

collective bargaining

Issue 1/2018 | 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
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European sources

Two blogs on wage developments and inequality

January 25, 2018

In a summarising blog, published by Eurofound, it is said that the growth in average (nominal) pay of employees has accelerated in recent years in EU countries after the slump following the economic crisis. Similar developments show up in data on collectively agreed wages. However, higher wage growth figures do

not automatically mean that all employees benefit equally. The data illustrate the vast differences across Europe of the minimum wage rates and an included graph shows the nominal growth in statutory minimum wages. At EU-level, the discussion about the necessity of a minimum wage intensified in 2017. A second blog looks after the income inequalities and disparities in Europe. EU-wide income inequality declined notably prior to 2008, driven by a strong process of income convergence. The Great Recession broke this trend. After 2008, income convergence has been sluggish, while inequality within many countries increased significantly.

Read on: [in English \(1\) ...](#) [in English \(2\) ...](#)

Violations related to health, social security and social protection in 2017

January 24, 2018

The European Committee of Social Rights (ECSR) published its 2017 conclusions in respect of 33 states parties (European Social Charter (1961) and the revised European Social Charter (1996)) showing 175 violations (36%), 228 situations of conformity (47%) and 83 cases (17%) where the Committee was unable to assess the situation due to lack of information, known as 'deferrals'. The Committee concluded that, in many countries in Europe, poverty level is far too high and the measures taken to remedy this fundamental problem are insufficient. In particular, in many states the social security benefits (notably in respect of unemployment and old age) are well below the poverty level, even when taking into account social assistance, which remains too low. The conclusions adopted by the ECSR in the framework of its reporting system can be consulted using the European Social Charter HUDOC Database.

Read on: [in English ...](#) The link to the HUDOC Database: [in English ...](#)

Negotiations at Ryanair not self-evident

January 24, 2018

Several Ryanair pilots' unions have demanded a joint meeting with management, saying individual talks on a new collective bargaining system were not satisfactory. In a letter sent by the European Cockpit Association and signed by 11 trade unions, the pilots also demand that Ryanair commit by March 1 to introduce permanent direct employment contracts in accordance with the local laws of the country where staff are based. Ryanair, in a statement, refused the idea of meeting unions collectively. In the past, the company's practice was to deal with pilots from its 87 bases separately.

Read on: [in English ...](#)

Quality of life 2016 full report online

January 23, 2018

The complete outcomes of the European Quality of Life Survey (EQLS), a tool established by Eurofound for monitoring and analysing quality of life in the EU, are now online. The overview report presents the findings for the EU Member States. It uses information from previous survey rounds, as well as other research, to look at trends in quality of life against a background of the changing social and economic profile of European societies. Ten years after the global economic crisis, it examines well-being and quality of life broadly, to include quality of society and public services. The findings indicate that differences between countries on many aspects are still prevalent – but with more nuanced narratives. Each Member State exhibits certain strengths in particular aspects of well-being, but multiple disadvantages are still more pronounced in some societies than in others; and in all countries significant social inequalities persist.

Read on: [in English ...](#)

World employment social outlook

January 22, 2018

The ILO published a report with a forecast on employment trends. Chapter 2 on Europe comes up with several graphs and statistics. The business cycle has been closely synchronised across European countries, with the majority of economies expected to see slightly slower GDP growth in 2018, after a strong rebound in 2017. The unemployment rate is projected to have dropped from 9.2% in 2016 to 8.5% in 2017, the lowest rate since 2008. But, while employment has been expanding since 2015, wage growth remains subdued, constraining further improvement in aggregate demand and, in turn, in the labour market.

Read on: [in English ...](#)

Oxfam publishes report on inequality

January 22, 2018

NGO Oxfam's report, *Reward Work, Not Wealth*, shows that the gap between rich and poor is far greater than had been feared. The report details how big business and the super-rich are fuelling the inequality crisis by dodging taxes, driving down wages and using their power to influence politics. In its annual report on wealth inequality, the UK-based poverty and disaster relief charity said a booming global economy had allowed a small elite group of rich families to grab 82 percent of the new wealth created in 2017, while the poorest 50 percent saw no increase in their prosperity.

Read on: [in English ...](#) The report: [in English ...](#) [in other languages \(and summaries\) ...](#)

Austria

Eurowings negotiators close to a deal

January 25, 2018

Trade unions *vida* announced that a collective agreement is within reach at Eurowings Europe. The union expects to conclude the agreement early February. It would bring better pay and an improvement of the working conditions. The union also thinks that the result will be important for workers that are coming over from the insolvent NIKI company. In a press statement, the union's negotiator said that the main aim for the future is a national sectoral collective agreement for all workers that work as crew members in the country.

Read on: [in German ...](#)

Social security system assessed

January 19, 2018

Whilst the system of unemployment benefits and other social security provisions could come under pressure, due to governmental plans, the Arbeiterkammer (AK) gave the floor to Professor Mossialos, London School of Economics, who emphasised the many strengths of the country's social security system that is characterised by the high level of satisfaction and the lowest levels of unmet need worldwide.

Read on: [in English ...](#) The presentation: [in English ...](#)

Belgium

Deliveroo couriers in an industrial dispute

January 27, 2018

Deliveroo workers in five cities (and in Amsterdam – the Netherlands) started a strike, after Deliveroo refused to delay its decision to treat all workers as self-employed from 1 February 2018. The strike was being led by a collective representing about 200 couriers. Shortly after, talks were announced in a trade union press statement. The workers said that the multinational cannot simply impose precarious employment status upon its workers solely under the pretext of its operating via the internet, and by taking an aloof attitude to the issue.

Read on: [in English ...](#) Press statement: [in French ...](#)

Enormous job losses at Carrefour

January 26, 2018

The French group Carrefour has announced a restructuring resulting in a cutting of jobs for 1.233 people in Belgium and 2.400 in France and at their international headquarters. The group called the transformation plan 'Carrefour 2022' and said to understand the impact these cuts will have on the lives of their employees. Carrefour stated that they would do their utmost to limit the societal consequences. Carrefour Belgium wants to reassess its 44 integrated hypermarkets' efficiency: three will be turned into a supermarket formula (Westerlo, Bruges Sint-Kruis and Haine-Saint-Pierre). The restructuring plan will contain two store closures (hypermarkets in Genk and Angleur) and job cuts at the main office in Evere. The workers reacted with strike action against the company's restructuring plan. The trade unions were not calling for a strike, but they support the action as a signal to the management.

