

collective bargaining

Issue 4/2018 April

This newsletter presents up-to-date information on collective bargaining developments across Europe since February 2008. It aims to facilitate information exchange between trade unions and to support the work of the ETUC's collective bargaining committee.



AMSTERDAM INSTITUTE FOR ADVANCED LABOUR STUDIES
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European sources

OECD reports on taxing wages

April 26, 2018

The OECD has published a brochure on wage and income taxation. The brochure is based on the annual report with details of taxes paid on wages in OECD countries. A summary is available in 8 languages. The brochure provides information on the income taxes paid by workers, their social security contributions, the family benefits they receive in the form of cash transfers as well as the social security contributions and payroll taxes paid by their employers. The average tax wedge decreased by 1.1 percentage points from 37.0% to 35.9% for the single taxpayer on average earnings and by 1.8 percentage points from 27.9% to 26.1% for the one earner married couple on average earnings with two children.

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

European cabin crew threatens Ryanair with strike

April 24, 2018

European unions representing Ryanair cabin crew gave the airline until 30 June to adopt national employment laws for all their workers or face industrial action during the summer, the unions said after meeting in Lisbon. The Portuguese cabin crew trade union SNPVAC staged a strike early in April over what it says is the airline's failure to recognise Portuguese labour rights, including doctor-approved sick days. Ryanair attempted to break the strike by employing foreign cabin crew to work around laws preventing the company from replacing the striking personnel with another crew from Portugal. On the initiative of SNPVAC five unions representing Ryanair European cabin crew in Europe met and agreed on the deadline for Ryanair to meet their demands. The demands include respecting national legislation where cabin crew are based and applying the same work conditions for all workers.

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

Minimum wages in the EU

April 18, 2018

A revised Eurofound report provides information on statutory minimum wages that are generally applicable and not limited to specific sectors, occupations or groups of employees. The term 'minimum wage' refers to the various legal restrictions governing the lowest rate payable by employers to workers, regulated by formal laws or statutes. While the scope of the report covers all 28 EU Member States, the main findings relate to the 22 countries that had a statutory minimum wage in place in 2018. In the majority of countries, the social partners have been involved in the setting of the minimum wage in 2018 – in marked contrast to the beginning of the decade when minimum wage-setting was characterised by strong government intervention. The highest increases in the minimum wage were recorded (in nominal and real terms) in Bulgaria and Romania. However, both countries – as well as several others – have a long way to go to catch up with the minimum wage levels prevailing in western European countries.

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

Rising inequality and democracy

April 18, 2018

Economist Branko Milanović published a blog on rising inequality and the threats it poses to democracy. When it comes to inequality within nations, Western countries have responded to China's rise by slashing the jobs or wages of people working in industries that have to compete with China. His remedy is, rather than just raising taxes for the rich, to pour energy into creating better educational opportunities for everyone, no matter what their background. That means people will start off in the jobs market on a more

level playing field.

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

Robots, employment and wages

April 18, 2018

Thinktank Bruegel published a working paper that studies the impact of industrial robots on employment and wages in six European Union countries, that make up 85.5% of the EU industrial robots market. In theory, robots can directly displace workers from performing specific tasks (displacement effect). But they can also expand labour demand through the efficiencies they bring to industrial production (productivity effect). The authors' estimates do not point to robust and significant results on the impact of robots on wage growth, even after accounting for possible offsetting effects across different populations and sectoral groups.

The working paper: [in English ...](#)

ILO on inequality in Europe and on bargaining in the gig economy

April 17, 2018

Two recent ILO publications address the root causes of inequality and the challenges in the gig economy. A first book examines the possible role of social dialogue and the social partners – and more generally industrial relations – in reducing inequalities. It addresses wage inequality as well as inequalities in the distribution of working time and access to jobs, training and career opportunities, social protection and pensions by looking at various labour market policies and industrial relations' systems. It identifies ways to carry out necessary transformations without generating further inequalities and social exclusion. A second ILO-publication looks at the representation and bargaining needs in the gig economy.

Read on: [in English ...](#) Chapter 1 of the book: [in English ...](#) Bargaining in the gig economy: [in English ...](#)

Evolution of employee share ownership

April 10, 2018

The annual Economic Survey of Employee Share Ownership in European Countries in 2017 provides a lot of information on the financial participation of workers. The report includes an overview of the evolution over the period 2006-2017, with main findings, tables and graphs and a list of the most remarkable companies. According to the report, 2017 was a new record year for employee share ownership in Europe, with nearly 400 billion euro held by employees in their company or 3.20%. 86.6% of all large European companies have employee share plans. Their number increased by 3 to 4% on average each year since 2006, a solid growth.

The report: [in English ...](#)

Austria

Hospitality has a pay deal

April 30, 2018

The collective bargaining in the tourism sector has led to a collective agreement with important improvements for the low-paid workers in the sector. It is estimated that around 50% of all workers in the sector (total workforce 220,000 workers) will profit from the increase of the minimum wage to 1500 euro. Moreover, also the apprentices' fees will improve by 2.9%. The pay deal will come into effect on 1 May 2018.

Read on: [in German \(1\) ...](#) [in German \(2\) ...](#) Sector profile: [in German ...](#)

Works council at Foodora

April 27, 2018

Trade union vida announced that bicycle couriers working for the app-based restaurant delivery service Foodora in Vienna have founded a works council. The union supported the efforts of the couriers to form the works council. Works councils have legal rights to information and consultation on major business

decisions. The main goal of the new works council is to negotiate an agreement on working conditions between couriers and management.

