. and Eichenberger, S. 2020. "Transformations of Swiss Neo-corporatism: From Pre-parliamentary Negotiations toward Privileged Pluralism in the Parliamentary Venue." In *The European Social Model under Pressure*, eds. Careja, R., Emmenegger, P. and Giger, N. Wiesbaden: Springer Fachmedien Wiesbaden. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-658-27043-8_4

United States

Score 6

The ability of environmental CSOs to engage with federal government policymakers largely depends on the political inclinations of the administration in power. Democratic administrations tend to be favorable to environmental groups, whereas Republican ones, especially in recent times, tend to be relatively hostile or neutral (Turner, 2018). This partisan divide on environmental issues was not always the case; one of the greatest environmentalists in the White House was Republican Richard Nixon, founder of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) (McCright et al. 2014).

During the development of the EPA's Clean Power Plan, the Obama administration invited environmental CSOs, such as the Sierra Club and the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC), to participate in crafting these regulations and to provide recommendations on how to best reduce carbon emissions from power plants (Gonzalez 2019).

In some cases, CSOs are integrated into the infrastructure of the environmental agencies in the federal government. For example, the EPA's Clean Air Advisory Committee includes representatives from environmental CSOs. This committee advises the EPA on air quality standards and accompanying regulations (Reversz and Lienke 2016).

The Department of the Interior, responsible for managing federal lands and relations with Native American tribal communities, frequently consults with environmental CSOs on its conservation initiatives. For example, representatives from the Wilderness Society provide guidance on national park management plans. Experts from the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) serve on the Marine Protected Areas Federal Advisory Committee and advise the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) on marine conservation strategies.

Citation:

James Turner. 2018. *The Republican Reversal: Conservatives and the Environment from Nixon to Trump*.

Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

George Gonzalez. 2019. "The Obama Administration's Global Warming Legacy: Going With the Flow and the Politics of Failure." In *Looking Back on President Obama's Legacy*, ed. W. Rich. Palgrave.

Aaron McCright, Chenyang Xiao, and Riley Dunlap. 2014. "Political Polarization on Support for Government Spending on Environmental Protection in the USA, 1974-2012." *Social Science Research*.

Christopher Bailey. 2018. "Environmental Policy." In G Peele et al., eds., *Developments in American Politics* 8. Palgrave.

Christopher Klyza and David Sousa. 2013. *American Environmental Policy: Beyond Gridlock*. Cambridge: MIT Press.

Frank Thompson, Kenneth Wong, and Barry Rabe. 2020. *Trump, the Administrative Presidency, and Federalism*. Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press.

Richard Reversz and Jack Lienke. 2016. *Struggling for Air: Power Plants and the War on Coal*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Australia

Score 5

The environmental movement has grown and become more active in recent years, engaging with governments and influencing public opinion on climate change. This has pressured governments to address environmental issues, evidenced by the growing success of the Greens party. However, the fossil fuels industry's influence, including significant contributions to major parties, remains a barrier to decisive action.

It should be noted that the environmental movement is not a unified whole. There are significant divisions within it (Pearse 2023). Some segments such as the Australian Conservation Foundation (ACF), a large environmental charity, tend to adopt a relatively pragmatic and incremental approach to reform. They believe it is best to "take what you can get" as a step toward greater progress. Other actors in the environmental movement, including the Greens political party, believe more in transformative change and are inclined to reject what they perceive to be "weak" changes. These tensions have sometimes weakened the coherence and effectiveness of the environmental movement (Pearse 2023).

Tensions were apparent in the divisions within the environmental movement during the 2023 debate about the Labor government's environmental "safeguard" mechanism. The proposal included a commitment to require large industrial emitters to reduce the intensity of their emissions by 4.9% a year to achieve a reduction of 205 metric tons of greenhouse gas by 2030 (Karp 2023). While the ACF urged the Greens to accept the government's initial proposal, the Greens held out for a stronger measure that included a commitment to no new coal and gas power stations. The Greens eventually supported the bill following negotiations with the government, securing some compromises. Most notably, these include the introduction of a declining total cap on emissions, which will mean that the total emissions permitted under the scheme will decrease over time.

