

collective bargaining

Issue 4/2016 April

This newsletter presents up-to-date information on collective bargaining developments across Europe since February 2008. It aims to facilitate information exchange between trade unions and to support the work of the ETUC's collective bargaining committee.



AMSTERDAM INSTITUTE FOR ADVANCED LABOUR STUDIES
UNIVERSITEIT VAN AMSTERDAM



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European sources

Regulation of labour market intermediaries

April 27, 2016

Private labour market intermediaries – such as temporary work agencies and employment placement agencies – contribute to facilitating labour mobility within the EU. However, due to loopholes in regulation, some workers and vulnerable groups run the risk of being exploited by fraudulent agencies. This Eurofound report examines how public authorities are currently regulating labour market intermediaries across EU Member States, highlighting the effectiveness or otherwise of different registration or licensing schemes. It also examines activities by social partners aimed at preventing the trafficking of labour. The overall aim is to contribute to the development of a best practice guide for public authorities to encourage better monitoring and enforcement of regulations deterring trafficking for the purpose of labour exploitation.

English: [http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/publications/report/2016/labour-market ...](http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/publications/report/2016/labour-market...)

IMF on growth and collective bargaining

April 12, 2016

In the updated World Economic Outlook 2016, the IMF predicts a baseline projection for global growth in 2016 of a modest 3.2 percent, broadly in line with 2015, and a 0.2 percentage point downward revision relative to the January 2016 Update. The recovery is projected to strengthen in 2017 and beyond, driven primarily by emerging market and developing economies, as conditions in stressed economies start gradually to normalise. In the 3rd chapter of the report (titled *Time for a supply-side boost*), the IMF continues with the plea for labour market reform and deregulation, although the organisation admits that these reforms can have a negative effect: 'the impact becomes contractionary if the reforms are undertaken during periods of slack'. It is interesting to read in a special box (3.2) how the organisation struggles with the fact that there is hardly any evidence in Europe for the advocated IMF-policy of decentralisation of collective bargaining and its fight against sector level bargaining and extension of agreements.

English: [http://www.imf.org/external/pubs ...](http://www.imf.org/external/pubs...)
[http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/weo ...](http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/weo...)

Inequality, youth income and well-being

April 5, 2016

UNICEF published the *Innocenti Report Card 13*. The card presents an overview of inequalities in child well-being in 41 countries of the European Union and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). It focuses on 'bottom-end inequality' – the gap between children at the bottom and those in the middle – and addresses the question 'how far behind are children being allowed to fall?' in income, education, health and life satisfaction. Across the OECD, the risks of poverty have been shifting from the elderly towards youth since the 1980s. The Scandinavian countries, with the exception of (mid-ranking) Sweden, have the smallest relative youth income gaps. Income gaps in excess of 60% are found in Bulgaria and Romania and in the larger southern European countries (Greece, Italy, Portugal and Spain).

English: [https://www.unicef-irc.org/publications ...](https://www.unicef-irc.org/publications...)

European labour markets and the falling wage share

April 4, 2016

The Foundation for European Progressive Studies (FEPS) published a first Volume of the work of its Young Academics Network. The paper is dedicated to the distributional, institutional and political dimensions of the capital-labour relation in Europe. Declining or stagnant wages, the attitude of the European Commission and beneficial tax systems for capital lead on several levels to a weakening position not only of middle and lower class interests but also their institutionalised representatives, i.e. trade unions and progressive parties. The authors have calculated the changing wage shares across selected European countries over the 'pre' and 'post' crisis periods between 2008 and 2016. A second paper is on strengthening labour rights.

English: [http://www.feps-europe.eu/assets ...](http://www.feps-europe.eu/assets...)
[http://www.feps-europe.eu/assets/b ...](http://www.feps-europe.eu/assets/b...)

Labour costs in Europe in 2015

April 1, 2016

The statistical office Eurostat published its annual statistics with wage data for the year 2015. Average hourly labour costs (made up of wages and salaries and non-wage costs such as employers' social contributions) in the whole economy (excluding agriculture and public administration) were estimated to be €25.0 in the whole European Union and €29.5 in the euro area. This average masks significant gaps between member states, with the lowest hourly labour costs recorded in Bulgaria (€4.1), Romania (€5.0), Lithuania (€6.8),

Latvia (€7.1) and Hungary (€7.5), and the highest in Denmark (€41.3), Belgium (€39.1), Sweden (€37.4), Luxembourg (€36.2) and France (€35.1).

English: [http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained ...](http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained...)

Press release in English, French and German: [http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web ...](http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web...)

Austria

Agreements concluded in several industries; transport talks fail

April 22, 2016

The employers' organisation in the electronics industry FEEI (Fachverband der Elektro- und Elektronikindustrie) agreed with the trade unions PRO-GE and GPA-djp a deal that includes a pay increase of the basic wages with 1.4%, starting from 1 May 2016. The sectoral minimum wage increases to 1,715.96 euro. Youngsters that participate in vocational training schemes will receive a compensation pay of their travel costs, next to the 1.4% increase of their salary. Trade union PRO-GE concluded a pay deal in several branches belonging to agriculture with a pay increase of 1.4%, as of 1 March 2016. Trade union GPA-djp concluded collective agreements with the regional sections of the Red Cross, becoming effective from 1 January 2016. PRO-GE and GPA-djp signed an agreement in the paper and pulp industries with a 1.45% pay increase for the minimum wages and 1.35% for all other wages. A 1.43% wage increase reached by trade unions PRO-GE and GPA-djp in 2015 will become effective on 1 May 2016 in the chemical sector. The negotiations in the transport sector got to a dead end; the trade unions could not agree with a weakening of the working time regulations on Sundays and public holidays.

German: [http://www.kollektivvertrag.at/cms ...](http://www.kollektivvertrag.at/cms...)

[http://www.gpa-djp.at/cms ...](http://www.gpa-djp.at/cms...)

Poverty and social exclusion in 2015

April 14, 2016

According to the EU-Statistics on Income and Living Conditions (EU-SILC), the number of persons at risk of poverty or social exclusion in Austria has declined by 148 000 persons since 2008. Nevertheless, 18.3% of the population has been at risk of poverty or social exclusion in 2015. These persons had low household income, were severely materially deprived or lived in households with low work intensity. A quarter of those affected (385 000 persons) were confronted with more than one of these social risks.

English: http://www.statistik.at/web_en/press/107543.html

German: http://www.statistik.at/web_de/presse/107519.html

Unpaid overtime widespread

April 12, 2016

Based on data from the office for statistics, the chamber of labour AK has calculated that some 52 million hours of overtime were not paid in 2015. This would equal 30,000 fulltime jobs. In its daily juridical assistance AK is regularly confronted with non-pay of overtime. In order to prevent breaches the AK suggest introducing a sanctioning based on the doubling of the compensation pay.

English: [http://www.statistik.at/web_en/statistics/PeopleSociety/labour_market/working ...](http://www.statistik.at/web_en/statistics/PeopleSociety/labour_market/working...)

German: [https://wien.arbeiterkammer.at/interessenvertretung/arbeitsmarkt/Krasse_Faelle ...](https://wien.arbeiterkammer.at/interessenvertretung/arbeitsmarkt/Krasse_Faelle...)

Belgium

Civil servants on strike

April 28, 2016

Trade union ACOD had announced at 24-hour strike for 26 April. The union called its members out in protest against the measures contained in the public budget. The strike covered ACOD members that work at the Justice, Interior, Foreign, Finance, Social Security, Labour, Health, Transport and Economic Affairs departments. The trade union confederations CSC/ACV and FGTB/ABVV have also planned different manifestations to protest against the government's measures. Prison workers continued with their strike

after the planned 24 hours.