Read on: [in English \(1\) ...](#) [in English \(2\) ...](#)

Luggage handlers walk out

January 25, 2018

Baggage handlers that work for Aviapartners at Zaventem Airport, near Brussels have down tools. Aviapartners provides baggage handling services and other services to a number of airlines that operate from the country's busiest airport. The strike action has come about as a result of pressure of issues, like work stress, felt among the baggage handling staff. There are also staff shortages and issues with the management not having honoured previous agreements made with the unions.

Read on: [in English ...](#)

Bulgaria

Prison officers staged a protest

January 29, 2018

Prison officers from the prisons and remand centres from across the country staged a protest on 29 January 2018 in demand of higher wages and better working conditions. They were backed by a statement from their colleagues from the Court Guard unit, and several interior ministry officers who were off duty and joined the protest. A spokesperson from the trade union of the prison staff explained that the demands of the workers remain unchanged: 20% pay rise and equalising the remunerations with the size of the remuneration of their colleagues from the interior ministry, the State Agency for National Security and ministry of defence. Other demands include improvement of the working conditions and appointment of more staff to fill in the vacancies and new positions to be added to the staff complement.

Read on: [in English ...](#)

Joint action of unions and Ombudsman

January 22, 2018

The national Ombudsman and the leaders of trade unions CITUB and Podkrepa submitted to Parliament a proposal for amendments to the Labour Code that would repeal the employer's right to pay only 60% of the salary earned or limit this right to certain circumstances and times of the year. The legislative proposal provides for the repeal of Article 245 of the Labour Code or its change in order for the employer to be entitled to pay incomplete wages for only one month of the year or in certain circumstances to be declared to the General Labour Inspectorate.

Read on: [in English ...](#)

Croatia

Strike threat over after loan issue at shipyard is cleared

January 24, 2018

Workers at the Uljanik shipyard had announced they would go on strike because of unpaid salaries. With the loan issue cleared, after the European Commission agreed with rescue aid for the shipbuilder in the form of the grant of a state guarantee, they were expected to call off the strike, but when the union leaders met they voted to put a 48-hour hold on the strike. The day after the atmosphere in the dock went back to normal, as the management promised to pay the unpaid December salary and Christmas bonuses.

Read on: [in English ...](#)

Wage data 4th quarter 2017

January 9, 2018

In the 4th quarter of 2017, the average wage in the country was 5,586 Kuna (753 euro), an increase of 1% compared to the 3rd quarter. In the same period men earned, on average, 13% more than women (men 5,931 Kuna, women 5,240 Kuna). Besides the top management, the best paid jobs can be found in technology and development, human resources and IT. The lowest average wage is paid in textile and leather and several

services sectors. Also hospitality scores below average.

Read on: [in English ...](#)

Cyprus

Union plans march to push demands

January 23, 2018

Bank workers Trade union Etyk is planning a march for 1 February 2018 – between the first and second rounds of the election – in a bid to get as many concessions as possible from the government and incumbent President Nicos Anastasiades. At the demonstration – likely to be held outside the presidential palace – the union will again demand full restitution for provident funds that were seized (along with depositors' savings) in the March 2013 banking meltdown. In recent weeks, the union has received promises from four of the five main (party-backed) presidential candidates, with only Anastasiades holding out.

Read on: [in English ...](#)

Czechia

Škoda workers seek pay rise of 18%

January 25, 2018

Unions at the Republic's biggest car maker, Škoda Auto, are demanding a pay rise of 18 percent. They have asked for a 14 percent increase in the basic wage and a further 4 percent rise related to personal evaluations. Unions are also seeking to repeat last year's practice where two special one-off payments totalling around 90,000 crowns. The monthly average wage for an automotive worker in 2017 was around 40,000 crowns (1580 euro). A new deal should be in place by 1 April 2018 to cover the following 12 months.

Read on: [in English ...](#)

Swift increase of pensions predicted

January 2, 2018

The pensions will increase in 2018 faster than in the past years because the calculation of their indexation will change and as of the beginning of the year, they will be increased by one-half of the growth in real wages instead of the current one-third and by the inflation rate. Due to this, the average monthly pension will rise by 475 crowns in January 2018 (with the old method the average sum would be 65 crowns lower). More changes are planned. The fixed part of the pension, which is the same for everyone and amounts to 9% of the growth salary, will rise from 2550 to 2700 crowns. The proportion of the pension that is set down according to the years spent at work and paid sums will be increased by 3.5 percent. There will be also a 35 percent rise in the additional payments to the pensions of resistance fighters and their families.

Read on: [in English ...](#)

Denmark

Employee representatives take position on bitcoin

January 24, 2018

Scandinavia's largest bank Nordea announced that it's implementing a ban for its employees to invest and trade in Bitcoin and other cryptocurrencies. With this measure, the bank wants to protect its employees from the risk of unknowingly getting involved in any ethical or illegal activity. The Danish Financial Federation told the public news-station Danmarks Radio that banning employees from owning cryptocurrency is stepping way out of line. Later on, the DJØF trade union expressed itself also highly sceptical of Nordea's reasoning in this matter. The two organisations represent a majority of Nordea's employees.

Read on: [in English ...](#)

Union informs about new unemployment scheme

January 4, 2018

Trade union 3F, the country's largest union, has published an overview (in English) of the income requirements and other conditions that workers have to meet in order to obtain unemployment benefits. The changes came into effect per 1 July 2017. The income requirement is calculated in Danish kroner: workers must have earned DKK 228,348 within three years (2018 figures). It is possible to count a maximum of DKK 19,029 (2018 figures) for each month to meet the requirement. For a part-time insured person, the income requirements are lower. Only unsubsidised work accrues the right to unemployment benefits. This means that jobs with subsidies do not count. The unemployment fund calculates the rate of unemployment benefit based on the best 12 months of earnings within the past two years. A rate is only calculated when a worker starts a new period of unemployment benefits. As of 1 July 2017, a monthly rate – a fixed amount – was introduced, whether or not the month is short or long. The maximum rate is DKK 18.633 per month for a full-time insured person. On another webpage the union's unemployment fund is introduced.