Citation:

Pearse, R. 2023. "Pragmatism versus Idealism? Behind the Split between Environmental Groups and the Greens on the Safeguard Mechanism." *The Conversation* April 6. <https://theconversation.com/pragmatism-versus-idealism-behind-the-split-between-environmental-groups-and-the-greens-on-the-safeguard-mechanism-203139>

Karp, P. 2023. "Labor Agrees to Absolute Cap on Emissions to Secure Greens Backing for Safeguard Mechanism Climate Bill." *The Conversation*. March 28. <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2023/mar/27/labor-agrees-to-absolute-cap-on-emissions-to-secure-greens-backing-for-safeguard-mechanism-climate-bill>

Greece

Score 5

Prominent environmental CSOs in Greece have minimal involvement in the early stages of policymaking on crucial environmental issues. Although numerous environmental CSOs exist, they often lack sufficient organizational strength and fail to form lasting alliances.

Criticism of government measures and the mobilization of environmental CSOs against successive governments' environmental policies and industrial investment plans have occurred but are not systematic. These actions rarely gain nationwide traction and are often confined to local settings (Velegrakis and Frezouli 2016).

For example, in the fall of 2021, an alliance of environmental CSOs mobilized against draft legislation that bureaucratized the registration process for voluntary associations in Greece. Around 300 CSOs, including environmental groups, co-signed a petition and participated in protests (Hellenic Platform for Development 2024).

In the summer of 2022, environmental CSOs critically assessed the government's "Voluntary National Review on the Implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development" before its submission to the UN. The CSOs also drafted their own review (Presidency of the Hellenic Republic 2022: 16). During this period, the Greek government engaged in systematic consultations with stakeholders, including environmental CSOs. The Ministry of Energy and Environment also held talks with 11 environmental CSOs that opposed the environmental policy measures under preparation.

As in other policy sectors, the relevant ministry is required to upload draft environmental legislation to its official website and solicit feedback from organizations and citizens before finalizing the bill for submission to parliament. Subsequently, there is a legislative mechanism for consulting environmental CSOs, with MPs consulting representatives of environmental CSOs and experts in environmental studies during parliamentary debates. The parliament has also established a "Special Permanent Committee on Environmental Protection" to monitor developments in Greece's natural environment.

Overall, consistent consultation between environmental CSOs and government officials is lacking, and there is no comprehensive policy to involve these CSOs in policymaking.

The weakness of environmental organizations in Greece is also reflected in the minimal political influence of Green parties, which consistently fall short of the 3% electoral threshold required by electoral law to elect MPs in national elections. The reasons for the electoral failure of Green parties in Greece (van Versendaal 2023) are similar to the challenges faced by environmental CSOs: a lack of a political culture that prioritizes environmental issues, antagonistic political trends that polarize the political party system and society, and persistent internal conflicts within the environmental movement.

Citation:

Greenpeace. 2022. "Press Release on the Meeting of Environmental CSOs with the Minister of Energy and Environment." <https://www.greenpeace.org/greece/issues/perivallon/47046/anakoinosi-perivallontikon-organoseon-synantisi-yphen/>

Presidency of the Hellenic Government. 2022. "Voluntary National Review on the Implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development." <https://hlpf.un.org/sites/default/files/vnrs/2022/VNR%202022%20Greece%20Report.pdf>

Van Versendaal, H. 2023. "Why Greece's Parties are Failing to Bloom." *He Kathimerini* July 30. <https://www.ekathimerini.com/in-depth/analysis/1216628/why-greeces-green-parties-are-failing-to-bloom/>

Velegrakis, G., and H. Frezouli. 2016. *Environmental Conflicts and Social Movements: 12 Greek Case Studies*. Athens: Harokopeion University.

