



Editorial

It was a very hot summer almost everywhere in Europe but particularly for Ryanair. The arrogant CEO of the low-cost company, who had said that hell would have to freeze over before his company became unionized, has been confronted with a series of strikes by pilots and crew demanding better pay and working conditions. This is the first time that these strikes are happening simultaneously in different European countries. The actions have been coordinated and supported by the International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF) and European Transport Workers' Federation (ETF), as well as by the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC).

The employment contracts of the Ryanair pilots show suspicious similarities with the employment situation of platform workers. Pilots are only paid for actual flight hours and not for time on the ground or hours worked due to delays and have to cover themselves such expenses as necessary overnight stays and unpredictable transfers from one base to another. They even have to pay for their own water or coffee when on board. Many of the Ryanair pilots are forced to work in complex employment structures making them operate as independent contractors which does not entitle them to sick pay and other benefits. Crew staff have been warned of negative pay and rostering consequences for those whose average sales per flight fall below certain targets.

The situation at Ryanair is not the only indication that something is moving in the sector of the allegedly self-employed. In Belgium, the Administrative Commission for the Regulation of Work Relationships (CRT) ruled at the beginning of March that the work relationship between Deliveroo and their riders cannot be classified as freelance work. In November last year, the UK's Employment Appeal Tribunal rejected an appeal made by Uber against a ruling passed the year before acknowledging that Uber drivers were eligible as 'workers' to receive paid holiday, paid breaks and a minimum wage. In July Spain's Labour Inspectorate announced that it is claiming €1.3 million from Deliveroo to cover missing social security contributions for its Barcelona-based delivery riders. The authorities consider the riders to have an employment relationship with Deliveroo and not a business one.

These recent developments give credit to the belief that trade unions have a role to play in this so-called new economy. In fact, by peeling back the layers of the platform, what emerges is a classic employment relationship economy in which trade unions can do their core business of ensuring good pay and working conditions for all.

Philippe Pochet, General director ETUI

Publications

The European social dialogue. The history of a social innovation

The Deconstruction of Employment as a Political Question

(1985-2003)

NOW ENGLISH VERSION AVAILABLE

The aim of this book is to trace the history of the social dialogue, from its origins to its autonomous empowerment, based on the testimonials of those responsible for designing and developing it, looking at the various texts from joint opinions to autonomous agreements, and analysing how the social dialogue functions.

[Read more](#)

The wide-ranging European perspectives brought together in this volume aim to analyse, by means of an interdisciplinary approach, the numerous implications of a massive shift in the conception of 'work' and the category of 'worker'.

The book, edited by Amparo Serrano-Pascual and Maria Jepsen, has been published by Palgrave Macmillan.

[Read more](#)

The untapped possibilities of YouTube as a trade union tool

This policy brief examines how trade unions can use YouTube videos as a tool for organising and informing trade unionists and workers.

[Read more](#)

The power of social media as a labour campaigning tool

This policy brief discusses how social media can help renew trade union collective action and strengthen the labour movement's capacity to mobilise.

[Read more](#)

New issue of Transfer on "work and employment grey zones" out now

The August 2018 edition of Transfer, the European Review of Labour and Research, has just been published with a focus on 'work and employment grey zones: new ways to apprehend emerging labour market norms.'

[Read here the full news item with links to temporary free-to-download articles](#)

[Read more](#)

New issue of SEER on "wage developments in Eastern Europe" out now

The latest issue of the SEER Journal for Labour and Social Affairs in Eastern Europe addresses 'Wage developments in Eastern Europe' with two articles that provide an overview of wage developments across the broader region and three that give an in-depth analysis of wage setting and labour conditions in the low-wage garment industries of Serbia and Ukraine.

[Read more](#)

Training

New online course "EWCs: the rules of the game"

This six weeks training - starting on 17/09 and ending on 26/10 - is addressed to worker representatives considering the establishment of a European Works Council in their company, newly elected members of a Special Negotiating Body or an existing EWC and union officials from ETUC affiliated organisations supporting their members in multinational companies.

This online course will involve about 12 hours of work and is free of charge. A maximum number of 150 participants will be accepted. [You can find more information about the registration here](#)

Recent events and news

ETUI Senior researcher **Magdalena Bernaciak** became a teacher in the Department of Political Science and European Studies at the American University in Bulgaria (AUBG). She will cooperate with the ETUI as Associate Researcher. Her academic interests lie in the political economy of EU eastern enlargement, industrial relations in Central-Eastern Europe, and transnational relations among trade unions.

Save the date

25/09: [What can workers in Europe expect from a post-Brexit EU Budget that declares itself to be more social, more innovative and more flexible?](#)

22/10: [New Trade Union Strategies for New Forms of Employment](#)

4-5/12: [Conference Women, Work and Cancer](#)

[If you wish to receive invitations for ETUI events, please register here.](#)

New in Reforms Watch

[EU: income distribution, risk of poverty and stalled social mobility – why reform is needed](#), 11/07

[Belgium: second pillar pension reformed - restrictions for youngsters disappear](#), 11/07

[Sweden: social partners agree on limits to solidarity strikes if the peace obligation applies](#), 12/07

[Romania: draft bill seeks to regulate parts of the platform economy](#), 12/07

[Slovakia: reform of labour market policy simplifies entrance of third country workers](#), 13/07

In the media

7/08: [Ryanair en O'Leary botsen op Europese solidariteit](#), apache

31/07: [Workers' rights in the digital age](#), euronews

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The ETUI is financially supported by the European Union. ETUI, aisbl 2018

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