

collective bargaining

Issue 10/2018 October

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

Does Ryanair want to reach an agreement with European unions?

October 25, 2018

After months of industrial action in various countries, that forced the airline company to cancel many flights, Ryanair now states that it would like to reach an agreement with trade unions before Christmas. At the end of September 2018 the European Commission ordered Ryanair to respect EU rules by giving workers employment contracts on the basis of the laws of the country they live and work in rather than in Ireland

where its planes are registered. This would mean a great improvement in the employment conditions of many Ryanair workers. In the current situation workers are hired on the basis of Irish labour laws and, one of the most 'liberal' of the continent. Local labour laws are not respected which also impedes them from accessing local social security benefits. Meanwhile several countries in Europe are still in the middle of labour disputes with Ryanair and are continuing either industrial action or negotiations (see different country reports in this newsletter).

Read on: [in English ...](#) Long read on Ryanair and workers' rights: [in English ...](#)

Legal framework for platform workers

October 20, 2018

The European Commission published a study that focusses on existing legal frameworks for emerging digital platforms and the related challenges for policy makers. The study describes the operation of platforms throughout five different phases: access and registration, selection process and hiring, performance execution and command power, rating and ranking, monitoring power, payment rewards for completed tasks. Regarding to policy on digital platforms, the study found that only a few European states have adopted specific regulations to address the numerous issues stemming from the platform economy. Platform workers have very limited access to labour protection and when no adequate policies are developed to regulate some aspects of the work, the continuing growth of the platform economy may lead to the growth of social precariousness.

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

Collective bargaining and work in the digital transformation

October 19, 2018

Digitalisation in relation to developments of work is a much debated topic. Statistics show that there are already job cuts taking place, primarily in low skilled jobs, as result of the digital transformation. However, digitalisation may also create new forms of work and workers might benefit from digital change as some of the most standardised and repetitive elements of their jobs can be taken over by machines. This summer EPSU organised a seminar that focussed on the question how trade unions can use collective bargaining to uphold and improve working conditions in the context of the digital transformation of public services. The report of this seminar is now available.

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

Downward trends in share of persons at risk of poverty

October 16, 2018

Eurostat published data that indicate a downward trend in the share of persons at risk of poverty or social exclusion in the EU. However, still around 113 million people are in this situation. In 2017, 112.9 million people, or 22.5% of the population, in the European Union were at risk of poverty or social exclusion. This means that they were in at least one of the following three conditions: at risk of poverty after social transfers (income poverty), severely materially deprived or living in households with very low work intensity. After three consecutive increases between 2009 and 2012 to reach almost 25%, the proportion of persons at risk of poverty or social exclusion in the EU has since continuously decreased to 22.5% in 2017, 1.2 percentage points below its 2008 reference-point and 1 percentage point below the 2016 level.

The news release: [in English ...](#)

Protecting self-employed workers

October 11, 2018

The ETUC study "Trade unions protecting self-employed workers" offers a thorough overview of the current situation on self-employment in the countries of the European Union. Not only does this study provide facts and figures regarding prevalence of self-employment it also focusses on how the different EU countries deal with employees' rights and collective bargaining for the self-employed. Findings include that union membership for the self-employed is mostly accepted but unions have found it much more difficult to undertake collective bargaining for their self-employed members than to recruit and organise them. Another important conclusion of the study is that self-employed workers across Europe lack sufficient access to social protection. Healthcare is the most accessible benefit for the self-employed, and unemployment benefit the least. Self-employed also stay behind when it comes to benefits for accidents at work and sickness. Even when the self-employed do have access to social benefits the level of support that is provided may be

inadequate because they do not meet the conditions or their contributions in the past have been too low.

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

The relevance of collective bargaining for development of real wages

October 10, 2018

An Eurofound report examines the development of real wages in the period 2000- 2017, and the effect that collectively agreed pay has had on actual pay outcomes in the European Union. Furthermore, the study examines if and how the relation between collectively agreed pay, labour productivity in real terms and the development of actual wages might be changing. The study finds that from an employees' perspective wages per employee have grown more slowly than productivity since the beginning of the millennium and the gap has been widening. There has also been a growing wage drifts between collectively agreed pay and actual compensation which could mean that negotiated wages are less able to influence pay outcomes. However, the report concludes that while the role of collectively agreed pay may be changing it remains a crucial element of any bargaining system and is not so easily replaced by something else because changes in institutional structures come at a high cost.

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

Austria

Unions warn for beer shortages as negotiations with brewery remain fruitless

October 30, 2018

Brewery workers are negotiating new collective agreement, that covers around 3500 workers in the industry, and demand a 4% pay increase, paid breaks on working days with more than 10 hours and extra pay when working 11 or 12 hours a day. The fourth round of negotiations remained fruitless with breweries only offering 1% more wage and salary. Unions are now threatening with industrial actions that might lead to beer shortages in the country.

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

Metalworkers union prepares for strike

October 20, 2018

Negotiations between unions and employers in the metal industry (see our September newsletter) seem to be deadlocked. Unions are now preparing for industrial action. While unions demand a 5% pay increase, employers only want to pay 2%. While employers state that they regret that the negotiations were broken off the unions are preparing for strike actions to put some pressure behind their demands. The workers council will now decide on the further course of action.