The website of the "Special Permanent Committee on Environmental Protection" is <https://www.hellenicparliament.gr/Koinovouleftikes-Epitropes/CommitteeDetailView?CommitteeId=9f9d3ea9-40b0-4571-916e-8fa9fde448c7>

United Kingdom

Score 5

The answer to this question is essentially the same as for G4.2. Numerous NGOs, think tanks, and research institutes specializing in environmental analysis and policy contribute to policymaking, both through formal consultations and, often more effectively, through informal means. Formal consultations include those conducted by arm's-length bodies such as the Climate Change Committee, which issues calls for evidence and collaborates closely with researchers and advocacy bodies to conduct policy-relevant research.

In summary, while major CSOs understood as social partners do not play a prominent role in shaping environmental policy, other organizations significantly influence this area.

Citation:

<https://www.theccc.org.uk/publicationtype/0-report/08-supporting-research/>

France

Score 4

Some environmental CSOs are very visible in France, including Greenpeace, Réseau Action Climat and Les Amis de la Terre. Cécile Duflot, a former leading green politician and minister under François Hollande, became director-general of Oxfam

France in 2017, initiating a “green” turn for this association. Most of these associations rely on the propagation of their positions in the public, public events and the generation of expert reports to influence policymaking. Case-study research has shown that many of these organizations show signs of increasing professionalization and institutionalization (Berny 2018).

In recent years, new CSOs have emerged that are often more attractive to younger people, and are frequently much more radical than older counterparts. This includes the French chapter of Extinction Rebellion, Soulèvement de la Terre and Dernière Rénovation. They respond to the perceived inaction of public actors and the ineffectiveness of older organizations, and employ more radical methods of gaining public attention.

Though some cooperation between public actors and environmental associations takes place (Flahault, Robic 2007), governments have not regularly included them in policymaking. More radical actions – including the occupations and blockades carried out by newer organizations – have been met with a rather strict police reaction. Minister of the Interior Gérald Darmanin has regularly called them “eco-terrorists.” Ultimately, this has served to scale back the environmental program of the current government.

Citation:

Berny, Nathalie. 2018. “Institutionalisation and Distinctive Competences of Environmental NGOs: The Expansion of French Organisations.” *Environmental Politics* 27 (6): 1033-1056.

Flahault, Érika and Paulette Robic. 2007. “Les associations d’environnement partenaires privilégiés des pouvoirs publics : un paradoxe qui dynamise la gestion de l’environnement.” In *L’économie sociale entre formel et informel*, eds. Annie Dussuet and Jean-Marc Lauzanas. Rennes: Presses universitaires de Rennes, 183-198.

Italy

Score 4

In Italy, 81 CSOs are legally recognized in the environmental field, many of which receive public funding. These organizations are recognized as political actors and should be consulted at both national and regional levels when decisions on environmental issues are made. However, consultation at the national level is often primarily ritualistic, and their political positions are not systematically incorporated into government policies. This is evident from the strong disagreement expressed by the three most important CSOs – Legambiente, WWF Italia, and Greenpeace Italia – with the environmental policies of both the Draghi and Meloni governments. The capacity of environmental CSOs to influence policies and decisions is generally greater at the regional and local levels, though this depends significantly on the political alignment of the local government.

Citation:

for the positions critical of the last governments of the major environmentalist CSOs see:

<https://greenreport.it/>

<https://www.greenpeace.org/italy/>

<https://www.legambiente.it/>

Japan

Score 4 Environmental civil society organizations in Japan suffer from similar organizational limitations as in other areas. Most are locally based, have only limited outreach potential and seem preoccupied with promoting specific policies. Several advisory councils under the Cabinet Secretariat deal with environmental issues, such as the Expert Council for Promotion of Climate Change Countermeasures or the Expert Panel on Clean Energy Strategy. However, private-sector members of these bodies are almost exclusively scholars and CEOs of big corporations, not representatives of environmental NGOs. Civil society groups are also rarely represented in the advisory councils established by the Ministry of the Environment. NGOs are consulted by the ministerial Nature Restoration Council, though mainly on the regional level. Overall, the influence of civil society groups on governmental policy – for example, regarding global warming – has remained minimal.

