

collective bargaining

Issue 2/2019 February

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.

 DE BURCHT | 

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European sources

Right to strike in the public sector

February 15, 2019

The right to strike has often been restricted for public service workers and in recent years has come frequently under attack. Making use of 35 country factsheets provided by the ETUI, EPSU has published an extensive article that covers recent challenges to the right to strike, an analysis of which workers are denied the right to strike, the restrictions related to essential and minimum services, government action to prevent or suspend strike action in the public sector and procedural barriers to exercising the right to strike.

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

Impact of Paris climate agreement on employment

February 12, 2019

Eurofound published a report that analyses the potential employment and economic impacts of the Paris climate agreement across sectors and occupations in the European union. The analysis is carried out using the E3ME macro-econometric model which provides information on sectoral impacts, together with the Warwick Labour Market Extension model for occupational analysis. Further analysis of the employment developments in Europe are undertaken using Eurofound's European Jobs Monitor. The report highlights that the impact the climate agreement is positive for the EU as a whole, although with considerable variation between sectors. The positive impact on employment is largely due to the investment required to achieve this transition, along with the impact of lower spending on imported fossil fuels.

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

Annual report on intra-EU labour mobility

February 8, 2019

The European Commission's annual report on intra-EU labour mobility provides updated information on labour mobility trends in EU and EFTA countries. Annual developments in stocks and flows are analysed in the perspective of longer-term trends. The analysis considers the mobility of all working-age citizens (20-64 years) as well as the mobility of those who are active (employed and unemployed). The report also looks at indicators of economic integration of mobile citizens, such as employment/unemployment rates and occupations. This year two specific topics on the qualifications and the household composition of the EU-28 movers are further analysed. The report shows that the large growth in mobility seen in 2015 and 2016, has slightly slowed down. Intra-EU mobility is still increasing but with a slower speed than before.

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

Collective bargaining in outsourced services

February 7, 2019

The growth in outsourcing is exerting a strong impact on collective bargaining institutions. Outsourcing does not only reshape company boundaries but at the same time also fragments the representation base of trade unions. The RECOVER project focusses on the difficulties regarding collective bargaining in outsourced services in Europe. The report consists of six separate country studies: France, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland, Spain and the United Kingdom. For each country the collective bargaining coverage gaps and/or conflicts of workers in outsourced services at sectoral and company level are examined by focussing on two different cases per country. The report also provides some policy guidance in order to ensure inclusive and effective collective bargaining coverage.

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

European Council wants to deny public service workers EU-protection

February 5, 2019

The European Parliament and the Council (our governments) are negotiating on a European Commission proposal to improve the rights of workers to transparent and predictable working conditions. According to EPSU, the European Council seeks to deny large groups of public service workers EU this new minimum protections. At the end of 2017, the European Commission presented a proposal for a directive on transparent and predictable working conditions that would apply to all workers. The European Parliament made several improvements to the Commission's proposal, but at the same time made it worse by allowing for workers in the army, police and emergency services to be treated differently and denied certain rights and protections. European trade union institutions finds this discriminatory and wants to see all workers, starting from those on zero-hour contracts covered by the new directive on transparent and predictable working conditions.

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Austria

New collective agreement publishing sector

February 15, 2019

In the most recent round of negotiations a new collective agreement for commercial publishing industry workers was agreed that includes a pay rise of 2.6% from 1 January 2019 onwards. This means that salaries will increase with at least 50 euros a month, salaries will be rounded up to full euro amounts. Existing overpayments remain upright. The apprenticeship allowances will be raised to 600 euro in the first year of apprenticeship and to 750 euro a month in the second year of apprenticeship.

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

Rights of young workers

February 4, 2019

Young workers celebrate the halt to neoliberal governmental plans to roll back their labour rights. A petition, demonstrations and meetings sufficed to make the government withdraw their plans to the labour rights of young workers. The ÖGJ (Austrian Union Youth) was mainly responsible for the actions to safeguard the obligation of companies with more than five young workers to install a 'Jugendvertrauensrat' (a council to defend the rights of young workers).

