

collective bargaining

Issue 12/2016 December

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



etui.

contents

European sources

The debate around low-wage jobs
Social partners' representativeness assessed
EU-wide legislation on working conditions in fishery
The impact of austerity
Employee share ownership documented
Social pillar discussed
Report on labour provisions in trade agreements
Wage report 2015/2016

Austria

Several collective agreements settled before Christmas
First increase in income of agricultural workers since 2012
A plea for targeted and qualification-orientated immigration

Belgium

Social partners agree on improvement of parental leave
Negotiations at interprofessional level started
Unions try to save jobs at bulb factory

Bulgaria

Minimum wage as per 1 January 2017

Croatia

Dispute on promised wage increase continues

Cyprus

New data for 2016

Czech Republic

Post workers act for better wages
Electricity conglomerate agrees on wage increase

Denmark

Traineeships and subsidised jobs for refugees
OECD report recommends support for low-skilled
On top of happiness at work ranking
Enforcement of the Uber court decision

Estonia

Teachers' pay increases twice in 2017

Doctors will strike if union demands are not met

Finland

Walkout at temporary agencies
Pilot project with basic income will start
Data on poverty

France

Disputes with Uber continue
Minimum wage increases slightly
The grey zone of the underemployed
Blog on the negotiations at the postal services
Research on wages and working conditions

Germany

Amazon envisaged in long-running dispute
Railway negotiations still ongoing
Two reports on growing inequality and income poverty
Collective bargaining results 2016
Bundesbank publishes macroeconomic prognoses
Collective agreement for temporary agency workers

Greece

Ferry workers end 9-day strike
Demonstration over new budget cuts - journalists on 24-hour strike

Hungary

Garbage collectors consider strike
Water utility workers on strike

Iceland

Poverty reported

Ireland

The trade union bargaining demands for 2017
Pay dispute comes to an end
Public transport branches still discuss pay demand

Italy

Agreement metal sector approved by workforce
Food workers' unions succeed
Temporary work agency bankrupt

Latvia

Report on the structure of earnings in 2014

Liechtenstein

Pay deal in nine sectors
Info letter with bargaining news

Lithuania

Compensation for migrant workers

Luxembourg

Minimum wage increase comes nearer
What income is needed for a decent living
Agreement at ArcelorMittal

Malta

Social workers' action postponed

Netherlands

Court bans strike on safety grounds
Strike action at Shell ends
Transport unions activate compliance control
Mismatch between skill level and jobs

Norway

Can the social model be exported?

Poland

Main destination for economic migration investigated
Media restrictions criticised

Portugal

Strike of handling and security staff
Minimum wage proposal discussed

Romania

Minimum wage increase postponed
Collective bargaining at a standstill

Serbia

Latest wage data

Slovakia

Labour market improves further

Slovenia

Statistical overview of 2016

Spain

Mass demonstration for better working conditions
Increase of minimum wage
Retailer insolvent again
Garbage strike at Barcelona airport

Sweden

Union critical about working time
Investment in youth needed

Switzerland

Swissport strike warning withdrawn
Richemont reaches agreement with employees on job cuts

Turkey

Walk against dismissals of unionists
Supply industries with poor working conditions

United Kingdom

The labour market position of agency and zero-hours workers
Cabin crew strikes suspended
Two-year Nissan pay deal
Draft Codes on balloting and on picketing in industrial disputes
Welsh national assembly questions trade union bill reform
Monitoring poverty and social exclusion

European sources

The debate around low-wage jobs

December 23, 2016

An interesting comparison of Eurofound examines the low-wage job debate in six European countries (Germany, Hungary, Norway, Romania, Spain and Sweden), illustrating a variety of objectives, measures, debates and responses. In many countries, the least-educated workers and those with less work experience face the greatest risk of being in low-paid jobs. The comparison refers to an evidence review, funded by the European Commission, which found that workers in low-wage jobs are often young and/or female, have low levels of educational attainment and are more likely to be members of a disadvantaged ethnic minority or immigrant group. Part-time jobs and temporary jobs are also more likely than full-time or permanent jobs to be low paid. While the creation of low-wage jobs could create more jobs, they exacerbate the issue of low pay and in-work poverty. The EC study also looked at the function of statutory minimum wages. Minimum wages create a wage floor and prevent employers from being able to pay very low 'exploitative' wages.

English: [https://www.eurofound.europa.eu/observatories/other-eurwork ...](https://www.eurofound.europa.eu/observatories/other-eurwork...)

The EC-report: [http://ec.europa.eu/social/main ...](http://ec.europa.eu/social/main...)

Social partners' representativeness assessed

December 19, 2016

The representativeness of social partners provides legitimacy for their various roles in industrial relations, whether through the vehicle of social dialogue, collective bargaining or involvement in government policymaking or implementation. A Eurofound report compares the different ways in which the representativeness of social partners is defined at national, European and international levels. It shows that representativeness has various meanings across the 28 member states and Norway, with most countries featuring a combination of legal conformity and mutual recognition. The report analyses the concept of representativeness at national level by reviewing key elements such as electoral success, organisational strength in terms of membership, and the capacity to negotiate.

English: [http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/sites/default ...](http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/sites/default...)

EU-wide legislation on working conditions in fishery

December 17, 2016

In October, we already reported that the Council of the EU intended to approve a proposal of the Commission which transposes a social partners' agreement on working conditions in the fisheries sector. On 19 December, the Council of the EU formally adopted the EU Directive giving legal effect to an agreement negotiated by the European social partners to implement the ILO Work in Fishing Convention, 2007 (No. 188). This Convention includes a comprehensive set of labour standards covering such issues as medical care at sea, written work agreements, mandatory crew lists, safety, health, food, accommodation, rest time and repatriation. Its provisions help prevent unacceptable forms of work, including forced labour, child labour and abuses in the recruitment and placement process. So far, ILO Convention No. 188 has been ratified by 10 countries, and both the Convention and the EU Directive will enter into force on 16 November 2017.

English: http://www.ilo.org/brussels/press/press-releases/WCMS_537359/lang--en/index.htm

The impact of austerity

December 15, 2016

A research paper of the European Social Observatory (Ose) investigates the impact of austerity on certain fundamental rights. The eight years which have gone by give a striking perspective on the outcome of the strict austerity policies introduced in Europe. In the section on the right of work, the author lists a series of measures undertaken by the public authorities and national legislator: public sector job cuts; changes to working time and deregulation of atypical contracts with increasing precarity of contracts; simplifying of the conditions governing (collective) redundancy; pay cuts and freezes; weakening of unemployment protection.

English: [http://www.ose.be/files/publication/OSEPaperSeries/Ghailani ...](http://www.ose.be/files/publication/OSEPaperSeries/Ghailani...)

Employee share ownership documented

December 14, 2016

In a Barometer of employer share ownership policies in Europe it is concluded that all recent policy developments in Europe, with the exception of France, pave the way towards higher incentives for employee

ownership. According to the authors, the development of employee share ownership brings better motivation, productivity, profitability, higher growth, more and better jobs.

English: [http://www.efonline.org/BAROMETER ...](http://www.efonline.org/BAROMETER...)

Social pillar discussed

December 8, 2016

The German trade union confederation DGB and the Austrian OGB organised, with several NGOs, a panel discussion, 'How to build the pillar of social rights', with some outstanding speakers. Allan Larsson, Special Advisor for the European Pillar of Social Rights of Commission President Juncker commented that Europe would urgently need a new approach to the obviously failed neoliberalism. Maria João Rodrigues, MEP, rapporteur for the Pillar of Social Rights in the Employment Committee, said that the negotiations in the European Parliament were proving to be difficult in particular with regard to the question of the concrete achievement of objectives, such as how the pillar of social rights should be embedded legally binding or how and what resources could and should be made available. Other speakers came from the ETUC, the Austrian Arbeiterkammer and the Cabinet of the EU Commissioner for Social Affairs.

English: [http://www.akeuropa.eu/en/news ...](http://www.akeuropa.eu/en/news...)

Position paper of AK: [http://www.akeuropa.eu/_includes ...](http://www.akeuropa.eu/_includes...)

Report on labour provisions in trade agreements

December 6, 2016

Several ILO reports, on labour provisions in trade agreements, assess the impact of these provisions on labour market outcomes. The Handbook of Labour Provisions in Trade Agreements, provides practical information on the design, implementation and stakeholder involvement of labour provisions in a user-friendly format geared towards non-technical audiences. It situates the report in the broader trade and labour debate, provides practical country case studies, and examines particular issues related to global supply chains, gender and overall labour governance. Two of the case studies are dedicated to trade agreements established by the EU. The report signals that the European Parliament Roadmap has had a significant influence on the enforcement and recognition of policies like the freedom of association and of collective bargaining.

