

collective bargaining

Issue 5/2016 | May

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

Coordinated action against loss of quality jobs in the North Sea

May 27, 2016

Maritime and oil and gas unions affiliated to IndustriAll Global Union and the International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF) met in Aberdeen to begin development of an industrial and political strategy to challenge the replacement of quality jobs with cheap labour by employers in the North Sea. In both the oil-service sector and within the subsea-contractor segment there are still companies that are not covered by collective bargaining agreements. Social dumping in the region has expanded through the employment of non-European workers, resulting in unfair competition and redundancies for local workers.

English: [http://www.industriall-union.org/global-federations-collaborate-against-job-losses ...](http://www.industriall-union.org/global-federations-collaborate-against-job-losses...)

Interactive webpage on collective bargaining

May 26, 2016

The International Labour Organisation (ILO) has launched a website called *InfoStories*, which uses storytelling techniques and interactive features to communicate labour issues with a general audience. InfoStories is an adaptation of an iPad app launched in 2014, which was the first of its kind for the ILO. Readers can navigate through videos, data visualisations, illustrations and other interactive elements that present complex concepts and the results from ILO research in clear, jargon-free language. Among the five InfoStories that have been published one is on collective bargaining and another on the gender pay gap. The collective bargaining story presents trends for trade union membership and collective bargaining around the world, supported by six data visualisations with the most recent information on over 30 countries. The story also highlights the importance of collective bargaining in building a fair society.

English: [http://ilo.org/infostories/Stories/Labour-Relations/Can-Collective-Bargaining-Create ...](http://ilo.org/infostories/Stories/Labour-Relations/Can-Collective-Bargaining-Create...)

All InfoStories: <http://ilo.org/infostories>

Social dialogue in higher education and research

May 26, 2016

The European Trade Union Committee for Education has presented a detailed report on the state of the art of social dialogue in education and research based on a survey among its affiliates. Nearly all of the responding unions, mainly active in social dialogue in higher education at national and institutional levels, participate in collective bargaining. The results show that satisfaction with social dialogue is higher than with collegial governance.

English: [https://www.csee-etuice.org/images/attachments ...](https://www.csee-etuice.org/images/attachments...)

Social impact of TTIP

May 20, 2016

In a trade union blog, the European Commission's consultation on the EU-US trade deal known as TTIP is explained. The EU has commissioned independent researchers to produce assessments of the impact trade deals might have on workers, the environment and society. The European Commission has committed to acting on the recommendations of these impact assessments saying they will 'feed into and steer the negotiations.' This creates the opportunity for trade unions to ally across the EU in a special civil society dialogue event. According to the author of the blog, very large risks to public services, health and safety and workers' rights are to be expected, apart from slight wage gains for high skilled workers.

English: [http://touchstoneblog.org.uk/2016/05/eu-launches-public-consultation ...](http://touchstoneblog.org.uk/2016/05/eu-launches-public-consultation...)

World employment social outlook

May 18, 2016

The 2016 edition of the ILO *World Employment and Social Outlook* report is devoted to the issue of poverty. The main finding of this report is that decent work is a necessary precondition for ending poverty. Thus, without decent work, it will not be possible to meet the first goal of the Sustainable Development Agenda. Relying on economic growth alone will not be enough to eradicate poverty. The report demonstrates that the recent pattern of growth, associated with inequitable transfers of natural resource wealth, low productivity gains and lack of attention to the agricultural sector has only served to widen the gap between the rich and the poor and prolong the incidence of poverty. Worryingly, the rate of poverty is rising in developed countries, especially in Europe, so the goal of ending poverty is relevant to all regions.

English: [http://www.ilo.org/global/research/global-reports/weso/2016-transforming-jobs ...](http://www.ilo.org/global/research/global-reports/weso/2016-transforming-jobs...)

The report: http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/---publ/documents/publication/wcms_481534.pdf

Management attitude towards information and consultation

May 13, 2016

The Leuven University, commissioned by the employers' organisation BusinessEurope, launched the results of a research on the functioning of information and consultation procedures based on the EWC Directive. The Directive allows representatives of workers from European countries in which MNCs have operations to regularly meet central management with the purpose of exchanging information and engaging in consultation. The work in the EWC comprises a wide range of forms and types reflecting different paths of development pursued by managers, varying from information and consultation to negotiation.

English: <https://soc.kuleuven.be/ceso/wo/erlm/files/permewc-final-report-eng>

Bargaining power and equality

May 12, 2016

The Foundation for European Progressive Studies and the Renner Institute published online a large volume with contributions from a broad range of academics. The publication, *Delivering Welfare Societies*, is the 10th volume of the FEPS Next Left Book Series. The chapters include analyses of the political processes and socio-economic trends shaping and shaking the EU at the moment. The first chapter is composed of six contributions on equality, quality employment and decent living standards. The authors signal an increasing gap between wages and productivity gains that can be explained by a worsening of the bargaining power.

English: <http://www.feps-europe.eu/assets ...>

Austria

Several agreements concluded or renewed

May 25, 2016

In the course of this month several collective agreements were concluded or renewed. Trade unions and employers finalised agreements in the leather and shoe industries, in the glass and glass processing industries and for the ground personnel of the airports. Most agreements apply for a period of 12 months and were to expire. The average pay increase as per 1 May or 1 June 2016 is between 1.2 and 1.5%.

German: <http://www.kollektivvertrag.at/cms ...>

Social plan negotiations with no end

May 13, 2016

The workers at the logistic centre of retailer Pfeiffer in Vienna are still waiting for the finalisation of a social plan. An arbitration procedure started after the first negotiations in December 2015 failed. Services trade union Vida is very critical about the company's approach and says the company is not taking its social responsibility. Pfeiffer has proposed to settle the dismissal of 209 workers through individual assistance in the search for a new job, instead of a collective social plan.

German: <http://www.vienna.at/gewerkschaftskritik-an-zielpunkt-mutter-pfeiffer ...>

Swarovski plans transfer of production

May 5, 2016

Workers at different departments of jewellery producer and retailer Swarovski are worried about planned outsourcing. The company speaks about an optimisation project that will lead to a transfer of administrative jobs to Eastern European countries and layoffs within the group. In the outsourcing plans several IT-jobs and personal and financial administrative functions are involved. So far, the workers' representatives have not been fully informed about the operation.

English: <https://www.friedlnews.com/article/swarovski-employees-worried-about-outsourcing>

German: <http://www.vienna.at/sorge-vor-jobabbau-bei-swarovski-wegen-optimierungsprojekt ...>

Belgium

Massive protests against labour reform plans

May 31, 2016

More than 60,000 unionised workers marched on 24 May in protest against proposed labour-market reforms including longer hours and a higher retirement age, snarling up traffic in a large part of Brussels. The march was followed by a large demonstration on 31 May and strikes by public-sector employees, with train and bus services disrupted along with schools, prisons and mail delivery as workers protested against the government's social and economic policies. The three main trade union confederations oppose proposals that would allow employers to impose a working week of up to 45 hours when required, followed by shorter weeks to retain a 38-hour weekly average. The protests are the first in a series of actions planned for the coming months, including a strike on 24 June and a day of national demonstrations on 7 October.

