

# collective bargaining

Issue 5/2018 | May

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



AMSTERDAM INSTITUTE FOR ADVANCED LABOUR STUDIES  
UNIVERSITEIT VAN AMSTERDAM



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## **European sources**

### **New strike threat at Ryanair**

*May 29, 2018*

After a meeting in Madrid, trade unions representing the cabin crew workers based in Spain, Portugal, Belgium and Italy at Ryanair announced in a statement that they would go on strike this summer unless the low-cost airline accepts their demands. The unions demand that Ryanair workers are employed according to the national legislation of the country they operate in, rather than that of Ireland as is currently the case.

Furthermore, the airline should give subcontracted workers the same working conditions as its own employees. Finally, Ryanair should recognise unions for pilots and cabin crew and negotiate with a representative chosen by the unions and not by the company.

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

## **Report on implications of digitalisation and platform work**

*May 24, 2018*

A Eurofound report reviews the history of the digital revolution to date. Furthermore, it examines three key vectors of change: automation of work, the incorporation of digital technology into processes and the coordination of economic transactions through the digital networks known as 'platforms'. In another report, Eurofound also publishes the latest developments in working life in the European Union. Main topics of interest are the commission's social fairness package, the provisional agreement on the revision of the posting workers directive and discussion at the spring tripartite social summit for growth and employment.

Read on: [in English \(1\) ...](#) [in English \(2\) ...](#) The Platform Work report online: [in English ...](#)

## **Social dialogue is key**

*May 18, 2018*

The OECD launched, in cooperation with the ILO, the report 'Building trust in a changing world of work'. The report stresses the critical role of social dialogue in creating decent work and inclusive growth. It also stresses that new efforts are needed to ensure the recognition and realisation of the rights to freedom of association and collective bargaining. The report highlights the crucial role of social dialogue in enhancing the inclusiveness of labour protection and the important role played by social partners in shaping the future of work, through workplace cooperation, collective bargaining and tripartite social dialogue.

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

## **Industrial relations and convergence in Europe**

*May 15, 2018*

The International Labour Organisation (ILO) presented an overview of the report 'What effects of industrial relations on convergence in Europe' earlier this month at a conference in Paris. The study highlights four ways in which industrial relations seem to have contributed to national convergence stories: 1. National social dialogue is found to have contributed to convergence 2. Collective agreements can also be an engine of convergence 3. Industrial relations are found to play a role in mitigating the effects of a crisis 4. Industrial relations increasingly help in tackling new issues and challenges that are relevant for convergence. Besides the main report 'Convergence in the EU: what role for industrial relations?' several presentations on specific countries are provided.

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

## **Interim growth report with bargaining data**

*May 4, 2018*

The OECD published its regular report on structural reforms in policy areas that have been identified as priorities to boost incomes in OECD and selected non-OECD. The report provides data on changes in collective wage bargaining policy. The main policy priorities are updated every two years and presented in a full report, which includes individual country notes, with detailed policy recommendations to address the priorities as well as a follow-up on actions taken.

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

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# **Austria**

## **Chamber of Labour's report on welfare**

*May 29, 2018*

The Chamber of Labour AK produces since 2016 an annual welfare study. In the current edition, AK provides the reader with an interesting chapter on the distribution of income, the wage development and

inequality. Additional parts underpin the gender pay gap, labour productivity and the distribution of wealth. The report has other chapters on employment and fair and decent work, the quality of life, sustainability and economic stability. The authors expect over a 5-year period, ending in 2019, a relatively positive development of the welfare situation. They are critical about the indicators 'full and decent employment', 'fair distribution of wealth' and a 'sustainable environment'.

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

### **Unions protest against social reforms**

*May 23, 2018*

Trade unions GPA-djp and Vida launched a joint campaign to protest government plans for social reforms. With the campaign 'My Heart for a Social Austria' the unions want to promote the preservation of what they see as 'one of the best social systems in the world'. Part of the social reform plans of the government that the unions see as 'anti-worker policy', is to save 1 billion euro. At a conference of the trade union confederation ÖGB 800 representatives of all unions agreed that a restructuring of the domestic social security system will only be carried out under heavy protest from the unions. The ÖGB threatened indirectly with strikes.

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

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## **Belgium**

### **Collective actions Lidl result in alleviating work pressure**

*May 25, 2018*

After unsuccessful negotiations with Lidl management - the company offered four times lower than the Lidl workers' demands (see our April newsletter) - several strikes were held in Lidl shops to protest understaffing and work pressure. After a wave of strikes covering more than a week and the blockade of all five of Lidl's distribution centres, Lidl's management finally acceded to the union's request. Each store will get the equivalent of 42 extra staff hours per week to alleviate working pressures.

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

### **Brussels Airlines pilots on strike**

*May 15, 2018*

Brussel Airlines held walkouts this month after some 80% of the pilots voted in favour of strike actions. The pilots protested the heavy workload with not enough time to rest, retirement conditions, career prospect and demand a pay hike. The strikes that were held on 14 May and 16 May 2018 lead to a cancelation of approximately 75% of the scheduled flights. Brussels Airlines says it will lose 10.4 million euro from the two days of walkouts.

