

collective bargaining

Issue 4/2017 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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contents

European sources

Transport workers rally for fair transport
The European Pillar of Social Rights
Report on middle income
Eurofound report: Decline in social mobility
Labour cost data updated
An assessment of the Youth Guarantee
Social dialogue and the effect of the crisis

Austria

High number of posted workers underpaid
Working time assessed

Belgium

Social dispute at Ford Lommel
ING workers can stay at home
Social partners agree on mobility policy

Bulgaria

CITUB expects relaunch of tripartite talks
Collective agreement for miners

Croatia

Construction workers quit company

Cyprus

Limassol port stackers vote on Dubai Ports' proposal

Czech Republic

Social workers' union launches pay increase campaign
Higher strike frequency

Denmark

Tripartite agreement functions
Denmark in figures 2017

Estonia

Health care workers plan to strike

Finland

Fewer strikes in 2016

Unions well represented in municipal councils
Metal and industrial workers to strike in Tampere region

France

CGT calls on EDF board to reject Fessenheim closure
Louis Vuitton and workers extend talks after walkout
The right to be offline at Crédit Agricole

Germany

Amazon uses peer pressure on sick leave
Pay dispute at Tesla
Minimum wage not enough for single parents
Ranking of labour costs
Pocket with statistical bargaining data

Greece

Protest strike against austerity announced
Call for strike in retail against Sunday opening
Postal workers strike against outsourcing
State ordered to pay abused fruit pickers
The IMF-dictate ruins the social model

Hungary

Transit workers receive 15% pay increase
Law that restricts workers' rights

Iceland

Mind the pay gap

Ireland

Public service staff to get 6% pay rise over three years
Full pay restoration top of agenda of teachers
Bus Eireann workers return to work

Italy

Alitalia workforce rejects rescue plan
Households in economic difficulties
Autostrade strike

Latvia

Labour market data show mixed picture

Liechtenstein

Provisional labour market figures 2016

Lithuania

Economic growth and inequality

Luxembourg

Conciliation talks about aerial operations
Detailed labour market data

Malta

Industrial action at Malta International Airport

Netherlands

Central banker repeats call for pay hike
Pay dispute at retailer Jumbo

Four-year contract model for retail proposed
Teachers' strike looms

Norway

Agenda for social dialogue

Poland

Wages improved in recent months

Portugal

Early-retirement penalty will disappear
Azores Airline workers on strike
Doctors' strike avoided?

Romania

Uber protests leads to taxi law change
Museum professionals and researchers organise protest

Serbia

Wage data updated

Slovakia

Rules for opening the market criticised
Volkswagen may face strike
Diverging views on minimum wage

Slovenia

Better pay on the agenda

Spain

Negotiations for a framework agreement pending
National labour council in the making
Strike brings employers in food processing to the table
Unions do not agree with redundancy procedure

Sweden

Legislation on posting approved
The hotel sector signs an agreement
Metal workers sign agreement

Switzerland

Thermo Fisher workers fight for their jobs
Union wants special coaching for older workers

Turkey

Prison sentences for union officials

United Kingdom

Complex and difficult talks at Royal Mail
The pension liabilities of Tata steel
The failings in the skills system
Unions demonstrate over undercutting in construction
Gig economy contracts questioned
Gender pay gap regulation starts

European sources

Transport workers rally for fair transport

April 28, 2017

Trade union activists from road passenger and freight transport gathered together in the European quarter at the Schuman roundabout to hold the European Commission responsible for the future of the driver profession and of the road transport sector. The trade unions, affiliated to the European Transport Federation, criticise the fact that the planned measures by the EU Commission for the road sector are exclusively market oriented and contain no measures to improve the living and working conditions of drivers. The unrestricted mobility of goods and people is regarded as one of the key instruments for single market integration and more growth. However, the liberalisation process is by no means accompanied by a harmonisation of employment and social standards.

English: <http://www.etf-europe.org/etf-news-online.cfm/newsdetail/11572>

The ETF Fair Transport Europe vision paper: [http://www.etf-europe.org/files/extranet ...](http://www.etf-europe.org/files/extranet...)

The European Pillar of Social Rights

April 26, 2017

The European Commission presented its initiative of a European Pillar of Social Rights. The Pillar is primarily conceived for the euro area but applicable to all EU Member States wishing to be part of it. It sets out 20 key principles and rights to support fair and well-functioning labour markets and welfare systems that are structured around three categories: equal opportunities and access to the labour market; fair working conditions and social protection and inclusion. The European Commission flanks the Pillar with a number of further concrete legislative and non-legislative initiatives such as on the work-life balance of parents and carers, on the information of workers, and on access to social protection and on working time. In a comment, the ETUC appreciated that the Commission considers the need for better enforcement of existing European social legislation and rights, and urged it to bring forward proposals quickly.

English: [http://ec.europa.eu/social/main ...](http://ec.europa.eu/social/main...)

The ETUC comment: [https://www.etuc.org/press/no-future-without-more-social-europe ...](https://www.etuc.org/press/no-future-without-more-social-europe...)

Report on middle income

April 24, 2017

A PEW report reveals that the fortunes of the middle classes in Western Europe's largest economies are moving in opposite directions. From 1991 to 2010, the shares of adults living in middle-income households increased in France, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom, but shrank in Germany, Italy and Spain. Among the 11 Western European countries examined in the report, Ireland experienced the most rapid growth in income from 1991 to 2010 and the biggest expansion of the middle class. Several other countries in Western Europe also experienced large gains in household income. However, rising incomes did not translate into expanding middle classes in these countries.

English: <http://www.pewglobal.org/2017/04/24/middle-class-fortunes-in-western-europe/>

The report: [http://assets.pewresearch.org/wp-content ...](http://assets.pewresearch.org/wp-content...)

Eurofound report: Decline in social mobility

April 19, 2017

Younger Europeans are likely to have fewer opportunities for upward social mobility than preceding generations. Most common indicators to measure social mobility include either income or occupation. Social mobility in Europe seems to have stagnated with opportunities for upward social mobility only increasing in a minority of EU countries for all age groups; in some Member States there is even evidence of decline in social mobility. These are the main findings of Eurofound's report Social mobility in the EU, which is the first of its kind to look at the issue throughout the European Union.

English: [https://www.eurofound.europa.eu/news/news-articles/diverging-trends ...](https://www.eurofound.europa.eu/news/news-articles/diverging-trends...)

The report: [https://www.eurofound.europa.eu/sites/default ...](https://www.eurofound.europa.eu/sites/default...)

Labour cost data updated

April 6, 2017

Eurostat updated its webpage with hourly labour costs. In 2016, average hourly labour costs were estimated at 25.4 euro in the EU-28 and at 29.8 euro in the euro area (EA-19). However, this average masks significant gaps between EU Member States, with hourly labour costs ranging between 4.4 euro and 42.0 euro. The countries at the bottom of the list (below 10 euro per hour) are Bulgaria (4.4), followed by Romania (5.5), Lithuania (7.3), Latvia (7.5), Hungary (8.3) and Poland (8.6). Between 2015 and 2016, hourly labour costs in

the whole economy rose by 1.6% in the EU and by 1.4% in the euro area. While being part of the lower wage bracket, the Baltic countries saw the strongest increase within the euro area at 7.5% in Lithuania, 6.4% in Latvia and 5.6% in Estonia. For member states outside the euro area, expressed in their national currency, the largest rises in hourly labour costs in the whole economy were registered in Romania (+12.7%) and Bulgaria (+7.8%). The only decrease was observed in Italy with its wages going down by 0.8%.