English: [http://www.dailymail.co.uk/wires/ap/article-3617407/Public-sector-workers-strike ...](http://www.dailymail.co.uk/wires/ap/article-3617407/Public-sector-workers-strike...)
[http://www.reuters.com/article/us-belgium-protests ...](http://www.reuters.com/article/us-belgium-protests...)

Prison workers strike over job cuts

May 21, 2016

The government struggles to end a strike an unprecedented strike of prison staff. The dispute, involving penitentiaries in Brussels and the regions, shows no sign of being resolved. Prison wardens rejected a draft agreement between the justice ministry and the unions aimed at ending the strike which began over staffing cuts. The prison system has been condemned as 'disastrous' by senior lawyers. The government decision to call in the army to help is controversial. The unions consider a dangerous precedent to use the military forces to sort out a social issue. Dozens of striking workers gathered outside Forest prison on 10 May to call on the government to resolve the conflict. Trade unionists and prison workers demanding an end to austerity and better working conditions organised a demonstration into the justice ministry in Brussels on 17 May.

English: <http://www.straitstimes.com/world/europe/unrest-brewing-in-belgiums-prisons>
[http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe ...](http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe...)

Wild cat strike of luggage handlers

May 11, 2016

A mistake on wage slips triggered a wildcat strike at Aviapartner, leading to problems for passengers at Brussels Airport. Aviapartner is one of two luggage handlers at the airport. The workers refused to load and unload planes preventing flights from taking off. Aviapartner is used by carriers including Jetair, Etihad, SAS and Qatar Airways. The baggage handlers were unhappy with working conditions following the March attacks. They speak of poor organisation with regard to temporary unemployment and a lack of respect for the workforce. Workers also complained about staff shortages and the failure to make certain payments.

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

Bulgaria

Demonstration of tobacco workers

May 9, 2016

Trade unions have called a demonstration on 9 May in front of the government headquarters in central Sofia against the decision of the country's major tobacco holding Bulgartabac to close down a Sofia-based tobacco plant. The decision, in force as of 1 April 2016, which left 420 people without employment, was a result of Bulgartabac's move to halt exports of cigarettes and other products to the Middle East. Workers will receive their salaries by the end of May. An additional number of jobs offered by Bulgartabac and connected to the plant's work might also be lost as a result of the closure.

English: [http://www.novinite.com/articles/174378/Workers+to+Protest+Again+over+Closure ...](http://www.novinite.com/articles/174378/Workers+to+Protest+Again+over+Closure...)

Croatia

Scepticism over reform

May 23, 2016

The government proposals - in line with EU recommendations - to cut red tape, scrap various fees, and reduce public debt by cost-cutting at state-owned firms as well as reforming the health and pension sectors are received by most actors with scepticism. Critics, including the national employers' association, HUP, say the main worry is implementation. Successive governments failing put promised reforms into action. The fact that people are leaving or planning to leave is a direct reflection of dissatisfaction with the failure of the government to drive the economy forward. Public sector trade unions have serious doubts about the plans.

English: [http://www.reuters.com/article/us-croatia-economy-reforms ...](http://www.reuters.com/article/us-croatia-economy-reforms)

Cyprus

Port pilots stage two-hour strike

May 17, 2016

Port pilots at Cyprus Ports Authority (CPA) organised a two-hour work stoppage on 17 May. They protested against the disciplinary actions taken by the CPA board against one of their colleagues, a chief accountant at the CPA, who is also the head of port workers' union SYALK. In an announcement, SYALK said that the document justifying the disciplinary action launched against its chairman by the CPA board is unfair. The CPA charges are labelled 'undocumented' and the union demands to put an end to the victimisation.

English: <http://cyprus-mail.com/2016/05/17/port-pilots-stage-two-hour-wide-strike/>

Overtime registration disputed

May 11, 2016

The ministry of health wants the doctors to punch time cards at the hospitals to prove how many extra hours they were doing. However, state doctors' trade union PASYKI wants doctors to be paid by the case and not by the hour and is also averse to queuing up to clock in with other hospital workers because it is humiliating.

English: <http://cyprus-mail.com/2016/05/16/furious-pamboridis-tells-doctors-not-law/>

Czech Republic

Pay increase up to 10% - teachers offered 5%

May 20, 2016

Wage increases of 10 percent, way ahead of inflation, are now being pledged for health workers as well as teachers. And such sizable increases have been seen in some of the most dynamic parts of the private sector as well. The push to boost pay in the health sector comes against a backdrop of a shortage of doctors and nursing sisters. Promises of 10 percent pay increases for 2017 have been made to teachers, traditionally amongst some of the worst paid graduates in the state sector. However, the actual proposals come up with a five-percent pay rise for teachers. For the teachers' trade unions, the proposal is unacceptable; the unions made clear they would not stand for less than a ten percent increase. The unions have set aside the next two weeks for possible negotiations.

English: [http://www.radio.cz/en/section/news/teachers-unions-call-proposed-five-percent ...](http://www.radio.cz/en/section/news/teachers-unions-call-proposed-five-percent)
[http://www.radio.cz/en/section/business/double-digit-pay-rises-make-waves ...](http://www.radio.cz/en/section/business/double-digit-pay-rises-make-waves)

Transport union on strike alert over dismissal of director

May 20, 2016

The Prague Public Transport Company (DPP) workers' trade union has declared a strike alert in reaction to the dismissal of DPP General Director Mr. Duris. He was dismissed by the DPP board of directors on the recommendation of the supervisory board of the company, which is the largest firm run by the city of Prague. The transport union representative said the strike alert is a warning so that a strike did not come out of the blue, if steps towards destabilisation of DPP appeared. The union will terminate the strike alert as soon as all their questions are answered adequately.

English: [http://www.praguemonitor.com/2016/05/20/prague-transport-union-strike-alert ...](http://www.praguemonitor.com/2016/05/20/prague-transport-union-strike-alert...)

Widening the scope for labour recruitment abroad

May 11, 2016

Last month we reported about NGO-research that showed that the status of migrant workers, poor language skills and lack of information about the country's labour code make migrant workers vulnerable to potential abuse on the labour market. Mid-2015, the government launched a pilot programme to attract foreigners, primarily from Ukraine, by speeding up the visa application process. The emphasis was originally on skilled jobs such as IT; it turns out that what some companies need more is to fill vacancies for manual and factory jobs. Firms are putting pressure on the government to take steps to ease the procedure. One of the proposals is lowering the minimum wages that employers will have to offer the new recruits from Ukraine.

English: [http://www.radio.cz/en/section/business/czech-ministry-widens-scope-for-companies ...](http://www.radio.cz/en/section/business/czech-ministry-widens-scope-for-companies...)

Denmark

Salary bonus for police officers who choose Copenhagen

May 25, 2016

The police trade union federation Politiforbundet has made an agreement with national police force Rigspolitiet to offer salary bonuses to officers who move from another jurisdiction to take a job in Copenhagen or south Jutland. The bonuses range between 30,000 and 60,000 kroner annually. Officers willing to move across the bridge from Jutland or Funen to Copenhagen will earn the top bonuses.

English: [http://cphpost.dk/news/police-officers-who-choose-copenhagen-will-get-a-bonus ...](http://cphpost.dk/news/police-officers-who-choose-copenhagen-will-get-a-bonus...)

