

# collective bargaining

Issue 1/2017 | January

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.

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## **European sources**

### **New online service ‘Reforms Watch’**

*January 27, 2017*

The online service ‘Reforms Watch’ developed by the ETUI consists of informative dossiers for all EU Member States with fact-based information on the industrial relations system in each country (key facts, players and institutions), information on the latest developments in labour market and pension reform, as well as data and legislative information on the right to strike and strike activities. It monitors developments in labour market and pension reform, as well as strike activities, via regular short ‘Reforms Watch’ news items, in conjunction with the basic country dossiers.

English: <http://www.etui.org/Reforms-watch>

## **Collective bargaining, statutory minimum wage and workers' protection**

*January 20, 2017*

The idea of a pan-European minimum wage is since decades on the agenda of European politicians. A report that urges the European Commission to introduce an equitable wage gained significant support by the MEPs. The report is strictly advisory, but its approval falls two months prior to the Commission's scheduled proposal of new social welfare rules, including measures on working conditions and wages. While 22 countries already have a minimum wage in place, Austria and five other countries did not follow suit. The reason, however, lies in the robust system of collective agreement in some of these countries. The bargaining is conducted by trade unions at a sectoral level with a strong emphasis on decent wages (also at the lowest level), which makes the unions in these states understandably sceptical of a minimum wage.

English: [https://sputniknews.com/europe ...](https://sputniknews.com/europe...)

The report: [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/news-room ...](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/news-room...)

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

## **Capacity-building initiative for social partners**

*January 16, 2017*

In the context of the relaunch of social dialogue announced in 2015, the European Commission set the target to foster the capacity-building among social partners in the EU states. In 2015, a guideline report was prepared by the EU cross-industry social partners to provide some orientation on how social partners can get involved at EU level. An article by Eurofound takes a closer look at the national-level initiatives aimed at strengthening social dialogue among social partners in five EU countries: Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Latvia and Lithuania. In all five countries, the social dialogue structures are rather weak and trade union membership is declining. A lack of both physical and human resources has been identified as contributing to the difficulty of engaging in a meaningful social dialogue, hence the capacity-building approach. This approach has different strategies for different areas of activity, such as informing, organising and protecting their current and potential members.

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

## **Oxfam paper on inequality**

*January 16, 2017*

NGO Oxfam has produced a briefing paper on inequality and wage disparities. Wages in low-skill sectors in particular have been falling behind productivity in emerging economies and stagnating in many rich countries, while wages at the top continue to grow. One section of the paper is dedicated to the decline of workers' collective bargaining power. It says that the changing structure of the jobs market and associated decline of collective bargaining makes things worse. Various factors have led to the decline in the proportion of workers who are members of unions. The IMF has found a relationship in advanced economies between this decline and the increasing share of incomes of the top 10%. In developed countries, the increase in self-employed workers in the 'gig' economy, where they are contracted for defined outputs rather than being employees, puts workers in more precarious financial positions.

English: <https://www.oxfam.org/en/research/economy-99>

The report: [https://www.oxfam.org/sites/www.oxfam.org/files ...](https://www.oxfam.org/sites/www.oxfam.org/files...)

## **Income statistics from the ECB criticized**

*January 13, 2017*

The blog Arbeit & Wissenschaft comments (in German) the ECB-publication on earnings and wealth that came out shortly before Christmas 2016. The ECB-publication reveals that the richest 10% of households in the Eurozone owns more than 50% of all capital (the richest 5% in total 38%). This share increased during the crisis. In the blog the methodology is criticised because information of the superrich is missing and, as a consequence, the real size of inequality is blurred. If the ECB-policy on taxation and transfers is based on such incomplete figures, the authors see a risk of neglect of the interests of large parts of the society. The blog refers also to an earlier own compilation (in German) with inequality analyses by several authors.

Comments by A&W (in German): [http://blog.arbeit-wirtschaft.at/neue-daten ...](http://blog.arbeit-wirtschaft.at/neue-daten...)

ECB-press statement: [http://www.ecb.europa.eu/press ...](http://www.ecb.europa.eu/press...)

The ECB-report: [http://www.ecb.europa.eu/pub/pdf ...](http://www.ecb.europa.eu/pub/pdf...)

The A&W compilation (in German): <http://blog.arbeit-wirtschaft.at/wp-content ...>

### **Agreement at BNP-Paribas on stress management**

*January 11, 2017*

On 10 January 2017, trade union federation UNI Europa Finance signed together with the management of BNP Paribas and the European Works Council an agreement on the 'Prevention of Work-Related Stress'. It is the third and last part of the bank's Social Charter. Two earlier agreements had been signed in this frame: one on the management of employment and one on professional equality between men and women. These three agreements together form the Social Charter that covers all employees of BNP Paribas within the European Union. The Charter is a big win for the European trade union movement and serves as a good example for other multinational companies in the finance sector.

English: <http://www.uniglobalunion.org/news/prevention-stress-agreement-signed-bnp-paribas>

The agreement (in English): <http://www.uniglobalunion.org/sites ...>

The agreement (in French): <http://www.wk-ce.fr/actualites/upload/bnp-paribas-accord ...>

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## **Austria**

### **Union leader wants to negotiate improved minimum wage**

*January 12, 2017*

The leader of trade union vida has asked the Chamber of Commerce, the employers' delegation that normally negotiates the wages, to open up a new bargaining round with the aim to improve the collective minimum wage. The country is rich enough to lift up the minimum wage in all collective agreements to 1500 euro, according to vida. This is especially necessary in low-wage sectors like hospitality, cleaning, security workers and other services. The requested amount of 1500 euro is seen as the absolute low; the future target should be 1700 euro, as formulated by the confederation ÖGB.

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

### **Minimum wages in international transport**

*January 12, 2017*

The Chamber of Labour (AK) published a paper on the impact of statutory minimum wages in a cross-border context, notably in international transport. The Austrian legislature recently decided against applying the minimum wage for pure transit, in cases of services with limited scope and short duration. Referring to the controversy (between Germany and France on the one, Poland and the Czech Republic on the other hand) on overriding reasons for the application of these minimum wages, the author states that the frequency of transit journeys and the wage difference must be regarded as major factors within the meaning of a flexible system. Since the additional administrative costs for the employer is relatively low, in view of modern technical opportunities, proportionality is as a rule only not applicable if the wage difference is minimal and/or the company concerned deploys employees for transit journeys only in exceptional cases.

The report (in English): [http://www.akeuropa.eu/\\_includes ...](http://www.akeuropa.eu/_includes ...)

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## **Belgium**

### **Work stress in Flemish region documented**

*January 28, 2017*

According to a report of the Flemish socio-economic council (SERV) around half of the labour force is confronted with work stress. The share of workers that have to deal with stress has increased substantially in the last three years. The labour ministry has already reacted with an announcement that a dialogue with the social partners will be opened. The report sees the economic growth as one of the main reasons, it has led to increased time pressure, whilst the job growth stayed relatively modest. Social partners agreed in 2000 to develop a policy that should lead to a decrease until 2020.