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

Belgium

National strike in demand of better pay

February 26, 2019

Workers from a number of sectors went on strike to enforce the unions' demand to raise wages by 1.4% and improve working conditions, including old age pensions. The strike paralyzed parts of the public sector and traffic, like airports. Dockworkers in Antwerp also laid down their tools to support the demands. The united union movement regarded the strike a success. On 26 February 2019 an agreement was reached between unions and employers which includes a wage raise of 1.1%. Members will vote for or against the agreement next month.

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

Union victory at Ryanair

February 26, 2019

Around 50% of Ryanair cabin crew in Belgium used to be employed by Crewlink, a subcontractor of the Irish low-cost airline. Ryanair has announced that the workers concerned will be offered to sign an employment contract with Ryanair itself. According to the unions Crewlink was working with even worse employment conditions than those of Ryanair. A part of the staff that was employed by Crewlink did not even have a minimum number of guaranteed working hours and therefore had no minimum financial security. Furthermore, since 31 January 2019 Belgian labour law is applied to pilots and cabin crew that are directly employed by Ryanair. This means that the two main demands that led to last summer's strikes are now met.

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Bulgaria

Difficult working conditions textile workers

February 12, 2019

In relation to the forthcoming European elections Euronews has produced a series of reports on some of the major issues concerning Europe and its citizens. In one of these reports the working conditions of textile workers in the country are investigated. The report shows that while many international brands have outsourced their textile production to the country, working conditions remain poorly. Not only are the workers experiencing a lot of work pressure, payment is also a serious problem with the average net wage just between 320 and 350 euro a month. Despite a rise of 10% in January 2019 the country's minimum wage is still the lowest in the EU.

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

Croatia

Same Deutz Fahr Žetelice factory on strike in demand of better wages

February 6, 2019

Workers at the Same Deutz Fahr Žetelice, a factory that produces combine harvesters, have been on strike since 9 January 2019 in demand of better wages. About 95% of the company's 400 workers are on strike and are seeking an increase of 750 Kuna (about 100 euro) a month and an 8% allowance for special working conditions. The Supreme Court will now decide whether the strike is allowed to go on or not. According to

the metal workers union that represents the striking factory workers, the cost of employees amounts to a mere 8% of the company's revenue and with the increase costs would still remain under 10%.

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

Cyprus

Construction workers strikes in demand of collective agreement

February 13, 2019

Around 15000 construction workers participated in a 24-hour strike to urge their employers to sign a collective agreement. According to the workers the refusal of employers to sign the collective agreement bill, that they negotiated on together but was suddenly dismissed by the employers, encourages illegal employment and unfair competition and allows employers to pay workers less than they should. The strike by construction workers also affected the work of around 10000 other employees such as electricians and civil engineers will also be affected. Contractors have asked the unions to continue negotiations.

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

Czechia

Government wants to increase old age pensions

February 14, 2019

The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs proposes an increase in old-age pensions. The system is already regarded by experts as one of the most solidarity based in Europe. The minister also announced legislation aimed at delivering affordable housing because even the middle classes find it hard to rent houses at present.

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

Unions ready to fight planned dismissal of 10% of the public sector workers

February 12, 2019

Unions threaten to fight government plans to let 10% of the public sector workers, mainly clerks, go as a cost-saving measure. The proposed measure would lead to the loss of 12,500 jobs. Trade unions state that some state agencies are at present already faced with an acute labour shortage. Public sector workers are worried that the redundancy will increase the workload even further. Union leaders also say that the government plans will have a negative impact on the quality of public services.

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

Denmark

Inequality greater than many might think

February 5, 2019

According to a new inventory from the Confederation of Trade Unions inequality in the country is greater than many might think and the distance between rich and poor is steadily growing. The richest 10% sits on half of the total wealth. This figure is just one in six numbers that were used for measuring inequality. According to figures from Statistics Denmark, the poorest tenth of the population has on average an overall negative wealth of a total of 246,852 DKK. At the same time, the richest tenth has an average fortune of 5.5 million DKK. The trade union confederation is worried about this development and urges government to take action in the form of an inequality stop and by setting up an inequality commission.

