

# collective bargaining

Issue 11/2018 | November

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

### **Report on approach to Transnational Corporate Agreements**

*November 30, 2018*

ETUC and BusinessEurope developed a report that is the result of a joint project on Transnational Company Agreements (TCA). The debate on TCAs is already going on for some years now and ETUC and BusinessEurope wanted to build on current practices in order to identify solutions that may be of support to bargaining agents. Their final report identifies and outlines key findings from interviews that were conducted with central management and union representatives of eight companies that have already concluded TCAs. They conclude that while differences in social dialogue and collective bargaining practices across Europe are often seen as obstacles, unions and companies can overcome such barriers by applying a pragmatic and inclusive approach.

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

### **Eurofound report on living wage**

*November 30, 2018*

Living wage campaigns have been launched since the 1990s in an effort to achieve pay increases for the low-paid. These initiatives calculate the income required to achieve a basic standard of living, taking into account existing levels of state transfers. In recent decades, living wage initiatives have emerged in a small number of

mainly English-speaking countries, including the UK and Ireland. Eurofound made a report to provide policymakers with a practical guide to the living wage concept. After addressing the background and multiple dimensions of the living wage concept the report ends with summary conclusions and policy pointers.

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

### **Black Friday protests at Amazon**

*November 27, 2018*

At the international Black Friday shopping event, hundreds of Amazon workers in Italy, Germany, Spain, and the UK staged mass walkouts under the slogan 'we are not robots'. They organised industrial action to protest poor working conditions and low wages. More than 600 German workers at the company's Bad Hersfeld facility walked out. In Spain 1800 workers planned a two-day strike Friday and Saturday. And about 500 workers in the United Kingdom demonstrated at five Amazon warehouses.

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

### **Relationship between workplace representation and strikes**

*November 27, 2018*

The Center of Economic Studies (CES) published a research report 'Strikes, Employee Workplace Representation, Unionism, and Industrial Relations Quality in European Establishments'. Using cross-country data the relationship between workplace representation and strikes is investigated. Key findings include that workplaces with high union representation score higher on three additional strike measures, namely strike duration, strike frequency, and strike duration. Also workplaces with union dominated work councils see more strikes than establishments with union workplace representation where union members are in a minority.

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

### **Future of social protection for self-employed workers**

*November 7, 2018*

Non-standard work and self-employment, in particular, are not recent phenomena. Social protection systems are often still designed for the archetypical full-time dependent employee. Work patterns deviating from this model can lead to gaps in social protection coverage. A new OECD report takes a closer look at existing programmes in OECD countries that provide social protection to non-standard workers. This in order to learn from the practical experiences with such approaches. The report provides seven case studies that shed light on different aspects of the social protection of non-standard workers (the self-employed, those at the border between self- and dependent employment, temporary workers, and workers on flexible or on-call contracts). At the end of the report some policy options are presented to help provide social protection for non-standard workers, and increase the income security of on-call workers and those on flexible hour contracts.

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

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## **Austria**

### **Warning strike railway**

*November 26, 2018*

Trade union Vinda launched a two-hour warning strike as last-minute pay negotiations failed. The strike is believed to have affected 100 000 passengers. After the strike both parties continue to negotiate. The union has expressed the hope to reach an agreement which is believed likely to happen as they have put a lot of pressure on the negotiations with their warning strike. Besides a pay rise unions want the railway workers to have the right to one day special leave for voluntary work, an additional anniversary bonus after 15 years of service and a four-day workweek as a compensation for the twelve-hour working day.

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

### **Deadlocked negotiations with metalworkers see first strike**

November 13, 2018

Negotiations between unions and employers in the metal industry (see our September and October newsletter) still seem to remain deadlocked. While unions demand a 5% pay increase, employers only want to pay 2%. Steelmaker Voestalpine is hit by a strike and according to the trade unions other sites are also to be affected by industrial action. Further negotiation rounds are not yet scheduled.

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

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## Belgium

### **Strikes at Bpost postponed as negotiations continue**

November 12, 2018

After five days of strike at Bpost industrial action is now postponed as negotiations reopen. The trade unions launched a week of industrial actions to protest working conditions at the postal company. Their main complaint is lack of staff and high workload. The willingness to strike was great with more than 90 percent of the post workers participating.

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

### **Women earn less than men and gap widens as careers advance**

November 9, 2018

According to statistics from the Partena social secretariat women earn an average of 500 euro on a monthly basis than men with the same educational background. The gender pay gap seems to widen as men and women advance in their careers. On entering the labour market, women earn 7% less than men. The gap in gross salaries then widens gradually, increasing to as much as 20% (650 euro a month) at the age of 60 years.

