

collective bargaining

Issue 1/2019 | January

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.

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European sources

ILO landmark report 'Work for a brighter future'

January 22, 2019

The ILO landmark report 'Work for a brighter future' focusses on transformations in the world of work and the challenges that these changes pose. One of the transformations that the report addresses are technological advances: artificial intelligence, automation and robotics. They will lead to new jobs, but those who lose their jobs in this transition may be the least equipped to seize the new opportunities. Another relevant transformation is the greening of our economies. This will lead to the creation of new types of jobs but at the same time jobs in the area of non-renewable energy will disappear. The ILO report calls for a universal labour guarantee that would enshrine the right to an adequate living wage, maximum limits on working hours, and health and safety protections. It would also enforce freedom of association in trade unions and the right to collective bargaining, freedom from forced labour, child labour and discrimination.

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

Pilot unions suspend talks with Ryanair

January 15, 2019

Pilots are angry at Ryanair management for using the closure of bases to threaten workers that try to establish a collective agreement and fight for more workers' rights. Therefore pilot unions in several European countries have suspended talks with Ryanair management. The decision of the pilots follows the closure of Ryanair bases in the Dutch city of Eindhoven and Bremen in Germany, the reduction of capacity in the German region of Niederrhein and the threat to close its Canary island bases. The European Cockpit Association described the closure of the Ryanair bases as a "declaration of war".

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

Increase in strikes by air traffic controllers

January 11, 2019

According to Airlines for Europe there is a clear increase in the frequency and duration of air traffic controller strikes in Europe, with 30 days of strike in 2018 compared with 24 days in 2017. Last year air traffic increased by 3.8% to a record of 11,011,434 flights. En route delay per flight in 2018 averaged 1.73 minutes—or more than triple the EU-wide performance target 0.5 minutes—and the delay per delayed flight averaged 19 minutes. Eurocontrol data shows that capacity and staffing issues caused 60.4% of en route delays, while weather issues generated 25.3% of the delays while air traffic controller strikes and other disruptive events accounted for 14.3% of the delays.

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

ECSR: self-employed cannot be categorically excluded from collective bargaining

January 8, 2019

Responding to a complaint in 2016 by the Irish Congress of Trade Unions, the European Committee on Social Rights (ECSR) has for the first time released a statement on the collective bargaining rights of self-employed workers. The ECSR stated that "self-employed workers should enjoy the right to bargain collectively through organisations that represent them, including in respect of remuneration for services provided, subject only to restrictions provided by law, pursuing a legitimate aim and being necessary in a democratic society".

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

When the boss is an app

January 14, 2019

According to a qualitative study sponsored by the Hans Böckler Foundation food suppliers such as Foodora or Deliveroo promise their drivers flexible and self-determined work while in fact there is a sophisticated digital control regime. The study explores the interplay between autonomy and control in the app-based management of food-delivery platforms. The researchers set out to understand how much autonomy is given to food-delivery workers and how platforms attempt to increase their control through technologies. One of the main conclusions of the study is that autonomy promised to the riders is granted to them only when they meet the performance standards set by the companies

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

Austria

Negotiations in private health and social sector interrupted

January 25, 2019

The collective bargaining negotiations for the approximately 100,000 employees in the private health and social sector were interrupted without result. Unions GPA-djp and Vida find the offer of employers for a 2.37% wage increase completely inadequate and hold on to their demands for a higher wage increase. The unions GPA-djp and Vida are now calling for action in public spaces in Vienna, Linz and Graz on 29 January 2019 as part of an action day in order to emphasize their demands.

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

Concentration of wealth still extremely high

January 14, 2019

The distribution of wealth is still very uneven. According to data published by the Austrian National bank the richest 1% of the population owns almost 25% of total wealth. And it is noteworthy that the Super rich Austrians are not included in the data. The poorest 50% of the population on the contrary only owns 3,6%. The results of the research contradict the income-based image of Austria as a society of the middle class.

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

Belgium

Maximum wage increase set at 0.8%

January 16, 2019

The desirable average wage increase is calculated at 0.8% by the Central Council of Economic Life. This percentage will be the maximum for the upcoming negotiations between employers and labour unions. The union movement in the recent past regularly declared it is time that employees get their decent share of growth and company profits.