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

Estonia

Long term unemployment at 20-year low

February 15, 2019

According to new data from Statistics Estonia unemployment continued to fall over the past ten years, with long-term unemployment at a 20-year low. With an average of 5% in most age groups, unemployment in the country lies below the EU average unemployment rate of 7%. However, the number of underemployed workers- people who work part-time but want to work more hours- has increased. Part-time work is also on the rise with a record high at 82,000 part-time workers in 2018.

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

Finland

Pay dispute may lead to seafarer strike

February 14, 2019

The Seafarers' Union began pay negotiations for the new collective agreement earlier this month. The new agreement is to be valid for two years. The union demands a pay rise of 2.5% for this year and another 2.5% next year. The seafarers now threaten that if payment demands are not met, they will engage in industrial action. Such a strike action would be stopping all passenger and cargo vessels, including ice-breakers.

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France

Plans to cut down employment benefits highest income groups

February 26, 2019

The government wants to cut down employment benefits for the highest income groups. Unemployment benefits in the country are normally negotiated with trade unions and constitute on average 68% of a worker's previous wages. This means that if highly paid workers lose their job they can get unemployment benefits up to 7700 euro a month. The average amount of unemployment benefits, however, lies around 1200 a month. The government defends its plans to reduce the amount of employment benefits by comparing the countries' policies with other OECD nations than on average pay only 56% of the last earned wages in employment benefits. With the new austerity plans the government wants to save up to 3.9 billion euros over three years.

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Yellow and red vests march together for the first time

February 5, 2019

For the first time since the yellow vest movement started there has been joint protest march together with a part of the countries' trade union movement. The country's biggest trade union, the left-wing CGT, invited the yellow vest movement to join them in nationwide protest over taxes and purchasing power. In Marseille, Strasbourg, Saint-Nazaire, Montelimar, Toulouse, Rouen and Le Havre, thousands of red and yellow vests marched together in opposition to the government. Although the yellow vest movement and the trade unions share some concerns, such as unfair taxation and the lack of purchasing power, an intensified collaboration between the two movement doesn't seem very likely. From the side of the yellow vest movement there's a lot of scepticism towards official institutions, and trade unions are by many seen as a part of this institutions. A lot of trade union members, on the other hand, have problems with nationalistic or far right elements within the yellow vest movement.

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

Strike at XPO Logistics ends same day with victory for workers

February 5, 2019

XPO Logistics, a European leader in transport and logistics, has experienced a short national strike in which around 80% of the staff participated. Work at CPO Logistics centres of Artenay (Loiret), Meung-sur-Loire (Loiret), Ingré (Loiret) and several others (according to the unions) was slowed down or totally put to a hold because of the strike action. Following the strike action management of XPO logistics started negotiations with union CGT, CFDT and CFTC and an agreement was reached the same day. The agreement includes a

salary increase of 2%, transportation allowance of 110 euro a month and 1 additional day of absence for sick children per year.

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

Germany

Public sector workers on strike in demand of 6% wage increase

February 28, 2019

While representatives of employers and trade union Verdi were engaged in the third round of negotiations, thousands of public sector employees went on strike. Verdi and the civil servants' association DBB are demanding a salary increase of 6% for state employees, with a minimum of at least 200 euros more per month. This warning strike was preceded and will probably be followed by several other strikes. Negotiations will proceed in March 2019.

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Vacation days may not expire without notification

February 19, 2019

The Federal Labour Court (BAG) in Erfurt declares that employers must notify their employees to take their holidays and also point out that these days will lapse if not taken in due time. The court ruled that vacation days may not simply expire, if workers have not been warned in time they can claim their vacation days later. The European Court of Justice (ECJ) had ruled in November 2018 that employers must expressly warn their employees against the expiry of their leave. With the Federal Court ruling, European law is now integrated into German law.

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Strike Reha Klinik ends with pay deal

February 14, 2019

An agreement was reached after 202 strike days at the Reha-Klinik in Bad Langensalza (Thüringen). Trade union Verdi and private investor Celenus came to an understanding after months of strike and lock-out although the union was not really satisfied with the reached 1.5 to 2.25% wage raise.

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IG Metall organises warning strikes in demand of 6% pay increase

February 4, 2019

After negotiations in the third round of collective bargaining remained deadlocked, trade union IG Metall announced a series of warning strikes next week. Warning strikes tend to be brief, lasting a few hours or a day. IG Metall wants a 6% pay increase and 1800 euro annual holiday pay with the option to convert those into non-working day. The steel employers association Arbeitgeberverband Stahl (AGV) has rejected this demands and states that a 6% pay increase would put pressure on overall production costs.

