

**COLLECTIVE  
BARGAINING IN ITALY  
(2024)**

**ADAPT XI REPORT**

**Book-series *Per uno studio della contrattazione collettiva***

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### *(I) Scope of Research*

This Report on collective bargaining in Italy in 2024, produced using the contracts collected in the *FareContrattazione* database of the ADAPT School of Higher Education ([www.farecontrattazione.it](http://www.farecontrattazione.it)), focuses on the following areas:

- 1) an examination of the **44 renewals of national collective agreements by category/sector signed in 2024** by the trade unions affiliated with CGIL, CISL, and UIL (as well as the main representative bodies for managerial staff), and their respective employer's organisations in the private sector, covering a total of approximately 7.5 million workers;
- 2) an analysis of **collectively bargained wages in 2024**, also based on data provided by ISTAT;
- 3) an analysis of **427 company-level agreements signed in 2024** across various sectors, for a total of approximately 635,000 workers;
- 4) an analysis of **867 company-level agreements signed in 2023 and 2024**, with a focus on the **employee classification and grading**;
- 5) an in-depth study of contractual provisions concerning the **job retention period (the protected period during which a worker's job is safeguarded during illness) for workers with chronic illnesses and other vulnerabilities, based on a sample of 59 collective agreements renewed between April 2023 and May 2024**, following the most recent and stringent provisions contained in relevant case law;

- 6) a close examination of the regulation of part-time work in collective bargaining, through the analysis of **9 of the most widely applied CCNLs**.

## ***(II) Main Research Outcomes***

### **National Collective Bargaining**

In 2024, the sectoral federations of CGIL, CISL, and UIL renewed **44 national collective contracts in the private sector**, in line with the figures recorded over the previous two-year period. This confirms a **certain regularity in contract renewals**, in contrast to the previous decade, which saw significantly lower numbers.

Despite a turbulent political climate, collective bargaining in the private sector yielded notable outcomes, with instances of **“chain renewals” occurring within identical or closely related sectors**. Overall, **the sectors most affected by the renewals were retail and services, the food industry, and the social care sector**.

**With regard to pay**, the 2024 renewals in Italy took place in an economic context characterised by declining inflation and a **partial (though not full) recovery of workers’ purchasing power**.

Wage increases vary across sectors, with significant rises observed in the food industry, private security, and the tertiary sector – including distribution and services. Furthermore, **37% of the agreements include one-off payments to compensate for periods during which contracts had lapsed and were awaiting renewal**.

Overall, in 2024, **wage increases appear to be more structural than in previous years**, accompanied by a **strengthening of contractual welfare provisions** and a consolidation of pay rises.

With regard to the **coordination between the national level (sectoral collective agreements) and the decentralised level (territorial and company-level bargaining)**, 17% of the analysed renewals include measures aimed at promoting the expansion of decentralised bargaining – particularly through pay-related instruments such as the so-called **‘guaranteed pay item’**, to be awarded in the absence of second-level regulation of performance-related bonuses. Furthermore, 75% of the agreements contain clauses that define **the hierarchical relationship and the distribution of responsibilities between the sectoral collective agreement and decentralised bargaining**. These clauses generally involve **specific references to well-defined matters (fixed-term contracts being the most prominent)** and primarily **concern the organisation of work and the management of contractual provisions that are difficult to govern at national level – such as remote working or so-called ‘banked hours’**.

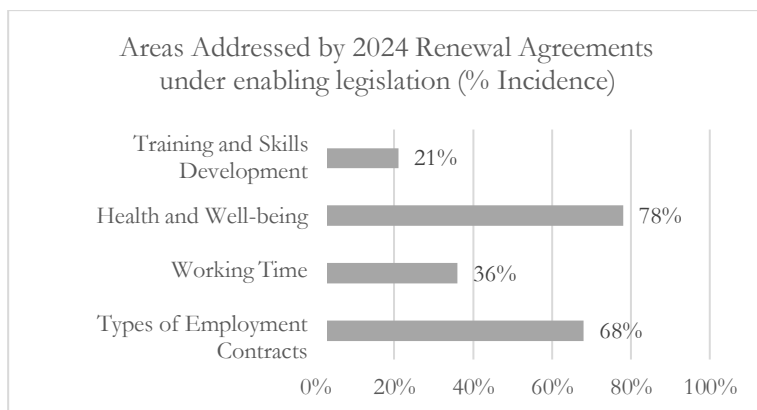
With regard to **matters delegated by legislation to collective bargaining**, the principal issues addressed in the 2024 renewals are as follows:

- **Fixed-term employment:** covered in 35% of the renewals analysed, with provisions relating to the definition of specific cases for the conclusion of fixed-term contracts exceeding 12 months, and the regulation of quota limits;
- **Apprenticeships:** addressed in 20% of the renewals, particularly through provisions on apprentice pay and training, often supported by interprofessional funds or bilateral bodies;
- **Working time:** addressed in 36% of the renewals, with measures concerning reductions in weekly working hours and the introduction of flexible models, such as variable multi-week schedules;
- **Health and well-being:** the focus of 78% of the renewals. Special attention was given to vulnerable workers, with the



strengthening of protective measures (e.g., job retention periods), and to work-life balance. Many agreements also expanded provisions on solidarity-based time-off banks;