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

### **Wildcat strikes at Carrefour hypermarket**

*May 11, 2018*

To protest restructuring plans of the company that include 1233 job cuts at stores and the downsizing of several hypermarkets into supermarkets 17 of the French-owned retailer's 45 hypermarkets closed several days due to spontaneous strikes. Unions state they did not order the strike and that's why not all shops were closed down but the trade unions have however now threatened a general strike within the company if discussions do not progress.

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

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## **Bulgaria**

### **Poverty and the cost of living**

*May 22, 2018*

The Institute for Trade and Social Studies of trade union CITUB came up with the latest data (for the first quarter of 2018) on the necessary living wage. A four-person household with two adults and two children

needs BGN 2340 per month (1196 euro). This is necessary to cover the cost of food, housing, health, transport and leisure. The study shows substantial regional differences with the necessary funds for a normal living of a four-person household in Sofia at BGN 3055 (1562 euro). The capital exceeds the average levels of life support in the country by 30.5%. In total, 73.3% of households live with a total income under the necessary means of subsistence.

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

### **Unions want an 18% increase in teacher wages this autumn**

*May 14, 2018*

While the responsible minister states that an increase of 18% in teacher salaries will certainly happen from 1 January 2019, trade unions insist that this should happen earlier from October this year. According to statistics the average age of teachers is 55 years. The trade union claim that the reason for the lack of young people working in education is low wages.

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

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## Croatia

### **Report compares labour markets and inequality**

*May 18, 2018*

A FES-report compares the SEE countries in the area of wages, tax policy and income redistribution. Inequality levels in Croatia are moderate to low, showing a gradual, downward trend, converging with the average level of inequality of EU28 countries. The redistributive impact of social transfers and pensions in the countries considered varies: for instance, social transfers and pensions accounted for a reduction of 19 Gini points in Croatia, 15 points in Macedonia, and as much as 24 points in Serbia in 2015 (as opposed to 21 points for the EU28 in 2015). Other forms of social transfers, including social assistance or unemployment benefits, had a substantial impact on inequality in Croatia, similar to that of the EU28.

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

### **Possible summer strike Croatia Airlines**

*May 7, 2018*

The Workers Organisation of Croatia Airlines (ORCA) warned it may stage industrial action during the summer. In several statements the pilots declared that employees are stepping down from various positions in the company to seek better employment conditions elsewhere and that there are severe problems in the field of maintenance due to lack of skilled engineers. Croatia Airlines' employees are pushing for a collective bargaining agreement after the previous one expired seventeen months ago. So far, the negotiations that have been going for some time between the unions and management are still deadlocked.

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

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## Cyprus

### **Municipal rubbish collectors strike to protest privatisation**

*May 21, 2018*

Municipal rubbish collectors in Strovolos went on strike to protest the use of private companies for garbage collection. They are asking the municipality to examine the suggestions made by the trade unions to create inter-municipal services. Municipalities are forced since the economic crisis to hire private companies because they are not allowed to fill vacant jobs in the garbage collection which has led to too much workload for the public garbage collectors. Unions are worried about the use of private companies replacing public garbage services because private garbage collection companies refuse to bargain. The practice will gradually lead to loss of municipal posts as dustmen who eventually retire will no longer be replaced. The refusal to negotiate collective agreements for the workers leads to lower salaries and even illegal employment.

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

### **Paphos bus drivers on strike**

May 2, 2018

Bus drivers in Paphos went on strike because they did not receive their April salary. The Paphos Transport Organisation (Osypa) told the drivers that the company was unable to pay wages because the company had not received their state subsidy. The company's 117 vehicles remained stationary, with the 237 drivers and other staff warning that they would not return to work unless they received their salaries. The strike affected thousands of people, amongst them a lot of students.

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

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## Czechia

### **Wages steady on the rise**

May 29, 2018

With the lowest unemployment rate of Europe and a shortage of workers, wages are rising steadily. According to the country's trade union confederation this upward trend will continue for several more years as labour costs lie far below those in the richer West. On average three Czech workers cost as much as one German worker. The union believes that in the next three or four years the country can realistically expect real wage growth of 3 percent to 5 percent per year.

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

### **Opening up of the labour market for Ukrainian workers**

May 22, 2018

During a visit to the Ukraine the labour minister has examined why employers complain they can't recruit Ukrainians quickly enough to fill gaps in the labour force. Employers say that the period between starting the recruitment process based on a long-term visa of one year or more and finally settling all the paperwork and bureaucratic hurdles can take nine months or even up to a year. The unemployment rate was 3.2 percent in April 2018 and, according to statistics, there are around 25,000 vacancies at labour offices that cannot be fulfilled. Shortages are especially high in jobs that are very physically and mentally demanding.

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

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## Denmark

### **Precarious workers on the labour market**

May 17, 2018

The art centre of Trampoline House is currently hosting a sound installation, titled *Economy of Migrant Labor – For the Right to Work*. The initiative pays attention to bottle collectors that try to survive in the country. There are no official figures on the number of bottle collectors, and the collectors' status is quite varied in terms of background and social status. Some bottle collectors are low-income and homeless Danes, while others are migrants and refugees. Some are waiting for their asylum applications to be processed, and others have been granted asylum but have no work. What they all share is the common experience of being exploited, marginalised and excluded from society. According to the initiative, this difficult situation is not only limited to bottle collectors. The Global North is dependent on migrant workers for their cheap, exploitable and non-unionised labour, who pick fruits or work in construction and cleaning industries.

