

# breakback

## Newsletter n.2

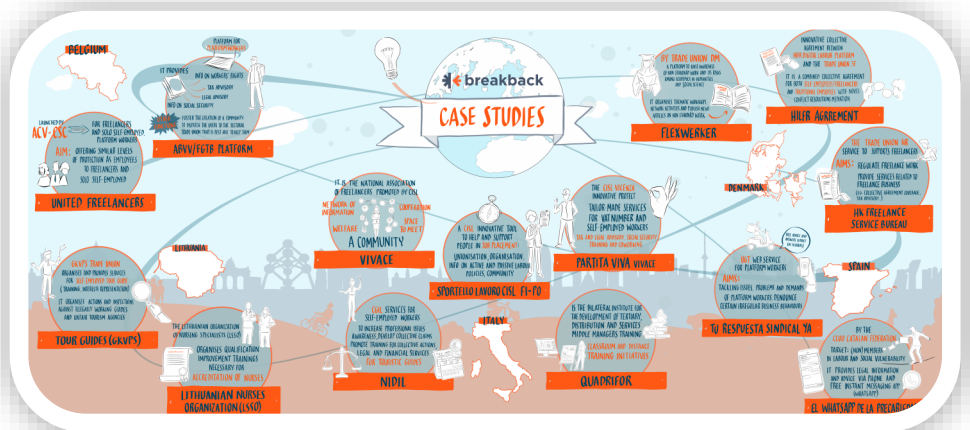
The BreakBack Newsletter is a tool for the dissemination of the results of the European Project “VS/2019/0079 - Break up to get back together (BreakBack). The impact of unionisation through innovative service provision on union membership and industrial relations”

The newsletter is edited by the Project lead-applicant **CISL Nazionale** with the contribution of the project **partners:**  
**Lsrc** - Lithuanian Social Research Center (Lithuania);  
**QUIT**-Sociological Research Centre on Everyday Life and Work of the Uab - Universitat Autònoma De Barcelona (Spain);  
**Dsps-Unifi** - University of Florence (Italy);  
**Faos** - Employment Relations Research Center, Department of Sociology, University of Copenhagen (Denmark);  
**Diesis Coop Scrl-Fs** (Belgium);  
**Ezio Tarantelli Foundation** - Research and Training Center (Italy)- as an affiliated entity;  
**ETUC** -European Confederation of Trade Unions, as an Associate Organisation.

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## The impact of unionisation through innovative services on union membership and industrial relations : the BreakBack Case Studies

The second issue of the “BreakBack Newsletter” aims to offer an overview of the case studies analysed during the European Project on Innovative services and unionisation. They represent best practices in five countries (Italy, Belgium, Denmark, Lithuania and Spain) with different systems of industrial relations and unionisation models. Further information on these case studies will be available in the Final reports of the project.

Project Steering Committee and experts established that case studies had to be chosen among:

- trade union innovative individual services aimed at developing a collective associative dimension for those groups and individuals who are often excluded from protection or outside the traditional perimeter of unionisation.
- trade union tools and/or associations aimed at broadening the perimeter of union membership, through the promotion of new protections and opportunities for individual support and collective bargaining.

Trade unions and services analysed by the BreakBack project frequently carry out "campaigning" activities (often in "digital" form) with the aim of individual emancipation, but also of social empowerment. The latter objective is often pursued by broadening the scope of action beyond the usual confederal trade union alliances, obviously bearing in mind the different national contexts of industrial relations.

The fulcrum of these experiences is therefore the constitution of a subjectivity and collective action, which starts from individual needs and services and then opens up to contractual, bargaining and solidarity dimensions carried out with approaches that we can summarise as a positive synthesis between 'servicing' and 'organising'.

The practices analysed, therefore, operate in segments of the labour market that are poorly unionised: platform workers, managerial and high-professional staff, freelancers, self-employed workers, 'traditional' workers reached through innovative services and tools, and unemployed persons seeking professional requalification and 'regeneration'.

For further information about the case studies and the project material:  
→[www.breakback.cisl.it](http://www.breakback.cisl.it)

## Italian cases 1/2

Five are the Italian national case studies analysed by the CISL, the Ezio Tarantelli Foundation and the University of Florence as part of the project activities.