Read all the conditions: [in English \(1\) ...](#) [in English \(2\) ...](#)

Estonia

Climate hardens at meatpacking plant Rakvere

January 29, 2018

The trade union confederation EAKL made public that workers at meatpacking plant Rakvere, part of the HK Scan group, were threatened by the employer in an attempt to avoid a strike. Workers were said that they could be fired, blacklisted or 'having their life made difficult' if they participated in the strike, the union said. The attempts include influencing employees one by one. According to EAKL's information, people have been threatened in the central warehouse of the meatpacking plant, in the flavouring unit and the roast production unit. In order to avoid threats, the trade union suggested that employees record conversations as the activity of the employer is illegal and punishable pursuant to criminal procedure. Workers are asking a 16% increase from 1 February 2018 and an additional 16% increase in basic wage from 1 July 2018.

Read on: [in English ...](#)

Pay deal for cultural workers

January 3, 2018

The trade union of Estonian public-sector trade unions TALO and the ministry of culture signed a 2018 pay agreement for cultural workers, according to which the gross minimum monthly salary of cultural workers whose pay comes from the state budget will increase to 1,150 euro in 2018, a 22% increase. According to a previously signed agreement, the salary of full-time cultural workers should reach the country's average monthly pay by 2020. The ministry declared that this deal shows the great value that the country gives to cultural work.

Read on: [in English ...](#)

Finland

Unions against severe cuts of unemployment benefits

January 29, 2018

Unemployed people who don't find work or enter training schemes will face a 4.65 percent cut in their benefit payments. Some 130,000 people have signed a citizens' initiative demanding the cessation of the activation programme that sanctions unemployed benefit claimants who fail to perform 18 hours of paid work over a three-month period, or enter job-related training. Trade union confederation SAK and several unions are organising a major demonstration on Friday 2 February 2018. The unions will gather for a protest in Helsinki against the so-called 'active model'. The board of the Industrial Union decided to join the protest with a strike against the government's new measures. The strike will affect every shift in the affected sectors.

Read on: [in English \(1\) ...](#) [in English \(2\) ...](#) [in English \(3\) ...](#)

Paper workers agree after conciliation

January 15, 2018

Trade union Pro has fought against attempts by employers to make cuts in employment conditions in the paper sector. 3000 of Pro's members have been on an overtime ban since 9 January 2018. The workers announced to strike a full week starting at 7am on 18 January, 2018, as an attempt to maintain their current employment conditions. Another reason to strike was the proposed measure to take away decision making power from bargaining partners. After the government arbitrated in a mediation, both trade union Pro and the employers' association, Finnish Forest Industries, approved the mediation proposal of the National Conciliator for the paper sector's white-collar employees to increase salaries, and all strike actions were immediately cancelled.

Read on: [in English ...](#)

France

Labour reform assessed from a US-perspective

January 24, 2018

The New York Times reports on the changes in the labour code. Just weeks after the new code went into effect, companies are readily taking advantage of the rules that make it easier to hire and fire. But the other changes, those designed to help cushion the blow like retraining programs, haven't been put into place yet, leaving workers vulnerable to a coming wave of downsizing. The changes to the country's voluminous labour code are part of a broad push by President Macron to revive growth and steer the country toward a Scandinavian-style economic model known as 'flexicurity'. But the initial imbalance between employers' rights and workers' protections means the economic picture could get worse before it gets better.

Read on: [in English ...](#)

Blockade of prison workers

January 22, 2018

The industrial action by increasingly angry prison staff entered a second week. The prison officers have blockaded dozens of jails after renewed attacks by inmates increased fears for wardens' safety. A spokesman for the Ufap-Unsa trade union, which represents the majority of prison staff, said violence against warders was a 'daily thing'. Earlier on, union officials rejected an offer to reinforce prison security with 1,100 new jobs, the setting up of special detention units for violent prisoners over the next four years and the reinforcing of prison security teams.

Read on: [in English ...](#)

CGT leadership criticises Anglo-Saxon model

January 12, 2018

The head of the trade union CGT does not want the country to treat its workers like the UK and US, with zero hours contracts and no protection for the unemployed. He said that the controversial reforms by the current government cut into the power of the trade unions and make it easier for firms to lay off staff. The union leader believes Macron is influenced by the 'Anglo-Saxon' model but he does not want to see the same situation in France.

Read on: [in English ...](#)

Germany

Series of agreements in woodworking

January 29, 2018

Trade union IG Metall is working on a successful series of collective agreements in the woodworking (and plastics) industries. One of the first state where an agreement could be reached was the state of Baden-Württemberg. The agreement included a 4% wage increase as of 1 May 2018. In the first 4 months of 2018, workers will receive nominal 150 euro each month. In the new deal, youngsters participating in vocational training will receive monthly an extra 50 euro. The agreement will expire on 30 September 2019. Shortly after the union came to similar results in

Read on: [in German ...](#)

Report on minimum wage compliance

January 29, 2018

The Institute of Economic and Social Research (WSI) at the Hans Böckler Foundation published a report on the compliance with the statutory minimum wage. The authors reveal that around 2.7 million workers received less than the minimum wage in 2016 even though they were entitled to it. This comes up to 9,8% of people who are entitled to receive it after the minimum wage law that came into force in 2015. The highest rates of avoidance by employers are found in private households (42,6%), hotel and catering industry (38,0%) and retail (19,5%). Companies without workers' councils and collective labour agreements more frequently undermined the minimum wage. In such companies, 18.6% of employees did not receive the legally prescribed minimum wage. By comparison, 3.2% of companies with workers' councils and collective labour agreements circumvented the payment of the minimum wage in 2016.

Read on: [in English ...](#) The report: [in German ...](#)

IG Metall will intensify campaign

January 27, 2018

The IG Metall metalworkers' trade union announced that it will intensify its campaign for better pay and conditions, threatening 24-hour 'warning strikes' after talks with employers' representatives fell apart. Production by the country's crucial metal and electrical engineering industries may be affected in the coming weeks by the walkouts after the latest round of negotiations ended without a deal. The main sticking point remains the demands for workers to have the option of a 28-hour week, with employers making up some compensation of the salary loss.