OECD 2016 economic survey

May 10, 2016

In the 2016 survey the organisation looks back at the flexicurity model that was largely developed through the 1990s in its current form. A substantial decrease in the duration of unemployment benefits and a much stronger emphasis on active labour market policies was done to promote return to work through upskilling and to ensure that the unemployed are available to the labour market. The OECD also states that the housing boom of the late 2000s contributed to a misallocation of resources in the economy, and 'it is likely that some of that misallocation continues given the large size of the financial sector and its wage premiums'.

English: <http://www.oecd.org/denmark/economic-survey-denmark.htm>

Estonia

Union busting continues - bargaining hindered

May 25, 2016

According to the financial sector trade union EFTL, the relationship between the Nordea Estonia bank and the union has not improved, after the leaving of the former union representative. The union is accusing the bank's board of blocking the concluding of a collective agreement and breaching the Trade Union Act. The union stated that the bank is also preventing the union from holding meetings and events at the bank's rooms. The management at Nordea Estonia said in a letter that Nordea is open to constructive dialogue with the representatives of the bank's employees.

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

Wage data for 1st quarter of 2016

May 25, 2016

Statistics Estonia published wage data for the 1st quarter of 2016. The average monthly gross wages and salaries were 1,091 euro and the average hourly gross wages and salaries were 6.86 euro. Compared to the 1st quarter of 2015, the average monthly gross wages and salaries increased by 8.1% and the average hourly gross wages and salaries by 7.7%. The increase was mainly due to the irregular bonuses and premiums, which increased 32.5% per employee compared to the 1st quarter of 2015 and which affected the increase in

average gross monthly wages and salaries by 0.8 percentage points. Without irregular bonuses and premiums, the average monthly gross wages and salaries increased by 7.2% in the 1st quarter. Minimum wages increased from 390 euro to 430 euro at the beginning of 2016. The office also published wage data for the year 2015. The average monthly gross income per employee in 2015 was 1013 euro, a 6% increase.

English: <http://www.stat.ee/277448>
<http://www.stat.ee/277468>

Finland

Negotiations reach ultimate stage

May 27, 2016

After the national labour market pact or the so-called competitiveness pact was agreed upon in February by the three trade union confederations and the employers' associations the negotiations started in the different industries. There are two main issues at play in the negotiations under the umbrella of this pact: to add 24 more annual working hours into the collective agreements and the so-called survival clause. According to the national pact, this clause should 'help secure the employer's operations and jobs by adjusting terms and conditions of employment when the employer runs into financial difficulties that jeopardise jobs.' After the dead-line the government will see whether the reformed collective agreements go far enough in cutting companies expenses and thus negate the need for proposed heavy austerity measures.

English: [http://heikkijokinen.info/en/trade-union-news-from-finland/1024-home-stretch ...](http://heikkijokinen.info/en/trade-union-news-from-finland/1024-home-stretch...)

Microsoft to lay off 1350 workers

May 25, 2016

Microsoft has announced it is shutting down mobile device research and development operations in Finland with the loss of some 1,350 jobs. Worldwide an additional 500 jobs will be cut. The company bought Nokia's mobile phone business in 2014 but has failed to make it profitable. In 2015 the firm shut down some operations and went over to the closure of the Salo site with the loss of 2,300 jobs.

English: [http://yle.fi/uutiset/microsoft_to_cut_1350_jobs_in_finland ...](http://yle.fi/uutiset/microsoft_to_cut_1350_jobs_in_finland...)

Nokia negotiates dismissals

May 21, 2016

Nokia has wrapped up its latest round of redundancy talks, which began on 13 April. The original target of cutting some 1300 jobs has been narrowed down to 1032. Last year, before its takeover of French rival Alcatel-Lucent, Nokia had an average of 6900 workers in its home country. The negotiations covered all of the company's sectors except for Nokia Technologies. The firm says most of the jobs will be phased out this summer, with the rest by the end of 2016. Nokia offers outgoing staff financial support based on how long they worked for the company.

English: [http://yle.fi/uutiset/nokia_to_cut_1032_jobs_in_finland ...](http://yle.fi/uutiset/nokia_to_cut_1032_jobs_in_finland...)

Fujitsu Finland will cut 140 jobs

May 12, 2016

IT hardware and services company Fujitsu announced on 12 May that a corporate restructuring exercise is likely to result in the elimination of up to 140 jobs. Fujitsu Finland said that it will begin negotiations with employees' representatives following plans to restructure the organisation. The employer-employee talks will focus mainly on IT infrastructure positions in its Managed Infrastructure Services business unit, and will not affect employees working for its support, maintenance or Service Desk operations.

English: [http://yle.fi/uutiset/fujitsu_finland_to_slash_headcount_by_140 ...](http://yle.fi/uutiset/fujitsu_finland_to_slash_headcount_by_140...)

France

Series of protest and strikes over labour reform

May 26, 2016

Workers at 19 nuclear plants have voted to strike on 26 May as part of protests over labour reforms as a standoff between the government and unions escalated. Workers led by the trade union CGT have blocked oil refineries around the country in protest at the planned reforms aimed at making it easier for firms to dismiss workers. This collective action has led to fuel shortages in large parts of the country and long queues of cars at near-empty petrol stations. Metro, bus and RER rail workers in Paris have been urged to join a strike by the union CGT from 2 June in protest against the new labour laws as well as their own working conditions. No end date for the walk-out has been set. If the strike rumbles on it will have an impact on the Euro 2016 tournament, with the opening game being staged in Paris on 10 June. Workers are particularly fighting for a re-opening of wage negotiations, but are also protesting the new labour laws that have prompted long-running demonstrations across the country

English: [http://www.france24.com/en/20160525-french-police-break-fuel-depot-blockade ...](http://www.france24.com/en/20160525-french-police-break-fuel-depot-blockade...)
<http://www.thelocal.fr/20160523/paris-transport-workers-set-to-stage-indefinite-strike>

Police workers demonstrate against stress at work

May 18, 2016

Police officers demonstrated to vent frustration over the stresses produced by near daily clashes with gangs of violent youths on the fringes of the anti-reform movement that protests against the planned labour reform. The demonstration – unprecedented in France – was called by police trade unions. Police unions estimate that 350 of their colleagues have been injured, some seriously, in attacks with stones, bottles and Molotov cocktails since street protests against reform of labour laws began two months ago.

English: [http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/police-car-set-alight ...](http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/police-car-set-alight...)

Germany

Juridical dispute on minimum wage application

May 26, 2016

The first ruling of a court about the minimum wage, which came into effect in 2015, came down on the side of employers. The judge sided with a hospital service company which argued that the minimum hourly wage applied to a person's total yearly income, inclusive of holiday and Christmas bonuses which employers are not legally obliged to provide. A hospital employee was being paid €8.03 per hour, far below the legal minimum wage of €8.50. But, by adding her Christmas bonus and her holiday money onto her hourly wage, her employer had managed to calculate the woman's annual wage up to €8.69 an hour.

English: [http://www.thelocal.de/jobs/article/how-your-employer-can-still-pay-under ...](http://www.thelocal.de/jobs/article/how-your-employer-can-still-pay-under...)

German: [http://www.kostenlose-urteile.de/BAG_5-AZR-13516_Mindestlohn-Urteil-Arbeitgeber ...](http://www.kostenlose-urteile.de/BAG_5-AZR-13516_Mindestlohn-Urteil-Arbeitgeber...)

