



## EMPLOYEE INVOLVEMENT IN DECISION-MAKING

*Confederación Sindical Independiente (FETICO)*

# National Report - Spain

Employee involvement in decision-making in times of crisis  
as a key to the effective organization of the company's work

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30-11-2021



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## Introduction

This document responds to the **National Report for the case of Spain**, a deliverable envisioned for the Project “Employee involvement in decision-making in times of crisis as a key to the effective organization of the company's work” funded by the call for proposals “Information, consultation, and participation of representatives of undertakings” of DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion.

The **document is structured** as such:

- Firstly, the section [Country Context](#) briefly describes the legal framework adopted in Spain during the pandemic and the Covid-19 related information during the period.
- Secondly, the section [Employee's Survey Results](#) summarises and analysis the responses from 100 employees with the objective to understand their involvement during the pandemic in terms of information, consultation and participation on their companies' restructuration of work.
- Thirdly, the section [Employers' Interview Results](#) includes the summary and analysis of five interviews carried out with the employers or Human Resources staff, who had to perform the restructuration and adaptation of their companies following the pandemic.
- And finally, the section [Conclusions and Recommendations](#) summarises the conclusions from the research, and draws out the recommendations for improvement that may work in Spain in case of a hypothetical other similar crisis.

From the **methodology perspective**, the research took place between August and October 2021. The **surveys** were filled by the employees between August and September. The data was later categorised and analysed. Most of the information of the analysis is retrieved by using dynamic tables where the information is categorised on age and gender and the replies per each question.

As regards the **interviews**, the guidelines approved were used. The interviews were carried on the phone to the representatives of five companies. The interviews were recorded and transcribed. They were then coded manually and analysed. The process of interviewing and analysis was carried out during the months of September and October.

The whole report was finalised on 31 October 2021.

## Country Context

As a cause of the Covid19 pandemic, the Spanish authorities put in place legal measures with the objective to enable a social shield for the workers and businesses.

Firstly, the Royal Decree-Law 8/2020 of 17 March<sup>1</sup> on urgent extraordinary measures to face the economic and social impact of COVID-19 determined **the reduction of working hours** for economic, technical, organizational and productive reasons whilst maintained intact the rights of consultation and negotiation. The deadlines for consultation were shortened to 7 days. All the suspensions of contracts and reductions in working that were caused by COVID-19 were considered as **a result of force majeure**, to be firstly communicated to the workers and to the workers' representatives. The union and employer representation activities were allowed to be carried out whilst the mobility restrictions<sup>2</sup>. There was an active involvement of social partners in policymaking during the COVID-19 outbreak.

The **Temporary Employment Regulation File (ERTE, for its abbreviation in Spanish)** is a temporary suspension of contracts regulated by article 47 of the Workers' Statute that is put in place during the pandemic and considered a force majeure, such as verified by the labour authority. No consultation period is necessary. The employees affected by an ERTE return to work once the stipulated time period expires. The employers must continue to pay 100% of the Social Security contributions, but they do not pay compensation to the employees.

As on end of August 2021<sup>3</sup>, 272.190 people were **protected by the ERTE in Spain**, being this the lowest level since the start of the pandemic. The ERTEs designed to support companies and protect employment, managed to protect more than 3.6 million workers at their highest point in 2020.

## Overview on the Employee Surveys

The **questions of the online employees' survey** were held the **native language (Spanish)**. A minimum number of **50 answers per country was expected**, and in this case the number was around 100<sup>4</sup>. The interviews were finalised by end of September 2021. The survey aimed at gathering information from the employees of the trade and services sector on **their involvement in decision making during the**

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<sup>1</sup> Royal Decree-Law 8/2020 of 17 March <https://www.boe.es/buscar/act.php?id=BOE-A-2020-3824> Page last accessed on 19 October 2021

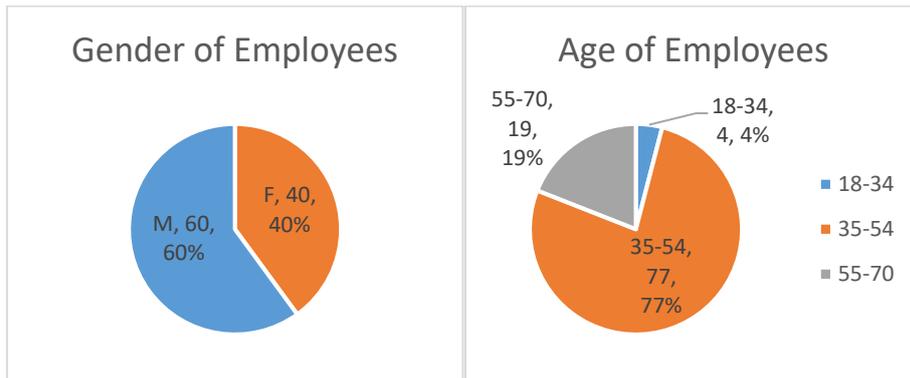
<sup>2</sup> Ministerial Order SND/ 307/2020 of 30 March <https://www.boe.es/buscar/pdf/2020/BOE-A-2020-4196-consolidado.pdf> Page last accessed on 19 October 2021

<sup>3</sup> Info from this web: <https://www.lamoncloa.gob.es/serviciosdeprensa/notasprensa/inclusion/Paginas/2021/020921-erte.aspx> Page last accessed on 19 October 2021