German: <http://deredactie.be/cm/vrtnieuws.deutsch/nachrichten ...>

The report (in Dutch): <http://www.serv.be/sites ...>

## **Social partners draft interprofessional agreement**

*January 13, 2017*

Trade union organisations and the employers have adopted a social agreement for 2017-2018, paving the way for a 1.1% annual wage rise on top of pay scale increases and automatic wage indexation. The agreement marks a return to the system of social dialogue. Next to wage increases, the agreement includes an increase of the age of early retirement for employees made redundant as a result of corporate restructuring, workers in strenuous occupations and long-serving employees. As of 2019, employees in these groups will no longer be eligible to join early pension schemes from the age of 55, but must instead wait until they are 60.

French: <https://www.csc-en-ligne.be> ...

Several links (in French): <http://www.fgtb.be/-/le-g10-est-parvenu-a-un-projet> ...

Dutch: <http://www.socialedialoog.be/index> ...

Several links (in Dutch): <http://www.abvv.be/-/sociale-gesprekspartners-sluiten-ontwerp> ...

## **Unions critical about relocation**

*January 13, 2017*

The plan of post company Bpost to transfer some 200 jobs of external ICT specialists to two Indian companies was received very critical by both the Telecommunications Minister and the trade unions. The unions are furious and call it a scandal for a publicly-owned company to move jobs abroad to low-wage countries. One of the tasks of the still employed 200 ICT specialists is to train the Indian workers.

English: <http://deredactie.be/cm/vrtnieuws.english/Economy> ...

Dutch: <http://www.skynet.be/nieuws-sport/business> ...

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## **Bulgaria**

### **Carriers threaten with counter-blockade**

*January 18, 2017*

The threat of a blockade of the border as a consequence of Greek farmers' protests, has instigated fears among transport workers. The Association of International Carriers reported that they would mount a counter-blockade if the Greek farmers went ahead with shutting down border checkpoints as planned. A similar incident in February 2016 has cost Bulgarian companies some estimated 20 million euro. The trade union of transport workers urged all of the country's state and government institutions to act to prevent another border blockade.

English: <http://sofiaglobe.com/2017/01/18/bulgarian-transport-carriers-threaten> ...

### **Earnings and wages documented**

*January 17, 2017*

Economists expect the average monthly wage to increase to BGN 1,039 (530 euro) in 2017 and reach BGN 1,125 (575 euro) in 2018. Analysts forecast that the economy will grow by 3.6%. The main engine of growth will be internal demand and individual consumption. According to data of the National Statistical Institute, at the end of 2016, the average monthly wage in the country was BGN 954 (488 euro). The National Statistical Institute (NSI) also presented the publication 'Structure of Earnings 2014'. It contains data from the representative Structure of Earnings Survey for 2014.

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

Structure of earnings 2014: <http://www.nsi.bg/sites> ...

Key indicators 2016: <http://www.nsi.bg/sites> ...

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## **Croatia**

### **Free movement of workers extended**

*January 20, 2017*

Switzerland ratified legislation that extends the Agreement on Free Movement of Persons (signed by Switzerland and the European Union) to Croatia. On January 1 2017, Protocol III entered into force. It envisages a gradual transition of the free movement of persons to Croatia. If the work location is within

Swiss borders, Croatian nationals now can apply for a border commuter permit (G-permit) in Switzerland.

English: [http://www.internationallawoffice.com/Newsletters/Immigration/Switzerland ...](http://www.internationallawoffice.com/Newsletters/Immigration/Switzerland...)

### **Low wages for seasonal workers in tourism**

*January 3, 2017*

The average salary of a seasonal worker in the tourist industry remains a secret. Only one of the big hotels revealed information, although very general, about its wages. The sector makes up a huge part of the economy, accounting for 19% of GDP of the country and employing some 25.000 seasonal workers. The president of the Croatian Trade Union for Tourism and Services said that salaries in tourism remain 13% lower than the average wage, even after bonuses for working shifts are added.

English: [http://www.total-croatia-news.com/business/15546-low-wages-for-seasonal-workers ...](http://www.total-croatia-news.com/business/15546-low-wages-for-seasonal-workers...)

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## Cyprus

### **1948 strike jointly commemorated**

*January 29, 2017*

A special event to commemorate the miners' strike of 1948 took place in Lefka in the north as Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots got together to remember a watershed moment in history where the two communities worked together in a long and sustained fight for workers' rights. Organisers hope that the event will serve as a unifying message that both communities need to work together to enact social change. The 1948 strike, a landmark in the history of workers' rights in Cyprus, was jointly declared by PEO and the Turkish Cypriot miners' union and lasted for more than three months from 13 January to 17 May 1948.

English: <http://cyprus-mail.com/2017/01/29/lessons-strike-70-years-ago/>

### **Port pilots on strike**

*January 17, 2017*

The Limassol port pilots went on strike after they were told that they had to train six Dutch colleagues of theirs, who are to assume duties after the private investors take over operations at the end of January 2017. The work stoppage ended as a sign of goodwill ahead of the pilots' scheduled meeting with the head of the House transport committee over this conflict. The Limassol port pilots had staged another strike on July 2016 to protest the intention of Dubai Ports to employ non-Cypriot pilots. The pilots expect that Dubai Ports will hire them after it takes over from the Cyprus Ports Authority.

English: <http://cyprus-mail.com/2017/01/11/port-pilots-strike-employment-foreign-nationals/>

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## Czech Republic

### **The search for foreign labour continues**

*January 13, 2017*

According to the Statistical Office the number of foreigners in 2015, with 464,700 registered foreign nationals, was the highest in the country's history. Companies in the country face a shortage of qualified workers. The government created a fast track programme aimed at increasing the influx of skilled workers from Ukraine. The idea has been criticised since there are still about 380,000 unemployed. The trade unions were cautious about the system for importing Ukrainian labour from the start and have tried to seek guarantees that imported skilled workers would get the same sort of wages as their Czech counterparts. The employers stressed the country needs foreign workers and said their lack could be a brake for future economic growth.

English: [http://www.radio.cz/en/section/marketplace/fast-track-programme-for-ukraine ...](http://www.radio.cz/en/section/marketplace/fast-track-programme-for-ukraine...)

[http://www.radio.cz/en/section/news/employers-stress-countrys-need-for-more ...](http://www.radio.cz/en/section/news/employers-stress-countrys-need-for-more...)

[http://www.radio.cz/en/section/curraffrs/number-of-foreigners-in-czech-republic-rises ...](http://www.radio.cz/en/section/curraffrs/number-of-foreigners-in-czech-republic-rises...)