Documentary (and studies) about inequality

May 25, 2016

According to the Institute for Economic Research (DIW Berlin), companies are booming yet wages are stagnating. Several studies reveal that the share of middle-class individuals in the total population sank by more than five percent between 1991 and 2013. The 'middle class' comprises all adults whose total household income—before taxes and social security contributions—falls between 67 and 200 percent of the median, which separates the higher-income half from the lower-income half of the population. High-income individuals' share in total income, increased to 33 percent by 2010, up from 22 percent in 1991 to 31 percent in 2013. In contrast, the share of the middle class in the total income decreased by around ten percentage points after 1991, down from roughly 68 percent. A very instructive online documentary sketches out what is causing the increasing disparity between income levels.

English: [http://www.dw.com/en/how-socially-just-is-germany ...](http://www.dw.com/en/how-socially-just-is-germany...)

German: [http://link.springer.com/article ...](http://link.springer.com/article...)

A comparative report (Germany and US): [https://www.diw.de/sixcms/detail ...](https://www.diw.de/sixcms/detail...)

Collective agreement for construction approved

May 21, 2016

Construction trade union IG Bau and employers in the construction industry agreed a wage increase of around five percent for some 750,000 workers in the sector. The employers' federations, ZDB and HDB, and the IG Bau agreed on a pay increase of 4.6 percent for workers in the west of the country in two stages over a

period of 22 months. And workers in the east of the country will receive an increase of 5.3 percent. The deal was later on approved by the union's bargaining committee.

English: [http://www.breitbart.com/news/german-unions-bosses-reach-wage-deal ...](http://www.breitbart.com/news/german-unions-bosses-reach-wage-deal...)

Wage agreement in metal

May 13, 2016

Trade union IG Metall and employers in North Rhine-Westphalia reached a wage agreement that could pave the way for a further boost to real incomes in Europe's largest economy. The deal in North Rhine-Westphalia is for a 4.8 percent pay rise in two steps, covering some 700,000 workers. The union said the talks should serve as a model for metal workers in other regions. With unemployment at a record low, workers have been able to push for higher pay even with inflation weak and disposable income getting a boost from falling fuel prices. That's helped support consumer demand, which along with government spending helped the economy to grow at its fastest pace in two years at the start of 2016.

English: [http://www.dw.com/en/german-metalworkers-secure-strong-wage-hike ...](http://www.dw.com/en/german-metalworkers-secure-strong-wage-hike...)

How to deal with self-employed workers?

May 9, 2016

The numbers of so-called 'solo' freelancers, over 2.3 million self-employed workers, are increasing rapidly, but not their income. In 2014, the average net income of 'solo' self-employed was only 1,500 euro per month. Some earn much less. Unlike for all other employees since 2015, the minimum wage is not compulsory for freelancers. As a result, hourly rates of pay lower than the minimum wage of 8.50 euros are common. The service workers' union, Ver.di, is of the opinion that self-employed workers must be paid fairly, and have genuine social insurance. Industry trade union IG Metall is proposing to include minimum working conditions and fees for independent workers in collective agreements. The problem is that the law does not allow self-employed workers to negotiate their pay collectively. Ver.di has opted for other means of defending its members by putting pressure on the town councils to provide training and education, where the local authorities use a lot of self-employed workers.

English: [http://www.equaltimes.org/germany-looking-for-ways-to-defend ...](http://www.equaltimes.org/germany-looking-for-ways-to-defend...)

Greece

Walkout against privatisation

May 24, 2016

Port workers walked off the job on 26 May for 48 hours to protest against the sale of the country's two biggest ports, which Athens has promised to international lenders in exchange for much-needed bailout loans. The port workers trade union fears job cuts after the selling and is of the opinion that selling the ports is a mistake that won't help bring growth.

English: [http://www.reuters.com/article/us-eurozone-greece-port-protests ...](http://www.reuters.com/article/us-eurozone-greece-port-protests...)

Three-day nationwide protest

May 8, 2016

On 6 and 7 May, the largest private and public trade union called for a 48-hours nationwide strike to all workers, as well as the unemployed and pensioners, in protest against reforms. The strike was followed by a demonstration in Syntagma Square, the day that the government planned to set for voting the reform bill in the Parliament. The proposed legislation would raise social security contributions, increase income tax for high earners and introduce a new national pension. The measures would also gradually phase out a top-up pension for low income earners.

English: [http://www.telesurtv.net/english/news/Greek-Workers-Start-3-Day-Nationwide-Strike ...](http://www.telesurtv.net/english/news/Greek-Workers-Start-3-Day-Nationwide-Strike...)
[http://www.telesurtv.net/english/news/Greek-Police-Fires-Teargas-at-Protesters ...](http://www.telesurtv.net/english/news/Greek-Police-Fires-Teargas-at-Protesters...)

Hungary

Ban on UBER application proposed

May 17, 2016

The ride-sharing application Uber has caused controversy around the world with its ease of use and comparatively low prices. Hungarian taxi drivers have been protesting to have the government restrict access to the ride-sharing program. Ultimately, the government plans to pass new law that would ban the application and its servers from being accessed. According to the proposal, the purpose of the law is to obstruct access to unlawfully operating taxi or taxi-service type dispatchers operating on the internet.

English: [http://budapestbeacon.com/news-in-brief/taxis-in-hungary-are-not-feeling-uber ...](http://budapestbeacon.com/news-in-brief/taxis-in-hungary-are-not-feeling-uber...)

OECD Economic survey 2016

May 6, 2016

In the OECD 2016 economic survey the organisation on the one hand pleads for lowering the minimum wage (and for instance also the wage of youngsters), on the other hand the OECD signals a brain drain and labour shortages that ask for an improvement of wages. Notably in health care significantly higher wages may be needed to stem these developments. Moreover, low health care investment spending has led to unfavourable working conditions and outdated medical equipment. Such underinvestment is not sustainable. Finally, the bulk of long-term care is currently provided informally by family and friends, but as in other countries this may change, and an increasing institutionalisation of long-term care would raise public spending.

English: <http://www.oecd.org/eco/surveys/hungary-2016-OECD-economic-survey-overview.pdf>

Iceland

Labour dispute air traffic control continues

May 26, 2016

Last month we already reported about an ongoing dispute between air traffic controllers and the airport management at Keflavík International Airport. Air traffic controllers have been on a work-to-rule strike since 6 April, mean they work only their standard hours with no overtime allowed. All Icelandair flights to Europe and North America are suffering delays, due to a collective bargaining disagreement over pay and working conditions between the Icelandic Air Traffic Controllers Association (FÍF) and airport management.

English: [http://icelandmonitor.mbl.is/news/politics_and_society/2016/05/26/iceland_atc ...](http://icelandmonitor.mbl.is/news/politics_and_society/2016/05/26/iceland_atc...)

Ireland

Strike at Tesco suspended – talks continue

May 25, 2016

A strike by Tesco workers which was due to be held on 26 May has been called off pending further talks between the parties. According to the Mandate trade union, as many as 5,000 workers were due to take part in the industrial action. Both parties have now agreed to take part in further talks at the Workplace Relations Commission (WRC). The dispute centres on plans by Tesco to move some 300 of its staff recruited before 1996 to contracts introduced for personnel taken on after that date. This could lead to pay cuts of 15 per cent to 20 per cent, reductions to overtime rates and changes to rosters.