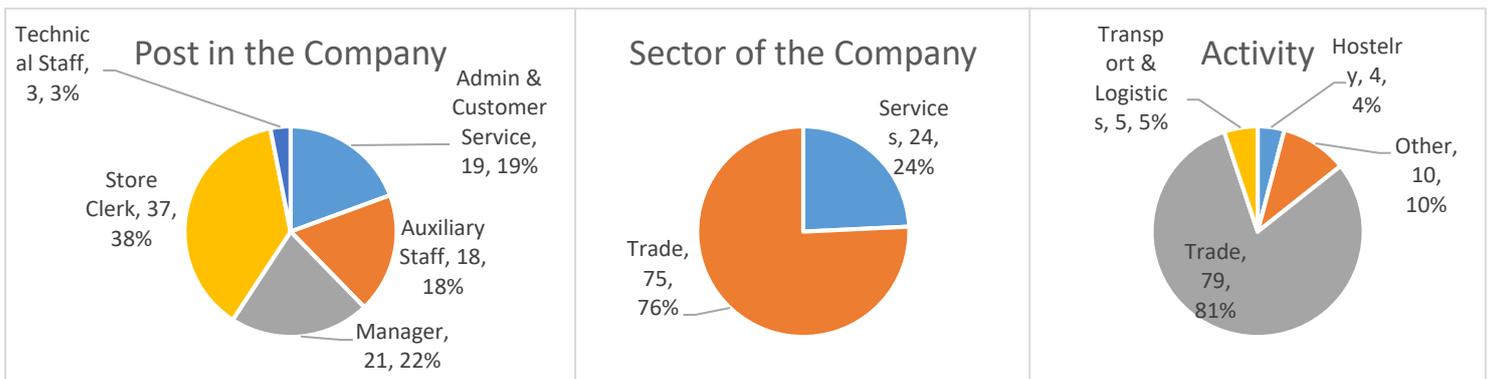
<sup>4</sup> We use the term "around" as we have encountered some blank answers in several occasions. The oscillation is between 97 and 102 answers.

**covid-19 pandemic** since its start till now. The retrieved information is anonymous and it is treated with confidentiality for the purposes of the project only.

A total number of 100 answers were received out of which their **gender** is: 60 males and 40. Their **age** covers from 18 years old to 70 years old, being the first category of 18-34 years old only 4% of the respondents, the category of 35-54 years old the overall majority by 77%, and the 55-70 years old the minority with 19% of the respondents.



A variety of **posts** in the company is covered being the store clerks 38%, the managers 22%, the administrative and customer service 19%, the auxiliary staff 18%, and the technical staff 3% of the respondents. As regards the **activity of the company**, this is diverse, being the majority trade 81%, transport and logistics 5%, hostelry 4% and other 10%. Two **sectors of activity** are covered, trade 76% and services 24% of the respondents.



After the description of the respondents, here below a brief summary will be given on the **20 answers of the survey**. The detailed information will be given with dynamic tables with the complete information.

A vast majority of the respondents agree that they were **informed very well** (85<sup>5</sup> of them scored 6-10 and only 15 scored 0-5) by their employers regarding the

<sup>5</sup> The numbers coincide with the % as there have been 100 respondents, with very rare cases of 1 or 2 blank answers occasionally.

changes in the company during the pandemic. The trend is similar in both female, male and the three age categories. (See table 1)

1. To what extent you were informed (directly or through your trade unions) about changes in your company during the pandemic? (0=Nothing, 10=Very much)

	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Total
<b>F</b>	2		1		2	1	2		3	12	17	40
18-34									1	1		2
35-54	2		1		2	2	1	10	16			34
55-70						1		1	1	1		4
<b>M</b>	1	1	1	1	2	4	1	4	8	12	25	60
18-34						1					1	2
35-54	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	3	3	8	22	43
55-70					1	2		1	5	4	2	15
<b>Total</b>	3	1	1	2	2	6	2	6	11	24	42	100

As regards to the **consultation** this trend changes slightly, but still remains positive (74 of them scored 6-10 and 26 scored 0-5) with no triggers in either gender or age. (See table 2)

2. To what extent you were consulted (directly or through your trade unions) about changes in your company during the pandemic? (0=Nothing, 10=Very much)

	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Total
<b>F</b>	5	1	2			2	2	5	7	9	7	40
18-34		1								1		2
35-54	4	1	1			2	2	3	5	9	7	34
55-70			1					2	1			4
<b>M</b>	5	1	4	2	4	6	4	6	10	18		60
18-34				1		1						2
35-54	3	1		2	2	3	3	3	4	4	18	43
55-70	2		1	1	2	1	2	2	6			15
<b>Total</b>	10	2	2	4	2	6	8	9	13	19	25	100

The third stage of employer-employee relations is that of **participation in decision making**. Here the trend keeps balancing on the positive side, but with less recurrence than in the information and consultation. 62 respondents have scored 6-10 and 37 have scored 0-5 with no changes in either gender or age. It is remarkable to see more 0 votes, i.e.: no participation whatsoever whilst the employer introduced the changes. (See table 3)

3. To what extent did you participate in the decision making (directly or through your trade unions) when changes were introduced in your company during the pandemic? (0=Nothing, 10=Very much)

	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Blank	Total	
<b>F</b>	5	1	2	3			2	6	3	6	4	7	1	40
18-34							1			1				2
35-54	4		2	3			1	4	3	5	4	7	1	34
55-70	1	1						2						4
<b>M</b>	9		2	4	2	7	3	3	10	8	12			60
18-34	1										1			2
35-54	6		1	4	1	5	3	1	6	4	12			43
55-70	2		1		1	2		2	4	3				15
<b>Total</b>	14	1	4	7	2	9	9	6	16	12	19	1		100

As regards the **atmosphere** where the changes were introduced this is seen as frustrating for 35 of the respondents, and easy-going for 64 of them with no changes in either gender or age. (See table 4)

4. How would you consider the atmosphere in which these changes were introduced? (0=Frustrating, 10=Easygoing)

	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Blank	Total
<b>F</b>	3	1	2	1	2	3	8	6	5	3	6		40
18-34		1					1						2
35-54	3		2	1	2	2	6	5	4	3	6		34
55-70							2	1	1				4
<b>M</b>	3	3	3	1	8	5	4	10	13	2	7	1	60
18-34			1		1								2
35-54	2	2	2		6	5	2	8	7	2	6	1	43
55-70	1	1		1	1		2	2	6		1		15
<b>Total</b>	6	4	5	2	10	8	12	16	18	5	13	1	100

When asked about how they consider the **organisational changes** of their company, a vast majority answers that these were done in harmony with their interests (70 score 6-10 and only 28 score 0-5) with some reticence from men when compared to women and of the age range of 35-54.