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

The Handbook: [http://www.vlaanderen.be/int ...](http://www.vlaanderen.be/int...)

Wage report 2015/2016

December 2, 2016

The annual wage study conducted by the WSI, a research institute of the trade union related Hans Böckler Foundation, reveals that, on average, wages in the EU block of 28 climbed by 1.4 percent in 2015, with an actual climb (in relative terms) of 1.7 percent in 2016. This figure is not so much due to actual salary increases, but more thanks to the very modest inflation rates. 11 European countries even saw prices go down under a so-called deflation. Looking at the long-term development between 2010 and 2016, the researchers conclude that relatively seen, salaries dropped in 11 EU countries. Employees in Germany (+9.6), France (+5.4) and the Netherlands (+1.9 percent) saw a more positive development.

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

German (also for the download): [http://www.boeckler.de ...](http://www.boeckler.de...)

Austria

Several collective agreements settled before Christmas

December 23, 2016

Trade unions affiliated to trade union confederation ÖGB concluded several collective agreements in the course of December. Trade union Vida settled a one-year deal for bus drivers (some 15,000 workers) with a pay increase of 1.4%, starting 1 January 2017. For workers and assistants in kindergartens the minimum wage will increase from 1 January 2017 up to 1,469 euro, based on an agreement that trade union Vida signed. Vida also settled a wage deal for domestic workers with an average pay increase of 3.7% and an improvement of the allowances to be paid to au pairs. Trade union GPA-djp concluded a one-year agreement for the staff at the chambers of accountants and tax consultants with a similar pay increase of 1.4%. GPA-djp reached a deal in the metal sector for staff workers (plus 1.43%). Union PRO-GE improved the minimum

wages in several food related industries: in the carbonated drinks (plus 1.3%, with a minimum wage of 1,617.76 euro), in the vinegar and essence branch (plus 1.3%, with a minimum wage of 1,473.50 euro) and in the candy and confectionery industries (plus 1.45%, with a minimum wage of at least 1,651.30 euro).

German: [http://www.oegb.at ... -buslenkerinnen](http://www.oegb.at...-buslenkerinnen)
[http://www.oegb.at ... -kindergartenassistentinnen](http://www.oegb.at...-kindergartenassistentinnen)
[http://www.gpa-djp.at ... -angestellten-im-metallgewerbe-2017](http://www.gpa-djp.at...-angestellten-im-metallgewerbe-2017)
[http://www.proge.at ...](http://www.proge.at...)
[http://www.oegb.at ... -angestellte-bei-wirtschaftstreuhaendern](http://www.oegb.at...-angestellte-bei-wirtschaftstreuhaendern)

First increase in income of agricultural workers since 2012

December 22, 2016

First estimates based on the Economic Accounts for Agriculture (EAA) compiled by Statistics Austria reveal that, following a four-year period of decrease, the average agricultural income per worker (measured as the net value added at factor cost per annual work unit) increased with 7.5% in real terms in 2016 (2015: -7.2%). With the continuous reduction in agricultural labour input (-1.4%), agricultural factor income per worker, showed an even higher increase (+9.5%, in nominal terms). The statistical office published also regional data on the disposable income of private households per capita for 2015. Private households in Vorarlberg received the highest disposable income per capita in 2015 (€23 500). For the first time in the Regional Accounts time series, the disposable income per capita in Burgenland reached the national average of €22 200. The lowest disposable income per capita was recorded in both Carinthia and Vienna (€21 500). Vienna was the only region that showed a declining disposable income per capita (-0.2%). This was mainly due to the strong population growth of 1.9%, which was markedly above the national average of +1.0%.

English: [http://www.statistik.at/web_en ...](http://www.statistik.at/web_en...)
[http://www.statistik.at/web_en ...](http://www.statistik.at/web_en...)

A plea for targeted and qualification-orientated immigration

December 15, 2016

Presenting the findings of a report on migration, the interior minister said the country needs around 50,000 migrants a year, who will work and pay social insurance. The population is shrinking and ageing. According to migration experts, the average birth rate of 1.4 children is not enough to counter this development. If the population does not grow the risk is that social benefits for all citizens will become unaffordable. However, the minister said that uncontrolled migration can be damaging to society and therefore he wants to set up a migration commission at the beginning of 2017 to come up with a strategy for controlled immigration.

English: <http://www.thelocal.at/20161215/austrias-social-system-unaffordable-without-migration>
The report (in German): [http://www.infografiken.com/bmi-at/Flipbook ...](http://www.infografiken.com/bmi-at/Flipbook...)

Belgium

Social partners agree on improvement of parental leave

December 20, 2016

The social partners reached an agreement on the time credit for parental leave. In the past, it was even possible to take a period of non-motivated leave. However, this provision was forbidden in a royal decree by the government. The new agreement gives workers the right to apply for a fulltime, halftime or 20% leave, with a maximum of 51 months. The leave has to be motivated; valid grounds are the caretaking of children up to the age of 8 years, palliative care, the caretaking of a family member or relative that is seriously ill or the care for handicapped and seriously ill children (up to 21 years).

French: [http://www.7sur7.be ...](http://www.7sur7.be...)
Text of the agreement (in French): [http://www.cnt-nar.be/CCT-ORIG ...](http://www.cnt-nar.be/CCT-ORIG...)
Dutch: [http://www.hln.be/hln/nl ...](http://www.hln.be/hln/nl...)
Text of the agreement (in Dutch): [http://www.cnt-nar.be/CAO-ORIG ...](http://www.cnt-nar.be/CAO-ORIG...)

Negotiations at interprofessional level started

December 14, 2016

Every two years the trade union confederations and their counterparts on the employers' side negotiate a general agreement for the private sector. In this overall agreement, an indicative development of wage and working conditions is formulated that is later on the reference for negotiations at sectoral and company level. The trade unions have declared that time is ripe for a serious improvement of wages after a two years' wage freeze, dictated by the government. The leader of the trade union confederation ABVV/FGTB stated that the government's policy is contributing to a 'race to the bottom' that makes employers lazy. The central economic council (CRB), which includes representatives from both sides of industry, calculated that trade unions and employers have to examine the scope for actual wage increases within a 1% margin.

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

French: <http://www.fgtb.be/-/aip-les-negociations-ont-commence>

[http://www.cgsib.be/fr/articles/comite-national ...](http://www.cgsib.be/fr/articles/comite-national...)

Dutch: [https://www.acv-online.be/acv-online/Themais/Sociaal-overleg ...](https://www.acv-online.be/acv-online/Themais/Sociaal-overleg...)

[http://www.tijd.be/opinie/algemeen/Loonkostendebat ...](http://www.tijd.be/opinie/algemeen/Loonkostendebat...)

Unions try to save jobs at bulb factory

December 9, 2016

The Tienen-based lamp factory Sylvania has to close. 170 jobs will be axed in the process, but trades unions want to save as many jobs as possible. Most employees are on average over 50 years of age, and have worked an average of 29 years at the factory. They are afraid of their future. The first talks between the unions and the management led to the conclusion that the planned translocation will lead to a loss of 170 of the current 200 jobs. So far, it is not clear to which location abroad the activities will be transferred.

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

Dutch: [http://deredactie.be/cm/vrtnieuws/regio/vlaamsbrabant ...](http://deredactie.be/cm/vrtnieuws/regio/vlaamsbrabant...)

Bulgaria

Minimum wage as per 1 January 2017

December 1, 2016

The parliament approved a new minimum wage that will be introduced on 1 January 2017. The statutory minimum will be BGN 460 (230 euro), up from the current value of BGN 420. The increase had to be approved during the final reading of the state budget, as the lowest wage in the country corresponds to the lowest payment offered to a civil servant by the state administration.

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

Croatia

Dispute on promised wage increase continues

December 12, 2016

In 2009, an agreement promised to increase public sector wages by 6% per year as soon as the economy grew by 2% on average in two consecutive quarters (see earlier Newsletters). After years of recession, the economy did return to growth in 2015 and the condition thus met. However, the government referred to the fragile budget as a reason for why the increase failed to materialize. Negotiations between the government and public sector trade unions failed to lead to an agreement. The unions demanded the full 6% while the Labour Minister pointed to the protection of state finances as the reason why no agreement was reached. The annual wage increase of six percent would cost the budget up to 1.8 billion kuna, or 0.5 % of GDP.