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

Belgium

Strike by baggage handlers at Brussels airport ends with deal

October 31, 2018

Civil servants that work for the federal authorities staged a protest against proposals to, amongst other things, reform the rules governing their sick pay entitlement. The reform introduces rules that enable workers no longer to save 21 sick days and transfer them to their holiday and sick pay on full pay entitlement for the following year. The changes apply to federal civil servants and the 'special corps' that include the police, the fire service, military personnel and those working for courts of law. Members of the Civil Protection Agency and fire fighters marched in their uniforms.

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

Ryanair agrees to respect country's employment laws

October 26, 2018

After union statements earlier this month threatening to organise ‘several more strike days’ before the end of the year if Europe’s largest budget airline did not radically change its position and attitude, there now lies an agreement between the two parties. Ryanair has signed agreements with trade unions in Belgium in which it declares that it will apply the country’s employment laws to its pilots and cabin crew. Similar agreements were recently made in Spain, Portugal and the UK. The newly agreed Collective Labour Agreements will come into force end of January 2019.

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

Bulgaria

Trade union positive about new budget plans

October 25, 2018

Trade union CITUB says the presented draft budget for 2019 is the closest match to the demands of trade unions compared to other budgets so far. This month the government presented the draft budget for 2019 to the Confederation of Independent Trade Unions (CITUB). The draft envisages an increase in all wages in the budget sector by 10% on average from next year.

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

Croatia

Another shipyard strike on unpaid wages

October 23, 2018

Workers at several shipyards of the Uljanik group have been on strike in recent months (see our latest Newsletters). The core problem is the delay or even uncertainty of pay. Workers in Rijeka left the premises of the 3. Maj shipyard in a protest against unpaid wages. Workers was told that they would receive their September wages, but, according to a trade union representative workers no longer trust anyone. The Rijeka-based plant is part of the troubled Pula-based Uljanik group. The group’s bank account has been blocked for 60 days.

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

Unions stand for decent work

October 6, 2018

In a joint statement, marking the 11th World Day for Decent Work, the Independent Trade Unions (NHS) and the Federation of Autonomous Trade Unions of Croatia (SSSH) take a strong stand for the improvement of workers’ rights. The injustices of the global economic system need to change. The unions called for decent and safe work, with decent pay and working conditions. Moreover, the demand compliance with labour legislation and banning of work on Sundays and public holidays.

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

Cyprus

New bill should regulate labour inspections

October 23, 2018

The government has presented a bill for consultation that seeks to establish a workplace inspection service. A framework act, consisting of 28 laws has been discussed at the House labour committee and seeks to establish a workplace inspection service so as to ensure that inspection and penalty mechanisms function more effectively. So far there is strong disagreement between employers’ organisations and trade unions regarding the necessary competences allocated to the inspectors by the bill.

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

Hospitality workers demand consultation

October 18, 2018

Trade unions representing hotel workers have threatened to take measures unless a voting in parliament on a bill for the operation of hotels is postponed because they were not consulted. The trade unions Sek and Peo said that the trade union movement was not informed of proposed legal changes that affect the work and life of thousands of hotel workers. The planned bill gives the right to hoteliers to outsource the operation of some activities to third parties. Thousands of hotel workers will be faced with uncertainty as to their future and were being left to the mercy of 'the whims of hoteliers'.

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

Czechia

Sectoral agreement ends strike alert

October 25, 2018

A new sectoral collective agreement ends almost a year of strike alert in the finance sector. The collective agreement raises standards in the industry and will come into effect starting 1 December 2018. The trade union states that because collective bargaining didn't go easily they had to use tactics like the strike alert that were never before used in the finance sector before.

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

Minimum wage expected to rise 45 euro a month

October 17, 2018

The minimum wage in the country that currently is 12200 CZK (473 euro) per month, is expected to increase with an additional monthly 1200 CZK (45 euro). Unions initially demanded a 1500 CZK pay rise but agreed on the negotiated 1200 CZK. The proposed increase in minimum wage still has to be officially approved by the two biggest political parties. Last year the minimum wage was approximately 37.3% of the average salary in the country, minimum wages have been increasing since 2007.

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

Denmark

Improving the work environment

October 15, 2018

After coming to the conclusion that the country's work environment was developing negatively in 2017 the government appointed an expert committee tasked with turning around negative workplace environment. After thorough analysis the committee of experts has now come with 18 recommendations which all point to the fact that work environment measures should take into account the actual conditions in the workplaces. The inspection should give more advice to businesses and improve their targeting of businesses and trades that are known to have work environment issues and give higher fines when they discover misconducts. Trade union 3F does not believe that the recommendations will make much of a difference if more money is not allocated to the improvement of work.