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

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## Bulgaria

### **Miners march to demand job security**

November 29, 2018

More than 2000 of coal miners and energy workers took to the streets of downtown Sofia to demand job security. The miners want the government to guarantee that their jobs will be preserved whilst closing mines to tackle climate change. Union officials say that 150,000 jobs are at risk should the biggest coal mines and energy plants in south-eastern part of the country close down.

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

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## Croatia

### **Labour shortages tackled with better wages and permanent contracts**

November 6, 2018

One of the country's leading combine harvester production plants has managed to successfully tackle labour shortages. The company has offered workers a permanent contract and a wage increase of 20% in an effort to find properly skilled workers and to motivate the stay of the existing workforce. The Zupanja based plant exports to almost all European countries and is planning an expansion of its business.

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

### **Wage data published**

November 1, 2018

Data published by the finance ministry reveal that, out of a total of 1.6 million registered employees, some 87,000 workers receive a monthly net wage between 6000 and 6500 Kuna (807 to 874 euro). This amount represents more or less the monthly average wage that is calculated at 6254 Kuna. As many as 1, 16 million workers earn less than the average wage, with more than half of the workforce (847,750 workers) grouped in the category between 2500 and 5500 Kuna. A small group of top earners (269 employees) receives a monthly net wage above 100,000 Kuna (13,500 euro).

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

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## Cyprus

### **Construction workers walk out**

*November 9, 2018*

Workers at the site of the new University of Cyprus library, which was planned to open on 22 November, started a solidarity strike. The employees of Ten Group Services, which offered support services to J&P Overseas, working at the construction site of the building walked out to demonstrate their solidarity with unpaid workers at J&P Overseas which went into liquidation in October 2018. They joined around 200 other employees of Ten Group Services who went on an indefinite strike on 31 October. Industrial observers had already warned in 2015 that J&P was poorly managed and that a collapse was to be expected.

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

### **Doctors end strike after concessions**

*November 7, 2018*

Doctors at the Paphos hospital accident and emergency department postponed their strike for 15 days to give time to the health ministry to follow up on promises that two doctors will be assigned to the understaffed department. The rolling strike started on 1 November and lasted five days. The A&E doctors at Paphos stopped work for two hours every day. Their key demand was the hiring of more staff in order to solve understaffing problems and increasing work pressure and overwork. The doctors' trade union said the postponement was a sign of good will from the workers' side.

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

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## Czechia

### **Latest Eurofound working life developments**

*November 22, 2018*

The country is facing serious labour shortages. Continuing high demand for labour has resulted in an unprecedented situation where there are no more than 0.7 jobseekers per vacancy. The lack of sufficient labour forces pushes employers to increase wages above the growth in labour productivity and offer flexible forms of work. In agreement with the main trade union confederation proposed a 12.3% increase of the minimum wage as of 1 January 2019. After disapproval from employers, coalition partners, and the second largest trade union confederation, the Association of Independent Trade Unions (ASO), the proposed increase was revised to 9.8%.

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## Denmark

### **Is there a legal basis for collective agreements for platform workers?**

*November 15, 2018*

A research article, published in the Nordic Journal of Commercial Law, examines platform work in the light of the Danish model of providing a legal basis for decent pay and working conditions by way of collective bargaining. Platforms often rely on the worker not officially being an employee. Therefore collective agreements could be questionable from both a labour law as well as a competition law perspective. The article looks further into these legal perspectives by drawing out principles from national case law as well as case law of the European Court of Justice. The article concludes that as long as the platform workers are not

genuinely self-employed collective agreements would be in line with both labour law as competition law.

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

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## Estonia

### **20% workers work unpaid overtime**

*November 27, 2018*

Results of a recent survey show that 45% of the workers working conduct paid or unpaid overtime. Only 24% of the workers are financially compensated for their overtime work which means that in one in every workers that work overtime do this unpaid. The construction sector, transport, logistics and IT see the highest percentages of unpaid overtime work. The least unpaid overtime was found in assistance and finance.

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## Finland

### **Unions want to improve situation for the self-employed**

*November 27, 2018*

A coalition of all three trade union confederations, called Itset, wants to improve the situation of self-employed workers. With parliamentary elections in sight coming spring, Itset came forward with a list of proposals. Their most important objective is to guarantee bargaining powers to self-employed workers. According to the trade union confederations the European competition legislation provides no obstacle to such bargaining. Another important demand is that national labour laws will be applied also to self-employed workers to ensure greater security for the workers.