English: http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Hourly_labour_costs

An assessment of the Youth Guarantee

April 4, 2017

The European Court of Auditors published a report that examines the progress made by the EU Youth Guarantee in ensuring that under 25's receive an offer of employment, education, apprenticeship or training within four months of leaving school or becoming unemployed. The results fall short of expectations with regard to providing a good quality offer to all NEETs (those not in employment, education or training). In the introduction the Auditors state that besides the financial consequences borne directly by young people, long periods of unemployment also have a negative effect in terms of future employability, increased risk of poverty, social exclusion and their role in society as a whole. In addition, there is a risk that talent and skills are not used optimally. The report includes several interesting graphs and figures.

English: [http://www.eca.europa.eu/en/Pages ...](http://www.eca.europa.eu/en/Pages...)

The report (also available in other languages): [http://www.eca.europa.eu/Lists/ECADocuments ...](http://www.eca.europa.eu/Lists/ECADocuments...)

Social dialogue and the effect of the crisis

April 1, 2017

The ILO, in cooperation with the European Commission, presented on 30 March 2017 a book on the evolution of social dialogue in various EU Member States in the post-crisis period. The book brings together country case studies from eleven EU Member States, which document emerging trends in national social dialogue, focusing on developments since 2013. The authors shed light on the many factors that have influenced recent social dialogue and industrial relations developments, including the national economic and political context, the effectiveness of bipartite and tripartite institutions, and collective bargaining.

English summary: [http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public ...](http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public...)

French summary: [http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public ...](http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public...)

Spanish summary: [http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public ...](http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public...)

The report (English): [http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public ...](http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public...)

Austria

High number of posted workers underpaid

April 25, 2017

A legal advice of AK Vienna shows that many posted workers receive only one-third of the pay which they are entitled to under the collective agreement. The reports of the enforcement authorities show that tens of thousands of the more than 190,000 work assignments declared as posting or transferring employment in 2016 are in fact equivalent to permanent employment in Austria. These workers are simply redistributed from one foreign company to another. Some of these foreign companies (i.e. in the transport sector) are apparently controlled by Austrian companies and serve exclusively to circumvent labour laws.

German: [https://www.arbeiterkammer.at/service/presse/Sicherheit_fuer ...](https://www.arbeiterkammer.at/service/presse/Sicherheit_fuer...)

Working time assessed

April 11, 2017

A report of the Institute of Economic Research analyses the duration, scheduling and distribution of the weekly working time of employees. The main findings are: working time is unequally distributed between women and men. About a quarter of the employees are not satisfied with their current working time. Existing instruments to adapt working time in the fields of family, education and labour market are outlined as well as reform options which support a gender time gap reduction and a life-course perspective.

German: [https://www.arbeiterkammer.at/interessenvertretung/arbeitszeit ...](https://www.arbeiterkammer.at/interessenvertretung/arbeitszeit...)

The report (English): <http://www.wifo.ac.at> ...

Belgium

Social dispute at Ford Lommel

April 25, 2017

Workers at the Ford plant in Lommel prepare actions after a growing discontent with job descriptions. Part of the Lommel workers came over from the closed Genk plant. Trade unions representatives and experts have examined the job descriptions and formulated suggestions to the management. However, the Ford management so far has neglected the advice. The problems are related to the unequal pay conditions and the scaling. The unions have the impression that the refusal comes from the international Ford management.

English: <https://gopressmobility.be/2017/04/25/social-thunder-clouds-fords-proving-ground/>

ING workers can stay at home

April 20, 2017

The ING bank has decided to keep 1,500 older employees at home, out of work. The bank decided to make 3,000 employees redundant by 2021. In order to avoid dismissals as much as possible, the bank offered some 1,500 older people the option to stay at home in future, keeping the lion's share of their wage. This is in fact a kind of early retirement, something which the federal government is trying to abolish to keep as many people in work as long as possible.

English: [http://deredactie.be/cm/vrtnieuws.english/News ...](http://deredactie.be/cm/vrtnieuws.english/News...)

Social partners agree on mobility policy

April 5, 2017

The trade unions and the employers' organisations have agreed on the basic principles of a mobility policy. They vetoed a proposal of the government of a wage increase in exchange for a company car. Their opinion is that a mobility budget has to be spend on mobility first and the unused funds should be taxed. The trade unions fear that otherwise the social security system will suffer. For the government it will be difficult to ignore this unanimous advice.

English: <https://gopressmobility.be/2017/04/05/social-partners-veto-cash-cars/>

Bulgaria

CITUB expects relaunch of tripartite talks

April 30, 2017

The leader of the Confederation of Independent Trade Unions said to expect a restart of the dialogue at the National Council of Trilateral Cooperation before the formulation of the new programme of governance. According to CITUB, the system of social assistance must be reformed without a reduction of the financing; the poorest pensioners can receive a bonus through the social assistance system. CITUB presented earlier on at the National Assembly registry a package of legislative amendments that should stop the so-called 'modern slavery': non-payment of salaries, insurance, benefits and outstanding social commitments.

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

Collective agreement for miners

April 6, 2017

The signing of a collective agreement ended a conflict between the miners at the Obrochishte manganese mine in North-eastern Bulgaria and the mine's owner. The signing of the agreement was announced by the national ombudsman who has been actively involved in the efforts to resolve a dispute between the miners and their employer. The miners have been in a cycle of strikes for a month, protesting over unpaid wages. They also demanded a pay rise and a new collective agreement to address their grievances.

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

Croatia

Construction workers quit company

April 9, 2017

Hundreds of workers of the construction company Vijadukt are leaving the company as they have not received their salaries for 2 months. According to the unions several dozens of workers have stopped working for the company in the last weeks.

English: [https://www.total-croatia-news.com/business/18054-hundreds-of-workers ...](https://www.total-croatia-news.com/business/18054-hundreds-of-workers-...)

Cyprus

Limassol port stackers vote on Dubai Ports' proposal

April 4, 2017

Dubai Ports, which is in charge of the general cargo business at the Limassol port, submitted a new proposal in an attempt to resolve the labour dispute with the stacker members of the trade unions SEK and PEO. The port cargo staff will vote on whether they will accept the company's improved proposal made during a meeting at the Ministry of Transport.

English: <http://cyprusbusinessmail.com/?p=43161>

Czech Republic

Social workers' union launches pay increase campaign

April 11, 2017

The trade union of health and social care workers (OSZSP) has launched a campaign for an increase in employees' pay with the motto 'End of cheap labour in social services'. The union wants the government to transfer social workers to the same pay categories that are used for nurses. The highest gross monthly pay of workers in social services is about 18,000 crowns including overtime, weekend and night hours in a situation where the average wage in the country was 29,320 crowns in the last quarter of 2016. The government has reacted by explaining that they are planning a reduction of a number of pay categories from nine to six as from July 2017 and that will improve the remuneration of workers in the public sector.

English: [http://www.praguemonitor.com/2017/04/11/czech-social-workers-union-launches ...](http://www.praguemonitor.com/2017/04/11/czech-social-workers-union-launches-...)

Higher strike frequency

April 6, 2017

A wave of workers' strikes for higher salaries has reached the country. Bus drivers in three regions went on strike on 6 April 2017. The week before, employees of the Skoda Auto car maker went on strike. The trade unions of the Mitas tyre producer announced that they would stop working on 11 April 2017. Shortly before Christmas, a part of the employees of the Ceska posta state-run postal services company went on strike. The leader of the Kovo metallurgic union association, said even more protests may come due to the company's unwillingness to raise the pay although they are faring well. Notwithstanding the increase of strikes, trade union confederation CMKOS prefers to go for an agreement with the firms rather than go on strike.