Read on: [in English ...](#) [in German ...](#)

Deliveroo couriers start works council

January 24, 2018

Bike drivers at Deliveroo Cologne have planned to go for the installation of a works council. The workers are fed up with the fact that their interests are not taken seriously. The riders are assisted by the food and hospitality workers trade union NGG. The union says that the pay and the working conditions qualify the sector as a very precarious industry. The hope is that through the mandatory co-decision rights that a works council can derive from the legislation a more balanced dialogue with negotiations can be initiated.

Read on: [in German ...](#)

GfK maps purchase power

January 18, 2018

Research institute GfK has published its expectations on the distribution of per-capita purchasing power in 2018. The forecast stems from earlier calculations, with data the organisation's purchasing power survey. According to the 2018 study, citizens have an annual 22,992 euro per person for consumer purchases, living expenses, recreation and saving. This amounts to a nominal per-person increase of 2.8% or 633 euro compared to 2017. While purchasing power is rising across all of the country, the western federal states continue to significantly outpace the eastern federal states. Among the many insights contained in the study is the fact that not all large cities have above-average purchasing power.

Read on: [in English ...](#) The data: [in English ...](#)

Greece

Increase of on-and-off jobs

January 19, 2018

The recovery of the economy has not led to an improvement of the quality of jobs. Although the jobless rate has dropped, nearly 6 in 10 people are stuck in a market dominated by part-time, on-and-off jobs. A spokesperson of the General Confederation of Greek Workers pinpointed the painful conclusions that can be drawn from the statistics. He said that the working assumption has always been that new jobs would be created once salaries were sheared and hiring and firing rules were made easier for employers. But

ultimately, this has all backfired, creating a monster, market jungle where anything goes. As a consequence, the most vulnerable have been hit hardest.

Read on: [in English ...](#)

Public transport workers protest

January 15, 2018

Public transport workers have withdrawn their labour to press parliament not to proceed with an austerity bill that would limit trade unions' right to strike. The trade unions proceeded with a 24-hour stoppage of commuter train and bus services ahead of parliament's vote. The unions are angry about the bill, which would allow strikes only when a union musters a 50-percent vote at a members' assembly (currently 20%). They said the bill would remove constitutionally safeguarded workers' rights.

Read on: [in English ...](#)

Hungary

Teachers join protest for 'a minimum of education'

January 30, 2018

The 'I Would Teach' movement held a demonstration in Budapest's Kossuth Square to publicise policy recommendations. In a speech, a representative of the teachers' union said that for the past 28 years every party has talked about the strategic importance of education but these words never translated into action. In the weeks before, the Budapest-Capital Administrative and Labour Court ruled that the nationalisation of council schools was unconstitutional. The government nationalised and centralised public education in two phases. In early 2013, the government took away the right of municipal councils to maintain schools (including the right to employ teachers, to pay them, and the overall professional management of schools). In 2017, with new legislation, the government forced the remaining few councils that still had the right to manage their respective school properties to hand them over to the state. A lawsuit brought against the Ministry of Human Resources ended after a year in January 2018 when the court determined that multiple parts of the law permitting the nationalisation of schools were unconstitutional.

Read on: [in English \(1\) ...](#) [in English \(2\) ...](#)

Regional disparities in purchase power

January 10, 2018

Based on data from the Central Statistical Office (KSH) and National Tax and Customs Administration (NAV), research institute GKI calculated that per capita purchasing power was HUF 1.2 million (3863 euro) on average in 2016. A regional breakdown shows that the poorest settlements were located in southern and northeast Hungary, while the wealthier ones were located in northern Transdanubia and Central Hungary. The range in the settlements surveyed is relatively broad from a level below HUF 0.8 million to above 1.6 million in the wealthiest settlements and some Budapest districts. The data do not match with an earlier calculation by research institute GFK that had calculated a much higher annual average for 2016 (and 2017).

Read on: [in English \(1\) ...](#) [in English \(2\) ...](#)

Iceland

Gender pay gap illegal

January 2, 2018

Iceland is the first country in the world to make it illegal to pay women less than men. A Bill (amendments to the Gender Equality Act 10/2008) came into effect on 1 January 2018. The Bill that makes equal pay for equal work a must in the country - irrespective of gender, ethnicity, sexuality or nationality - was submitted by the Minister of Social Affairs and Equality and passed the Parliament with a vast majority in June 2017.

Read on: [in English ...](#)

Ireland

Health workers ballot in favour of strike

January 29, 2018

Almost 7,000 health and social care workers in bodies funded by the Department of Health have voted overwhelmingly to take strike action over the failure to restore their pay cuts in line with public servants. The health workers are contracted through bodies known as Section 39 organisations, funded by the Department of Health, but workers are not deemed to be public servants. SIPTU said that that 97% of staff balloted had backed strike action, which will begin with a one-day stoppage on 14 February. The turnout was 85%. The dispute centres on around 12,000 workers in, of whom SIPTU represents around 7,000.

Read on: [in English ...](#)

NCT service SIPTU members accept Labour Court Recommendation

January 24, 2018

SIPTU trade union members employed by Applus National Car Testing (NCT) service have formally accepted a Labour Court recommendation in relation to pay and conditions which includes permanency for workers currently on fixed terms contracts. The recommendation includes a 2% pay rise backdated to 1st April 2017, a further 2% pay rise on 1st April 2018 and a 2.5% pay rise on 1st April 2019. SIPTU members will also receive a 500 euro voucher to cover the period from July 2016 to March 2017.

Read on: [in English ...](#)

Redundancy deal reached on Bord na Móna plant

January 19, 2018

Unions at peat briquette production company Bord na Móna have reached agreement on the terms of redundancy for up to 70 workers at the firm's peat briquette plant in Tipperary, following months of negotiations. The plant was closed down by the company in May 2017 - blaming a decline in briquette sales and global issues and talks between the company and the unions have been underway since. The semi-state company is, after more than eight decades of peat production, very much in a state of 'transition and transformation'. The proposed redundancy terms include six weeks' pay per year of service inclusive of statutory entitlements, plus allowances, a 500 euro voucher and other benefits. Redeployment options have been agreed with a one year settling in period.