English: [http://www.businessinsider.com/r-croatia-government-and-public-sector-unions ...](http://www.businessinsider.com/r-croatia-government-and-public-sector-unions...)

Cyprus

New data for 2016

December 22, 2016

The statistical service published *Cyprus in figures 2016*, an online pocket book containing the most recent

set of data on the main social and economic indicators. The data reveal that the population is aging and the labour force is shrinking. In the last four years, the risk of poverty and social exclusion increased to 28.9% of the population (coming from 27.1% in 2012). After years of negative wage growth, the 2015 figures show an increase of earnings in real terms of 1.6%.

English: [http://www.mof.gov.cy/mof/cystat/statistics ...](http://www.mof.gov.cy/mof/cystat/statistics...)

Czech Republic

Post workers act for better wages

December 22, 2016

Post workers have joined a chain strike in demand for better wages. The chain strike is to last for an hour at each facility before moving on to the next site. The postal trade unions recorded over 600 workers who said they would join the strike. All three of the country's post unions have been pushing for a wage increase for workers by 2,500 crowns (92 euro) a month. The government, responsible for the state-owned company, has described these demands as unrealistic in view of the company's economic results. Employees have been promised a raise of just over 500 crowns a month. The average wage in the company is currently between 22,700 and 23,000 crowns (840 to 851 euro), that is more than 4,000 crowns less than the national average.

English: <http://radio.cz/en/section/business/czech-post-workers-strike-for-higher-wages>

Electricity conglomerate agrees on wage increase

December 22, 2016

Energy ČEZ has agreed on a supplement of the collective agreement that results in a growth in wages paid in the company by 5% in 2017. Contractual wages will grow by 2.2%. According to a spokesperson, the company will allocate the volume particularly to departments and positions with the highest need of recruitments and retaining employees. She said that the agreement applied to parent company ČEZ employing about 5,500 people. ČEZ's subsidiaries were negotiating on wages separately.

English: [http://praguemonitor.com/2016/12/22 ...](http://praguemonitor.com/2016/12/22...)

Denmark

Traineeships and subsidised jobs for refugees

December 15, 2016

Get more newly arrived refugees into jobs, and as quickly as possible after their arrival. That is what the government and the social partners have agreed, and as a result they have expanded the number of measures which give financial support to private or public companies which take on refugees as workers. Both public and private companies often use traineeships, a publicly funded measure, as a way to give refugees an introduction to the workplace. And if the internship goes well, some companies choose to use wage subsidised jobs as a way of keeping the refugee in the workplace for a longer period of time.

English: [http://www.nordiclabourjournal.org/i-fokus ...](http://www.nordiclabourjournal.org/i-fokus...)
[http://www.nordiclabourjournal.org/i-fokus ...](http://www.nordiclabourjournal.org/i-fokus...)

OECD report recommends support for low-skilled

December 15, 2016

The country's flexible labour market allows employers to hire and fire workers in line with fluctuating demand. With the strong focus on activation and high spending on measures geared at helping jobseekers back into employment, many displaced workers receive the support and encouragement needed to find a new job. The unemployment benefit system provides income support to insured jobseekers in periods of unemployment. Nevertheless, challenges remain: despite the 2016 unemployment insurance reform fostering incentives to accept short-term, fixed-term and part-time employment, as a stepping stone back into jobs, benefit coverage remains a major challenge as many low-wage and low-skilled workers are not covered by the system.

English: [http://www.oecd.org/newsroom/denmark-could-do-more ...](http://www.oecd.org/newsroom/denmark-could-do-more...)

Read online: [http://www.keepeek.com/Digital-Asset-Management/oecd/employment ...](http://www.keepeek.com/Digital-Asset-Management/oecd/employment...)

On top of happiness at work ranking

December 2, 2016

The Danish workforce shows the highest levels of satisfaction with current jobs in this year's Global Workforce Happiness Index. The survey asked over 200,000 young professionals in 57 markets to rank their satisfaction level, their willingness to recommend their current employer to others and their likelihood to switch jobs in the near future. That respondents to the survey scored high on loyalty would seem to run counter to a recent report that roughly 30% of all workers have switched jobs in the course of 2016.

English: [http://www.thelocal.dk/20161202/denmark-has-the-happiest-young-workers ...](http://www.thelocal.dk/20161202/denmark-has-the-happiest-young-workers...)

The index: <http://universumglobal.com/happinessindex/>

Enforcement of the Uber court decision

December 2, 2016

Following the Eastern High Court's ruling that an Uber driver was guilty of operating an illegal taxi service, the prosecuting authority has filed charges against the popular ride-sharing service itself. The Danish Prosecution Service (Anklagemyndigheden) and the Copenhagen Police announced that charges have been filed against Uber BV, the Dutch company behind the Uber app. The company is being charged with abetting drivers' illegal taxi service.

English: <http://www.thelocal.dk/20161202/danish-prosecutors-to-take-on-uber>

Estonia

Teachers' pay increases twice in 2017

December 23, 2016

Teachers' salaries are set to rise twice in 2017, once in January, when teachers' minimum salaries will be raised to 1,000 euro and the average to 1,200 euro, and again in September, when the new minimum of 1,050 euro and the new average of 1,260 euro enter into effect. The salary increase is planned for teachers at general educational schools as well as for those working at vocational schools. The double increase makes it possible to raise teachers' pay by some 10%. The current minimum salary for teachers is 958 euro.

English: [http://news.err.ee/v/news ...](http://news.err.ee/v/news...)

Doctors will strike if union demands are not met

December 4, 2016

The trade union of medical specialists, Eesti Arstide Liit (EAL), announced that the warning strike of the country's doctors of 20 September 2016 had not produced any results. The government has until February 2017 to adopt the union's demands, otherwise a new and bigger strike will follow. The doctors demand of the government a guarantee to quality and timely care for patients. To this end, it should equip the Health Insurance Fund (Haigekassa) and the hospitals with enough money to cover the arising costs. Further demands include making specialists' care available to children within reasonable distance of their place of residence. The accessibility of health care is an issue in a country that has recently suffered from the depopulation of its more remote rural areas.

English: [http://news.err.ee/v ...](http://news.err.ee/v...)

Finland

Walkout at temporary agencies

December 22, 2016

Employees of the temporary labour companies Barona and Manpower organised a two-day walkout. Taking part were some 600 information technology experts working as customer service subcontractors around the country. The trade union Pro said the subcontractors were protesting plans by Barona and the Service Sector

Employers group Palta to shift them and eventually all customer service workers to a different collective agreement, which would lower their wages.

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

Pilot project with basic income will start

December 20, 2016

Before the end of 2016 the Social Insurance Institution (Kela) will notify 2,000 randomly selected unemployed people of their participation in its basic income experiment. The pilot aims to determine whether a monthly 560-euro payment will encourage recipients to find temporary or part-time work. Once the trial begins, basic income recipients will have to give up their basic unemployment allowance or labour market subsidy. For those selected, participation in the experiment is obligatory.

English: <http://kwbu.org/post/finland-test-basic-income-unemployed>
[http://yle.fi/uutiset/osasto/news/2000_selected ...](http://yle.fi/uutiset/osasto/news/2000_selected...)

Data on poverty

December 15, 2016

Statistics published by the National Institute of Health and Welfare (THL) show that poverty has risen in recent years, especially among families with very young children. Five percent of children were found to be from families subsisting on basic social security alone in 2014, the year of the survey. The THL report shows that family poverty rate tripled in the twelve years from 1995 to 2007, and has remained at or around a stable 10 percent in the 2010s.

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

France

Disputes with Uber continue

December 23, 2016

The government has taken a stand in the row over Uber's cut-price taxi service, urging local representatives of the U.S. app-based business to give its drivers a proper hearing after two days of noisy protests over their working conditions. The California-based start-up whose cab service has expanded exponentially worldwide stands accused of bypassing national labour protection standards and shunning collective negotiation with drivers who work on freelance terms. The government reacted after talks with drivers and unions. The Uber management had refused to deal with various unions that are seeking to present their demands, which include higher ride rates and floor-prices for trips. In the meantime, drivers continue with their protests.

English: <http://fortune.com/2016/12/16/france-uber-protest/>
<http://www.thelocal.fr/20161223/uber-drivers-blockade-paris-airports>

Minimum wage increases slightly

December 20, 2016

The government has announced that the level of the statutory minimum wage (the so-called SMIC) will be 'technically' heightened with 0.93%, up to a monthly gross pay of 1,480.27 euro (or a net pay of 1,153 euro). The government herewith follows the advice of a group of economists. Several trade unions have asked in the recent past for a more substantial increase. They argue that, since 2012, the SMIC has only increased with 68 euro, whilst the payment of dividends went through a real enormous rise.