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

Agreement at Austrian Lufthansa subsidiary

April 25, 2018

Trade union Vida, the union for cabin crews, and Lufthansa's Austrian Airlines started in October 2017 with their bargaining round with the main dispute concerning a pay rise (see our March newsletter). Austrian Airlines offered an increase in salaries of 2.1% and an additional onetime pay of 1.4%. The works council and the trade union wanted to raise the wage level to the standard level that is paid across the industry. Following further negotiations, the collective bargaining partners succeeded in establishing a key issues paper for the conclusion of a collective agreement. Parties have agreed not to publicise any further details on the agreement at the moment. Eurowings did not provide any details of the deal with Vida. The union stated that cabin crew would get a starting monthly salary of 1,700 euro, up from under 1,500 euro previously.

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

Labour Chamber reports on 2017

April 16, 2018

In its annual report 2017, the Labour Chamber (AK) reports on the activities that the AK performs on behalf of the workers. AK could resolve, through labour court interventions and through direct mediation, disputes related to labour law issues, insolvencies and consumer protection amounting to in total 231.9 million euro. In the area of social rights/protection a total sum of compensation of around 229 million euro was reached.

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

Belgium

Strike actions Lidl spread to distribution centres

April 30, 2018

More than 100 Lidl shops are on strike since 27 April 2018. In the process of ongoing negotiations over understaffing and work pressure, the unions were offered an upward-revised proposal but 'on a take it or leave it' basis. The proposal was four times lower than their demands. Two of the three involved unions considered to accept the offer while affiliates of trade union confederation ABVV/FBTB rejected it. The strike was later on expanded to all distribution centres across the country.

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

Federal civil servants on strike

April 30, 2018

The federal civil servants have organised a strike that affected federal public services, social security and scientific bodies, prisons and detention centres. The trade unions called for the strike because they are unhappy with the reforms being introduced by the minister for the civil service. The government plans to reduce the size of the workforce with jobs for life. Instead, the government wants to introduce temporary staff and to reduce the facilities of the workers on a direct labour contract.

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

Government comes with a draft on pensions for demanding work

April 20, 2018

The government concluded a draft bill in the frame of the pension reforms that defines whether an occupation is arduous and demanding. These occupations are exempted from the planned increase of the pension age. The draft bill contains the criteria of hard work (physical constraints, organisation of work, safety risks and mental or emotional hardship) and the coefficients that will be applied to the career so as to

allow to retire earlier or increase the pension. The social partners discussed this issue in 2017 and it is now up to the pension minister to negotiate with the social partners on the criteria that workers have to meet.

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

Bulgaria

Union publishes report on bargaining

April 30, 2018

A trade union report on wage bargaining in 2017 reveals that computer specialists receive about five and a half times the average salary for hotel and restaurant workers. The report was made by trade union CITUB. The average salary in 2017 increased by about 12% or 115 leva and reached 1060 leva (542 euro). The union stated that the low salary of the employed in the tourism sector meant, against the backdrop of the sector's growth in 2017, either a payment under the table or an improper allocation of the financial resources. According to CITUB, this summer there will be no serious increase in the number of employees in tourism. According to Eurostat figures, the hourly labour costs in 2017 were with 4.9 euro an hour the lowest in the EU. With 12% the country had the second-highest increase among non-euro zone countries.

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

Croatia

Unions oppose increase of pension age

April 26, 2018

The trade unions are opposing government plans on a pension reform in the second quarter of 2018 that will increase the pension age from 65 to 67 (see our March newsletter). The NHS union federation staged a rally at St. Mark Square between Government and Parliament Houses on 25 April 2018 to protest the proposed increase in pension age. Furthermore, the Unions of Autonomous Trade Unions of Croatia and the Association of Croatian Trade Unions announced a joint May 1 protest demanding amongst other things fairer wages and better working conditions and a dignified life for elderly citizens. The proposed pension reform is also part of the May 1 protest.

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

Privatisation of healthcare disputed

April 26, 2018

Two of the major two trade unions, the Union of Autonomous Trade Unions of Croatia and the Association of Croatian Trade Unions, urged the government to stop the privatisation of health care that is planned under new health care legislation. The new legislation would mean a further step in the privatisation of health care, with licensed GPs that would no longer operate under a lease agreement but would be fully private. The trade unions fear this will threaten access to quality health care.

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

Cyprus

Hospital workers strike for more staff

April 25, 2018

A 12-hour strike over personnel shortages at Limassol's general hospital was suspended to give the government an extra week to meet the workers' demands for better staffing. During a meeting between trade unions and the ministry it was decided to establish procedures to fill new positions which were promised by the government to alleviate personnel shortages. Unions warn that if their demands are not met they might

stage a 24-hour work stoppage.

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

Labour exploitation on the rise

April 4, 2018

In the annual report from the Council of Europe's Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (GRETA) Cyprus is listed among the countries where labour exploitation has emerged as the predominant form of human trafficking. The proportion of identified victims of labour exploitation grew from one third of the total of identified trafficking victims in 2013, to two thirds in 2015. Trade union Peo called on the government to toughen its response to illegal employment. According to the union the state needs to build more effective mechanisms to support and protect victims of trafficking for labour exploitation so that victims can report abuses.

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

Czechia

Pay deal at Škoda Auto

April 27, 2018

Trade unions and management of the country's biggest car maker, Škoda Auto, have been bargaining on wages since the start of 2018. After unsuccessful rounds of negotiations and unions threatening with industrial action, Škoda made offer of an 8.3% hike in wage tariff but that offer was rejected. Union representatives at Skoda now agreed to a 12% wage rise. The increase covers the period from 1 April 2018 to the end of March 2019. The agreement also means that workers who qualify for full bonuses would get an average annual bonus of 110,000 crowns. It includes increases in bonuses and incentives. The company, struggling to meet demand, announced that it will start with a production line in Germany.