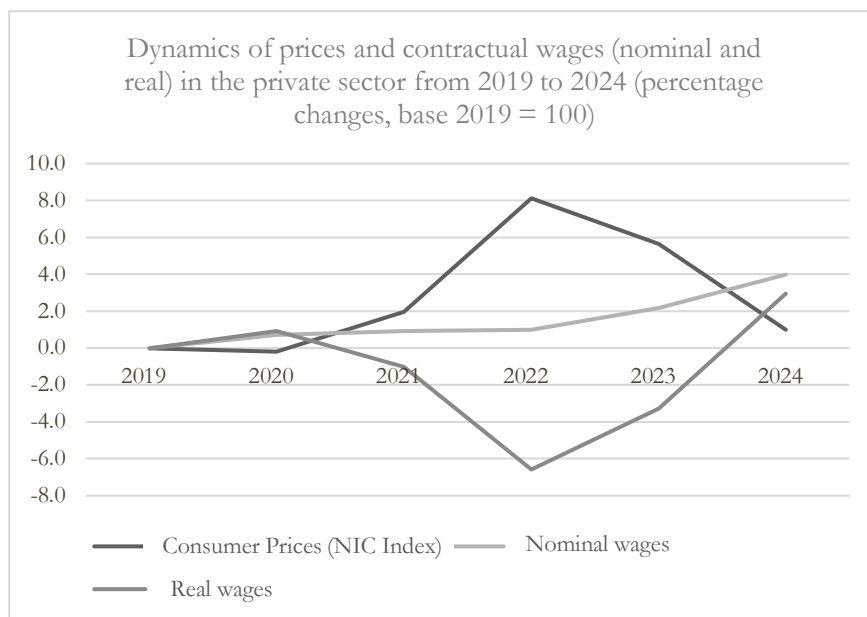
- **Training:** featured in 21% of the renewals, with an emphasis on professional growth, including the establishment of an annual minimum number of hours dedicated to training.



**Source:** elaborated by ADAPT based on data from the *FareContrattazione* database

Finally, **welfare** remains a central issue, with the strengthening of supplementary pension schemes and healthcare funds, responding to growing needs – particularly those linked to an ageing population.

In light of current inflationary trends, a focus has been on the **significant improvement in wage dynamics recorded in 2024, with collectively agreed wages in the private sector rising by 4%**, compared to a more moderate inflation rate (+1%), resulting in a real wage increase of 3% after years of losses. This positive trend was driven primarily by renewals in the industrial and banking sectors, while other areas within the tertiary sector experienced a slower recovery.



**Source:** elaborated by ADAPT based on ISTAT data

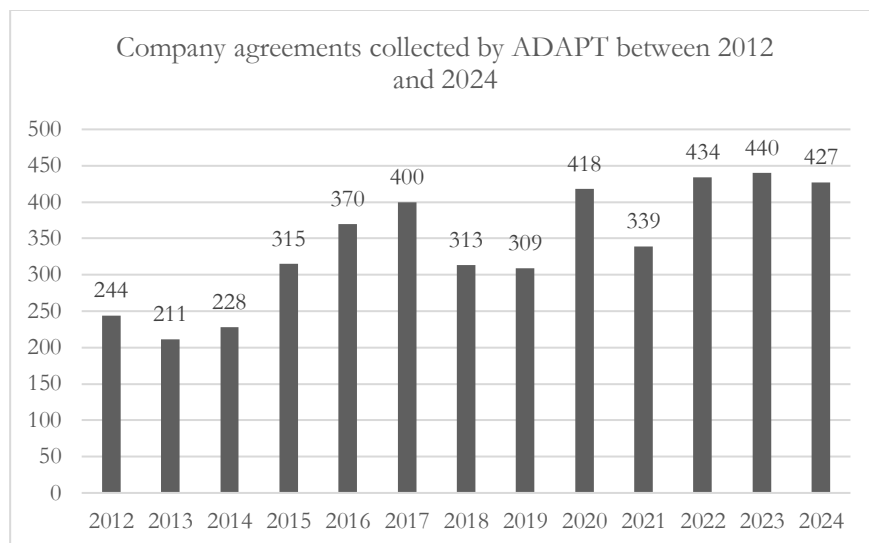
**The mechanism for adjusting minimum contractual wages to inflation**, included in certain collective agreements within the industrial sector, **has played a decisive role – alongside the intense cycle of renewals** that marked the service sector during the 2023-2024 period.

However, the gap accumulated between price growth and wage increases – which resulted in a loss of purchasing power of -7.1% over the period 2019–2024 – although narrowing, highlights the existence of **structural rigidities within the collective bargaining system that hinder the timely adjustment of wages**.