Read on: [in English \(1\) ...](#) [in English \(2\) ...](#)

Italy

Nurses will strike in February

January 31, 2018

Two large trade unions for nurses have called on their members to stage a one-day national strike on 26 February. The protest is the consequence of failed negotiations for a collective agreement. The bargaining for health-sector workers ended without result. Other workers, like laboratory and radiology technicians are expected to join.

Read on: [in English ...](#)

Alitalia's future is at stake

January 25, 2018

Alitalia entered into bankruptcy proceedings in May 2017 after workers rejected a deal brokered by unions and management that would have seen job and pay cuts. Alitalia is currently losing up to a monthly 100 million euro and is continuing to operate thanks to a government bridging loan. Meanwhile, administrators are accepting bids to take over the business from around 20 airlines, including from low-cost airlines such as Ryanair and EasyJet, whose emergence has presented such a challenge to national airlines. The government has stated that the airline will continue to operate, although state aid restrictions will make it difficult to continue state support, and nationalisation has been ruled out.

Read on: [in English ...](#)

Unions rally for better working conditions

January 23, 2018

The metalworkers trade unions FIOM-CGIL, FIM-CISL and UILM-UIL organised a rally and one-hour strike across the Lombardy region to attract public attention to the problem of poor health and safety at work, following four recent tragic fatalities at Lamina spa in Rho, Milan and Elettronica LG in Rovato, Brescia. The unions criticised the lack of compliance by companies with procedures and safety rules. They recalled that too often these dramas show the inadequacy of the prevention systems and measures necessary to ensure the safety and security of workers. Too often working conditions are being put in second place underestimating the necessity of prevention, training and interventions to raise awareness of the topic and securing of workplaces are held back by cost, and no investment is done in people and their future.

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Ryanair strike announced

January 11, 2018

The Ryanair management had the idea to select only one union for its negotiations with the country's workforce. Directly after, three trade unions representing cabin crews, pilots and ground crews called for its members to strike on 10 February to protest against the plans to negotiate working conditions exclusively with one union. Ryanair has said it would negotiate with Anpac, the pilots' association, but not with other unions representing cabin crews, ground crews and pilots who are not Anpac members. As a reaction to the company's position the Filt Cgil, Fit Cisl and Uiltrasporti unions said in a statement: 'There must be a discussion about salaries and safeguards for all of the workers, and not just a portion of them'.

Read on: [in English ...](#)

Latvia

Timetable for teachers' pay increase

January 10, 2018

The Cabinet of Ministers approved on 9 January the timetable for increasing teachers' pay, undertaking to gradually increase the minimum monthly wage for educators, making the increase conditional on the results of optimisation of the school network. Under the timetable proposed by the Education and Science Ministry, the monthly minimum wage for teachers should be raised from 680 to 710 euro from 1 September 2018, with the necessary financing to be provided from the existing budget this year.

Read on: [in English ...](#)

Liechtenstein

Pay guidelines applicable for part-time workers

January 23, 2018

In order to comply with the rules, employers have to pay several social security contributions and parts of the sickness and care provisions. In some of these regulations, a threshold is applied that can be defined in working hours and/or earnings. With the aim to inform employers and to guarantee workers the right payment, the government has updated a manual that details all changes entering into force on 1 January 2018. The manual was first produced in 2016.

Read on: [in German ...](#) The manual: [in German ...](#)

Lithuania

Real wages increased 5.7% in 2017

January 11, 2018

Preliminary figures released by the country's statistics office show that real wages grew by 5.7% in 2017 compared with 2016. Average gross monthly wages in the economy increased with 66 euro, or 8.5%, to 840 euro and average net monthly wages increased by 58 euro, or 9.6%, to 660 euro. Gross wages increased in all

economic activities, especially in wholesale and retail trade (by around 11.1%) and information and communications (by around 10.3%). Economists said that the gross domestic product (GDP) went up by around 3.5% last year from 2016, mainly driven by growing exports and still agile domestic consumption.

Read on: [in English ...](#)

Luxembourg

Serious job cuts at Nordea's private banking unit

January 26, 2018

A strategic review of Nordea's Private Banking International activities as part of the company's transformation led to the decision to concentrate Nordea's private banking activities on the Nordics. Following an announced takeover by UBS of its activities, the consequences for workers at Nordea's private banking unit become clear. Around 200 jobs are at risk at Nordea. Workers have been told 50% or more of the bank's 350 employees face redundancy, as only around 150 workers will be transferred to UBS. The banking and insurance trade union within the OGBL trade union confederation has requested an interview with bank officials to discuss the situation and preserve as many jobs as possible.

Read on: [in English ...](#)

Bargaining in bank sector pending

January 17, 2018

Collective bargaining in banking has come to a standstill with working hours as one of the main controversies. According to the LCGB-SESF trade union, the boundary between the professional life and the private sphere tends to disappear. People do not rest at the end of their working day and this can have big consequences on their health. Also, the OGBL trade union deplores the situation and is lobbying for the same rights for the employees of the local financial sector. The unions demand the right to disconnect from work to be respected, a framework to be put in place and training to be organised for employees and managers. So far, they failed to reach agreement with the Bankers' Association (ABBL) during negotiations for a new collective agreement for employees of the financial sector.

Read on: [in English ...](#)

Malta

Industrial action by social welfare workers

January 13, 2018

A week-long industrial action by social welfare service employees might well escalate if no progress is registered in collective agreement talks in January 2018. The UHM Voice of the Workers ordered members at the Foundation for Social Welfare Services to follow directives that included refusing to use means of communication and not to participate in multidisciplinary meetings. These meetings bring together vulnerable clients and professionals such as social workers and psychologists.

Read on: [in English ...](#)

Netherlands

Higher poverty risks for migrants and refugee households

January 19, 2018

Statistics Netherlands (CBS) reports figures in its annual report on low wages, poverty and social exclusion. In 2016, more than half of all households in the Netherlands with people from refugee countries had an income below the low-income threshold. This is over six times the average. Almost 30 percent of all households with a Moroccan background main breadwinner were at risk of poverty. This share is higher than among households with a Turkish, Antillean or Surinamese background, the other three largest non-Western population groups. Dependence on low income is less common among households of German, Belgian, British or Indonesian origin compared to households with a Polish, Bulgarian or Romanian background.