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

Estonia

Trade union plans to take ferry company to court

October 26, 2018

The Estonian Seamen's Independent Union (EMSA) wants to take ferry operator TS Laevad to court claiming that the company is undermining the collective bargaining process. This month the ferry operator broke off negotiations on a new collective agreement that started in March 2018. Furthermore, the company is said to have offered its employees various benefits in order to free it from signing a collective agreement. Ferry workers are mainly demanding the guarantee that the value of the payable salary will not constantly

diminish and insurance for work related accidents. Besides going to court, unions also threaten with industrial action.

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

Unions demand 380 euro a month pay rise for drivers on minimum wage

October 17, 2018

The Estonian Transport and Road Workers Trade Union (ETTA) and the Union of Estonian Automobile Enterprises started talks on a new collective agreement. ETTA wants the minimum wage for drivers, which in nearly half of the companies is currently 620 euro a month, to be risen to 1000 euro a month. During the negotiations both parties will invite non-member employers and drivers that to present their opinions and add proposals to the agreement to be signed.

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

Finland

Industrial action suspended as government wants to renegotiate bill

October 29, 2018

Thousands of workers took part in strike actions to protest the new government bill that would make it easier for small firms with fewer than 10 employees to fire workers. Besides a 24 hour strike on 3 October a 48-hour strike was held that mostly affected the welfare sector. Industrial action is now suspended. The industrial actions were the result of an escalated conflict on the new dismissal bill that unions refuse to accept because it undermines the rights of workers and discriminates workers that work in smaller companies (see our September newsletter). As government proposed a set of measures to the trade unions on which to negotiate unions have suspended the industrial actions and say that they are ready to negotiate.

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

Security guards strike as negotiations break off

October 24, 2018

As negotiations on a new collective bargaining agreement for about 8,500 security guards broke off because of a conflict over wages, security guards organised a 3-day strike at Helsinki airport and multiple train stations across the country. The security workers have been without a collective agreement since the beginning of May 2018.

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

France

Decentralised bargaining and labour market inequalities

October 26, 2018

A number of reforms applied since the first decade of the century to decentralise social dialogue in the country in order to reduce labour inequality between so called 'insiders' and 'outsiders' on the labour market. While union membership in the country is very low, historically a very high percentage of workers is covered by industry-wide collective bargaining agreements. The industry-wide collective agreements were once introduced in order to make sure that workers with an employer who didn't want to negotiate on working conditions would also be protected by collective agreements. To make sure that the coverage of collective agreements would drop in the process of decentralisation the state introduced a legal requirement for companies to negotiate, and ideally to sign agreements, on a certain number of subjects. It still remains unclear if the decentralisation has indeed led to a reduction of inequality because content and result of company-level negotiations are heavily influenced by the qualification levels of the labour force and the size of the firms in the sector.

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

Agreement in sight after months of strike at Air France

October 19, 2018

After months of industrial action Air France management and five trade unions that represent 76.4% of the employees reached a deal which include a 4% pay rise. Employees will get a general pay increase of 2% retroactive from 1 January 2018 and a general pay increase of 2% on 1 January 2019. The main pilots' union did not sign the agreement. Air France said the strikes had cost the airline 335 million euro. The next round of salary negotiations will start in November 2019.

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

Nationwide protest against government reforms

October 10, 2018

Together with other workers and students, rail workers launched a series of nationwide strikes against government policies, including labour reforms, which they claim are 'destroying France's social model'. The call for protests was given by trade unions such as General Confederation of Labour (CGT), Worker's Force (FO) and Solidaires, along with students' unions such as the National Union of Students of France (UNEF) and Union National Lyceenne (UNL). The protesters demanded an increase in wages, pensions, gender equality and an end to privatisation. According to the organisers of the protests around 300.000 people took part.

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

Bargained equality?

October 9, 2018

A study that was recently published in the British Journal of Industrial Relations investigates the results of employers' duties to bargain on gender equality. The study finds that despite a rise in formal compliance due to stronger enforcement of bargaining duties since 2012, most companies submitting plans or agreements do not systematically address quantitative measurement of pay or other gender gaps. Furthermore, there exists a large degree of variation that reflects sectoral differences. Based on their analysis the researchers argue that in order to promote an equality agenda attention should be paid to the resources available to local bargaining actors.

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

Germany

Minimum wage to be increased in both 2019 and 2020

October 31, 2018

The statutory minimum wage for millions of workers will be increased in both the coming two years. As of January 1, 2019 the minimum wage will increase from the current 8.84 euro to 9.19 euro per hour. On January 1, 2020 it will further increase to 9.35 euro. Government officials stated that the introduction of the minimum wage in 2015 had been a necessary and proper step and that the minimum wage needs to be adjusted regularly.

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

Talks on transition and reconversion in coal mines

October 25, 2018

The country's approach to phasing out coal through a process of just transition could provide useful lessons for other countries and sectors, like farming and transport, that seek to both decarbonise and protect workers at the same time. But an analysis of the 'German approach' can also be read as a warning that climate targets can become overshadowed by focussing on jobs and other social aspects of the transition. To articles present different points of view on the matter.