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### **Government and unions seem to have reached agreement dismissal bill**

*November 5, 2018*

Conflict between Government and trade unions over a labour market legislation that would make it easier to fire employees who work in small firms escalated steadily this autumn resulting in strikes and other forms of industrial action (see our October newsletter). The unrest seems to be over for now as Government, unions and the private sector have reached an agreement on the new bill. It is believed that the government took back proposed rules that would make it easier for firms employing fewer than 20 persons to fire workers. Government now proposes that the courts consider the size of a business when deciding dismissal cases. If this means an end to industrial action remains unsure as union members still have to vote on the agreement.

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## France

### **Refinery strikes suspended**

*November 30, 2018*

After unions CGT and FO rejected an offer for a 1.5% salary increase, which lies below the inflation rate of 2.2%, the unions called out a week-long strike in the oil sector. The industrial action affected multiple plants but most affected were gas major Total's refineries preventing an output of 253,000 barrel-per-day. The unions now decided to suspend further industrial action awaiting the new negotiation round that is set for 11 December 2018.

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### **Teachers strike to protest cutting of jobs**

*November 13, 2018*

Teachers across France took part in industrial action to protest the 2019 education budget of the government and more funding for education. Part of the new budget that the teachers are opposing, is the cutting of 2650 positions in public middle schools and high schools, another 550 positions in the private sector, and 400 administrative positions. It was the first time since 2011 that the main education trade unions have put out a united call for a national education strike. In a joint statement, unions stress that the government is planning to cut a total of 4500 positions in the civil service; 40% of those cuts being made in education. Unions not only see the proposed cuts as a lack of recognition for the work educators put in but besides that, job cuts in secondary education are also not logical considering the demographic growth expected in middle and high schools.

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### **Mental health workers protest quality of care**

*November 5, 2018*

Throughout the country mental health professionals have been protesting for several months. In Rouen, eight of them even went on an 18-day hunger strike. The mental health workers are not protesting to get a pay rise but are instead concerned about the quality of the care and loss of meaning in their work. While staffing levels are falling, patient numbers are constantly on the rise: between 1991 and 2003, they increased by 62% for general psychiatry, with an annual increase of three to five %. It can take patients years to get an appointment.

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## Germany

### **Strike actions Real continue**

*November 26, 2018*

After earlier strike actions at the supermarket chain stores (see our September newsletter) workers from different supermarkets went on a one-day strike. Until the end of May, Real still had a collective agreement with trade union Verdi but then the company decided to go a different path. Metro, the owner of the Real chain, wants to cut employment costs and therefore employees on fixed-term contracts only get new contracts if they work for about one-third less salary. Verdi on the contrary wants to reinforce their own collective bargaining coverage. Around 2000 employees demonstrated at the headquarters of Metro in Dusseldorf.

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

### **Warning strike at Eurowings Dusseldorf**

*November 20, 2018*

Trade union Verdi and the Lufthansa subsidiary Eurowings have been in dispute over wages and working hours for flight attendants for months now. When after the 13th round of collective bargaining an agreement was still nowhere in sight union Verdi organized a warning strike by cabin crew on 20 November 2018. The strike has affected 26 flights. Union Verdi demands reliable staff rosters, better working and standby times and want Eurowings to honour the standing collective agreement by not letting service shifts lasting longer than they legally should.

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

### **Roof workers win 5.6% pay hike**

*November 1, 2018*

After long negotiations the German construction workers union IG BAU and the Federation of German Roofing Contractors finally agreed on a new collective agreement. Part of the new agreement, that has a term of 26 months, is that the approximately 80 000 employees in the sector will get a pay rise of 2.7% from December 2018 and an additional 2.9% in October 2019. A one-time payment of 360 euro for members of IG BAU is also part of the deal. According to the trade union the industry is finding it increasingly difficult to find experts for the heavy work on the roof. They believe higher wages would make the work significantly more attractive.



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## Greece

### **24-hour strike public sector in demand of better wages and pensions**

*November 28, 2018*

The country's largest public sector union staged a 24-hour strike in demand of wage and pension increases. Public sector workers have a loss in income up to 40% since the country had to accept financial deals with the European Union and the IMF in 2010. The union stated that since the country is returning to normal, after all the cuts in the past year they now demand decent salary increases.