English: [http://www.thelocal.fr/20161219/france-raises-minimum-wage-by-just-nine-centimes ...](http://www.thelocal.fr/20161219/france-raises-minimum-wage-by-just-nine-centimes...)
Analysis (in French): [http://www.liberation.fr/france/2016/12/19/une-onzieme-annee ...](http://www.liberation.fr/france/2016/12/19/une-onzieme-annee...)

The grey zone of the underemployed

December 19, 2016

A study of the research centre Insee examines the situation of underemployment that looms in the zones in between unemployment and the relatively stable employment of direct labour. These zones cover what is known as the halo around unemployment (of inactive persons that would like to work although they are not counted in the statistics as real unemployed) and underemployed (that work less than they would like to).

French: [http://www.metiseurope.eu/la-zone-grise-du-sous-emploi_fr ...](http://www.metiseurope.eu/la-zone-grise-du-sous-emploi_fr...)
Report with data: [https://www.insee.fr/fr/statistiques ...](https://www.insee.fr/fr/statistiques...)

Blog on the negotiations at the postal services

December 18, 2016

In a blog of a Magazine, several interviews are published with trade unionists active in the postal services. It is reported how trade unions at the postal services (La Poste) were constantly locked in intense negotiations with management over working conditions that have been linked to escalating levels of psychological distress among its 250,000 employees. The strong position of trade unions at La Poste has meant that workers were able to negotiate with management and ensure that workers' rights were protected. Every phase of company restructuring has been accompanied by close consultation with the unions.

English: <https://www.jacobinmag.com/2016/12/france-post-office-workers-privatization/>

Research on wages and working conditions

December 7, 2016

The research and statistical department of the labour ministry has published two important reports with data. The first report is on the wage structure in the private sector (in 2014). In companies with more than 10 workers 19.2% of the gross wages was of a variable nature. Components such as bonuses, wage supplements and payment of overtime and additional hours form the largest variable part of the wages. In a second report the basic data on working conditions and occupational health and safety are summarised.

French: [http://dares.travail-emploi.gouv.fr/dares-etudes-et-statistiques ...](http://dares.travail-emploi.gouv.fr/dares-etudes-et-statistiques...)
[http://dares.travail-emploi.gouv.fr/IMG/pdf/synthese ...](http://dares.travail-emploi.gouv.fr/IMG/pdf/synthese...)

Germany

Amazon envisaged in long-running dispute

December 21, 2016

The trade union Ver.di has called workers at the warehouses of U.S. online retailer Amazon.com on strike on 21 December 2016, as part of a long-running dispute over pay and conditions. Ver.di said in a statement it was calling on workers at three of the nine Amazon warehouses to join the strike, which will run until 24 December. Germany is Amazon's second-biggest market after the United States, with 11,000 warehouse staff plus thousands of seasonal workers. The trade union members of the different workplaces have opened a permanent website with reports about the protests and activities.

English: [http://www.reuters.com/article/us-amazon-com-germany ...](http://www.reuters.com/article/us-amazon-com-germany...)
Trade union website (in German): <https://www.amazon-verdi.de/1>

Railway negotiations still ongoing

December 16, 2016

After a series of six bargaining talks the management of railway company Deutsche Bahn and the union of train drivers could not come to an agreement. There is no new date for the reopening of the negotiations, However, strikes are not envisaged, with a view on the Christmas and end of the year holidays. The union demands a substantial pay increase, next to an improved regulation of the working and rest time system.

German: [http://www.handelsblatt.com/unternehmen/handel-konsumgueter/deutsche-bahn ...](http://www.handelsblatt.com/unternehmen/handel-konsumgueter/deutsche-bahn...)

Two reports on growing inequality and income poverty

December 14, 2016

The forthcoming fifth government Report on Poverty and Wealth indicates that more and more citizens are either very rich or very poor. The rich are getting richer, and the poor are getting, if not necessarily poorer, then more numerous. The report won't be published until early 2017, but preliminary details have been leaked to various newspapers. 4.17 million citizens - some 6.1% of the population - are heavily in debt, and pay in the low-wage sector by no means kept pace with the national average. The number of homeless people went from 223,000 in 2008 to 335,000 in 2014. Some 5.6% of the population are now officially classified as poor, and around one-fifth of the populace is threatened by poverty. Another report of the Cologne Institute for Economic Research Poverty (IW) stresses that it is not just a question of how much money an individual makes, but also what he or she can actually buy with it. The researchers looked into relative income poverty,

defined as earning less than 60 percent of the median income. They also calculated the purchasing power residents have in different regions and cities.

English: [http://www.dw.com/en/latest-figures-show-poverty-increase ...](http://www.dw.com/en/latest-figures-show-poverty-increase...)

The IW report (in German): [http://www.iwkoeln.de/presse/pressemitteilungen ...](http://www.iwkoeln.de/presse/pressemitteilungen...)

Collective bargaining results 2016

December 13, 2016

The socioeconomic institute WSI published its annual balance of the outcome of the collective bargaining in 2016. The results in the sectors range from 1.5 to 3%, with most branches concentrated around a pay increase of 2.5%. The level of the inflation and the costs of living stayed at the low level of 0.5%. The institute estimates that the increase in real terms of the collective agreed wages ends up to a maximum of 2%.

German: [http://www.boeckler.de ...](http://www.boeckler.de...)

The report (in German): [http://www.boeckler.de/pdf ...](http://www.boeckler.de/pdf...)

Bundesbank publishes macroeconomic prognoses

December 9, 2016

According to a Bundesbank projection Germany's economy is continuing to move on a sound upward path. However, employment will grow less dynamically as a result of demographic change, whereby the pool of people available to work will shrink, resulting in a dampening effect on consumption growth. The bank expects mounting labour market bottlenecks that will be a catalyst for stronger rises in wages and income. The projection foresees (over the period 2015-2018) an increase of the gross wages between 2.4 and 2.9%.

English: [https://www.bundesbank.de/Redaktion/EN ...](https://www.bundesbank.de/Redaktion/EN...)

Collective agreement for temporary agency workers

December 1, 2016

The employers' organisation in the agency sector, represented by the VGZ, and the trade union confederation DGB have concluded an agreement for the temporary employment sector. The agreement will cover a term of 36 months until 31 December 2019 with increased pay rates that take effect on 1 March 2017, 1 April 2018, 1 April 2019 and 1 October 2019, for each of the tariff areas in the East and West. A further wage adjustment will take place on 1 April 2021, extending by then West wages to the entire federal territory.

English: [http://www2.staffingindustry.com/eng/Editorial ...](http://www2.staffingindustry.com/eng/Editorial...)

Details of the agreement (in German): [http://www.dgb.de/tarifrunde-leiharbeit ...](http://www.dgb.de/tarifrunde-leiharbeit...)

Greece

Ferry workers end 9-day strike

December 10, 2016

Ferry workers have ended a nine-day strike, saying they did not wish to disrupt the holiday season, but they are planning to resume action if the government did not back off tax hikes for ferry workers. The general secretary of the Pan-Hellenic Seamen's Federation has said the strike was suspended even though none of the workers' demands had been resolved.

English: [http://bigstory.ap.org/article ...](http://bigstory.ap.org/article...)

Demonstration over new budget cuts - journalists on 24-hour strike

December 10, 2016

Thousands of trade unionists demonstrated against planned new cuts demanded by international creditors in a general strike that shut down several key sectors. According to police, some 15,000 people took part in trade union protests in Athens and another 5,000 in Thessaloniki. Civil servants, bank staff, merchant seamen, railway workers and state-employed doctors were among professionals taking part in the 24-hour stoppage against the measures, which are scheduled to be approved by lawmakers. The measures include cutting public spending on salaries and pensions by 5.7 billion euro in 2017. Unions are also against the government's plans to raise over 2.0 billion euro in 2017 from privatisations, including 1.2 billion euro from the sale of regional airports. Journalists were also striking. All television and radio news broadcasts were off the air a day and no newspapers were published before the nationwide general strike. Journalists are

protesting the social security reforms that will affect their pension funds. The media sector has been hammered by both the financial crisis and a global slump in newspaper sales and media advertising. Journalists are often left unpaid for several months.

English: <http://pakobserver.net/thousands-demonstrate-in-greece-over-new-budget-cuts/>
[http://www.timesunion.com/news/world/article/Greek-journalists-on-24-hour-strike ...](http://www.timesunion.com/news/world/article/Greek-journalists-on-24-hour-strike...)