English: [http://praguemonitor.com/2017/04/06/hn-czech-workers ...](http://praguemonitor.com/2017/04/06/hn-czech-workers-...)

Denmark

Tripartite agreement functions

April 12, 2017

Increasing numbers of refugees have found success in finding work, according to a newly-released analysis. The Confederation of Danish Employers (Dansk Arbejdsgiverforening, DA) says the positive news can in

part be put down to the tripartite agreement the government entered into with businesses and trade union representatives in 2016. Under the agreement, a so-called 'basic integration education programme' (integrationsgrunduddannelse, IGU), was introduced, aiming to put refugees in short-term jobs at an apprentice salary level of between 50 to 120 kroner (6.7 to 16.1 euro) per hour.

English: [https://www.thelocal.dk/jobs/article/more-immigrants-finding-jobs ...](https://www.thelocal.dk/jobs/article/more-immigrants-finding-jobs...)

Denmark in figures 2017

April 5, 2017

The statistical office produces every year an overview of data and figures. In the 2017 edition one section is dedicated to labour market developments, another to income and earnings. Labour market participation is among the highest in Europe. An important reason for this is that women are more frequently part of the labour force. Only Sweden and the Netherlands have a higher activity rate among women. The highest average monthly earnings are accounted for by men engaged in managerial jobs, while the lowest earnings are accounted for by women performing other manual work. Within each occupation group, there are differences between the various tasks performed by men and women, which is one of the reasons why men account for higher average earnings than women.

English: [http://www.dst.dk/Site/Dst/Udgivelser ...](http://www.dst.dk/Site/Dst/Udgivelser...)

Estonia

Health care workers plan to strike

April 13, 2017

The medical and health services trade unions are planning to start a strike on May 15 to demand additional funding for the sector. The unions are planning to take the action because they estimate that the health care system has a shortfall of more than 70 million euro compared with the actual need for the treatment of patients and funding is missing for the treatment of more than 200,000 patients.

English: [http://www.baltictimes.com/estonian_health_care_workers_planning ...](http://www.baltictimes.com/estonian_health_care_workers_planning...)

Finland

Fewer strikes in 2016

April 28, 2017

Latest data show that there were fewer cases of industrial action such as strikes and walkouts than there were in 2015. So few, in fact, that the figure is the second-lowest since documenting began in 1975. There were only 69 cases of industrial action in 2016, compared to 163 cases in the previous year. Some 7,300 employees from various sectors took part in protest actions last year. 2005 was the busiest year of the 2000s in terms of work protests, as the paper industry was in crisis at the time. Statistics from the 1970s and 80s show that in some years more than one thousand cases of industrial action were recorded.

English: [http://yle.fi/uutiset/osasto/news/far_fewer_industrial_actions_strikes ...](http://yle.fi/uutiset/osasto/news/far_fewer_industrial_actions_strikes...)

Unions well represented in municipal councils

April 20, 2017

A large number of trade union members were elected onto the municipal councils in the local elections. The municipal elections took place in the 295 municipalities on April 9. As a clear majority of Finns in working life are organised in trade unions, at least a couple of thousand of the new councillors are members of the unions. Those elected from among the unions belonging to SAK and STTK trade union confederations were mostly Social Democrats. The Left league is also well represented.

English: [http://heikkijokinen.info/en/trade-union-news ...](http://heikkijokinen.info/en/trade-union-news...)

Metal and industrial workers to strike in Tampere region

April 20, 2017

Some 1,500 metal and industrial workers in the Tampere area were striking on 20 April 2017 to protest government measures that they say are eroding workers' standing of living. The industrial action affected 16 companies in the Tampere region. The trade union organising the industrial action claimed that the government seems to have adopted the ideological goal of undermining the status of workers and the trade union movement.

English: [http://yle.fi/uutiset/osasto/news/up_to_1500_metal_and_industrial_workers ...](http://yle.fi/uutiset/osasto/news/up_to_1500_metal_and_industrial_workers...)

France

CGT calls on EDF board to reject Fessenheim closure

April 9, 2017

Trade union CGT has called on workers' representatives on the board of state-controlled utility EDF to reject the shutdown of the Fessenheim nuclear plant. The CGT is against the closure because it says it would result in job losses. The union said in a statement that the Fessenheim plant is safe, and it is recognised as such by the Nuclear Safety Authority, adding that the plant contributes to the country's energy security. The union urged its members to picket the headquarters of the company during the board meeting to keep pressure on the board members. The closure of the 1,800 megawatts plant was an election promise of outgoing President Francois Hollande in 2012.

English: [http://www.reuters.com/article/france-nuclearpower-fessenheim ...](http://www.reuters.com/article/france-nuclearpower-fessenheim...)
[http://www.world-nuclear-news.org/NP-EDF-defies-Fessenheim-shutdown-order ...](http://www.world-nuclear-news.org/NP-EDF-defies-Fessenheim-shutdown-order...)

Louis Vuitton and workers extend talks after walkout

April 6, 2017

Talks between the management of luxury house Louis Vuitton and workers at its ateliers across the country were extended a day after the company's employees staged a walkout for the first time in 15 years to demand wage increases. Shortly before a deadline that had been imposed by Louis Vuitton, both sides agreed to prolong the negotiations.

English: [https://www.nytimes.com/2017/04/06/fashion/louis-vuitton-strike-france ...](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/04/06/fashion/louis-vuitton-strike-france...)
[http://wwd.com/accessories-news/leather-goods/louis-vuitton-leather-workers ...](http://wwd.com/accessories-news/leather-goods/louis-vuitton-leather-workers...)

The right to be offline at Crédit Agricole

April 5, 2017

The trade unions and the management of Crédit Agricole have concluded a national framework for the right to be offline. The formulated policy can be applied in the negotiations of local agreements. The deal is based on a guide that was prepared by trade union representatives, entitled 'the right to be offline in the branches of the Regional Offices of Crédit Agricole'. The guide provides concrete examples of the subjects that have to be treated and the modalities that have to be dealt with in the local agreements.

French: [http://www.wk-ce.fr/actualites/detail/99074/la-branche-du-credit-agricole ...](http://www.wk-ce.fr/actualites/detail/99074/la-branche-du-credit-agricole...)
The agreement (in French): [http://www.wk-ce.fr/actualites/upload/credit-agricole-accord ...](http://www.wk-ce.fr/actualites/upload/credit-agricole-accord...)

Germany

Amazon uses peer pressure on sick leave

April 19, 2017

To encourage workers not to use too many sick days, Amazon has established a controversial policy that relies on peer pressure to encourage better employee attendance. The policy gives workers a bonus of between 6% and 10% of their monthly salary if they have used few paid sick days that month. But workers can only reach the top bonus level if co-workers on their teams also have good attendance records.

English: [https://qz.com/962717/amazon-pays-german-warehouse-workers-bonuses-partly ...](https://qz.com/962717/amazon-pays-german-warehouse-workers-bonuses-partly...)

Pay dispute at Tesla

April 16, 2017

Tensions between the management of Tesla and its workers' representatives have escalated to threats of a strike 3 months away from the planned start of the new Tesla Model 3 production. The head of the works council said that, while workers are excited about the prospect of working for Tesla, they also liked the security of having a broad range of clients. Workers are seeking a renegotiation of their labour agreement to get reassurance that Tesla is committed to local jobs in Prüm and they want to increase their compensation. In terms of salary, it seems that the union members are seeking an increase of 400 euro per month, while Tesla is offering 150 euros and stock options in the company.