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### **Public strike and protest rally**

*November 14, 2018*

The trade union ADEDY had called for a public 24-hours strike and a protest rally to Parliament (see our October newsletter). The union formulated a series of demands, increase of salaries and pensions that have been slashed since the start of the crisis, the abolition of social security reforms introduced by the former labour minister and improvement of the contributions, the abolition of the ENFIA property tax and other measures to lighten the effects of austerity.

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## Hungary

### **Union opposes new overtime bill**

*November 22, 2018*

Trade union MaSzSz and opposition parties' unions have protested a bill submitted to parliament that would extend the maximum allowed overtime from 250 to 400 hours. Also, employers would only have to compensate employees every three years for overtime instead of the current 12 months. Furthermore, the new bill would extend the period employers may account overtime for the purpose of calculating wages and rest days from twelve months to three years. Opposition fears that this new bill will gradually introduce a six-day working week.

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## Iceland

### **Low unemployment and rising wages**

*November 22, 2018*

According to new statistics from the Labour Force Survey unemployment levels remain at historic lows while wages continue to rise. Over the last year unemployment decreased from 3.7% in October 2017 to 2.9% in October 2018. Wage have risen 0.4% in the same time period. When inflation is taken into account the wage index has risen by 3.2%.

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## Ireland

### **Ambulance workers announce strike**

*November 29, 2018*

In a dispute over union recognition and the deduction of union subscriptions, around 500 ambulance personnel of the Psychiatric Nurses Association (PNA) announced a two-hour strike on 19 December 2018. The dispute centres on refusal to recognise NASRA (National Ambulance Service Representative

Association) - an affiliate of the Psychiatric Nurses Association (PNA) that was established in 2010. The PNA says the strike is in pursuit of its members' right to be represented by the trade union of their choice. The 1,300 workers in the ambulance service that are represented mainly by SIPTU are not in dispute and are expected to work normally.

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### **Unions goes for four-day working week**

*November 22, 2018*

In a debate on the future of work union Fórsa workers calls for a four-day working week so the fruits of technological change can be equally split. According to the union, most of the benefits of increased productivity has gone to a small 'global elite' rather than working people and this has to change. The union also sees a rationale for a four-day working week in increased productivity. By producing more with less, our needs would be met through less.

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### **SIPTU: better protection dock workers is essential**

*November 15, 2018*

SIPTU representatives have called for better protections and safety protocols for all dock and port workers following the tragic death of seafarer from the Philippines in Dublin city. SIPTU representatives have been campaigning with all stakeholders across Ireland and the UK over recent years to highlight members' concerns on lashing and securing. According to SIPTU the only way further incidents can be eradicated, or at least minimised, is through the introduction of a certified training programme for seafarers. A Safe Pass Certificate similar to the one used in the Irish construction industry should also be put in place for all dock workers as a matter of urgency.

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## Italy

### **Outsourcing of services and collective bargaining coverage in Italy**

*November 21, 2018*

Collective bargaining coverage is increasingly under pressure. It is challenged by several phenomena, including restructurings of (global) value chains, outsourcing practices, workplaces fragmentation and diffusion of non-standard forms of employment. The RECOVER project aims to analyse collective bargaining coverage in outsourced services with a view to identify coverage problems, gaps, conflicts – across different groups of workers. In Italy the researchers focused on two different outsourced activities, with high and low-qualified occupations, specifically: 1) cleaning services and 2) ICT services. In addition, a case study was conducted on a facility management company, operating in the national territory.

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

### **Journalists protest against political attacks**

*November 13, 2018*

The European Federation of Journalists (EFJ) joined its Italian affiliate, Federazione Nazionale della Stampa Italiana (FNSI), in organising a protest action on 13 November to speak out against systematic attacks against the press, as expressed by governmental representatives. FNSI called the attacks organised actions to discredit professional journalists and aimed at disorienting public opinion. A 'flash mob' will be held simultaneously in the different squares of the regional capitals on 13th November. The country's communications authority AGCOM said attacks on the media risked damaging the free press.

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### **Government plans basic income**

*November 5, 2018*

A basic income for the poor and job seekers has been the flagship campaign pledge of the anti-establishment M5S. The plan was to start with this measure in 2019, although the coalition partners diverged in their ideas

about the necessary provisions. In a recent statement, the labour minister has announced that a basic income for 4.5 million citizens will be introduced by the end of March of 2019.