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

Uber banned in Brussels

January 3, 2019

The Dutch speaking tribunal of commerce court ruled that the law permitted only taxi services to operate whose drivers were in possession of a taxi licence. The court overruled the company's arguments that Uber is not a taxi service, but a car-sharing service. It was the Brussels taxi association that brought in complaints about Uber because of unfair competition. Contrary to the Association's members Uber drivers are not required to meet certain standards on dress, presentation and conduct.

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

Bulgaria

Salaries not high enough to cover costs of living

January 25, 2019

According to data of trade union CITUB the average wage in the country only covers 72% of the average costs of living. This means that a lot of people in the country struggle to make ends meet. Especially so as only 30% of the population receives an average or above-average wage. However, the situation seems to be slowly progressing. While over the last ten years the costs of living in the country have increased with 25%, in the same period salaries have increased with 65%.

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

Croatia

Unions urge government to intervene at Uljanik shipyard

January 21, 2019

The problems at Uljanik shipyard, that is dealing with serious financial troubles, are far from over. After another wave of strike actions last month (see our December newsletter) delayed wages are still not paid. Trade unions now urgently asked the economy ministry to organise a meeting with the management board and the finance ministry in order to find a way to pay delayed wages shipyard workers. Not only did the company miss the deadline for the payment of the December wages, many works still await payment for September, October and November.

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

Cyprus

Strikes at Limassol port continue

January 14, 2019

The collective bargaining conflict at the Limassol port is still not resolved. After earlier strikes last month (see our December newsletter) port workers belonging to the PEO, SEK and Deok unions voted unanimously in favour of another strike, urging the government to meet their demands. Accordingly, another 24-hour strike was held on Wednesday 16 January. Union officials stated that they will deliver a letter to the president and minister explaining their disagreement with the establishment of a court of arbitration to deal with the renewal of their collective agreement.

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

Czechia

Difficult to survive on Prague wages

January 23, 2019

Data from Czech Statistical Office (CSU) suggest that that over 10% of Prague's residents find it difficult to survive on their wages. This is a result of rising rents and living costs. People in the country's poorest region seem to have less difficulties living of their wages.

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

Foreigners make up 11% of the workforce

January 11, 2019

Although an important part of the workforce is already from abroad employers still ask for more foreign workers. December statistics show that employers mainly searched for builders, cleaners and lorry drivers. Trade unions, meanwhile, are not against the influx of foreign workers but insist that they should not work for lower wages and in worse conditions than Czech citizens.

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

Denmark

Union wants collective agreement for fast-food workers

January 3, 2019

Trade union 3F is trying to establish a collective agreement for a group of fast food workers that work for several different fast food restaurants in Copenhagen's Tivoli Gardens. Many of this young fast food workers are believed to be working under precarious conditions. While Tivoli itself and other restaurants at the tourist attraction negotiate collective agreements for their workers with 3F and other trade unions, the fast food restaurants in Tivoli's food hall refused to sign collective agreements. In the holiday season 3F organised picket lines and distributed leaflets to urge the fast food companies to recognize the rights of their workers and sign a collective agreement.

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

Estonia

Increase in budget for salaries of artists and writers

January 4, 2019

In 2015 the country introduced a budget to provide salaries equal to the national average wage to a small group of artists and writers. Before 2015 there were no official funds to support artists and writers. The ministry of culture is planning to increase the budget for artists and writers salaries. With the higher budget, starting from January 2019, the amount of monthly paid salaries will increase from the level of the national

average wage to a salary that equals 1.1 times the minimum wage of cultural workers with higher education. Furthermore, the number of artists and writers that can apply for this monthly income will from 2021 onwards be raised from 24 to 30 writers and artists.

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

Finland

SAK proposes new unemployment scheme

January 28, 2019

Trade union federation SAK launched plans of its own to reform the country's unemployment security system. Over the last years there have been many changes to the unemployment benefit system. This made it difficult for the unemployed to keep up with all the new rules and all these changes made the system more bureaucratic. The SAK wants the new government to drastically modernise the unemployment scheme so that it will meet the needs of workers in a changing labour market. In this respect a special point of concern for the SAK is the livelihood of workers in the gig economy. Currently the income of many workers in the gig economy relies on adjusted unemployment benefit that is paid on the basis of hours worked, even though there may be no way to monitor the working time of such workers. The SAK proposes to put an end to the working time monitoring and instead of this, create an income register system that provides automatic access to the information that is needed for unemployment benefits. Furthermore, the SAK plans include milder sanctions and more services to adequately support the unemployed.