English: [https://electrek.co/2017/04/16/tesla-strike-advanced-automation-model-3 ...](https://electrek.co/2017/04/16/tesla-strike-advanced-automation-model-3...)

Minimum wage not enough for single parents

April 13, 2017

In an answer to an official question put by the opposition Left party, the government has admitted that the country's minimum hourly wage is not enough to cover the costs of a single parent working full-time. The detailed answer shows that a single person working a 38-hour week on the minimum wage of 8.84 euro will end up earning 1,444 euro a month. After tax, social insurance contributions, and living costs have been deducted, they would be left with 339 euro for rent and heating. That, according to official statistics, would be just about enough to cover the average costs of someone living alone (338 euro), but considerably less than the costs of a single person with a child under six (457 euro).

English: [http://www.dw.com/en/minimum-wage-not-enough-for-single-parents ...](http://www.dw.com/en/minimum-wage-not-enough-for-single-parents...)

Ranking of labour costs

April 11, 2017

The statistical office Destatis has produced a ranking of labour costs in Europe, based on own calculations. The report reveals that Germany ranked seventh within the European Union (EU) in terms of the labour cost level in 2016. Compared with the EU average of 25.70 euro, employers paid 30% more per hour worked. However, compared with neighbouring country France (36.30 euro), for example, it was nearly 8% less. Denmark had the highest labour costs per hour worked (43.40 euro), Bulgaria the lowest (4.40 euro). In 2016, employers paid an additional 28 euro of non-wage costs per 100 euro of gross earnings. This means that non-wage costs were below the EU average of 31 euro.

English: [https://www.destatis.de/EN/PressServices ...](https://www.destatis.de/EN/PressServices...)

Pocket with statistical bargaining data

April 7, 2017

The Hans Boeckler Foundation published the annual pocket with all relevant information on bargaining results. The pocket (in German) provides information on the average wage increase in 2016, minimum wages in different sectors, collectively agreed holiday pay and other allowances. Also included are non-financial outcomes of bargaining, like the density and coverage of collective agreements or the size of industrial disputes. The pocket presents 130 graphs, tables and overviews.

German: https://www.boeckler.de/pdf/p_ta_tariftaschenbuch_2017.pdf

Greece

Protest strike against austerity announced

April 27, 2017

The country's civil servants' union ADEDY and the main private sector union GSEE called a 24-hour strike for May 17 to protest additional austerity measures being demanded by the country's lenders in exchange for the next tranche of bailout loans. ADEDY said the measures, which the government is planning to legislate in order to conclude a crucial review of its bailout progress, were unfair and tough.

English: [http://www.ekathimerini.com/217973/article/ekathimerini/news/two-main-unions ...](http://www.ekathimerini.com/217973/article/ekathimerini/news/two-main-unions...)

Call for strike in retail against Sunday opening

April 10, 2017

The OIYE federation of private sector workers has called on employees in the retail sector to strike against Sunday's opening of shops and supermarkets. Retailers across the country have the option to stay open on the last Sunday of every month and ahead of major holidays like Easter under a law passed under the previous government to liberalise the retail market and boost sales. The measure is considered controversial, as smaller businesses say it raises their operating costs and benefits large chains and multinationals, while labour unions claim it undercuts workers' rights.

English: [http://www.tornosnews.gr/en/greek-news/economy/24514-union-calls-on-retail ...](http://www.tornosnews.gr/en/greek-news/economy/24514-union-calls-on-retail...)

Postal workers strike against outsourcing

April 4, 2017

Postal workers in Athens have called rolling 24-hour strikes from 4-5 April 2017 in protest at the management decisions regarding delivery services. The Hellenic Postal Service (ELTA) workers held a rally on 4 April morning and called the strike to decry the outsourcing of delivery services to private courier companies. According to ELTA workers' union, this decision downgrades the quality of services.

English: [http://www.ekathimerini.com/217405/article/ekathimerini/news/athens-postal ...](http://www.ekathimerini.com/217405/article/ekathimerini/news/athens-postal...)

State ordered to pay abused fruit pickers

April 3, 2017

The European Court of Human Rights has ruled in favour of a group of 42 Bangladeshi migrants in a human trafficking and forced labour case dating back to 2013, when the strawberry farm workers were shot at by their employers for demanding wages. The ECHR in the case of Chowdury and others v. Greece ruled there had been violations against the migrant workers who were subject to forced labour and not protected by the state. In this landmark ruling, the court has ordered the Greek state to pay €16,000 to each Bangladeshi national involved in the proceedings for damages sustained, plus €4,363 to the applicants to cover expenses.

English: [https://www.freshfruitportal.com/news/2017/04/03/greek-state-ordered ...](https://www.freshfruitportal.com/news/2017/04/03/greek-state-ordered...)

The IMF-dictate ruins the social model

April 5, 2017

In a blog the effects of the IMF-policy are described. Since the introduction of a series of legislative reforms between 2010 to 2012, to satisfy the 'troika' of lenders coordinating its bailout programme, free collective bargaining – the negotiation of wages between employers and employees – has been all but abolished. Of an original 18 industry level collective agreements, just 3 remain. Cynically enough, the IMF has described the almost extinct dialogue between employers' associations and trade unions as EU 'best practice'.

English: [http://www.ips-journal.eu/regions/europe/article ...](http://www.ips-journal.eu/regions/europe/article...)

Hungary

Transit workers receive 15% pay increase

April 28, 2017

Workers at Budapest's public transit authority (BKV) had planned an eight-day strike after the breakdown of negotiations for wage increases. The strike starting on April 18, was announced by two BKV unions after their demand for a 30 percent wage increase over three years was denied by the transit authority. A deal that was reached has led to a cancelling of the strike. Workers will receive a 15 percent wage hike this year. The pay increase, negotiated with the trade unions, will be financed by a 50-50 contribution from the city government and the transport authority. The wage increase will apply retroactively from January 2017.

English: [http://budapestbeacon.com/news-in-brief/bkv-workers-receive-15-percent ...](http://budapestbeacon.com/news-in-brief/bkv-workers-receive-15-percent...)
[http://budapestbeacon.com/economics/budapest-transit-workers-plan-8-day-strike ...](http://budapestbeacon.com/economics/budapest-transit-workers-plan-8-day-strike...)

Law that restricts workers' rights

April 20, 2017

A legislative amendment under debate in the National Assembly could usher in drastic changes to labour practices and place further control over working hours into the hands of employers. If the amendments are passed, employers would be granted the ability to manipulate the working and non-working hours of workers at will; it would be possible to grant only a single off-day per week for seasonal workers and workers

on multiple shifts, and still be in compliance with labour laws. It would also essentially eliminate the need for employers to pay extra for overtime work, as the overtime hours could simply be offset later by off-time.

English: [http://budapestbeacon.com/public-policy/slave-labor-law-bring-radical-changes ...](http://budapestbeacon.com/public-policy/slave-labor-law-bring-radical-changes...)

Iceland

Mind the pay gap

April 7, 2017

According to the country's Ministry of Welfare, women are paid on average 7%-18% less than men. After years of campaigning by feminist groups, politicians have finally implemented legislation to force businesses to publish their wages, proving employees are paid equally. In this interview the thoughts on this legislation and what it is like to be a woman at the workplace are discussed.