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

### **Agreement public sector**

May 4, 2018

The ongoing labour dispute in the public sector (see our March and April newsletters) has come to a positive conclusion. The collective bargaining process that started December 2017 resulted in an agreement with the trade unions that met most of their demands. The unions, representing 180,000 state workers and around 500,000 municipality workers, were demanding an 8.2% pay rise over 3 years. The main highlights of the collective agreement are an 8.1 % economic increase over the next 3 years, public sector workers will benefit from a real wage increase matching wage developments in the private sector and specific pay rise targeting

low-wage public sector workers' professions including specific provisions to bridge the gender pay gap.

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

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## Estonia

### **Wages up 7.6% compared with 2016**

*May 11, 2018*

According to information of Statistics Slovenia the average gross monthly income per employee in 2017 totalled 1155 euro; this means an increase of 7.6 % compared to 2016. The number of persons earning gross income increased in 2017 to 528,735, up by approximately 9,000 compared to 2016 figures. The share of young people among income recipients has decreased steadily in recent years

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## Finland

### **Union protests extending overtime hours**

*May 25, 2018*

The Central Organisation of Finnish Trade Unions (SAK) is critical about government plans to increase flexibility that will lead to more overtime. The SAK fears that extending overtime hours could result in fewer new hires. If approved, the proposed law would increase the allowed overtime from 2250 hours to slightly above 2300 hours per year. Under the new rules, in a four-week period, the number of working hours could not exceed an average of 48 hours per week.

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

### **Agreement construction sector**

*May 10, 2018*

After strikes that started at the end of April an agreement has been reached over a two-years collective agreement. The unions were demanding a pay rise of 6% over two years while the employers were offering a pay rise of 3.2%. With the new agreement the hourly wages of construction workers will increase by at least 30 cents in 2018 and 2019. Furthermore, minimum wages in the sector will be raised by 40 cents in both 2018 and 2019. While the increases have not been converted into percentages a spokesperson of the trade union stated that the 30-cent increase is roughly in line with the increases adopted in other sectors.

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

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## France

### **Strikes and protests continue**

*May 26, 2018*

The protests against the reform plans continue with students and railway workers in action. The 'two out of five days' strike at the railway is still going on with no agreement in sight. The railway workers keep striking despite government's pledge to take over €35 billion of SNCF's debt. Moreover, on 22 May more than 15,000 public sector workers, including teachers, police officers, transport staff and air traffic controllers, took to it to the streets in Paris to protest against the planned economic reforms. Air France pilots, cabin crew and ground staff have been holding strike actions since February 2018 (see earlier 2018 newsletters). Unions are asking for a 6.6% 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, and then offered a 2% increase. Air France workers are still holding on to their demands while Air France CEO Jean Marc Janailac decided to resign after airline staff refused a new pay deal designed to end weeks of strikes.

Read on: [in English \(1\) ...](#) [in English \(2\) ...](#) [in English \(3\) ...](#) [in English \(4\) ...](#) [in English \(5\) ...](#)

### **McDonald's workforce in action**



May 17, 2018

McDonald's is facing the first industrial action in the country since 2003. It started with wild picket lines that blocked many of the company's fast food restaurants in Paris. Since 11 May, a McDonald's located at Boulevard de Magenta, near Gare de l'Est, is occupied by a dozen employees that are supported by students and railwaymen who joined them. Workers are demanding a base salary of 13 euro per hour, a 13th month for all and sufficient staff.

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

### **Oxfam reports on inequality and wealth distribution**

May 14, 2018

Basic, the office for social analysis, co-produced a report with the NGO Oxfam France that aims to fuel the public debate on the sharing of wealth. One of the findings of the report is that French companies are paying out the vast bulk of their profits to shareholders, leaving little for investment and even less for employees. In the 2000s companies paid out less than a third of profits in dividends, today it is more than two-thirds. The report shows that firms paid out 15 times as much to shareholders than they did to workers. CEOs' salaries also soared since 2009 to 119 times their employees' average pay, with 54.5% of CEO's income tied to their company's share price, encouraging them to align their interests with those of the shareholders.

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

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## Germany

### **Opel deal with job security in exchange for wage concessions**

May 29, 2018

Long and intense negotiations between the management of the automaker, since August 2017 owned by French car giant PSA, the central works council and the IG Metall union on the future of Opel's plants has resulted in an agreement in principle. Opel has promised to start significant investment programs at the production plants and at the R&D centre. According to a statement by the works council and trade union IG Metall, the workers at the production sites in Rüsselsheim, Kaiserslautern, Eisenach, Dudenhofen and Bochum will have their jobs guaranteed until the summer of 2023 and investments have been budgeted for each site. In exchange, the workers' representatives have agreed with pay concessions.