Read on: [in English ...](#) The unemployment scheme: [in Finnish ...](#)

France

CGT calls for 24-hour strike in energy sector

January 31, 2019

Trade union CGT has called its member who work in the mining and energy sector to go on a 24 hour strike on 5 February 2019. The strike is organised to demand higher salaries and pensions. The CGT said it was pushing to align its protest with the grassroots "yellow vests" protest over the cost of living.

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

Month long strike at Cosne hospital over unpaid overtime

January 27, 2019

A month-long strike at Cosne hospital over unpaid overtime seems to have been effective. The director of the Cosne hospital stated that they have obtained help from the regional health agency and are now able to pay up to 100.000 euro more in overtime. Without the financial help from the regional health agency the hospital would only be able to pay up to 80.000 euro in overtime. The extra money will be accompanied by a redesign of the organization so that the problem of overtime payment does not reoccur each end of the year. Unions state that they are happy with the progress and that they will consult with their members.

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

Collective agreement for ground personnel of Air France

January 11, 2019

Air France and unions representing ground staff have signed a new collective agreement for 2019. The deal will provide for pay increases of 1.8%, as well as money to finance individual bonuses and measures to make the payment of overtime easier. Last year the airline was hit by a series of strikes that had a huge financial impact and even led to the departure of the chief executive. The collective agreement, that was signed with trade unions CFDT, CFE-CGC, FO and UNSA aerien Air France comes in addition to an earlier agreement that was signed in October 2019 to put an end to the industrial unrest.

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

Works stoppage Marseille-Provence airport to denounce working conditions

January 7, 2019

Trade union CGT called Air France ground staff for a 4-hour work stoppage at the Marseille-Provence airport to denounce the working conditions. One particular problem is the organization of employee schedules. The call for a strike comes as three of their colleagues stationed at the Marseille port of call committed suicide at their homes between November and the end of December 2019. The three employees, aged between 32 and 50, were working on the tracks or were mechanics. In response to a request of the social partners, the management of Air France in Marseille has proposed the establishment of working groups to involve all workers in the organization of their work.

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

Germany

Security staff airports strike in demand of better wages

January 16, 2019

Trade union Verdi called security staff at various airports around the country to go on a full day warning strike as negotiations on wages for the 23.000 security workers remain deadlocked. The workers want a wage increase that will lead to them earning at least 20 euro per hour and furthermore they want their working conditions to improve as well. According to the union there is high strike readiness under the workers which underlines that they are ready to stand up for their demands.

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

Poor pensioners

January 9, 2019

Official figures from the Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs indicate that in 2016, 48% of retirees had a state pension of less than 800 euro a month. Raising the bar to 1,000 euro, the proportion is 62% of the total number of retirees (almost 11.5 million people). According to the authorities state pensions are often supplemented by income from private funds or pension schemes offered by companies. Data on the number of pensioners who benefit from this extra income are not available. Poverty in old age is especially prevalent amongst women. Poverty in old age is expected to increase from 16.2% today to 20.2% in 2036.

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

Union asks for a member bonus

January 6, 2019

In the context of declining union membership and protection of workers through collective bargaining, trade union DGB asks for a bonus for union members. The union believes that union members should be rewarded in the collective agreement because they contribute to strengthening of the collective bond and help to preserve the social peace. One possibility that the DGB put forward is that union members get a bonus, or more vacation days.

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

ATM workers strike for 1.50 euro an hour pay rise

January 2, 2019

Trade union Ver.di called a three-day strike in demand of an 1.50 euro hourly wage raise for its around 12,000 drivers and others workers in the money-transport branch. The increase would amount to around 250 euro a month. The union also want equal pay rates for workers in the former East German states, many of whom earn less than their counterparts elsewhere in the country. The question is how much impact the strike will have. At another strike in 2015 when the union was seeking improved high-risk insurance, some ATMs ran out of cash but cash as a portion of overall turnover dropped below 50% in 2017.

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

Greece

Minimum wage to rise with 11%

January 28, 2019

The first increase in the country's minimum wage in nearly a decade is a fact as government announced that the standard monthly minimum wage would rise by 11%, from 586 euro a month to 650 euro a month. More than 800.000 workers will be directly affected by the minimum wage increase. As part of the austerity measures, in 2012 the country was forced to cut back minimum wages 22% to 586 euro a month. The planned wage increases were agreed in consultation with EU lenders and must be approved by parliament to take effect in February.