5. How would you consider that the organisational changes were made in your company? (0=Topdown, 10=In harmony with my interests)

	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Blank	Total
<b>F</b>	2	1	1	3	6	4	4	8	6	4		1	40
18-34					1	1							2
35-54	2	1	1	2	3	3	3	8	6	4		1	34
55-70					2	1	1						4
<b>M</b>	2	2	3	4	1	3	10	8	11	9	6	1	60
18-34	1					1							2
35-54	1	2	2	3	1	1	9	5	6	8	5		43
55-70			1	1	1	1	3	5	1	1		1	15
<b>Total</b>	4	3	4	4	4	9	14	12	19	15	10	2	100

As regards to their **own attitude towards the changes**, a decided majority considers it active (87 respondents score 6-10, and only 12 score 0-5) with no variation of gender or age. (See table 6)

6. How would you rank your attitude towards the organisational changes that were introduced in your company during the pandemics? (0=Passive, 10=Active)

	0	2	3	5	6	7	8	9	10	Blank	Total
<b>F</b>	1		5	1	4	10	8	11			40
18-34							1	1			2
35-54	1			5	4	7	6	11			34
55-70					1	2	1				4
<b>M</b>	2	1	2	1	4	5	17	13	14	1	60
18-34	1							1			2
35-54			2	1	4	3	10	10	12	1	43
55-70	1	1				2	7	3	1		15
<b>Total</b>	3	1	2	6	5	9	27	21	25	1	100

Most of the employees have been **aware of their legal rights** for information and consultation during the pandemic (88 answering positively and 12 answering

negatively). Women seem to be more aware of these rights in comparison to men. (See table 7)

7.Are you aware of the legal rights you have for information and consultation with the company, including in times of crisis such as the pandemic?				
		No	Sí	Total
<b>F</b>		6	34	40
18-34			2	2
35-54		6	28	34
55-70			4	4
<b>M</b>		6	54	60
18-34			2	2
35-54		6	37	43
55-70			15	15
<b>Total</b>		12	88	100

Nearly half of the respondents was not offered the possibility to choose on the organisational changes introduced in their company during the pandemic. (46 score 0-5 and 54 score 6-10) No variation is noticed in gender or age. (See table 8)

8.To what extent you were offered choice or alternatives regarding the organisational changes introduced in your company during the pandemics? (0=No possibility, 10=Yes possibility to choose)												
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Total
<b>F</b>	4	1	4	5	1	3	3	5	3	8	3	40
18-34						1					1	2
35-54	4	4	4	1	1	2	5	3	8	2		34
55-70		1		1	1	1						4
<b>M</b>	9	2	4	8	3	2	4	5	14	4	5	60
18-34		1	1									2
35-54	5	1	3	7	3	2	3	3	9	2	5	43
55-70	3	1		1		1	2	5	2			15
<b>Total</b>	13	3	8	13	4	5	7	10	17	12	8	100

A majority of respondents were never or little asked to present ideas regarding organisational changes in their company (54 scoring 0-5 and 44 scoring 6-10) with no variation in gender or age. (See table 9)

9.To what extent you were asked to present ideas and give opinions on the organisational challenges introduced in your company during the pandemics? (0=Never, 10=A lot)													
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Blank	Total
<b>F</b>	6	3	4	3	3	6	4		6	2	2	1	40
18-34		1				1							2
35-54	6	1	3	3	2	4	4		6	2	2	1	34
55-70		1	1	1	1	1							4
<b>M</b>	10	3	5	5	1	6	5	8	8	4	5		60
18-34		1				1							2
35-54	6	3	4	4	1	4	5	5	4	3	4		43
55-70	3	1	1		1	1	3	4	1	1			15
<b>Total</b>	16	6	9	8	4	12	9	8	14	6	7	1	100

Gender has not affected the respondents in the working conditions offered as a consequence of the organisational changes (74 scoring 0-5 and 22 scoring 6-10)

with women being slightly more reticent when answering negatively. (See table 10)

10. To what extent would you say that your gender has affected you in the working conditions that you were offered as a consequence of the organisational changes introduced in your company during the pandemics? (0=Nothing; 10=A lot)												
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Total
<b>F</b>	17	4	3	2	1	6	1	1	2	2	1	40
18-34						2						2
35-54	15	4	3	2	1	3	1	1	2	1	1	34
55-70	2					1			1			4
<b>M</b>	31	7	3	2	2	2	4	2	3	5	1	60
18-34	1		1									2
35-54	23	5	1	1	1	4	2	1	4	1		43
55-70	7	2	1	1	1			2	1			15
<b>Total</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>100</b>

Nearly half of the employees answer that they had the **chance to work from home** (52 of them did not have the opportunity, and 47 of them yes) with women having missed the chance of telework more than men. (See table 11) A vast majority of who **worked from home found it easy** (38 scoring 6-10 and 11 scoring 0-5) with no variation in gender or age. (See table 12)

11. Did you have the chance to work from home?					12. If yes, to what extent you were able to organise your work at home on such same conditions as in your regular workplace? (0=It was hard, 10=It was easy)													
	No	Yes	Blank	Total		0	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Blank	Total	
<b>F</b>	22	17	1	40	<b>F</b>	2			2	3	1			6	2		24	40
18-34	1	1		2	18-34					1							1	2
35-54	19	14	1	34	35-54	1			1	2	1			6	2		21	34
55-70	2	2		4	55-70	1			1								2	4
<b>M</b>	30	30		60	<b>M</b>	3	1	1	1	1	5	3	7	6	5		27	60
18-34	1	1		2	18-34	1											1	2
35-54	24	19		43	35-54	1	1	1	1	4	1	5	2	3			24	43
55-70	5	10		15	55-70	1	1		1	2	2	4	1				3	15
<b>Total</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>100</b>	

A majority of the respondents indicate that **they received support to adapt to the new working conditions** (69 scored 6-10 and 29 scored 0-5) with no variation on gender or age. (See table 13).