English: [http://sputniknews.com/europe ...](http://sputniknews.com/europe...)
[http://deredactie.be/cm/vrtnieuws.english/Economy ...](http://deredactie.be/cm/vrtnieuws.english/Economy...)

Strike at Zaventem airport

April 14, 2016

Air traffic at Brussels Airport was seriously disrupted after a wild strike staged by the air traffic controllers. The strike was about a draft accord on early retirement at Belgocontrol. Air traffic controllers would no longer have to turn up to work from the age of 58 - instead of 55 now - and they would receive 85% of their salary. Controllers are also unhappy about increased working pressure due to staff cuts. The number of breaks they can take will go down. The trade unions were divided on the matter.

English: [http://www.france24.com/en/20160414-reopened-brussels-airport-paralysed ...](http://www.france24.com/en/20160414-reopened-brussels-airport-paralysed...)

Labour market statistics updated

April 1, 2016

The national statistical office has completely updated the labour market statistics over the period 1999-2015. Additional graphs and tables (only available in French and Dutch) illustrate the growth of the labour market participation (age groups 15-24, 25-49 and 50-64 years) , the average working time, the different forms of flexible work, the employment development and the entrance of youngsters on the labour market.

English: [http://bestat.economie.fgov.be/BeStat/BeStatMultidimensionalAnalysis ...](http://bestat.economie.fgov.be/BeStat/BeStatMultidimensionalAnalysis...)

French: <http://statbel.fgov.be/fr/statistiques/chiffres/travailvie/emploi/>

Dutch: http://statbel.fgov.be/nl/statistieken/cijfers/arbeid_leven/werk/

Bulgaria

Protest of health care practitioners continues

April 1, 2016

Protest of health care general practitioners (GPs) grows further as ten more regions will join in it. The protest began when GPs from four regions closed their surgeries. It spread the days after, with respectively five and nine other regions joining. The protest is foreseen to spread gradually until it encompasses the entire territory of the country. A meeting between the leadership of the Association of general practitioners and the health ministry did not yield any results, with the GPs saying that they will not back down from their demands and the protest will continue. They have assured that one medical crew in each practice will remain on duty in order to take care of patients in need of acute medical help. GPs are discontent with the policies and reforms proposed by the government, especially those concerning the outside hospital healthcare.

English: [http://www.novinite.com/articles ...](http://www.novinite.com/articles...)

Croatia

Laborious consultation in public sector

April 12, 2016

Just two out of eight public sector unions went to a meeting with government representatives planned for 11 April. Six public sector unions explained why the negotiations with the government did not take place. The trade union representatives reiterated they did want to negotiate and invited the government to come to a meeting. Unions demand an increase in base salary by six percent for about 250,000 people, according to an agreement from 2009 which came into force on 1 January 2016 (see our March Newsletter). The government does not deny the right to the raise, but it would need about 1.8 billion kuna (240 million euro) a year for the increase. The funds have not been appropriated in the 2016 state budget and the projections for 2017-2018.

English: [https://www.total-croatia-news.com/politics/11364-public-sector-unions-boycott ...](https://www.total-croatia-news.com/politics/11364-public-sector-unions-boycott...)

Cyprus

Bank workers go on indefinite strike

April 11, 2016

FBME Bank staff announced that they will be going on an indefinite strike in protest against the mass lay-off of 136 staff. On 31 March, the new administrator of FBME in Cyprus, delivered signed redundancy notices to 136 FBME Bank workers, covering the major part of the remaining employee base of FBME in the country, citing cost cutting for this decision. The mass lay-offs came after a recent decision by the US Treasury Department's financial crime enforcement network – FinCEN – to support an earlier ruling prohibiting US banks from opening or maintaining correspondent accounts of or on behalf of FBME, which, FinCEN described as a primary money laundering concern.

English: <http://in-cyprus.com/fbme-bank-staff-cyprus-go-indefinite-strike/>

Employers seeks to restrict strike rights in essential services

April 10, 2016

The Cyprus Employers' Federation's new chair believes a law restricting strike action in essential services is paramount. The OEB federation has drafted its own proposals on curbing strikes at hospitals and state utilities based on the argument that the economy is fragile and the expectations of unions are unjustifiably high. The Employers have sent that draft document to President Nicos Anastasiades and four key ministers – Labour, Finance, Commerce and Health.

English: <http://in-cyprus.com/oeb-seeks-end-crippling-strikes/>

Czech Republic

Collective agreement at Skoda concluded

April 29, 2016

The trade unions at Skoda Auto, the Czech unit of Volkswagen AG (VOWG.DE), have approved a collective agreement with management on working conditions and pay increase for the next two years. Wage tariffs will rise by 3.5 percent as of April 2016 and another 3 percent in January 2017; additional increases will come in other parts of salaries, including one-off payments and production related bonuses.

English: [http://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-skodaauto-wages ...](http://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-skodaauto-wages...)
[http://www.odbornikovomb.cz/rekordni-vyplata-diky-vyjednavani-odboru-kovo ...](http://www.odbornikovomb.cz/rekordni-vyplata-diky-vyjednavani-odboru-kovo...)

Subcontracting and the recruitment of cheap labour

April 19, 2016

A report published by the Multicultural Center Prague reveals how subcontracting has become an important form of employment for migrant workers in low-skilled jobs, where labour rights violations have been common. Cases were collected through a number of public hearings with migrant workers as well as interviews and meetings with local stakeholders. The country report focuses on different types of indirect work through subcontracting instead of sector-specific aspects of migrant workers' labour. It provides cases of labour rights violations from the automobile, electronics and floral industries. Another NGO, the Centre for Integration of Foreigners, has launched a project which aims to both help individual foreign workers fight for their rights and to raise awareness about the problem in society. The NGO also concludes that abuse on the labour market is still one of the most common problems addressed.

English: http://www.migrationonline.cz/czech_republic_country_report.pdf
[http://www.radio.cz/en/section/curraffrs/foreign-workers-still-face-widespread-abuse ...](http://www.radio.cz/en/section/curraffrs/foreign-workers-still-face-widespread-abuse...)

Employers see space for higher wages

April 7, 2016

The Confederation of Industry of the Czech Republic (SPČR) sees space for a growth in average wages. This was stated by the SPČR Vice-president Jan Rafaj at the seminary Convergence of Wages between Old and New EU Member States on 6 April 2016. According to employers, a change in the structure of jobs including the introduction of incentives for the creation of job opportunities with higher value added or the introduction of the initiative Industry 4.0 would be suitable ways for the growth in the average wages.

According to preliminary results of a survey conducted by SPČR and the National Bank in Q1 2016, employers predict an average growth in wages by about 2% in 2016.

English: [http://www.praguemonitor.com/2016 ...](http://www.praguemonitor.com/2016...)

Denmark

Takeover leads to job losses

April 14, 2016

The electronics manufacturer Bang and Olufsen has decided to lay off 55 employees as a consequence of the company's new partnership with the South Korean electronics giant LG Electronics. LG Electronics will take over some of the company's development tasks within mechanical and TV production. Forty-seven of the affected employees work at the company's headquarters in Struer in west Jutland. At the same time, the company has announced plans to hire up to 30 software engineers, to be employed both in Struer and in the business department in Lyngby.

English: <http://cphpost.dk/news/business/bang-olufsen-laying-off-55-employees.html>

Labour news online

April 1, 2016

The trade union confederation LO publishes a regular newsletter (Danish Labour News) that is now online. In the first edition of this year LO reflects on the labour market proposals for refugees (see our March Newsletter), on the development of the labour market and the importance of vocational training.

English: [http://www.lo.dk/English%20version/~media/LO/English ...](http://www.lo.dk/English%20version/~media/LO/English...)