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

Unions worried about steel plant

April 11, 2018

Trade unions have expressed worries about a possible deal in the steel sector. The concern is linked to current owner Arcelor Mittal's attempts to take over Italy's Ilva steelmaker, whose main plant is located at the southern city of Taranto. Arcelor is reported to have offered the Czech plant, employing around 7,000, as part of a package to pave the way for the European Commission to clear the deal. Ostrava and the wider Moravia and Silesia region are still in the painful process of diversifying their employment base after being based for most of the last century on coal, steel, and heavy engineering.

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

Denmark

Trade union 3F signs historical agreement in platform work

April 23, 2018

Trade union 3F has negotiated with Hilfr.dk, a platform for cleaning in private homes. As a result, a ground breaking collective agreement was signed between the management and 3F. The collective agreement will enter into force on 1 august 2018 and will guarantee people who work on the platform sick pay, holiday allowance and a contribution to their pension. The agreement will run first as a pilot agreement for 12 months. The parties agreed to evaluate the collective agreement on the basis of the gathered evidence.

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

Public sector labour dispute is pending

April 23, 2018

The labour dispute in the public sector (see the March newsletter) is still going on. The trade unions, representing 180,000 state employees and around 500,000 people employed by the municipalities, are demanding an 8.2% pay rise over three years. After long negotiations, the national strike and lockout that were announced for April are postponed till May. If no agreement is reached, 10,000 municipal workers will go on strike on May 8 and a lockout of around 400,000 state employees is planned for May 12.

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

Trade union confederations LO and FTF plan merger

April 13, 2018

The delegates at two Congresses of the trade union confederations LO and FTF voted in favour of a merger creating a new central organisation with 1.5 million members. Both extraordinary congresses required a two-thirds majority to go forward with a joint central organisation. In FTF, 71.4% of the delegates voted in favour of the merger. In LO, 389 out of 400 delegates voted for the merger while 11 votes were void or against. With currently 2.7 million persons engaged in active employment on the labour market, the organisation will be representing more than half of the active workforce. The founding of the joint central organisation will come into effect as of 1 January 2019. Until then, LO and FTF will continue to operate separately.

Read on: [in English ...](#) The LO merger files: [in Danish ...](#)

Estonia

Rakvere strike ends with pay deal

April 16, 2018

The longest strike in the country's history over wages at meatpacking plant Rakvere (see our February and March newsletters) ended with an agreement meeting the demands of the strikers. The workers asked a 16% wage increase from 1 February 2018 and an additional 16% increase in basic wage from 1 July 2018. They also demanded that HKScan would sign a contract recognising their trade union. While no agreement on the latter demand has been reached yet, both the striking employees as well as their union IMTAL agreed to the proposed salary increase of the slaughterhouse unit workers. The strike ended on 16 April 2018.

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

Finland

Construction sector on strike

April 20, 2018

A strike started at the end of April in the construction sector after negotiations between unions and employers broke down. The strike is targeting seven concrete-related firms and their subsidiaries. These companies produce nearly two-thirds of the country's ready-mixed concrete. According to the union, the strike will cost the sector some 30 million euro a day. The unions are demanding a pay rise of 6% over two years while the employers are offering a pay rise 3.2%. Unions are also against the removal of Sunday allowances and the full liberalisation of temporary work. During the strike unions and employers will continue their negotiations.

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

Electrical workers cannot agree

April 9, 2018

The Electrical Workers' Union turned down a proposal that was tabled by the Deputy National Conciliator. It was meant to settle a dispute over the terms and conditions of employment for electricians. The union said that the employers had adopted an inflexible and hard-line strategy for the negotiations based on the government's decisions. A strike was scheduled to continue until 16 April, affecting over a dozen companies

represented by Service Sector Employers (Palta) including Are, Aro Systems, Bravida Finland, Caverion Suomi and Consti Talotekniikka. More industrial actions are scheduled to begin on 17 May.

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

France

Rail strikes against reform plans continue

April 28, 2018

Railway workers went on strike in reaction to plans to reform the rail system and cut rail workers special employment rights. One of the fears expressed by the unions is that the rail system will be privatised (see our January and March newsletter). Railway staff have walked out two days out of five since the start of the strikes in the beginning of April. The government has claimed to push through the reform plans 'to the very end'. A poll suggests that the majority of public back plans to reform debt-ridden state rail operator and public support for the strike seems to be relatively modest.

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

Ongoing strikes at Air France

April 26, 2018

After earlier strike actions in February and March 2018 (see our March newsletter) new strikes at Air France were organised. Air France claims the strikes have cost the company over 250 million euro in operating income. Pilots, cabin crew and ground staff are demanding a wage increase with unions asking for a 6% pay rise that the company deems 'impossible'. At first Air France came up with a proposal for a 1% increase to be paid in two stages, now they offer a 2% increase. Three pilot unions have announced another four days of strike action in early May stating that they intend to keep up the pressure for their wage demands.

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

Eiffel tower reopened after strike action

April 15, 2018

Security staff at the Eiffel tower held a two-days strike, protesting after three of their former colleagues had been fired, allegedly for distributing a petition asking for better working conditions. Workers complained about a deterioration of their working conditions, their remuneration as well as intimidation of their employer, the security agency, Byblos Group. The Eiffel management stated that an agreement was found.