### **Nurses might get better pay**

January 9, 2017

The finance ministry raised 600 million crowns to improve the salaries of nurses as from the latter half of the year. The ministry reached an agreement on raising the spending on health insurance fees the state pays for children, pensioners and the unemployed by a total of 3.5 billion crowns annually in 2018-20. The increase is yet to be approved by the government.

English: [http://praguemonitor.com/2017/01/09/minister-gains-czk-600-million ...](http://praguemonitor.com/2017/01/09/minister-gains-czk-600-million...)

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## Denmark

### Union updated wages and collective bargaining information

January 5, 2017

The trade union 3F has updated its information on collective bargaining and the specificities for workers in the hospitality branches, the construction and the 'green' sectors. The webpages say that it is important to become a union member, the moment someone gets a job. This is followed by overviews of the workers' rights, the wages, pay supplements and other working conditions in the envisaged sectors. These pages complement the sectoral information that was already provided in 2016 for the transport and manufacture sectors. The general page also has a link to information on social dumping.

English: <https://www.3f.dk/english/wages-and-collective-agreements/collective-agreements>  
<https://www.3f.dk/english/wages-and-collective-agreements/hotel-and-restaurant>  
<https://www.3f.dk/english/wages-and-collective-agreements/byggeri>  
<https://www.3f.dk/english/wages-and-collective-agreements/den-groenne-sektor>

### Negotiations for central industry agreement started

January 4, 2017

The trade unions that cooperate in the association Central Organisation of Industrial Employees (CO-Industri) have opened the negotiations for a new agreement with employers' organisation Dansk Industri. The old agreement, running from 2014 to 2017, will expire as of 1 March 2017. The central agreement applies to some 230,000 industrial workers in around 6000 companies. This overall framework of collective bargaining is supplemented by local agreements, negotiated by the parties at the enterprises.

Danish: [http://co-industri.dk/DA/Nyheder/Pages ...](http://co-industri.dk/DA/Nyheder/Pages...)

Explanation of the bargaining process (in English): [http://www.co-industri.dk/uk/Pages ...](http://www.co-industri.dk/uk/Pages...)

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## Estonia

### Hiring of foreign workers eased

January 12, 2017

The government passed a regulation that will make it easier to employ seasonal workers from abroad. This includes lowering the minimum pay requirement for seasonal workers from a third country. For companies to hire seasonal workers to work abroad, the job must be listed as a seasonal one. The list of such jobs has now been expanded to include next to agriculture, also accommodation, and food production.

English: [http://www.baltictimes.com/estonian\\_government\\_makes\\_easier...](http://www.baltictimes.com/estonian_government_makes_easier...)

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## Finland

### Pension scheme changes raise uncertainties

January 9, 2017

An extensive reform of the pension system applying from January 2017 has left many residents of the country confused. The country's pension system is based on two complementary pension schemes: the public plan known as the national pension and a compulsory earnings-related pension scheme. The national pension provides a flat-rate benefit of up to 20 percent of average wages, with a minimum guaranteed income reduced by the amount of the earnings-related pension. The earnings-related pension is financed by



contributions paid by both employers and employees and is the backbone of the pension system. From January 2017, the current retirement age of 63 years will be raised by 3 months annually, reaching an official retirement age of 65 years by 2027. After that, retirement age will be linked to life expectancy.

English: [http://yle.fi/uutiset/osasto/news/incremental\\_retirement\\_age\\_hike ...](http://yle.fi/uutiset/osasto/news/incremental_retirement_age_hike...)  
[http://yle.fi/uutiset/osasto/news/when\\_can\\_i\\_retire\\_pension\\_scheme\\_changes ...](http://yle.fi/uutiset/osasto/news/when_can_i_retire_pension_scheme_changes...)

### **Benefits from the basic income discussed**

*January 9, 2017*

As of 1 January 2017, the country has implemented a plan whereby unemployed citizens receive a basic monthly income. Created by the government agency responsible for social security benefits (KELA), it will be run as a pilot scheme in which 2,000 randomly selected unemployed people receive 560 euro every month in place of their existing social security payments. In this article the authors argue that, looking at the logic behind the experiment, a basic income has more advantages than disadvantages. The social security system becomes much simpler, with less benefit fraud, and the scheme will reward unpaid contributions to society.

English: [https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/jan/03/finland-trials-basic-income ...](https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/jan/03/finland-trials-basic-income...)  
[https://theconversation.com/how-finland-could-see-benefits ...](https://theconversation.com/how-finland-could-see-benefits...)

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## France

### **Workers at EDF on strike**

*January 25, 2017*

Workers at EDF were on strike again on 25 January and 30 January 2017. The call to strike came against the proposal to freeze salaries for workers in the electricity and gas industries in 2017. The major concerns of the employees joining this action are remuneration, job cuts, and site closures. Force Ouvriere, along with four other trade unions, including the General Confederation of Labour's (CGT's) energy branch, called for the opening of wage negotiations for 2017 and said 31 January should be 'a day of unitary mobilization'.

English: [http://www.platts.com/latest-news/electric-power/london/workers-at-frances-edf ...](http://www.platts.com/latest-news/electric-power/london/workers-at-frances-edf...)

### **Working conditions in retail**

*January 16, 2017*

'Forgotten by the management' is the title of a background article that is dedicated to the working conditions in large retail chains. Several cited experts note that the work organisation with cash decks, based on a Taylorian model, has hardly evolved since the invention of the supermarkets. Workers are disciplined through double control mechanisms, filmed by cameras and under surveillance of their store management. Cashiers have benefited little from technological innovations, apart from automatic scanning. Depending on the flow of products, cashiers can neither be absent from their positions, nor stretch their legs, let alone decide their breaks, programmed by the hierarchy according to peaks of affluence. The trade unions try to improve the situation by promoting more all-round tasks and other methods to break monotony.

French: [http://business.lesechos.fr/directions-ressources-humaines ...](http://business.lesechos.fr/directions-ressources-humaines...)

### **Right to disconnect from work**

*January 1, 2017*

From 1 January 2017, workers have a 'right to disconnect' from checking professional email out of working hours, as France seeks to establish agreements that afford work flexibility but avoid burnout, sleeping and relationship problems, denounced by many employees. Companies will be required to guarantee their employees a right to switch off from work and technology as the country seeks to tackle the modern-day scourge of compulsive out-of-hours email checking. A new law obliges organisations with more than 50 workers to start negotiations to define the rights of employees to ignore their work digital devices.

English: [http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe ...](http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe...)  
[https://www.theguardian.com/money/2016/dec/31/french-workers-win-legal-right ...](https://www.theguardian.com/money/2016/dec/31/french-workers-win-legal-right...)

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## Germany

## **Minimum wage circumvented**

*January 30, 2017*

The government has been called on to enforce its minimum wage law, after a new study showed that millions of people with 'mini-jobs' were paid below the legal minimum wage in 2015, the year when Germany's 8.50 euro per hour rate was introduced (it has since been increased to 8.84 euro an hour). Trade unions say the authority for enforcing the 2015 law is chronically understaffed. The Institute of Economic and Social Research (WSI) found that around half of the 7.4 million people who work mini-jobs - that is, limited time or salaried work capped at 450 euro a month - received less than the hourly minimum wage in 2015.