Read on: [in English ...](#) The report: [in Dutch ...](#)

Regional transport strike

January 4, 2018

Transport workers organised a regional transport strike for better working conditions. The workers complain because they are often under extreme pressure to stick to their schedules. They also called for a 3.5% pay increase. The trade unions FNV and CNV backed up the strike that led to a great deal of problems for travellers on railways stations in the regions. The action was because the negotiations for a collective agreement failed, with neither guarantees to reduce job stress, nor a satisfactory salary proposal.

Read on: [in English ...](#)

Norway

Sunday trading will not get through parliament

January 31, 2018

It is quite probable that a proposal to open more possibilities on Sunday trading will be blocked. The opposition in parliament will vote for the continuation of restrictions against stores trading on Sundays and will thus keep trade limits in place. The current public holiday law means many retailers are required to remain closed on Sundays, as well as public holidays like the Christmas and Easter holidays. Stores with an area of under 100 square metres, as well as petrol stations and florists, are allowed to open on Sundays.

Read on: [in English ...](#)

The search for coordinated wage bargaining

January 31, 2018

One of the biggest trade unions – Fellesforbundet – wants industry wage settlements this year, but several other federations fights for coordinated settlements. The unions affiliated to the confederation LO that want a joint settlement justify this policy with the need for a common front in the inflamed question regarding retirement. According to Fellesforbundet, pension and purchasing power could be combined in coordinated settlements, but not the requirements related to travel, boarding and lodging. The union made those requirements equally important and the question was which form of settlement would make it easiest to achieve this. The union thinks that union wise settlements are the way forward.

Read on: [in English ...](#)

Poland

Gender pay gap documented

January 9, 2018

Women earn PLN 700 (168 euro) a month less than men on average, the labour ministry has said. Depending on the method used to select and calculate data, women earn 7% to 18.5% less than their male counterparts. Industrial relation experts say that, although it looks that the country's gender pay gap is smaller than the EU-average, the smaller difference in pay is not so much the result of efforts by employers as of the lower wages employees receive compared to their counterparts in other countries. The bigger wage gap in Western European countries is also a result of women there often working part-time.

Read on: [in English ...](#)

Doctors cannot find agreement on pay and investment

January 6, 2018

Amid an ongoing protest over healthcare spending, pay and conditions the health ministry and a group of resident doctors failed to arrive at an agreement. The OZZL doctors trade union which is leading the protest, said it was disappointed by the meeting, adding that the ministry was unprepared and had nothing to offer. Resident doctors held a nearly month-long hunger strike in October 2017, demanding a healthcare spending hike to 6.8% of GDP by 2021, less red tape, shorter hospital waiting lists and better pay and conditions.

Read on: [in English ...](#)

Portugal

Postal workers strike against restructuring

January 24, 2018

Workers at the CTT postal services have scheduled a nationwide strike and demonstration for 23 February, against job cuts and post office closures that are part of a restructuring plan. CTT is to close 22 of its branches as part of the plan. At least four branches are due to close in Lisbon, three in Porto, and one in the Algarve. Reports suggest employees were informed of the shake-up via an internal communiqué, and many claim they were caught unawares by the move. The original restructuring plan initially put to employees reportedly states 'shops with poor demand' would be closed down, although workers claim the intention to close 22 branches nationwide was not specified. The head of the CTT workers' committee, said that they were told that there was no intention of making any significant changes to the network. The CTT has refused to address any possible lay-offs, allegedly telling its committee that affected workers will be transferred to other places where there is a shortage of employees.

Read on: [in English ...](#)

TAP cabin crew on strike

January 21, 2018

TAP Portugal cabin crew trade union SNPVAC, the National Union of Flight Personnel Civil Aviation, has called for strike action the weekend before Carnival starts (8, 9 and 10th February 2017). The management has stated that the strike is illegal and wants judges to decide. Previously TAP has cut back flights but merged passengers into larger rented jets with rented crews. The union also threatens strike action in March. The basis of the protest is the discriminatory treatment that the Government imposes on cabin crew workers and the deteriorating cabin crew working conditions.

Read on: [in English \(1\) ...](#) [in English \(2\) ...](#)

VW dispute continues

January 4, 2018

The workforce at Autoeuropa, the Volkswagen unit at Palmela is still disputing new working hours. The factory interrupted production from 26 December, citing a break in the supply of pieces. The coordinator of the Works Council said that the interruption had happened at a difficult period due to the definition of hours to assure production of the T-Roc model, after workers had approved a proposal for a strike on 2 and 3 February 2018. The Works Council has presented a list of demands to management. The new working hours imposed by management from February to July includes compulsory working on Saturdays, which the company says is necessary to meet the production objectives.

Read on: [in English ...](#)

Romania

Disposable income doesn't keep pace with growth

January 14, 2018

Despite a steady growth of the gross domestic product, the country's wealth – calculated as citizens' net assets as a share of disposable income – remains about the same as it was five years ago. For some, the gains are just enough to make a living, whilst others have consumed more but also accumulated more debt. So far, the benefits of living in the Europe Union's fastest-growing economy does not pay.

Read on: [in English ...](#)

Ford workers prepare industrial action

January 9, 2018

After a spontaneous strike in December 2017, renewed collective bargaining started at the Ford car plant in Craiova. The workers are unhappy with the salary increases proposed by the company's management and

the unions will start preparing a warning strike if the mediation process between the unions and the management fails. The union at Ford Craiova notified the company's employees that it decided to start the work conflict procedures. The collective agreement at the Ford plant expired at the end of 2017 and will have effect until the end of February 2018. After that, employees are only covered by individual labour contracts.

Read on: [in English ...](#)

Serbia

Fiat workers have a new agreement

January 23, 2018

The management of Fiat Chrysler Automobili (FCA) and the independent trade union signed a 3-year-collective agreement during Christmas holidays. Fiat's workers at the Kragujevac plant are satisfied with the fact that the agreement has been concluded, taking it as a sign that Fiat has no intention of leaving Kragujevac in autumn once its old agreement with the government expires. Workers who do work at night will get an increase of 6 dinars per hour or 50 dinars per working day. According to the Labour Law, working in night shifts is paid at least 26% more, while the collective agreement with Fiat stipulates 30%. However, not many workers will benefit from it because the third shift at Fiat has been abolished a while ago.