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

Germany

Report documents pay differentials in public sector

April 25, 2018

Trade union confederation DGB published a report on pay of public officials (*DGB-Besoldungsreport 2018*). The report (in German) can be downloaded from the webpage. It documents the pay differentials that exist in the different layers of the public services. In spite of performing the same activity, civil servants are sometimes paid very differently. Even within the same grade, there are large income differences between the states. The DGB criticises the fact that the public services are no longer competitive on the labour market.

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

Ryanair recognises Ver.di

April 23, 2018

Ryanair has formally recognised trade union Ver.di to represent cabin crew in Germany. The trade union welcomes what they see as the this first step toward collective bargaining. Ryanair has been in talks to

formalise union recognition in several European countries since its decision in December to recognise unions for the first time in its 32-year history.

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

Public service workers reach best result in years

April 18, 2018

Public service trade union Ver.di, which represents 2.3 million public employees, demanded a 6% pay raise for public service workers from state and local governments, with a minimum increase of 200 euro per month (see our March newsletter). After a series of strikes, trade union Ver.di came to a deal which resulted in a cumulative 7.5 % increase in salaries over a period of 30 months and includes top-ups and extra payments designed to make the public sector a more attractive employer. The head of the Ver.di public-sector trade union described the deal as ‘the best result in many years’.

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

Workers at Deutsche Post and at Deutsche Telekom have their agreement

April 12, 2018

Deutsche Post that employs 130,000 employees concluded an agreement, which introduces a possibility of choosing between salary increases or free time. The agreement with trade union Ver.di includes a pay increase on 1 October 2018 with 3%, and on 1 October 2019 with 2.1%. Once implemented, it will run for 28 months, until May 31, 2020. The remuneration for trainees will improve between 3 and 4% in 2018 and between 2.2 and 3% in 2019. Ver.di also agreed with Deutsche Telekom, a branch of the telecommunications group which serves individuals and companies in the country, on a compromise for the 55,000 employees. Ver.di negotiated pay improvements between 4.8% and 5.2%. Moreover, workers will see their working time reduced, thanks to an additional 14 days of paid leave per year. The agreement will be valid for 26 months.

Read on for Deutsche Post: [in English ...](#) Read on for Deutsche Telekom: [in English ...](#)

Greece

Workers protest against privatisation and cuts on hospitals

April 25, 2018

Thousands of protesters took to the streets of Athens and other cities to denounce austerity measures and the sale of the Public Power Corporation's coal, planned pension cuts, and funding cuts at state-run hospitals. State-run hospital workers were also on strike, demanding more funding for healthcare and protesting shortages in the hospitals.

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

Lawmakers in favour of sale despite protest power plant workers

April 25, 2018

Workers at Public Power Corp (PPC) took to the streets in protest against privatisation urging lawmakers to rescind the planned sale of power stations which they have branded a ‘national crime’. Hundreds of workers gathered outside parliament, as lawmakers debated legislation. Workers fear the sale will lead to job losses and hurt their labour right. Despite the protests a majority of lawmakers voted in favour of the bill which paves the way for PPC to begin selling plants in May 2018.

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

Hungary

Report on migration and human trafficking

April 27, 2018

A report by the Council of Europe's Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (GRETA), based on a visit to transit zones located at the border between Hungary and Serbia, concludes that the ability to detect potential victims of human trafficking has worsened. Concerns raised in previous reports have been 'magnified' by more restrictive legislation and measures on immigration and asylum. The report found as many as 79 cases of collective expulsions of irregular migrants to Serbia in a period of less than two weeks in December 2017.

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

Journalist union worried about free speech

April 13, 2018

Radio station Lánchíd Rádió as well as the opposition daily newspaper Magyar Nemzet have shut down on 10 and 11 April 2018. The European Federation of Journalists (EFJ) is appalled by the developments following Orbán's electoral win, which further narrows media pluralism in the country. There are strong suspicions the closing down is politically motivated. At the EU level, the European parliament's committee on civil liberties, justice and home affairs (LIBE) recommended in a draft report to trigger Article 7 procedures against Hungary, the strongest possible sanction against a member state.

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

Iceland

Midwives on strike

April 23, 2018

After negotiations between the state and midwives ended in a deadlock for around six months, all the countries 95 midwives that go on home visits went on strike 23 April 2018 asking for an updated contract with a 13.8% salary increase. The midwives have been fighting to improve their pay for nearly two years. With the midwives on strike the hospitals will have to deal with all deliveries of new-borns.

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

Ireland

Talks about controversial two-tier pay system

April 28, 2018

Public service unions and government officials are holding new talks on the two-tier pay system, which has seen about 60,000 State workers taken on since January 2011 receive less than more long-serving colleagues. Public service unions want the government to bring forward to 2019 the provision of increased pay for newer entrants to the public service in what they see as an equity issue. While government still maintains that no funding to address the issue will be located before 2020 trade union Fórsa believes that the strengthening economic and exchequer recovery means it should be possible to start funding it in 2019.

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

Irish Life workforce on strike

April 19, 2018

Some 800 employees of insurance company Irish Life who are members of the Unite union went on strike on 5 April 2018 to protest the company's decision to close their benefit pension scheme to future accruals in the middle of 2018, even though it currently has a €240 million surplus. A 2nd day of strike was held on 24 April, accompanied by place pickets on Irish Life offices in Dublin and Dundalk. According to their union the workers are particularly angry that Irish Life's decision to close the staff pension scheme coincided with a 6% increase in the dividends paid by parent company Great West Lifeco to shareholders.