Read on: [in English ...](#) Blog Pieter de Pous: [in English ...](#)

Change in legislation to help Ryanair workers set up a works council

October 19, 2018

With current legislation it is not possible for flight attendants to set up a works council without having a collective agreement. This benefits the budget airline Ryanair. The Federal Government wants to close this loophole and offer better protection to the airline workers and therefore proposes new legislation that grant workers the right to set up a works council, even if there is no collective agreement. Trade union Verdi is positive about the proposed change in legislation. The change in legislation will come into effect early 2019.

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

Another wave of strikes at Amazon

October 1, 2018

After a series of strikes earlier this year, Amazon workers in the country organised another two day strike at the beginning of this month. So far Amazon has rejected any collective bargaining agreement with trade union ver.di that represents their employees on a national level with thousands of them being member of ver.di. The company's hostility to unions has led to several strikes and other workplace actions across Europe over the past four years. Amazon has tried to put an end to the unrest and made an offer to increase wages by 2% to 2.7%. The union states that wage changes can be reversed and security can only come from a collective agreement.

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

Greece

Walk-out at broadcaster ERT

October 23, 2018

Workers at national broadcaster ERT will organise two six-hour strikes to underline their demands for hiring and the repayment of wages that they say they are owed. Trade unions POSPERT called for the walkouts that disrupted programming on state TV and radio. In an announcement, the workers threatened to step up their action and launch 24-hour strikes if the government does not satisfy their demands.

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

Public strike announced

October 16, 2018

The public sector trade union ADEDY has called for a 24-hour strike on 14 November. The union wants to protest against ongoing privatisation and outsourcing. However, the main demand is an increase of wages and pensions. ADEDY also calls for the abolition of the so-called Katrougalos Law that recalculates pensions.

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

Working conditions surveyed

October 14, 2018

A survey carried out for the General Confederation of Greek Workers (GSEE) on the occasion of the centenary of its founding revealed that 9 in 10 employees in the private sector have faced worsening labour conditions in the years of the debt crisis. In the conducted poll 90% of the respondents said that they had suffered from reduced salaries, job insecurity and blows to their social insurance protection and working conditions in the past eight years. The trade union movement has called for reestablishment of collective agreements to safeguard workers' rights as well as the increase of the minimum wage in the private sector. Another report has shed a light on the quality of the jobs that have been established in recent years. According to the official database 'Ergani' of the labour ministry, there was a positive balance of 288,369 more jobs during the first nine months of 2018. However, 53.02% of the new jobs were part-time positions.

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

Hungary

Solidarity based social security system under threat?

October 23, 2018

The government plans to levy the cost of medical treatment from those whose social security is not paid by their employer as part of its policy to reduce the financial burden on the health-care sector. This legislation in the area of health care insurance could lead to the end of the existing solidarity based social security system. The media has reacted with shock to the news, while observers call the current healthcare system unreliable and chaotic both for the patients and healthcare workers.

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

Hungary challenges EU rules against cheap labour

October 5, 2018

The country's government is asking the European Court of Justice to annul new EU rules against wage dumping across EU countries. Government states that it is of the opinion that the new rules are a form of economic protectionism and will not protect workers while it forces posted workers out of the labour markets of other countries. The European Trade Union Confederation has condemned the actions by the Hungarian government that they say primarily wants to sell their workers as cheap labour

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

Iceland

Unions want 40% pay hike for lowest paid workers

October 24, 2018

Unions want the lowest paid workers to get a 40% pay hike over the next three years. Unions say increases are needed because living costs have also increased. Especially on the housing market. Negotiations on the issue are expected to become difficult because the union demand comes at a time were wages have already risen above inflation and economic growth is stagnating.

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

Ireland

Nurses might go on strike

October 31, 2018

Last month unions called on their member to reject a proposed pay deal by the government (see our September newsletter). Unions want a pay increase for all nurses that would set their salaries at the level of physiotherapists and demand that serious recruitment and retention issues are attended. Members of the two unions involved indeed voted to reject the pay offer. Unions will now discuss their next steps. A ballot in favour of industrial action is to be expected. Government wants to reopen talks with the unions to prevent industrial action.

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

Primary schools under threat of strike action

October 30, 2018

Primary schools may face strike actions after a government proposal to end two-tier pay in the public service was rejected by union INTO, accepted by union TUI and with union ASTI still to decide. Points of conflict were a qualification allowance worth €1,236 a year which was stopped and the fact that teachers no longer start at the third point of their pay scale. Public servants who joined after 2011 have been on lower pay rates due to cuts imposed during the austerity era. The Government's new 190 million euro package deal has not settled all points of concern for the teachers.

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

SIPTU wants to renegotiate public pay deal because of rising costs of living

October 4, 2018

Trade union SIPTU calls to renegotiate the public pay deal because of the rising costs of living. A motion at the SIPTU conference that urged public service unions to break the current collective agreement open in

order to establish a new pay deal as soon as mid-2019 because of the increasing cost of rents, mortgages and the everyday cost of living was unanimously accepted. The responsible minister said he would support a union call for the current public service pay agreement to be renegotiated ahead of schedule.