Read on: [in English ...](#)

Slovakia

Automotive workers join forces

January 25, 2018

Trade unionists from several larger automotive plants have decided to join forces. The unionists from the KOVO trade unions organisation operating in automotive companies agreed to proceed jointly in collective bargaining. Representatives of basic organisations in the PSA Groupe in Trnava, Kia Motors Slovakia in Teplička nad Váhom near Žilina, and Volkswagen Slovakia in Bratislava signed a memorandum of mutual cooperation and promotion on 25 January 2018. They plan to invite other basic organisations in automotive factories all over the country to form closer cooperation of their unions. The unionists plan to cooperate not only on the issue of higher wages and surcharges for night shifts but also with regard to the growing demand for skilled labourers and the current shortage, high employee turnover, and the issue of foreign employees.

Read on: [in English ...](#)

Strike alert at Embraco leads to pay deal

January 22, 2018

Workers of the a Embraco plant based in Spišská Nová Ves announced they would go on strike. The chairman of the KOVO trade union said that they had to declare this action because of the failure to agree on wage conditions for 2018 with the employer. However, the collective bargaining at the factory, which makes refrigeration compressors and condensing units, was reopened and could be finalised. The agreement provides the staff of the manufacturer with an 11% wage growth including bonuses in 2018 and with 6% in 2019. The plant employs about 2,300 people whose average gross wage was €964 in 2017.

Read on: [in English ...](#)

Slovenia

Public sector workers go for higher wages

January 24, 2018

More than 10,000 public service workers including customs officers, nurses, social workers and university professors started a one-day strike on 24 January 2018 to demand higher wages. The unions complain that, although this is the fifth year of economic growth, some wage restrictions imposed in 2012 have not been lifted yet. The unions stated that it is time to scrap all restrictions and increase wages. The demand is that

public sector wages should rise by 16 to 20 percent over a period of time due to be determined in negotiations with the government.

Read on: [in English ...](#)

Minimum wage proposals questioned

January 16, 2018

A proposal to increase the statutory minimum wage to a monthly 842.8 euro has led to a dispute among members of the government. The labour minister had explained that a 4.7% increase was reasonable, given the inflation, as well as trends in recent years and the outlook for stable economic growth, taking into account the period between 2013 and 2017. The ministry of finance reacted negatively. The proposal is expected to be put forward to the Economic and Social Council.

Read on: [in English ...](#)

Spain

Agreement at Opel plant

January 30, 2018

The trade unions and the PSA's Opel management have reached an agreement on working conditions at the former GM-owned Corsa plant at Figueruelas, Aragon, near Zaragoza. The automaker had threatened to cut investment at the factory employing 5,300 people. A deal was agreed after more than 12 hours of negotiations and shortly before a deadline set by Peugeot. The details are not yet available, but according to a local newspaper it included a five-year pact, with salary freezes for 2018. Other sources report details on job security, with more than 200 workers hired indefinitely and many others that will have four-year contracts.

Read on: [in English ...](#) [in Spanish ...](#)

More temporary contracts converted in permanent jobs

January 22, 2018

Data from temporary agency Randstad reveal that 40% of permanent contracts in the country began as a temporary contract. The data showed for 2017 that there were 686,445 conversions of temporary contracts into permanent contracts, representing an increase of 17.9% from last year. This is the highest figure in the past eight years. Temporary contracts converted into permanent contracts have increased in all age groups. Those over 45 years of age saw the biggest increase in conversions compared to 2016 (23.8%).

Read on: [in Spanish ...](#)

Union action at Ryanair

January 19, 2018

Ryanair pilots have threatened to take legal action against the airline over their employment rights under Spanish law if they do not receive certain assurances. The pilot trade union SEPLA has written to Ryanair accusing management of failing to negotiate in good faith since formally recognising unions before Christmas. SEPLA warns that if a meeting is not held by end January 2018 to regularise the rights of Ryanair pilots in accordance with the country's regulations, it will proceed to initiate all legal actions that the labour law grants in defence of legitimate workers' rights. SEPLA is surprised and disappointed at documentation received from management, which continues to link payment of a 20% pay rise to conditions which pilots find unacceptable.

Read on: [in English ...](#)

Sweden

Income statistics 2016 finalised

January 31, 2018

The statistical office came up with final data on wages and income in 2016. The data and graphs show an increase of the median value of total income over the period 2005-2016 of 25% among women and 19%

among men, taking into account inflation. Incomes vary between various ages. Among men, the median income is highest for those aged 42 to 51, where it exceeds SEK 390 000. Men aged 45 have the highest median income, SEK 402 000. Among women, the median income is highest for those aged 43 to 52, where it exceeds SEK 325 000. Women aged 49 have the highest median income, SEK 332 000. Although the economic standard of households has developed favourably, the percentage of people at risk of poverty has also increased in the same time period, from 10 percent in 2005 to 14 percent in 2016.

Read on: [in English ...](#)

Workers have a real voice in the energy transition

January 15, 2018

The government has the ambition to make the country the world's first fossil-fuel free state that will no longer emit greenhouse gases by 2050. This deadline was finally brought forward by five years with the passing of a climate law on 15 June 2017. The country has adopted a positive approach, largely thanks to effective cooperation with the social partners. When faced with restructuring, workers are able to rely on the Job Security Councils, which provide them with support at every level in the retraining process. Thanks to the 70 per cent rate of union membership and the obligation to have at least two unionised employees on the board of directors in all companies with over 25 employees, workers have a real voice in this transition.

Read on: [in English ...](#)

Switzerland

Posting company condemned for underpayment

January 29, 2018

A labour court in Geneva has ruled against a subcontractor that underpaid its posted workers active on a Geneva building site. The workers earned 8 euro an hour, about a third of what the work warranted, the court said. The case was led by the trade union UNIA on behalf of the workers and has been ongoing for almost five years. The reason for the delay and difficulty of the case is that the subcontractor turned out to be a type of 'phantom-company', impossible to pin down. The Polish company was subcontracted by a German principal contractor for the building work; however, according to Swiss law covering posted workers, the primary company can only be prosecuted once all avenues of chasing down the subcontractor are exhausted. In this case, UNIA explained, the workers would need to obtain a court order from the Polish justice system before returning and possibly launching a case in Germany.