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

Potential industrial action Aer Lingus

April 12, 2018

Industrial action looms at Aer Lingus after an emergency motion from the Fórsa trade union conference. This happened after the airline announced it was unilaterally withdrawing from a new dispute resolution process. Fórsa union views this as a breach of the collective agreement between workers and management. An Internal Dispute Resolution Board (IDR) was set up in 2016 at the request of Aer Lingus management in a bid to reduce conflict and avoid industrial action. In March 2018, Aer Lingus notified the union that it was withdrawing from the IDR. Union delegates at the conference voted in favour of a motion that urges the union to take what steps it deems appropriate to ensure Aer Lingus honour the terms of the IDR agreement.

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

Italy

Unions occupy town hall

April 30, 2018

Trade union FIOM, FIM and UILM have occupied the Termini Imerese town hall. The occupation is part of a protest against the failure of the Blutec company to meet union demands. The unions refer to guarantees of the national government related to an agreement between the national agency to attract investment Invitalia and Blutec. It was agreed that public funding would be used to get the former FIAT plant back to production.

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

Strike F-35 assembly line cancelled

April 28, 2018

Workers at the F-35 assembly line at Cameri Air Baese have cancelled a planned strike to protest the widespread use of employment agency contractors at the site and the lack of job security. The unions said 600 staff are working on agency contracts, while only 270 are employed directly by the defence firm Leonardo, which runs the site. The planned strike was cancelled following guarantees that more of the workers will be given staff contracts.

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

Main statistical yearbook published

April 27, 2018

The statistical office ISTAT published its annual overview *Noi Italia*. The 2018 online overview provides a general framework for understanding the different economic and social aspects of the country, its role within Europe and its territorial differences. Over 100 indicators are classified in 6 macro areas and cover 19 sectors. Users can also export charts and download data. For each sector the complete dataset of time series and other data can be downloaded. In each sector additional information is available (Publications and Useful links). The entire database can be acquired as well, by clicking on the button (download *dati*) from the homepage. During the presentation, the office said that the country is improving in many sectors, but the situation in the South is still worrying with high unemployment, more poor people and economic hardship.

Read on: [in English ...](#) The webpage with all statistics: [in Italian ...](#)

Latvia

Up to a quarter undeclared labour in construction

April 13, 2018

The State Revenue Service estimates that the proportion of unreported pay in the construction sector in 2016 was 24,4%. A slight increase compared to 2015 when a 24,1% unreported was estimated for the construction sector. The construction sector is important for the country's economy, employing 23,089 taxpayers or 6.6%

of all taxpayers. The unreported pay in the construction sector led to a 54-million-euro budget loss in unpaid taxes.

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

Liechtenstein

Labour market reports 2017 published

April 10, 2018

The statistical office published its unemployment report and the provisional labour market analysis 2017. The office reveals that the employment growth reached the level of almost 3.6% (against 1.9% in 2016). The unemployment rate decreased to an average 1.9% (against 2.3% in 2016). The highest unemployment rate (with an annual average of 2.6%) was signalled in the age group of 15 to 24 years.

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

Lithuania

Wages on the rise

April 11, 2018

A survey carried out by the Central bank of Lithuania shows that 1 in 2 firms intend to raise salaries for their workers in 2018. The bank predicts that the average monthly salary will grow by 6.7% this year and by further 6% in 2019. According to the prime minister the average monthly salary may reach the 1,000-euro mark in 2019. In the fourth quarter of 2017 this was 884.8 euro a month.

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

Luxembourg

Negotiations with tram operator deadlocked

April 25, 2018

Trade unions OGBL and FNCTTFEL left the negotiating table as talks with management over working conditions reached a deadlock. The unions call on the government to intervene. Main of dispute is the fact that rest periods between shifts are 11 hours with shifts lasting up to 13 hours. The unions claim that this is incompatible with the security demands imposed on a tramway especially considering staff have long journeys to get to work.

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

Social inequality has increased significantly

April 16, 2018

The chamber of employees (chambre des salariés) held a press conference to present its 2018 social panorama. The president of the chamber argued that social inequality has increased significantly over the last 20 years and stressed that the equality gap is likely to widen in the future. The groups that are most drastically affected include the unemployed, young people as well as single-parent families. The chamber of employees emphasised that the inequalities become even more shocking when we look beyond the mere differences in income, and also consider differences in wealth. Poverty is a real threat in today's society.

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

Retail workers dispute Sunday opening

April 12, 2018

Trade union OGBL cannot back up the extension of Sunday opening hours. The union claims that extending opening hours would lead to staff being forced to cover shifts spanning the entire week and infringe on personal lives without sufficient financial reward. Allowing retailers, including shops, food businesses and commerce, to choose their opening times over a longer time-frame and have the option of being open for longer on Sundays would have negative repercussions for the work-life balance of workers in the industry.

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

Socioeconomic situation of frontier workers

April 5, 2018

A thematic issue of the journal 'espace populations sociétés' is dedicated to the socioeconomic situation of frontier workers. The main article refers to a study, carried out by the Luxembourg Central Bank (BCL) and the Luxembourg Institute of Socio-Economic Research (LISER). The researchers looked at more than 2,400 households in France, Germany and Belgium with at least one member working in the Grand Duchy. In 2017, cross-border workers filled nearly 45% of jobs. The survey looks at trends in cross-border workers' investment choices, profiles, average commuting times and salaries compared with native workers. Most commuters are on permanent contracts and have been working in the country for around 10 years. In comparison, commuters are more likely to be working in retail and wholesale, or in the financial sector.

