

collective bargaining

Issue 4-5/2019 April-May

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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Glasgow airport strike suspended

National Living Wage rises with 4.9%

European sources

Recommendations to end in-work poverty

May 25, 2019

The European Social Policy Network (ESPN) produced a new Synthesis Report that puts forward several recommendations and calls for more effective policy action at European and national levels to tackle in-work poverty. Preventing in-work poverty is seen by policymakers and stakeholders alike as part of the overall goal to reduce poverty in the EU. However, while working is generally considered as the best way to avoid poverty, this is not the case for a significant number of European workers. In 2017, 9.4% of all EU-28 workers lived in households that are at risk of poverty. In certain categories of the population (mostly young, low educated, non-standard workers, poor households with children including lone parents, workers and households with low work intensity) in-work poverty is much higher and has in some cases been increasing significantly in recent years.

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

Yearbook ‘Living and working in Europe 2015-2018’

May 20, 2019

This year’s Living and working in Europe brings together Eurofound’s work on the living and working conditions of Europeans over 2015–2018. It has been a period of economic expansion and employment growth. But averages hide significant differences between countries and population groups, and developments across the continent. Over this four-year period, Eurofound has answered some key questions about the living standards, well-being and working conditions of Europeans, highlighting where policymaking needs to target its efforts if it is to be seen to deliver.

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

ILO and Eurofound report ‘Working conditions in a global perspective’

May 6, 2019

Job quality is increasingly recognised as a major policy concern. It is central to the ILO’s Decent Work Agenda and to the European Union’s Quality of Work policies. The ILO and Eurofound published a report together that offers a comparative overview of results from the most recent surveys on working conditions available across the world. In the report, that covers approximately 1.2 billion of the world’s workers, seven dimensions of job quality are covered: the physical environment, work intensity, working time quality, the social environment, skills and development, prospects, and earnings, finding both important differences and similarities between countries.

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

March for a fairer Europe for workers

April 26, 2019

The European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) organised a march for a ‘fairer Europe for workers’ in Brussels on 26 April 2019. With this march, in which some 8000 workers took part, the ETUC wanted to draw attention to the European elections, to call for a better and more social Europe, not less Europe – and for social progress, better pay and better working and living conditions. Over half the 8000 demonstrators came from Belgium and France, with delegations from many European countries including Germany, Italy, Spain, Hungary, Slovenia, Austria, Estonia and Switzerland.

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Employment Outlook 2019

April 25, 2019

This year’s edition of the annual OECD Employment Outlook presents new evidence on changes in job stability, underemployment and the share of well-paid jobs. The report focusses i.e. on the implications of digitalisation, globalisation and ageing as well as on employment protection and social protection reforms. With regard to collective bargaining the reports shows that low levels of organisation among workers, in particular non-standard workers, pose a serious challenge. This partly reflects legal obstacles for workers classified as self-employed, for whom the right to bargain collectively may be seen as infringing competition law. In this context, some OECD countries have made tailored extensions of collective bargaining rights to some non-standard workers. However, practical difficulties remain. Employers’ organisations are being put to the test by the emergence of new forms of business. Established trade unions are developing strategies to reach non-standard workers, while new vehicles of workers’ representation are also emerging.

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

New trade union strategies for new forms of employment

April 8, 2019

The ETUC published a report on trade unions strategies for new forms of employment that focusses specifically on the growth of forms of work that fall outside the protection of labour laws and social security. Making use of data from Austria, Belgium, France, Italy, Sweden, Spain, Germany and the UK the report identifies similarities and differences between the countries covered by the survey. The report furthermore focusses on the collective labour rights of self-employed workers in the above mentioned countries as well as legal obstacles to collective bargaining due to restrictive interpretation of antitrust law. Findings of the report show that the self-employed category is increasingly populated by a heterogeneous group of workers with a weak position in the labour market which prevents them from having a strong organisational autonomy or independence in the marketplace.