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Greece

Work stoppages at urban train in demand of collective agreement

February 19, 2019

Workers at Athens Urban Train ISAP organised a 3-hour work stoppage in demand of the signing of a new collective agreement and the hiring of permanent personnel. With this industrial action they also want to draw attention to permanent problems like delays in the ticket issue and shortages in spare parts that leads to decrease of schedules.

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Local authority workers union calls 24-hour strike

February 18, 2019

The union representing local authority workers, POE-OTA, has called a 24-hour strike. The union demands that workers with hazardous jobs get paid a corresponding bonus. The union is also protesting against recent privatizations and urges the public nature of services to be safeguarded.

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Hungary

Redundancy dispute leads to strike payroll specialists Tesco

February 6, 2019

Payroll specialists at Tesco went on strike at the Gyor office that is facing closure. The Independent Union of Trade Workers (KDFSZ) stated that the union has been negotiating with the company's representatives on the matter but that the offer that was made by Tesco management did not meet their demands. The employees of the office that will be closed and who will lose their jobs would like to arrange the conditions of their departure and dictate how it will be carried out. The strikers have asked the company to exempt them from work during the entire notice period—which they've requested to be implemented in two stages. Due to the strike of the payroll specialists many Tesco workers are expected not to receive their salaries on time but the union states that these workers stand in solidarity with the payroll specialists facing unemployment.

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Iceland

Hotel housekeepers to vote on work stoppage

February 22, 2019

Trade union Efling is organising a one-day work stoppage at hotels and guesthouses throughout the country in order to urge employers' to meet their collective bargaining demands. When members vote in favour of the industrial action, cleaning, housekeeping and laundry services will be unavailable. The collective agreement for these workers expired at the end of December 2018. Unions demand a significant wage increase that they say is already long overdue. When member vote in favour of the actions the strike will begin at 10 on the morning of 8 March 2019 and will finish at 23:59 on the same day except if the collective agreement has been signed before this time.

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

Ireland

Ongoing dispute over union rights leads to strike by ambulance workers

February 27, 2019

About 500 ambulance workers are participating in a two-day strike from 7 AM to 5 PM, in an ongoing dispute over trade union representation rights and the deduction of union subscriptions at source from their wages. The striking ambulance workers' union is the National Ambulance Service Representative Association (Nasra) that is part of the Psychiatric Nurses Association (PNA) but this union is not recognised by management as a representative body for ambulance personnel. The ambulance workers already held two previous work stoppages in recent weeks as part of a campaign to get their union recognised. According to the general secretary of the PNA the ambulance workers believe so strongly that they should be able to join the union of their choice and be represented by that union that they are willing to take this two day action and to take further action.

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

Community employment supervisors strike over pension entitlements

February 18, 2019

Around 500 supervisors on community employment schemes organised a strike action at six locations in the country. According to the supervisors and their unions Fórsa and SIPTU the strike follows a ten-year dispute over pension entitlements. Forsa and SIPTU say over 250 supervisors have retired with no occupational pension since a 2008 Labour Court recommendation. The 1250 current staff also don't have access to an employer sponsored occupational pension scheme, despite Labour Court recommendations. With the strike action unions demand a decent pension scheme for the community employment supervisors.

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

Unions urge Irish Ferries to pay decent wages

February 8, 2019

Siptu, together with several other trade unions, organised a protest in the port of Dublin to draw attention to the fact that Irish Ferries portrays itself as being Irish but doesn't pay the Irish national minimum wage. The unions urge Irish Ferries to pay decent wages. In 2006 Irish Ferries de-registered from the Irish maritime register and opted to place the company on the Cypriot register in order to navigate around the Irish national minimum wage. The demonstration was part of a European-wide trade union campaign to seek better rights and conditions for seafarers.