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

### **Non-compliance with minimum wage reported**

May 15, 2018

The statutory minimum wage law that came into force on 1 January 2015 should protect workers from wage dumping. But practice shows that many companies do not stick to it. A recent study by the Hans Böckler Foundation concludes that in 2016, around 2.2 million employees received less than the minimum wage although they are officially entitled to it.

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

### **800.000 construction workers win 6% pay rise**

May 12, 2018

Trade union representatives and employers reached an inflation-busting pay rise of roughly 6% for more than 800,000 construction workers, making the agreement the strongest wage deal sealed so far in 2018 in Europe's biggest economy. Union IG Bau stated that construction workers in West Germany will get a pay hike this year of 5.7% while wages in East Germany will jump by 6.6%. Both steps are backdated to 1 May and will last for 26 months. The agreement also includes one-off payments for workers in West Germany of 250 euro in November 2018, 600 euro in June 2019 and a further 250 euro in November 2019. Workers in the East will get a one-off payment of 250 euro in November 2019.

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

### **Minimum wage contributes to well-being**

May 12, 2018

A study based on the socio-economic panel SOEP reports on the impact of minimum wages on wellbeing. The results show that the minimum wage has significantly positive effects on all considered dimensions of well-being, on average, with an increase in life satisfaction by 0.10 standard deviations (0.15 points on a ten-point Likert scale). Positive effects last at least until one year after the reform. Life satisfaction tends to increase particularly in the region that is overall economically less developed (East Germany).

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

### **Atlas of work**

*May 7, 2018*

Digitalisation, globalisation, global competition: The world of work is becoming more and more unfair, according to the trade union confederation DGB's new labour study on work worldwide 'Atlas of work'. It is becoming increasingly difficult to create and maintain good jobs. As a result, at least 1.4 billion people around the world were working in precarious jobs.

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

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## Greece

### **Nationwide strike to protest austerity and new wave of reforms**

*May 30, 2018*

After a call-out by the country's two biggest trade unions thousands of workers went on strike on 30 May in protest against austerity, high taxes and a new wave of reforms. The GSEE union and its public counterpart, ADEDY, organised the one-day walkout. The walkout disrupted flights and urban transport and knocked out train and ferry services across the country. Journalists also walked off the job, leading to a dearth of news bulletins.

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

### **Workers pay price of financial crisis**

*May 28, 2018*

According to several experts, ordinary workers are paying the price of the financial crisis and reforms that were imposed in the aftermath of the strike. While consumer prices have not fallen, salaries went down by an average of 15% since 2010. According to the country's leading labour think-tank the Labour Institute, salary cuts should have led to a cut in the prices of products and services but they didn't because product markets are to a great extent monopolies or oligopolies. The country has a serious skills mismatch with a highly educated workforce that is often overqualified for the jobs that are available.

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

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## Hungary

### **Serious labour shortage industrial sector**

*May 17, 2018*

Union and business leaders warn that multinationals might be taking their business elsewhere due to lack of sufficient labour force reports a daily newspaper. The deputy head of metalworkers' trade union Vasas told the paper that one multinational recently laid off more than 500 workers because it could not find sufficient labour. The union official estimated that 2,000-3,000 jobs have been lost as companies take capacity elsewhere, while shelved investments have prevented job creation. He urged immediate government intervention and negotiations with interested parties to find rapid solutions to prevent more firms from shifting production away from the country.

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

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## Iceland

## **Midwives continue their fight for better wages**

*May 2, 2018*

Because negotiations on a new collective agreement with better wages failed the country's 95 independent midwives that go on home visits went on strike last month. They asked for a new agreement with a 13.8% salary increase (see our April newsletter). 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. The independent midwives have made a deal with the government. Currently, the midwives working for the National University Hospital of Iceland have announced that they will refuse to take any extra shifts from 1 May until a new collective labour agreement is struck between the state and the Icelandic Midwives' Association. Shortly after that, the midwives from Akureyri Hospital have also taken action.

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

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## **Ireland**

### **Day of action on CervicalCheck scandal**

*May 29, 2018*

SIPTU representatives have called on members to participate in a 'day of action' on 30 May organised by the Standing4Women campaign in solidarity with the 209 women affected by the CervicalCheck scandal. The 'day of action' will include events in communities across the country. Cervical Check is a free smear test offered to women aged 25 to 60 years. This screening is not an exact science and it can throw up false positive, or false negative results.

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

### **Hospital workers win protest for sufficient staffing**

*May 24, 2018*

Trade union SIPTU want agency staff at Tullamore Hospital to be offered more secure employment. The trade union held a protest outside the facility to highlight what they call understaffing. Management has advertised around 20 full-time and temporary 'multi task attendants', however SIPTU claims the hiring process will take months. In reaction to the actions the management of the Midlands Regional Hospital in Tullamore has announced that approval has been received for the recruitment of 19.5 Multi Task Attendant (MTA) posts at the hospital.