13. To what extent would you say that you received support from your company to adapt to the new working conditions caused by the pandemics? (0=No support, 10=I was supported)													
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Blank	Total
<b>F</b>	4			2	3	3	4	8	8	8			40
18-34						1	1						2
35-54	4			1	2	2	3	7	7	8			34
55-70				1	1			1	1				4
<b>M</b>	6	3	1	3		7	1	8	11	9	9	2	60
18-34	1							1					2
35-54	3	3	1	3		4	1	5	8	5	8	2	43
55-70	2					3	2	3	4	1			15
<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>100</b>

When asked about the **health safety** after having introduced the organisational changes caused by the pandemic, a vast majority have responded positively – feeling safe (74 scored 6-10 and 25 scored 0-5) with no variation on age or gender. (See table 14)

14. How safe did you feel in terms of health in the company after having introduced the organisational changes caused by the pandemics? (0=Not at all, 10=A lot)														
		0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Blank	Total
<b>F</b>		1	3	1	2	3	4	6	3	6	11			40
	18-34							1	1					2
	35-54	1	2	1	2	2	3	4	2	6	11			34
	55-70		1			1		1	1					4
<b>M</b>		3	2	2	3	3	2	5	8	11	9	11	1	60
	18-34					1		1						2
	35-54	2	2	2	2	2	3	7	6	6	10		1	43
	55-70	1		1	2		1	1	5	3	1			15
<b>Total</b>		3	3	5	4	5	5	9	14	14	15	22	1	100

A set of questions were asked about a **hypothetical case of a future crisis/pandemic** how important it is for the employees to receive from the company information, consultation, to participate in decision making and to have a positive attitude. By all means, receiving **information** seems to be the most important aspect for the respondents (98 scored 7-10 - table 15) followed by **consultation** (91 scored 6-10 – table 16) and **participation in decision making** (84 scored 6-10 – table 17). Again a vast majority would be involved with a **proactive attitude** in case of a hypothetical crisis. (95 scored 6-10 – table 18).

15. In the hypothetical case of another crisis similar to the pandemics how important is for you to receive from the company: information, consultation, participation in the decision making, your attitude in participating? - Information (0=Not at all, 10=A lot)										16. In the hypothetical case of another crisis similar to the pandemics how important is for you to receive from the company: information, consultation, participation in the decision making, your attitude in participating? - Consultation (0=Not at all, 10=A lot)										
		0	7	8	9	10	Total			0	2	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Blank	Total
<b>F</b>		1	8	11	20		40	<b>F</b>		1	1	2	2	7	10	17				40
	18-34			2			2		18-34				1	1						2
	35-54	1	5	9	19		34		35-54	1	1	1	2	6	7	16				34
	55-70		1	2	1		4		55-70						3	1				4
<b>M</b>		2	9	12	37		60	<b>M</b>		2	1	3	9	14	29	2				60
	18-34				2		2		18-34											2
	35-54	1	5	6	31		43		35-54	1	1	2	6	7	24	2				43
	55-70	1	4	6	4		15		55-70	1		1	3	7	3					15
<b>Total</b>		2	1	17	23	57	100	<b>Total</b>		2	1	1	2	5	16	24	46	2		100

17. In the hypothetical case of another crisis similar to the pandemics how important is for you to receive from the company: information, consultation, participation in the decision making, your attitude in participating? - Participation in the Decision Making (0=Not at all, 10=A lot)										18. In the hypothetical case of another crisis similar to the pandemics how important is for you to receive from the company: information, consultation, participation in the decision making, your attitude in participating? - My attitude in participation (0=Not at all, 10=A lot)																
		0	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Blank	Total			0	5	6	7	8	9	10	Blank	Total		
<b>F</b>		1	1	2	3	9	11	12					40	<b>F</b>		1	2	8	11	17				40		
	18-34				1		1						2		18-34			1							2	
	35-54	1	1	1	3	6	10	11		1			34		35-54			2	6	9	16		1		34	
	55-70				2	1	1						4		55-70				1	2	1				4	
<b>M</b>		3	2	4	2	3	11	12	21		2		60	<b>M</b>		1	1	1	4	9	12	31		1		60
	18-34								2				2		18-34										2	
	35-54	2	1	3	2	2	8	7	17		1		43		35-54			1	3	5	7	26		1	43	
	55-70	1		1	1	1	3	5	2		1		15		55-70			1	1	1	4	5	3		15	
<b>Total</b>		3	1	1	2	6	2	6	20	23	33	3	100	<b>Total</b>		1	2	1	6	17	23	48	2		100	

The employees prefer to **receive the information** orally through digital means/ phone (47 respondents), followed by in a written form (32), and orally in person (21) with no variation in gender or age. (See table 19)

19. In the hypothetical case of another crisis similar to the pandemics which mechanism of information and consultation would you prefer? - I want to be informed (Please tick one):

	In a written form through letter or email	Orally in person	Orally on the phone or through a digital means	Total
<b>F</b>	15	6	19	40
18-34			2	2
35-54	15	4	15	34
55-70		2	2	4
<b>M</b>	17	15	28	60
18-34		1	1	2
35-54	11	9	23	43
55-70	6	5	4	15
<b>Total</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>100</b>

They prefer to be **consulted** digitally (respondents 55), in physical safe places (35) and lastly in their office (10). (See table 20)

20. In the hypothetical case of another crisis similar to the pandemics which mechanism of information and consultation would you prefer? - I want to be consulted (Please tick one):

	In digital or audio (phone) meetings	In physical meetings in a safe place	In physical meetings at the working space/office	Total
<b>F</b>	26	11	3	40
18-34	2			2
35-54	22	9	3	34
55-70	2	2		4
<b>M</b>	29	24	7	60
18-34	1	1		2
35-54	19	17	7	43
55-70	9	6		15
<b>Total</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>100</b>

Lastly, the employees' survey had an **open question** asking about what they would change regarding the processes carried out during the pandemic, in a hypothetical case of a new one. The answers were diverse. Some of the most frequent ones are: **rapidity of the processes**, the **consultation** of all the personnel not only a selected one, the implementation of measures such as planned, more **transparency**, better **coordination**, more detailed information, etc.