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

Teachers union urges members to accept new deal

May 23, 2016

The Teachers Union of Ireland (TUI) is calling on members to accept the proposed agreement with the Department of Education and Skills. In a communication to members, the TUI has stated that the proposed agreement provides tangible concessions with additional stepping stones for further progress on workload, terms and conditions, bureaucracy and professional autonomy.

English: [http://www.waterford-news.ie/2016/05/23/teachers-demand-end-to-lansdowne ...](http://www.waterford-news.ie/2016/05/23/teachers-demand-end-to-lansdowne...)

Ongoing Luas dispute may trigger Labour Court intervention

May 20, 2016

The Labour Court is to explore the scope for intervention in the Luas dispute, which has led to tram services being disrupted on 12 days. The Labour Court has asked the Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU) and Luas operator Transdev to brief it on the dispute. On the basis of these appraisals, the court will determine whether there is scope for it to intervene in the ongoing dispute. Meanwhile, no decision had been taken by the trade union Siptu to hold a ballot for an all-out strike at the Dublin light rail system.

English: [http://www.irishtimes.com/news/ireland/irish-news/fractious-luas-row-may-trigger ...](http://www.irishtimes.com/news/ireland/irish-news/fractious-luas-row-may-trigger...)

Public sector pay deal discussed

May 19, 2016

Higher pay rises for doctors, nurses and those workers who are difficult to retain in the public service are likely to be considered for inclusion in a new public sector pay deal. While some senior government figures said a public sector pay rise could be as high as 6.5 per cent over the period of a pay agreement, others expressed scepticism that a final package would offer a pay rise of that scale. The government has committed to the establishment of a new public sector pay commission to help quell industrial unrest and prepare the ground for a successor to the Lansdowne Road agreement. The country's largest public service trade union Impact has said it will not accept the government's planned new pay commission as a substitute for pay rounds negotiated through collective bargaining.

English: [http://www.irishtimes.com/news/politics/public-sector-pay-rise-could ...](http://www.irishtimes.com/news/politics/public-sector-pay-rise-could...)
[http://www.irishtimes.com/news/ireland/irish-news/pay-commission-cannot-be-substitute ...](http://www.irishtimes.com/news/ireland/irish-news/pay-commission-cannot-be-substitute...)

Deal on revision of pay scales for firefighters

May 4, 2016

There has been a breakthrough in pay talks for firefighters as the government agrees to reverse cuts for new recruits. Under the deal, firefighters hired after 2012 will regain a 4,500 euro rent allowance. The Acting Public Expenditure Minister and Acting Environment Minister have announced that they agreed to the revised salary scale for these public servants. In return, the firefighters are said to be prepared to work on productivity as part of a reform package within the fire service - known as Keeping Communities Safe.

English: [http://www.newstalk.com/Firefighters-deal-could-highlight-one-route-out ...](http://www.newstalk.com/Firefighters-deal-could-highlight-one-route-out...)

Italy

Metal negotiations with no result

May 24, 2016

The metalworkers' trade unions FIOM, FIM and UILM have announced a 12-hour strike and no overtime for two days after no agreement was reached with the federation of metalworking companies Federmeccanica on the renewal of the collective agreement. Last month, thousands of metalworkers went on strike against Federmeccanica's proposal for the renewal of the contract, which unions say give pay rises to only 5% of workers, those who are currently under the regulated minimum.

English: [http://www.ansa.it/english/news/2016/05/24/metalworkers-unions-announce ...](http://www.ansa.it/english/news/2016/05/24/metalworkers-unions-announce...)

IMF comes with well-known receipt

May 23, 2016

At the end of an official visit the IMF describes the preliminary findings in a Concluding Statement, the basis of a report on the state of the economy. The IMF estimates that with the actual growth path a return to pre-crisis (2007) output levels will only be reached by the mid-2020s and, as a consequence, the country will stay behind the faster growing euro area average. The IMF praises the reforms and the labour market legislation that is being implemented, in particular the Jobs Act. In the statement it is recommended to build up a new wage bargaining system that helps align wages with productivity, in order to improve competitiveness: by broadening the scope for firms, specifically smaller enterprises as well as many in the South, to engage in effective firm-level negotiations that strengthen the link between wages and productivity.

English: [http://www.imf.org/external/np ...](http://www.imf.org/external/np...)

Municipal workers on strike

May 18, 2016

Rome's 24,000 municipal workers called for a general strike on 25 May to press for a new agreement. The main three union confederations, CGIL, CISL and UIL will organise this action.

English: [http://www.ansa.it/english/news/2016/05/18/rome-municipal-workers-to-strike ...](http://www.ansa.it/english/news/2016/05/18/rome-municipal-workers-to-strike...)

Latvia

Plea for more expenditure on education

May 19, 2016

Public expenditure on education in Latvia and per-student funding at all levels are lower than many OECD countries. According to the OECD more progress is needed to realise the country's ambitions in education and for society as a whole. It requires a stronger focus on equity, establishing the conditions for a high-quality education profession and continuing the reforms of vocational and tertiary education. Raising teacher salaries to nationally comparable levels will improve recruitment.

English: [http://www.oecd.org/latvia/latvia-should-continue-improving-quality-of-education ...](http://www.oecd.org/latvia/latvia-should-continue-improving-quality-of-education...)

Unemployment rate falls

May 12, 2016

The registered unemployment level in April 2016 decreased to 8.8% from 9.1% in March, according to the State Employment Agency. At the end of April 2016, there were 82,268 people registered with the State Employment Agency as unemployed compared to 85,414 registered jobless at the end of March, dropping by 3,146 people. The Riga Region had the lowest unemployment level in late April this year at 5.6%, while Latgale province in eastern Latvia had the highest rate at 18.8%. Among the cities, Riga had the lowest unemployment rate at 5.3%, with the highest registered in Rezekne in eastern Latvia at 16.8%.

English: [http://www2.staffingindustry.com/eng/Editorial/Daily-News/Latvia-Unemployment ...](http://www2.staffingindustry.com/eng/Editorial/Daily-News/Latvia-Unemployment...)

Liechtenstein

Economic developments – spring 2016

May 3, 2016

An updated report dedicated to the economic developments reveals that the employment growth almost stabilised in the second half of 2015 (with a slight growth of 0.5%). However, in manufacturing employment decreased. In monetary terms the country survived from what is called the 'Frankenshock' (the negative effects of the strong Swiss currency that is also the currency of the principality).

German: <http://www.llv.li/files/as/konjunkturbericht-16f.pdf>

Lithuania

Trade union calls for no confidence vote against Prime Minister

May 17, 2016

The Council of the trade union of health and social care employees (LVSADA) requested on 17 May 2016 that the parliament hold a vote of no confidence against the Prime Minister. The decision was supported by 21 out of 28 Council members present at the meeting. LVSADA said that the medical trade unions had previously agreed to sign a compromise proposal for the government's action plan. However, the proposal for increased financing to healthcare to address the problems in the sector in accordance with the recommendations by the World Health Organization (WHO) and the European Commission was not included in the action plan approved by the government on 26 April 2016.