English: [http://www.dw.com/en/german-companies-flouting-minimum-wage ...](http://www.dw.com/en/german-companies-flouting-minimum-wage...)

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

## **Pension fund for service industries set up**

*January 17, 2017*

Trade union ver.di is planning to set up a pension fund for the country's service industries that could model itself on the occupational pension scheme for the metalworking and engineering industries. Ver.di will be the first union using of the government's proposal for a new type of pension plan without guarantees and possible opting out. These plans are foreseen in the government's proposal for pension reform, the so-called 'Betriebsrentenstärkungsgesetz'.

English: [https://www.ipe.com/countries/germany/german-trade-union ...](https://www.ipe.com/countries/germany/german-trade-union...)

Information about the pension legislation (in German): [http://www.portal-sozialpolitik.de/recht ...](http://www.portal-sozialpolitik.de/recht...)

DGB position paper (in German): [http://www.dgb.de/themen ...](http://www.dgb.de/themen...)

## **Union demands increase public funding for education**

*January 13, 2017*

The trade union GEW is initiating a campaign called 'Education. Thinking ahead – More money for education!' (Bildung. Weiter denken – mehr Geld für Bildung!), aimed at increasing the governments' funding for education. After a successful rally for the improvement of teaching and learning conditions in primary schools, launched last year by GEW, this year's efforts will focus on the topic of working conditions and professional status in the education sector.

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

## **Draft law to fight the gender pay gap**

*January 11, 2017*

The government has proposed a law that would let workers sue their employer if they can't justify a wage gap between men and women for doing the same job. Under the draft law, companies with 200 or more employees will have to provide workers with details on how their salary is calculated. Bigger companies, with more than 500 staff, will have to report regularly on efforts to provide equal pay for men and women. Women still earn less than men, official statistics show. Female workers receive on average 21 percent less than their male counterparts in gross earnings. The proposal has been received with mixed feelings as it will only apply to 40% of all women workers.

English: <http://www.politico.eu/article/germany-backs-equal-pay-laws/>

German: [http://www.spiegel.de/wirtschaft/soziales/manuela-schwesig-gesetz ...](http://www.spiegel.de/wirtschaft/soziales/manuela-schwesig-gesetz...)

The trade union reaction (in German): [http://www.deutschlandfunk.de/gesetz ...](http://www.deutschlandfunk.de/gesetz...)

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## **Greece**

### **Wages stuck at low level**

*January 20, 2017*

According to data from the labour ministry new jobs are offering increasingly lower salaries. Despite the creation of more than 82,679 new jobs, one in two workers are making an average monthly salary of below 600 euro for full-time employment. One in four see less than 500 euro gross monthly. The statistics service said in a monthly report that the number of unemployed people totalled 1,102,335 in October 2016, with the number of unemployed people in the 55-64 age group rising steadily as companies dismissed older workers to hire young ones at the minimum wage.

English: [http://www.statistics.gr/en ...](http://www.statistics.gr/en...)

[http://greece.greekreporter.com/2017/01/20/report-greeks-severely-underemployed ...](http://greece.greekreporter.com/2017/01/20/report-greeks-severely-underemployed...)

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## Hungary

### **Audi workers strike**

*January 26, 2017*

Audi workers at an engine plant stopped work for two hours on 26 January 2017 in a protest over pay. Earlier on the Audi's workers had set up a strike committee in the dispute. The AHFSZ union said in a statement that it continued to believe there could be a compromise wage deal reached with Audi but the company so far has not reacted on the union's demands. The action by Audi workers follows a December agreement with unions at Daimler's factory that will see base salaries increase by 10% in 2017 and 2018.

English: [http://europe.autonews.com/article ...](http://europe.autonews.com/article...)

[http://www.reuters.com/article/us-daimler-hungary ...](http://www.reuters.com/article/us-daimler-hungary...)

### **Long-lasting gender pay gap**

*January 17, 2017*

According to a research study by B2B marketplace Expert Market, Hungary is expected to be the last country in Europe to close the gender pay gap, and this cannot be expected to happen earlier than 2068. Expert Market investigated the factors that affect the gender pay gap in the EU by modelling current pay gap trends into the future for five economic factors (hours worked, sector, age, industry and job type), in order to identify both the countries and groups of women who will see the gender pay gap close quickest.

English: [http://bbj.hu/analysis/equal-pay-in-hungary-still-a-half-century-away ...](http://bbj.hu/analysis/equal-pay-in-hungary-still-a-half-century-away...)

### **Unions denounce violation of right to collective representation**

*January 16, 2017*

Four trade union leaders have been dismissed during the wage negotiation round by the Fővárosi Közterület-fenntartó Nonprofit (FKF) Zrt (Capital Public Domain Maintenance Company). The union representatives demanded a fair wage increase and expressed readiness to resort to strike action due to the dissatisfaction of workers. Trade union confederation MASZSZ considers these dismissals a clear violation of the collective right to represent the interest of the workers in collective bargaining.

English: [http://szakszervezet.net/en/international-news/1129-flagrant-violation ...](http://szakszervezet.net/en/international-news/1129-flagrant-violation...)

[https://www.labourstartcampaigns.net/show\\_campaign ...](https://www.labourstartcampaigns.net/show_campaign...)

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## Iceland

### **Renewal of the labour market model**

*January 30, 2017*

The Minister of Social Affairs and Equal Rights has planned to introduce a brand-new labour market policy based on the Nordic model. He will also present proposed legislation to implement an equal pay standard. The social partners have agreed to review the labour market negotiation model, i.e. the framework for how the negotiating policy and the labour market works. The goal is to create a negotiation framework modelled on the Nordic Model. Work methods used for wage negotiations will be improved. Another aim is to achieve greater purchasing power and economic balance while lowering inflation and interest rates and stabilising the currency. The agreement should also help create balance and calm in the labour market.

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

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## Ireland

### **Labour Court will not intervene in Bus Éireann pay dispute**

*January 24, 2017*

The Labour Court will no longer intervene in the current dispute over pay and cost cuts at Bus Éireann. Unions said the Labour Court had told the parties that there was no viability in reinvigorating the pre-Christmas process on the pay claim. Bus Éireann management was meeting with representatives of the National Bus and Rail Union (NBRU) and SIPTU. Unions reject proposals from the company which would involve cuts to wages in the order of 30% and consider that, in order for the court to be of assistance, the dispute would have to be through normal procedures. The company has presented unions with cost-cutting proposals including reductions in overtime, premium payments, possible compulsory redundancies and outsourcing. The company says the measures must be implemented urgently to avert an insolvency.