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

Italy

General strike in public services

October 24, 2018

A strike in public transport, education and health care could easily lead to a black Friday throughout the country. There is a general strike, called by the some trade unions in the public and private sectors that will last, in some cases, even 24 hours. The strike was called to protest, among other things, against government measures, the deterioration of working conditions, the reduction of the social protection system and full enjoyment of social and health rights, for public education and against the law 107/2015 for the reduction of working time at equal pay and in favour of public investment for the environment and work. In a protest against insufficient funding for the national health fund, hospital doctors will refuse to do overtime.

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

Trade union leaders present joint document

October 22, 2018

The three main trade-union confederations, CGIL, CISL, UIL, have presented a joint document criticising the government's 2019 budget plan. Although the unions see the package as a first reversal of the trend of austerity, the budget contains 'elements of inadequacy and is lacking a vision of the country and a strategic design capable of recomposing and boosting policies for sustainable development and work'. The joint document features the union priorities with proposals on growth, jobs, tax reform, pensions and the public service that the unions say are the basis upon which they intend to open dialogue with the government.

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

Caritas publishes alarming poverty report

October 17, 2018

NGO Caritas has published an alarming report on poverty. According to the charity organisation the country has an 'army of poor' who do not seem to find responses to their needs from the State. The report, which was released on the international day for the eradication of poverty, says that the number of people in absolute poverty is over five million, following a 182% increase since the start of the economic crisis.

Read on: [in English ...](#) A summary [in Italian: ...](#)

Dialogue at Bekaert plant results in redundancy deal

October 3, 2018

The management at the rubber reinforcement entity in Figline e Incisa Valdarno of the Bekaert Group announced in the summer of 2018 the decision to close and cease all activities there. The works council of the Figline site, the trade unions and the authorities were informed about the decision. Bekaert expressed its intention to start up a dialogue aimed at mitigating the social impact for the 318 affected employees. A redundancy deal was struck with the trade unions: the procedure of collective firings has been suspended, redundancy payments have been restored, as well as incentives to leave.

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

Latvia

Uncertainty about promised increase of wages healthcare workers

October 31, 2018

The Trade Union of Health and Social Care Employees is concerned that wages of employees in the healthcare sector will not increase by 20% as they have been promised. There will not be any free money for

the newly-elected political parties to realise their pre-election promises. To raise salaries, increase pensions or provide healthcare to residents who don't pay taxes the government needs to make cuts or increase taxes. The union warns that if the government fails to keep its promise more healthcare workers will leave the country which will result in severe labour shortages in healthcare.

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

Liechtenstein

Pension funds in strong financial position

October 24, 2018

A new report from the Financial Market Authority shows that pension funds are in a strong financial position and achieved an average investment return of 6.6% in 2017. Furthermore, the coverage ratio of pension funds has improved, with the average coverage increasing from 105.3% in 2016 to 111.1% in 2017. The FMA is the authority for 19 pension funds who insure a total of 40,866 people.

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

Lithuania

Worries about restricting media access to public data

October 8, 2018

The trade Union of broadcasting workers is concerned about new legislation that restricts media's access to public data. According to the union this threatens the political independence of public service media in the country. Journalists will have to pay a commercial price for the access to data and they will also have additional restrictions such as the possibility to only have access to the most recent financial documents of a company. In a letter to the Lithuanian Trade Union of Broadcasting workers, UNI Global Union expressed its solidarity with colleagues in LRT and called on the national authorities to refrain from legislative action, which would harm freedom of speech, the independence of the media and the fulfilment of the public service mission.

Read on: [in English ...](#) The letter of solidarity: [in English ...](#)

Luxembourg

Serious concerns about future of Dudelange plant

October 30, 2018

There are serious concerns about the future of the Dudelange site that currently employs 300 workers. While there are concrete plans for selling the steel plant, it is still uncertain who will buy the Dudelange site. And if the new owner will guaranty continuity in the sector. LCGB trade union quickly drew attention to the seriousness of the situation and risks associated with the sale.

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

Finally a new collective agreement for the construction sector

October 23, 2018

After 2.5 years of negotiating (see our September newsletter) unions and employers in the construction sector reached an agreement on a new collective agreement for the sector. Union members voted in favour of signing the new agreement that includes the following improvements: an increase in tariff wages of 2.4%, a single premium of € 300, a rise in the end-of-year premium of 5% to 7%, a right to training for all employees, the granting of 27 days of leave and an end-of-year bonus for administrative employees.

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

Malta

Industrial action of dentists

October 18, 2018

Dentists employed in the public sector were on strike for the past two months. Trade union UHM Voice of the Workers had called for the industrial actions that backed up its bargaining. The protest by the dentists were suspended following talks between the Ministry of Health and the Union. The Ministry said that both parties decided to move forward with their discussion on the sectoral agreement for the dentists in a structured manner with the aim to finalise an agreement.

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

When strikes are needed

October 7, 2018

The Malta Union of Teachers (MUT) was facing the question whether or not to strike, as Parliament debated a new Education Act with far-reaching implications for the teaching profession as a whole. In a long interview the leadership of the union explains the union's reasoning to first announce a strike and, later on, calling it off. Despite a consultation exercise of 2016, MUT had not been consulted about the new Act.