## Overview on the Interviews to Employers

The objective of this part of the research was to gather information from employers in the trade and services sector regarding **how they involved their employees in the organisation changes introduced in their companies during the Covid-19 pandemic**. Methodologically, the interviews were semi-structured, held in Spanish, done on the phone during the months of September and October 2021, with a duration of 30 minutes approximately.

A total number of **five interviews were carried out with**: 1) a director of an engineering SME (services sector), 2) an HR director in a consultancy for

employment (services sector), 3) a representative of the HR department in a consulting company for leadership (services sector), 4) a business director in a consulting company for training (services sector), and 5) a store manager in a clothes store (trade sector).

The companies were mainly working in the services sector (four out of five), being three of them consulting companies (for employment, leadership, and training). Information on the size of the companies is not given for all the companies, but a diversity exists: there are at least two SMEs and one mid-cap/big company.

Due to the different nature of the companies' activity, **the pandemic has affected each and every one of them differently**. The engineering SME and the clothes store were **severely affected**, the first economically and the second even in the Human Resources, by reducing its staff by 40%.

*Orders were reduced, contracts were paralyzed, deliveries of works were delayed, thus also billing. (Director, engineering SME)*

*At the beginning our activity was completely paralysed and the workers went to ERTE<sup>6</sup>. We reopened as soon as we were allowed but, but the sales have fallen nearly 40%, therefore we had to let two people off. We were five before the pandemic. (Manager, clothes store)*

The rest of the companies (consultancies in employment, leadership, and training) note an **increase in their workload**.

*The pandemic positively affected the business, since most of the training actions we provide are online and the demand for them increased notably. (HR director, consultancy for employment)*

*It [the pandemic] entailed a notable increase in workload, an adaptation in record time to teleworking, an adaptation to a new way of working, with a more "horizontal" work configuration to achieve the necessary agility in decision-making and execution. (Representative of HR department, consulting company)*

Such as mentioned above, another evident change has been **the recognition on the use of digital tools**, and more specifically teleworking, in the working process. This is noted from the services and trade sector companies.

*In terms of HR management the pandemic has brought about great changes, especially related to digitization. The most decisive change has been the introduction of teleworking. (Business director, consulting company for training)*

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<sup>6</sup> Temporary Employment Regulation File (ERTE, for its abbreviation in Spanish). For more info, see above.

*Due to the pandemic we have accelerated the digitalisation process, and that is what is allowing us to stay in the market. (Manager, clothes store)*

When asked about **the process of involving employees**, the following is highlighted:

a) Employees have **had to adapt** to the extraordinary emergency measures put in place in a short time span. This is seen in both sectors and different companies.

*The co-workers have been exemplary. They have adapted to the circumstances, and the company has too. (Director, engineering SME)*

*At the beginning, all the measures were imposed from outside and we were all subject to closure, later the imposed restrictions have been incorporated with the agreement of all. (Manager, clothes store)*

At the beginning of the pandemic, there was not enough time for processes of opinions and negotiations. Subsequently, a more fluid dialogue for the organization of work took place. (Business director, consulting company for training)

b) **Two tools** were put in place to involve the employees, and this has happened in the companies of the services sector, both consultancies. The first reference highlights **organisational tools** and the second **digital ones**.

*The people who make up the organization have played a key role in the decision-making and reorganization processes. As already mentioned, it has evolved towards a more horizontal organizational structure, with fewer Middle Managers and more participation of teams in the development of projects, new work processes, design of new tools, etc., even creating teams multi-departmental if necessary. The improvements come from the people who carry out the activity, since there is the freedom to propose ideas in any forum. (HR director, consultancy for employment)*

*Through the devices connected to the Internet. Virtual meetings and work at home. (Representative of the HR department, consulting company for leadership)*

The five employees believe that the **involvement of their employees has been effective in the decision making processes** with a different narrative. For example there is quite a top down perspective in the case of the engineering SME director: "Decision-making is my responsibility, obviously important issues are discussed and as a consequence the staff actively participates based on their experience and knowledge." The consultancy staff believes that the employees' involvement during the pandemic has changed "the essential values such as co-responsibility and being proactive" (HR director, consultancy for employment), and "the new organisation and adaptation to the new reality" (representative of HR department, consultancy for leadership). The store manager sees the involvement of the employees as key to move forward.

The **five employees see the attitude of their employees** as “exemplary” (engineering SME director), “very positive” (HR director, store manager). No negative issues or complains were raised as a consequence of the changes either at the beginning or later during the pandemic.

The identified **best practices** during the interviews had to do with:

- **Mechanisms for creating space**, and therefore information, consultation and participation in the decision making.  
*Every now and then we hold an Athenaeum, it is a meeting where problems, difficulties, ideas are discussed, and opinion and solutions are generated. Meetings do not last more than 1h15min. The method becomes effective after 3-5 meetings.* (Director, engineering SME)
- **Training** to all the staff or specific categories.  
*Specific training in subjects such as equality, telework, COVID, and teamwork carried out to the entire staff of the organization in a transversal manner. Specific training for leaders to face the situation and continue developing their teams.* (HR director, consultancy for employment)
- **Protocols**  
*Protocols for sending information, contacting clients and developments based on new technologies.* (Representative of HR department, consulting for leadership)
- **Open debate regarding telework.**  
*One of the positive aspects of the pandemic has been to open the debate on telework management, in terms of people management.* (Business director, consulting for training)
- **Use of digitalisation**  
*If the pandemic has taught us anything, it is that digitization is essential to stay in the market, both in sales and in the internal management of the company.* (Manager, clothes store)

Regarding **the process of employee involvement** in the organisational changes during the pandemic, the interviewees recognise that that would **improve** the following:

- **Offer more communication**  
*Keep working on internal and informal communication to eliminate the feeling of isolation and increase participation.* (Representative HR department, consulting company for leadership)  
*More communication, more interaction with them to get their opinion and involve them in the necessary changes.* (Manager, clothes store)
- **Offer more space for understanding**  
*We need to have a better understanding of the values, experiences and wishes of the staff.* (HR director, consultancy for employment)
- **Build trust**

*We must overcome the mutual distrust that exists between the company and the workers.* (Business director, consultancy for training)

- **More and better training**

*Offer more training.* (Director, engineering SME)

*A lot of pedagogy is required* (Business director, consultancy for training)

Whilst the three consultancies place their importance in the communication, understanding and trust, the engineering SME director and the store manager see as important to improve the training component of the involvement on the employees in the process.