English: <http://www.rte.ie/news ...>

### **No agreement in nurses' pay dispute**

*January 23, 2017*

Nursing representatives held a meeting with senior management of the Health Service, at the Workplace Relations Commission (WRC), to discuss the recruitment and pay of nurses and midwives. These talks between nurses' representatives and government officials on the staffing crisis in hospitals nationwide have adjourned without agreement. The trade unions SIPTU and INMO agreed to engage in further meetings and dialogue. According to INMO, it became clear that health service management 'had no funded workplace plan to address the current unsafe staffing levels'. The organisation insisted that this is compromising patient care and impacting on the health, safety and morale of frontline workers. In the event that there is no 'radical change', INMO is likely to begin industrial action, following a recent ballot in which 90% of the membership voted in favour of such action.

English: <http://www.irishhealth.com/article ...>  
<http://www.siptu.ie/media/pressreleases2017 ...>

### **Road workers win High Court appeal over 10% wage cut**

*January 20, 2017*

A group of workers from the road maintenance company Complete Highway Care (CHC) have won a High Court appeal over their employer's decision to cut their wages in 2009 by 10 per cent due to difficult economic trading conditions. The employees of CHC, which provides temporary traffic management and road maintenance services, had appealed a decision of the EAT which found the wage cut was lawful.

English: <http://www.irishtimes.com/business/construction/road-workers-win-high-court ...>

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## Italy

### **Urgent procedure report on trafficking**

*January 30, 2017*

The Council of Europe Group of experts against human trafficking (GRETA) has published a report on the implementation of the Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings by Italy. The report assesses the specific situation of forced returns of victims of trafficking and the identification of victims of trafficking among asylum seekers and migrants. GRETA acknowledges the extreme difficulties the country is experiencing due to the unprecedented increase in the arrival of migrants and refugees, and the significant efforts made by the country, with the assistance of international organisations and civil society, to cope with the challenges posed by it. The report, which was preceded by a visit in September 2016, reveals gaps in the detection of victims of trafficking among newly arriving migrants and unaccompanied children.

English: <http://www.coe.int/en/web/anti-human-trafficking ...>  
The report: <https://rm.coe.int/CoERMPublicCommonSearchServices ...>

### **Union's bid for referendum on firing process rejected**

*January 11, 2017*

The Constitutional Court has rejected a request by trade union CGIL for a referendum on key provisions of the Jobs Act, adopted under former prime minister Matteo Renzi. The law was one of Renzi's flagships in his attempt to revive the economy. The law scrapped a rule that gave terminated workers from large private sector companies the right to be re-hired if a court established that the termination was unjustified. Big businesses as well as the bond market appeared to welcome the Constitutional Court's decision. Trade union CGIL announced that they consider bringing the case to the European Court of Justice now.

English: [http://www.channelnewsasia.com/news/world/italy-court-rejects ...](http://www.channelnewsasia.com/news/world/italy-court-rejects...)

### **Shorter working week considered**

*January 5, 2017*

The region of Emilia Romagna discusses a proposed bill to reduce the working week in a bid to tackle unemployment. The proposal would see the working week cut down from 40 hours to 32 in, effectively creating a four-day week. Regional councillor and former labour law professor Piergiovanni Alleva, who is behind the bill, argues that the change could see as many as 200,000 new jobs created. Emilia Romagna has currently 2 million people in employment and 160,000 job-seekers, according to recent available data.

English: [http://www.thelocal.it/20170105/italian-region-mulls-introducing-32-hour ...](http://www.thelocal.it/20170105/italian-region-mulls-introducing-32-hour...)

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## Latvia

### **The retirement economy**

*January 19, 2017*

Compared with the other Baltic states Latvia is aging rapidly. The share of aged population in the national economy increases more quickly than the inflow of young and middle-aged population, i.e. persons who are at the age of labour activity. With 28%, their ratio of elderly people (>65 years) to labour force (15-64 years) is the largest in these countries and predictions go as high as 43% for 2040. Next to a low birth rate, the country is also faced with substantial out-migration of able-bodied population to other countries with good working opportunities. One of the solutions could be a paradoxical decision to lower retirement age. In order to free up jobs for young people, who particularly keenly feel the burden of unemployment and to motivate them to participate in social programs and pension funds.

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

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## Liechtenstein

### **Historical low of unemployment**

*January 9, 2017*

Unemployment reached an historical 15-year low in December 2016 with 406 unemployed (the last time the absolute figure was lower, was in 2001) and an overall unemployment percentage of 2.1%. A quarter of the unemployed is categorised as long-term unemployed. Especially youngsters profited from the recovery.

German: [http://www.amsfl.li/ams ...](http://www.amsfl.li/ams...)  
[http://www.amsfl.li/ams ...](http://www.amsfl.li/ams...)

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## Lithuania

### **Emigration leads to shortages of skilled labour**

*January 11, 2017*

Emigration remains one of the biggest challenges, especially as there is a shortage of skilled workers. Unemployment stands at 8% and salaries rise faster than productivity, which might hurt competitiveness. According to the International Organisation for Migration Vilnius office, economic reasons are major concerns of the migrants, combined with factors like the lack of social security and justice, no trust in the state, demeaning attitudes of employers toward employees as well as better work opportunities abroad.

English: [http://famagusta-gazette.com/lack-of-skilled-workers-emigration ...](http://famagusta-gazette.com/lack-of-skilled-workers-emigration...)

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## Luxembourg

### **Social protection scheme will change**

January 17, 2017

The country's minimum guaranteed income (known as the RMG - introduced in 1986) will soon be replaced by an 'Income of Social Inclusion' or REVIS. In general, the government wants to limit subsidy dependency, in other words, fewer people living on benefits. REVIS will be calculated in a different way, being divided into two parts. In practice, there will be two benefits: the 'inclusion' allowance and the 'activation' subsidy: the inclusion allowance will initially be composed of a basic amount of 701.19 euro per person, plus the same amount per household to help pay the expenses and 217.71 euro per dependent child. For single parents, the amount rises to 282.07 euro for each dependent child.

English: [http://www.wort.lu/en/luxembourg/rmg-to-revis-luxembourg-s-minimum-income ...](http://www.wort.lu/en/luxembourg/rmg-to-revis-luxembourg-s-minimum-income...)

French: [http://www.lesessentiel.lu/fr/luxembourg/story/Le-RMG-remplace ...](http://www.lesessentiel.lu/fr/luxembourg/story/Le-RMG-remplace...)

## **Unions act against relocation plan Rothschild**

January 10, 2017

Trade unions OGB-L and ALEBA have taken a stand against private bank Edmond de Rothschild's decision to move its IT department to Switzerland. A move that would make 18 people redundant in April 2018. The unions' main concern is the apparent refusal of the company's management to negotiate a social plan for the affected employees. The trade unions organised a protest rally in front of the private bank's headquarters.