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

Netherlands

Union in conflict with Bovag over working on Saturdays

October 29, 2018

Trade unions FNV and CNV have given Bovag, who represents the interests of garage owners, an ultimatum as current negotiations on a new collective agreement for motor vehicles and two-wheelers remain deadlocked. One of the main points of dispute is Bovag demanding its workers to work on Saturdays while that used to be a normal day off. While the company states that workers should adapt to the changing society and be more flexible, workers are strongly against involuntarily shifts on Saturday as they need this day to be able to spend time with their families and watch their children sport. The trade unions threaten with strike actions if Bovag doesn't respond properly to the ultimatum. Besides the rejection of involuntary Saturday shifts the unions demand a 3.5% pay rise and options for elderly employees to reduce their working hours when they're close to their retirement age.

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

Unrest at Ryanair continues

October 22, 2018

Ryanair cabin crew based at Eindhoven airport organised another 24-hour strike. This time the cabin crew workers went on strike to protest a sudden decision of Ryanair made earlier this month to close its Eindhoven basis and the way they treat their employees. This decision would effectively mean that cabin crew and other staff are forced to relocate. Trade unions and politicians believe the sudden decision to close its Eindhoven basis is as a retribution for strike actions earlier this year when Ryanair workers put forward demands concerning union recognition and the application of Dutch labour laws instead of Irish laws and legislations.

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

Unions FNV and CNV call out demonstration against government policies

October 16, 2018

The countries' two biggest trade unions, FNV and CNV, are jointly calling on their members and sympathizers to come to Dam Square in Amsterdam on Saturday 10 November for a large demonstration against government policies. The unions urge the government that was intending to give billions of euro to multinationals in tax benefits, to pay decent wages in the public sector and to invest in a higher social standard. Since the plan for the abolition of dividend tax, which would give the multinationals more tax benefits, is now off the table the unions demand that the reserved money should end up with the people.

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

Norway

Workers participate in patrols against misconducts at construction sites

October 10, 2018

Construction workers and employees of the labour inspection have set up a system in which they join forces in the struggle against illegal activities on construction sites. In their patrols they will focus on violation of employment laws and tax rules as well as health and safety breaches. The system is run by employers' organisations and trade unions because authorities have not had enough resources to monitor illegal construction activities.

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

Poland

Strikes at LOT airlines suspended as talks reopen

October 27, 2018

Warsaw-based LOT Polish Airlines was forced to cancel several flights as crew members were striking to demand better pay and better working conditions and to protest recent layoffs. 67 flight crew members, one of which was the leader of the workers actions, have been fired for participating in the strike that started this month. ETUC wrote a message to support the fired workers. Following seven hours of talks with management and new negotiations planned the union suspended its strike actions. As a result of the seven hour long talks LOT management agreed to reinstate two union leaders that were fired during the actions.

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

Ryanair denies rights to cabin crew union

October 18, 2018

In an interview with Reuters Ryanair stated that it will press ahead with plans to move their staff on to self-employed contracts (see our September newsletter). The cabin crew trade union refuses to sign the new contracts that Ryanair wants to introduce and warns that the introduction of self-employed contracts means that workers will lose important rights such as maternity leave and sick pay. Many local Ryanair workers are currently on contracts provided by the parent company. They are being summoned to transfer to the self-employed contracts because Ryanair's main operation in Poland is handed to Ryanair Sun, a local subsidiary. Meanwhile Ryanair is still refusing to recognise the new union for cabin.

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

Portugal

Public strike with broad participation

October 27, 2018

The two main trade union confederations CGTP and UGTP have joined forces in a massive public strike. It is the first serious joint strike action since the current government came to power. The major problem for the unions is that salaries remain low and no major increases have been proposed in the 2019 state budget. Public sector workers have had their salaries frozen for 10 years. In real terms, this equates to a 20% loss of purchasing power. A second strike has been called for 15 November.

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

Prison workers on strike most of the week

October 25, 2018

The National Prison Guards' Union (SNCGP) call for a strike was followed by a large majority of prison guards, with a substantial effect of visits to the establishments. The action aimed to defend the rights and

interests and demanded a review of prison workers' career status. The guards also joined the civil servants' strike that was announced for Friday. There are currently around 4,000 guards working in 50 prisons.

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

Once again – nurses strike

October 17, 2018

Nurses started a second batch of a six-day strike, which began on 10 and 11 October. Round two of the action is a strike action for four days. According to the trade unions, between 70 and 75% of nurses are adhering to the action. The action aims to press the government to table a new negotiating proposal, in line with professionals' expectations and commitments that were already made. The demands are a review of nursing careers, the definition of conditions of access to employment categories, the salary scale, the principles of the system for performance assessment, the rules for and organisation of working time, and the conditions and criteria applicable to employment. Other claims are that the specialist nursing career is applicable to all public and National Health Service (SNS) institutions and to all nurses who work in them, independent of the type of employment contract they have.