English: <https://grapevine.is/mag/interview/2017/04/07/mind-the-gap-the-future-is-female/>

Ireland

Public service staff to get 6% pay rise over three years

April 24, 2017

The government is preparing a proposal to award some 300,000 public sector workers a pay rise of 6% over three years as part of a deal on their remuneration. It is also expected to seek significant reform of the pensions for state employees as part of forthcoming talks. Pensions are set to be high on the agenda in talks that will begin after the Public Service Pay Commission issues its report on pay levels across the public service.

English: [http://www.irishtimes.com/news/ireland/irish-news/public-service-staff ...](http://www.irishtimes.com/news/ireland/irish-news/public-service-staff...)

Full pay restoration top of agenda of teachers

April 17, 2017

The restoration of pay for all teachers is high on the agenda for three teachers unions. While some progress has been made for members of two teacher unions who have started on lower pay since 2011, the recently qualified teachers' growing proportion of the profession means the government will remain under pressure to put them back on full pay parity. The Association of Secondary Teachers Ireland (ASTI) has foregone those partial restorations as it maintains an industrial action campaign in which strikes on the specific issue are currently suspended.

English: [http://www.irishtimes.com/news/ireland/irish-news/public-service-staff ...](http://www.irishtimes.com/news/ireland/irish-news/public-service-staff...)

Bus Eireann workers return to work

April 13, 2017

After 21 days of strike on public transport, the National Bus and Rail Union (NBRU) and Siptu said their members were going back to work in time for the Easter holidays. Moreover, they will be asked to vote on recommendations on redundancies, pay structures and reform of their duties and management which were issued by the Labour Court. The long-running dispute between Bus Eireann workers and management was sent to the Labour Court after the two sides failed to reach a full agreement on all the issues after five days of intensive negotiations at the Workplace Relations Commission (WRC).

English: [http://www.independent.ie/breaking-news/irish-news/bus-eireann-workers ...](http://www.independent.ie/breaking-news/irish-news/bus-eireann-workers...)

Italy

Alitalia workforce rejects rescue plan

April 24, 2017

Two-thirds of Alitalia workers rejected a management restructuring plan to cut jobs and salaries that had been agreed with unions. After these developments, it is likely that the government will call in an

administrator to draft an alternative rescue plan. The air company has been bailed out repeatedly by Italian governments and private investors over the years, though Rome says it will not renationalise Alitalia.

English: [http://www.reuters.com/article/us-alitalia-restructuring ...](http://www.reuters.com/article/us-alitalia-restructuring...)

[http://www.italy24.ilsole24ore.com/art/business-and-economy/2017-04-24/alitalia ...](http://www.italy24.ilsole24ore.com/art/business-and-economy/2017-04-24/alitalia...)

The rejected deal: [http://www.italy24.ilsole24ore.com/art/markets/2017-04-14/alitalia ...](http://www.italy24.ilsole24ore.com/art/markets/2017-04-14/alitalia...)

Households in economic difficulties

April 20, 2017

According to preliminary figures from statistics agency ISTAT, some 11.9% of households experienced serious economic difficulties in 2016. Between 2015 and 2016 the situation worsened for people aged 65 and older, with 11% facing serious economic difficulties in 2016 compared with 8.4% in 2015. Times were also tougher for households with a 'reference person' in search of employment, with those facing serious economic difficulties climbing to 35.8% from 32.1%. On the other hand, the situation improved slightly for those below the age of 18. The office also produced a prognosis for the demographic development. It is foreseen that the population will decline substantially.

English: [http://www.italy24.ilsole24ore.com/art/business-and-economy/2017-04-19/istat ...](http://www.italy24.ilsole24ore.com/art/business-and-economy/2017-04-19/istat...)

[https://www.istat.it/en/files/2017/04/Demographic-projections ...](https://www.istat.it/en/files/2017/04/Demographic-projections...)

Autostrade strike

April 18, 2017

A strike was organised by workers at motorway company Autostrade, despite a call for talks from the industry minister. Trade unions are unhappy at a directive for staff to be present in toll booth around the clock.

English: [http://www.gazzettadelsud.it/news/english/241420/autostrade-strike-continues ...](http://www.gazzettadelsud.it/news/english/241420/autostrade-strike-continues...)

Latvia

Labour market data show mixed picture

April 19, 2017

Unemployment rate reduced to 8.3% in March 2017, according to the State Employment Agency's data. At the beginning of March, 79,152 unemployed persons had registered with the Employment Agency, while at the end of the month there were 76,431 unemployed persons. At the end of March 2016, the unemployment rate for Latvia was 9.1%). On the other hand the country still had the highest youth unemployment among the three Baltic states in 2016, according to Eurostat information. The Eurostat figures show that 17.3% of young people aged 15-24 years were jobless in Latvia in 2016, growing by 1 percentage point from 2015. In the meantime, shortage of labour in several industries is signalled. The four industries most affected are construction, information and communications technology, wood processing, and mechanical engineering.

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

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

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

Liechtenstein

Provisional labour market figures 2016

April 14, 2017

The statistical office published provisional data on labour market trends in 2016. The labour force increased in 2016 with 2%. Unemployment reached an average annual historical low of 2.3% (in 2015: 2.4%). In the different age groups, the highest unemployment percentage was for the 15 to 24 year old (3.1%), whilst the 25 to 49 year old came out close to the average (2.4%). The 50plus workers scored best (1.9%).

German: <http://www.llv.li/files/as/beschäftigungsstatistik-2016-vorläufige-ergebnisse.pdf>

<http://www.llv.li/files/as/arbeitslosenstatistik-2016.pdf>

Lithuania

Economic growth and inequality

April 21, 2017

In a comment to the economic outlook, the chair of the national bank stated that growing inequality in income and economic opportunities are issues that are relevant to all. While the economy's recovery and growth look positive, the gap between the richest households and those with the lowest income continues to be unjustifiably large; hence, people's feelings about economic growth vary, and not everyone's quality of life has been improving. It is therefore necessary, in formulating and implementing modern taxation and social policies, for the focus to be targeted on the reduction of social exclusion.

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

Luxembourg

Conciliation talks about aerial operations

April 28, 2017

The third conciliation meeting between the Air Navigation Administration (ANA) staff representatives and the representatives of the Ministry of Sustainable Development and Infrastructure did not result in an agreement. The dispute is about the future tasks of the ANA. Representatives of the ANA staff challenged the planned policy and initiated a conciliation procedure. During three conciliation meetings, a number of commitments were discussed with the trade unions.

English: [http://chronicle.lu/categoriesluxembourgpolitics/item/21527-no-solution-yet ...](http://chronicle.lu/categoriesluxembourgpolitics/item/21527-no-solution-yet...)

Detailed labour market data

April 24, 2017

The public employment service, ADEM, revealed that the unemployment rate in March was 6%; 0.5% lower than in March 2016. Since 2002, the growth in employment slowed down and the unemployment rate, which was relatively low until then, accelerated, especially after the start of the financial crisis. However, the rate has been falling constantly over the past 27 months. At the end of March 2017, 5,374 people were allocated to a back to work scheme (2.3% lower than in March 2016 when 5,503 people signed up to the scheme).

English: [http://www.wort.lu/en/luxembourg/unemployment-almost-1-000-fewer-people ...](http://www.wort.lu/en/luxembourg/unemployment-almost-1-000-fewer-people...)

The Bulletin (in French): [http://www.statistiques.public.lu/fr/actualites/population/travail ...](http://www.statistiques.public.lu/fr/actualites/population/travail...)