Hungary

Garbage collectors consider strike

December 12, 2016

The garbage collectors in Budapest are planning to strike, if their demands are not met. Budapest Public Area Maintenance Company (FKF) workers have scheduled a strike for before the Christmas holiday after wage negotiations with the company broke down. The company FKF is responsible for cleaning public areas and clearing snow from areas of the inner city. The company recently granted its workers a 4% wage increase, denying their demands for an 8% rise. In November 2016, the Parliament mandated a 23% increase in minimum wages in the run-up to the 2018 election. However, certain classes of public service workers are excluded from the deal. Local Industrial and City Economy Workers Union, HVDSZ, has turned to a court to agree on the legality of the work stoppage, and to determine what basic functions the FKF must still perform during the strike to ensure 'sufficient service', a legal condition for a strike. The court is expected to hand down its decision soon, after which the strike could begin.

English: [http://budapestbeacon.com/news-in-brief/budapest-garbage-haulers-to-strike ...](http://budapestbeacon.com/news-in-brief/budapest-garbage-haulers-to-strike...)

Water utility workers on strike

December 1, 2016

The national federation of water workers' unions is organising a strike with associated organizations, in the water utility sector. This collective action will affect hundreds of thousands of citizens which will be left without water during the strike. Claiming that workers in the water sector receive 'shamefully low' pay and complaining that they have received only a 2.5% wage hike in the past six years on a single occasion, while other benefits have reportedly been cut, the trade union federation is seeking a uniform 30% pay rise.

English: [http://bbj.hu/economy/strike-could-leave-hundreds-of-thousands-waterless ...](http://bbj.hu/economy/strike-could-leave-hundreds-of-thousands-waterless...)

Iceland

Poverty reported

December 17, 2016

An NGO has stated that the situation for those who are under the poverty limit is far worse than citizens and society realise. In total, the number of people in need of assistance are around 2400 and many hundreds of them are children. There is one group particularly noticed, people that had a bad turn in the 2008 financial crash. These people lost their property, lost their jobs and were unemployed for some time. Many lost their vitality and will as a consequence and this impacts their health and mental health heavily. They are now renting flats on very expensive rates, as the rent prices have surged with the tourist bomb.

English: [http://www.icenews.is/2016/12/17/poverty-in-iceland-860-families-need-help ...](http://www.icenews.is/2016/12/17/poverty-in-iceland-860-families-need-help...)

Ireland

The trade union bargaining demands for 2017

December 21, 2016

The Irish Congress of Trade Unions Private Sector Committee is advising affiliate unions in the sector to seek pay increases in 2017 that would see basic pay rise by at least €1000 annually, or 4% - whichever figure is higher. The committee monitored pay bargaining developments over the course of 2016 and trends across a range of key measures that impact on the living standards of workers. The country's largest employers'

group described the unions' demand for a 4% pay increase for private sector workers in 2017 as a 'try on' and said there was no justification for an across-the-board wage increase. The ICTU replied in an open letter.

English: [http://www.ictu.ie/download/pdf/patricia_king_response ...](http://www.ictu.ie/download/pdf/patricia_king_response...)

[http://www.independent.ie/irish-news/monday-interview-unions-demand ...](http://www.independent.ie/irish-news/monday-interview-unions-demand...)

Leaflet with the demands: [http://www.ictu.ie/download/pdf/private_sector_bulletin ...](http://www.ictu.ie/download/pdf/private_sector_bulletin...)

Pay dispute comes to an end

December 20, 2016

SIPTU members at Bausch + Lomb's Waterford plant have voted to accept a pay deal, averting the threat of strike action and job cuts. The vote, which was supported by over 80% in a ballot, lifted a threat to the future viability of the plant, where 1,250 people are employed. The dispute polarised earlier on as the company, which is owned by troubled Canadian pharma group Valeant, had imposed a deadline for agreement on a pay deal. Otherwise, it warned, it would take a series of measures that could put 220 jobs at risk. SIPTU was looking for the restoration of the working conditions that prevailed back in 2014 before unions agreed to an €18.5 million package of cuts that saw 200 staff let go and a pay cut of 7.5 per cent as well as a new, lower pay grade for temporary staff and other measures. Reopening of the talks led to an improved deal.

English: [http://www.irishtimes.com/business/health-pharma/bausch-lomb-staff ...](http://www.irishtimes.com/business/health-pharma/bausch-lomb-staff...)

[http://www.irishtimes.com/business/health-pharma/bausch-lomb-workers-ballot ...](http://www.irishtimes.com/business/health-pharma/bausch-lomb-workers-ballot...)

Public transport branches still discuss pay demand

December 19, 2016

Observers expect a modification of the pay demands at the Irish Rail after Dublin Bus workers sealed pay deals in the Labour Court. Dublin Bus drivers and staff voted in October to accept a pay deal and cleared the way for a pay increase of 11.6% over 15 months. There is speculation that Irish Rail workers may feel more pressure to lower their initial claim - which is as high as 25% - because it is part of the CIE family. However, they haven't gone before the Workplace Relations Commission yet. Bus Éireann trade unions already almost halved their claim for a 21% pay increase for the troubled semi-state company's 2,600 workers.

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

[http://www.independent.ie/irish-news/bus-ireann-unions-halve-pay-claim ...](http://www.independent.ie/irish-news/bus-ireann-unions-halve-pay-claim...)

Italy

Agreement metal sector approved by workforce

December 22, 2016

The collective agreement for the steel sector that was concluded by the end of November (see our November Newsletter) was approved by an overwhelming majority of the workforce (80.1% of the workers voted in favour). On 1 December 2016, all three trade unions FIOM-CGIL, FIM-CISL and UILM-UIL had a meeting and issued a joint statement, calling the achieved agreement 'a good contract for metalworkers'. The deal was sent for approval to the workforce for a binding referendum on 19, 20 and 21 December.

English: [http://www.gazzettadelsud.it/news/english/225784/steelworkers ...](http://www.gazzettadelsud.it/news/english/225784/steelworkers...)

[http://www.industrialunion.org/italian-metalworkers-reach ...](http://www.industrialunion.org/italian-metalworkers-reach...)

Food workers' unions succeed

December 16, 2016

Following a sustained mobilisation by the trade unions, more stringent legislation aiming to eliminate human trafficking in agriculture has been adopted by the Parliament. The law amends the 2014 law on Quality Work in Agriculture to assist migrant workers and incentivise adherence to collective agreements. According to FLAI-CGIL, the crime of worker exploitation has now, for the first time, been established in law. The law establishes that the criminal offence of recruiting or employing workers under illegal and exploitative conditions will be sanctioned with imprisonment for up to 6 years, increasing to 8 years if threats or violence are involved. Besides, the law imposes fines of up to 2,000 euro per worker in these cases.

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

Temporary work agency bankrupt

December 7, 2016

Trade union Filcams CGIL in Modena made public that the Court of Modena confirmed the bankruptcy of the temporary staffing agency Trenkwalder Italia and appointed a trustee. In mid-October Trenkwalder Italia made arrangements with its creditors, a procedure that had been granted following liquidation problems in September which made it impossible to pay its staff. The union calls the collapse of the temporary work agency the 'worst case scenario' for workers and fears that many employees will remain unemployed, despite strong interest by a competitor.

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

Italian: [http://www.ansa.it/emiliaromagna/notizie/2016/12/07/trenkwalder ...](http://www.ansa.it/emiliaromagna/notizie/2016/12/07/trenkwalder...)

Latvia

Report on the structure of earnings in 2014

December 1, 2016

The annual report on the structure of earnings (for 2014 - partly in English) includes key indicators of the number of employees and wages in breakdown by sex, age, education, occupational group, and type of employment contract in the country as a whole as well as regions. The second, third and fourth sections provide tables on average gross monthly earnings, hourly wages and gross earnings by deciles.

English: [http://www.csb.gov.lv/sites/default/files/publikacijas ...](http://www.csb.gov.lv/sites/default/files/publikacijas...)

Liechtenstein

Pay deal in nine sectors

December 9, 2016

Trade union LANV (German: Liechtensteinische ArbeitnehmerInnenverband) could conclude the collective bargaining negotiations in several sectors. Two sectors will see a general wage increase of 0.5% while in the remaining seven industries there will be an individual increase between 0.3% to 1%. Work-family balance is still a major issue for the trade unions although they managed to increase the number of paternal leave days in two sectors.

German: [http://www.volksblatt.li/nachricht ...](http://www.volksblatt.li/nachricht...)