Estonia

Job losses and shortening of working week at Eesti Energia

April 19, 2016

Eesti Energia Tehnoloogiatoostus, the technology arm of the state-owned energy group Eesti Energia, has cut a couple of hundred jobs, reducing the workforce from 609 (in 2015) to 425 workers. The majority of the remaining employees are working four days a week, under an arrangement initially in force from 18 March to the end of April, in the absence of orders.

English: [http://www.baltic-course.com/eng/energy ...](http://www.baltic-course.com/eng/energy...)

Collective agreement in the hotel sector

April 13, 2016

After nearly one year and three months of negotiations the Service Workers Union (ETKA) and SOKOTEL SOK Group concluded a new collective agreement for nearly 250 workers at two of SOKOTELS hotels in Tallinn, Solo SOKOS and Original SOKOS Hotel Viru, and all its restaurants, bars, nightclub and spa. The collective agreement is valid for two years. This is one of the first collective agreements for hotel and restaurants workers in the country. The collective agreement guarantees workers better working conditions.

English: <http://nu-hrct.dk/nyheder/new-collective-agreement>

Finland

Unions leave bank that figures in Panama papers

April 24, 2016

Several trade unions have decided to quit as clients from the Nordea bank. Trade union Team and the Transport Workers Union announced their departure due to recent revelations in the Panama Papers data leak suggesting that Nordea helped its customers arrange tax shelters. Other organisations like the Social Democrats, Left Alliance and True Finns parties also announced they would leave Nordea. Nordea, a

Swedish based financial services institution, admitted that it had assisted customers shelter assets in the past, adding that it acted entirely within the law when it did. The bank said that it has since ceased the practice.

English: [http://yle.fi/uutiset/team_union_leaves_nordea ...](http://yle.fi/uutiset/team_union_leaves_nordea...)
[http://yle.fi/uutiset/transport_workers_union_to_pull_out ...](http://yle.fi/uutiset/transport_workers_union_to_pull_out...)

Extended working time did not create jobs

April 22, 2016

Extended opening hours for shops that stepped into effect at the start of 2016 have been a disappointment to the service workers trade union PAM. A PAM spokesperson stated that no new jobs have been created and cashiers have not gained the additional hours they hoped for. The union admits that there may be additional working hours on offer in hypermarkets, but that means fewer hours on offer in smaller shops in the same chain. Overall there are no signs that hours are increasing.

English: [http://yle.fi/uutiset/union_disappointed_extended_store_hours_have_not ...](http://yle.fi/uutiset/union_disappointed_extended_store_hours_have_not...)

Union fights for public rail

April 6, 2016

A campaign called Raidepuolue (Rail Party) started in March 2016 with a public event at the Helsinki railway station. The goal of the campaign is to stimulate debate on rail transport and its future. Behind the campaign are Railway Professionals JHL and the Locomotive Drivers Union VML, which have started this action as a reaction to the governments' plans to open up domestic passenger rail transport to private competition. This could mean an end to many local rail connections. Railway Professionals JHL fears that the whole future of the rail transport could be under threat. Railway Professionals JHL is part of the trade union for the public and welfare sectors JHL comprising those JHL members who work on rail transport. The campaign will continue to the end of 2016. It will go to 18 cities with a campaign tent in front of railway stations and visits to the rail transport working places.

English: [http://www.jhl.fi/portal/en/jhl_info/news ...](http://www.jhl.fi/portal/en/jhl_info/news...)

France

Rail workers strike over conditions and work planning

April 26, 2016

Employees of the state-owned rail company SNCF have started a strike – the third in two months – over pay and working conditions. The rail workers protest also over plans to reduce periods of rest and other protective work practices. The key controversies are the compensation for the commuting related to the job, the obligatory amount of weekend work, the rest time between shifts, the number of nights that workers have to spend from home and the timing of information about work schedules.

English: [http://www.telesurtv.net/english/news/France-Strikers-Shut-Down-Trains ...](http://www.telesurtv.net/english/news/France-Strikers-Shut-Down-Trains...)

Massive protest against labour law reform continues

April 14, 2016

Trade unions and student groups and marched in Paris and other large cities against a planned labour reform they say will worsen working conditions and increase unemployment. The reform would put almost all aspects of the country's strictly codified labour relations up for negotiation. The trade unions see the law as a 'complete reversal' of the existing labour laws that will make it easier for struggling companies to fire workers. The anger over the reforms has spawned a protest movement dubbed 'Up All Night' that is taking over city squares, with young people gathering until dawn demanding social change.

English: [http://www.france24.com/en/20160409-protesters-keep-pressure ...](http://www.france24.com/en/20160409-protesters-keep-pressure...)
<http://www.thelocal.fr/20160410/fresh-violence-in-protests-over-french-labour-reforms>

General Electric workers protest

April 10, 2016

At least 2,500 European employees of General Electric (GE) Co protested in Paris on 10 April 2016 against the US industrial conglomerate's restructuring plans, which include 6,500 job losses throughout the

continent. The demonstrators came from throughout Europe, with 700 from Germany and hundreds more from Italy, Poland, Belgium and France itself. A large number were from French company Alstom SA, four months after GE acquired its power and grid businesses. Other protests took place in Germany, Spain, Austria, Belgium, the Czech Republic, Sweden and Switzerland, international union federation IndustriALL said. GE is most of the way through a restructuring to hone its focus on its key traditional industrial businesses, which include railway equipment and renewable energy like wind turbines, and to grow in newer sectors, such as healthcare and energy management.

English: [http://www.taipeitimes.com/News/biz ...](http://www.taipeitimes.com/News/biz...)

Germany

Wage agreement for the public sector

April 30, 2016

The federal and local governments reached agreement with public sector workers on a pay rise, settling a dispute that grounded hundreds of flights during a warning strike earlier on. Trade union Ver.di had organised the strike as a warning to speed up wage negotiations. As a result of the concluded collective agreement more than two million workers are to receive a pay increase of 4.75 percent over two years. In a statement Ver.di said the increase would be paid in two stages, with a first increment of 2.4 percent in March 2016 to be followed by another 2.35 percent in February 2017. The union, which had initially demanded a six-per-cent pay rise, hailed the result as 'a compromise that clearly increases salaries, boosts purchasing power and helps make the public sector more attractive' to workers.

English: <http://www.thelocal.de/20160430/german-public-workers-dispute-settled>

Metal workers stage walkouts

April 30, 2016

More than 100,000 workers in the metals and electrical industries staged walkouts across the country after trade union IG Metall rejected a wage offer for the 3.8 million employees it represents. IG Metall union turned down an offer from employers for a wage rise of 2.1 percent, saying it fell too far short of its demand for a 5 percent increase. The union stated that warning strikes would continue into the coming period, adding that it would start 24-hour strikes if no agreement was reached by the Pentecost holiday.

English: [http://in.reuters.com/article/germany-strike ...](http://in.reuters.com/article/germany-strike...)

IG Metall active for job protection

April 9, 2016

Trade union IG Metall wants jobs protected during talks between Thyssenkrupp (TKAG.DE) and India's Tata Steel (TISC.NS) about combining their European steel operations. The IG Metall's regional head in the state of North Rhine-Westphalia stated that if there is a merger, there should be no jobs lost. He also said that IG Metall would hold a day of protest in the city of Duisburg in North Rhine-Westphalia in April 2016 against plans by the European Commission to toughen carbon emission certificate rules for the steel industry.

English: [http://finance.yahoo.com/news/ig-metall-union-presses-thyssenkrupp ...](http://finance.yahoo.com/news/ig-metall-union-presses-thyssenkrupp...)