## Company-level Collective Bargaining

The report analyses **427 company-level agreements signed in 2024**, a figure consistent with the number of agreements collected

in previous years. These agreements **concern 222 companies employing a total of approximately 635,000 workers** – equivalent to 4.2% of employees in private sector enterprises, and 11% of the workforce that ISTAT estimates to be covered by decentralised bargaining (both territorial and company-level) in firms with at least 10 employees.



**Source:** elaborated by ADAPT based on data from the *FareContrattazione* database

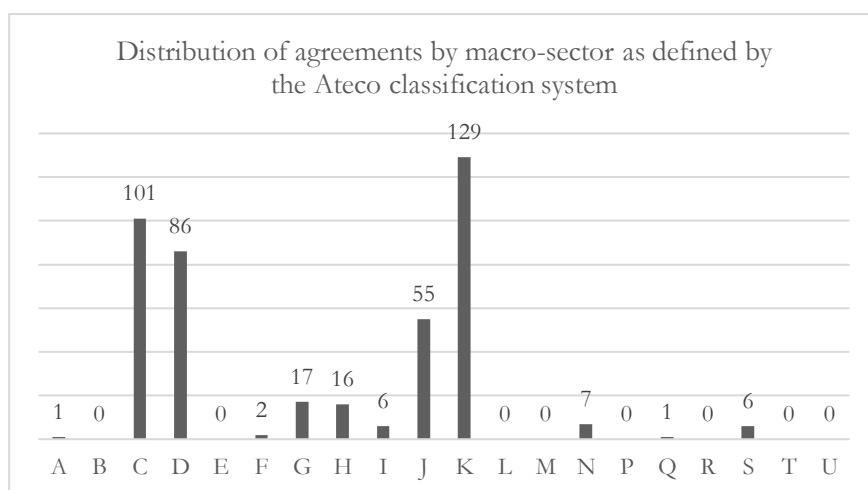
The analysis revealed a particularly heterogeneous level of development in company-level bargaining across the various sectors examined.

As shown in the graph below, approximately 30% of the agreements analysed pertain to economic or productive activities within the macro-sector “**Financial and Insurance Activities**” (Ateco code K<sup>1</sup>), with 88 agreements relating to companies in the

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<sup>1</sup> The Ateco code (which stands for “*Attività Economiche*” or “*Economic Activities*”) is a classification system used in Italy to categorize economic activities.

banking sector, 34 agreements concerning insurance companies, and 7 agreements signed by the Poste Italiane Group. In contrast, 101 agreements regulate productive activities within the macro-sector “**Manufacturing Activities**” (Ateco code C), which encompasses industrial activities of various kinds, with the most represented being those related to the metalworking industry. Similarly well-represented are the macro-sectors “**Electricity, Gas, and Air Conditioning Supply**” (Ateco code D) and “**Information and Communication Services**” (Ateco code J).



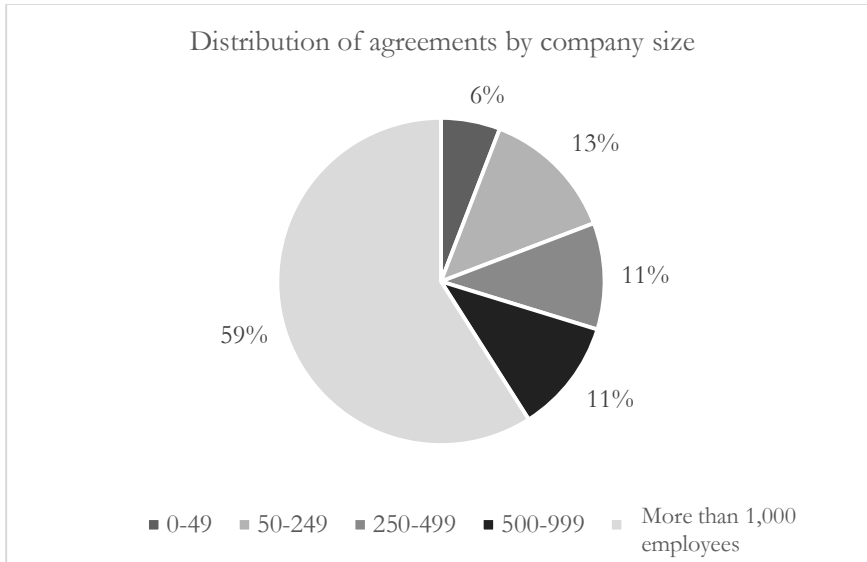
**Source:** elaborated by ADAPT based on data from the *FareContrattazione* database

In terms of company size, 81% of the agreements analysed relate to **large enterprises** (with more than 250 employees). Specifically, 59% of the agreements analysed were signed by companies