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

Italy

Amazon drivers fed up with high work load

February 25, 2019

Amazon drivers in the Lombardy region are organising industrial action to protest working conditions. Especially the high work load is a problem for the drivers. The company has seen an increase in market share but the number of workers has not increased accordingly. The drivers say that they now receive twice as much work as a driver would normally handle. Transportation unions Filt Cgil-Fit Cisi-Uil asked Amazon for "a responsible intervention" as workers said many of last years' new hires were sent home after Christmas. Drivers plan to stop deliveries in Lombardy and demonstrate under the office building of the company headquarters in Milan.

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

Rubbish collectors threaten to strike in Rome

February 10, 2019

Trade unions representing employers of the capitol's waste collection company, have threatened a strike if the mayor does not provide assurances regarding the future of the municipal company. Tensions began when the responsible environment councillor left the council because she was the only council member that supported the 2017 balance sheet of the city's waste collection company. Trade unions are worried about the future of the waste collection company and want employment guarantees for the approximately 8000 workers.

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

Unions organise mass protest against austerity policies

February 9, 2019

Hundreds of thousands of people came to Rome on 9 February 2019 to participate in a rally organized by trade union federations CGIL, CISL and UIL. Under the banner "A future for work" they protested against austerity policies which, according to the trade union federations, have led to deep inequality, increased poverty, and growth of unemployment, in particular among youth and women. According to the Italian National Institute of Statistics (Istat), the unemployment rate in the country reached a record high of 10.6 % in 2018. This is the third highest unemployment rate in Europe, just after Greece and Spain. Youth unemployment is even more severe with 16.7% of young people without work in 2017.

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

Latvia

Teachers might go on strike if new budget doesn't include wage rise

February 20, 2019

The Latvian Trade Union of Education and Science Employees (LIZDA) announced that they might organise strike actions during the exit exams if government doesn't include a wage rise for teachers in the new budget. Although the premier agreed that raising teachers' wages was an objective necessity, government officials state that they are in a difficult position because the previous government promised to raise the wages of teachers but didn't earmark the necessary funds.

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Liechtenstein

No wage discrimination

February 25, 2019

During the 3rd Lichtensteinischer Tag der Lohngleichheit (Lichtenstein Day of Wage Equality) a wage analysis among the 1,900 employees of the Hilti factory was presented. The analysis showed that wage differences between the workers are just and right. Only 0.8% of the differences cannot be explained by education, experience and other non-gender variables.

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

Lithuania

European commission country report

February 20, 2019

The new country report by the European Commission states the country continues to catch up with the rest of the European Union rapidly but needs to adjust to the challenge of a shrinking population. The economy is growing steadily but the fruits of its rapid economic development have not been equally shared among its social groups and regions. Furthermore, the declining population, is putting pressure on the labour market and social security systems.

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Luxembourg

Women underrepresented in science and politics

February 11, 2019

Data by Eurostat show that the country shares the lowest number of women working as scientists and engineers in Europe with Hungary. Despite the effort to push for more gender equality and inclusion, only 25% of scientists and engineers are women. The average across Europe is 41%. Women are also underrepresented in politics with only 20% of ministerial posts occupied by women and less than one-third female parliamentarians.

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

Malta

Minimum wage below EU average

February 2, 2019

According to Eurostat data the national minimum wage that is currently set at 762 euro a month, is below the European Union average. The average minimum wage across the European Union was 924 euro a month. Southern European member states, including Malta, Greece, Portugal and Spain, all had minimum

wages ranging between 650 and just over 1000 euro per month. The minimum wage in Malta is higher than the minimum wage in Greece and Portugal but lower than in Slovenia and Spain. While the vast majority of the EU member have a national minimum wage, Denmark, Italy, Cyprus, Austria, Finland and Sweden do not have a set minimum wage.

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

Netherlands

Trade union FNV threatens to take grocery delivery service to court

February 25, 2019

Trade union FNV states that it will take grocery delivery service Picnic to court for refusing to pay staff according to the nationwide sectoral supermarket labour agreement. According to the union workers are paid 2 euro an hour less than they should be payed because the company is refusing to apply the supermarket labour agreement. The company is defending itself by stating that the supermarket labour agreement doesn't apply to them because they are instead in the e-commerce sector. Picnic is however engaging in a hard competition with supermarkets and unions believe that the underpayment of staff at Picnic is causing unfair competitions towards other supermarkets.