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

Codetermination not satisfactorily guarded

April 1, 2019

The Company Law Package which is under discussion in the EU-parliament has lost support from the labour unions according to the director of the Institut für Mitbestimmung und Unternehmensführung (I.M.U., Institute for codetermination and company governance) of the Hans-Böckler Stiftung. The proposed measures are not enough to prevent letterbox companies to be established for the sole purpose of neglecting national regulations.

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Austria

Unemployment remains at high level

May 9, 2019

Although the level of unemployment has fallen for months in a row it is still higher than during the years before the financial and economic crisis. In the actual developments of the economy, unemployment threatens to grow again. To fight unemployment and improve welfare investments in education, climate and social services are necessary.

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Unions successfully fight for 4 day working week

April 12, 2019

The union federation ÖGB (Austrian Trade Union Federation) will aim at negotiating the four day working week in upcoming collective agreements. In Trade and Construction it is already allowed to work four days a week if normal business is not hindered. The government also made it possible that employees work 4 days a week or 12 hours a day, on a voluntary basis. It is clear that workers are more satisfied and more productive if they are allowed to work on these terms. At the eMagnetrix company it proved a success to combine the 30 hour working week with equal pay.

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Power shift from labour to capital

April 11, 2019

Socialeurope.eu published an in-depth article on recent developments that might endanger the social equilibrium. According to the authors the countries' right-wing government has tilted the balance of power with their recent series of labour-market reforms. These reforms resemble changes in other countries like the United Kingdom and the Hartz process in Germany. The new Working Time Act, which was implemented despite massive protests, for example allows employers to assign a 12-hour working-day and a 60-hour working week. Trade unions and works councils have no saying in this while the individual worker

is hardly in a position to refuse.

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Belgium

Unions denounce poor working conditions on ship of the Blumenthal company

May 20, 2019

Trade unions under the guidance of the International Transport Workers Federation (ITF) took action in the Port of Ghent. ITF inspectors unsuccessfully tried to board the ship Pegasus to check the working and living conditions. The Blumenthal company employing some thousand persons on 50 ships is part of a bigger problem. The ITF estimates that more than one million people worldwide work under the non-regulated FOC system, which allows ship-owners to neglect national labour laws.

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

Airports continue to be affected by Skeyes actions

May 16, 2019

The ongoing spontaneous actions by air traffic control centre Skeyes staff caused a closure of the Belgian airspace. Actions started already in March (see our March 2019 and April 2019 newsletters). They have caused a lot of trouble for the company while cancellations of flights forced e.g. Brussels Airlines to demand compensation of 4 million euros from Skeyes. Passengers were also victim because strikes at Skeyes are third party strikes and not the direct responsibility of the airlines, hence the right to financial compensation for passengers is no longer valid. On May 17, 2019 a Brussels court ruled that Skeyes has to pay 200,000 euros a day for each next strike. Following the ruling unions decided to cancel further actions.

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Increasing number of young workers on long-term sick leave

May 2, 2019

Partena Professional consultancy studied long-term illness of workers. Contrary to popular belief it is not the 50+ age group that are responsible for the increase in long-term sick leave. No, it is young people aged 25 to 44, women and employees of businesses with more than 199 workers who are more prone to long-term illnesses. These groups all showed big increases in sick-leave since 2014. Young people complain of work overload and pressure in their private lives.

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Bulgaria

Sofia tram and bus drivers get pay increase between 25 and 28%

April 12, 2019

Federation of Transport Trade Unions in Bulgaria (FTTUB) and the Confederation of Independent Trade Unions of Bulgaria (CITUB) managed to negotiate the biggest ever pay rise, ranging between 25 and 28%, for bus and tram drivers at the Sofia Electric Transport and Sofia Bus Transport company. Earlier on it seemed that they would get a 10% wage hike (see our March newsletter). The FTTUB is still negotiating with the municipality on legislation to criminalize aggression towards public transport workers and strategies to make public transport more attractive to passengers and workers.