The employers were asked if in the **hypothetical case of another crisis**, what would help to better involve employees in the reorganization processes that they could introduce in their company and their business. The respondents answer:

- **Use of digitalisation**

*Innovation tasks can be carried out remotely or locally at least in part. For the next one we will be prepared.* (Director, engineering SME)

- **Use of better communication**

*Better work internal communication so that no one feels displaced or relegated in any change that occurs.* (HR director, consultancy for employment)

*We must improve the protocols and the transmission of messages.* (Representative HR department, consultancy for leadership)

- **Use of training**

*Promote training on certain issues such as teleworking and time management and work stress. Pedagogy is needed to create a more positive and favourable mentality for changes.* (Business director, consultancy for training)

- **Better involvement in decision making**

*I hope next time we are more prepared, with more time to react, to plan and organise changes and thus be able to involve more staff.* (Manager, clothes store)

As **conclusive final remarks from the interview** the employers say that it may be important “to have an analysis of possible risks for the business and a contingency plan to possible future crisis”. (Manager, clothes store). The investment in digitalisation and skills is key.

## Conclusions and Recommendations

This document draws the **Spain's National Report as a deliverable** to the Project "Employee involvement in decision-making in times of crisis as a key to the effective organization of the company's work".

The covid-19 pandemic hit hard the country, but the authorities put in place normative measures that served as **a social shield for businesses and workers**. The Temporary Employment Regulation File (ERTE) became an instrument to preserve employment by allowing the companies to reduce employment costs. More than 3,6 million workers were protected by ERTes at the worst point of the pandemic in 2020.

The research carried out shows **an excellent participation of the workers**, with a total number of 100 answers received from the online employees' survey, with quite a balance between genders. **Workers admit to be informed, consulted and involved in decision making** very well during the pandemic worst moments regarding the organisational changes that took place in their companies, although nearly half of them admit that **they were not offered the possibility to choose** on the organisational challenges, let alone to present ideas regarding these ones. In **hypothetical cases of future crisis** nearly all the workers maintain the idea that receiving **information** is the most important, followed by **consultation** and participation in **decision making**.

During the pandemic, the respondents consider **the changes were done in harmony with their interests**. They consider their own **attitude as active**. They were aware of their legal rights during the pandemic. Gender has not affected in the working conditions. Nearly half of the respondents had the chance to work from home, and the ones that did, found working from home easy, and that they received support to adapt to the new working conditions. As regards the **health safety**, they have responded positively.

In case of **a hypothetical case of a future crisis** most of the employees prefer to receive the **information orally through digital means**, and they prefer to be **consulted digitally**, making clear their choice for the use of the digital tools for both the information and consultation. A more **comprehensive and transparent process** of information and consultation adapted better in time is seen as an improvement.

The research carried out **discussed the organisational changes** during the pandemic and the employees' involvement with the **employers** too. **The pandemic has affected the companies differently**, depending on their activity. Some were severely affected with a relevant reduction in their activity, and some saw their activity grow, mainly because of the digitalisation and nature of their activity. The most highlighted change introduced in the companies' ways organisation has been

that of the **digitalisation**. As regards to the process of involving the employees the employers draw **two tools: the organisational ones and the digital ones**. Organisation wise, the employer-employee relationship was made more horizontal. Digitalisation wise, this enabled a new activity such as teleworking is, as well as a new relationship employer-employee.

The employee's attitude is seen as exemplary. **Best practices** were identified, with the **Athenaeum** – a space for debate inside the company, as well as training, protocols, use of digital means, etc.

The offer of more **communication**, of more **space for understanding**, for **building trust**, and for offering **more and better training** are seen as key to improve the involvement of employees in the organisational changes in the company. Likewise in the **hypothetical case of another crisis**, the identified processes were: the **use of digitalisation**, use of **better communication**, and a **more effective involvement in decision making**.

As the online employees' survey and the employers interviews main messages match, the report concludes by **recommending the creation of space and time inside the companies for a comprehensive and transparent involvement of the workers** whenever decision making is needed for carrying out organisational changes. The creation of this space can be a permanent structure planned inside the organisational culture of each company and with the eminent use of the digital tools, which use is supported by both the employees and the employers. The **emergency measures and organisational changes carried out during the covid-19 pandemic** counted with the full comprehension of the companies stakeholders and were made resilient because of the digital tools, and the social shield applied as normative measures, in the specific case of Spain.

In case of the hypothetical crisis the **permanent existence of a space to share information and build trust** for improving participation in decision making is key.

## Annexes

### Annex 1: Template of the Employees' Survey

#### Start of the Survey.

#### 0. Information on the respondent:

- Age
  - 18-34
  - 35-54
  - 55-70
- Sex
  - M
  - F
  - Other
- Post in the company Haga clic aquí para escribir texto.
- Your company's sector is: Haga clic aquí para escribir texto.
- Your company's activity is: Haga clic aquí para escribir texto.

#### 1. To what extent you were informed (directly or through your trade unions) about changes in your company during the pandemic?

0									10
Nothing									Very much

#### 2. To what extent you were consulted (directly or through your trade unions) about changes in your company during the pandemic?

0									10
---	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	----

Nothing										Very much
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3. To what extent did you participate in the decision making (directly or through your trade unions) when changes were introduced in your company during the pandemic?

0										10
Nothing										Very much

4. How would you consider the atmosphere in which these changes were introduced?

0										10
Troublesome/frustrating										Serene/Easy-going

5. How would you consider that the organisational changes were made in your company?

0										10
Totally top-down										In harmony with my interests

6. How would you rank your attitude towards the organisational changes that were introduced in your company during the pandemics?

0										10
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I was indifferent/ I was passive										I was empathetic/ I was active
-------------------------------------	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	-----------------------------------

7. Are you aware of the legal rights you have for information and consultation with the company, including in times of crisis such as the pandemic?