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

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## **Italy**

### **First ever direct agreement of unions and Amazon**

*May 23, 2018*

Amazon workers are celebrating a historic victory. The company gave in under trade union pressure and agreed to end inhumane work schedules. The agreement between Amazon Italy and trade unions is a first in the entire company's history. Amazon is known for its anti-union policy. The deal that supplements the nationwide sectoral collective labour agreement, ensures fairness in scheduling through reductions in mandatory night shifts and distributing weekend work in a just way. Amazon is notorious for long hours, punishing quotas, and little break time during shifts

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

### **Temporary layoff 4000 telecom workers**

*May 18, 2018*

Telecom Italia has asked the government to approve a temporary layoff scheme for 4000 workers as part of the new 2018-20 business plan the telecoms group unveiled in March. The telecom operator is unable to cut jobs due to union pressure. Their alternative is a state-sponsored scheme whereby workers remain at home for a certain period of time as the company adjusts to lower market demand but are not laid off.

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

## **Massive increase of low-hours work**

*May 7, 2018*

A study by the craftsmen and small enterprises association CGIA revealed that 592,000 people in worked in 2017 for less than 10 hours per week, up 20.3% from 2007. Of those who worked less than 10 hours per week, 389,000 were employees and 203,000 were self-employed. The majority of people working for less than 10 hours a week did not work in the gig economy, but in traditional sectors such as personal services. Two out of three were women, mainly employed in personal services such as babysitters, carers or service activities related to personal care such as hairdressers, beauticians and wellness centres. Also, the hospitality sector and businesses services are characterised by a high incidence of small hours contracts.

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

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## **Latvia**

### **Plan to hire foreign doctors angers trade union**

*May 29, 2018*

Because of anticipated personnel shortages the government plans to hire foreign doctors and drafted a regulation listing 29 specialties in which foreign specialists could be hired on more lax requirements. The Latvian Health and Social Care Workers' Trade Union (LVSADA) responded with anger stating that the way to address anticipated staffing shortages is to start paying decent salaries to local medics.

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

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## **Liechtenstein**

### **Wage data 2016 published**

*May 22, 2018*

The statistical office published the final wage data for 2016. The median gross wage in 2016 landed at 6603 Swiss francs, an increase over two years with 1.2%. The gender wage gap in 2014 was 15.2%. This gap slowly decreased in the two-years period that the office applied. Another report revealed that the number of households depending on social and economic protection has reached a record high level. The necessary budget increased from 3.5 million Swiss francs in 2007 to 9.8 million Swiss francs in 2017 (an increase of 181%).

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

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## **Lithuania**

### **Government imposes new rules to decrease labour immigration**

*May 17, 2018*

The government is setting up quotas amid rising immigration from Ukraine. The issue of labour immigration is getting high priority due to the growth of Ukrainian drivers and construction worker in the country. Besides this, the government decided to toughen the order of the trip of third-country nationals to Lithuania by bringing back the system of work permits.

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

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## **Luxembourg**

### **Agreement concluded in banking**

*May 17, 2018*

After 18 months of tense negotiations, the trade unions OGBL, LCGB, and Aleba reached a breakthrough in the discussions of a collective agreement with the banking association ABBL. The bargaining result will introduce new classification and remuneration systems and has a clause that will lead to an increase of the June 2018 bonuses by 10%. It includes an improvement in flexible working hours and training of employees in the sector. The trade unions had increased the pressure on the ABBL in recent weeks. The agreement affects approximately 15,000 people in the sector. The negotiators decided to set up a sector-wide joint committee with the mandate to decide on issues such as employee functions being incorrectly defined.

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### **Unions conclude collective agreement for insurers**

*May 16, 2018*

Trade unions ALEBA, LCGB-SESF and OGBL announce in a joint press statement that an agreement was reached between the various stakeholders in the insurance sector. The agreement, signed on 16 May 2018 after several months of negotiations, will be effective in 2018, 2019 and 2020. The collective agreement introduces a number of benefits, such as bonuses, an increase of the salary scales for new hires, the increase of guaranteed pay rises over a three-year period and the right to training.

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### **Work quality research renewed**

*May 11, 2018*

The University of Luxembourg and the Chambre des Salariés (employee's chamber - CSL) have renewed their partnership to research well-being at work through to 2022. This means that the university's Quality of Work Index continues. This study has been recording employees' feelings of work for six years, with a focus on requirements and expectations at work, work schedules, collaboration with colleagues, continuous and promotional training as well as making corporate level decisions.

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## Malta

### **Workers at Malta International Airport have a pay deal**

*May 31, 2018*

The management of Malta International Airport and the two unions representing its workforce, GWU and UHM, signed a collective agreement. The agreement covers the period between 1 January 2018 and 31 December 2022. The agreement will lead to improved benefits for workers, with year-on-year increases in salaries, which amount to a 17.5% increase by 2022. The package includes performance bonuses and wellbeing benefits. In return, the agreement foresees a more agile operation linked to quality management and the company's strategic goals. It introduces a better shift structure to allow the company the flexibility it needs to continue to manage the ever-increasing operational demands of the airport.

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## Netherlands

### **Regional public transport strike continues**

*May 28, 2018*

The strike in regional transport, organised together by trade unions FNV and CNV is still going on as no agreement on the dispute on wage and working schedules was reached (see our April newsletter). Workers are on strike in support of their demands for a 3% wage increase, lower workload, more training and breaks to use the bathroom. The trade unions of bus and train drivers in privatised public transport companies have been negotiating with employers for equal pay with their colleagues working for the national railway company NS. A train driver working for NS earns up to 10% more than workers for private company Arriva.