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

Post workers strike to protest further cut downs

January 23, 2019

Workers at the Greek postal service (ELTA) staged a one-day strike to protest plans for further cut downs in the postal service. Part of the plan is the firing of 2300 workers and shutting down 220 more branches. The proposed cuts will leave many rural parts of the country without a post office. Furthermore the union states that the ELTA should be modernized and join parcel services.

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

Hungary

Week-long strike at Audi ends with pay deal

January 30, 2019

After a week of industrial action at the nations' Audi plant, unions and management reached a deal on an 18% wage increase. Thousands of workers participated in the strike actions. The workers at the Audi plant were demanding an 18% wage increase because of what they considered an unfair wage gap with colleagues working for Volkswagen Group's other factories in eastern Europe. Unions also pointed out that Volkswagen pays much higher salaries to workers in other European countries.

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

Iceland

Labour peace might be under pressure

January 4, 2019

At the start of the collective bargaining season it is clear that some industrial unrest may well be expected. While the government states that the budget leaves little to no room for wage increases the three big trade unions united in the demand to raise the minimum wage by about 40%. The unions justify this demand because current minimum wages are insufficient to cover the costs of living. The unions stated that they are ready to fight for their demands and that they will join forces in this year's collective bargaining. Together the unions have a huge part of the workforce behind them. In reaction to the wage demands of the trade unions, the government is already threatening to reconsider proposed tax cuts to the country's lowest paid workers.

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

Ireland

Pay dispute leads 35.000 nurses into strike

January 31, 2019

Some 35.000 nurses that are members of the Irish Nurses and Midwives Organisation (INMO) went on a 24-hour strike on 30 January in a dispute concerning pay and staffing shortages. The union demands a 12% pay increase. This was the second massive strike in the history of the INMO. The Government responded that giving special pay rises to nurses would undermine the public service agreement. Further strikes are

expected as the industrial action, so far, has not forced a breakthrough. The next day of strike action is planned for next Tuesday, February 5, with further strikes planned for February 7, 12, 13 and 14.

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

Ambulance workers on strike

January 22, 2019

Some 500 national ambulance service workers staged a ten-hour strike which caused a lot of disruption. During the work stoppage they only responded to emergency situations that might be life threatening. The ambulance workers, that are organised in the Psychiatric Nurses Association (PNA), are having a dispute with their employer over union representation rights. As a result of the strike action government deployed emergency defence forces ambulances and paramedics to help provide services for patients. Trade unions SIPTU, UNITE and FORSA are recognised as parties representing the national ambulance workers but members of PNA state that they were not feeling represented by these unions and therefore they want their new union to be a recognised negotiating partner as well.

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

Workers at Allied Irish Banks get 3% pay hike

January 10, 2019

Finance trade unions and the Allied Irish Banks (AIB) agreed upon a new collective agreement that includes an average 3% pay raise for AIB workers. The 3% pay hike consists of two elements: a fixed element to cover the increased costs of living and a performance-related element. The average increase of 3% is set to apply to 80% of employees across the bottom three staff levels covered by the collective bargaining agreement. About a fifth of the employees are currently on a salary below the minimum proposed ranges for the three staff levels.

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

Italy

Exploited migrant workers

January 17, 2019

It has proven very difficult to tackle the problem of the exploitation of migrant workers in the country's agricultural sector. After multiple strike action by migrant workers who were protesting harsh working conditions and underpayment in September 2011 the country passed a law that introduced "unlawful mediation and labour exploitation" as an offense carrying up to eight years in prison. Up until then, people who exploited migrant workers didn't risk much more than a 50 euro fine. In 2016, the law was extended to employers in a bid to drive down the demand for intermediation. But despite the new laws the problem has persisted due to the workers' extreme vulnerability and their exposure to blackmail, if they're undocumented or their residence permit is directly dependent on their employer. A young Cameroonian migrant has come forward with a whole new approach to tackle the problem, he hopes that consumers' choices in time will put an end to exploitation of migrant workers. With the introduction of an ethical label for products like tomato sauce consumers will be able to identify ethically-sourced products.