The government's reluctance to extensively consult civil society organizations probably results from its intention to contain dissenting voices. Many NGOs specializing in environmental issues remain rather critical of and distant from the government, mainly due to the reactivation of nuclear power plants and slow progress on decarbonization. As a result, impartiality, transparency and the scope of the consultation process is disturbed.

Citation:

Kameyama, Yasuko. 2016. *Climate Change Policy in Japan: From the 1980s to 2015*. London: Routledge.

Ministry of the Environment. 2020. "Shizen Saisei Kyōgikai" [Nature Restoration Council]. https://www.env.go.jp/nature/saisei/tebiki_k/guide-saisei_2-1.html

Poland

Score 4 Public authorities are obliged to invite public participation in the initial stages of document formulation. These documents are made public, and the results are published. However, the degree to which social proposals are actually incorporated in the area of environmental protection remains extremely low.

Most organizations maintained a high level of independence under the PiS government. They criticized the government's inability to address Poland's environmental challenges, for instance in the areas of decarbonization, air quality or wild species protection. In 2020, Greenpeace called on Poland to discontinue policies inconsistent with achieving climate neutrality goals. These policies included draining peatlands, hindering the development of renewable energy sources, failing to develop a sustainable transportation policy, and inadequate building thermal modernization.

In the 2022 – 2023 period, CSOs continued to highlight the overexploitation of Polish forests, the lack of management and oversight leading to the Oder River environmental disaster, and the need to change legislation regarding wind energy. Consultations were conducted as part of the legal requirements set out by EU regulations. The local dialogue process with environmental organizations evaluating regional strategies was well developed.

Citation:

<https://www.fhi360.org/sites/default/files/media/documents/csosi-europe-eurasia-2022-report.pdf>

Slovakia

Score 4

Institutional mechanisms exist to ensure the active involvement of environmental CSOs from the initial stages of policymaking on issues central to this sector. Legislative rules and other regulations mandate the engagement of environmental CSOs in expert commissions, public hearings, and performance monitoring. In 2019, the Council for the Green Agreement was established to further this involvement. However, compared to the mechanisms in labor, capital, and welfare, the consultation process in the environmental sector has been more irregular, selective, and lacking in transparency during the period under review.

During this period, some environmental CSOs and their representatives received significant government support. For instance, Michal Šipoš, the chair of the parliamentary club of OĽANO (2020–2023), repeatedly declared that environmental protection was a major priority for the government. The OĽANO-nominated minister, Ján Budaj, was active and frequently consulted with major environmental CSOs. Many of these organizations, such as Clima Coalition, Via Iuris, and Friends of the Earth Slovakia, were involved in consultations on the Clima Law prepared by the Ministry in February 2023. However, the law was not approved by the government due to politicization before the early elections in September 2023.

The new Fico government, in power from autumn 2023, indicates at least partly antagonistic relations with environmental CSOs. These CSOs played a critical role in the massive and successful protests against the nomination of Rudolf Huliak to the position of minister of the environment (see, for example, Mäkká and Grečko, 2023).