- Yes
- No

8. To what extent you were offered choice or alternatives regarding the organisational changes introduced in your company during the pandemics?

0										10
I did not have the possibility to choose.										I had the possibility to choose.

9. To what extent you were asked to present ideas and give opinions on the organisational challenges introduced in your company during the pandemics?

0										10
Never										A lot

10. To what extent would you say that your gender has affected you in the working conditions that you were offered as a consequence of the organisational changes introduced in your company during the pandemics?

0									10
Not at all									A lot

11. Did you have the chance to work from home?

- a. Yes
- b. No

12. If yes, to what extent you were able to organise your work at home on such same conditions as in your regular workplace? [Non mandatory question.]

0									10
I struggled a lot									It was easy for me.

13. To what extent would you say that you received support from your company to adapt to the new working conditions caused by the pandemics?

0									10
I was not offered any support.									I was supported.

14. How safe did you feel in terms of health in the company after having introduced the organisational changes caused by the pandemics?

0									10
Not safe at all									Very safe

15. In the hypothetical case of another crisis similar to the pandemics how important is for you to receive from the company: information, consultation, participation in the decision making, your attitude in participating?

- Information

0									10
Not at all									Very much

- Consultation

0									10
Not at all									Very much

- Participation in the decision making

0									10
Not at all									Very much

- My attitude in participation

0									10
Not at all									Very much

16. In the hypothetical case of another crisis similar to the pandemics which mechanism of information and consultation would you prefer?

- I want to be informed (Please tick one):

- In a written form through letter or email
- Orally in person
- Orally in a phone or digital tool

- I want to be consulted (Please tick one):

- In meetings physically in the company's offices
- In meetings physically somewhere safe

- In digital and audio meetings

17. In the hypothetical case what would you change in the future in relation to information and consultation regarding organisational changes in your company?

Haga clic aquí para escribir texto.

## Annex 2: Employers' Interview Guidelines

### Start of the Interview.

1. Can you briefly **describe your company**, sector of activity, size, number of employees, any relevant organisational aspects, etc.?
2. In a few words, how would you describe how did the pandemic affect the **organisation** of your company and your business?
3. How did you **involve your employees in the decision-making processes** when you had to reorganise your company's work due to the pandemic?
4. How **effective** do you think has the involvement/inclusion of your employees in this decision making process?
5. How would you consider the **attitude of your employees**? Were they interested, willing to express their opinion or did they participate at all?
6. Would you share with us some **good practices**, methods or tools you used?
7. What would you **improve** from the whole process of involving the employees in the organisational changes of your work?
8. In the hypothetical case of another crisis similar to the pandemics what would **support you to better involve** the employees in the organisational changes you may introduce to your company and its business?

### Annex 3: Matrix of the Interviews to Employers

Post	Director - Services / Industry Sector	HR Director - Services Sector - Professional Training Consultancy for Employment.	Representative of the HR Department Consulting-training	Director of Business – Services Sector	Manager – Trades Sector
Company description	Engineering company. It develops products and services to reduce fuel consumption, reduce your emissions and manage your workflow. It stands out that we develop technologies that provide value for drastically reducing pollution and detecting it by means of hyper spectral radars that are mounted on roads, ports, mining centres and environmental protection areas (low emissions).  <b>25-32 people</b>	<b>Group of companies</b> that develops its activity in the sector of <b>Vocational Training for Employment</b> and training solutions in general for companies. It currently has approximately <b>180 people on the staff, in addition to the teachers</b> who collaborate in the delivery of the Training Plans that we develop. The scope of action is eminently national, although we have a growing presence in Latin America.	The company is dedicated to the <b>training of middle managers and opinion leaders</b> for their effective performance within the EU.	It is a company dedicated to the provision of <b>consulting services HR management and development.</b>	Shop of clothes and complements. <b>Five staff</b> before the Pandemic. Now: <b>three.</b>
How did the Pandemic affect your organization and your business?	Orders were reduced, contracts were paralyzed, deliveries of works were delayed, thus also billing	The pandemic <b>positively</b> affected the business, since most of the training actions we provide are online and the demand for them increased notably for various reasons, highlighting among them the greater time available for training and the increase in workers in ERTE seeking retraining training and greater employability in other sectors. In any of the cases, online or face-to-face training through a virtual classroom means the elimination of barriers derived from the mobility restrictions imposed.	It involved a strict <b>reorganization</b> in order to channel the workload based on the restrictions imposed to fight COVID19. <b>More teleworking and the use of new technologies</b> such as virtual classrooms.	It has been serious. <b>Loss of business is around 60%.</b>  In terms of HR management the Pandemic has brought about great changes, especially related to <b>digitization.</b> The most decisive change has been the <b>introduction of teleworking.</b>	In the first moments the activity was completely paralyzed and the workers went to ERTE. When possible we reopened but since then, <b>sales fell (almost 40%), and we had to let two people off.</b> We had already started a <b>digitization process</b> that due to the Pandemic we have <b>accelerated</b> and is what is allowing us to stay in the market.

		Regarding the organization, it entailed: 1) A notable increase in workload. 2) Adaptation in record time to teleworking.3) Adaptation to a new way of working, with a more “horizontal” work configuration to achieve the necessary agility in decision-making and execution.			
How have you involved employees in decision-making processes when you had to reorganize work at your company due to the Pandemic?	The co-workers have been exemplary, they have adapted to the circumstances, and the company too, we have not had any problems.	The people who make up the organization have played a key role in the decision-making and reorganization processes. As already mentioned, it has evolved towards a more horizontal organizational structure, with fewer Middle Managers and more participation of teams in the development of projects, new work processes, design of new tools, etc., even creating teams multi-departmental if necessary. The improvements come from the people who carry out the activity, since there is the freedom to propose ideas in any forum.	Through the devices connected to the Internet. Virtual meetings and work at home.	The changes have taken place so there has not been much time for processes of exchange of opinions and negotiation, at least at the beginning of the Pandemic. Subsequently, a more fluid dialogue between the company and workers for the organization of work has worked.	At the beginning, all the measures were imposed from outside and we were all subject to closure, later the imposed restrictions have been incorporated with the agreement of all.
To what extent do you think the participation / inclusion of your employees in these decision-making processes has been effective?	Decision-making is my responsibility, obviously important issues are discussed and as a consequence the staff actively participates based on their experience and knowledge.It has been very effective.	Related to the previous answer, in the organization we understand that it is the best way to work, forming an essential part of our values, and the competencies that the people who work with us have: internal customer orientation, co-responsibility, innovation and proactive ty.	It has served to reorganize us and adapt to the new reality.	This period of the Pandemic is not significant since it has not given rise to too much debate but to mere compliance with the rules for a health issue, however, from a certain moment on, priority has been given to dialogue and negotiation for an adequate	The participation of workers and their willingness to collaborate in the measures that have had to be implemented has been key for us to move forward.