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

Sit-in to protest non-renewal of jobs at call centre

January 15, 2019

Workers and their trade union organised a sit in action in Calabria in the square in front of the offices of Abraham Customer Care call centre. The workers are angry that their 400 fixed-term contracts will not be renewed. The company defends the decision to not renew the contracts with the rules laid down by the Dignity Decree according to which workers after a period of 24 months on fixed-term contracts must be offered a permanent position.

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

Air traffic controllers stage four-hour strike

January 11, 2019

Air traffic controllers and their trade unions UNICA, UGL-TA, and Assivolo Quadri went out a four-hour strike on 11 January 2019 to protest the non-renewal of labour contracts and to express their discontent with the air navigation service provider's (ENUV) new business plan. ENUV's new business plan calls for a transition to a new high-tech model of remote air traffic control that will require personnel to move to other cities and learn new technologies. According to the unions the new business plan will result in job losses and will have a negative impact on remaining staff. Unions state that they cannot stand behind the ENUV's plans that demand social sacrifices from their workers, while at the same time the company is paying astronomical dividends to shareholders. Due to the strike actions, that affected Brindisi, Catania, Genoa, Milan, Perugia, Pescara, Rome and Turin airports, hundreds of flights were cancelled.

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

Latvia

Forming government plans to increase minimum wage

January 11, 2019

In an initial declaration that will now be discussed with the social partners, the forming government has put forward its priorities. One of the priorities is the strengthening of the national economy. Part of the plan to strengthen the economy are an increase in the minimum wage and reforms in the tax system. The forming government wants to establish a transparent tax policy that includes a further transition of the tax burden from labour taxes to indirect taxes and pushing non-taxable minimum closer to the minimum wage.

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

Liechtenstein

Fight against modern slavery

January 9, 2019

Although slavery is legally forbidden around the globe it still exists in several forms. According to estimations by the UN around 40 million people live in some way of slavery world-wide. Inhabitants of Western countries come across slavery when buying food, clothing or telecommunication devices. To fight this the government set up a commission. This action was provoked by the fact that the financial world can do more in this respect. During this month the country will host an international conference on modern slavery and human trafficking. Best practices how to fight it will be developed.

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

Lithuania

Next steps in resolving wage conflict with teachers

January 24, 2019

After a six-week long strike in a dispute over wages and class sizes, that ended December 2018 (see our December newsletter) when both parties agreed that improvement to the payment model will be made, the minister has invited trade unions to further discuss the agreed improvements. The responsible minister states that he is not opposed to the idea of teachers' wages rising by 20 to 30% but in order to do this successfully there is need for national consensus and a long-term plan.

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

Luxembourg

Unemployment drops by 12%

January 21, 2019

The latest data by the unemployment agency Adem has decreased by 12% over the last year. At the end of 2018 there were 15,186 unemployed in the grand duchy. Five out of every one hundred employee was out of

a job. Earlier this month Adem announced jobseekers are now allowed to register online instead of signing up in person at one of the seven regional agencies.

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

Malta

Union urges its members to only attend patients accompanied by a colleague

January 27, 2019

The General Workers Union is worried about unfounded allegations being made against their members. Therefore care workers, nursing aides and health assistants working in public hospitals and residential care facilities have been urged by their union to only attend to patients if accompanied by a colleague. Nursing aides and health assistants should be assisting nurses but according to the union there is a lack of supervision. When health workers attend to patients alone and the patients file a complaint there are no witnesses to prove their innocence.

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

One of the lowest proportions of young people in risk of poverty

January 22, 2019

According to Eurostat data in 2017 5,1% of the young and employed people in the country were at risk of poverty. This is one of the lowest proportions of young people aged 18-24 in work and at risk of poverty in the European Union. The average proportion of young people at risk of poverty EU-wide was estimated to be 11%, this is 1,1% below the figure for 2016. Individuals are identified as being at risk of poverty if their income after social transfers is less than 60% of the median income.

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

Netherlands

Court rules: Deliveroo workers are employees, not self-employed

January 17, 2019

A court ruled that Deliveroo wrongly classifies its workers as self-employed in two cases filed by union FNV. Because there is an employment contract Deliveroo should consider its deliverers employees. There exists an authority relationship, hence delivery workers are not really free to schedule their workday as they please. The collective bargaining agreement for professional goods transport is valid for the deliverers, even retroactively. Deliveroo will appeal against the ruling.