Info letter with bargaining news

December 1, 2016

The number 3 issue of the LANV trade union news bulletin is online. In the editorial, the ongoing bargaining round is commented. The union states that fair employers' behaviour is not only for Christmas time. In a key contribution, the main demands from this bargaining round are listed. These demands vary according to the economic perspective in a sector and the results of recent years. In several sectors and branches the recent past was a period of zero pay increase. The sought wage increase lies now between 0.5 and 1.5%, with special attention for the lower pay scales. In some sectors, a 13. monthly wage is still missing and improvement of the minimum wage is needed up to a level of at least 3,250 Swiss Francs (3,025 euro).

German: [http://www.lanv.li/contortionist ...](http://www.lanv.li/contortionist...)

Lithuania

Compensation for migrant workers

December 11, 2016

A UK couple agreed to a landmark settlement worth more than £1m in compensation and legal costs for a group of migrants who were trafficked to work on farms producing eggs for high street brands. The deal reached with six Lithuanian chicken catchers is the first settlement of a claim against a UK company in relation to modern slavery, and came after the group became frustrated at the lack of a criminal prosecution. The couple agreed to the compensation deal after a high court ruling found that they had failed to pay the national minimum wage, had made unlawful deductions from wages and had failed to provide adequate

facilities to wash, rest, eat and drink. The claimants alleged to the court that they had been threatened and assaulted by Lithuanian supervisors who intimidated them with fighting dogs, and that they were housed in appalling conditions.

English: [https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2016/dec/20/gangmasters-agree ...](https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2016/dec/20/gangmasters-agree...)

Luxembourg

Minimum wage increase comes nearer

December 23, 2016

The next indexation of salaries and pensions is expected from 1 January 2017. Indexation is a mechanism which enables earnings to keep in line with inflation. The last time earnings were indexed was in October 2013. The next long-awaited indexation has been shelved several times in 2016. The proposed bill states that the minimum wage for unskilled workers should rise to 1,949.86 euro per month, which represents an increase of 26.90 euro. As for skilled workers, this amount should increase by 32.28 euro to 2,339.84 euro.

English: [http://www.wort.lu/en/business/wage-indexation-earnings-to-rise ...](http://www.wort.lu/en/business/wage-indexation-earnings-to-rise...)

What income is needed for a decent living

December 15, 2016

The statistical office STATEC outlined in a report the minimum budget required for different households in order to lead a decent life. The report bases its findings on the average costs of food, clothing, personal hygiene, accommodation (including electricity and other charges), healthcare, transport, social life, training and children's needs across the country. To 'actively participate in society', a man living alone would require minimum 1,923 euro per month, while for a woman the sum was 1,909 euro. The slight difference between the budgets of a man living alone and a woman were down to the fact that men would spend more on food.

English: [http://www.wort.lu/en/lifestyle/statec-study-shows-minimum-budget-required ...](http://www.wort.lu/en/lifestyle/statec-study-shows-minimum-budget-required...)

The report (in French): [http://www.statistiques.public.lu/fr/actualites/conditions-sociales ...](http://www.statistiques.public.lu/fr/actualites/conditions-sociales...)

Agreement at ArcelorMittal

December 12, 2016

After several rounds of bilateral negotiation between trade unions and steel manufacturing giant ArcelorMittal, the government had initiated a tripartite meeting to find a way out. Solutions have been found with regards to the early retirement plan as well as the provision for occupational rehabilitation which the ArcelorMittal wanted to dispense with. Both the unions and the company agreed on the topic of investments.

French: [http://www.lessentiel.lu/fr/luxembourg/story/Des-embauches-esperees ...](http://www.lessentiel.lu/fr/luxembourg/story/Des-embauches-esperees...)

Malta

Social workers' action postponed

December 17, 2016

The Malta Union of Midwives & Nurses (MUMN) is 'disgusted' that no response from the authorities was received after a meeting took place early November regarding social workers and ECG technicians to conclude the sectoral agreements. As such, the MUMN informed the authorities that if by 14 December an appointment was not made to conclude the agreements, an industrial action will be ordered which would include a strike from 15 December onwards. The industrial action was postponed after talks were reopened.

English: [http://www.independent.com.mt/articles/2016-12-17/local-news/MUMN ...](http://www.independent.com.mt/articles/2016-12-17/local-news/MUMN...)

Netherlands

Court bans strike on safety grounds

December 22, 2016

A local court in Breda has ruled that drivers and conductors of railway company NS cannot go on strike as planned because of the risk to public safety. It would not be responsible to allow large groups of people to gather at railway stations because the strike stopped them getting to work, the judge said. However, from January 6, when police numbers are back up to strength, the strike can go ahead, court said. The strike involving workers in Amsterdam, Rotterdam and Hoofddorp would have resulted in widespread disruption to the rail network.

English: <http://www.dutchnews.nl/news/archives/2016/12/court-bans-train-drivers-strike/>

Strike action at Shell ends

December 15, 2016

Trade union FNV has called off a strike at Shell's Pernis oil refinery even though it has rejected a pay proposal from the oil company. The strike started on 9 December because of a pay dispute between Shell and the FNV and CNV unions. The CNV union has accepted the pay offer for workers at the refinery and neighbouring petrochemical plant. The FNV had asked for a 1.5% increase in 2016 and 1.75% in 2017.

English: [http://finance.yahoo.com/news/one-two-dutch-unions-accepts ...](http://finance.yahoo.com/news/one-two-dutch-unions-accepts-...)

Transport unions activate compliance control

December 5, 2016

The inspectorate for environment and transport, the labour inspectorate, the police and the custom services held a joint control and enforcement campaign in the international transport sector. One company that drove without a license and with no administration of the drivers' driving and rest periods was sanctioned with a shutdown. In another company, it was found that Polish and Lithuanian truck drivers were lodged without any sanitarian provisions. In a third company investigations, notably with respect to the pay and working conditions, are going on. Overall, 47 companies were investigated in 2016; in 60% of the cases the inspectorate discovered artificial arrangements and other breaches. The transport trade union FNV, in close cooperation with the Belgium colleagues, is very active in detecting and reporting fraud, non-payment of collectively agreed wages and other breaches of working conditions.

English: [http://www.dutchnews.nl/news/archives/2016/12/ministry-inspectors-find ...](http://www.dutchnews.nl/news/archives/2016/12/ministry-inspectors-find-...)

The inspectorate statement (in Dutch): [https://www.ilent.nl/actueel/ilt-misstanden ...](https://www.ilent.nl/actueel/ilt-misstanden-...)

Mismatch between skill level and jobs

December 1, 2016

Agency Randstad published the results of an online survey (with 810 respondents). One of the conclusions is that an increasing number of employees are working at jobs below their skill and education level. In 2016, 56% of employees were working below their skill and education level, up from 48% in 2012. For workers who are 34 or younger, this figure goes up to 65%. Other collected data are the mobility on the labour market, expected labour market shortages and the investment in training and education.

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

The report (in Dutch): [https://www.randstad.nl/binaries/content/assets/randstadnl/werkgevers ...](https://www.randstad.nl/binaries/content/assets/randstadnl/werkgevers-...)

Norway

Can the social model be exported?

December 2, 2016

Norway and Greece were unequally affected by the financial crisis. While Norway was one of the countries that came out of the crisis in a relatively sound condition, Greece was one of the countries hardest hit. In the aftermath of the crisis Greece has introduced several welfare reforms, but the country still aims at improving the effectiveness, efficiency and fairness of its welfare state further. The Greek Ministry of Labour, Social Security & Social Solidarity and the Norwegian Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs asked Fafo to conduct a study where relevant features of the Norwegian social model are highlighted and where features of the Norwegian model that could be an inspiration for Greece are identified.

English: [http://www.fafo.no/images/pub/2016 ...](http://www.fafo.no/images/pub/2016-...)

Poland

Main destination for economic migration investigated

December 20, 2016

According to the study *Working abroad* by the public opinion research centre CBOS, 41% of labour migrants who are working or have worked abroad went to Germany, making it the main destination for economic migration, followed by the UK and the Netherlands. The UK was cited by 23% of those who are, or have been, working abroad, and the Netherlands by 20% (up from 8% in 2007). Differences in wages remain the most important motivation for seeking work abroad.

English: [http://www.thenews.pl/1/12/Artykul/285368,Germany-most-popular-destination ...](http://www.thenews.pl/1/12/Artykul/285368,Germany-most-popular-destination...)