A notable example of the politicized situation in environmental protection is the issue of the brown bear. Some relevant CSOs state that the number of brown bears in Slovakia is at the optimal level, between 1,000 and 1,500 bears. Other CSOs claim there are 3,000 to 4,000 brown bears in Slovakia, exceeding the country's real territorial capacity. The State Environmental Protection body of the Ministry of Environment ordered a study to estimate the real number of brown bears. Two Czech universities conducted the study to ensure its accuracy, determining the number to be between 1,012 and 1,275. However, some environmental experts claim that the study was manipulated because only 2,200 biological samples were collected and

analyzed, suggesting that with 4,000 samples, the results would be different (see *Správy RTVS*, 27 July 2023). This case study highlights the variability of opinions and the frequent manipulation of facts in the sector. Reflecting its positions, the OĽANO government did not issue any regular permits to shoot brown bears (only a few were shot based on specific licenses), while the Fico government plans to significantly reduce the number of brown bears.

Citation:

Mákká, S., and Grečko, T. 2023. "Kto je možný minister životného prostredia Rudolf Huliak." *Denník N*, October 12. <https://e.dennikn.sk/3622481/navadzal-na-obesenie-ochranara-kto-je-mozny-minister-zivotneho-prostredia-rudolf-huliak/>

Správy RTVS. 2023. "Vedci a zoológovia obhajovali výsledky štúdie o počte medved'ov. Narazila na kritiku lesníkov a poľovníkov." <https://spravy.rtvsk.sk/2023/07/vedci-a-zoologovia-obhajovali-vysledky-studie-o-pocte-medvedov-podla-analyzy-dna-narazila-na-kritiku-lesnikov-a-polovnikov/>

Hungary

Score 2

Environmental advocacy in Hungary, distinct from sectors such as capital, labor and social welfare, is marked by a high degree of internationalization. This is largely due to the global and regional scope of environmental issues and the strong competencies of the European Union in this area. Prominent global NGOs like WWF and Greenpeace, along with their Hungarian subbranches, dominate the scene. However, the Hungarian government has stigmatized foreign CSOs through the Lex NGO, labeling them as alien to the Hungarian nation. Consequently, these organizations operate in a challenging environment. They often face stigmatization, though not to the extent experienced by CSOs focused on human rights or feminism (Gerő et al. 2023). Unsurprisingly, their ability to influence lawmaking remains minimal.

There are some access points via EU funds, where oversight mechanisms such as consultation rights and regulatory impact assessments (RIAs), are part of the administrative process. The EU has called for changes in the participatory competence of CSOs and the strengthening of RIAs. In response, the Hungarian parliament made some adjustments to the relevant legislation. Nonetheless, the structural problem persists: a confrontation between foreign-funded CSOs and an illiberal government that places little emphasis on environmental issues.

Smaller NGOs and grassroots movements have resorted to local spaces, aiming to depoliticize their campaigns (Kovács and Eszter-Pataki 2021: 47). By distancing themselves from more prominent transnational social players and opposition parties, they have attempted to influence local affairs (Buzogány, Kerényi and Olt 2022), though with limited success. The situation is exacerbated by the government's lukewarm and skeptical stance on sustainability. This was reflected in a 2023 speech by Prime Minister Orbán, in which he declared, "Yes to green energy, no to green ideology" (Magyar Nemzet 2023). Differences between environmental NGOs and the government appear irreconcilable with regard to issues such as establishing new battery plants in the country.

Citation:

Buzogány, A., Kerényi, S., and Olt, G. 2022. "Back to the Grassroots? The Shrinking Space of Environmental Activism in Illiberal Hungary." *Environmental Politics* 31(7): 1267-1288.

Kovács, K., and Eszter-Pataki, G. 2021. "The Dismantling of Environmentalism in Hungary." *Politics and the Environment in Eastern Europe* 25-51.

Gerő, M., Fejős, A., Kerényi, S., and Szikra, D. 2023. "From Exclusion to Co-optation: Political Opportunity Structures and Civil Society Responses in De-democratising Hungary." *Politics and Governance* 11(1): 16-27.

Magyar Nemzet. 2023. "PM Orban: Yes to Green Energy, No to Green Ideology." 24 November. <https://magyarnemzet.hu/english/2023/11/pm-orban-yes-to-green-energy-no-to-green-ideology>

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