Trade unions seeks wage hike of 5 percent

April 8, 2016

Trade union IG BCE announced it would seek wage increases of 5 percent for the more than 550,000 workers in the chemicals sector after the economy grew at its fastest rate in four years in 2015. The country's biggest union, IG Metall, has also demanded wage increases of 5 percent for 3.8 million metals and electricians sector workers after the economy grew by 1.7 percent last year. The trade unions argue that solid wage increases would help bolster domestic spending in Europe's largest economy as the country's export engine, once a reliable growth driver, stutters amid a global economic slowdown.

English: [http://finance.yahoo.com/news/german-ig-bce-union-seek ...](http://finance.yahoo.com/news/german-ig-bce-union-seek...)

Evasion of labour standards in meat processing and construction

April 4, 2016

The Polish Social Council presented a report at a meeting of NGO Solidar on social dumping practices. The

report describes how in both investigated sectors (construction and meat processing) employers broadly use subcontracting as a strategy to reduce wage costs. Both sectors apply lower labour and social standards for migrant workers in comparison with a regular part of the workforce, thus circumventing labour provisions intended to level the rights of domestic and foreign workers from other EU countries.

English: http://www.migrationonline.cz/germany_country_report.pdf

Greece

Protest against Sunday shopping hours

April 26, 2016

The private sector trade union confederation GSEE is holding a strike in protest of Sunday shopping hours (eight Sundays a year) on 8 May. The union said it 'was completely opposed' to the bailout-inspired introduction of Sunday shopping hours 'since it will lead to the end of the Sunday rest day and because the measure works in the interest of multi-nationals, leading smaller businesses to closure'. The Panhellenic Seamen's Federation (PNO) has announced that its members will join the 24-hour strike.

English: [http://www.ekathimerini.com/208113/article/ekathimerini/news/private-sector ...](http://www.ekathimerini.com/208113/article/ekathimerini/news/private-sector...)
http://www.migrationonline.cz/germany_country_report.pdf

Public sector workers strike over pension reform

April 7, 2016

Public sector workers called a strike against the pension and tax reforms sought by Greece's foreign lenders. A 24-hour walkout, called by public sector union ADEDY (representing about 500,000 public sector workers and pensioners), coincided with a review by lenders of Athens's compliance with terms of an international bailout agreed in 2015. Citizens have seen their incomes and services slashed under austerity measures agreed as part of its international bailouts. European Union institutions and the International Monetary Fund are holding out for a conclusion of additional reforms by Athens before signing off on the review, which could potentially unlock further financial aid to the indebted country. The review of fiscal reforms has stalled for weeks because of disagreements between European Union institutions and the IMF on the level of fiscal adjustment Athens must pursue to cover any shortfalls.

English: [http://www.dailymail.co.uk/wires/reuters/article-3527707/Greek-public-sector ...](http://www.dailymail.co.uk/wires/reuters/article-3527707/Greek-public-sector...)

Hungary

Automotive safety workers reach agreement

April 8, 2016

Following a two-hour long strike, the management of automotive safety systems company Autoliv came to an agreement with the Vasas workers trade union. A strike committee was formed in March, after the trade union deemed the 2.5% wage increase by the management to be unacceptable. A strike on 31 March became successful as management later on promised a 10% wage increase for assembly line workers retroactive to 1 January 2016. Blue collar workers who carry out indirect services and administrative staff will both receive a 4% wage increase, while factory workers will receive a 5% increase. Blue collar and factory workers will also receive the previously promised 13th month wage plus HUF 78 thousand in holiday compensation.

English: [http://bbj.hu/business/autoliv-workers-management-agree-on-wage-rise ...](http://bbj.hu/business/autoliv-workers-management-agree-on-wage-rise...)

Audi agreement concluded – strike cancelled

April 4, 2016

The workers at Audi Hungária in Győr (northwest Hungary) cancelled their strike after the negotiations on a collective agreement ended successfully. Trade union AHFSZ had established a strike committee as the negotiations on the wage increase of employees failed. The AHFSZ asked for at least a HUF 15,000 uniform raise to basic wages, retroactive to January. Furthermore, the union asked for a revision to the current salary system, and called for the creation of a 'working group' to decide on a new wage system.

English: [http://bbj.hu/business/audi-hungary-to-raise-pay-strike-canceled ...](http://bbj.hu/business/audi-hungary-to-raise-pay-strike-canceled...)

Teachers demonstrate

April 2, 2016

The Tanítanék ('I would teach') movement, an informal association of teachers, is demanding an end to sweeping educational reforms introduced under the second and third Orbán governments. The movement called on the representatives of the government to meet. Should the government fail to attend their demands and reach an agreement Tanítanék will announce another two-hour demonstration similar to the one-hour protest that took place earlier. More than 15,000 citizens participated in demonstrations held across the country and all top ten high schools participated. The president of the Teachers' Union announced that if the meetings with the government fail, they will call for a one-day strike.

English: [http://budapestbeacon.com/public-policy/teachers-gearing-up ...](http://budapestbeacon.com/public-policy/teachers-gearing-up...)

Iceland

Labour dispute air traffic control not yet solved

April 29, 2016

An ongoing dispute between air traffic controllers and management delayed numerous flights and an agreement has still not been reached. Flights at Keflavík International Airport were limited to only medical or emergency flights. This is due to a collective bargaining disagreement between the Icelandic Air Traffic Controllers Association (FÍF) and airport management. Talks between the two parties have been at a standstill, and in reaction FÍF has instituted a ban on overtime duties since 6 April. A state arbitrator, who is handling the dispute, called a new meeting between the air traffic controllers and the management on 9 May.

English: <http://grapevine.is/news/2016/04/29/flight-delays-due-to-labour-dispute/>

Ireland

Partial deal at Luas – drivers dispute gets tough

April 28, 2016

Transdev, the system operator at light rail company Luas, reached agreement with three non-driver grades, raising hopes that a deal could also be agreed with drivers. However, the dispute with the drivers hardened after operator Transdev threatened to impose a 10% pay cut on drivers if they continued their strike action over pay. Siptu, the trade union representing the workers, and Transdev failed to reach a compromise on a deal for drivers, meaning that strike actions will go ahead (see earlier Newsletters). The company wrote to drivers asking them to question what Siptu hopes to achieve by continued strike action and what basis there is for the pay increase being sought.

English: [http://www.rte.ie/news ...](http://www.rte.ie/news...)

[http://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/luas-strikers-fury-over-threat-to-dock-pay ...](http://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/luas-strikers-fury-over-threat-to-dock-pay...)

[http://www.rte.ie/news ...](http://www.rte.ie/news...)

Benchmark indicators on costs

April 21, 2016

The National Competitiveness Council, established by government in 1997 as part of the Partnership 2000 Agreement, has published its latest report *Costs of Doing Business in Ireland 2016*. The report benchmarks the main costs facing enterprises, across over 50 indicators, with Chapter 3 dedicated to labour costs. It focuses on areas where Irish costs are out of line with those in key competitor countries and concentrates on costs that are largely domestically determined. While the Irish economy is experiencing rapid growth, the global economy is not proving as robust. The Council states that, in order to protect the competitiveness gains made to date, the country must continue to enhance all aspects of its competitiveness.

English: [http://www.competitiveness.ie/News-Events ...](http://www.competitiveness.ie/News-Events...)

Pay dispute at Tesco

April 18, 2016

Tesco management and unions are to set the date for conciliation talks at the Workplace Relations Commission over the company's plans to change the pay and conditions of around 1,000 of its 14,000 employees. The supermarket multinational wants to transfer pre-1996 employees from their existing

contracts to what the company calls 'modern' post-1996 contracts. Workers affected voted overwhelmingly to back strike action, saying they would lose out under the proposed changes. There was an 85% turnout and 99% of those voted to back industrial action. Workers have warned they will place pickets outside stores as soon as the company changes their pay and conditions.