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

Luxembourg

Less job seekers; unemployment slightly increases

May 24, 2016

Although the number of job seekers is slowly decreasing since January 2015, the latest figures of the statistical office indicate that unemployment is going up since the beginning of 2016. The office published a detailed bulletin on the situation at the labour market (in French). The document that was produced together with the official employment office (ADEM) describes in detail the characteristics of the unemployed (age group, vocational training and education, gender, industry, sector or branch).

English: [http://www.statistiques.public.lu/en/news/population/labour ...](http://www.statistiques.public.lu/en/news/population/labour)

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

Malta

NGO presents living wage study

May 17, 2016

NGO Caritas Malta has presented a study titled 'A minimum essential budget for a decent living', a research study focusing on three low-income household categories. The document was produced with the aim of establishing a minimum essential budget for a decent living. The focus of Caritas was on low income families. The NGO made a number of recommendations, including the improvement of the minimum wage.

English: [http://www.independent.com.mt/articles/2016-05-17/local-news/Caritas-attempts ...](http://www.independent.com.mt/articles/2016-05-17/local-news/Caritas-attempts)

The report: [http://www.caritasmalta.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/Caritas-Report-2016 ...](http://www.caritasmalta.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/Caritas-Report-2016)

Netherlands

Large survey on working conditions

May 17, 2016

The National Survey on Working Conditions (NEA) is a large scale survey among the workforce. In 2015 the statistical office CBS and research institute TNO worked out the 11th NEA, in cooperation with the labour ministry. The results show that only 20% of the workforce active in flexible jobs is satisfied with this status; the other 80% is looking for a direct contract. The survey also asked the attitude of workers towards collective agreements. The respondents (in total almost 46,000 workers) expressed both high importance (19.5% not important, 50.6% important, 30% highly important) and relatively high satisfaction (18.8% not satisfied, 70% satisfied, 11.2% highly satisfied) towards the existence and content of collective agreements.

Dutch: [https://www.cbs.nl/nl-nl/nieuws/2016/20/1-op-de-5-flexwerkers-heeft-voorkeur ...](https://www.cbs.nl/nl-nl/nieuws/2016/20/1-op-de-5-flexwerkers-heeft-voorkeur)

The report (in Dutch): [http://www.monitorarbeid.tno.nl/dynamics/modules ...](http://www.monitorarbeid.tno.nl/dynamics/modules)

Gender pay gap still significant

May 12, 2016

Women in the Netherlands still earn an average of 5 percent less than their male colleagues, according to a study done by foundation Loonwijzer and job site Monsterboard. While this is an improvement - in 2014 men earned 5.8 percent more - there are some sectors where the wage gap is still significant. In healthcare and education, for example, men earn an average of 15 percent more than their female colleagues.

English: <http://www.nltimes.nl/2016/05/12/women-still-earning-less-male-colleagues/>

Wage Indicator gender pay gap page: [http://www.wageindicator.org/main/salary/gender-pay-gap ...](http://www.wageindicator.org/main/salary/gender-pay-gap)

Broad coalition against TTIP

May 5, 2016

Representatives of the farming unions, livestock farmers' associations and environmental groups have signed a joint declaration against the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP). According to the declaration TTIP will flood the European market with American agricultural products produced to a lower standard. This will adversely affect the incomes of farmers, the safety of our food, workers' rights, the quality of the environment and animal welfare. The European market will become unbalanced and this will

seriously affect the continuity of the primary agricultural sector in Europe. Unfair competition will force farmers to scale up and family businesses will be closed. Job losses in the supply chain and the processing industry will be inevitable. The working conditions and workers' wages in the entire agricultural sector will come under even more pressure.

English: <http://www.dutchnews.nl/features ...>

Ground handlers confronted with wage freeze plans

May 2, 2016

Some 15,000 ground workers would see their salaries frozen, and would lose one of their paid days off per year, according to a new proposal submitted by the management of airline KLM to union representatives. The company would also like to replace some 3,000 baggage handlers and ground crews with temporary employees, according to the trade union CNV Vakmensen.

English: <http://www.nltimes.nl/2016/05/02/klm-wants-freeze-salaries-15k-ground-workers ...>

Increase of strikes in 2015

May 1, 2016

The statistical office CBS registered 27 strikes in the year 2015, totalling 48,000 working days. In the last 15 years the amount of strikes was only higher in 2005 (28) and 2006 (31). In total, 42,000 workers were involved in the 2015 strikes that had an average duration of 1.8 working days. The longest strike was organised by the police workers' unions, whilst the most frequently envisaged sector was the manufacturing industry. More than 80% of the strikes were initiated by the trade unions. In 70% cases the unions were also involved in the negotiations that led to a solution of the dispute. One third of the disputes was related to a conflicting situation in the renewal of collective agreement; 15% of the disputes were conflicts on pay.

Dutch (with graphs): <https://www.cbs.nl/nl-nl/nieuws/2016/17/in-2015-hoogste-aantal ...>

Norway

Agreement for hotel and restaurant workers

May 21, 2016

The lengthy and highly disruptive hotel strike that was reported in last month's Newsletter ended in what the trade unions were calling a victory. Hotels that have been closed by the strike were due to reopen on 21 May. The trade union federation Fellesforbundet reached an agreement with hotel and restaurant employers' organization NHO. Striking hotel workers were jubilant after they prevailed in their demands for the right to local negotiations and higher wages for the lowest-paid hotel workers.

English: <http://www.newsinenglish.no/2016/05/21/hotel-strike-over-workers-jubilant/>

Strike could paralyse public services

May 2, 2016

The police, the national tax administration, customs, the Norwegian Labour and Welfare Organization (NAV) and the nation's universities and colleges are among the organizations that could be paralysed if a threatened public strike becomes reality. A public sector strike was viewed as likely after three of four labour unions broke off negotiations with the state at the beginning of May 2016. The union Akademikerne Stat was the only one of the four union confederations to reach a deal with the state this year. LO Stat, Unio Stat and YS Stat all opted to break off negotiation talks. The unions and the state will meet with a state mediator. His goal is to help the two sides reach agreement on 25 May.

English: <http://www.thelocal.no/20160502/looming-strike-could-paralyse ...>

Poland

Nurses strike because of broken pay promises

May 24, 2016

Nurses at one of the country's largest specialist paediatric hospitals, the Children's Memorial Health

Institute in Warsaw, are on strike, with patients being sent to other institutions. The nurses demand that managers fulfil promises made earlier this year to increase wages. The nurses have received only part of a promised PLN 400 (around 90 euro) increase. A spokesperson for the nurses' trade union at the hospital said that low wages 'pose a threat to the lives of the hospitalised children', as more and more nurses are leaving the hospital due to being underpaid.

English: <http://www.thenews.pl/1/9/Artykul/254121,Nurses-strike-at-Warsaw-hospital>

Bill on junk job contracts has effects

May 10, 2016

In late February, amendments to the Labour Code to curb the excessive use of fixed-term contracts came into force (six months after they were formally enacted), ending a long battle in which, in 2012, even the European Commission had become involved. The journal Gazeta Wyborcza recently reported this month that the reform of these so-called junk job contracts - contracts for 2-3 months of temporary employment with minimum salary and no social security pay - starts generating profits. As a result of imposing a social insurance tax on the junk job contracts, the social insurance institution receives PLN 50 million monthly more than before the bill was enacted.

English: [http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/observatories/eurwork/articles/industrial-relations ...](http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/observatories/eurwork/articles/industrial-relations...)