Read on: [in English ...](#) The thematic issue: [in French ...](#)

Malta

Workplace harassment: more workers come forward

April 20, 2018

Due to a change in trade union policy creating a greater awareness on offline and online workplace harassment, more victims are coming forward. Since 2016 police have seen an increase in reports on workplace harassment. The Minister of Equality spoke about the issue at a conference organised by the General Workers' Union and stressed that more than laws and enforcements were needed and that it is key to create more public consciousness on the problem.

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

Netherlands

Regional public transport on strike

April 27, 2018

In a joint action, the trade unions FNV and CNV called for a two-day strike in the regional public transport. Workers will go on strike in support of their demands for a 3% wage increase, lower workload, more training and breaks to use the bathroom. The FNV said that driving times are getting tighter and tighter and the public transport workers have no time for breaks. Due to the strike (30 April and 1 May 2018), regional bus services and some regional trains will not be operating. Employers tried to prevent the strike in court. But the judge ruled that in this case the right to strike outweighs the inconvenience the strike will cause.

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

Work stoppages of luggage handlers

April 15, 2018

Workers at international airport Schiphol's handling firms demand a pay increase of 3% or at least 75 euro a month, less work pressure by hiring additional staff and healthier work rosters. After collective bargaining negotiations between the three handling companies, Aviapartner, Menzies Aviation and Swissport, stranded on pay, stress and working hours the union will resort to work stoppages.

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

Building workers have their collective agreement

April 14, 2018

Negotiations between BouwendNederland and other employers' organisations in construction and the trade unions have led to an agreement. The collective agreement came into effect on 1 April 2018 and expires on 31 December 2019. The deal includes a pay increase per 1 August 2018 of 2.35% and another increase per 1 July 2019 of 3%. Bonuses and other allowances will increase with the same percentage. Extra attention will be paid to vocational training and a return to the industry of workers that left during the crisis. Social partners will jointly address the government to create a flexible retirement for workers in demanding jobs.

Read on: [in Dutch ...](#) On labour shortages: [in English ...](#) The deal: [in Dutch ...](#)

Collective agreement at PostNL

April 9, 2018

Delivery services PostNL and the trade unions FNV, Bond van Post Personeel and CNV Publieke Diensten have reached a final agreement on mail deliverers' pay in a collective labour agreement. The agreement is valid for two years: from 1 October 2017 until 30 September 2019. It includes pay increases in five steps during the duration of the CLA, 5 percent in total. It also includes a one-time bonus of 1 percent and the adjustment of the pension scheme to the tax requirements.

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

Norway

Deal prevents massive strike

April 8, 2018

The country's employers' organization NHO and two of the largest trade union confederations, LO and YS, made a deal preventing what would have been the first massive nationwide strike in 18 years. This year's negotiations covered not only wages but all other aspects of labour contracts. The dispute primarily concerned proposed pension reforms. The first wave of negotiations involved the private sector, covering contracts between NHO and 28,900 employees who are members of LO and another 6,000 employees organised through YS. The main branches targeted included bus companies, food producers, media and ferry transport firms. Beside a 2.8% pay increase the workers preserved the right to retire early at an age of 62. Some adjustments were made to pensions for low-paid workers. The unions' demand allowing workers to accrue pension contributions from the first krone they earn was not met.

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

Poland

Unions announce strike action at LOT airline

April 29, 2018

Trade unions at the country's state-owned airline LOT announced that workers are planning to go on an indefinite strike from 1 May. The action could lead to delays at Warsaw Chopin airport. The strike decision came after more than three years of negotiations with the airline over pay. LOT management states that the strike, if it goes ahead, would be illegal as it is not supported by all six labour unions that have negotiated with LOT. The Warsaw regional court issued a provisional 'ban on strike action pending a final ruling'.

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

Industrial action looms at steel fabricator Huta Pokoj

April 10, 2018

Workers at steel stockpiler and fabricator Huta Pokoj, are carrying out a strike ballot for possible industrial action to demand wage increases. Unions have been unable to reach an agreement with Pokoj's management during wage negotiations, which have been ongoing for months. They are also seeking wage increases for workers at other subsidiaries of coal exporter Weglokoks, namely Euroserwis, Euroblacha and Eurokonstrukcje. Workers are demanding a raise of 71.50 euro in monthly wages, claiming the majority of

workers are paid minimum wage or only slightly above. Huta Poloj's management offered an increase of around 49 euro a month, based on a lower overtime rate and cuts in allowances.

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

Portugal

Strike at Lidl prolonged

April 30, 2018

A dispute on job security and pay improvements has led to a strike at Lidl supermarkets. Trade unions representing workers of the German supermarket chain said that the aim of striking workers is to increase job security while also calling for a wage hike. Unions also claim that many permanent workers currently only work half shifts, earning half a salary in the process. Lidl has responded to the claims, saying they paid out five million euros to workers in benefits in 2017.

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

Union campaigns for higher minimum wage

April 26, 2018

Trade union confederation CGTP called for the minimum wage to be raised to over the 600 euro forecast by the government. The union reacted to statements by the Prime Minister, who had restated that the monthly minimum wage, currently 585 euro, will be updated again in 2019. and that it has "a few days" to say if it will unfreeze pay rises in the civil service. The union added that, given the replacement of the 5% salary cut in ministerial offices in 2019, it is time to unfreeze civil service salaries.