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

Biggest union confederation discusses basic income

January 16, 2019

The FNV (Dutch Confederation of Labour Unions) starts a discussion on the feasibility of basic income as a means to reach a more honest division of work, income and wealth. The starting point of the discussion is a research report by Paul de Beer and Wieteke Conen in which the authors conclude that not only the active part of the potential labour population has grown over the latest 40 years but at the same time inequality has also risen.

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

Career paths of temporary workers

January 10, 2019

In a recently publishes research paper multichannel sequence analysis of labour market positions and incomes is applied to create a typology of careers starting with temporary employment in the Netherlands. The most important research conclusion is that making the distinction between traps and stepping stones only does not fully render justice to the large variety in temporary employment trajectories that is observed in the Dutch labour market: although 29.6% of the careers can be classified as stepping stones and 39.7% as

traps, about a quarter (24.7%) of the individuals follow a career that does not fit into the original trap and stepping stone scenarios, because they combine high income security with low employment security or vice versa, or because the permanent contract was not the final outcome in the career.

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

Norway

Distribution of income is getting more unequal

January 5, 2019

New data from Statistics Norway shows that the pay gap is increasing, especially in the public sector. In a period of ten years, from 1997 to 2007, the difference between those who earn the most and the least has become much bigger. In 1997 the average monthly salary for people in the first decile was 2.8 times higher than in the lowest decile while in 2007 this had risen to a salary that was 3.8 times higher than the salaries paid in the lowest decile. According to Statistics Norway an important explanation for the increased pay gap is the increase in pay for top executives. According to OECD data, in the period of 2000- 2015 income inequality in the country grew more than in most other countries.

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

Poland

Government will pay minimum pension to mothers of four or more children

January 22, 2019

The Prime Minister explained to a news conference that this government's new "Mum 4 plus" programme aimed to benefit "mothers and grandmothers who have devoted their lives to bringing up children" and deserved "gratitude and respect" from society and state authorities. The new social assistance programme is designed to solve the problem of women who have given birth to and raised at least four children but have not acquired the right to a minimum state pension. The maternal pensions will benefit nearly 90,000 citizens.

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

Portugal

CGT union claims that privatisations have had negative effects

January 18, 2019

According to trade union federation CGTP, the privatisations that were carried out in the last decades harmed workers and worsened the quality of public services. During a meeting the union stated that workers in companies involved in privatisations had lost rights and working conditions and that privatisations led to an increased inequality between the coastal areas and the inland areas where essential public services have been cut down.

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

Public sector union announces national strike

February 17, 2019

Public sector trade unions called out a national strike for 15 February 2019 in order to demand higher wages. The unions are angry with the government's lack of proposals to raise salaries in the public sector. The government proposed to raise salaries for the public service from 580 euro a month in 2019 to 635.07 euro a month in 2019 but unions demand a bigger increase in wages. The salary increase in 2019 is expected to cover around 70.000 civil servants and could cost 50 million euro.

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

Dockworkers plan new wave of strikes

January 4, 2019

Dockworkers announced new strikes in a dispute over anti-union practices and the prevalence of casual labour. At the end of last year, the dockworkers at Setúbal port also held a month-long strike (see our November and December newsletter) that paralysed the port and prevented the export of cars from the nearby Volkswagen plant. Trade union Sindicato dos Estivadores e da Atividade Logística (SEAL) has presented notice of strikes at national ports for six months, between 16 January 2019 and 1 July 2019. SEAL argues that with the agreement at Setúbal port the problems identified in the other national ports are not met.

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Romania

Railway workers demand 50% pay rise

January 22, 2019

After collective bargaining by trade unions in other state-owned companies proved successful, with wage increases up to 20%, the trade unions representing the workers of the state railway company demand a 50% wage increase. The union declared that if their demands are not met they will organise a protest rally on 4 April 2019.

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Strike coalminers ends with wage deal

January 17, 2019

A weeklong strike by coal miners at the state-owned coal and power complex CE Oltenia (CEO) ended with a pay deal. The strike at CEO, that provides about 30% of the electricity that the country needs, started when negotiations on the unions demand for a 45% wage increase failed. After a local court declared the strike illegal the union and company management reached a deal that put an end to strike. Besides an agreement on a wage hike the mining company has agreed not to punish the workers who participated in the strike.

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Serbia

Living standard on the rise

January 10, 2019

According to economists the living standard for the average citizen will increase by 4% at the beginning of this year. Predications are that both production levels and the purchasing power in the country will stay on the rise the coming years. Experts predict that banks will have no justification to increase their interest rates in the coming year and that the prices of real estate will not decrease. Furthermore, they believe that in five more years that see a 4% increase in real wages the purchasing power of the people living in Serbia could go up by over 20%.