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## Latvia

### **Guarantees on higher wages demanded in order to resolve staffing crisis healthcare**

*November 23, 2018*

The Ministry of Health has asked the outgoing government to ensure that health workers will get a wage hike next year. The normal procedure would be to leave this decision for the new government but many fear that remaining uncertainty about wage development in the sector (see our October newsletter) would only deteriorate the staffing problems that already exists within the healthcare sector. The World Bank and the European Commission earlier reported that multiple deaths per day could have been prevented if health care in the country would meet normal European standards. Labour shortages in the sector are the main cause of the problem. The Latvian Trade Union of Health and Social Care Employees (LVSADV) therefore has send a letter to the government demanding that they will provide 90 million euro in order to increase healthcare workers' salaries.

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## Liechtenstein

### **More employees than residents**

*November 17, 2018*

The number of employees working in Liechtenstein rose by 1,208 in 2017 to 38,661, while the country has 38,568 inhabitants of which 19,398 were employed on 31 December 2017. Liechtenstein employees therefore accounted for only 46.7% of the total workforce. In 2017 the proportion of foreign students that study in Liechtenstein but live elsewhere was 55.1%, corresponding to 21,299 people.

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## Lithuania

### **Teachers strike enter third week**

*November 29, 2018*

Negotiations between government and teachers over what teachers call un 'unfair und non-transparent' pay system and recent educational reforms seem to be deadlocked. Teachers are now entering their third week of strike. Government officials state that they can start raising wages only in 2020 because they lack the required additional 130 million euro in funding that is needed to raise wages in 2019. The Lithuanian Education Employees Trade Union finds this to be unacceptable and demands a pay rise coming year.

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## Luxembourg

### **Bargaining for a new collective agreement at Post Luxembourg**

*November 26, 2018*

With the signing of an amendment to Post Luxembourg's collective labour agreement that finally formalised a salary increase of 1.5% that was already agreed on in 2016, allowed unions to denounce the agreement and start new salary negotiations for Post Luxembourg employees. Trade union OGBL wants the working conditions of the post office employees brought back to those of state servants. At the moment half of the staff at Post Luxembourg has a public status and this work benefit from the conditions of the civil service

while the other workers do not have this status. OGBL wants an end to the current wage inequality between the different categories of personnel and

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

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## Malta

### **Union acted in a justifiable way**

*November 11, 2018*

The trade union Unjoni Haddiema Maltin - Voice of the Workers (UHM) acted in a responsible and justifiable manner when signing the sectoral agreement for the health sector, according to a ruling of the civil court. The case was brought to court by 10 individual workers in 2013 who demanded €500,000 in damages. The UHM said that the professionals wanted to be the only professionals to gain a wage increase through a promotion, at the expense of 44 other workers who were eligible for the same promotion. The union said that the 10 professionals expected that even though the government had implemented a sector-wide reform, which meant that 54 were eligible for promotion, only 10 would be eligible for that promotion.

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### **Compulsory union membership discussed**

*November 5, 2018*

The General Workers' Union has requested the Maltese Council for Social and Economic Development (MCESD) to open a discussion on the proposal for every worker to be involved in a trade union of his choice. Earlier on, the Malta Employers' Association (MEA), the Malta Hotels and Restaurants Association (MHRA) and the Malta Chamber of Commerce Enterprise and Industry (MCCEI) had stressed that it is up to an individual employee or company to decide on joining an association. The organisations reacted on a statement of the Prime Minister who had suggested in parliament the possibility of a compulsory membership of workers and companies in trade unions and employer associations.

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## Netherlands

### **Hungarian truckers entitled to Dutch wages**

*November 23, 2018*

According to a ruling by the Supreme Court, Hungarian drivers who drive for a Dutch transport company should be paid according to Dutch standards. The ruling was the result of the drivers and trade union FNV going to the Supreme Court as they successfully contested an earlier decision from the Supreme Court of Den Bosch. The drivers have Hungarian contracts and salaries but they do not work in Hungary. They do not transport goods in or out of Hungary but in and out of the Netherlands.

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### **Pension reform talks collapse**

*November 21, 2018*

Negotiations between unions, employers and the government on reforming the pension system collapsed and the three big unions pulled out. The unions say the government is not doing enough to meet their demands for a slower rise in the official retirement age, which is going up in line with life expectancy projections and is set to reach 67 by 2021 and is lacking structural solutions on most issues. Other important issues for the unions are an early retirement options for workers in hard physical jobs and accommodating self-employed workers into the pensions system. Trade union FNV has announced strong actions to reinforce its pension requirements.