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

Train drivers on strike

April 4, 2018

Train drivers announced a strike between mid-day on 16 to mid-day on 17 April 2018 to demand social and labour rights and greater safety. The train drivers want rules and regulations to be complied with and standardised across the board, and for the infrastructure's manager to make sure that trains run safely by using temporary warnings and signs. The train drivers' union also demands an end to hiring retired train drivers to provide services to the freight companies.

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

Ryanair tries to break strike

April 4, 2018

Cabin crew at Ryanair held a three-day strike after negotiations between trade union SNPVAC and Ryanair management regarding improved conditions, pay rise and paternity leave failed (see our March newsletter). The SNPVAC says 91% of cabin crew at Ryanair bases in Lisbon, Porto, Faro and Ponta Delgada took part in the strikes and 27 out of 49 scheduled flights were cancelled. The last 7 operating flights were allegedly operated by cabin crew from other countries in an attempt by Ryanair to break the strikes. Leaked recordings reveal that a Ryanair boss warned the foreign cabin crew there would be 'serious consequences' if they refused to operate flights during the strike by their Portuguese counterparts. It looks like the airline believes it can resolve this issue by using cabin crew from a different European country, although legislation would forbid Ryanair from calling in other cabin crew to break the strike. SNPVAC warns that Ryanair could face Europe-wide strikes, if the company continue to ignore local regulations. SNPVAC has met with several other European unions representing Ryanair workers (read our European sources section).

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

Romania

Health workers take to Bucharest streets in protest of wage cuts

April 26, 2018

Some 10,000 health workers from across the country came to the capital to participate in a massive protest against wage cuts. The protest is following government promises to hike salaries in the health care sector. Sanitas health union, said that at the same time some employees lost up to 1,100 lei (236 euro) of their net monthly pay. The most disputed change has been shifting social security taxes from employers to employees. The health workers threatened to go on strike if the government doesn't resolve their salary issues.

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

Paradox of social inequalities and poverty is maintained

April 11, 2018

A representative of the European Commission stated that the paradox of social inequalities and poverty is maintained in the country, given that the economic growth is above the EU average and unemployment is at the lowest level in the last 20 years. According to the EC the trend of economic growth is maintained. The paradox of social inequalities and poverty is also maintained, especially in disadvantaged groups, such as children. One in two children is at risk of poverty.

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

Serbia

Teachers' union campaigns for equal pay

April 25, 2018

According to the teachers' union, the government is planning to introduce in 2019 a new system of 12 pay grades with teachers classed as grade 8. The union believes the pay grade system the government is drawing up is discriminatory towards teachers, health care and social services staff. The union staged a protest against the new grade in front of the government headquarters demanding equal pay grades for all state employees and higher salaries.

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

Union wants new agreement with Fiat

April 4, 2018

After the prime minister declared that Italian car company Fiat will not leave the location of Kragujevac the Fiat employees expect the state to become more involved in their rights. Both trade union and the employees expect the government and FIAT to reach a new agreement as soon as possible, put it on paper and sign it. Main concern is the security of fixed contract hours. The last seven months workers have been complaining about a certain number of non-working days or paid leave which had a negative impact on their earnings.

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

Slovakia

Collective agreement at Kia

April 17, 2018

Negotiations between Kia and trade union Kovo that started in November 2017 resulted in an agreement. The agreement covers 2018 and 2019, over which period the employees will see their monthly salaries increased with around 220 euro. Employees in production see their salaries increase by 75 euro on average in 2018, and by a further 80 euro in 2019. The hourly wage benefit for night shifts will increase to 1.30 euro this year and 1.50 euro in 2019. The salaries of the administrative employees will grow by 7% on average, in both 2018 and 2019. Moreover, both this and next year all employees will receive a 100-euro Christmas voucher from the social fund. According to the agreement, employees who have worked for the company for more than five years are entitled to one extra day off.

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

Slovenia

Rally for better wages at airport

April 25, 2018

With a rally on Ljubljana airport firefighter and airport maintenance controllers protested for better wages. The workers rejected the new collective bargaining agreement although airport management claims the new agreement raises wages and enables promotions.

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

Precarious work debated

April 18, 2018

At a public debate on the current status of precarious work several experts contributed. Precarious forms of work lead to a rise in poverty, they poorly influence the functioning of a social state, force citizens into apathy and lead to their withdrawal from politics. Precarious forms of work don't only happen in the outskirts but are deeply embedded in the economic system.

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

Spain

Two-day strike at Vueling

April 26, 2018

Already 246 flights have been cancelled due to a pilots' strike at low-cost airline Vueling in a wage dispute between the trade unions and the airline. Vueling pilots claim they receive on average 30% less than their main competitors including Ryanair and EasyJet. Currently, Vueling airline, which belongs to British group IAG, is tripling its profits and the unions feel there should be made some improvement in the working conditions of the pilots. Instead the company's only offer so far has been zero improvement. According to union officials this offer has been rejected by 90% of the pilots.

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

Air traffic controllers threaten with summer strike

April 22, 2018

In a dispute about understaffing at air traffic controller ATC, 89% of the union members have voted to implement 24-hour stoppages from 20 June 2018 if the number of ATC staff is not increased by the start of the summer season. The union issued a statement that predicted a summer 'collapse' in Barcelona due to the lack of controllers and the constant traffic growth experienced by El Prat airport. The airport has seen a 9.4% increase in passengers compared to the same period of 2017 and everything points to exceeding the record of 47.2 million passengers.