				<b>adaptation to changes.</b>	
How would you consider the attitude of your employees? Were they interested, willing to collaborate, express their opinion, or did they not participate at all?	The attitude has been <b>exemplary</b> , it cannot be otherwise.	As has already been said, our way of working and the culture of the organization is based on <b>teamwork</b> , co-responsibility, innovation and proactivity.	Absolutely. The reorganization has had to go through the <b>total collaboration of all</b> .	The changes have been forced but <b>the attitude has always been positive</b> .	The <b>attitude has been very positive</b> , it has been accepted from the beginning that we were all in the same boat, that in a situation like the one we experienced there was no company and workers, that it was a health problem and that we were all affected in the same way by what that was being lived.
Could you share with us <b>any good practices</b> , methods, procedures or measures that you have used that you think have worked well?	Every now and then <b>we hold an Athenaeum</b> , it is a meeting where problems, difficulties, ideas are discussed, and a critical mass of opinion, solutions, etc. is generated. Both experts and people who have another activity within the company participate. This method is very effective after the 3-5 meetings. The Athenaeum should not last more than 1 hour and 15 minutes. The people who participate, must bring the issues to be discussed and with a criterion to expose. This is very effective. The concept of Athenaeum comes out of medicine, when there is a singular case, the pathology, the data, and the experience, protocols and solutions are shared, if any. From this point on, a project may	<b>More horizontal organizational structure.</b> Active participation of people in the design, implementation or enhancement tools and business processes. Implementation of flexibility and conciliation measures. Specific training in subjects such as Equality, Telework, COVID, teamwork, transversal to the entire organization. Specific training for leaders to face the situation and continue developing their teams. Redefinition of the company's values with the participation of volunteers from the entire organization and subsequent internal communication plan to <b>reinforce the message and culture</b> .	<b>Protocols</b> for sending information, contacting clients and developments based on new technologies.	One of the positive aspects of the Pandemic has been to <b>open the debate on telework management</b> , in terms of people management. We are moving towards hybrid presence / telework systems that will end up imposing themselves in companies. There are still <b>many legislative gaps</b> to resolve practical issues such as mechanisms to control working times, job security, etc. It is yet to be defined how this will be regulated in the regulations and in labour relations.	If the Pandemic has taught us anything, it is that <b>digitization is essential</b> to stay in the market, both in sales and <b>in the internal management of the company</b> .

	begin to develop, protocol changes, etc. All health staff, doctors, nurses, administrative staff, orderlies participate since, to a lesser or greater extent, all are affected by the work flow. Some participate more actively than others less.				
¿What would you improve from the entire process of employee involvement in organizational changes at your work?	<p><b>Offer more training.</b></p> <p><b>We need to have a better understanding of the values, experiences and wishes of the staff.</b></p>	Keep working on <b>internal and informal communication</b> to <b>eliminate the feeling of isolation</b> and <b>increase participation.</b>	We are in <b>permanent evolution.</b> We improve procedures every day. Trian and error.	<p>It caught us all <b>off guard</b>, without organization, without procedures, <b>without the telework culture</b>, etc. We are still very subject to very face-to-face systems and there is also a <b>mutual distrust</b> between the company and the workers that must be overcome.</p> <p>Digitization breaks down many barriers. A very flexible work system is created to which both companies and workers will have to adapt. This requires a <b>lot of pedagogy to teach that security is not provided by a type of contract, but by your professionalism, your competence,</b> etc.</p>	More <b>communication</b> , more <b>interaction</b> with them to <b>get their opinion</b> and <b>involve them</b> in the necessary changes.
In the hypothetical case of another crisis, <b>what would help to better involve employees</b> in the reorganization processes that you can introduce in your company and your business.	We lacked reflections and resources to develop anti and post Covid products and services, we focused more on security, and we should have dedicated more energy to innovation. <b>Innovation tasks can be carried out remotely or locally</b> at least in part. For	<b>Better work internal communication</b> so that no one feels displaced or relegated in any change that occurs.	We must <b>improve the protocols and the transmission of messages</b> , but that is done on a daily basis	<p><b>Promote training on certain issues such as teleworking and time management and work stress.</b></p> <p><b>Pedagogy is needed to create a more positive and favourable mentality for changes, innovation, creativity, adaptability, so that changes are seen as something positive, in short, moving towards a different mentality in labour</b></p>	I hope next time we are more prepared, with <b>more time</b> to react, to plan and organise changes and thus be able to involve more staff.

	the next one we will be prepared.			<p><b>relations</b>, towards a more horizontal system, of collaboration, of cooperation. He made <b>formulas of greater confidence</b>. There are few employees who feel like "company."</p>	
We appreciate any <b>comments</b> you wish to make on the subject matter.	The best relationship between the employer and the workers is to <b>develop the relationship next to each other, and not opposite each other.</b>			<p>The Pandemic has come to introduce a new paradigm that will force companies <b>to manage new work schemes that will have to be incorporated into labour relations.</b></p>	<p>The Covid crisis has taught us that we must <b>anticipate much more</b> to the possible changes that may occur, permanently have an <b>analysis of possible risks for the business</b> and a response plan to possible crises because these can occur again at any time. And above all, <b>invest in digitizing</b> if we want to stay in the market, since it will be digital or it will not be.</p>