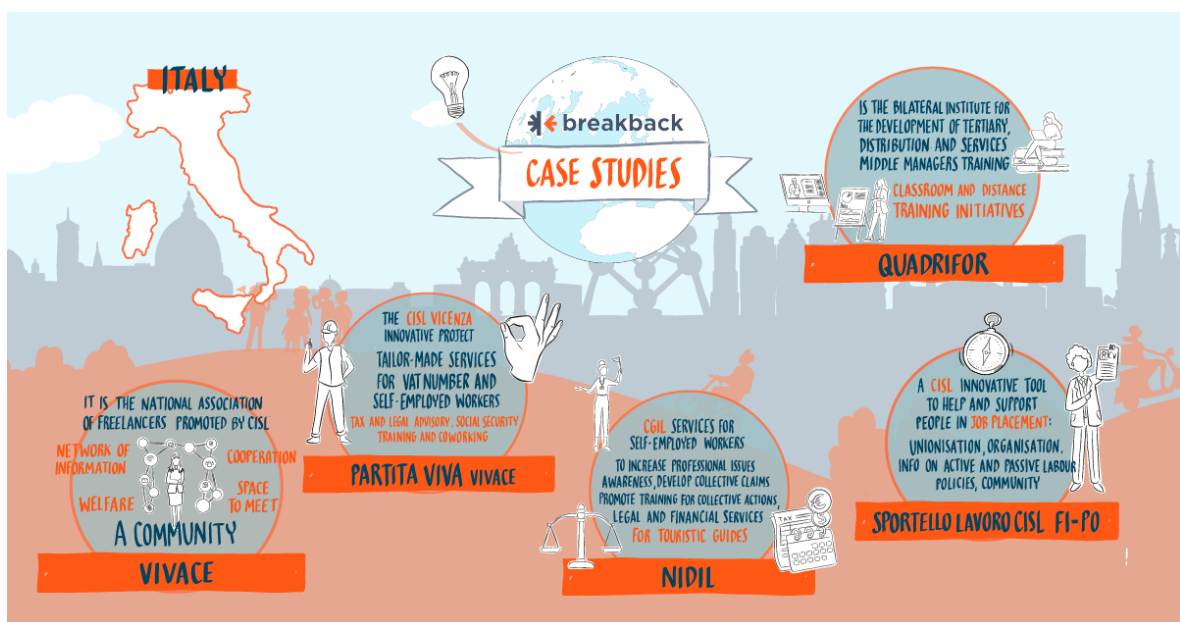
Vivace (Cisl), is a national association for freelancers and self-employed workers affiliated to FeLSA, the Cisl Federation for freelancers, self-employed and atypical workers. Vivace was born as an online community but territorial offices are going to be opened. vIVAcE aims are to offer services (Tax/Legal Advisory), develop a collective culture and identity, and represent the self-employed workers in national discussions.

Partita Viva Vicenza (Cisl), represents VAT holders and provides them with services. Furthermore, it has opened a

co-working space in the heart of the trade union headquarters. While maintaining its specific characteristics, recently Partita Viva Vicenza joined Vivace.

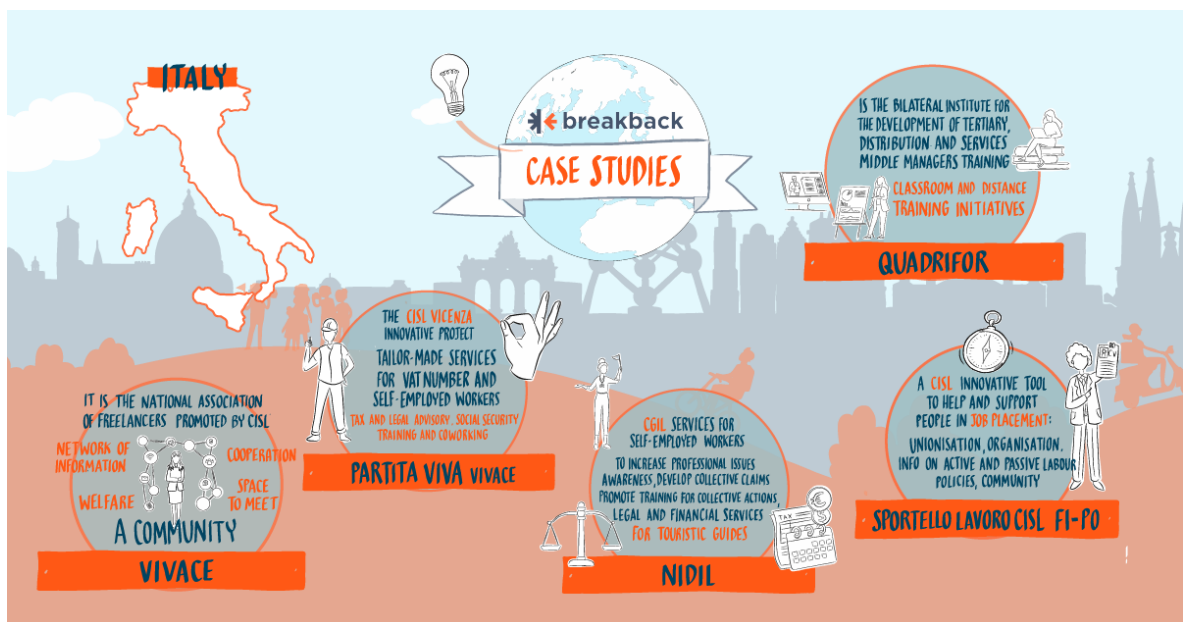
Sportello Lavoro (Florence and Prato CISL) is a trade union front-office service for unemployed workers that provides information, skills analysis, job search support and targeted training. During the pandemic, the front-office service has become a virtual service in synergy with some trade union federations.