Malta

Industrial action at Malta International Airport

April 12, 2017

The General Workers' Union has organised industrial action against Malta International Airport. The GWU has ordered workers to refrain from communicating by email as the first step in an industrial action against the airport management, due to the failure to reach a collective agreement for its workers. According to GWU, which is in negotiations with MIA together with Union Haddiema Maghqudin (UHM), the biggest hurdle to reaching a new collective agreement for MIA workers is the company's refusal to improve working conditions despite increased commercial activity resulting from growth in the tourism sector.

English: [http://www.maltatoday.com.mt/news/national/76242/general_workers_union ...](http://www.maltatoday.com.mt/news/national/76242/general_workers_union...)

Netherlands

Central banker repeats call for pay hike

April 24, 2017

The central bank DNB president has repeated his call for stronger wage increases to boost spending. Speaking ahead of an IMF meeting in Washington, he said unemployment was falling rapidly but wages are failing to keep pace with other countries. He urged trade unions to place more emphasis on wages in their demands during negotiations with employers. The DNB president said higher wages would serve to increase domestic spending and curb inflation.

English: [http://www.dutchnews.nl/news/archives/2017/04/dutch-central-banker-repeats ...](http://www.dutchnews.nl/news/archives/2017/04/dutch-central-banker-repeats...)

Pay dispute at retailer Jumbo

April 24, 2017

Retailer Jumbo has pulled out of talks with the unions on a pay deal for distribution centre workers and decided to make a deal with the company works council instead. Workers went on strike at several distribution centres after negotiations for a collective agreement failed. Trade union FNV has called for a 2.5% pay increase and more permanent jobs. Some 3,000 people work in Jumbo distribution centres and 2,000 of them are employed on temporary contracts, the FNV says. The Jumbo management that is prepared to pay a 1.5% increase called the strike illegal. The unions say the company is acting like a dictatorship and putting workers' rights back decades by side-lining them.

English: [http://www.dutchnews.nl/news/archives/2017/04/jumbo-sidelines-unions ...](http://www.dutchnews.nl/news/archives/2017/04/jumbo-sidelines-unions...)
[http://www.dutchnews.nl/news/archives/2017/04/empty-shelves-loom ...](http://www.dutchnews.nl/news/archives/2017/04/empty-shelves-loom...)

Four-year contract model for retail proposed

April 14, 2017

Employers in the retail sector and trade union CNV are discussing the introduction of a four-year contract for retail workers which includes a budget for training, as part of a their collective bargaining agenda. The aim, employers and trade union CNV say, is to increase workers' chances at finding work later on while at the same time providing flexible staff for retailers. At the moment some 300,000 people work in supermarkets and small retailers, such as greengrocers and butchers. Most are younger than 23 and have contracts for a year with a maximum of 12 hours a week. Just 25% to 30% have a permanent contract. Trade union FNV is sceptical about the proposal, whilst labour law experts have explained that in the current situation a start with a four-year contract is already possible.

English: [http://www.dutchnews.nl/news/archives/2017/04/four-year-contract ...](http://www.dutchnews.nl/news/archives/2017/04/four-year-contract...)
The proposals (in Dutch): [http://comform.cnvvakmensen.nl/attachment ...](http://comform.cnvvakmensen.nl/attachment...)

Teachers' strike looms

April 13, 2017

Primary school teachers are demanding higher salaries and smaller class sizes. If the new government does not address both these issues in their coalition agreement, the teachers will strike for a week. This was announced by action group *PO in Actie* and education trade union AOb after both organisations polled their membership. A manifesto with this demand, addressed to the government, will be signed by both unions and employers. The trade union has been calling for higher salaries in primary education for years.

English: <http://nltimes.nl/2017/04/13/teachers-strike-shut-dutch-primary-schools-days>

Norway

Agenda for social dialogue

April 6, 2017

Minister of Labour Anniken Hauglie said in an interview that she wants to change working hour regulations and strengthening legislation protecting whistle-blowers. Together with the social partners she wants to draw clearer lines for what staffing agencies can and cannot do, strengthen workers against work related crime. She invites Nordic colleagues to discuss what the sharing economy and new trends will do to the future of work.

English: [http://www.nordiclbourjournal.org/artikler/portrett/portrait-2017 ...](http://www.nordiclbourjournal.org/artikler/portrett/portrait-2017...)

Poland

Wages improved in recent months

April 28, 2017

The statistical office published the data over the year 2016. The report *Employment, wages and salaries in national economy in 2016* describes working persons, employed persons and their nominal and real wages and salaries, as well as time worked, and licences for work issued to foreigners. The data of the 1st quarter of 2017 reveal that average wages in companies employing more than nine people increased 5.2% year on year to PLN 4,577 (1,072 euro) a month. Analysts had expected a 4.1 percent wage rise in the corporate sector.

English: [http://stat.gov.pl/en/topics/labour-market/working-employed-wages-and-salaries ...](http://stat.gov.pl/en/topics/labour-market/working-employed-wages-and-salaries...)
[http://www.thenews.pl/1/12/Artykul ...](http://www.thenews.pl/1/12/Artykul...)

Portugal

Early-retirement penalty will disappear

April 20, 2017

The government plans the implementation of a one-off increase in pensions in August and to eliminate penalties for those who retire at 60 and who began working at 14. The measures to boost pensions and for the 'protection' of those who have contributed to social security for an especially long period were announced in parliament during a fortnightly debate.

English: [http://www.theportugalnews.com/news/early-retirement-penalty ...](http://www.theportugalnews.com/news/early-retirement-penalty...)

Azores Airline workers on strike

April 14, 2017

Cabin workers from SATA International/Azores Airlines have announced that they will be on strike from 1 May to 2 May 2017, according to a statement released to the press by the National Union of Civil Aviation (SNPVAC). The two day stoppage, which will include 'all Azores Airlines/SATA International flights', will fulfil only the 'minimum services'. According to SNPVAC, failure by the company to comply with several agreements signed with the union employees was the reason for the strike.

English: [http://portuguese-american-journal.com/travel-azores-airlines-on-strike ...](http://portuguese-american-journal.com/travel-azores-airlines-on-strike...)

Doctors' strike avoided?

April 13, 2017

The government approved amendments to legislation restoring part of overtime payments to medical professionals in the national health service that were reduced in 2012 by the previous administration, but without revealing full details of a move that may or may not head off a doctors' strike. A phased increase was announced over the current year of the percentage increases foreseen in the legislation in force. However, it is neither clarified how the percentages are to be phased in nor from when exactly the overtime payments are to be restored. Doctors' unions have scheduled a strike for 10-11 May to protest the government's failure fully to restore overtime payments, which are currently running at 50% their pre-2012 level.

English: [http://www.theportugalnews.com/news/government-to-boost-doctor-overtime-pay ...](http://www.theportugalnews.com/news/government-to-boost-doctor-overtime-pay...)

Romania

Uber protests leads to taxi law change

April 26, 2017

Some 3,000 drivers and transporters who protested in front of the government's building in Bucharest on 26 April, managed to convince the government to change the taxi law and have the Police fine Uber drivers and other people who carry unauthorised transport activities. The law changes will be adopted in maximum 30 days, according to the transporters' association COTAR, which organised the protest. COTAR had that more protests were to be staged in Bucharest, but the protest ended earlier after the transporters reached an agreement with the Government

English: <http://www.romania-insider.com/uber-reacts-bucharest-protests-pro-regulation ...>

Museum professionals and researchers organise protest

April 8, 2017

Around 1,500 museum professionals and researchers will protest on 20 May 2017, during the Night of Museums. They want the legislation on protection of cultural heritage and museums to be changed, and the wage disparities in museum institutions to be eliminated. A march will be organised in Bucharest, with protesters walking to the Ministry of Culture.