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

Months of industrial action end with victory for metal workers

February 12, 2019

The three trade unions involved have signed an agreement in principle for the new sectoral collective labour agreement for metal workers. The agreement follows 8 months of negotiating and multiple strike actions by tens of thousands of workers across the country. With the new collective agreement wages will be increased by 3.5% on 1 February, by 58 euro on 1 August and 116 euro on 1 January 2020. This pay rise will also apply to temporary workers. Furthermore both parties agreed upon a 'generation pact', this scheme will give older workers the opportunity to work less to remain in good health until retirement while keeping the fulltime employer's pension contribution and being partly compensated for lost wages. The agreement, that already expired 1 June 2018, will be valid until 1 December 2020 and applies to approximately 150,000 employees in the large metal sector with employers such as Fokker, ASML, DAF, Siemens, Scania, Thales and Damen.

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

New labour market law makes it easier to dismiss workers

February 5, 2019

The House of Representatives accepts the new law Arbeidsmarkt in Balans (labourmarket in balance) in which differences between steady and flexible work are limited. The union movement opposed this law because it makes it easier for employers to sack employees in order to deregulate the labour market. Some advantages of the new law were also acknowledged such as the fact that the law causes flex work to become better paid and employees in payroll contracts will build up a complete old age pension. This new law still has to go through discussions in the Senate.

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

Norway

New inclusive workplace agreement

February 15, 2019

The Inclusive Workplace Agreement (IA) was renegotiated and changed and will now be available to all companies. The country first implemented the IA 17 years ago when sick leave levels began to rise sharply. The IA initially had three main goals: 1. a 20 % cut in sick leave 2. helping more people with various handicaps enter the labour market and 3. help the over-50 extend their work activity by one year. Companies that signed IA agreements with the welfare administration would be given new tools to help them reach these aims. Research showed that some of these goals were conflicting. For example by hiring more people with a handicap sick levels also rise. The new agreement, that is valid until 2022, therefore only focusses on reducing the sick leave levels with 10% compared to 2018.

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Poland

Unemployment lowest in almost ten years

February 26, 2019

Unemployment in December 2018 was the lowest in almost ten years, calculated Statistics Poland. Despite a slight increase to 6.1% in January the government expects unemployment to fall by the end of this year. Government expects the economy to grow 3.8% t in 2019, with an inflation targeted at 2.3%.

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Portugal

Nationwide public sector strike

February 20, 2019

Public workers in hospitals, schools and rubbish collection went on a nationwide strike on 14-15 February 2019 demanding the government to raise wages in the public sector. The government promised to increase the salaries of the lowest paid workers in 2019 but unions say the pay of around 600.000 public sector staff has been frozen for the last 10 years. Nurses were already holding strategic strike actions that prevented many operations from the beginning of the months. The nurses went on strike in demand of better pay and working conditions and have ignored a government order to get back to work. The leader of one of the main nurses' unions even started a hunger strike after prosecutors declared the three-week-long walkout by surgical nurses unlawful and threatened to impose penalties on those still taking part. FENPROF, FNE and eight other education trade unions also joined the national public sector strike. The teachers went on strike to protest the Government's decision to recover only 2 years, 9 months and 18 days of the frozen service time for teachers. A large national demonstration of teachers and educators is scheduled on 23 March 2019 in Lisbon.

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

Government tries to tackle labour trafficking in agriculture

February 13, 2019

By carrying out thousands of raids on farms suspected of trapping poor migrants in unpaid work the government tries to put an end to labour trafficking and exploitation in the agricultural sector. However, with less than 20 inspectors available for the job, authorities lack capacity to inspect most properties where workers are being abused. A recent report by the European Commission showed that in the period 2015-16 the country had a higher proportion of labour trafficking victims per one million of the population than any other European Union state except Malta.