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

Croatia

Unions gather enough signatures to force referendum '76 is too much'

May 15, 2019

Trade unions have gathered enough signatures to force their '67 is too much' referendum. With this campaign that was launched on 27 April 2017 the unions want to reduce the country's retirement age to 65 from the current 67 years of age, reduce penalties for early retirement and extend the transition period for equalising the retirement conditions for women and men. The number of signatures needed was at least 10% of all the registered voters or 373,568 people and the unions' collected more than 600,000 signatures in total. In December 2018 parliament approved the government's proposal to raise the retirement age to 67 and to reduce pensions for people who retire early.

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Still no solution in sight for Uljanik

April 19, 2019

The situation for workers at Uljanik that still didn't receive their wages is getting harder by the day. Many workers of the shipbuilding company have been working without pay for eight months now and organised several strikes in demand of their wages (see our February 2019 newsletter). The trade union urges the government that is co-owner of the shipyard, to take accountability and come forward with a solution. It is still not clear if Uljanik will go bankrupt or will be saved. Economy Minister Darko Horvat said that executives of the China Shipbuilding Industry Corporation would visit Uljanik Group explore possibilities for cooperation and that after that they would hold meetings with the Croatia side.

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Cyprus

Contract workers public sector demand equal treatment

May 15, 2019

In a three-day protest hundreds of public contract workers demanded the same treatment as their colleagues with permanent contracts. The workers and their union wanted to speak to the president and ask him why the government does not comply with EU laws on contracting. The union has already filed 100 cases with the labour disputes tribunal and has filed complaints with the EU and the European Parliament. As the government does not seem willing to compromise the union warned they are likely to start an indefinite strike.

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Czechia

Sharp rise in minimum wage didn't cause increase in unemployment

May 2, 2019

The trade union network for Hyundai and Kia met in Ostrava with participants from Czech Republic, Slovakia, Germany, India, Korea, Brazil and Turkey. A common theme of the meeting was poor relations with the company. Hyundai tried to thwart the meeting. The auto director for the Korean Metal Workers' Union (KMWU), explained the company's hostility from the oppositional labour relations in Korea. The Indian delegation from Hyundai was prevented to travel but participated through a video call. The meeting resolved to seek a global framework agreement (GFA) with the companies as a way to build the network and improve conditions across the company's operations.

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

Unions call for a global framework agreement at Hyundai in Ostrava

April 15, 2019

The trade union network for Hyundai and Kia met in Ostrava with participants from Czech Republic, Slovakia, Germany, India, Korea, Brazil and Turkey. A common theme of the meeting was poor relations with the company. Hyundai tried to thwart the meeting. The auto director for the Korean Metal Workers' Union (KMWU), explained the company's hostility from the oppositional labour relations in Korea. The Indian delegation from Hyundai was prevented to travel but participated through a video call. The meeting resolved to seek a global framework agreement (GFA) with the companies as a way to build the network and improve conditions across the company's operations.

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Denmark

Unions successful in organising transnational construction workers

May 13, 2019

In a new article in the scientific journal *Work, Employment and Society* is analysed how unions succeed in organizing transnational workforce at the construction of the Copenhagen Metro City Ring. Despite several subcontracting firms that actively sought to circumvent Danish labour-market regulation. Transnational workers in large construction projects are often poorly integrated in the national labour-market regulation, which causes that current collective agreements are not always enforced. Trade unions have thus been able to change their organizational and enforcement strategies so that they better include transnational workers in the country. To be able to do this successfully the union created shared goals and identities across different groups of workers and actively tried to change the public owners' attitude to employment conditions.

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

Estonia

Academic trade union demands wage hike of 30%

May, 2019

The academic trade unions have sent a sectoral agreement draft to the council of rectors of the Estonian universities. In the draft, the unions petition for improved working conditions, and for a salary increase by at least 30 percent. Higher education employees want the agreement to take effect starting 2020. Among other things, the unions are petitioning for the extension of the minimum leave for academic employees from currently 35 days to 56 days, due to the nature of their work. Last year scientists also organized a protest outside Riigikogu to highlight the problem of funding in the academic sector.

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Finland

Re-negotiating public sector agreement

May 25, 2019

Under heavy pressure from the government in 2016 trade unions agreed upon a pact in the public sector that added 24 hours onto annual working time and cut holiday by 30 per cent for three years. With collective bargaining over a new agreement starting this autumn it looks like unions want to renew agreements only if the extended working hours are removed which means that the whole agreement that covers more than 100,000 employees must now be re-negotiated. According to the unions "the time of voluntary unpaid work is completely over".