English: [http://www.wort.lu/en/business/switzerland-move-luxembourg-unions ...](http://www.wort.lu/en/business/switzerland-move-luxembourg-unions...)

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## Malta

### **New legislation on trade union recognition**

January 12, 2017

A legal notice revising the way in which a trade union wins recognition at the workplace is being hailed by both employers and unions as one which could prevent unnecessary disputes and strikes. Legal notice 413 prevents a number of problems by providing clearer definitions and also lays down remedies for when a challenge is made. The secretary general of the GWU said that 'clearly defined parameters' were the way to avoid disputes, for the trade union itself, between trade unions, and between trade unions and the employer.

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

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## Netherlands

### **Largest disparity in working time between men and women**

January 31, 2017

The Netherlands has the largest differences in the number of hours worked by men and women in the EU, according to research by the social and cultural planning office SCP. In the EU, the average number of hours worked per week is 35 hours for women and 39 hours for men. In the Netherlands, it is 29 hours for women and 37 hours for men. Young women more often take part time work immediately after completing their qualification than young men. 62 percent of women aged 18 to 25 years work only part time, even if most of the women in this age group don't have children yet. Among men aged 18-25 years, only 28% work part time.

English: [http://nltimes.nl/2017/01/31/netherlands-biggest-disparities-eu ...](http://nltimes.nl/2017/01/31/netherlands-biggest-disparities-eu...)

The report (in Dutch): [http://www.scp.nl/Publicaties ...](http://www.scp.nl/Publicaties...)

### **Union calls for flexible pension**

January 30, 2017

Trade union FNV has called for the retirement age to be made more flexible to reflect different types of labour. The age at which workers become eligible for their pension is rising gradually to 67 years and 3 months by 2022, after which it will be tied to life expectancy. Forecasts by the government statistics service CBS predict that people in 2060 will not retire until halfway through their 72nd year. The FNV says later retirement ages will discriminate against people in physically demanding and arduous jobs.

English: [http://www.dutchnews.nl/news/archives ...](http://www.dutchnews.nl/news/archives...)

## **Unemployment further down**

*January 19, 2017*

Statistics Netherlands (CBS) reported that unemployment has declined by an average 9 thousand per month over the last quarter of 2016, ending at a total of 482 thousand unemployed in December. This amounts to 5.4 percent in the labour force. By the end of 2016, the Employee Insurance Agency (UWV) provided 412 thousand unemployment benefits. In December 2016, unemployment affected 5.4 percent of the total labour force; among under-25s, it affected relatively fewer women than men. On the other hand, more women than men were unemployed in the age categories 25-44 and 45 years and over.

English: [https://www.cbs.nl/en-gb/news ...](https://www.cbs.nl/en-gb/news...)

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## **Norway**

### **Integration of refugees and the gender gap**

*January 31, 2017*

Half of the women who participate in the Introduction programme for newly arrived refugees are in work or education one year after the programme. The political goal is 70%. Men achieve this target, but women do not. The question is raised why there is such a gender gap. The author analyses the main developments on the labour market and the functioning of the introduction program. One reason for refugee women's poorer participation may just be the accumulation of demanding care tasks in this phase of life. They are often from countries where kindergarten is an unknown phenomenon or where places are limited. The threshold for participation in society will therefore be higher for some women than for men. Many will need time to gain a foothold in the competitive labour market with its strict qualification requirements.

English: [https://www.ssb.no/en/utdanning/artikler-og-publikasjoner/women-and-men ...](https://www.ssb.no/en/utdanning/artikler-og-publikasjoner/women-and-men...)

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### **Bargaining deal at OSM aviation**

*January 16, 2017*

OSM Aviation and the International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF) have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) recognising the right of employees to organise and laying the basis for genuine representation and collective bargaining rights to raise standards and working conditions, and to ensure professional services in the international aviation sector. The agreement will contribute to the best possible collaboration between unions and the company including not only adherence to International Labour Organization (ILO) core conventions on freedom of association, organising and collective bargaining, but also the guarantee of regular meetings between unions and management and the inclusion of grievance and arbitration procedures.

English: [http://www.icenews.is/2017/01/16/ceo-espen-hoiby-we-offer-pilots-and-cabin-crew ...](http://www.icenews.is/2017/01/16/ceo-espen-hoiby-we-offer-pilots-and-cabin-crew...)

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## **Poland**

### **Wages in private sector rise**

*January 18, 2017*

The Central Statistical Office revealed that the average monthly gross salary in the business sector climbed 2.7% on year to PLN 4,635 (€1,06). The wage rise fell short of analyst predictions of 3.8% though. The rise comes as some 38% of the companies surveyed by Grant Thornton predict wage rises and none of them wage cuts. The office also published its labour market data for the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter of 2016.

English: [http://www.thenews.pl/1/12/Artykul/289519,Polish-private-sector-employment ...](http://www.thenews.pl/1/12/Artykul/289519,Polish-private-sector-employment...)  
[http://www.thenews.pl/1/12/Artykul/288018,Two-fifths-of-Polish-companies ...](http://www.thenews.pl/1/12/Artykul/288018,Two-fifths-of-Polish-companies...)  
[http://stat.gov.pl/en/topics/labour-market/working-unemployed-economically-inactive ...](http://stat.gov.pl/en/topics/labour-market/working-unemployed-economically-inactive...)

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## **Portugal**

### **Immigration workers on strike**

*January 27, 2017*

The union representing SEF immigration officers said that a rotating strike initiated earlier this month, which will last until the summer, has enjoyed strong participation. The industrial action has seen 86 percent of administration workers lay down their pens. The strikes will take place once a month at each centre across the country and are in protest against rights they enjoyed up until 2008 with regards to their status as non-law enforcement workers.

English: <http://www.theportugalnews.com/news/immigration-office-strike ...>

### **Changes in minimum wage and social security system**

*January 19, 2017*

The government's proposal to increase the minimum wage to 557 euro passed by the end of 2016 and was signed by the country's president. Legislation enshrining that increase is in force from 1 January 2017. In line with this proposal, additional legislation to reduce employers' social security contributions on workers earning the minimum wage was signed by the president, after the measure had been agreed by employer organisations and one of the two largest trade union confederations, in statutory tripartite talks.

English: <http://www.theportugalnews.com/news/government-proposes-557-minimum-wage ...>

### **Union calls for bank nationalisation**

*January 10, 2017*

One of the main bank worker unions added its voice to the growing chorus of those calling for the 'temporary nationalisation' of Novo Banco. The Bank of Portugal announced earlier in January that the US investment fund Lone Star, which also owns Vilamoura, was best placed to buy Novo Banco and it would be invited for further negotiations. The union stressed the importance of the bank for the domestic market.