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### **Deal luggage handlers Schiphol**

May 18, 2018

Aviation industry union FNV Luchtvaart had reached agreement with two of the three independent baggage and passenger handling firms at Amsterdam's Schiphol airport earlier this month and later this month the third passenger handling firm Aviapartner also committed itself to the agreement. Workers at international airport Schiphol's handling firms asked for a pay increase of 3% or at least 75 euro a month, less work pressure by hiring additional staff and healthier work schedules (see our April newsletter). The union has agreed terms with Menzies Aviation, Swissport Handling and Aviapartners that will lead to a wage increase of about 5% over two years.

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### **Highest numbers of strikes since 1989**

May 2, 2018

According to the national statistics bureau (CBS), 32 strikes took place in 2017, the highest number of strikes since 1989. The highest number of strikes occurred in the industry and transport and storage sectors. The industry sector suffered 13 strikes and the transport and storage sector 12, equating to 10.000 lost working labour days and more than 2.000 respectively. Whilst the highest number of strikes occurred in the industry sector, the most sizeable strike transpired in the education sector with over 10.000 educators participating.

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## Norway

### **Agreement in oil drilling**

May 25, 2018

Industri Energi, the trade union that represents the largest part of workers on offshore oil drilling rigs, has concluded a new wage deal. The Safe union, a smaller involved union, still has to ask its members to decide whether they accept the deal. According to Industri Energi the deal means a 'solid increase' in pay, while the Safe union said the pay rise was smaller than it had hoped for.

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### **Journalists win demands after strike**

May 15, 2018

The Norwegian Union of Journalists (NJ) managed to win on all main demands in the newly negotiated collective agreement. The agreement came to being after 1700 journalist members of NJ at the Norwegian Public Service Broadcasting NRK went on strike after negotiations and mediation did not lead to a collective agreement. Amongst other things the journalists are worried about the position of non-permanent staff and feared that their workload will increase while their pay remains the same.

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## Poland

### **Labour migration decreases, workers often stuck in temporary jobs**

May 22, 2018

A report based on a regular survey and published by the consultancy company Work Service concludes that around 11.8% of the (future) workforce considers labour migration. The percentage of potential labour migrants has decreased by 2 points in the last twelve months, showing the lowest reading since the survey was first conducted. Germany remains the most popular destination (31.4%), followed by the Netherlands (15%), which has overtaken the UK (5.7%). The most important drivers for migration are higher earnings (82%), higher standard of living (36%), ability to travel and explore the world (24%) and better career prospects (24%). A report by the Dutch statistical office CBS revealed that a majority of Polish migrants were employed on a flexible and temporary basis, even after a stay of several years.

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

## **Go slow actions at LOT airline**

*May 20, 2018*

Trade unions at the country's state-owned airline LOT last month announced that they were planning to go on an indefinite strike from 1 May (see our April newsletter) but this indefinite strike was deemed illegal by court and therefore eventually called off. Instead LOT workers held several 'go slow' actions whereby workers only 'worked to rule'. The willingness to take action came after more than three years of negotiations with the airline over pay.

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## **Portugal**

### **Dock workers on overtime strike**

*May 22, 2018*

Lisbon dock workers have begun a two-week overtime strike in a dispute over issues related to wage rises and the distribution of the work at the port. The union offered the Yilport group to negotiate again so they could prevent the strike but, on the eve of the meeting, the Yilport group had stepped up its anti-union practices. The company said it would determine a strike as an unwarranted absence and, in addition, the company considered any worker in its staff or its 'pool' who did not arrive at work due to any workers' meeting, would be prevented from resuming work in the following 24 hours'.

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

### **Unemployment below 8% for first time in decade**

*May 10, 2018*

The unemployment is below 8% for the first time in a decade, with prospects of a further reduce of unemployment. Additional data from the National Office of Statistics (INE) indicate that not only are workers becoming increasingly in demand, but that wages are also at an all-time high. The INE revealed that by the end of 2017, the number of workers earning 3,000 euro after deductions had climbed to its highest figure on record, with 37,500 workers falling in this category. Not only high-income earners are benefitting; the number of workers cashing monthly wages below 600 euro is at a new low, while the average take-home pay has risen above inflation to 876 euro a month. In the level beyond the minimum, there was a substantial increase (18.4%) of workers earning a monthly wage between 1,800 and 2,500 euro.

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## **Romania**

### **Purchase power improves**

*May 25, 2018*

According to a study by market research company GfK, the Romanians' purchasing power recorded the fastest growth in the European Union in 2017, namely 7.8% (against an EU-average of 1.9%). But, in nominal terms, the country's purchasing power of 4,556 euro remained at one of the lowest levels in the EU. This is almost 4 times lower than the EU average of 16,436 euro.

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

### **Agreement reached: strike health workers called off**

*May 8, 2018*

Health workers were angry over wage cuts that followed government promises to hike salaries in the health care sector (see our April newsletter) and threatened with strike to put pressure on their wage demands. The health care workers have called off their strike after the government agreed to cover recent wage cuts that hit some health employees. The government agreed with the unions to cover losses starting 1 May 2018. In return, the unions cancelled the scheduled walkout.