Media restrictions criticised

December 18, 2016

Several thousand people protested in Warsaw over the government's plans to impose restrictions on media coverage of parliament. The rules proposed by the head office of the Sejm, the lower house of parliament, will ban all recording of parliamentary sessions. Only five selected TV stations will be allowed to record or broadcast parliamentary sessions. The rules will also limit the number of journalists allowed in the building (maximum two accredited parliamentary reporters for each media outlet). The European Federation of Journalists (EFJ) has strongly condemned this latest attack on media freedom by the ruling Law and Justice party (PiS). In September, the Journalists Association (SDP) issued an appeal calling the speakers of Sejm and Senate to not implement the media restrictions in parliament.

English: [http://europeanjournalists.org/blog/2016/12/18/polish-government-plans ...](http://europeanjournalists.org/blog/2016/12/18/polish-government-plans...)

Portugal

Strike of handling and security staff

December 24, 2016

Airport workers belonging to handling and assistance companies Groundforce and Portway might go ahead with strike action from 28 to 30 December. Private security workers belonging to companies Prosegur and Securitas, who are responsible for checking passengers and employees and scanning baggage, are also expected to strike at the same time. Topping off what looks to be a complicated period for national airports, Groundforce employees have further threatened to strike on Christmas Eve.

English: [http://www.theportugalnews.com/news/air-passengers-warned ...](http://www.theportugalnews.com/news/air-passengers-warned...)

Minimum wage proposal discussed

December 21, 2016

The government has presented a proposal in which it calls for the minimum wage to be increased to 557 euro. The proposal was formulated after the ruling Socialists joined the opposition PSD and CDS-PP parties to vote against a proposal from the Portuguese Communist Party (PCP) recommending that the government would raise the National Minimum Wage to €600 per month from 1 January 2017.

English: [http://www.theportugalnews.com/news/government-proposes ...](http://www.theportugalnews.com/news/government-proposes...)

Romania

Minimum wage increase postponed

December 29, 2016

The government announced that the level of the minimum wage will remain at RON 1,250 (275 euro). A future government will have to establish a new value of the minimum wage. Representatives of the political party that will build the new government announced earlier on the plan to increase the statutory gross minimum wage from 1 January 2017 to RON 1,450 (321 euro). The trade unions suspended the negotiations with the outgoing government, preferring to wait for a new government to install. Increasing the minimum wage to RON 1,450 was one of the main promises delivered by the winning PSD during the campaign.

English: [http://www.romania-insider.com/no-change-romanas-minimum-wage ...](http://www.romania-insider.com/no-change-romanas-minimum-wage...)

Collective bargaining at a standstill

December 8, 2016

The trade union confederation Cartel-Alfa evaluates the collective bargaining situation in its December Newsletter. The union writes that the changes of the labour laws have eliminated the negotiations at sectoral and national level. The requirement at the sector level to have 50+1 of the members in the sector, for both negotiating parties make the conclusion of such a collective labour agreement virtually impossible. The regulations for the sector-wide collective bargaining led to a sudden decentralisation of collective labour relations, collective bargaining practically taking place only at enterprise level. Although the situation might seem different at enterprise level, with a slight increase of agreements, in reality this does not mean a restoration of the unbalance between employer and employee or an improvement in the growth distribution.

English: [http://perc.ituc-csi.org/IMG/pdf/newsletter_cartel_alfa ...](http://perc.ituc-csi.org/IMG/pdf/newsletter_cartel_alfa...)

Serbia

Latest wage data

December 26, 2016

A press release from the statistical office provides an update of wage data. The average gross salaries and wages paid in November 2016 amounted to dinars 63 061 (511 euro). The average net salaries and wages (tax and contributions excluded) paid in November 2016 totalled 45 767 dinars (371 euro). Compared to the average gross salaries and wages paid in November 2015, average gross salaries and wages increased by 3.5% in nominal terms and by 2.0% in real terms, while average net salaries and wages increased by 3.6% in nominal terms and by 2.1% in real terms.

English: [http://www.stat.gov.rs/WebSite/repository ...](http://www.stat.gov.rs/WebSite/repository...)

Slovakia

Labour market improves further

December 8, 2016

The registered unemployment rate decreased to 8.78 percent at the end of November 2016, which is the lowest level since December 2008 when it stood at 8.39 percent. This is, according to the government, mostly due to the active measures in the labour market and targeted projects via the European Social Fund. The government signed another three projects aimed to support the unemployed on 19 December.

English: [http://spectator.sme.sk/c/20415773/unemployment-rate-falls ...](http://spectator.sme.sk/c/20415773/unemployment-rate-falls...)

Slovenia

Statistical overview of 2016

December 22, 2016

At the end of 2016 the statistical office published the latest statistical data on the situation in the country. Growth of disposable income in 2014 and 2015 continued for the third consecutive year, actually at a higher rate. High growth was mostly the result of the increase in compensation of employees both in the public and private sectors (increase in employment and growth of gross earnings). Average monthly gross earnings grew in 2016; in the first nine months by almost 2%. This is the result of the growth of average monthly gross earnings in both sectors, in the public by 2.4% and in the private by 1.7%.

English: [http://www.stat.si/dokument ...](http://www.stat.si/dokument...)

Spain

Mass demonstration for better working conditions

December 19, 2016

As announced in our November Newsletter, the main trade union confederations UGT and CCOO have taken to the streets of Madrid to protest government social policy and austerity measures. With the country emerging from an economic downturn, the protesters have demanded an increase in salaries and pensions. The protest was organised under the theme 'People and their rights first'. The march, backed by the Socialists and Podemos parties, was followed by dozens of smaller rallies across the country.

English: [http://www.dw.com/en/thousands-march-in-madrid-against-labor-policies ...](http://www.dw.com/en/thousands-march-in-madrid-against-labor-policies...)
[http://www.telesurtv.net/english/news/Spain-30000-March-in-Anti-Austerity ...](http://www.telesurtv.net/english/news/Spain-30000-March-in-Anti-Austerity...)

Increase of minimum wage

December 10, 2016

The government has approved an increase of 8% in the minimum wage for 2017, from the current €655.20 per month to €707.60. Even so, the new minimum wage has been denounced as insufficient by unions, some of whom had been demanding a rise to €800 a month. The rates will come into force on 1 January 2017 and will require employers to pay no less than €707.6 a month for 14 payments a year (two double payments).

English: [http://www.janetanscombe.com/news/spains-minimum-wage ...](http://www.janetanscombe.com/news/spains-minimum-wage...)

Retailer insolvent again

December 10, 2016

Fashion retailer Blanco has announced the closure of its 102 shops and the dismissal of 850 employees. Blanco is declaring insolvency for the second time in Spain (and Portugal) in three years, after the current owners, AC Modus, did not find an 'ideal investor' for the business. AC Modus only acquired the company recently. Blanco had told employee representatives in September that it planned to launch a redundancy scheme that could affect a significant part of its workforce. The company said during those talks to respect a 30-day consultation period with the aim to reach an agreement with as many workers as possible.

English: [http://www.spanishnews.es/20161210-spanish-fashion-retailer-blanco ...](http://www.spanishnews.es/20161210-spanish-fashion-retailer-blanco...)

Garbage strike at Barcelona airport

December 7, 2016

Cleaning personnel of Barcelona's El Prat Airport went on strike, protesting against a change in work schedules and cut in leave days. Earlier on, the airport concluded a low-priced contract with operator company Valoriza. The strike has ended, but the workers threatened to resume the strike if there is no progress in negotiations. However, the conflict was solved after Valoriza accepted several union demands.

English: [http://www.ccoo.cat/aspnet/noticia ...](http://www.ccoo.cat/aspnet/noticia...)
[http://www.straitstimes.com/world/europe/barcelona-airport-heaped-with-rubbish ...](http://www.straitstimes.com/world/europe/barcelona-airport-heaped-with-rubbish...)

Sweden

Union critical about working time

December 19, 2016

A report based on figures from the office Statistics Sweden and trade union Unionen has shed light on how much time workers actually spend at work, suggesting that more than one out of six Swedes on average clock up more than 6.2 hours of overtime per week. Rules for paid overtime are usually regulated in union agreements with workplaces, or in workers' individual contracts, however many don't actually write down their hours because they do not want to be seen as slow at getting the job done or not hard-working, says Unionen. In Stockholm, more than a third of those who work overtime do not get paid for it.

English: <http://www.thelocal.se/jobs/article/this-is-how-much-overtime-swedes-work>
Swedish: <http://www.dn.se/arkiv/ekonomi/har-jobbar-de-mest-overtid/>

Investment in youth needed

December 7, 2016

In a report on youth employment, social support and skills, the OECD pleads for the promotion of quality practical training. The report shows that 177 000 young people – nearly 10% of all 15-29 year olds – were not in employment, education or training (NEETs) in 2015, and half of them were not even looking for work. The 2011 upper secondary school reform introduced an apprenticeship track to increase the practical content of VET programmes. Interest in the apprenticeship track remains weak, however, and since programme structures and contents can differ across locations, employers and students may find it difficult to evaluate the skills and qualifications acquired.