Florence Nidil Cgil provides services addressed to self-employed and atypical workers, with an attention in turning individual issues into collective issues. In fact, it promotes territorial union agreements outside the perimeter of traditional trade union protection as, for example, in the case of tourist guides.



## Italian cases 2/2

**Quadrifor** is a national level **joint body** administered by a committee of employers and trade unions representatives. Its aim is to **provide training** for "**middle management**" in the **service sector**. This is a very interesting case of direct engagement of social actors in the training and empowerment of managers and high-level professionals (for which some sectoral trade union organizations have promoted ad hoc associations).



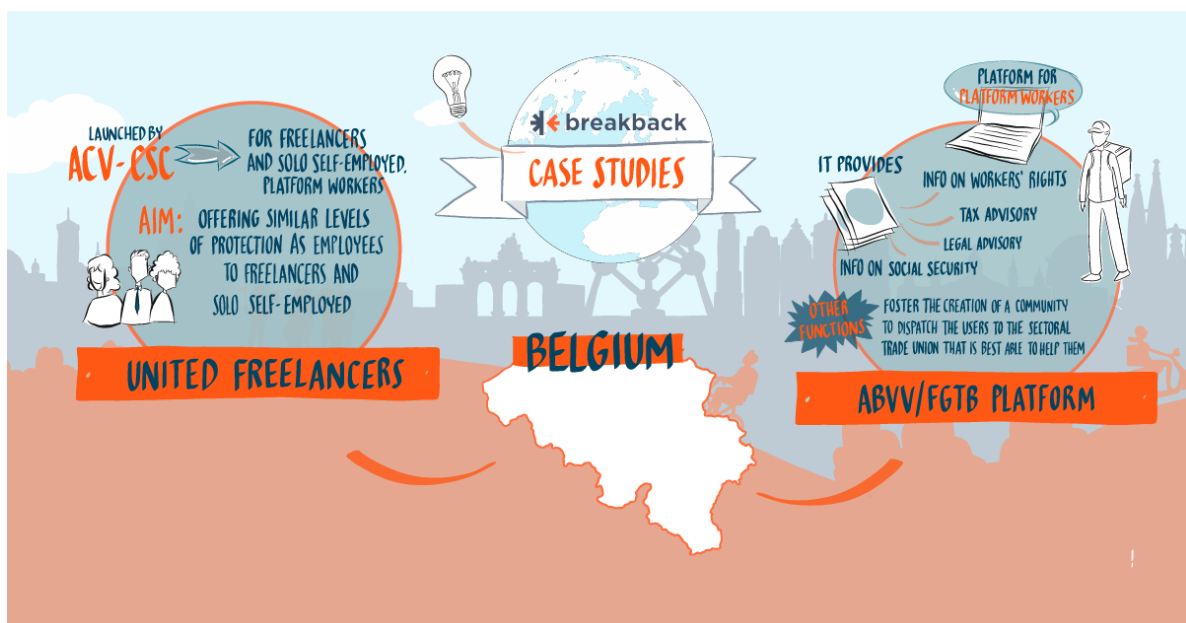
## Belgian cases

Two case examples were selected for further analysis on the relationship between (innovative) service provision and trade union membership in Belgium: **United Freelancers** (launched by ACV-CSC) and **platform for platform workers** (launched by ABVV-FGTB). These services were chosen for targeting groups that are traditionally not represented or reached by trade unions, but are increasingly seen as vulnerable groups in the labour market: self-employed (i.e. freelancers) and platform workers. Both groups appear to be growing. In addition, both groups are faced with challenges relating to atypical or non-standard work.