Portugal

Government wants talks with social partners on red tape

May 26, 2016

The government has formally presented to employer organisations and trade union federations its latest programme to cut red tape in public services, at a meeting in Lisbon at which the subject of unemployment benefit eligibility for the self-employed is also discussed. The administrative simplification programme Simplex 2016 includes 255 measures that are to be implemented over the next 12 months.

English: [http://www.theportugalnews.com/news/government-presents-unions-employers ...](http://www.theportugalnews.com/news/government-presents-unions-employers...)

Portuguese ports workers on strike action

May 24, 2016

The dock workers trade union, Sindicato dos Estivadores, Trabalhadores do Tráfego e Conferentes Marítimos (SETC) is on strike action from 12 until 27 May, if no agreements can be reached with the management on improved working conditions. The union plans to extend its current strike action until 16 June and has also arranged for a demonstration on that day. Dozens of striking stevedores gathered outside gates at Lisbon's port on 24 May 24 and shouted at what they said were strike-breakers helping to load the containers on trucks. The dock workers and shipping companies operating at the port failed to break the deadlock in their latest talks, and seven companies said would begin lay-offs to compensate for lost income. The companies say they have lost around 10 million euros so far due to the strike. The union is demanding greater job security and automatic promotions every three years, as well as higher pay.

English: [http://www.sandiegouniontribune.com/news/2016/may/24/police-help-lisbon-port ...](http://www.sandiegouniontribune.com/news/2016/may/24/police-help-lisbon-port...)
[http://shipandbunker.com/news/emea/666991-portuguese-ports-set-for-more-disruption ...](http://shipandbunker.com/news/emea/666991-portuguese-ports-set-for-more-disruption...)

Low-skilled poorly paid

May 19, 2016

Almost half the workforce with primary school level education and over 60 percent of the unemployed survived in 2014 on less than 610 euro per month, according to the Earnings and Living Conditions report released by the National Institute of Statistics. In 2014, the year of the study, a slight decrease in the level of earnings inequality was signalled. However, there remained 'a very significant asymmetry relative to the 10 percent of the population with the highest resources in comparison with the other classes of earnings', the report detailed before indicating 'employment and more education mean higher earnings.' Monetary income for the 10 percent of the adult population with the greatest resources, with an annual average income of 26,127 euro, was 10.6 times greater than the average earned by the 10 percent of the population with the lowest level of resources, on an average of 2,469 euro annually.

English: [http://www.theportugalnews.com/news/half-of-low-educated-workers-on-less ...](http://www.theportugalnews.com/news/half-of-low-educated-workers-on-less...)

Tables and press release: <https://www.ine.pt/xportal ...>

Teachers' wages and working conditions hit hard by austerity

May 8, 2016

Since the beginning of the economic crisis in 2008, education spending has fallen to 3% of the Gross Domestic product, with devastating consequences for the teaching profession. Many years of austerity measures have left more than a quarter of the teachers without job certainty, while salaries are low and employment conditions poor. The largest teachers' organisation, FENPROF, considers the establishment of a national dialogue of the new government with the unions an important step forward for the improvement of the situation.

English: http://www.ei-ie.org/en/news/news_details ...

Romania

Government drafts law on public wages

May 18, 2016

The government has drafted a law on salaries in the public sector, which focuses on correcting the inequalities in the local healthcare system and introduces performance bonuses for the healthcare and education personnel. The project has been published on the website of the National Trade Union Bloc (BNS). The project will correct certain failures in the public wage system. It has been drafted after long talks with the social partners. Unions in the education and in the public administration sector criticised the project and even threatened to boycott the local elections that are due to take place on 5 June. They are unhappy that the draft law fails to increase the salaries of workers in education or public administration.

English: <http://www.romania-insider.com/romanias-government-comes-new-law ...>

Draft law (in Romanian): <http://www.bns.ro/2015-04-20-09-24-30/228-ordonanta-de-urgenta ...>

Minimum wage goes up

May 3, 2016

The gross minimum wage went up to RON 1,250 (280 euro) starting 1 May 2016, following a government decision earlier this year. About 1.1 million workers who earn the minimum wage benefit from this measure. Almost three quarters (71.5%) of the employees have monthly net salaries of less than RON 1,700 (380 euro per month), according to official data from the Labour Ministry. Moreover, 44% of the employees make less than RON 1,000 (220 euro) per month, the same statistics show. The country has serious problems to attract and keep high-skilled workers

English: <http://www.romania-insider.com/gross-minimum-wage-ron-1250-romania ...>

Serbia

International Workers' Memorial Day site visit

May 12, 2016

On the occasion of International Workers' Memorial Day, representatives of the construction and building materials trade union (SGIGM) visited workers at the factory 'Zmaj' in the town of Smederevo highlighting the importance of prevention of risks at work and the important role of health and safety representatives at the work place. Also, other public events with participation of representatives from the construction and building materials sector were held, demanding from the employers and government to pay more attention to health and safety at work.

English: www.bwint.org/default.asp ...

Slovakia

Teachers will receive 6% pay increase

May 25, 2016

The cabinet approved a legislative amendment in a fast-tracked procedure that leads to an improvement of teachers' wages. It thereby fulfilled some of the commitments outlined in the Government Manifesto. In the regional education sector, the cabinet committed itself to increase the salary scales for teaching and specialist staff by an average of 6 percent, from 1 September 2016. In addition, salaries will be increased each year from 1 January 2018 if significant internal changes in the education system are adopted. The cabinet also pledged to increase the salaries of university lecturers.

English: [http://spectator.sme.sk/c/20173613/cabinet-approves-6-percent-rise ...](http://spectator.sme.sk/c/20173613/cabinet-approves-6-percent-rise...)

Labour market shortage and the recruitment of foreign labour

May 23, 2016

The labour market is becoming overheated with more and more employers reporting difficulty filling their vacancies with qualified labour, due to the shrinking pool of suitable employees. Sectors most affected by the shortages are IT and industrial production. While employers have started searching abroad for labour, the labour ministry refuses to ease employment requirements for people from non-EU member countries and would like to see vacancies filled by people registered with job offices or those lured back home.

English: <http://spectator.sme.sk/c/20168355/foreigners-fill-job-gaps.html>

Slovenia

IMF comes with mission statement

May 17, 2016

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has assessed that while the country is recording economic growth, it could be higher and more sustainable. The usual IMF-receipt is repeated: reforming and privatising state-owned companies and banks, narrowing of the budget deficit, pension reform, such as further extending the retirement age and indexing pensions to consumer price inflation. Finally, the IMF recommends a social pact that guarantees wage moderation and a tie of social transfers, wages and pensions to GDP growth.

English: [http://www.sloveniatimes.com/imf-slovenia-s-growth-could-be-higher-and ...](http://www.sloveniatimes.com/imf-slovenia-s-growth-could-be-higher-and...)

Spain

Metro workers hold three-day strike

May 24, 2016

Madrid metro workers concluded to hold a three-day strike, including partial interruptions in the transport service, to demand a new collective agreement. According to the sectoral trade union organisations, the call for strike took place after 27 meetings and six months of negotiations, in which there was no progress regarding future employment contracts. The six unions involved in the negotiations said the company intends to increase the working hours without a salary increase.

English: [http://www.plenglish.com/index.php ...](http://www.plenglish.com/index.php...)