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

Romania

15% pay hike to attract more post workers

October 30, 2018

Around 13.000 post workers that work for the state-owned Romanian post will get a 15% pay hike, this means on average 72 euro a month extra. The Post is dealing with personnel shortages and with the increased wages the minister hopes to attract more workers.

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

Trade unions threaten with general strike at subway

October 26, 2018

If collective bargaining a new agreement for subway workers fails, trade unions will call out a general strike that is set to take place between 10 and 15 November 2018. Trade unions are demanding a 42% wage increase and improvement of labour conditions. The management's latest offer was an increase of 8%. The current collective agreement expires end of October this year.

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

Serbia

Alarming labour market position of displaced persons

October 2, 2018

A report, supported by the UNHCR, which analyses the situation of internally displaced persons (IDPs) in the country provides alarming labour market data. The high unemployment rate among IDPs is a key indicator of their vulnerability. Almost one third of IDPs have no employment at all, compared to a general unemployment rate of 14.7% at the end of 2017. The most frequent source of income of IDPs in need is salary (for 13,210 persons), followed by 'Kosovo allowance' for persons who lost their jobs due to displacement (6,658 persons) and pensions (6,786 persons). Many of them do not hold permanent jobs but work on temporary jobs in the grey economy, and are probably registered in the files as 'other'. The total monthly income of more than 75% of IDP households is below 300 euro. The average monthly household income is 169 euro or 35 euro per household member.

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

Slovakia

Biggest wage hike ever in Slovak auto industry

October 18, 2018

Jaguar Land Rover and Modern Trade Union Aios Jaguar Land Rover Slovakia agreed on a new collective agreement for workers at the Nitra plant that includes a relatively big wage hike. Wages will rise between 5.43% and 10%. More than 1,300 people are currently working at the plant. Jaguar Land Rover aims to produce 150000 vehicles per year at the Nitra plant.

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

Slovenia

Bargaining in the chemical sector blocked

October 23, 2018

Negotiations for a collective agreement in the chemical sector ended without a result due to the refusal of a foreign-owned company to accept a compromise. Trade union of chemical, non-metal and rubber industries KNG announced that five-year talks on the renewal of the collective agreement failed, mainly because of a Ljubljana-based foreign-owned pharmaceutical company. KNG said that the talks had fallen through due to disagreement on two issues - the norms and pay brackets. Moreover, the union had signals that the main employers were willing to accept the proposed solutions.

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

Study on public sector pay

October 17, 2018

The government's macroeconomic forecaster, IMAD, presented a study on pay differentials between the public and the private sector during a wage conference. Public sector wages are roughly a quarter above private sector wages on average, which is no surprise given that about 60% of public sector employees have higher education versus 35% in the private sector. However, the authors see significant differences in terms of education: while those with higher education are paid 5-15% less than in the private sector, those with lower education are paid up to 20% more in the public sector.

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

Spain

Transition plan for mine closures

October 26, 2018

The government and the social partners in coal mining have signed a pact to guarantee a transition of the sector. Trade unions CC.OO, UGT and USO, and the National Federation of Coal Mining Businessmen (Carbunion) finalised with the government a framework agreement for a just transition of coal mining and sustainable development of the mining regions for the period 2019-2027. The agreement includes early retirement and incentivised redundancies of workers, as well as a fund of 250 million euro, spread over five years (from 2019 to 2023), to support business and development initiatives in the mining regions.

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

Postal services will strike

October 24, 2018

The trade unions in the postal services have announced a possible strike. Workers at Correos, the national postal service want to draw attention to their demands with a strike on Black Friday (30 November) and during the Christmas period (21-26 December). They ask for more investment in the service, improved wages and more permanent staff. The union that present up to 85% of the workforce at the services are still engaged in collective bargaining. If the results in the coming weeks are positive the strikes will be called off.

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

Biggest wage hike in 40 years

October 12, 2018

The government formulated a socially progressive 2019 budget plan that promises a spectacular repair of the wage decreases during the period of austerity. The cornerstone of a new partnership between the political parties that have formed a minority government is an agreement on the budget, which would include a package with socially oriented measures such as raising the minimum wage by 22%, the biggest increase in 40 years. The plans also foresee an improvement of the paternity leave. However, the budget has to pass both the parliament and the Senate, whilst approval at EU-level might also be very uncertain.

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

Deal for airport staff

October 4, 2018

A representation of the airport handling management (ASEATA) and the trade unions CCOO, UGT and USO reached an agreement over pay and working conditions that was signed at the headquarters of SIMA (Service of Intermediation and Arbitration). The deal has led to the suspension of a planned strike. The involved workforce, approximately some 60,000 workers, provides ground handling services for aircraft and passengers, including assisting passengers with reduced mobility, merchandise, mail, as well as the service of placing and removing gangways. The agreement runs until 31 December 2021, with a retroactive wage revision for 2016 and 2017 (of 1%), an annual pay increase with a minimum of 2% as per 1 January in the following years (2018-2021, 1% plus inflation compensation) and improved variable wage components.