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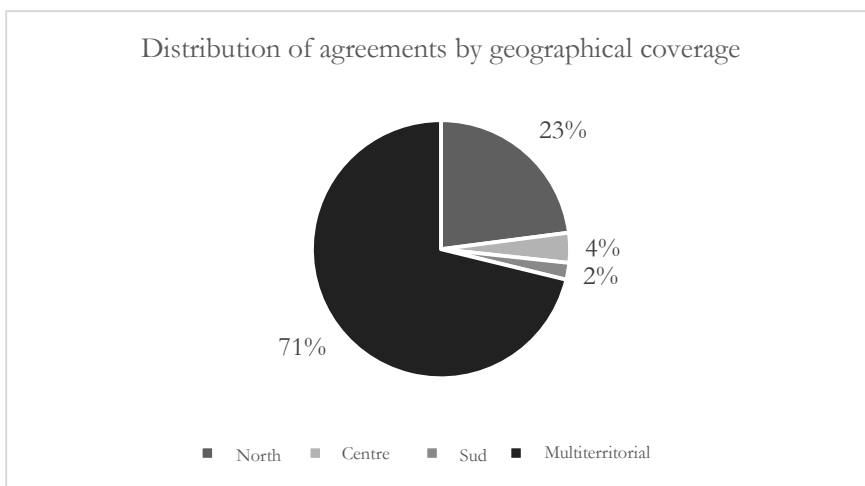
It is the Italian version of the European NACE code (Nomenclature of Economic Activities).

with more than 1,000 employees, 10.7% by companies with between 250 and 499 employees, and 10.9% by companies with a workforce of between 500 and 999 employees.



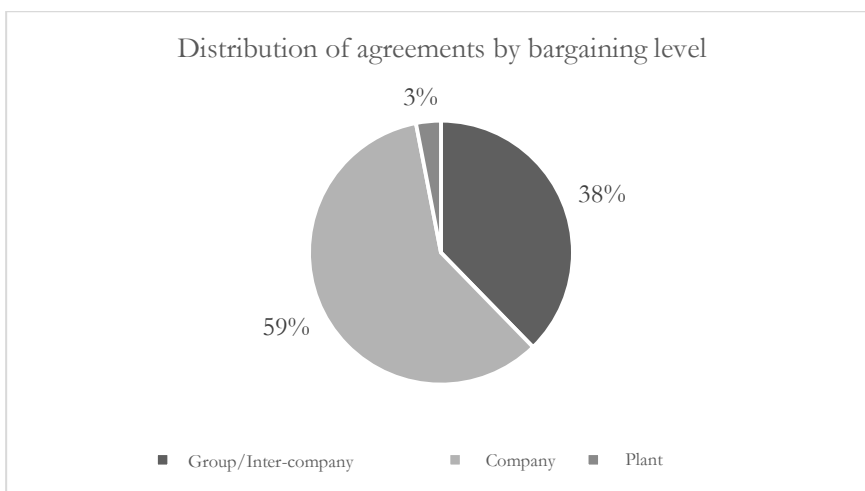
**Source:** elaborated by ADAPT based on data from the *FareContrattazione* database

With regard to the geographical distribution of the agreements analysed, 71% of them have **multi-territorial coverage**, meaning they are applicable to production sites located in multiple regions across different macro-areas of the country – North, Centre, South – or throughout the entire national territory. Among the agreements specific to a single area of the country, the majority apply to companies based in Northern Italy.



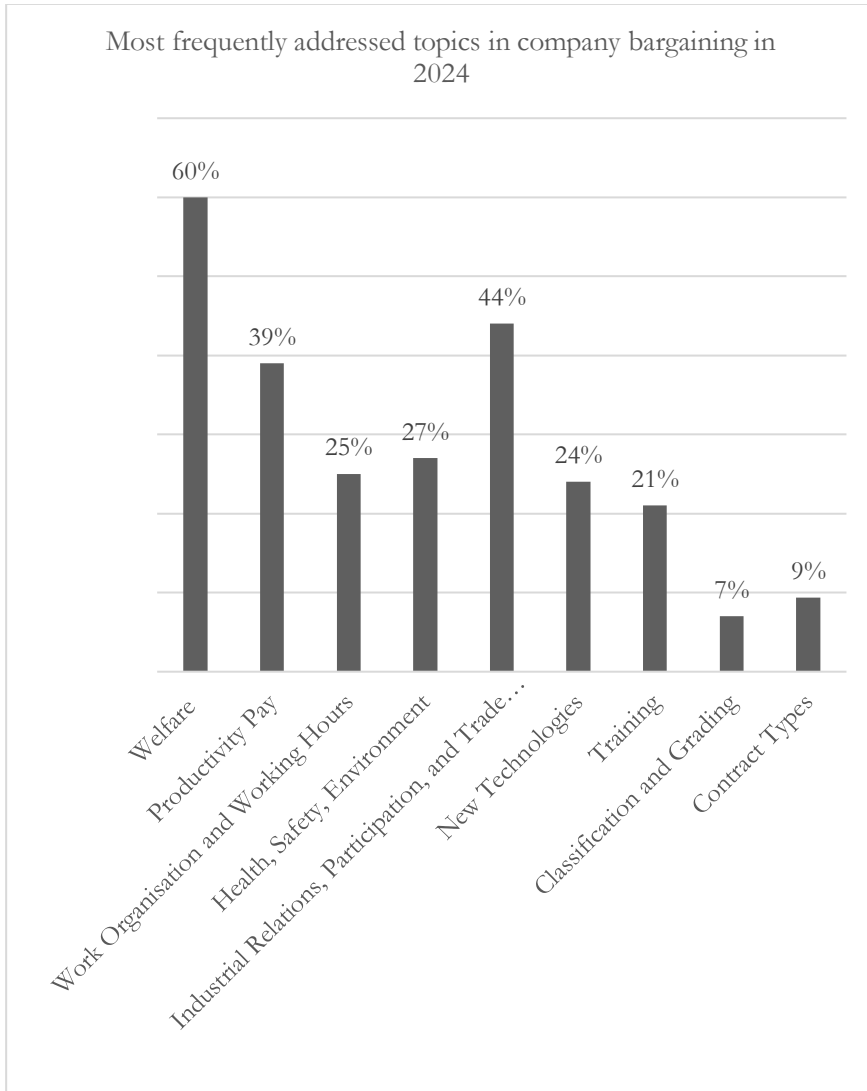
**Source:** elaborated by ADAPT based on data from the *FareContrattazione* database