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Slovakia

Dangerous substances at construction site or scaremongering?

January 17, 2019

Several media outlets reported there had been a potential leak of dangerous substances at the construction site on the R7 dual-carriageway. However, no dangerous substances were measured in the air. The health problems of workers have also not been confirmed. The police will now check whether a crime such as scaremongering has been committed because the incident looks like false alarm.

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Strike alert at railway infrastructure

January 11, 2019

Trade unions at state-owned railway infrastructure operator ZSR launched a strike alert because after the expiration of the collective agreement the director general issued a unilateral internal regulation. According to the trade union organisations, the director on his own decided by this regulation to guarantee the benefits he had selected without agreement with his partners.

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Slovenia

Brain drain puts productivity growth under pressure

January 17, 2019

According to a bulletin published by the central bank, the productivity growth of the country is under pressure because many medium and high skilled workers continue to leave the country in order to find employment elsewhere. The country's economy is therefore increasingly depending on migrant workers. The foreign worker population is, however, less educated than the domestic population. Experts warn that if this brain drain will continue the country's productivity growth could become too low to keep up with most developed countries.

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Spain

Unions and employers reach new agreement for construction sector

January 31, 2019

Trade unions and employers have reached an agreement in the construction sector that sets the minimum wage for the sector at 16,599.81 euros per year and includes a salary increase of 2.25% for the year 2019, 2.25% for the year 2020 and 2.50% for the year 2021. The agreement, which affects more than 835,000 people, furthermore includes improvements in the area of health and safety and the improvement of mandatory retirement. The parties have also committed themselves to create a working table to study the specific situation of long-term contracts in the sector.

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Industrial conflict postal services ends with solid collective agreement

January 18, 2019

A long-running industrial conflict at the Spanish Post, that included multiple strike actions and protests, has ended with a new two-year collective agreement. Unions UGT, CCOO, CSIF and Sindicato Libre are satisfied with the new agreement that is believed to be one of the best agreements in the history of the Spanish post. Key elements of the new agreement include: a wage increase of 11.74%, 12,000 new permanent job vacancies, the decrease of temporary employment at the Spanish post from 30% to 8%, a voluntary early retirement scheme and the elimination of the compulsory nature of Saturday shifts

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

Big trade union manifestation in February

January 9, 2019

Trade unions the General Union of Workers and Workers' Commissions announced a massive demonstration in Madrid to be held on 8 February 2019. The two trade unions want the government to reverse a number of reforms in the country's labour legislation that were introduced during the peak of the Eurozone crisis. The unions also oppose changes to pension rules that state payments will be reassessed according to factors including life expectancy which came into force at the start of this year. The government has promised to reverse some of the most controversial parts of the labour and pension reforms, but the trade unions are becoming increasingly impatient.

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Breakthrough in industrial conflict Ryanair

January 8, 2019

Announced industrial action by Ryanair staff in Spain (see our December issue) was called off as Ryanair and trade unions seem to have reached an agreement in their 1.5 year-ongoing dispute over workers' rights. According to the unions Ryanair finally agreed that it will apply Spanish labour laws to the workers that are based in the country and that they will also start collective bargaining as off immediately.

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Sweden

Strike hits ports around the country

January 23, 2019

Around 1000 dockworkers took part in a 3-hour strike that affected 15 ports around the country. The reason for the strike is a conflict between the dockworkers' union and port owners over union representation that has been going on since 2016. The dockworkers are currently covered by a local agreement with the transport workers' union, but they want their own dockworkers' union to represent them in negotiations on a new collective agreement for dockworkers. In reaction to the 3-hour strike the port operator imposed a lockout on the striking workers which prevented 1000 of them from working the rest of the day and evening.

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Switzerland

Victims of asbestos fund also supports those left behind

January 18, 2019

The fund that compensates victims of asbestos decided to pay also indemnification to family members left behind. At the same time the group of victims liable for compensation was enlarged. Originally only those whose mesotheliom has not been recognized as an occupational disease such as hobbyists were supported. From now on persons whose disease has been recognized as an occupational disease can also apply for compensation. Each year about 12 persons fall victim to lethal asbestos cancer.