Read on: [in English ...](#)

Survey looks after job stress

January 26, 2018

One quarter of all workers feel stressed and exhausted at work, leading to more serious health problems and lower productivity, a survey has found. The 'Job Stress Index', carried out by Health Promotion Switzerland together with the University of Bern and the Zurich University of Applied Sciences, showed stress levels at work rising from 24.8% in 2014 to 25.4% in 2016. The authors conclude that one quarter of staff were in a 'critical' situation, while stress problems were 'significant' for half of those interviewed. A better balance between incentives (pay, career perspectives, job security and positive evaluations) and significant job efforts can contribute to less stress, although compensation in pay is a limited remedy.

Read on: [in English ...](#) The report: [in German ...](#) [in French ...](#)

Weekly working hours assessed and debated

January 2, 2018

According to the Federal Statistical Office, the current working week is 41-hour. It is the norm across the country (excluding the self-employed). Legally, the maximum number of working hours per week is 45 for employees working in industry, office staff, technical and other employees, sales personnel in large retailing firms and 50 hours for everyone else. But there is flexibility in the system. The employers' organisation of SMEs has argued that the current labour law needs to be modernised and made even more flexible. The association wants to see the removal of 'red tape' regarding work times and break times and also called for SMEs to be freed from requirements aimed at large companies. The trade unions are committed to shorter working time; workers thus can benefit from technical progress and it can bring a better work-life balance.

Besides, a regular trade union working life survey, the *Barometer Decent Work*, revealed that job stress is growing and workers lose the grip on their leisure time as a result of digitalisation.

Read on: [in English ...](#) Travail Suisse Barometer Decent Work: [in German ...](#)

Turkey

Metal workers strike banned

January 26, 2018

A metal worker strike of some 130,000 workers at 179 workplaces across the sector, including all major multinational companies, scheduled to begin on 2 February 2018, was banned by the government on the grounds of being 'prejudicial to national security'. The strike was announced as a result of the dispute over the failed sectoral-level negotiations between the three unions representing metal workers and the Metal Industry Employers' Association, MESS. The strike was banned by government decree, announced in the Official Gazette on 26 January 2018 after being signed by the President, Prime Minister and all cabinet ministers on 24 January. The decree specifies the 179 workplaces where strike action is banned, including sites owned by multinationals such as ThyssenKrupp, Bosch, Ford, Mercedes Benz, Renault and Siemens.

Read on: [in English \(1\) ...](#) [in English \(2\) ...](#)

United Kingdom

Carillion liquidation has dramatic consequences

January 29, 2018

Construction firm Carillion's, which managed hundreds of public sector projects and vital public services, collapsed into liquidation after last-ditch rescue talks failed. The collapse has caused fears for the many companies and workers that relied on it for business. The company went into compulsory liquidation with debts of £1.3bn, a pension deficit of nearly £1bn and a host of unfinished public contracts. Payments to those receiving pensions from the firm are expected to continue, albeit at a reduced rate. The Unite trade union called for an urgent inquiry into Carillion's collapse and expressed concern about the impact on the wider supply chain, warning that many small firms were now at serious risk of collapse. Trade union GMB stated that workers are paying the price for the failures of corporate bosses and government ministers.

Read on: [in English ...](#) See the dossier (the Guardian): [in English ...](#)

Workers aren't necessarily more secure

January 25, 2018

The report, *Thriving, Striving, or just about Surviving?*, published by the Royal Society for the encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce (RSA), describes in seven portraits how workers are faring both in terms of their experiences of economic security and the quality of work. Employment may have reached a record high in 2017, but workers aren't necessarily more secure. Wider economic trends suggest that workers are worse off as real wages fall, income inequality persists and in-work poverty rises. Growth forecasts have been revised down, and productivity remains low. The pay of black and minority ethnic workers and women still lags behind that of their white, male counterparts. Many of the jobs that have been created are atypical in nature, meaning that workers have been shifting from full-time, permanent employment to zero-hour or temporary contracts, or are increasingly taking up self-employment or gig work.

Read on: [in English ...](#) Report of the RSA (with seven portraits): [in English ...](#)

Gender pay gap has to be reported

January 17, 2018

Companies with 250 or more workers must publish their figures on the pay discrepancy between men and women irrespective of their job or position by April 2018 and so far, 527 firms have done so. This is prescribed by reporting rules, with the results published on a government database. Ladbroke's, Easyjet and Virgin Money are among the major companies to reveal gender pay gaps of more than 15% in favour of men for mean hourly pay. At Easyjet women's hourly pay rates are 52% lower than men's. On average, women earn 15% less per hour at Ladbroke's and 33% less at Virgin Money. The current gender pay is documented by recent reports and blogs. According to Young Women's Trust, women are losing out on nearly £140

billion a year in wages due to the gender pay gap – or £9,112 each. An official governmental webpage provides an article, *Understanding the gender pay gap in the UK*, with data and figures.

Read on: [in English \(1\) ...](#) [in English \(2\) ...](#) [in English \(3\) ...](#)

Assessment of Brexit consequences

January 11, 2018

The mayor of London commissioned research on the Brexit to Cambridge Econometrics. The study 'Preparing for Brexit' provides an insight into the local economic impacts of the exit from the EU. The report is the first comprehensive assessment of Brexit across key indicators and sectors at a sub-national level and reveals a spread of impacts under five different scenarios, ranging from a status quo (where the UK remains in the Single Market and Customs Union) to an extreme no-deal (WTO rules) outcome. London is expected to experience a loss of 30,500 people in employment under the 'softest' scenario, rising to 87,000 under the 'hardest' scenario, by 2030. However, it is not expected to be as negatively affected as the rest of the country.

Read on: [in English ...](#)

Pay deal at McDonalds

January 4, 2018

McDonald's workers won a pay rise following the first UK strikes in the company's history. In September 2017, the Bakers, Food and Allied Workers Union (BFAWU) launched its 'McStrike' campaign at two restaurants in Cambridge and Croydon due to a dispute over pay and conditions as well as zero-hours contracts. More than 40 workers staged a 24-hour walkout. McDonald's has confirmed that a pay rise will take effect from 22 January 2018. The pay rise will be the biggest in ten years.

Read on: [in English \(1\) ...](#) [in English \(2\) ...](#)

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

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