Finally, it is noted that the agreements analysed were predominantly signed at the company level. In fact, agreements applicable at the group level or limited to one or more plants within the company or group in question represent a minority.



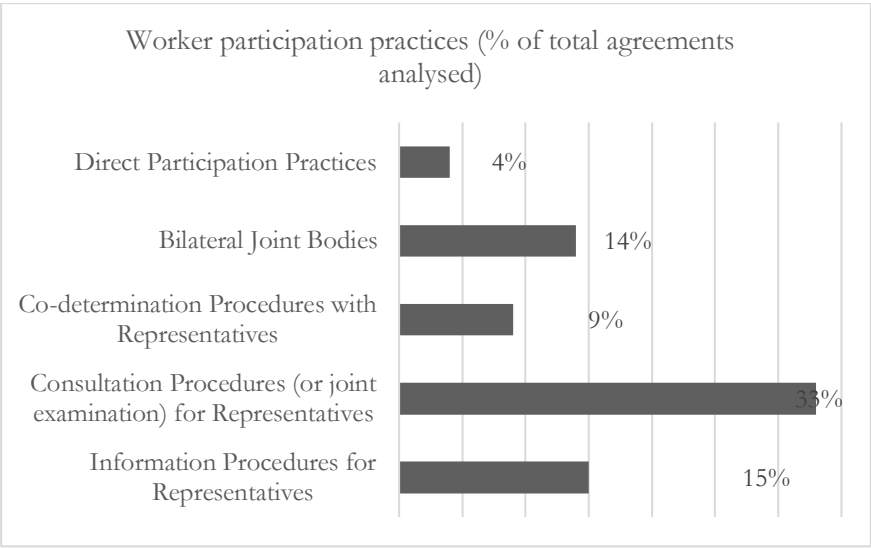
**Source:** elaborated by ADAPT based on data from the *FareContrattazione* database

With reference to the **issues negotiated**, below is a graphical representation of the frequency of the main topics across all the agreements analysed in this report.



**Source:** elaborated by ADAPT based on data from the *FareContrattazione* database

Regarding the theme of industrial relations and worker participation, approximately **44% of the company-level agreements analysed include worker participation in decision-making processes, with varying degrees of intensity** (information, consultation, co-determination) and across various decision-making areas. This generally takes the form of information and consultation procedures with trade union representatives, often within the framework of bilateral bodies, particularly on training and skills development, as well as health, safety, and the environment. Very few agreements enable genuine co-determination procedures between the parties outside the contractual context. Similarly, few of the agreements analysed regulate practices of direct worker participation, i.e., without the mediation of representatives.