Teachers and public service workers merge into new union federation

May 13, 2016

Aiming to better represent members, the former federations of Education Workers (FETE-UGT), an Education International (EI) affiliate, and Public Service (PSF-UGT), affiliated with PSI and UNI, have officially merged to become FeSP-UGT. Under the merger agreement FETE is set to continue as a sector within the new federation, which includes retaining their name to recognise the union's historical significance. The sectors have also been given international relations autonomy.

English: [http://www.ei-ie.org/en/news ...](http://www.ei-ie.org/en/news...)

Banks announce more job cuts

May 4, 2016

Several banks, which slimmed down after the property boom went bust in 2008, are once again closing branches and slashing jobs as their profitability is hit by stiff competition. The plans of Santander, the Eurozone's biggest bank by market capitalisation, to close 450 smaller branches and cut 1,400 jobs were already reported in the April Newsletter. Barcelona-based CaixaBank, the country's third-largest bank, plans to cut 500 of its 32,500 jobs through early retirement agreements as it seeks to trim its salary costs. Trade union UGT expressed the fear that this is not the end of the job cuts in the banking sector.

English: [https://www.enca.com/money/spanish-banks-launch-new-wave-of-job-cuts ...](https://www.enca.com/money/spanish-banks-launch-new-wave-of-job-cuts...)

Sweden

Migrants' labour market integration

May 13, 2016

An OECD review in a series on the skills and integration of migrants and their children signals that humanitarian migrants and their families face greater challenges to integrate into the labour market than other groups. Sweden has highly developed and longstanding integration policies that mainly aim at upskilling migrants while temporarily lowering the hiring costs. According to the OECD, tools that work more strongly with the social partners and the civil society are less well developed and need strengthening.

English: [http://www.oecd.org/newsroom/sweden-in-a-strong-position-to-integrate-refugees ...](http://www.oecd.org/newsroom/sweden-in-a-strong-position-to-integrate-refugees...)

The review: [http://www.keepeek.com/Digital-Asset-Management/oecd/social-issues-migration ...](http://www.keepeek.com/Digital-Asset-Management/oecd/social-issues-migration...)

Construction agreement promotes equality and diversity

May 1, 2016

After six days of strike members of the construction trade union Byggnads can finally go back to work with a nation-wide agreement giving higher wages and shortened working hours. The deal gives an extra pay rise for low paid workers within the sector, such as cleaners at construction sites. The union also pushed the employers to commit to promote gender equality and diversity by investing in apprenticeships to women and workers with a migrant background. This was a key demand of Byggnads as only around eight percent of all construction workers are women and the unemployment rates of women construction workers is double that of men.

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

Switzerland

Watchmakers put pressure on working conditions and job security

May 22, 2016

Watch manufacturers are increasing shedding workers. Exports of luxurious watches are slowing as Chinese consumers are buying less, and a stronger currency is also hurting their business. Cuts have been made mostly in administrative jobs so far, but some skilled professionals are starting to feel the pressure, Trade union Unia that has started negotiations to minimise the number of workers to be dismissed admitted that job cuts included not only administrative staff, but also skilled workers who are responsible for major production work. In the watchmaking industry, skilled workers have long been provided sanctuary from job cuts resulting from temporary fluctuations in the market to allow for long-term training.

English: <http://asia.nikkei.com/Business/Trends/As-China-slows-Swiss-watchmakers-cut-jobs>

The ins and outs of the basic income referendum

May 10, 2016

In the last Newsletter we reported about the basic income referendum on 5 June. The initiative asks the government to give people an unconditional basic income to allow everyone, whatever their circumstances, the ability to lead a dignified existence and participate in public life. The initiators say this basic income is necessary in the face of increasing automation in the workplace. With such an income as a cushion, people would have the freedom to undertake unpaid volunteer work, retrain or spend more time with their children.

English: <http://www.thelocal.ch/20160510/swiss-basic-income-vote-what-you-need-to-know>

Turkey

IndustriAll backs up unions

May 26, 2016

In the seventh edition of its magazine Global Worker the global trade union IndustriAll dedicates a long background article on the trade union situation in Turkey. The legislation on trade unions and collective bargaining sets thresholds for collective bargaining certification. A union that wants to sign a workplace level collective bargaining agreement must organise at least 1 per cent of the entire workforce in that industrial sector. In the meantime, there are also workplace level thresholds of 50 per cent, and for companies with more than one workplace it is 40 per cent. With unions under pressure to defend workers in a climate of consistent anti-union behaviour the magazine looks at how transnational campaigns provide them with the solidarity and space they need to organise and to start negotiations.

English: <http://www.industrialunion.org/sites/default ...>

Repression of unions increases

May 3, 2016

The ITUC has called on the government to cease its intensified repression of trade unions, and protested at its plan to amend labour laws to further weaken workers' rights. Dozens of academics have been dismissed for signing a statement calling for an end to repression against Kurdish and other people in the Kurdish provinces. Several of them have been banned from leaving the country and criminal proceedings have been launched against others. The ITUC has also been informed that 1,390 union members have been placed under investigation for participating in an event calling for peace and democracy.

English: <http://www.ituc-csi.org/turkey-government-stepping-up>

United Kingdom

Train drivers vote to strike

May 23, 2016

The general secretary of the train drivers' union, ASLEF, has welcomed the strong mandate from GTR Southern & Gatwick Express members who voted overwhelmingly in favour of taking action over the dispute concerning the extension of driver only operations. 95.8% of our members voted Yes to taking part in industrial action short of a strike and 84.4% voted Yes to taking part in a strike, on a turnout of over 82%.

English: <http://www.aslef.org.uk/information ...>

GMB Scotland welcomes Council climb down on holiday dispute

May 20, 2016

Trade union GMB Scotland has welcomed Glasgow City Council's (GCC) decision to climb-down from their changes to working time that could have cost workers up to £500 a year. The Council has confirmed that plans to convert six public holidays into annual leave will now be dropped having made budget savings. Previously, in the context of a campaign of resistance, a GMB Scotland industrial action ballot closed with 72 per cent support for strike action against the plans of the Council.

English: <http://www.gmb.org.uk/newsroom/glasgow-councils-climb-down>

General practitioners ballot on strike action – junior doctors have a deal

May 20, 2016

The British Medical Association's (BMA) annual conference of LMCs, which represent GPs has voted to ballot on potential strike action, days after junior doctors reached a deal with the administration intended to end their bitter dispute. Hundreds voted in favour of canvassing GPs on their willingness to sign undated resignations and take industrial action in response to what they say is an inadequate rescue package from NHS England to stop services crumbling under unsustainable workloads and a severe recruitment crisis. The deal in the long-running dispute over a new junior doctors' contract has been agreed between government negotiators and the British Medical Association leadership after eight days of talks at conciliation service Acas. The deal includes several major changes in working conditions such as: the basic pay rise; the payment

of supplementary hours; extra pay for night shifts (to be reduced from 50% to 37%) and extra support will be made available for doctors who take time out (i.e. maternity leave).

English: [http://www.theguardian.com/society/2016/may/20/gp-leaders-vote-ballot-strike ...](http://www.theguardian.com/society/2016/may/20/gp-leaders-vote-ballot-strike)
[http://www.bbc.com/news/health ...](http://www.bbc.com/news/health)

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