English: [http://www.rte.ie/news ...](http://www.rte.ie/news...)

[http://www.irishexaminer.com/breakingnews/business/staff-will-immediately-place-pickets ...](http://www.irishexaminer.com/breakingnews/business/staff-will-immediately-place-pickets...)

Union membership delivers

April 18, 2016

Results of a survey, conducted by Mandate Trade Union, show that workers in unionised employment in the retail sector earn 30pc more than workers in the non-union sector. Workers in unionised work earn an average of €13.03 per hour compared to €10.04 for non-union workers. The survey also shows that union workers in the retail sector tend to have more secure hours and better contracts of employment.

English: [http://www.mandate.ie/news/Mandate/1166/retail-workers-in-unions-earn-30pc-more ...](http://www.mandate.ie/news/Mandate/1166/retail-workers-in-unions-earn-30pc-more...)

Italy

Italcementi workers prepare national strike

April 23, 2016

Trade unions Feneal Uil, Filca Cisl and Cgil Fillea representing Italcementi cement workers have announced a strike in response to an industrial plan, which may result in 415 dismissals this year and further 250 redundancies in 2017. The unions met in Rome and committed to go on strike after multinational HeidelbergCement, which took a major stake acquisition at Italcementi in July 2015 and released a restructuring plan, failed to address affected workers' concerns. After meeting the government, the unions said in a statement that they 'challenged the business plan presented by HeidelbergCement in the press that stipulates the reduction of 415 employees of Bergamo, with 250 additional redundancies (at production sites) which could take place in September 2017'. The unions prepared a counter-proposal, aiming to significantly decrease the number of redundancies.

English: [http://www.bwint.org/default ...](http://www.bwint.org/default...)

Metal workers mobilise

April 21, 2016

On 20 April, metalworkers held a massive successful mobilisation during a four-hour national strike across the country. In many factories and offices activities remained completely blocked. Rallies and meetings were organised at almost 100 central squares all over the country. One the most successful mobilisations took place at Comer Industries (Reggio Emilia province) at the home company of current president of Federmeccanica (the Employers' Federation of Metalworking Industries). Some 90 per cent of 430 employees went on strike, and at GE Oil & Gas in Florence, the company where the current general director of the metalworking industry organisation of employers comes from, 70 per cent went on strike. The strike was a clear signal of support to the negotiations over renewal of the national contract for metalworkers.

English: [http://www.industriall-union.org/italian-metalworkers-hold-a-successful ...](http://www.industriall-union.org/italian-metalworkers-hold-a-successful...)

The Milan mobilisation on YouTube: [https://www.youtube.com/watch ...](https://www.youtube.com/watch...)

Exploitation in logistics and tourism

April 4, 2016

The Padua University published a report on exploitation in the logistics and tourism sectors in different regions (Padua and Rimini). In the tourism sector in Rimini, there has been a gradual worsening of working conditions and a strong compression of wages since the 2000s. The logistics sector in Padua is characterized by high fragmentation: warehousing and other operations are outsourced by firms to a wide number of small companies and cooperatives. Based on field work and several interviews, both in the logistics and in the tourism sectors, the authors found recurrent patterns of serious labour exploitation. In particular, workers are confronted with non-application of collective agreements, long and irregular working hours, pressures and threats by the management, withholding of wages and benefits.

English: http://www.migrationonline.cz/italy_country_report.pdf

Modern slavery in tomato fields work

April 1, 2016

A research project by the Ethical Trading Initiative (ETI) alliance of companies, trade unions and NGOs describes a mobile, seasonal workforce in the tomato fields work, living in extreme poverty, often without water and sanitation, housed in abandoned buildings or tent cities with little or no healthcare and controlled by work gangs. The report describes how a vast army of vulnerable, often stateless North African and Eastern European migrants is controlled by illegal work-gang masters and held in slave-like conditions in rural ghettos. The calls for action come as rising numbers of migrants travel to Europe from North Africa and the Middle East, raising concerns of increased exploitation of migrant workers. Many of the workers are waiting for the state bureaucracy to process their asylum applications, leaving them with no legal right to work and with little choice but to rely on local charity or find work illegally, making them vulnerable to exploitation.

English: [http://gulfnews.com/news/europe/italy/modern-day-slaves-in-italy-s-tomato-fields ...](http://gulfnews.com/news/europe/italy/modern-day-slaves-in-italy-s-tomato-fields...)

Latvia

Pay increase for teachers

April 25, 2016

As of 1 September 2016 the salaries of teachers will increase with 200 to 300 euro according to the Education and Science Minister. In April 2016, the Ministry presented its new teacher remuneration system to the government's social partners. The minister said that salaries for preschool teachers would increase only from 1 January 2017, provided that the government solves the problem of financial flows.

English: [http://www.baltic-course.com/eng/education ...](http://www.baltic-course.com/eng/education...)

Metal plant lays off

April 20, 2016

The ailing steel company KVV Liepajas Metalurgs has already dismissed more than 100 workers, and plans to lay off another 150 workers by the end of April 2016. The management is aware of the fact that there is the risk to lose qualified workers irreversibly – people with years of experience. This will make a revival of the production process in the future more difficult. The plant, based in the south-western Liepaja port city, has been struggling with financial problems since it was acquired by the KVV Group in October 2014. KVV agreed to invest over the next 10 years.

English: [http://www.baltic-course.com/eng/markets_and_companies ...](http://www.baltic-course.com/eng/markets_and_companies...)

Trade union rally on 1 May

April 19, 2016

The Free Trade Union Confederation will hold a major rally on 1 May calling for 'respectable jobs and respectable remuneration for healthy and educated people'. The trade union of Health and Social Care Employees that is fighting for improvements in healthcare has already decided to support and participate in the May 1 rally. Participation in the planned protest campaigns in the health sector is open for every citizen.

English: [http://www.baltic-course.com/eng/legislation ...](http://www.baltic-course.com/eng/legislation...)

Liechtenstein

Trade union activity report 2015 online

April 1, 2016

The activity report 2015 of the trade union association LANV has one section on social partnership and collective bargaining. Out of the 20 existing collective agreements that LANV concluded with the Chamber of Commerce 14 agreements are generally binding; 9 of these agreements were renewed in the autumn of 2015. In manufacturing an increase of the monthly minimum wage with 150 Francs was concluded in the autumn of 2015. In the sectors and branches with a long tradition of social partnership the negotiations went relatively well. However, the negotiations in the commercial sector came to a standstill. The enforcement of generally binding collective agreements is controlled by a paritarian committee (ZPK); the ZPK has serious

problems to tackle breaches by foreign employers that post workers to the country.

German: [http://www.lanv.li/Portals/o/Content/Organisation/Jahresbericht_2015 ...](http://www.lanv.li/Portals/o/Content/Organisation/Jahresbericht_2015...)

Lithuania

Reform of overtime in parliament

April 19, 2016

The parliament has given a go-ahead of more overtime hours in the debate on the new Labour Code. The decision is not yet final – after discussing the entire Labour Code, the parliament will vote on the entire bill before proceeding to the phase of adoption. The government says that the new, more liberal Code is necessary in order to attract more investment and create new jobs. Trade unions say, however, that it will lead to a reduction of social guarantees for employees, primarily due to shorter periods of notice of termination of employment and smaller severance payments.

English: [http://www.baltic-course.com/eng/legislation ...](http://www.baltic-course.com/eng/legislation...)

Recruitment and exploitation often go hand in hand

April 4, 2016

A report in the frame of the so-called LABCIT-project documents how labour recruitment and migration function. Based on interviews the authors found that, even though many different institutions are involved in the monitoring and regulation of recruitment agencies, the number of exploitation cases, with non-respect of workers' rights and labour standards, is relatively high. Victims of labour rights violations emphasised that the relevant institutions which should act in the cases of workers exploitation are too passive and the victims feel too vulnerable to look for help.