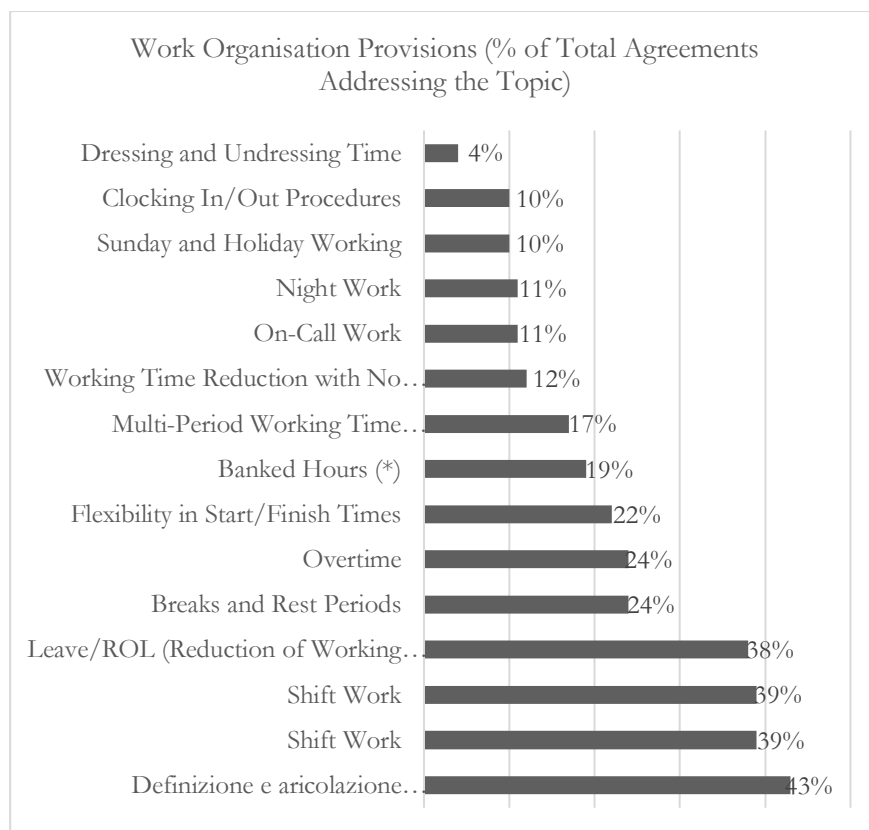


**Source:** elaborated by ADAPT based on data from the FareContrattazione database

Similar to the findings in previous reports, **the regulation of working hours is not a particularly prominent issue in the 2024 collective bargaining agreements**, being addressed in



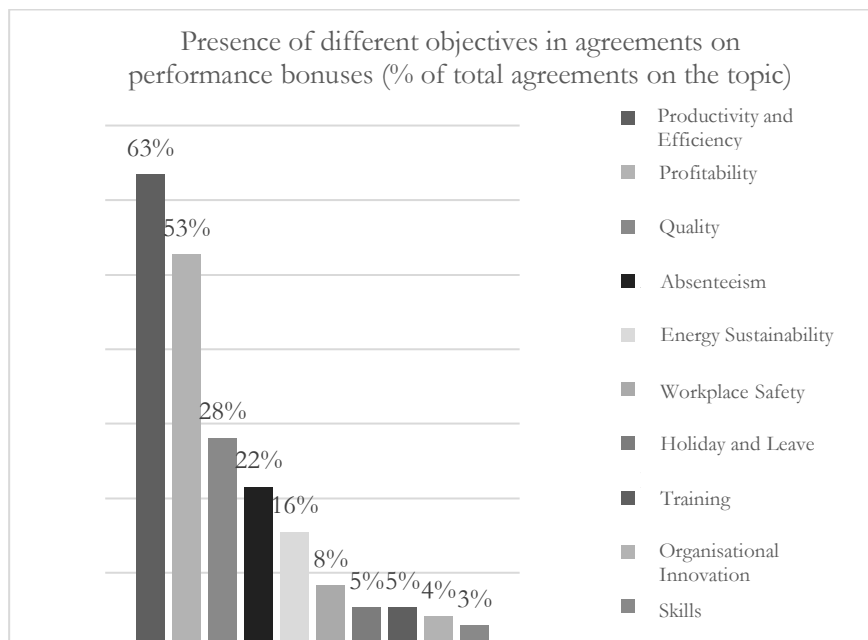
only 25% of the agreements. The percentage increases in sectors with higher levels of seasonal work or production peaks (such as the food industry and the tertiary sector, including distribution and services). Among the agreements that regulate this matter, it is noteworthy that the topics covered by the signatory parties range from the structuring of normal working hours (including flexibility in starting and finishing times) to overtime, holiday and night work, as well as holidays, breaks, and rest periods. **Agreements that regulate reduced working hours with the same pay are also common.**



**Source:** elaborated by ADAPT based on data from the *FareContrattazione* database

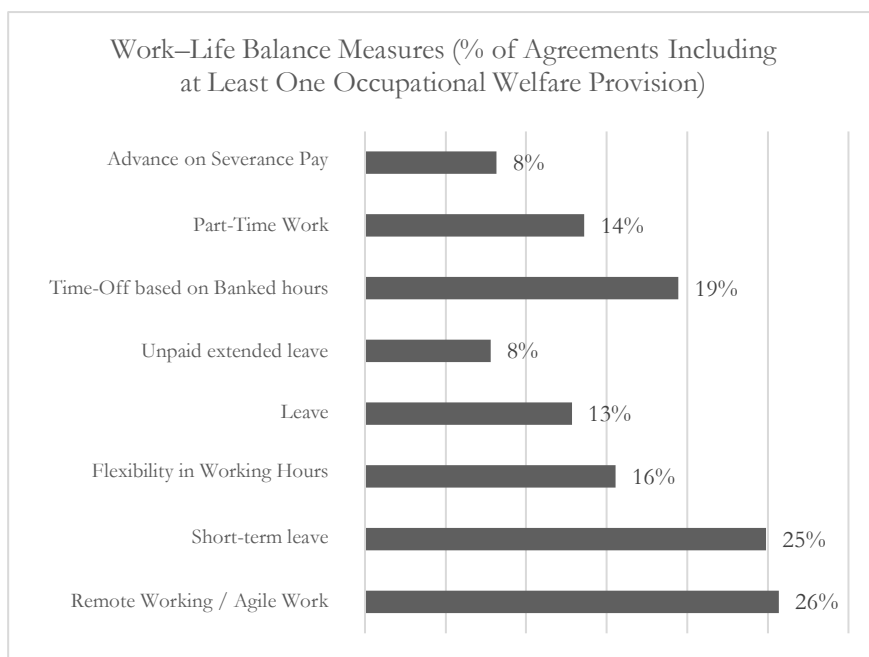
The regulation of **new technologies** is also a relatively under-addressed issue in company-level bargaining in 2024. It primarily focuses on provisions related to the remote monitoring of workers, through systems that vary in technological sophistication, and on **remote working**, though often in the form of an extension/renewal/integration of previous regulations rather than a comprehensive, detailed framework for its implementation.