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France

Strike action forces Louvre to close its doors for a day

May 28, 2019

Reception and security staff at the Louvre in Paris went on a one-day strike that forced the museum to close its doors. The staff were on strike to protest working conditions at the museum that due to its ever growing popularity have deteriorated. Last year alone the Louvre attracted a record of more than 10 million visitors. Union officials state that while the public has increased by more than 20% since 2009 the palace has not grown, making working conditions very harsh. Amongst the problems that arise from an overcrowded

museum are aggressive and impatient public, jostling crowds and inadequate emergency evacuation measures.

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34th day of strike for maids hotel NH hotel Marseille

May 14, 2019

Housekeepers at NH Hotel that work for the subcontracting company Elior are on strike for more than a month now. The housekeepers and their union CNT demand the payment of all unpaid hours of work, the payment of meal and transport allowances, the reimbursement of salary deductions deemed unfair, the payment of an exceptional premium in compensation for the injury, an increase of qualifications in the conventional wage schedule, the 50% Sunday increase, a 13th month and a new work organization that is more respectful of employees' privacy.

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

Demonstration and industrial action in protest of public sector reforms

May 9, 2019

The nine largest trade unions of the country, including the General Confederation of Labour (CGT), the French Democratic Confederation of Labour (CFDT) and the Workers' Force (FO), have jointly organised a nationwide strike action on 9 May 2019. With the strike action the unions protested against 120,000 job cuts in the public sector and other deep changes to the countries' public sector that the government wants to put into effect. In addition to job cuts, medical workers are angry at changes to public hospital financing. Teachers are angry at hiring changes they say will add to workloads. Air traffic controllers were also involved in the strike action leading to the cancellation of about 30% of the scheduled flights.

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Taxi drivers Oise on one-day strike

April 1, 2019

Taxi drivers in the department of Oise went on a one-day strike and demonstrated in front of the headquarters of the primary health insurance fund in Beauvais. The taxi drivers are in conflict with health insurance on the pricing to be applied for the transport of sick people. A conflict that has its roots in the memorandum of understanding signed between the six national taxi federations (FNAT, UNT, FNTI, FFTP, FNDD and UNIT) and the National Union of Health Insurance Funds entered into at the end of January 2019.

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

Germany

Thyssenkrupp receives union backing on overhaul

May 11, 2019

Thyssenkrupp's management and labour leaders from IG Metall reached an agreement on a reorganization announced on Friday that could result in 6,000 job cuts. They reached an agreement that acknowledges the need for an overhaul while ensuring the fair treatment of employees.

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

Amazon workers on strike in demand of collective agreement

May 3, 2019

Amazon workers were on strike this week, demanding a collective agreement that includes a living wage and safer jobs. Workers at warehouses in Rheinberg, Werne, Bad Hersfeld, Koblenz, and Leipzig have walked out off the job. Union Ver.di demands that the collective bargaining agreements in the retail sector finally be declared universally binding in order to reverse the dramatic erosion of collective bargaining. The strike was preceded by a gathering of Amazon workers from 16 countries. According to UNI Global Union the fight against Amazon's corporate greed is one of the most important labour struggles in recent history.

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Public workers attain pay rise

April 18, 2019

After a nationwide strike by more than 150,000 public sector workers the unions and public sector employers agreed to raise wages for about 2.3 million workers by 7.5% over two and a half years (yearly average 3%). The agreement will retroactively increase wages by 3.19% by March 1, 2019. The next increase of 3.09% will kick in on April 1, 2019, followed by a final raise of 1.06% on March 1, 2020. Low-paid workers will also receive a one-time payment of 250 euro, and public sector pay scales will be made more transparent. The strikes that forced employers to give in caused hundreds of flight cancellations and disruptions to public services.

