

50th IER Committee Meeting

Stockholm, 25th June 2026

NATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS

- **Collective agreements in the MET industries: recent outcomes**

Collective bargaining in Spain operates on multiple levels. In the metal sector, there is a nationwide collective agreement that sets the general framework for labor relations, while specific matters—such as wages and working hours—are negotiated at the provincial level. This leads to significant regional differences.

The national collective agreement expired in December 2023 but remains in force until a new one is signed. Negotiations for its renewal are currently underway.

We are having difficulties reaching an agreement with the trade unions and our organizations. On the one hand, the national structure is highly complex, as we have 50 provinces with 50 different negotiators, which makes it difficult to reach a solution that satisfies all parties. On the other hand, trade unions are seeking to modify the current negotiation system by introducing economic issues into the national collective agreement, such as sector-wide salaries or working time regulation. Moreover, the trade unions want to introduce other matters into the collective agreement that fall outside the competence of the national level, as they belong to lower-level bargaining units.

All of this is delaying the signing of the collective agreement.

However, we are making every effort to reach an agreement as soon as possible.

Regarding provincial collective agreements, 25 were negotiated before 2026 but have economic effects this year. A further 25 provincial agreements have been negotiated this year or are still pending signature. On average, the agreed wage increase stands at 2.73%, and the annual working time is approximately 1,747 hours.

- **Restructuring trends in MET industries with a particular focus on automotive sector**

In 2025, Spain's automotive industry produced 2.27 million vehicles, representing a 4.3% decline compared with 2024. This decrease was mainly driven by weak demand in

Europe and production adjustments linked to factory adaptation processes and the launch of new models.

Despite this, exports continued to be a key pillar of the sector, although they also declined. In 2025, 1.95 million vehicles were exported, 8.2% fewer than in the previous year, with a total value of €39.062 billion. Europe remained the destination for more than 92% of Spain's vehicle exports.

In terms of employment, the automotive sector ended 2025 with mixed results. Total employment reached 590,183 workers at year-end, up 4% year-on-year. However, the vehicle manufacturing subsector experienced a decline in activity, while the components industry continued to face pressure on margins, investment, and workforce levels. SERNAUTO had forecast a 1% reduction in employment in the components sector in 2025 compared with 2024.

Many companies are undergoing restructuring processes to adapt to this new environment — cutting costs, closing plants, relocating production, and implementing collective redundancy plans.

For example:

- Stellantis implemented new adjustment measures at its Vigo plant in 2025, opening negotiations to dismiss 90 employees and to introduce a temporary layoff scheme (ERTE) of up to 85 days during the year. The measure forms part of an industrial transition phase linked to the new production platform and the adaptation of manufacturing activities.
- Ford Almussafes also continued to advance its restructuring process in 2025, reorganising its engine plant to operate on a single shift from January onwards and maintaining a temporary layoff scheme (ERTE) affecting 996 employees, in addition to the collective redundancy plan (ERE) already agreed for 626 workers.
- TI Automotive completed a workforce adjustment process at its Tauste plant through a collective redundancy plan (ERE), ultimately reduced to 55 dismissals, accompanied by voluntary departure options, redeployment opportunities and support measures for the affected employees.

- **Collective bargaining as a tool to improve gender pay gap**

As is well known, our sector has traditionally been male-dominated. For this reason, in recent years many collective bargaining agreements have incorporated specific measures aimed at reducing the gender gap and promoting equal opportunities. These initiatives cover a wide range of areas, from pay transparency to measures designed to increase female representation in recruitment and career advancement processes.

Among the most noteworthy measures are the following:

- **Pay transparency and pay audits**

Several collective agreements reinforce the obligation to maintain pay registers and conduct pay audits in order to identify and correct any unjustified pay differences between women and men. They also provide for the disclosure of gender-disaggregated pay data to employee representatives. In some sectors, equality committees have been established with the specific purpose of analysing and proposing actions to eliminate the gender pay gap.

- **Positive action measures in recruitment and promotion**

Many collective agreements include positive action measures favouring the underrepresented gender where candidates have equivalent qualifications, merit and ability. Some agreements expressly provide that, where suitability is equal, promotions should be awarded by applying positive discrimination measures in favour of women.

Other initiatives focus on recruitment procedures, promoting the use of anonymised CVs that remove personal and gender-related information, or ensuring that a minimum percentage of shortlisted candidates belong to the underrepresented gender.

- **Gender-neutral job classification systems**

Some agreements require that professional groups and job classification criteria be reviewed from a gender perspective. To this end, analyses are carried out to identify potential links between job roles, classification systems and gender bias, ensuring that the classification structure itself does not give rise to indirect discrimination.

- **Training and awareness-raising on equality**

Training and awareness measures are also increasingly common. In particular, specific training programmes are provided for human resources professionals, managers and middle management, focusing on the identification of unconscious bias in recruitment, promotion and people management processes, thereby contributing to a more inclusive workplace culture.

- **Emerging practices in collective bargaining (Adapting to structural drivers)**

- **Sustainability, Digitalisation and Technological Change**

In recent years, some collective bargaining agreements have incorporated provisions addressing sustainability, environmental protection and the impact of technological transformation on employment. These measures seek to ensure that companies remain competitive while supporting workforce adaptation to new economic, environmental and technological challenges.

- **Ecological transition and environmental sustainability**

Some agreements recognise environmental sustainability as a strategic objective and promote a just ecological transition. Measures include commitments to environmental compliance, support for the principles of the circular economy, and initiatives aimed at facilitating workers' adaptation to the changes arising from climate and sustainability policies. In certain cases, joint bodies or committees have been established to monitor issues such as sustainable mobility, environmental management and the employment impact of the green transition.

- **Digitalisation and new technologies**

A growing number of agreements address the effects of digitalisation on work organisation and employment. Common provisions include information and consultation rights regarding technological transformation projects, the creation of monitoring bodies to assess the impact of digitalisation on jobs and skills requirements, and measures to enhance workers' digital competencies through training. Some agreements also contain provisions relating to the use of artificial intelligence and algorithmic management systems, emphasising the protection of employees' rights.

- **Environmental monitoring and management**

Certain agreements establish mechanisms to encourage environmentally responsible business practices. These may include environmental audits, joint monitoring committees and commitments to reduce waste, improve resource efficiency and ensure compliance with environmental regulations. Environmental considerations are increasingly linked to occupational health and safety policies and to broader corporate sustainability objectives.

- **Digital disconnection and technological wellbeing**

The right to digital disconnection is now widely recognised in collective bargaining. These provisions seek to guarantee employees' rest periods and work-life balance by limiting work-related communications outside working hours and preventing the risks associated with permanent connectivity. Some agreements also include safeguards to ensure that employees are not required to use their personal devices for work-related purposes.