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

Sweden

Report on working environment

September 24, 2018

A new report that examines the working environment over the past 25 years, that was carried out by trade union LO, shows reduced self-control, increased stress and greater vulnerability to environmental risks. Parts of the working environment deteriorated rather than improved over the past 25 years. Access to occupational health care decreased and sexual harassment increased. Women are more likely to experience work related stress and sexual harassment while insecure employment forms are also negatively linked with the quality of the working environment.

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

Report on income mobility

October 12, 2018

The Confederation of Swedish Enterprise and trade union confederations joined forces and together formed a labour market council for the European Union. The council is an answer to the European Commission's many recent legislative initiatives in the social policy field. With the newly formed council employers and trade unions want to work together to protect the Swedish model, that they say is more and more under pressure, and the position of collective bargaining in general. The council will meet four times a year.

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

Switzerland

Construction workers on strike

October 16, 2018

After ongoing negotiations on a new collective agreement for the construction sector, that have been ongoing this year, remained deadlocked multiple strike actions were organised. Around 3000 construction workers participated in industrial action in the south of the country and later on in Geneva to draw attention to unwanted changes in the industry. The workers protest the increase in temporary work contracts, the precarious job situation of older employees and perceived wage dumping because of sub-contracting. One of the other key issues is the retirement age of 60. In June 2018 some 18.000 people demonstrated in Zurich in demanding the government to keep the retirement age at 60.

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

Unions fight back against corporate tax reforms

October 6, 2018

Trade unions have joined an alliance with the Green Party, the Young Greens, the Young Socialists and the solidarités group to fight back against proposed corporate tax reforms with a public vote. The alliance warns that the EU pressures to reform the tax system so that it is more transparent, and multinationals are not taxed at low rates is real and that the critique should be dealt with. Furthermore, according to the alliance, the proposed reforms would lead to a fall in public spending on crucial services and encourage cantons to engage in a race to the bottom with lower tax rates.

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

Turkey

Wages still unpaid at airport site

October 23, 2018

The industrial dispute at İstanbul's new airport construction site continues with more than one hundred workers at site that launched a work stoppage because they have not received their wages for the last three months. Workers at the airport construction site organised already a strike in September due to allegedly dangerous working conditions that have caused hundreds of deaths (see earlier Newsletters). After that strike, the prosecutors ordered the detention of hundreds of workers on accusations of violating the law on meetings and demonstrations, violating the right of others to earn a living, damaging public property and inciting hatred and hostility among the people. Solidarity actions are initiated all over the world.

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

United Kingdom

Workers protest outside court as Uber faces appeal

October 30, 2018

At the beginning of Uber's Court of Appeal hearing, where the company was contesting the Employment Tribunal's October 2016 ruling that the company's drivers should be treated as workers rather than self-employed, workers held a protest outside court. Uber argues that its drivers are self-employed, meaning that they are not entitled to basic workers' rights including holiday pay and the minimum wage. The protest in which hundreds of precarious workers participated was Britain's biggest march to date by precarious workers. Earlier in October unions called a 24-hour Uber strike in London, Birmingham and Nottingham over an ongoing pay dispute (see our September newsletter). The unions asked the drivers not to sign into the app for 24 hours in a push for higher fares and more working rights.

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

More than 6 million jobs pay less than the real living wage

October 29, 2018

New research shows that there are now 2.9 million full time jobs and 3.37 million part-time jobs that pay less than the real living wage that is set at 10.20 pounds an hour for London an 8.75 pounds in the rest of the country. The real living wage is something different than the official minimum wage because it takes into account the real term costs. Over 4.000 companies voluntary pay according to the real living wage standards. The research also showed that women are overrepresented in low paid jobs. Currently 28% of all female employees are paid below the living wage.

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

Women in Glasgow strike in fight for equal pay

October 23, 2018

Supported by their trade unions and representative bodies thousands of women in Glasgow engaged in a 48-hour strike and a protest march to demand equal pay. The strike in which some 6.000 mostly cleaners and

care workers took part is thought to be the largest ever in the UK in a dispute over equal pay. As a result of the strike, hundreds of schools and nurseries in the city were closed and home care services were severely disrupted. The strike is part of a long running fight to establish equal pay between men and women.

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

Uber drivers on strike

October 9, 2018

The Independent Workers Union of Great Britain (IWGB), that represents the interests of Uber drivers called a 24-hour strike in London, Birmingham and Nottingham over an ongoing pay dispute (see our September newsletter). The unions asked the drivers not to sign into the app for 24 hours in a push for higher fares and more working rights. Organisers of the strike said that many drivers logged off the app and stayed at home participating in the industrial action while hundreds staged rallies outside the Uber offices in London, Birmingham and Nottingham

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

Industrial action in fast food sector

October 4, 2018

Mc Donald's and Wetherspoon workers and Uber Eats couriers have been staging walkouts in a pay dispute. The fast food workers have joined forces in a mutual for demand for a living wage of 10 pounds an hour for all workers and the recognition of union rights. The hospitality sector employs around 10% cent of the countries' working population. Workers in the sector were traditionally not well organised but in recent years have seen a growing movement of precarious workers that organise themselves demanding basic employment and union rights and a liveable wage.

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

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