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Tchibo and IndustriALL build industrial relations in the supply chain

April 15, 2019

In September 2016 a Global Framework Agreement (GFA) was signed between IndustriALL and the German retailer, Tchibo. The parties met in Hamburg to review the work of the last two years and to develop plans for 2019 and 2020. Participants from India, Bangladesh, Cambodia, Turkey and Myanmar attended the two-day workshop. GFAs are negotiated at the global level between trade unions and companies. They establish the best possible standards on trade union rights, on health and safety, and on the labour relations principles adhered to by the company in its global operations, regardless of the standards existing in a particular country.

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

Union ends outsourcing at Deutsche Post DHL

April 3, 2019

Union Ver.di was able to eliminate the two-tiered workforce after long rounds of negotiations. As a result more than 14,000 outsourced drivers will be reintegrated in Deutsche Post DHL. Since four years these employees in the parcel delivery have been employed against lower standards than workers in the postal division. The aim of Ver.di: 'one company, one workforce, one agreement' will be implemented from July 1, 2019. The company itself also seems to gain from this insourcing because administration costs will be lower.

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Greece

State hospitals face 24-hour strike

May 15, 2019

C State hospitals are facing a 24-hour strike to protest cutbacks and the increased contributions paid by patients for medicines and healthcare. According to trade union POEDIN Public health needs investment in human resources, medical equipment and infrastructure so that citizens can stop paying out of pocket some or all of the cost of treatment.

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

Couriers and delivery workers on strike in demand of more safety

April 15, 2019

Couriers and delivery workers across the country are staging rallies and a 24-hour job walkout on demanding employers to provide a corporate motorcycle, money for fuel and motorcycle maintenance and protective helmet and clothing, recognition for hazardous work, and a unified work description. They also demand a collective agreement. According to their union the couriers and delivery workers are constant danger as their workplace is the road and they believe their employers to have to take responsibility to keep them safe.

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Hungary

Wave of strike in automotive sector

April 3, 2019

After the successful strike at the Audi plant earlier this year (see our January newsletter) the country sees yet another strike action in the automotive sector. This time it is the Korean-owned tire-maker Hankook's plant where workers resorted to industrial action in demand of decent pay and more respect. Workers at the Racalmas plant reported that management had threatened to sack striking workers but after a 10-day stand-off the workers' demand for a double-digit hike in basic pay had been granted. Since the strikes at Audi several other German and Asian automotive companies including Bosch, Continental and Suzuki have agreed terms with staff who threatened similar shutdowns

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Iceland

New parental leave legislation has positive effect on gender equality

April 12, 2019

Since the country introduced nine months parental leave with three months earmarked for fathers mothers have returned to work earlier and fathers' participation in childcare has increased. The countries' new parental leave legislation came into effect in the 9000 with 9 months of leave to be divided between the parents. 3 months are earmarked the mother, 3 months are earmarked for the father and the remaining 3 months can be shared to choice between them. Because of this legislation all father have to take on caring tasks for their new-borns whilst if the parental leave for fathers wasn't compulsory a part of them would not apply for it. According to research fathers often end up simply assisting the mother in caring tasks if they never get to be alone with the baby from the start. Icelandic daddies now enjoy the strongest position as fathers in the world.

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Ireland

Health support staff vote in favour of strike action

May 17, 2019

In an ongoing dispute with the government an overwhelmingly 96% of chefs and 94% of support staff voted in favour of strike action in a ballot organised by trade union SIPTU. The total of 7000 health support staff that plans to go on strike work in 36 health care facilities throughout the country. The dispute with the government centres on the refusal to implement the findings of a job evaluation examining whether their roles and duties have expanded. When their roles and duties would be re-evaluated this could possibly see the health support staff receiving upgrades and pay rises.

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Congress of Trade Union critics low pay in accommodation, food and retail sector

May 13, 2019

Addressing the Unite trade union conference, the congress general secretary accused employers in the accommodation, retail and hospitality sectors of seeking to work low paid employees as hard as they can for as long as they can, for as little as possible. The general secretary said that as someone who sits on the Low Pay Commission where she hears all the submissions regarding whether the National Minimum Wage should be increased. At the conference the general secretary also stated that collective bargaining has a crucial role to play in ensuring economic inclusivity - as well as making it more difficult for employers to pursue a strategy of driving down pay to increase their own competitiveness.