Focusing on **wages**, it is evident that almost all agreements on remuneration address the issue from the perspective of **performance-based pay**. Among the most common objectives for performance-related pay are productivity and economic efficiency, which are the predominant criteria, alongside profitability and, to a lesser but still significant extent, quality. More than half of the agreements regarding performance-related pay include the option to **convert the bonus into welfare benefits**.



**Source:** elaborated by ADAPT based on data from the *FareContrattazione* database

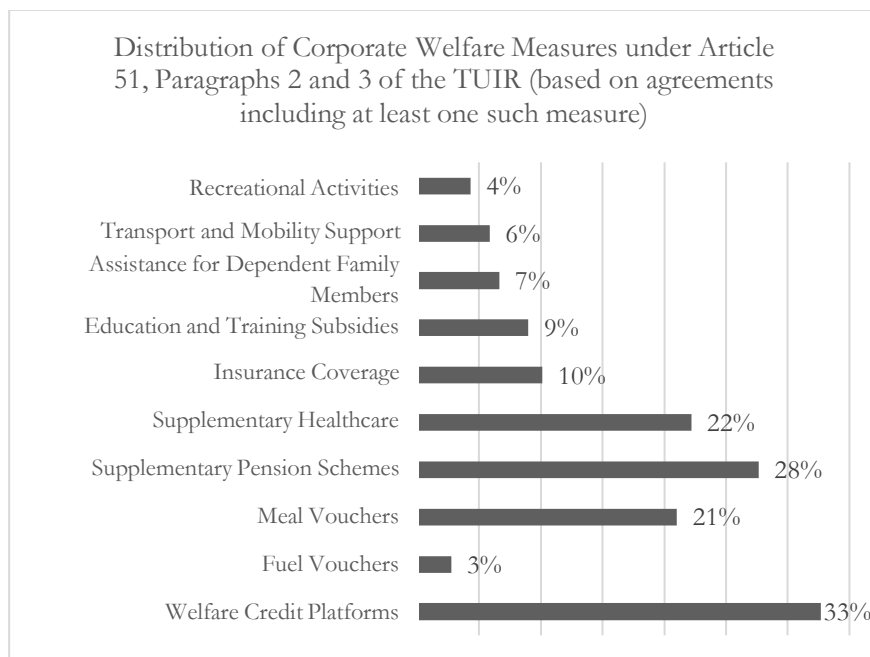
In line with what was observed in previous years, there is a significant spread of ‘**occupational welfare**’ (present in 60% of the agreements), particularly those measures aimed at promoting a better work-life balance, also with a view to safeguarding equal opportunities and diversity within the workforce. Among the most widespread measures are organisational and working hour flexibility solutions, leave (granted for a wide range of reasons), and the recognition of more favourable conditions regarding the use of leave granted by law and national collective labour agreements.



**Source:** elaborated by ADAPT based on data from the *FareContrattazione* database

Regarding **corporate welfare** measures found under Article 51, paragraphs 2 and 3, of the Consolidated Income Tax Law (TUIR), the most common within company-level bargaining are welfare-

related credits – accessible through a dedicated platform and usable to access various goods and services – supplementary pension schemes, supplementary healthcare, and meal vouchers.



**Source:** elaborated by ADAPT based on data from the *FareContrattazione* database

13% of the agreements contain at least one measure related to **inclusion and diversity**, which are mostly aimed at **ensuring gender equality**.

Approximately 25% of company-level agreements address **health and safety at work**, proposing various measures, including the use of training as a preventive tool, the establishment of days on which this topic is discussed, and linking compliance with safety regulations to performance-related bonuses. Similar solutions are

also implemented in the 2024 company-level bargaining with respect to **environmental sustainability**, although this is addressed in just under a hundred agreements.

The transformations in work and **skill mismatch** have also had an impact on the dynamics of industrial relations in Italy throughout 2024, reflecting in the content of collective agreements at the company level. Of the total agreements signed in 2024 considered in this report, 21% include at least one clause related to training and professional growth; 7% of the agreements feature clauses related to employee classification or grading; 5% of the agreements regulate both these areas. Specifically, regarding training, the provisions are varied, although the most common are those establishing or regulating the activities of joint bodies or cooperation with trade union representatives concerning training actions.

Finally, agreements that address contract types represent are limited (about 9%). These agreements regulate, though with varying degrees of complexity, aspects related to apprenticeships, fixed-term and part-time work, and self-employment.