English: [http://www.oecd.org/newsroom/sweden-should-promote-quality-practical-training ...](http://www.oecd.org/newsroom/sweden-should-promote-quality-practical-training...)

Twitter: [https://twitter.com/OECD_Social ...](https://twitter.com/OECD_Social...)

Read online: [http://www.keepeek.com/Digital-Asset-Management/oecd/social-issues ...](http://www.keepeek.com/Digital-Asset-Management/oecd/social-issues...)

Switzerland

Swissport strike warning withdrawn

December 23, 2016

Workers at Geneva airport stated that they could go on strike with only two hours advance warning after negotiations over pay with airport operator Swissport broke down. Unions say the current pay levels are not sustainable for one of the most expensive cities in the world. The Geneva branch of the Public Service Union (SSP) representing workers at the airport are demanding an increase in salary and renegotiation of the collective agreement. Swissport has rejected the call to increase pay, saying in a statement obtained by news agencies that the current collective agreement is valid until 2019. The company first reacted with sanctions threats towards the strike committee. However, later on a solution was found for ordinary talks.

French: [http://www.ssp-vpod.ch/actualites/nouvelles ...](http://www.ssp-vpod.ch/actualites/nouvelles...)

English: [https://worldradio.ch/news/2016/12/05/christmas-travelers-face-strike-action ...](https://worldradio.ch/news/2016/12/05/christmas-travelers-face-strike-action...)

Richemont reaches agreement with employees on job cuts

December 9, 2016

The luxury good company Richemont has reached an agreement with employees on a new round of job cuts. Trade union Unia, which was involved in talks between the company and its workers, said about the cuts that the layoffs were smaller than originally planned, as renegotiated severance packages helped support voluntary departures.

English: [http://www.euronews.com/2016/12/09/richemont-reaches-agreement ...](http://www.euronews.com/2016/12/09/richemont-reaches-agreement...)

Turkey

Walk against dismissals of unionists

December 30, 2016

Trade union KESK planned a 450km walk from Istanbul to Ankara, involving its leadership and workers dismissed in the government purge following the failed military coup. Some 200 fired workers and their supporters gathered on 21 December in Istanbul to embark on a protest march to the capital city of Ankara, demanding 'We want our jobs back!'. However, facing mounting police pressure, they decided in the end to head to Ankara by bus where they held a demonstration. The action aimed to protest against the dismissal of thousands of workers and the imprisonment of journalists during the purge.

English: [http://www.equaltimes.org/we-want-our-jobs-back ...](http://www.equaltimes.org/we-want-our-jobs-back...)

[http://www.ituc-csi.org/turkey-450km-walk-for-justice ...](http://www.ituc-csi.org/turkey-450km-walk-for-justice...)

Supply industries with poor working conditions

December 18, 2016

An investigation sheds light on the practices of factories that supply products for some of the most expensive and luxury leather brands. The investigation revealed that some items are produced by workers expected to toil 10 hours a day while earning well below a living wage. It would take all their pay for three months to buy either item. The reporters tracked down a back-alley factory in the leather district where the PM's luxury trousers are made. The Pasha Leather workshop is tucked away in a rundown district, where pay is as low as

£297 a month. For the 10-hour day that is common in this garment trade, that is just £1.49 an hour. Many of those producing high-end goods for Western shoppers will spend their lives in abject poverty. A trade union spokesperson said some cannot even feed their families – and those who complain are fired on the spot.

English: [http://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/inside-factory-theresa-mays ...](http://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/inside-factory-theresa-mays...)

United Kingdom

The labour market position of agency and zero-hours workers

December 30, 2016

The Resolution Foundation published new research results on the labour market position of agency and zero-hours workers, including statistical data and information on pay and working conditions. The reports aim to shed light on this overlooked groups by mapping out the scale and nature of this work. There are an estimated 865,000 agency workers in the UK today, a number that has increased since 2011 by 30%. Agency workers are more likely to be younger and less qualified than the overall workforce. In 2016, agency workers were paid on average £2.57 an hour less their non-agency counterparts. Workers on zero-hours contracts lose an estimated £1,000 a year compared with employees doing the same work. The Resolution Foundation said all workers who find themselves without a permanent, full-time role lose out in terms of wages, but people hired on zero-hours contracts suffer the biggest financial punishment.

English: [https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2016/dec/30/zero-hours-workers ...](https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2016/dec/30/zero-hours-workers...)
<http://www.resolutionfoundation.org/media/blog/a-typical-year/>
<http://www.resolutionfoundation.org/app/uploads/2016/12/Secret-Agents.pdf>

Cabin crew strikes suspended

December 23, 2016

Planned strikes by British Airways cabin crew on Christmas Day and Boxing Day have been suspended, the Unite union has said. Employees were due to walk out in a row over pay and conditions. The union said 4,500 workers employed on so-called 'Mixed Fleet' contracts - who have joined since 2010 - were on lower pay than other staff. Talks at conciliation service Acas have led to a revised offer which will be put to a ballot of union members.

English: [http://www.bbc.com/news/business ...](http://www.bbc.com/news/business...)

Two-year Nissan pay deal

December 13, 2016

A two-year pay deal for about 7,400 employees at car giant Nissan was hailed by Unite on 13 December 2016. The workforce accepted the deal by a large majority of 68%, which starts on 1 January 2017, for the staff at NMUK in Sunderland and the Nissan Technical Centre Europe (NTCE) at Cranfield, Bedfordshire. This will mean 2.75 per cent plus a £750 lump sum for year one and in year two, 2.75 per cent from 1 January 2018. An increase in maternity paid leave from 18 to 26 weeks starts in January 2017.

English: [http://www.unitetheunion.org/news/two-year-nissan-pay-deal-excellent-news ...](http://www.unitetheunion.org/news/two-year-nissan-pay-deal-excellent-news...)

Draft Codes on balloting and on picketing in industrial disputes

December 8, 2016

The government has published proposals for a revision of the Code of Practice on Industrial action ballots and on picketing. The draft Code of Practice on Industrial action and information to employers has been amended to reflect new legal provisions on industrial action ballots and information to employers made by the Trade Union Act 2016. Trade unions have been critical on the planned amendments.

English: [https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/code-of-practice ...](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/code-of-practice...)
[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads ...](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads...)

Welsh national assembly questions trade union bill reform

December 7, 2016

The national assembly for Wales intends to consult on changes to parts of the Trade Union Act 2016 that became law on the 4 May 2016, before implementation in Wales. The UK government plans to introduce

legislation to repeal sections of the act in devolved areas. The Bill was introduced and referred to the Equality, Local Government and Communities Committee for consideration. Earlier in 2016, the First Minister for Wales described the laws as ‘draconian’ and predicted it would ‘lead to a confrontational relationship between employers and workforce’ that could be ‘damaging’ to the delivery of public services. Under the act, public sector workers will have to reach a higher support threshold to take industrial action, trade union representatives risk having their facility time cut if deemed necessary, and trade unions will have to pay for check-off arrangements.

English: <http://www.ier.org.uk/sites ...>

Monitoring poverty and social exclusion

December 7, 2016

The Joseph Rowntree Foundation *Monitoring poverty and social exclusion 2016* report reveals that one in eight workers in the UK now live in poverty. The strong labour market has coincided with an increase in the number of workers in poverty. The number of people in poverty in a working family is 55% – a record high. Four-fifths of the adults in these families are themselves working, some 3.8 million workers in 2014/15, up by around a million since 2004/05. In-work poverty is more common for youngsters, self-employed workers and part-time employees. If the economic recovery turns into a period of sustained growth, it is important that those on low incomes share in it and feel the gains. The question is how the economy and the state can be restructured to prevent poverty.

English: <https://www.jrf.org.uk/report/monitoring-poverty-and-social-exclusion-2016>

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.

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

© ETUI aisbl, Brussels 2016. All rights reserved. We encourage the distribution of this newsletter and of the information it contains, for non-commercial purposes and provided the source is credited. The ETUI is not responsible for the content of external internet sites. The ETUI is financially supported by the European Union. The European Union is not responsible for any use made of the information contained in this publication.

This email is sent from www.etui.org.

To unsubscribe from this newsletter, click here [{action.unsubscribeUrl}](#)

To never receive email from the ETUI, click here [{action.optOutUrl}](#)

This email is sent from {domain.address}