English: <http://www.romania-insider.com/1500-museum-professionals-researchers ...>

Serbia

Wage data updated

April 15, 2017

The statistical office released a bulletin with detailed wage figures. The average gross salaries and wages paid in March 2017 amounted to dinars 65 695 (532 euro). The average net salaries and wages paid in March 2017 (social contributions and tax excluded) totalled 47 814 dinars (387 euro). Compared with the same month in 2016, average gross and net salaries and wages increased by 4.2% in nominal terms and by 0.6% in real terms.

English: <http://www.stat.gov.rs/WebSite/repository ...>

Slovakia

Rules for opening the market criticised

April 25, 2017

Rules that ease the recruitment of foreign labour, which come into effect in April 2017, were approved by the parliament. The changes aim at streamlining the procedure for employing foreigners, mainly seasonal workers who will stay for more than 90 days. The rules also affect employees who arrive in the country as part of inter-corporate transfers. Trade union confederation OZ KOVO has raised serious questions marks. These workers often don't have the same conditions; the collective agreements don't apply on them, so it is hard to force the employer to act differently. Though the trade unions do not oppose the plans to hire foreign workers, they claim they should have the same working and salary conditions as all other workers.

English: <https://spectator.sme.sk/c/20517234/unions-will-protest-against-new-rules ...>

Volkswagen may face strike

April 18, 2017

The collective negotiations on working and salary conditions in Volkswagen Slovakia that were restored on March 29, after a two-month break, are not very successful, according to trade union MOW. The MOV claims that if the negotiations, scheduled for April 20, do not move in the direction of conditions advantageous for employees, they are ready to halt the talks. The trade unions will subsequently ask the Labour Ministry to appoint a mediator and will start preparations for a general strike.

English: <https://newsnow.tasr.sk/economy/volkswagen-slovakia-trade-union-issues ...>

Diverging views on minimum wage

April 17, 2017

The trade unions would like to see the minimum monthly wage increased by €57 to €492 in 2018. This would mean an increase of 13.1% from the current €435. Positive macroeconomic developments, as well as the economic condition of both the public and private sectors, speak in favour of minimum wage growth of this magnitude, argue trade unions. While the Labour, Social Affairs and Family Ministry supports the hike, employers warn that such a high increase would make it difficult for low-earners to find jobs and they have called for a scheme to calculate the hike in the minimum wage.

English: [https://spectator.sme.sk/c/20510310/trade-unions-propose-to-hike-minimum ...](https://spectator.sme.sk/c/20510310/trade-unions-propose-to-hike-minimum...)

Slovenia

Better pay on the agenda

April 20, 2017

At their 11th traditional 'Trade Unions Without Borders' gathering in Mokrice, Slovenia, on 20 April, Croatian and Slovenian trade union confederations UATUC and ZSSS signed a joint statement on wages: It's time for OUR recovery. It calls for the strengthening of workers' rights, focusing on higher salaries and collective bargaining. The chair of trade union confederation ZSSS told in an interview ahead of labour day that he expects hard time for workers. Since the crisis, the workload has increased but pay has not gone up.

English: <http://payrise.eu/cross-border-call-for-higher-wages/>
<https://english.sta.si/2381428/leading-unionist-expects-hard-times-for-workers>

Spain

Negotiations for a framework agreement pending

April 29, 2017

Talks to renew the wage pact for 2017 have been open for half a year and the advance was with much slowness and tension. The trade union confederations showed their disgust, in the May Day presentation, at the progress of the negotiations and have warned that the time for talks has been exhausted. The employers' organisation CEOE had presented proposals for a general agreement (AENC) 2017 that included a salary increase between 1.0% and 2.0%, plus a variable 0.5%, to be negotiated on a case-by-case basis. At the general assembly of the CEOE, the government praised the social partners who, since 1979, and until the signing in 2015 of the 3rd Agreement on Employment and Collective Bargaining, signed by the CEOE, CEPYME, CC.OO and UGT, always reached agreements.

Spanish: [http://economia.elpais.com/economia/2017/04/26/actualidad ...](http://economia.elpais.com/economia/2017/04/26/actualidad...)
The government speech on tripartite talks:
[http://www.lamoncloa.gob.es/lang/en/presidente/intervenciones ...](http://www.lamoncloa.gob.es/lang/en/presidente/intervenciones...)
The employers' position (English): [http://www.ceoe.es/en/contenido/news ...](http://www.ceoe.es/en/contenido/news...)

National labour council in the making

April 24, 2017

The creation of a Labour Relations Council at state level that already exists in some autonomous regions, is under way. The employers' organisation CEOE plans to ask its affiliates to bear the expenses generated by the new structure of participation of social partners in public life. However, this proposal has been received with suspicion by the unions, who want the central government to be present in the organism and not depend exclusively on the contributions of companies.

Spanish: [http://www.elconfidencial.com/economia/2017-04-24/ceoe-ugt-ccoo-consejo ...](http://www.elconfidencial.com/economia/2017-04-24/ceoe-ugt-ccoo-consejo...)

Strike brings employers in food processing to the table

April 19, 2017

Poultry and rabbit slaughtering and process workers responded to an employer attack on their employment security with a two day national strike on April 11 and 12. Negotiations to renew the national sector collective agreement affecting 24,000 workers represented by the trade unions CC.OO and UGT deadlocked over employer demands for increased and more flexible working hours, the elimination of seniority, the cancellation of two consecutive rest days and a demand for greater flexibility to subcontract and outsource work. The strike action brought the employers back to the bargaining table. The unions return to the bargaining table in a strong position to win improved employment security.

English: [http://www.iuf.org/w ...](http://www.iuf.org/w...)

Unions do not agree with redundancy procedure

April 18, 2017

The trade unions UGT FICA Industria Construcción y Agro and CCOO Construcción y servicios reported that the OHL Group has submitted a Redundancy Dismissal Procedure affecting a total of 554 workers from the construction and industrial construction divisions. It will affect 404 workers out of 1452 from the construction division and 150 out of 442 from the industrial construction division. The established commission for the negotiation, together with the trade unions UGT and CCOO, expressed their total opposition to the redundancy procedure, because it is disproportional, unfair and inappropriate.

English: <http://www.bwint.org/default ...>

Sweden

Legislation on posting approved

April 26, 2017

The trade unions are to be given the right to take collective action against workplaces with foreign labour which have not entered into a collective agreement. This will provide better working conditions for employees who come from abroad for a limited time. These amendments to the Posting of Workers Act, the act containing provisions on what applies when foreign companies use posted workers, involve changes to Lex Laval. Lex Laval was introduced in the Posting of Workers Act in 2010, following a judgment from the Court of Justice of the EU on how the Byggnads trade union acted vis-à-vis the Latvian company Laval.

English: <http://www.riksdagen.se/en/news/2017/apr/26/greater-opportunities ...>

The hotel sector signs an agreement

April 19, 2017

The Hotel and Restaurant Workers' Union HRF signed a 3-year national agreement which meets their key bargaining demands less than 12 hours before a national strike was to begin. HRF received strong national and international support in the run-up deadline. Affiliates of the confederation LO pledged active support to the hotel workers, including stopping deliveries and other concrete solidarity actions in the event of a strike. The agreement provides for a SEK 1,650 (172 euro) monthly increase for full-time workers over a 3-year period; a 6.5% increase for overtime; and a significant increase for the lowest-paid which meets or exceeds the increases for low-wage workers established in other sectoral agreements.