English: <http://www.theportugalnews.com/news/union-calls-for-novo-banco-nationalisation ...>

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## Romania

### **Income tax changed**

*January 6, 2017*

The Chamber of Deputies has adopted a draft project that amends the Fiscal Code to remove the health contributions for pensions, as well as the income tax of 16% for the pensions below RON 2,000 (443 euro). Until now, only the pensions below RON 1,050 were exempted from paying the income tax of 16%. Currently, over 3.1 million retirees in Romania have pensions below RON 1,050. The new bill extends this measure to the pensions ranging between RON 1,050 and RON 2,000. A number of 1.43 million Romanians will thus be exempted from paying the income tax of 16%.

English: <http://www.romania-insider.com/romanian-deputies-remove-income-tax ...>

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## Serbia

### **Wage data for 2016**

*January 25, 2017*

The average gross salaries and wages paid in December 2016 amounted to dinars 73 641 (594 euro). The average net salaries and wages (tax and contributions excluded) paid in December 2016 totalled 53 456 dinars (431 euro). Compared to the average gross salaries and wages paid in November 2016, this was an increase of 16.8% in nominal terms and 16.9% increase in real terms, while the average net salaries and wages increased by 16.8% in nominal terms and by 16.9% in real terms. Compared with the same month in 2015, average gross salaries and wages increased by 4.1% in nominal terms and by 2.5% in real terms, while average net salaries and wages increased by 3.8% in nominal terms and by 2.2% in real terms.

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

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## Slovakia



## **Wage growth in 2016 documented**

*January 24, 2017*

The increase in salaries in 2016 was the highest in the past six years. The basic gross salary went up by 4.8 percent compared to 2015, while the average basic salary last year amounted to 920 euro gross a month. This stems from an analysis of a salary survey website where more than 70,000 people compared their salaries in 2016. Qualified workers saw their wages increase the most, by 6 percent compared with 2015. Their average basic wage amounted to 652 euro gross a month.

English: [https://spectator.sme.sk/c/20441462/salaries-grew-the-most-in-6-years ...](https://spectator.sme.sk/c/20441462/salaries-grew-the-most-in-6-years...)

## **Bus drivers in a pay dispute**

*January 17, 2017*

The negotiations on wage increases in public bus transport have ended in deadlock as the representatives of trade unions are unable to make a deal with carriers. As a result, employees in bus transport have announced a strike alert. If they fail to make agreement after meeting with the mediator, it is possible they will start striking. The trade unions want the tariff wages to increase by 10 percent, while the average wages should rise by 12 percent. The employers, however, propose only a 1-percent increase for the former and 2-percent increase for the latter. This would mean that the lowest wages would rise by only €4.50 a month.

English: [https://spectator.sme.sk/c/20435585/bus-drivers-threaten-with-strike ...](https://spectator.sme.sk/c/20435585/bus-drivers-threaten-with-strike...)

## **PPS Group employees on strike**

*January 5, 2017*

After failed negotiations with their employer, workers of the engineering company PPS Group Detva decide to go on strike on 9 January 2017. The unions were not able to agree with employer on some points of the collective agreement. Salary increase is the main conflictual issue. The decision was made based on the results of a strike vote. Almost 87 percent of the 800 employees of PPS Group Detva participated and of these, 97 percent agreed to a strike.

English: [https://spectator.sme.sk/c/20426135/pps-group-employees-to-strike ...](https://spectator.sme.sk/c/20426135/pps-group-employees-to-strike...)

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## **Slovenia**

### **Unions want 5% increase of minimum wage**

*January 21, 2017*

After a session of the Economic and Social Council (ESS) a 1.8% rise in the minimum wage to 805 euro gross or 614 euro net was announced by the labour ministry. Seven associations of trade unions that are a part of the Economic and Social Council, the main industrial relations forum, had called for raising the minimum wage. Given the economic recovery, unions demanded that the minimum wage should go up by 5% to 630 euro net in 2017. Earlier on opposition parties in parliament asked an improvement during 2017 in two steps, leading to a minimum wage of 700 euro in September 2017. Trade unions argue that the planned increase is not enough to keep minimum wage recipients above the poverty line.

English: <http://www.sloveniatimes.com/labour-minister-announces-1-8-minimum-wage-rise>

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## **Spain**

### **Unemployment decreases – new jobs are precarious**

*January 26, 2017*

Unemployment diminished sharply in 2016, dropping by 9.5 percent. The labour ministry said 3.7 million people were registered as out of work in 2016, nearly 400,000 fewer than in 2015, the biggest-ever yearly reduction. However, trade union UGT revealed that many of those moving out of the jobless queue had only been able to find employment with precarious working conditions. In December 2016, just four out of every 100 contracts signed were long-term and full-time, it said in a statement. The conservative government has come under fire for the unstable and temporary nature of many new contracts and the increase of economic and social inequalities.

English: <http://www.thelocal.es/jobs/article/spains-jobless-queue-shrinks-in-2016>

Labour market data (in Spanish): <http://www.ine.es/en/daco ...>

### **Coca-Cola court ruling**

*January 19, 2017*

Trade union representatives from four European Coca-Cola producing countries, joined by IUF secretariat representatives met in Madrid to show support and solidarity with the struggle of the workers at the Coca-Cola Fuenlabrada factory. In June 2014, the National Court annulled the company's decision to the 'collective layoff' and ordered to reinstate them; confirmed by the Supreme Court again in April 2015. The workers demanded that the court recognised that the work at the Fuenlabrada factory was not productive/regular as was dictated by the sentence as moving bottles is not productive/regular. The Supreme Court confirmed on Wednesday 18 January that the readmission of the employees of the closed Madrid plant will be carried out in a new logistics centre, and not in a factory, as demanded by part of the workforce.

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

### **Industrial action in Malaga metro**

*January 17, 2017*

Industrial action has been called on the Malaga Metro service on 2 and 9 February 2017, with protests and workers possibly going on strike for better pay and working conditions. Workers initially went on strike at the beginning of the year. The CCOO union is to vote on when they will start industrial action.

English: <http://www.englishradionews.com/news/spain/costa-del-sol/talks-continue ...>

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## Sweden

### **Dockworkers strike**

*January 18, 2017*

The dockworkers' trade union (SDU), which includes 85% of the dockworkers at the Gothenburg terminal, plans to organise a strike at APM Terminals Gothenburg 'after being barred from representing its members at upcoming redundancy negotiations'. The strike is an effort in a year-long dispute 'to re-establish a normal Swedish negotiation model, preventive health & safety in the workplace and other basic rights'.

English: <http://worldmaritimenews.com/archives/210681/swedish-dockworkers ...>

### **Municipal pilot program of six-hour workday for nurses**

*January 7, 2017*

The municipality of Gothenburg applied an 18 months' trial of the effect of a reduced six-hour workday for nurses at a hospital. The results show that the number of sick days taken by the staff was considerably reduced. Nurses at the 30-hour-per-week facility took 6.2 percent fewer sick days than nurses at the 40-hour-per-week hospital. As expected, the workers under the experiment reported that they were less tired and more fulfilled by their work. Patients also reported increased quality of care.