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

Romania

Transport operator federation protests rising fuel duties

February 20, 2019

At least 5000 members of the Federation of Romanian Transport Operators are expected to demonstrate on 22 February in Bucharest's Victory Square. The Federation of Romanian Transport Operators is protesting rising fuel duties and alleged illegal transport operators active in the country. The workers want the government to take an active regulatory stance on the matter. Transportation is expected to be severely disrupted by the protest

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Serbia

Safety and health in the construction sector

February 13, 2019

ILO published a report on occupational safety and health and in the countries' construction sector. The report provides a comprehensive review of the current occupational safety and health (OSH) situation in the construction industry in the country by assessing gaps in the national OSH system and identifying priority areas for national OSH policies and programmes. Main conclusions are that the country has a comprehensive legislation on OHS in the construction sector however the problem is its enforcement, labour inspection at constructions sites should be improved and that the knowledge on OSH amongst both workers and employers should be improved.

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Slovakia

Economy vulnerable to technological development

February 13, 2019

The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) warns that jobs in the country are more vulnerable towards technological changes, such as the further developments in robotisation, than anywhere else in the OECD. Because the economy concentrates on low-added value some 70% of the jobs can be jeopardized. The only way to oppose this development is by better education and an upscaling of the labour market. In recent times only 2.3% of GDP was spent on science and research, which is considered to be too little.

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Slovenia

Deal reached: postal workers strike called of

February 18, 2019

A planned strike of Postal workers at Pošta Slovenije has been cancelled when the two trade unions representing Pošta Slovenije workers and the management of the national postal company have managed to reach a deal on the employees' strike demands. Part of the new deal is an agreement on the payment of overtime, which, due to the personnel shortage, was one of the more urgent requirements of both trade unions. To tackle the work load that is caused by the personnel shortages management promised to increase the number of employees.

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Spain

Several strike actions announced for International Women's Day

February 26, 2019

The countries' feminist movement has called out a 24-hour strike on March 8 2019, International Women's Day. With the strike they want to draw attention to the inequality and violence suffered by women. The Federation of Education of trade union CCOO calls for a general strike in Education on March 8. With their strike they want to underline that it is increasingly urgent to place equality, coeducation and the elimination of violence at the centre of the educational debate.

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Taxi driver strike Madrid comes to an end

February 6, 2019

Taxi drivers in Madrid voted in favour to ending their 16-day strike action that began on 21 January 2019. With the industrial action the taxi drivers wanted to pressure regional government into regulating VTC

vehicles, used by ride-hailing services such as Cabify and Uber. Only a small majority of the taxi drivers voted to end the strike. The Professional Taxi Federation believes the reason why the taxi drivers chose to end their strike without having reached a deal with the regional government is that many of them simply could not afford to be inactive any longer. In Barcelona taxi drivers also staged stoppages, and managed to achieve concessions from the regional government which promised regulations forcing passengers to book their journeys with services such as Uber and Cabify 15 minutes in advance.

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Mass protest in demand of better pension

February 2, 2019

Thousands of senior citizens took to the streets of Madrid to demand better public pensions. Retiree groups and trade unions have held several protests across the country during recent months to demand that the government make sure that pension pay-outs rise in line with inflation. They argue that the 0.25% increase in 2017 was insufficient. The prime minister has now offered the pensioners a 6% increase.

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Unions protest Vodafone redundancy plan that will cost 1200 jobs

February 1, 2019

Trade unions UGT and CC OO announced a series of strike actions against the employment regulation file (ERE) presented by the telecom provider, which most likely make around 1200 employees redundant. In the negotiations with Vodafone unions made it clear that they consider the number of 1200 jobs disproportionate and unjustified and they urged the company to reconsider the structure of the new organization. Unions also came forward with demands regarding the social plan. Amongst other thing they want a much more generous compensation offer and better conditions for early retirement schemes.

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Sweden

Income differences getting bigger

February 6, 2019

Trade union confederation LO has presented its annual report on income inequalities in the country. The results show that the income difference between an ordinary employee and those on the top is the largest ever. In 2017, the directors of 50 large companies in the country had an average income that equals to the sum of just over 59 industrial workers' wages. In many cases the annual income for the CEOs of large companies is much far higher than what a worker earns for a lifetime. LO is worried about this development and proposes several measures to be taken. Amongst other things the trade federation is pleading for the implementation of provisions that the CEO's annual rate of wage increase shall not be higher than the rate of wage increase for other employees in the company and for a harder taxation of capital.