English: <http://www.iuf.org/w ...>

Metal workers sign agreement

April 12, 2017

The metal workers trade union IF Metall went into the collective agreement negotiations with three prioritised demands (a real wage increase, possibilities for part-time retirement and extra attention for low wage earners). An agreement was reached with the employers that includes results in all three areas. In the next three years, wages will increase with an annual 2% (as of 1 April every year). The lowest wages of fulltime workers will improve and possibilities to withdraw from work at the end of a career are extended. The agreement is valid until 31 March 2020. The bargaining council of the union has approved the outcome.

English: <https://www.ifmetall.se/globalassets/avdelningar/forbundskontoret/resurser ...>
<https://www.ifmetall.se/globalassets/avdelningar/forbundskontoret/resurser ...>

Switzerland

Thermo Fisher workers fight for their jobs

April 25, 2017

Thermo Fisher Scientific staff at Écublens maintain strike action in response to the decision by the board of the company in the US to ignore a negotiated agreement with trade union UNIA. Some 130 workers are taking part in the action. The earlier agreement was negotiated with the help of the employment office of the canton of Vaud, and met three demands of the union, namely: UNIA must be recognised as a negotiating partner; the consultation period must be prolonged till the end of May; the company must provide all the elements needed for formulation of counter proposals regarding the site delocalisation, as foreseen by law.

The US company board rejected the negotiated agreement and refused to accept any compromise. This lack of dialogue and unfounded decision of the management pushed workers to continue their strike.

English: [http://www.industrial-union.org/thermo-fisher-workers-fight-for-their-jobs ...](http://www.industrial-union.org/thermo-fisher-workers-fight-for-their-jobs...)

Union wants special coaching for older workers

April 25, 2017

The trade union federation Travail Suisse reiterated calls for additional measures to help unemployed older workers find a job. Travail Suisse said employees aged over 50 should benefit from special coaching offers and urged regional employment centres to increase efforts to encourage companies to offer jobs for older workers. Nearly 27% of unemployed workers over 50 need more than 12 months to find a job, according to Travail Suisse. Besides, the leading trade union federation SGB/USS has been calling for older workers to benefit from increased legal protection from dismissal at the workplace.

English: [https://www.swissinfo.ch/eng/unemployment_-union-wants-special-coaching ...](https://www.swissinfo.ch/eng/unemployment_-union-wants-special-coaching...)

German: [http://www.sgb.ch/themen/wirtschaft/konjunktur-und-beschaeftigung ...](http://www.sgb.ch/themen/wirtschaft/konjunktur-und-beschaeftigung...)

French: [http://www.uss.ch/themes/economie/conjoncture-et-emploi/article ...](http://www.uss.ch/themes/economie/conjoncture-et-emploi/article...)

Turkey

Prison sentences for union officials

April 19, 2017

Trade union TÜMTİS is enmeshed in decade-long legal cases that threaten to erode the rights of all unions in the country. Fourteen Ankara Branch officials of the trade union received prison sentences ranging from 1.5 years to 6.5 years for the reason of recruiting new members. There have been a number of protests against the prison sentences handed down to the 14 TÜMTİS leaders. Labour, occupational and non-governmental organisations have criticised the sentence and expressed solidarity with the union.

English: <http://tumtis.org/v2/2017/0414/news-from-tumtis/>
[https://www.equaltimes.org/tumtis-and-the-case-that-threatens ...](https://www.equaltimes.org/tumtis-and-the-case-that-threatens...)

United Kingdom

Complex and difficult talks at Royal Mail

April 28, 2017

The talks with the Royal Mail over plans to close its pension scheme in its current form are 'complex and difficult', according to trade union Unite. Unite, which has about 6,000 members working for the Royal Mail, was responding to a pensions update statement from the company. At this stage, it is not possible to say if an agreed solution can be found, but Unite is committed to making every effort to ensure its members have decent pensions provision in the future. If parties don't achieve a satisfactory outcome, an industrial action ballot or even strike action might be organised.

English: [http://www.unitetheunion.org/news/royal-mail-pension-talks-complex-and-difficult ...](http://www.unitetheunion.org/news/royal-mail-pension-talks-complex-and-difficult...)

The pension liabilities of Tata steel

April 20, 2017

Tata Steel is trying to hive off its historic liabilities before merging its European steel operations with German company ThyssenKrupp. Tata Steel could pay more than £500m into its UK pension scheme as part of a deal with regulators that involves the Pension Protection Fund taking a stake in the business. The Indian-owned company needs to find a solution to its pension scheme to secure the future of its UK operations, which employs 8,000 workers and includes the Port Talbot steelworks in south Wales.

English: [https://www.theguardian.com/business/2017/apr/20/tata-steel-offers-520m-pensions ...](https://www.theguardian.com/business/2017/apr/20/tata-steel-offers-520m-pensions...)

The failings in the skills system

April 19, 2017

In a report - From 'inadequate' to 'outstanding': making the UK's skills system world class - the CIPD, the professional body for HR and people development, shows that two decades of under-investment and failed policy on skills has contributed to the country lagging well behind its competitors in Europe and most of the OECD on at least four key measures, including literacy and numeracy, learning and development, and digital skills. The CIPD also notes that the UK Commission for Employment and Skills (UKCES) that played an important role in providing strategic policy advice to government, based on the input of employers and trade unions was abolished in 2015 without any clear rationale being presented.

English: <https://www.cipd.co.uk/about/media/press/170419-uk-skills-crisis>

The report: [https://www.cipd.co.uk/Images/from-inadequate-to-outstanding ...](https://www.cipd.co.uk/Images/from-inadequate-to-outstanding...)

Unions demonstrate over undercutting in construction

April 13, 2017

Construction unions GMB and Unite planned a series of demonstrations over the undercutting and exploitation of construction workers. The protests focus on several Danish firms who are involved in the funding and building of major energy and waste projects. Workers are being paid up to 61% below agreed industry rates, with some workers being paid just the minimum wage and financing their own travel and accommodation. Representatives from the unions will be handing in a petition containing over 5,000 signatures to the Danish embassy, calling on the Danish government to launch an investigation.

English: <http://www.gmb.org.uk/newsroom/demonstration-against-undercutting>

<https://goingtowork.org.uk/undercutting-must-end/>

Gig economy contracts questioned

April 6, 2017

The Work and Pensions Committee in parliament has published the contracts it has received in its inquiry into *Self-employment and the gig economy*, and related correspondence. Some of the problems of the contracts - the clauses they contain and the way they are written - were highlighted in the evidence session with Uber, Hermes, Deliveroo and Amazon, and the Committee asked to see copies of them, which they have now supplied. The Committee's chair stated that these companies parade the 'flexibility' their model offers to drivers but it seems the only real flexibility is enjoyed by the companies themselves.

English: [http://www.parliament.uk/business/committees ...](http://www.parliament.uk/business/committees...)

Gender pay gap regulation starts

April 6, 2017

Around 9,000 employers and more than 15 million employees – almost half of the country's workforce – will be covered by a new regulation on gender pay gap reporting. The regulation requires organisations to publish their median gender pay gap, their mean gender pay gap, the proportion of men and women in each quartile of their pay structure, and gender differences in any bonus pay-outs. The current pay gap is 18.1%. In 2016, the Fawcett Society reported that if the gap continues to narrow at its current rate, parity will not be seen for another 60 years.

English: <http://www.equalpayportal.co.uk/gender-pay-gap-reporting/>

<https://www.fawcettsociety.org.uk/2016/02/gender-pay-gap-regulations/>

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 or consult the archive with all articles in our database at www.cbnarchive.eu.

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