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## Norway

### **First ever lockout in healthcare stopped by government**

*November 22, 2018*

After an earlier strike organized by the Norwegian Nurses Organisation (NSF) at the end of October 2018, the Association of Norwegian Enterprise (NSO) called out a lockout to all 501 NSF members under this tariff agreement. The nation's first ever lockout in healthcare. In the strike only 55 strategically selected nurses took part, as to hurt healthcare institutions only financially and not put any patients at risk. A massive lockout on the other hand could have serious consequences for the health and safety of patients. The government therefore forced arbitration to end the lockout and strike. The NSF is demanding that nurses who work in the private healthcare sector receive the same wages and sick-leave benefits as nurses that fall directly under the responsibility of the municipalities.

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## Poland

### **Strikes at LOT airlines end with agreement**

*November 22, 2018*

A two-week strike at airline LOT ended after management and trade unions reached an agreement. The workers went on strike to protest changes to employment contracts and the dismissal of a flight attendant who functioned as chief union representative at LOT (see our October newsletter). Part of the agreement is that management promised that the union representative will be reinstated and that they will start working on new pay rules. Since 2003 LOT put a freeze on hiring to permanent positions, which means new staff are not entitled paid sick or holiday leave.

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

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## Portugal

### **Cleaners on strike**

*November 9, 2018*

Cleaners from the STAD trade union called for industrial action on 9 November. The cleaners have been without a collective agreement for 14 years. The workers are fighting for a collective agreement, their rights and their dignity. This includes a 30-50% bonus for night shifts, holiday pay, a Sunday premium and the application of transfer of undertaking. The workers are supported in their struggle for a collective agreement and decent pay by ISS union representatives from across Europe.

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### **Rebuilding collective bargaining**

*November 1, 2018*

The ILO produced an interesting report on the evolution of the labour market and the recovery of the country that is now available online. Chapter 6 is completely dedicated to collective bargaining and the impact of legal and policy changes since 2009. The changes to collective bargaining imposed by the Troika – especially the freeze on collective bargaining at the sectoral level – had a negative impact on the level of trust between and among the tripartite actors, heightened tension and created obstacles to restoring a bargaining tradition. The 30 May 2018 tripartite agreement marks an important milestone in rebuilding a stronger culture of collective bargaining. It provides new rules with regard to the expiry and renewal of collective agreements, which can promote a more dynamic outcome to bargaining and strengthen the principle of most favourable treatment.

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

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## Romania

## **Subway workers strike over wages**

*November 15, 2018*

The collective labour contract of subway workers is due to expire (see our October newsletter). After unions and management failed to reach an agreement on wage increases subway workers staged a two-hour strike in the capital. Unions threaten with an all-out walkout if the government doesn't agree to their wage demands. The union wants a 42% salary hike, while managers have offered 18%. Some 700,000 people use the subway on a daily base and many are affected by the industrial actions.

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## **Serbia**

### **Collective agreement at Philip Morris**

*November 15, 2018*

A Philip Morris company signed a collective agreement with Trade Union Organisation of the Independent Trade Union DIN, ASNS SDP 'Fabrika duvana' Nis and the Trade Union of the Tobacco Producer Philip Morris Serbia. The new collective agreement will come into force on 1 January 2019 and it will be valid for the next three years.

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## **Slovakia**

### **Gender pay gap above EU average**

*November 5, 2018*

When doing the same work, even if they are more experienced, women get paid less than their male counterparts. Although the country has reduced the gender pay gap over the last years it is still one of the most unequal nations in the European Union where it comes to gender bases wages differences. The differences in hourly wages earned by men and women in the country is now 19%. According to the Department for Gender Equality and Equal Opportunities at the Labour Ministry, one of the biggest obstacles remains the occupational segregation of women. The fields of education, social work, healthcare and clerical work are female-dominated and defined by their precarious wages. Two-thirds of workers who earn the minimum wage are women.

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## **Slovenia**

### **Part of public sector reaches pay deal**

*November 22, 2018*

After weeks of negotiations and strike actions, government and three public sector trade unions came to an agreement on wage increases that are said to be worth more than 300 million euro. The agreement was made with SVIZ union of teachers and two unions representing health care employees. Meanwhile nearly 20 public sector unions are still negotiating with the government and planning a strike and protest alongside unions from the private sector for 5 December 2018. The police are also amongst the workers that are still negotiating with government and intensifying their industrial actions.

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### **Public sector unions want separate talks**

*November 5, 2018*

The public sector trade unions no longer negotiate with the government in joint talks but will instead go on to discuss their demands in separate meetings. On 5 November this approach will be applied for the first time. The government is willing to go along with this wish and said that every trade union group has the right to separate talks. However, quite probably the government will come up with topics common to all

unions at the same table. While the specific demands of unions depend on the workers they represent, all are also fighting for better pay.