English: http://www.migrationonline.cz/lithuania_country_report.pdf

Luxembourg

Trade union not satisfied with tax reform

April 14, 2016

Following various meetings between the government and the social partners regarding tax reform, the trade union confederation LCGB stressed that the proposed reform is not sufficient and requires further measures. The LCGB advocated for measures of tax relief for employees and pensioners including the revaluation of the meal voucher amounting to € 10.80. The union proposed other additional measures to be included in the tax reform, in particular: regular adjustment of tax rates to the increase in cost of living to prevent future wage erosion; full exemption of minimum social wage equivalent income up 5.1% of net earnings; adaptation of the structure of the tax schedule to spread and flatten the progression of different tax rates; correction of inequalities in the tax classes, which disproportionately penalises single parents compared to married couples.

French: [http://lrgb.lu/fr/2016/04/21/reforme-fiscale-un-resultat-decevant ...](http://lrgb.lu/fr/2016/04/21/reforme-fiscale-un-resultat-decevant...)

Malta

The role and function of trade unions

April 27, 2016

The Foundation for the Well Being of Society and the Centre of Labour Studies at the University of Malta have recently published the findings of a survey about trade unions. The aim of the survey was to investigate the attitudes of the general population on trade unionism in Malta. The data emerging from the survey by and large confirm the widely held view that trade unions are primarily seen as agents that strive to improve the conditions of work for their members. The data reveal that the great majority of the workers expect their union to look after their vested interest. About one out of three respondents (31 per cent) regard trade union membership as a means to improve working conditions while 40 per cent of respondents regard it as a form of personal insurance from discrimination.

English: <http://www.timesofmalta.com/articles ...>

Netherlands

PostNL will return to direct labour

April 24, 2016

Delivery company PostNL has been under fire for relying largely on a network of freelance parcel services workers who work effectively as employees but without the social security benefits. The company has now decided to offer permanent contracts to the workers in the parcel delivery because delivery workers are increasingly entering people's homes. The reasoning is that jobs for parcel delivery staff require a level of stability, a group of people who deliver a high quality service. The company thus also hopes to make an end to the dispute on the use of fake or bogus self-employed. While the parcel delivery work is highly profitable, the post-delivery work is still shrinking.

English: <http://www.dutchnews.nl/news/archives/2016/04/postnl-to-offer ...>

Minimum youth wage revision

April 21, 2016

The legal minimum wage scales for youngsters have often been criticised. The scales are among the lowest in the EU. Currently one in six of the under-23s earns the minimum wage. An 18-year-old on minimum pay earns €32 gross a day. The government has announced that the minimum wage for youngsters will be increased slightly and the age at which adult rates apply will be lowered in stages from 23 to 21 years.

English: <http://www.dutchnews.nl/news/archives/2016/04/government-poised-to-raise ...>

The current youth wage scales: <https://www.government.nl/topics/minimum-wage/contents ...>

Retired have problems to make ends meet

April 18, 2016

A survey done by interest association ANBO among 9 thousand retirees reveals that nearly 40 percent of the pensioners are struggling to get by on their retirement income. The elderly people's income and purchasing power have been under pressure for 8 years, due to cuts to pensions or non-indexation.

English: <http://www.nltimes.nl/2016/04/18/many-dutch-pensioners-unable-make-ends-meet/>

The survey results (in Dutch): <https://www.anbo.nl/sites/default/files/uploads/rapportage ...>

Pay ceiling in public sector discussed

April 12, 2016

The government prepares a new round of slashing the higher public sector salaries. The aim is to ensure no one who is paid by the taxpayer or public purse earns more than a minister's basic wage of €179,000 a year. The current limits apply to senior executives but the government wants to extend the threshold to everyone working in the public sector, including advisors and other managers. However, the proposal includes a mechanism that provides for occasional exceptions.

English: <http://www.nltimes.nl/2016/04/12/interior-min-slash-top-public-sector-salaries/>

Norway

Hotel and restaurant workers go on strike

April 24, 2016

Around 3,500 workers at 363 hotels and restaurants were called out on strike on 24 April, after nearly 12 hours of negotiations in overtime failed to produce a settlement with hotel and restaurant employers. The action disrupted operations at the hotels and restaurants involved but also at a string of canteens for both private and public sector workers, including those at the parliament building (Stortinget), government ministries, the national hospital (Rikshospitalet) and the Oslo Police District's headquarters. Trade union Fellesforbundet representing the hotel and restaurant workers and the organisation representing hotel and restaurant employers (NHO Reiseliv) failed to resolve their differences despite efforts of a state mediator.

English: <http://www.newsenglish.no/2016/04/23/hotel-restaurant-workers-go-on-strike/>

No longer posted workers at Rowan

April 4, 2016

A settlement has been reached in the forthcoming court case which was set to start on 18 April on the issue of Secondment Agreements in the rig company Rowan Norway. Global offshore contract driller Rowan has agreed with Industri Energi to not use the so-called Secondment Agreements in the company. Norwegian law does not address Secondment and people who are employed on such agreements are allegedly not covered by the Working Environment Act. The deal means that those currently employed on Secondment Agreements and continue to work on the Norwegian Continental Shelf will be offered a Norwegian standard contract and employment in Rowan Norway Ltd.

English: [http://www.thedailystar.net/business/global-business/norway-union-and-employers ...](http://www.thedailystar.net/business/global-business/norway-union-and-employers...)

Deal in industry averts strike

April 3, 2016

The main industrial trade union Fellesforbundet reached a wage deal with employers, averting a strike affecting more than 26,000 workers. The deal with the employers' Federation of Norwegian Industries (Norsk Industri) came some 12 hours after a self-imposed deadline had passed. The outcome of the talks sets a benchmark for negotiations for other workers, including those in service industries and the public sector. Wage negotiations for the major oil unions have not yet started. A key part of the deal was extending the time workers who have lost their jobs can receive unemployment benefits from 30 weeks to 52 weeks. The right-wing government agreed to the change, despite being against such a move ahead of the talks. In return, the parties agreed a moderate growth in wages of 2.4 percent overall.

English: [http://www.euronews.com/business-newswires/3175222-norway-union ...](http://www.euronews.com/business-newswires/3175222-norway-union...)

Poland

Long-term pay deal for dockworkers

April 20, 2016

The dockworkers' trade union section of Solidarność and Deepwater Container Terminal (DCT) Gdansk finalised a collective agreement. The agreement brings an end to a bitter three-year dispute that has included complaints from the union over victimisation and harassment by the employer and the firing of union leaders. There has been support from the global trade union community with demonstrations at DCT Gdansk and in other European countries targeting the bank that owns the port. The historic agreement, valid until 31 March 2019, covers pay rates, hours of work, holidays and general conditions for 600 workers at a fast-growing new terminal. A second terminal is due to open next year and the workforce will grow to 1500 workers as the port seeks to become the main gateway to Russia and central Europe.

English: [http://www.itfglobal.org/en/news-events/news/2016/april/celebration-as-polish ...](http://www.itfglobal.org/en/news-events/news/2016/april/celebration-as-polish...)

Portugal

Massive protest against Uber

April 29, 2016

The taxi-drivers organised nationwide action on 29 April to protest against the existence of the app-summoned, private ride-providing service Uber. Taxis in the main cities staged a go-slow on Friday, crawling along the cities' main stretches to draw attention to their cause. Earlier on, the country's two largest taxi organisations, FTP and ANTRAL, launched a week of protest action, with a campaign in which they urge taxi-users and professionals to unite in 'the fight against Uber'. In their joint manifesto, which has been sent to Parliament, the associations argue that Uber is illegal because the service does not respect, obey, nor does it submit to, legal rules which regulate the activity of taxi transportation.