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## Serbia

### **Strike to protest privatisation arms company**

*May 23, 2018*

Employees at Zastava Arms company have called a strike, demanding that the state exempts their company from recently-adopted legislation aimed at privatising the arms industry. The workers' call for the change of the management and better privatisation position. So far negotiations with both government as the company's management remain deadlocked.

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## Slovakia

### **Strike alert Peugeot**

*May 10, 2018*

Workers organised in trade union KOVO PCAS are angry that wages at Peugeot - with an average of 1106 euro a month - are the lowest of the three major carmakers in the country and demand higher wages. The negotiation on a new collective agreement between trade unions and the management of the Trnava-based carmaker PSA Peugeot Groupe Slovakia have so far not led to an agreement on an increase of salaries. Consequently, the trade union organisation has announced a strike alert.

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

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## Slovenia

### **Strike Štore Steel called off due to threats**

*May 29, 2018*

According to the Confederation of Slovenian Trade Unions plans for a strike at Štore Steel, one of the country's biggest steel producers, were cancelled after management threatened to fire anyone who would participate in the strike. The workers were planning to go on strike because they want a 25% pay rise. The trade union believes the management of the company is guilty of violating the law on strike, so the case was reported to the labour inspection.

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## Spain

### **Strikes at Megasa steel plant**

*May 29, 2018*

Workers at Megasa steel plant are on a strike that is affecting up to 25% of the total production at the Megasa-owned Megasider Zaragoza plant. The strike will continue indefinitely as negotiations between management and trade unions are deadlocked. The workers began their actions in January due to dissatisfaction with the new management, which took over operations of the plant in 2016 from ArcelorMittal. Main points of conflict are managements' proposals to reduce pay and increased and extended working hours.

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

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### **Protests Amazon continue**

*May 18, 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. In April, 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 (see our March and April newsletters). This month protests continue with



more than 1,000 Amazon workers walking off the job at the company's San Fernando fulfilment centre to protest overreliance on zero-hour contracts and abuse of temporary workers.

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

### **Union breaks off talks with Ryanair**

*May 12, 2018*

Pilots' union Seplan states that it plans to file a lawsuit against the airline over contracts in Spain and has broken off talks about union recognition. Seplan represents about 500 of 800 Ryanair pilots based in Spain and is in conflict with Ryanair because the airline did not want to allow union members three days a month to carry out union duties despite earlier statements from Ryanair that the company will start to recognise unions. Seplan had previously threatened legal action but suspended it to carry out talks with Ryanair.

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

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## Sweden

### **Severe staffing shortages expected in the next decade**

*May 15, 2018*

According to a Bloomberg analysis, partly based on the Statistics Sweden's population forecasts for the next 10 years, the country will face severe staffing shortages in the next decade. Especially in the public sector. The public sector alone will need an extra 208,000 employees by 2025 to keep up with growing demand, but only 207,000 workers are projected to join the country's entire labour force.

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

### **E-strategy leads to job cuts at Ikea**

*May 3, 2018*

Furniture giant Ikea will cut 110 jobs in the southern region of the country as it shifts its strategy towards e-commerce. The company announced the plans of a cut of 90 workers in Malmö, and a further 20 shared between Helsingborg and the regional headquarter in Älmhult. Negotiations with the unions and with workers' representatives have started. The decision to cut jobs in human resources, sustainability, marketing, and communication, will also lead to job losses in Belgium and the Netherlands. The company foresees more changes in its organisational structure.

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

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## Switzerland

### **Pilots Edelweiss demand better pay**

*May 24, 2018*

While the current collective agreement is still valid until June 2019, pilots of Lufthansa Groups' Edelweiss organised in the aviation trade union Aeropers demand a pay rise. The pilots want to renegotiate their agreement and are pushing for their pay to improve. In a letter of aviation union Aeropers it is said that the pilots made the current growth of Edelweiss possible through years of exceptionally high commitment and deferral of personal and private needs. In the view of the pilots there can be no further growth for the airline without sustained investment in the flying personnel.

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

### **Nespresso workers protest to demand negotiations**

*May 15, 2018*

Workers organised in trade union Unia and their families demonstrated in front of the Nespresso headquarters in Lausanne. The workers demand respect for their trade union rights and the opening of negotiations on new schedules imposed by management. The imposed new schedules mean more weekend

shifts will be added and working weeks will lengthen from 41 to 43 hours. Although half of its staff mandated Unia to represent them, the company still refuses to meet the union to discuss the schedules.

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

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## Turkey

### **Increase of occupational fatalities whilst protest is suppressed**

*May 29, 2018*

One hundred seventy-seven workers were documented to have died in occupational accidents in April 2018, according to a monthly study released by the Workers Health and Work Safety Assembly (İSİGM). On 6 January 2018, İSİGM had published an annual report saying that 2,006 workers died at work throughout 2017. That number marked an increase from 2016, when 1,970 workers died in work related fatalities. However, the possibilities to protest have been blocked; while strikes are allowed in theory, they have effectively been banned since the most recent coup. In the year following the 2016 coup attempt, the government banned five strikes, compared to stopping eight strikes in the preceding 14 years. Workers are turning towards occupying factories, slowdowns and other forms of direct action.