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## Spain

### **Labour market data ambiguous**

*November 11, 2018*

Data released by the Labour Ministry give an update of the labour market and employment development. The number of workers signed up to the social security system increased to around 19 million citizens (October closed with 18.99 million workers - a rise of 130,360 people), whilst the official number of unemployed also increased: a total of 52,195 people more indicated that they were unemployed and/or seeking a job. Nevertheless, there is a continuing downward trend of the unemployment data over the last 12 months (by 6.2%, or over 212,000 people). The social security department explained the data in a video.

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### **Deliveroo rider is an employee**

*November 8, 2018*

Food courier firm Deliveroo withdrew an appeal against a court ruling that had qualified a Deliveroo rider as an employee and not as a self-employed. In June 2018 the Valencia court ruled that Deliveroo was not allowed to dismiss rider Victor Sanchez in the way it did when it fired him for 'lack of availability'. The court said that he should have been treated as an employee and not a self-employed contractor and said that the dismissal was inappropriate. Deliveroo filed an appeal against the Valencia Court's ruling. However, the rider made the announcement that Deliveroo had withdrawn its appeal. This makes the decision definitive and Deliveroo must compensate Sanchez for unfair dismissal and repay him €700.

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### **Strike looms at Amazon**

*November 7, 2018*

Trade unions at Amazon's logistics centre at San Fernando de Henares have called a strike for November 23 and 24, the Puente (bridge) holiday of December 7, 8 and 9, December 15 to 30 and January 3, coinciding with the Christmas and Three Kings holidays. The old agreement at Amazon has expired, whilst the result of bargaining is pending. According to the unions, the previous agreement regulated the working conditions of the centre and gave way to rights that had been historical in the centre such as the price of overtime, professional categories, the guarantee of salary increases and incapacity agreements.

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### **Closures at Alcoa disputed**

*November 3, 2018*

Trade unions have been confronted at the aluminium giant Alcoa with attacks on workers, contradicting the company's claim that it produces aluminium responsibly. The US-based Alcoa announced on 17 October that it would close two of its three Spanish aluminium smelters, Aviles and La Coruna, resulting in the layoff of 700 workers. The Alcoa European Works Council (EWC) criticised Alcoa for failing to comply with European information and consultation regulations by not consulting with the EWC in advance and not providing the EWC adequate information. The Netherlands-based EWC has filed a Dutch court claim in order to block the closure and layoff. Alcoa claims the two plants are inefficient and that nobody wants to operate them.

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## Sweden

### **Report on working environment**

*November 27, 2018*

For almost 50 years the Swedish Union of Journalist (SUJ) issues recommended freelance rates per hour as a benchmark for the fees that freelance journalists should receive for their work. This recommended rates are in line with the average earnings of an employed journalist. The SUJ has announced that the recommended fee will rise by 1.8% starting at the beginning of the new year.

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### **LO launches campaign to tackle growing inequality**

*November 22, 2018*

The Swedish Trade Union Confederation LO presented a redistribution program with proposals for measures that will help the country combat inequality. LO points out that income differentials have continued to increase in recent decades and that the country has fallen from the top of the list of the most equal countries in the OECD to the tenth place. The following 6 points are the focus of the redistribution program: 1. Set a goal for equality 2. Fairer taxation of capital income 3. Determine unfair differences between city and country 4. Unemployment and health insurance need to be improved 5. A pension to live on 6. Provide support that provides reasonable living conditions.

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

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## Switzerland

### **Unia takes action against wage dumping private security**

*November 27, 2018*

Trade union Unia has been negotiating for more than a year with the Association of Swiss Security Services Companies (AESS) for the renewal of the collective agreement. This collective agreement protects more than 20 000 employees and expires at the end of June 2019. Unia states that the new collective labour agreement for private security workers must stop wage dumping. They also want employers in the sector to put an end to working weeks of more than 50 hours. Unia wants urgent action. Besides a call for negotiations the union is launching a national petition to security agents to support its demands.

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

### **Unions demand correction in proposed minimum wages for post workers**

*November 11, 2018*

Trade unions state that the proposed minimum wage of 18.27 Swiss francs for employees in postal logistics is "scandalous". Swiss Trade Union Confederation (SGB) and the logistics trade union alliance Fairlog demand a minimum wage of at least CHF 20 per hour from PostCom. The unions state that the proposed low minimum wage is in clear contradiction to the principle of the state minimum wage policy, according to which the wage must be a living wage. PostCom thus opened the door to wage dumping in delivery services, according to the statement of the unions. Furthermore a minimum wage of 18.27 francs would indirectly also increase the wage pressure on the retail trade.