## Thematic Focus Areas

With regard to **job classification and professional growth**, 867 company-level agreements signed in the 2023–2024 period were analysed. The study included monitoring of clauses related to **training, professional skills, job classification criteria, internal mobility, and performance-based incentives**. A taxonomy was developed to distinguish between ‘*structural provisions*’, which define the economic classification system and legal employment framework for workers, and ‘*directive provisions*’, that is, conduct guidelines for individual employers – for example, regarding the contractual classification of workers or professional mobility.

The findings reveal that **job classification and professional growth are addressed in only 14% of company-level agreements** (covering approximately 428,000 workers, with the food and metalworking industries being the most prominent sectors). The majority of measures relate to training (60% of cases) and career progression (26.6%). **Interventions targeting classification systems are marginal** (3%), while professional growth is often managed through joint bodies and financial incentives. These findings confirm the central role of national-level bargaining on these matters and highlight the value of the adopted taxonomy in enabling a more qualitative analysis, beyond a simple frequency count.

As for **disability**-related issues, the research examined how collective bargaining provisions have evolved in light of the recent case law of the Italian Supreme Court (Corte di Cassazione), specifically regarding the regulation of the job retention period for disabled workers. Judgment no. 9095/2023 established that applying a uniform job retention period to all workers, without considering specific conditions of disability, constitutes indirect discrimination. This ruling has prompted social partners to revise the relevant contractual provisions.

59 national collective agreements renewed between April 2023 and May 2024 were reviewed. Of these, **only 10 had introduced changes to comply with the new legal interpretation**. Against this backdrop, two models emerged: on the one hand, some agreements extended the list of recognised health conditions that qualify for a differentiated job retention period, including certain chronic and degenerative illnesses; on the other, some agreements made the right to an extended job retention period conditional upon the official recognition of disability, as defined by specific legislation – such as Law No. 104/1992 (collective agreements signed in the banking sector) or Law No. 68/1999 (collective agreements signed in the food industry and food cooperatives), or as interpreted more broadly by case law (collective agreements

signed in the leather industry). There is wide variation in the solutions adopted to avoid discrimination against disabled workers. Some agreements extend the job retention period, others introduce unpaid leave options, and others still exclude absences due to certain medical conditions from the calculation of this period. Overall, **the adopted measures are often limited to specific conditions**, thereby falling short of fully reflecting the scope of the Supreme Court's ruling.

In conclusion, the research highlights that while case law has urged reform of collective regulations concerning the job retention period, the changes observed thus far remain limited and inconsistent. **The question of what constitutes reasonable contractual solutions to ensure equality for workers with disabilities thus remains open.**

A third thematic focus concerned the way how collective bargaining has regulated **part-time employment contracts**, concentrating on key aspects such as flexible clauses, additional hours, and the conversion of full-time contracts to part-time. For this purpose, nine of the most widely applied national collective agreements, as identified by INPS data, were analysed.

The most significant finding from this contractual analysis is the **central role of collective bargaining in regulating part-time work**, particularly in relation to flexible clauses and additional hours. The analysis confirms the tendency of collective agreements either to incorporate statutory provisions through explicit reference or to transpose them in full detail. Differences among agreements were also observed regarding the notice period for schedule changes and the additional pay rates for extra hours. Regarding flexible clauses, most of the agreements continue to apply the distinction introduced by Legislative Decree No. 276/2003 – between “flexible” and “elastic” clauses – despite this no longer being part of the current legal framework. On the matters of *right of withdrawal* from flexible clauses and the *conversion* to part-time contracts, the analysis shows a tendency for collective bargaining

to align with Legislative Decree No. 81/2015, allowing workers to exercise such rights in cases of serious health conditions affecting themselves or family members, for childcare, or for study and training purposes. Finally, there is growing awareness within collective bargaining of the importance of part-time work for reasons related to parenthood and maternity.

### ***(III) Outline of Research***

As in previous years, the report is organised into three parts.

**Part I** is dedicated to **national collective bargaining** and is divided into two chapters. The first provides an **overall assessment of the renewals of collective agreements that took place during 2024**, with particular attention to economic provisions, the coordination between national and decentralised levels, and the interaction between legislation and collective bargaining. The second explores the **relationship between inflation trends and collectively agreed wages in 2024**, drawing on data provided by ISTAT.

**Part II** presents a systematic analysis of **company-level bargaining carried out in 2024**. The first section is devoted to **general trends in company-level bargaining** and highlights several best practices concerning worker participation and industrial relations, work organisation and working hours, new technologies, pay structures, occupational welfare, work-life balance and diversity protection, health, safety and the environment, job classification and grading, training, and contractual arrangements. The second section explores **two case studies**, examining their development, the dynamics of negotiation, and the outcomes achieved.

**Part III** is dedicated to specific **thematic focus** areas. The first addresses the issue of **job classification and grading** within company-level bargaining in 2023 and 2024. The second explores



provisions related to the **job retention period for workers with chronic illnesses**, as found in recent national collective agreements. The third offers an analysis of some of the most widely applied national collective agreements in Italy, aimed at examining the **regulation of part-time work**.