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

### **Yves Rocher subsidiary fires union members**

*May 18, 2018*

Following a joint recruitment campaign by Petrol-Is Chemical and Rubber Workers' Union of Turkey a sufficient number of workers at Yves Rocher's subsidiary, Kosan Kozmetik, joined a trade union. After the workers joined the unions they approached the company with an offer to discuss collective bargaining. The company rejected the offer and instead started to intimidate and even fire workers that had joined the unions. A total of 85 workers has been dismissed. All the dismissal cases have been taken into the judicial process since the termination of contracts due to union membership is unjustified.

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

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## United Kingdom

### **First ever strike TGI Friday's**

*May 25, 2018*

Workers at two TGI Friday's restaurants - Milton Keynes and Covent Garden London - held a 24-hour strike action on 18 May 2018 in a dispute over minimum wages and tips. They had been given two days' notice that they would be stripped of 40% of their income from tips - a loss of up to 250 pounds per month. Workers at two other TGI Friday's locations, members of Unite, voted 100% in favour of possible strike action on 25 June, with other locations set to follow.

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

### **Uber and workers' rights**

*May 25, 2018*

Uber has introduced for its drivers a modified insurance scheme that provides them with workers' rights following increasing pressure from unions. Uber offered, since 2017, a pay-for insurance scheme to drivers to cover losses in the event of illness or injury. This scheme is now enhanced and made free for all taxi drivers who have completed at least 150 trips over a period of eight weeks, or Uber Eats workers who completed at least 30 deliveries over a period of eight weeks. Drivers can access a lump sum of £7,500 in medical cover, £50,000 for a permanent injury related to the job, bereavement pay, and sickness pay of up to £75 per day for 15 days and £30 a day for a further 15 days. According to the trade unions, the deal still falls short of what the drivers would likely be legally entitled to if they took their case to court.

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

### **Protests at Coventry University: union recognition**

*May 18, 2018*

Amidst a dispute over staff pay and conditions, the Coventry University Group (CUG) was trying to undermine union rights by setting up a ‘sham’ trade union – the Staff Consultative Group. The CUG signed a recognition agreement for it to represent staff – denying them official UCU representation. After protests and a petition named ‘Stop the anti-union dirty tricks in the Coventry University Group’ that was signed over 10000 times unions and CUG have come to an agreement on trade union representation. The agreement provides UCU with a voluntary recognition as a trade union for academic staff at the CU campuses, working alongside the Staff Consultative Group and others.

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

### **TUC reports on insecure jobs**

*May 17, 2018*

Trade union confederation TUC came up with an analysis of the features of insecure jobs. The findings show that 3,820,000 workers are in insecure forms of employment. This is 11.9% of the workforce, or 1 in 9 workers. Many workers in the ‘gig economy’ are denied key workplace rights, including protection from unfair dismissal. The union speaks about firms that falsely label workers as self-employed, outsource work to agencies or use zero hours contracts to drive down costs and dodge employment and tax responsibilities. Agency and zero-hours workers can be hired and fired at will and have no right to return to their job after having a baby.

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

### **Youngsters and the future labour market**

*May 8, 2018*

The Intergenerational Commission’s report *A New Generational Contract* is the result of a two-year study and provides a comprehensive and in-depth analysis of the intergenerational challenges the country faces, examining areas such as employment, housing and pensions. The report argues that there is a crisis of generational progress, far larger than millennial or the financial crisis, which undermines the ‘intergenerational contract’ which assures quality of life through generations. The report’s findings include: in contrast to older generations, young adults are making no income progress and accumulating much less wealth, millennial families are half as likely to own their home by age 30 as baby boomers were by the same age, future pensioners are exposed to retirement income risks.

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

### **Pay deal BBC**

*May 4, 2018*

After almost two years of negotiating unions representing BBC staff came to a significantly improved pay deal. The proposal includes a three-year deal on pay backdated from August 2017 and running until the end of July 2020. Wage increases are 2% for 2017-18, 2% in 2018-19 and 2.5%, or the increase in the licence fee settlement if higher, in 2019-20. The minimum pay at the corporation will increase from 15687 pounds to 20000. A ballot of BBC staff will open on 21 May and close on 8 June. The deal includes improvements to terms and conditions for staff covering London weighting, pay progression, parental leave, sick pay, contracts of employment and new approaches to weekend pay and night working.

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

### **New walk out at McDonald’s**

*May 1, 2018*

McDonald’s’ workers walked out of branches calling for guaranteed hours, a £10 per hour living wage, equal pay for young workers, and union recognition. The strike followed the first-ever instance of industrial action taken against the fast food chain in September 2017. Despite photographs of packed picket lines being published on Twitter, McDonald’s claimed only one worker had taken part in the action. The Bakers Food and Allied Workers Union has been in dispute with the company as it does not bargain with a trade union over working conditions for its workers in the UK – but it does in Denmark, France and Germany.

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

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