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

### **Protests in construction sector continue**

*November 5, 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 last month (see our October newsletter). The striking workers wanted to give out a strong signal against the massive attacks on the builders' collective agreement. They demand 300 additional flexible working hours and for a pension starting at the age of 60. The background of the strike action is the Landskraft contract for the construction industry, which expires at the end of the year. The unions complain that although a solution to secure the pension at age 60 is on the table, the construction workers would pay the cost of the renovation if the workers don't in return the master builders paid a decent wage increase. But the builders' association was only prepared to implement this solution if the unions agreed to a clear cut in the state coat-of-arms agreement.

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## Turkey

### **Strike at olive factory to protest dismissal of unionized co-workers**

*November 19, 2018*

After the dismissal of 7 workers as punishment for their union activities at an olive factory in the province of Izmir, workers organised protests and went on strike. Members of the Confederation of Progressive Trade Unions of Turkey (Disk) labour federation-affiliated food workers' union formed a picket line at the gates of the Taris factory for the 13th day in a row and said they would fight for their union rights.

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## United Kingdom

### **In-work poverty and combining multiple jobs on the rise**

*November 30, 2018*

Although the country currently has record high levels of employment, with over 32m people in work, many workers struggle to meet ends meet as in-work poverty is increasing. An approximate 5 million workers are paid below the Real Living Wage, which is set at a level based on the minimum income standard. New qualitative research reveals that more and more workers are therefore forced to combine multiple jobs. The workers that were interviewed had to take on additional jobs as a result of low wages, limited working hours, under-employment and job insecurity. Additional factors include the proliferation of part-time, zero hour contracts and temporary and casual contracts. The researchers conclude that along with a recommendation for more effective wage regulation, there also needs to be stronger regulation of working time arrangements with guaranteed hours.

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### **Midwives Northern Ireland vote in favour of industrial action**

*November 28, 2018*

Midwives in Northern Ireland have been consulted by their union on whether they are prepared to take industrial action, including strike action. The union decided to do so because pay for midwives in Northern Ireland has fallen behind the rest of the UK. For example, a midwife in Northern Ireland at the top of pay band 6 will earn over 2000 pounds less than colleagues at the same level in England. The Royal College of Midwives (RCM) Board said an overwhelming majority of almost 95% of its midwife and maternity support worker members (MSWs) in Northern Ireland voted in favour of industrial action.

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### **Impact of living wage on pay rises**

*November 27, 2018*

The Low Pay Commission's (LPC) 2018 Report, containing analysis and evidence underpinning the LPC's National Living Wage and National Minimum Wage (NLW) recommendations, shows that 5 million workers received higher pay rises this year than they would have had without the implementation of the NLW. When the Government announced the NLW in 2015, it set a target of 60 per cent of median earnings by 2020, subject to sustained economic growth. The impact on wages shows how significant an intervention the introduction of NLW has been in the labour market. So far, the evidence suggests the NLW has been successful in raising pay without causing unemployment.

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

### **Union organises ballot to vote for strike action at ScotRail**

*November 22, 2018*

The Transport Salaried Staffs' Association (TSSA) plans to ballot workers on strike action in a dispute over working on rest days. The union wants its members – who include ticket office, platform and control room staff to have parity with ScotRail drivers that are paid 300 pounds for working on a rest day. Another important demand of the union is that plans to outsource vital station maintenance and repair work are withdrawn.

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## **Union will go to high court to demand bargaining rights Deliveroo workers**

*November 14, 2018*

The Independent Workers Union of Great Britain (IWGB) wants to represent Deliveroo riders to negotiate on issues of pay, hours and holiday. Earlier the Central Arbitration Committee (CAC) rejected union IWGB's application to represent Deliveroo riders in north London claiming that the riders cannot be classified as workers. The court did not agree with the union's argument that the law which defines a "worker" must be interpreted in a way that gives effect to riders' rights to collective bargaining under article 11 of the European Convention on Human Rights. The union claims the CAC should have interpreted "personal service" in a way which does not exclude the right of Deliveroo riders to bargain collectively. The IWGB now goes to high court in an attempt to overturn the ruling which found that the company's riders were not entitled to collective bargaining rights because they are 'self-employed'.

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