In particular, **United Freelancers**, launched by ACV-CSC, targets three groups of workers: the freelancers (the self-employed without personnel), those

who are **self-employed in their secondary occupation**, and **platform workers**. Even though these workers perform similar tasks and in similar conditions as regular employees, **their employment status does not give them the same rights or level of protection**. ACV-CSC aspires to represent all workers active in the Belgian labour market, regardless of their employment status, and assist with solving their problems.

The **platform for platform workers** is an initiative of **ABVV-FGTB**. It is for platform workers in any sector having questions about their rights and through which workers are dispatched to the department that is best able to help them. Its main objective is to get more grip on platform work. Attracting new members is only a secondary goal.

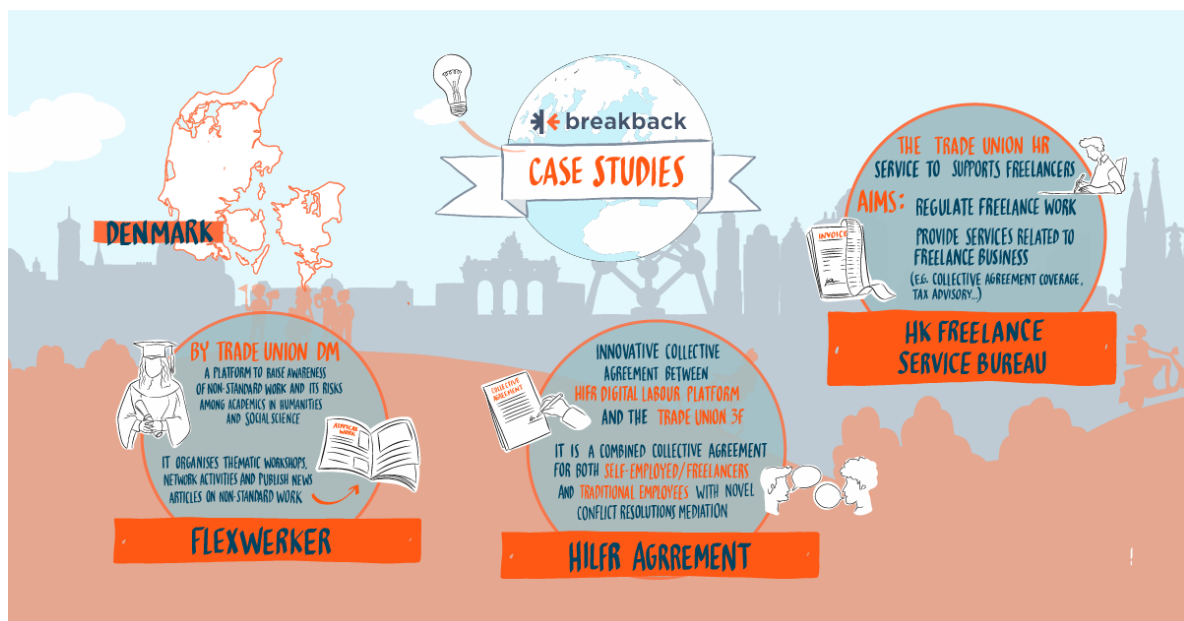


## Danish cases

Three innovative union services by three Danish sector unions were studied by the University of Copenhagen FAOS: Flexwerker (DM), the HK freelance bureau (HK) and the Hilfr agreement (3F –private services). Flexwerker is a grass root initiative to create a platform and raise awareness of non-standard work and its associated risks among academics within humanities and social science. At the beginning, there were no ties to the trade union but later DM (Danish Association of Masters and PhDs) financially supported it and has integrated Flexwerker as part of their union services. Flexwerker organises thematic workshops, network activities and publish news articles on non-standard work and it is open to union and non-union members. The aims of HK (The National Union of

Commercial and Clerical Employees) freelance bureau are to regulate freelance work and to assist freelancers with various services related to freelance business such as collective agreement coverage, assistance with invoicing, tax returns, insurance, work contracts etc. HK freelance bureau is open to union and non-union member – but with some service restrictions.