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

Amazon fires temporary workers that went on strike

April 19, 2018

In March over one thousand Madrid based Amazon workers went on strike with a two-day walkout demanding better pay and conditions. It was the country's first ever strike at Amazon (see our March newsletter). Amazon announced that it has decided not to renew the contract of over 100 temporary workers at a logistics centre that participated in the strikes. Trade unions have condemned the dismissal of the workers and accused the company of victimizing workers striking for better working conditions. The largest union in the works council of the logistics centre of San Fernando de Henares (Madrid), has proposed in a

meeting with unions in Italy, France and Germany to carry out a global strike involving all logistics centres of the multinational next July.

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

Sweden

Assessment of shorter working day

April 30, 2018

Gothenburg's City Council voted in 2015 to run an 18-month experiment at its Svartedalen elderly care home. The staff would shift from a standard eight-hour working day to just six hours a day with no pay cut. Amidst growing media attention, the question was whether it was possible to cut down on the amount of work hours and yet stay productive. The pilot did manage to stay within budget. However, the biggest achievement of the pilot goes beyond its positive, practical impact. The ensuing public debate about the validity of the standard workday seems to be the true success. The final findings will be published in August, but the results yield the potential for a radical shift in the way the work organisation is conceived.

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

Switzerland

Blacklist for wage-discriminating companies

April 27, 2018

Delegates of trade union TravailSuisse have unanimously approved at their yearly assembly a resolution on wage discrimination that proposes a black list of companies who commit wage discrimination against women. Because the law to prevent wage discrimination that came to force 22 years is still not working, with the wage discrimination of women still accounting for at least 7.7 billion francs annually, the unions now resort to a black list of wage discriminating companies.

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

Labour is not a commodity

April 16, 2018

Trade union confederation SGB/USS produced a dossier that documents the importance of the work of the ILO for the workers in the country. According to the union, ILO labour standards and conventions are of the utmost importance for the workers' protection. The paper explains the functioning of the compliance mechanisms. The country relies on these standards, partly because parts of the EU-legislation do not apply.

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

Turkey

Dispute with Uber continues

April 13, 2018

Tension between regular taxi drivers and Uber drivers spiked in Istanbul, with a series of violent attacks and demonstrations carried out by the regular drivers. The head of the Istanbul Taxi Drivers Union went as far as stating that 'Uber is terrorist and its users are traitors'. The United Taxi Drivers Association (İTEO) has opened a law suit against Uber protesting what they see as unfair competition. In reaction to the tensions, local authorities proposed a system envisaging the administering of all taxis from one centralised system.

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

Textile workers unite

April 11, 2018

Trade unions in the textile sector pledged their joint support for an international initiative led by IndustriALL Global Union and brands and retailers to achieve living wages in the textile and garment sector. In most garment and textile producing countries, including Turkey, workers' wages are currently set well below a living wage. The textile and garment sector are an important part of the economy with Turkey being among the top textile and garment producing countries in the world.

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

United Kingdom

Al Jazeera staff on strike

April 27, 2018

The London based al-Jazeera's staff at their English-language TV channel voted to go on strike in protest at pay and conditions. The workers will walk out for 24 hours on 9 May. Union officials claim that the company has failed to honour an agreement to negotiate pay on an annual basis. Union officials said they expect a substantial proportion of London-based al-Jazeera English staff to take part in the walkout, including on-air presenters, programme editors, field producers, reporters, camera operators and studio technical staff.

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

Union launches paper on insecure work

April 23, 2018

Trade union Usdaw launched a policy document with the union's approach to tackling insecure work and under-employment. Usdaw members work in the retail sector, but the union also has members in transport, distribution, food manufacturing, chemicals and other trades. Usdaw surveyed its members on issues around working hours. The conclusion was, firstly, that members want guarantees for additional hours that they work on a regular basis. Secondly, agency workers are being overused and exploited in many workplaces. And, thirdly, many workers are struggling to make ends meet. Over a quarter of respondents either have or want a second job. Moreover, the survey showed that 64% of the members regularly work overtime and of these, two-thirds would like to see this overtime guaranteed.

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

Reopening of negotiations at universities

April 13, 2018

Planned changes to staff pensions prompted 14 days of strike action at 64 universities in February and March 2018, and more strikes were planned. University employers withdrew plans which the University and College Union (UCU) said would have left members £10,000 a year worse off in retirement. Strike actions end after staff voted to accept an offer to reopen negotiations with employers over their pensions. Both sides agreed a joint expert panel to re-evaluate the pension scheme.

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

Dramatic data on the pay of apprenticeship levy

April 13, 2018

An assessment of the effects of the apprenticeship levy that was introduced a year ago comes with dramatic results. In the six months after the levy was introduced (April – October 2017), the number of people starting an apprenticeship fell by 40% compared to the same period in 2016. A similar downward trend was evident across November and December. In addition, more experienced and older workers are increasingly becoming the focus of the apprenticeship programme, at the expense of less experienced and younger employees. Moreover, employers are using the levy to rebadge existing training courses as apprenticeships to shift the costs of training onto the Government.

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

Massive job losses at retail chains

April 12, 2018

Following the collapse of Toys R Us and Maplin, which has affected 5,000 jobs, several retailers have confirmed plans for a restructuring process called a company voluntary arrangement (CVA). The CVA-process, which is designed to help struggling companies stave off insolvency, must be approved by creditors including landlords. The plans could involve the closure of hundreds of stores. Fashion chain New Look announced in March 2018 an expected maximum of 980 redundancies out of a workforce of 15,300, and chains like Marks & Spencer, Debenhams and House of Fraser are also closing store space. The latest in the row, is carpet retailer Carpetright that has confirmed plans to close 92 stores, with the potential loss of 300 jobs, in a restructuring process designed to stave off administration.

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

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