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Restaurant tips are not wage

May 10, 2019

It is illegal for companies to use tips as part of an employee's minimum wage but it is not illegal for them to use tips as part of a stated salary above that. In an attempt to put an end to tips being used as part of the wage, part of the new collective agreement a pledge to be signed by hotel and restaurant owners that they will not use the proceeds of tips to subsidise part of an employee's wage. The government has stated that it is considering to amend existing laws if the new collective agreement does not solve the issue.

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Trade union threatens with 6% pay claim over public servants' unpaid hours

May 8, 2019

Trade union Fórsa warns that the government will face claims for special pay rises of 6% for public service workers as compensation if it does not roll back additional working hours introduced after the economic crisis. According to Fórsa the additional working hours which were put in place for public service personnel in 2013 were worth about 6% in rough figures. The union states that if the additional working hours are not reversed, it is inevitable that unions would lodge productivity claims.

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9% drop in number of workers on minimum wage

April 26, 2019

New figures from the Central Statistics Office (CSO) show that the number of workers on minimum wage dropped by 9% in the last three months of 2018. The statistics show that 7.6% of employees earned the minimum wage or less in Q4 of 2018, down from 8.6% in the same period of 2017. Workers in the service sector are the least well paid According to the figures women are more likely to be on minimum wage or below than men. The CSO figures show that of the 137,200 workers who reported earning the minimum wage or below 55.3% were women while 61,300 or 44.7% were male.

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Strike actions ambulance staff continue

April 2, 2019

Up to 500 ambulance staff nationwide held a fifth strike and declared further actions in an ongoing dispute over the right to be represented by the trade union of their choice (see our February 2019 newsletter). Trade union SIPTU used to represent all the workers in the National Ambulance but nowadays some 500 workers are member of National Ambulance Service Representative Association of the Psychiatric Nursing Association and they want their union to be a recognised collective bargaining partner.

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Italy

Ports face strike actions as negotiations remain deadlocked

May 23, 2019

As negotiations for new collective agreement for the sector are not making enough progress the countries' ports are facing industrial action with trade union Ultrasport organising a 24-hour strike of port workers on 23 May 2019. The 24-hour strike followed industrial action in April 2019 when a one-hour walkout was organised after a worker lost his life due to injuries sustained in a forklift accident. One of the most pressing issues at hand is workplace security. According to the trade union the collective agreement has an irreplaceable role for the regulation and protection and is one of the central themes at the base of the dispute to safeguard the jobs at ports

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24-hour strike at several Italian airports

May 21, 2019

Following a dispute over working conditions and pay, airline, airport and air traffic control staff staged a 24 hour walkout that caused a half of the flights to and from Italy to cancel. Milan and Rome airports are the

worst affected by the strike action. Besides the working conditions and pay dispute the strike is also partly a protest against failure to decide on the future of Alitalia which has been in administration for over two years as successive governments struggle to agree on a buyer. Alitalia is facing another, smaller, strike in June 2019.

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Gig economy: riders get permanent contracts with rights and protections

May 10, 2019

After months of negotiations trade unions have signed an agreement with the Laconsegna food delivery platform that gives their riders a permanent contract with rights and protections. This is the first agreement in the country that governs subordinate work for riders. The agreement recognizes riders as subordinate workers with the right to apply the national contract, get the hours they actually worked paid instead of being paid not on the basis of deliveries and recognition of the rights and protections that are assigned to all workers in the sector such as paid vacation and sick leave. Trade unions expressed their hopes that the agreement reached with the food delivery platform will lead the way to other agreements that protect the rights of workers in the gig economy.

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Strike cancelled as teachers and government reach agreement

April 24, 2019

A teachers' strike that was planned to take place on 17 May 2019 was cancelled as government and trade union representing the teachers reached a deal. One of the main disputes was the salary of the teachers that have fallen drastically in recent years and are amongst the lowest in Europe. In the new agreement the government has stated that it is committed to finding additional financial resources to be specifically allocated to school staff on the occasion of the 2020 budget law and will offer reasonable increases in salaries to the teachers.