The Hilfr agreement is an innovative collective agreement negotiated between the cleaning platform Hilfr and the United Federation of Danish Workers (3F). It is a combined collective agreement for both self-employed/freelancers and traditional employees (i.e. on 0-hour contracts), along with novel conflict resolutions mediation. 3F aimed to lift workers with different employment status' wages and working conditions as well as attract new members within a digital labour market they rarely organise.



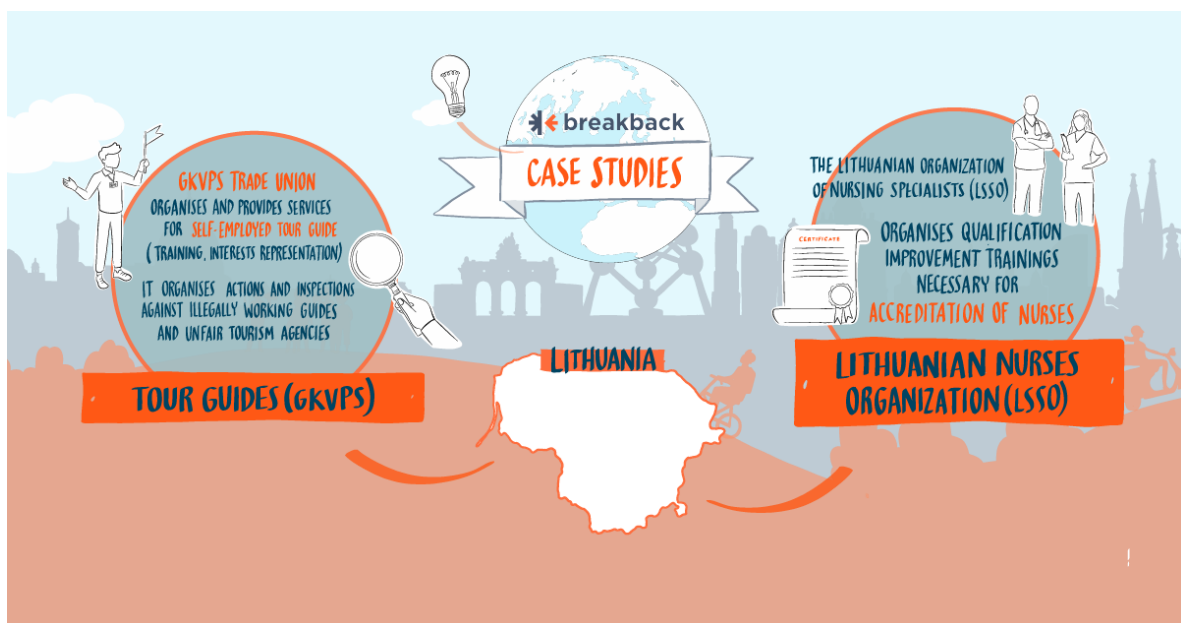
## Lithuanian cases

The **Lsrc - Lithuanian Social Research Center**, focused on two case studies: **Lithuanian Nurses' Organisation—LSSO** and **Trade Union 'Solidarumas' of Guides and tour guides—GKVPS**.

Lithuanian Nurses' Organisation – LSSO is a branch of Lithuanian Trade Union Confederation, organising and providing services for nurses. LSSO **organises professional development services for nurses** – provides **training** and issues **certificates, necessary for accreditation** of nurses in Lithuania (→<https://www.lssso.lt/>). It was established to meet the need for reformation of the profession, due to poor working conditions and heavy workloads, as well as the need to represent interest of the profession at national and international level. Among the main aims of the LSSO were:

improvement of nursing related legislation, establishment of decent professional standards, improvement of education of nurses.

Trade Union 'Solidarumas' of Guides and tour guides - GKVPS is a branch of Lithuanian Trade Union 'Solidarumas', organising and providing **services for self-employed guides**, operating in Lithuania. GKVPS provides some **training, represents interests** of tour guides in state institutions, organises various **actions and inspections against illegally working guides and unfair tourism agencies** (→<https://www.lps.lt/gidu-kontaktai>). The reasons of its establishment were the extremely poor working conditions of tour guides such as less social guarantees and possibilities to negotiate, an high share of illegally working guides, unfair competition, low income and an inappropriate and unclear legal regulation.