English: [http://www.theportugalnews.com/news/taxis-to-stage-massive-nationwide-protest ...](http://www.theportugalnews.com/news/taxis-to-stage-massive-nationwide-protest...)

Two weeks of strike in ports

April 11, 2016

The dockworker trade union, Sindicato dos Estivadores, Trabalhadores do Tráfego e Conferentes Marítimos (SETC), issued notice of planned strike action beginning on 20 April 2016 at the ports of Lisbon, Setúbal, and Figueira da Foz. The Port of Lisbon will see stoppage at all of its terminals involving movement of cargo, while Setúbal and Figueira da Foz will stop work on cargo ships rerouted from Lisbon. The strike action has to influence the settlement of a new collective agreement between port workers and operators.

English: [http://shipandbunker.com/news/world/834031-portuguese-ports-to-be-hit ...](http://shipandbunker.com/news/world/834031-portuguese-ports-to-be-hit...)

Romania

Marching miners and energy workers reach Bucharest

April 18, 2016

After 7 days and 320 km of walking, miners and energy workers reached Bucharest. The march aimed to draw the government's attention to problems in the energy sector, but also save some 800 mining jobs. State-owned energy company Oltenia Energy Complex had proposed laying off the staff after reporting yearly losses of almost 200 million euro in 2015. On arrival in the capital, delegates from the National Quarry and Energy trade union federation had a meeting with the Deputy Prime Minister and government officials.

English: [http://www.euronews.com/2016/04/18/i-would-walk-200-miles ...](http://www.euronews.com/2016/04/18/i-would-walk-200-miles...)

Violation of labour standards

April 4, 2016

A brochure, published by Conect Association, reports on an investigation of migrant labour exploitation among workers that go abroad. The report focuses on two sectors in which severe labour exploitation continues to occur: construction and domestic work. Although many migrants have qualifications and skills, they are willing to accept low skilled or unskilled jobs, precarious working conditions and lower wages, thus being more vulnerable to exploitation and rights violations.

English: http://www.migrationonline.cz/romania_country_report.pdf

Serbia

Public sector pay increase can be discussed

April 1, 2016

The prime minister has stated that he has no doubt an increase of incomes can be discussed with the IMF by the end of the year if positive economic trends continue. He pointed in particular to the education and health sectors, the military, the police and pensioners. The country is having its fourth and a fifth review of the agreement with the IMF in June 2016.

English: [http://www.b92.net/eng/news/business ...](http://www.b92.net/eng/news/business...)

Slovakia

More job cuts and pay deal at US Steel

April 19, 2016

The Kosice-based company U.S. Steel continues to reduce its labour force. After it scrapped 29 white-collar positions as of 1 April (see our March Newsletter), the steelmaker will cut another 29 jobs as of 1 May as part of its organisational changes. The trade unions are unhappy about the most recent move, pointing out that the company did not consult the introduction of a new organisational structure with them sufficiently in advance. This time, workers attending to telecommunications facilities or those measuring noise levels or dust nuisance at workplaces will have to leave. On 17 April the social partners signed a collective agreement addressing labour legislation and wage issues for 2016-2020. Based on it the company's average wage (some €1,570 in 2015) should increase by over 3 percent by 2020. The collective agreement, equally as the previous one, bans mass lay-offs, i.e. laying-off more than 30 employees at once. Trade unions opine that the

company is avoiding this by scrapping of only 29 work positions during one month.

English: <http://spectator.sme.sk/c/20141778/more-job-cuts-in-steelmaker-in-kosice.html>

Slovenia

Unions satisfied with result of strike in energy sector

April 21, 2016

The Energy Sector Trade Union organised a general strike in the sector. A three-week collective action in the energy sector started on 3 April, with the umbrella trade union seeking a restructuring of the industry and the suspension of layoffs. Both the government, towards which the strike was directed, and employers claimed that the action was unwarranted. The strike was first suspended and later on ended after it was agreed that the issues which triggered the strike will be addressed in dialogue.

English: [http://www.rtv slo.si/news-in-english/energy-union-an-important-step ...](http://www.rtv slo.si/news-in-english/energy-union-an-important-step...)

<http://www.sloveniatimes.com/energy-sector-workers-go-on-strike>

Exploited workers get direct job

April 11, 2016

After the contractor Gozdno Gospodarstvo Postojna terminated the contract with its subcontractor Veles, which was recriminated by the Financial Administration and labour inspection of exploitation of foreign workers, 90 workers were directly employed by its business unit Marof Trade. The company signed contracts with them for the duration of three months, with a possibility of extension, and with an obligatory insurance.

English: [http://www.rtv slo.si/news-in-english/better-times-for-exploited-foreign-workers ...](http://www.rtv slo.si/news-in-english/better-times-for-exploited-foreign-workers...)

Spain

Journal workers announce massive action

April 30, 2016

Workers at El Mundo publisher Unidad Editorial are to strike for 24 hours on 3 May after a first day of talks with management ended without agreement. The strike will involve workers across Unidad Editorial from three major Spanish newspapers: generalist daily El Mundo, business daily Expansión and the country's leading sports newspaper Marca. The full list of measures announced by the workers committee includes four different types of strike and a reform demand of senior management, including Unidad Editorial chairman's resignation. The workers of Unidad Editorial consider that the savage lay-off plan is being imposed by Italian owner RCS, due to its financial situation, and not because organisational or economic causes within Unidad Editorial justify it.

English: [https://www.thespainreport.com/articles ...](https://www.thespainreport.com/articles...)

Unemployment on the increase

April 28, 2016

Alarming news came from the Economically Active Population Survey (EAPS), conducted since 1964. It is a quarterly continuous research focusing on families, whose main purpose is obtaining data on workforce and its several categories (employed, unemployed), as well as on population out of the labour force (economically inactive population). Employment registers a decrease of 64,600 persons in the 1st quarter of 2016 as compared with the 4th quarter of 2015 (-0.36%), reaching a total of 18,029,600 employed persons. The number of unemployed persons increased by 11,900 persons (0.25%), standing at 4,791,400 persons.

English: [http://www.ine.es/dyngs/INEbase/en/operacion ...](http://www.ine.es/dyngs/INEbase/en/operacion...)

Press releases with English graphs: [http://www.ine.es/en/prensa ...](http://www.ine.es/en/prensa...)

[http://www.ine.es/en/daco ...](http://www.ine.es/en/daco...)

Talks at Santander bank on dismissals

April 6, 2016

Bank Santander is to cut up to 1,200 jobs by the end of 2016. Santander management met union representatives in Madrid to start talks that could affect as much as 5 percent of the staff in its home market. Some of the cuts would be related to the closure of 450 branches the bank announced earlier, and others would be from central offices or other branches. The management told the trade unions that it intends to lose the workers via voluntary redundancies and early retirements.

English: <https://www.thespainreport.com/newsitems ...>

Sweden

Food workers mobilise against closure

April 4, 2016

Food workers trade union *Livs* is fighting plans to shut down the Findus frozen food factory in Bjuv, which would throw 450 workers out of a job. On 31 March, the CEO of Nomad Foods, an investment vehicle registered in the British Virgin Islands, came to the factory, called all staff to a meeting, announced that the factory would close at the end of 2016. Nomad was founded in 2014 as an investment vehicle in search of brands to devour and assets to strip. It became Nomad Foods - dedicated to assembling 'a global portfolio of best-in-class food companies and brands' - with the purchase last year of frozen food manufacturers Iglo Group and Findus, European food companies that have gone through successive rounds of financial vandalism at the hands of their previous private equity owners. Pressure to deliver immediate returns threatens jobs and livelihoods throughout the company. Now the axe threatens to fall on Sweden.