English: <https://www.inverse.com/article/25718-six-hour-workdays>  
<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/jan/04/sweden-sees-benefits ...>

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## Switzerland

### **Still on top of the Big Mac Index**

*January 17, 2017*

According to Big Mac Index 2017 Switzerland still has the most overvalued currency in the world. Big Mac index was invented by The Economist in 1986 as a light-hearted guide to whether currencies are at their 'correct' level. It is based on the theory of purchasing-power parity (PPP), the notion that in the long run exchange rates should move towards the rate that would equalise the prices of an identical basket of goods and services (in this case, a burger) in any two countries. However, the situation is different in an adjusted

version of the index which takes into account labour costs and GDP. When adjusting for the country's average income, the franc is only overvalued by four percent, it found.

English: [http://www.economist.com/content/big-mac-index ...](http://www.economist.com/content/big-mac-index)

## **Uber drivers judged to be employees**

*January 5, 2017*

Uber has suffered another setback to its operational model in Europe after insurance agency Suva ruled that Uber drivers are employees, not freelance contractors as the company claims - meaning it must pay social security contributions. This follows a similar ruling by a UK employment tribunal in October which found that two Uber drivers bringing a claim were employed as workers by Uber, rather than being freelance contractors. The public-sector insurer Suva is involved in determining whether workers are freelance or not as a provider of compulsory on-the-job accident insurance which is required for certain professions. Trade union Unia welcomed the decision as a clear sign that Uber is circumventing social security obligations.

English: [https://techcrunch.com/2017/01/05/uber-drivers-judged-to-be-employees ...](https://techcrunch.com/2017/01/05/uber-drivers-judged-to-be-employees)

German: <http://www.srf.ch/news/schweiz/uber-blitzt-ab-fahrer-sind-angestellte>

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## Turkey

### **Collective agreement for the metal/electric equipment sector**

*January 24, 2017*

Strike action by over 2,000 workers has paid off as the trade union Birleşik Metal İş, won a major victory in securing a better collective agreement for metalworkers with major electrical equipment employers association EMIS (Electromechanical Employers' Association). Even though the government issued a decree postponing and effectively banning the strike, the metalworkers went ahead with industrial action. The duration of the new agreement will be two years and includes raises in wages and social benefits and a private health insurance for all workers at ABB.

English: <http://www.industrialunion.org/victory-for-metalworkers-in-turkey>

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## United Kingdom

### **Teachers strike in Northern Ireland**

*January 31, 2017*

During the month of January 2017 teachers in Northern Ireland have been organising strikes over pay, jobs and workload. The last in the row was a strike by teachers belonging to trade union NASUWT in the Derry City and Strabane, Mid Ulster and Fermanagh and Omagh council areas. In October 2016, all five main teaching unions in Northern Ireland rejected an offer that would have seen their pay frozen last year and a rise of 1% for 2016-17. Members of the NASUWT in Belfast and Newtownabbey subsequently held a one-day walkout. About 7,000 teachers belonging to the INTO union also staged a half-day strike on 18 January.

English: [http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-northern-ireland ...](http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-northern-ireland)

<http://www.thetransfertutor.co.uk/list-schools-striking-31st-january-2017>

### **The right to be classed as an employee**

*January 26, 2017*

Trade union GMB has taken the initiative for a legal claim from workers who believe they are wrongly classed as self-employed at Hermes, the courier company that delivers parcels. The possible legal proceedings come after a similar claim was brought successfully against app-based taxi company Uber. Employment judges ruled that self-employed drivers should be classed as workers and therefore have the right to the national living wage. Earlier this month a central London employment tribunal ruled that courier CitySprint wrongly classified a bicycle courier as a self-employed worker. The bicycle courier won the right to be classed as an employee rather than self-employed, which entitles her to employee rights such as holiday pay and minimum wage.

English: [https://www.theguardian.com/business/2017/jan/26/hermes-facing-legal-challenge ...](https://www.theguardian.com/business/2017/jan/26/hermes-facing-legal-challenge)

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

## **London Underground workers and Southern Rail drivers take collective action**

*January 26, 2017*

Tube workers continued their strike action on two London Underground lines on 26 January 2017. Members of the Rail, Maritime and Transport union who work on the central line walked out in a dispute over the 'forced displacement' of staff. The strike affected more than 800,000 commuters. RMT Southern Rail drivers' union also staged collective action on 24, 25 and 27 January 2017, with pickets planned at key locations. RMT has repeatedly requested access to the talks about working conditions of rail drivers involving the TUC, the employers, and other unions but they have been excluded for the negotiation talks so far. RMT considers that their continued exclusion from the negotiating table is unacceptable and will continue to press ahead with their industrial action.

English: [http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news ...](http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news...)

[http://www.rmt.org.uk/news/rmt-southern-rail-drivers-action ...](http://www.rmt.org.uk/news/rmt-southern-rail-drivers-action...)

## **Job protection deal for IT-workers**

*January 20, 2017*

Glasgow council IT workers have voted in favour of a deal to protect their jobs, terms and conditions and current employment status in any new set-up with CGI, the global company seeking to take over the running of the city's IT service. Workers who are currently council employees will be seconded and thus, remain council employees.

English: [https://www.unison.org.uk/news ...](https://www.unison.org.uk/news...)

## **In danger of remaining a low wage, low skill country**

*January 5, 2017*

Economists at the Centre for Business Research, University of Cambridge, have challenged the assumptions of the Treasury in their forecast for the economy and the impact of Brexit in 2017. They warn that the UK is in danger of remaining a low wage, low skill country unless it can create the conditions for a reorientation of its economic model post-Brexit.

English: [http://www.blogs.jbs.cam.ac.uk/cbr/cbr-economic-forecast ...](http://www.blogs.jbs.cam.ac.uk/cbr/cbr-economic-forecast...)

The report: [http://www.jbs.cam.ac.uk/fileadmin/user\\_upload/centre-for-business-research ...](http://www.jbs.cam.ac.uk/fileadmin/user_upload/centre-for-business-research...)

## **Beyond the annual average wage after two and half a days**

*January 4, 2017*

The High Pay Centre, an independent non-party think tank that monitors pay at the top of the income distribution, published calculations that reveal that the top FTSE100 management already earned the average annual salary on Wednesday 4-1 by lunchtime. After just two and a half days the country's top bosses have made more money than the average worker earns in an entire year. Pay for top company executives returning to work in 2017 passed the UK average salary of £28,200 by around mid-day on what is called 'Fat Cat Wednesday'. Trade union GMB stated that this is not just a FTSE100 company problem.

English: <http://highpaycentre.org/blog/fat-cat-wednesday-2017>

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You may find further information on the ETUI at [www.etui.org](http://www.etui.org), and on the AIAS at [www.uva-aias.net](http://www.uva-aias.net).

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