## Spanish cases

The QUIT—Sociological Research Centre on Everyday Life and Work analysed two innovative services provided by Spanish Trade Unions UGT and CCOO Catalunya: **TuRespuestaSindicalYa.com** and **El whatsapp de la precariedad**.

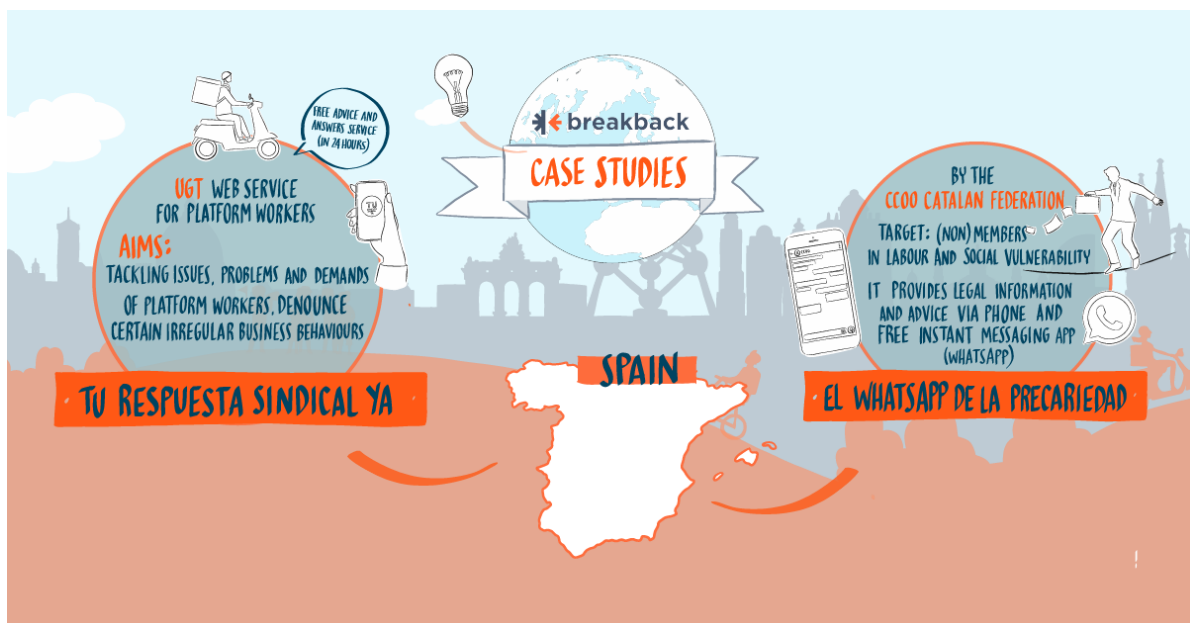
In both the case studies the main aim was not to increase the membership but reaching non-unionised vulnerable workers.

UGT-TuRespuestaSindicalYa.com is a top down initiative for **Platform workers** created with the inter-sectoral coordination of the Union. The aim of the service is to tackle issues, problems and demands of platform workers. This service also functions as a digital union section. Within the service, a MailBox is provided to answer questions on **(bogus) self-employed rights**. Another

aim of the service is the **collective coordination of hard-to-unionized profiles** and the **legal and CB coverage of out-of-employment-relation profiles**.

Even though the service was intended for platform workers, **many people from Spain rural areas use this service as their only way to get in touch with the trade union**.

Aims of the CCOO Catalunya-El whatsapp de la precariedad are: to **bridge the gap between the organization and non-unionized members**, to **influence the collective bargaining** at company level, to become a **tool of participation and interaction between people suffering the same precarious conditions**. It provides **legal information and advice via phone and free instant messaging app**. The service focuses **not only on labour related issues but also on social vulnerability issues**. The service is a response to the fragmentation of labour realities.





## On the next issue: The BreakBack Policy Labs

Since May 2021, in each of the Countries involved in the implementation of the BreakBack Project (Italy, Belgium, Denmark, Lithuania and Spain) academics, industrial relations experts and trade unionists have met to discuss the preliminary results of the research on Innovative Services and Unionisation. The outcomes of these meetings, which took the form of a Policy Lab, will be reported on in the third issue of the BreakBack Newsletter.



## *Newsletter n.2*

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