English: <http://www.iuf.org/cgi-bin/campaigns/show ...>

Switzerland

Poll indicates failure of basic income referendum

April 29, 2016

A proposal to introduce an unconditional basic income appears to enjoy little public support. A poll published ahead of a nationwide referendum on 5 June shows the campaign failing to convince voters and heading for a defeat, with just 24% of respondents in favour. There are five issues on the ballot sheet. Next to the initiative to introduce an unconditional basic income, there is a proposal by consumer rights groups to boost public services and a plan by the political right to provide extra tax funds to road transport. Two decisions by parliament are also at stake, a reform of the asylum laws and a law on the pre-implantation genetic diagnosis.

English: <http://www.swissinfo.ch/eng/in-depth/vote-june ...>

Turkey

Hugo Boss continues with serious breaches of labour rights

April 7, 2016

In March, Hugo Boss dismissed an employee who supports the Teksif trade union organising at her factory. The German-based brand has also increased pressure on two other leading union members. The objective is clear: frighten workers away from joining a union. Based on earlier disputes the Boss corporate management told IndustriALL, its affiliate Teksif and multiple third parties that it will remain neutral in the Teksif organising drive in Izmir. But at the same time intimidation, threats, harassment and dismissals continue against workers who support the union. The highly critical Fair Labour Association report published in January 2016 highlights a long list of serious violations of Turkish Law, the FLA code of conduct and Hugo Boss's own code of conduct at the Hugo Boss plant in Izmir.

English: <http://www.industrialunion.org/hugo-boss-continues-to-treat-turkish-workers ...>

The FLA report: <http://www.fairlabor.org/affiliate/hugo-boss>

Occupational fatalities on the increase

April 5, 2016

At least 415 workers died in the first three months of 2016, according to a monthly report released by a non-governmental organisation dealing with worker health and safety issues, with at least 157 worker deaths in March 2016 alone. The Worker Health and Work Safety Assembly (İSIGM) report, compiled with data in print and online media, labour unions and organisations notes that the sectors where the most worker deaths occur are agriculture, construction and transportation. İSIGM is an NGO comprised of workers, worker relatives, doctors, engineers, academics, journalists, and lawyers who deal with labour issues. The number of worker deaths in March has increased year-on-year by 9% compared to the same month of 2015.

English: [http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/at-least-415-turks-died-in-work-accidents ...](http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/at-least-415-turks-died-in-work-accidents...)

Collective agreement for food workers at Kent Gida

April 3, 2016

The Food & Beverage Industry Employers Association (TUGIS) representing the company Kent Gida reached an agreement with Tek Gida labour union on a collective agreement at its Gebze factory covering the period January 2016 to December 2017. According to the agreement the trade union members will receive a salary raise of 20 percent. The confectionery company Kent Gida, engaged in the production and sale of candy, chewing gum, chocolate and cocoa products, is a subsidiary of Cadbury Schweppes Overseas Ltd.

English: [http://www.reuters.com/article ...](http://www.reuters.com/article...)

United Kingdom

Blacklisting scandal leads again to compensation pay

April 29, 2016

Thanks to a very active core of trade union activists, the longstanding trials and juridical fights for a compensation to workers blacklisted because of their trade union background or the simple fact that they were active as safety reps comes to results. Some of the former carpenters and bricklayers who had their careers ruined when they were listed as troublemakers for requesting better working conditions will receive compensation pay. The financial settlement is expected to run into tens of millions and before a High Court hearing into the blacklisting scandal. It is the second wave of pay-outs; earlier this year 71 former bricklayers and carpenters were awarded up to £200,000 compensation each in a settlement totalling £5.6m.

English: [http://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/britains-biggest-building-firms-agree ...](http://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/britains-biggest-building-firms-agree...)
[http://www.theguardian.com/business/2016/apr/29/blacklisted-workers-secure-compensation ...](http://www.theguardian.com/business/2016/apr/29/blacklisted-workers-secure-compensation...)

Non-payment of national living wage taken to Brussels

April 28, 2016

A row over the Grimsby-based Icelandic Seachill, accused of paying for the new 'national living wage' by slashing overtime rates, has been taken to the European Commission, as the workforce faces the prospect of dismissal. Officers of trade union Unite handed in a letter to the firm's Icelandic owners at the Brussels Seafood Expo Global, protesting at the UK bosses changing workers' contracts without agreement. Unite has highlighted the hard-line stance of the UK management who, the union says, are pressuring the workers to sign new contracts which will see their pay packets significantly reduced.

English: [http://www.unitetheunion.org/news/grimsby-fish-firms-national-living-wage-row ...](http://www.unitetheunion.org/news/grimsby-fish-firms-national-living-wage-row...)

Unions succeeded in watering down controversial trade union bill

April 27, 2016

In an interesting blog the modifications in the controversial trade union bill are discussed. The government has dropped some of the most damaging proposals. However, according to the author of the blog, some harmful aspects of the draft bill are still in the text, like the unfair strike ballot turnout thresholds, rules about identifying picket leaders to the police and new membership rules that will cost the unions time and money.

English: [http://touchstoneblog.org.uk/2016/04/union-campaign-scores-win-big-changes ...](http://touchstoneblog.org.uk/2016/04/union-campaign-scores-win-big-changes...)

Mandatory minimum wage reduces depression

April 11, 2016

Through statistically modelling, researchers found a significant improvement in the overall level of mental health in those receiving the mandatory minimum wage equivalent to the effect of taking antidepressants. In a paper, published in the journal *Health Economics*, the researchers conclude that wage rises for low-paid workers reduce feelings of anxiety and depression partly, at least, because they are under less financial strain. The researchers analysed data from the British Household Panel Survey, a nationally representative longitudinal survey of approximately 5,500 households and 10,000 individuals, covering 1991 to 2009. They focused, in particular, on survey responses in the months leading up to the introduction of the national minimum wage and the months directly afterwards.

English: [http://medicalxpress.com/news/2016-04-effect-national-minimum-wage-similar ...](http://medicalxpress.com/news/2016-04-effect-national-minimum-wage-similar...)

The paper: [http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi ...](http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi...)

Junior doctors fight ‘unsafe and unfair’ contract

April 6, 2016

Nearly 50,000 junior doctors are currently fighting a new contract proposed by the conservative government. In February 2019, the Health Secretary announced that the government will be imposing the contract despite ongoing industrial action. This move led to the escalation of strike action that was approved by 98 per cent of junior doctors in a ballot late 2015. Following walkouts in January, February and March, 2016, junior doctors across England staged two 48-hour strikes in April. The disputed contract is part of the Conservative Party’s healthcare reform agenda, which is intended to lead to a ‘seven-day National Health Service (NHS)’. To facilitate this, the new junior doctors’ contract would extend core working hours to cover Saturdays 07.00 to 19.00 as well as weekdays until 22.00. To compensate for the loss of extra pay for unsociable hours, basic pay would be increased. Industry professionals say the new contract is neither safe nor fair. They are calling for more resources for the overstretched and underfunded NHS.

English: [http://www.equaltimes.org/junior-doctors-in-england-fight ...](http://www.equaltimes.org/junior-doctors-in-england-fight...)

For more information, please contact the editor Jan Cremers, Amsterdam Institute for Advanced Labour Studies (AIAS) cbn-aias@uva.nl or the Head of communications at the ETUI, Willy De Backer wdebacker@etui.org. For previous full issues of the *Collective bargaining newsletter* please visit www.etui.org/E-Newsletters/Collective-bargaining-newsletter. Since June 2013 readers can consult our archive and search through all articles in our database at www.cbnarchive.eu.

You may find further information on the ETUI at www.etui.org, and on the AIAS at www.uva-aias.net.

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