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Second most part-time workers in Europe

January 17, 2019

Part-time work continues to increase, with now over a third of employees working less than 90%. The figures show a marked increase in part-time work over the past 20 years: from 26.3% to 36.7%. This puts Switzerland second in Europe for part-time working, behind resounding leader the Netherlands, where 50.7% of the population work less than 100%. Swiss neighbours Germany (28.2%), France (18.8%) and Italy (18.7%) all have lower levels of part-time work; in Europe, Hungary (4.8%) and Bulgaria (2.4%) have the lowest levels.

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Turkey

Twelve-day strike Izocam ends as new collective agreement is signed

January 30, 2019

A twelve-day strike at wool factory Izocam, a subsidiary of Saint-Gobain, has ended with a new two-year collective agreement with major improvements for workers. The collective agreement that is signed by union Kristal-İş includes increased allowances and a significant wage increase and the acknowledgement of trade union rights. After twelve days of the strike, the company agreed to meet with workers' representatives and

on the same day the new collective agreement was signed. In addition, three workers who were unfairly dismissed for leading the organizing drive will receive 18 months compensation.

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Railway workers win 25% wage rise

January 11, 2019

Workers of the Railway Workers Union İzmir branch went on strike in demand of a 28% wage rise as part of their new collective agreement. After a month of strike actions, the strike was postponed due to a presidential decree. After new rounds of collective bargaining workers and railway management finally reached an agreement. According to the agreement, 449 workers will get a 25% wage rise, amounting to an increase of 700 Turkish Liras in their monthly salaries.

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United Kingdom

Union members reject pay offer Cosla

January 30, 2019

In a recent ballot the members of trade union Unite voted by 55% to 45% to dismiss the latest offer from Cosla. Unite recommended a rejection of the pay offer, which would give a 3.5% rise this year for those earning under 80.000 pound with 3% increases next year and in 2020 for all staff. The union is concerned that the deal does not include a “trigger clause” to reopen talks if Brexit leads to a rise in inflation. Furthermore, they are not satisfied with the pay offer that they say fails to restore local authority workers to the levels of real terms pay from 10 years ago. The union warned that if no agreement is reached the local authority workers might go on strike.

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Strike actions expected at Luton airport

January 30, 2019

Baggage handlers and check-in staff of Luton airport are to stage a series of one-hour strikes in a dispute over security and an imposed pay freeze. The Transport and General Workers Union said the stoppages were being ordered in protest of cuts in security jobs at the airport which it claimed posed a threat to safety. According to the union 590 jobs would be lost under cost-cutting plans instead of the originally proposed 200, the union sees this as an alarming development for the security at the airport. Last month the cleaners at Luton airport also went on strike (see our December newsletter). The cleaners won a 5% wage increase for day shift workers and a 6% pay increase for cleaners who work night shifts.

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Uber drivers on strike in demand of worker's rights

January 21, 2019

Uber drivers that are members of the Independent Workers Union of Great Britain (IWGB) are going to strike by not using the app for 24 hours and hence being not available for work. The Uber drivers demand an end to deactivation of drivers and want more respect for workers' rights. Uber lost a court battle two years ago when an employment tribunal found against its classification of drivers as independent contractors, although the company continues to appeal against that ruling. Uber's continued appeals have meant that ruling has not yet been implemented.

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Glasgow city council makes 500 million pounds deal to settle equal pay dispute

January 17, 2019

The Glasgow city council confirmed there is a 500 million pounds agreement in principle on payments to resolve historical unequal pay claims. The women have been fighting for twelve years to get the compensation for the years that they did not receive equal payments for their work for the city council. Besides legal cases they brought to court the women also organised massive demonstrations and a 48-hour

women's equal pay strike last year. The council aims to pay the 500 million pounds bill by borrowing money and mortgaging some of its buildings.

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Scottish teachers on strike in demand of pay rise

January 16, 2019

Trade unions have called out a 24-hour strike at various schools in Scotland in demand of a pay rise that does justice to the increased costs of living. Unions' claim teachers' pay has fallen 20% in real terms in the past decade and say that a significant increase is needed to show teachers they are valued and to help boost staff recruitment and retention. Colleges are offering a 2.5% cost-of-living rise. While some teachers had significant pay rises over the last years a part of the Scottish teachers haven't seen a pay rise in over three years. It is the third time in four years that colleges across the country have been hit by industrial.

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