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Switzerland

Trade union federation wants affordable healthcare

February 26, 2019

The Federation of Trade Unions (SGB) starts an initiative to stop the ever growing costs of healthcare. Under the device 'Health isn't a luxury product' the SGB declares that no one should pay more than 10% of available income for healthcare premiums. Premiums should decline and healthcare be available to all. The SGB started a Volksinitiative (People's initiative) to change the law accordingly.

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Cleaners public toilets Geneva on strike

February 13, 2019

The cleaning staff of the public toilets of the City of Geneva together with their union SIT organised strike actions throughout the city. They say that management fails to answer various problems that they experience during their work. The demands of the strikers are as follows: the withdrawal of an unfair dismissal of a unionized colleague, a halt to the flexibilisation of working hours with respect of the working schedules and the Labour Act, a stop to wage cuts via the decrease of working time, to be obliged to work every Sunday and the companies compliance with the law on occupational benefits.

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Turkey

Victory for wood workers

February 1, 2019

The Supreme Court affirmed the right of the Turkish Wood and Paper Industry Workers Union AGAC-IS to bargain collectively with SFC Integrated Wood Products (SFC). AGAC-IS initiated an organising campaign back in 2012 with which they managed to organise a majority of the SFC workers. Although they hereby met the criteria to have the right to collective bargaining SFC management tried to prevent the union from doing their work. SFC even fired 40 union members to prevent that AGAC-IS would meet the official criteria for the right to bargain collectively.

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

United Kingdom

Workers strike during court ruling collective bargaining outsourced workers

February 26, 2019

Hundreds of facilities workers at the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) and the Ministry of Justice, who earn as little as 7.83 pound an hour, joined cleaners from the University of London in a 1-day strike against outsourcing, which they say exposes them to insecurity and discrimination. Cleaners, security, catering staff and others represented by the PCS union are demanding the living wage, equal terms and conditions and an end to outsourcing. Cleaners and security officers from are demanding the living wage, and cleaners from the University of London who already won better pay and conditions, are demanding equal terms and conditions with directly employed staff. The strike is timed to coincide with a ruling on a landmark case on collective bargaining that could empower the UK's 3.3 million outsourced workers to negotiate directly with their companies buying the outsourced services – as well as their direct employers.

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Birmingham rubbish collectors on strike

February 20, 2019

The city council of Birmingham has installed some temporary measures to deal with a series of strikes by the Birmingham rubbish collectors and keep the streets clean. Usually, city residents get a weekly general waste collection and a recycling service every two weeks. During the temporary service people should put both bins out on their recycling collection day Unite, the union representing the majority of the city's bins workforce, announced it was to ballot members over industrial action amid health and safety concerns. One of the main reasons for the strike is a dispute over "secret payments" made to non-striking GMB staff in 2017.

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Deliveroo riders Manchester on strike in demand of fair pay

February 14, 2019

Deliveroo riders from Manchester went on a 4-hour strike today protest against cuts to pay and poor working conditions. Similar protests were also held on Thursday in Bristol and Bournemouth. The Deliveroo riders are demanding a minimum payment of 5 pounds per delivery and 8 pounds for a double order, a 1 pound payment for every additional mile travelled no deliveries outside Manchester city centre and for motorbike riders to be given the same access to orders as cyclists. The riders state that they need this money to cover the cost of living and to provide for accidents and illnesses. IWW Global Union that represents the

drivers says that riders around the UK have seen their pay cut in recent months and are increasingly being forced to deliver outside of zones for even less money.

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

Pay gap part-time work in Scotland more severe than in the rest of the UK

February 9, 2019

According to a report by Scottish Parliament Information Centre, Scotland has one of the highest gender pay gaps in the UK when it comes to part-time work. Whilst the gender pay gap between Scots men and women in full-time work with 5.7% is now the lowest in Britain with an UK average of 8.6%, this is not the case for part-time workers. But part-time workers are three times more likely to be women with average pay of 195 pounds a week. Here the pay gap is 7.8% which is the worst across the UK outside London. The Scottish Trades Union Congress called for a culture change in attitudes towards work carried out by women. They the under-valuation of 'women's work' is at the heart of the problem. Closing the gap must therefore involve increasing the pay of low-paid, female-dominated occupations such as carers, cleaners, clerical workers, and catering assistants.

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