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

Latvia

Teachers may go on indefinite strike starting in September

April 23, 2019

The Trade Union of Education and Science Employees sent a letter to the Education and Science Ministry in demand of higher wages that were promised to them earlier. The teachers and government are in ongoing pay dispute (see our earlier 2019 newsletter) On 17 April 2019 the trade union declared that if demands are not met, an indefinite strike will be organised from 2 September 2019 onwards. Active discussions were held during the meeting of the trade union's council where the strike actions were decided upon. According to government officials it is necessary to implement several important reforms in the educational system to improve the quality of education in the country before teacher's wages can be increased. Teachers in all regions said they are prepared for reforms, but they stressed that reforms should be rational.

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

Liechtenstein

Employers forced to record working hours

May 14, 2019

The European Court of Justice (ECJ) ruled that companies in the EU must "set up an objective, reliable and accessible system" to record how many hours their employees work every day. The member states can define the specific arrangements for implementing such a system. Such systems are needed to secure that the EU's working time directive and the charter is respected, the court said. The Ministry of Economics was not yet able to make clear how this could be implemented in the country.

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

Flexibilisation needs strict regulation

April 30, 2019

During a May 1 manifestation held the day before the president of the only trade union LANV spoke. He told the audience that modern developments need at least three measures. Langenbahn made it clear that solutions must be sector specific, the law may not be changed by treaties and clear rules like parent's leave are necessary.

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

Lithuania

Latest working life developments

April 25, 2019

Teachers in the country are fighting for higher wages. Trade union want the ministry to increase hourly tariff of teacher's wage and ensure that teacher wages rise at least 20% every year. Furthermore they want the number of schoolchildren in classrooms to be reduced to alleviate work pressure. In 2018 government introduced new tenure-based pay system for teachers, replacing the old system when teachers were paid for the number of classes. But in the wake of the nearly national teacher strike at the end of last year the new system was subjected to a profound overhaul. The government has stated that next year it intends to raise wages around 10-15% for teachers, lecturers, science, culture and social workers.

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

Luxembourg

Consumer confidence pick up

May 29, 2019

The central bank's (BCL) consumer confidence indicator has gone up in May. But the factors making up the indicator have evolved differently. Households' expectations about their financial situation and their perceptions have increased while their expectations about the general economic situation have receded slightly. Their intended spending on major purchases has remained static. The consumer confidence is calculated as the arithmetic mean of the sum of all four components.

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

Malta

Serious issues with precarious work

April 27, 2019

Some foreign workers were being paid as little as €1 an hour, UHM Voice of the Workers CEO Josef Vella revealed yesterday, insisting that the situation with precarious work in Malta was the worst it had ever been. To make things even worse the union found out that the money is not paid directly to these workers but is instead sent to an agency in India. According to the union more regulation is needed to prevent an influx from cheap labour that negatively impacts wage level across the country.

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

Netherlands

24-hour strike public transport

May 28, 2019

The three main trade union federations organized a public transport strike. Almost the entire network of trains, trams, busses and subway was down for one day. Following a judicial verdict trains ran every 15 minutes between Amsterdam Central and national airport Schiphol. These were the only trains running.

Around 35,000 people participated while another 30,000 from construction and metal works struck and demonstrated on May 29, 2019. The goal is a freeze of retirement age at 66. This strike originally took place on March 18, 2019 but was interrupted by the attack in Utrecht (see Newsletter April 2019).

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

Trade union workers FNV threaten with industrial action at their own union

May 21, 2019

Employers of the country's largest trade union FNV that are organised within their own union personnel union organised a rally outside of their headquarters. The union workers threatened with strike actions if the union management would go true with a reorganisation plan the union workers find to be 'not worthy of a trade union'. The union management has now agreed upon withdrawing the reorganisation plan and will come up with a new plan.

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

Shell strike postponed as new offer is on the table

April 26, 2019

Strike action at Royal Dutch Shell's Pernis refinery that started 7 April 2019 was extended. According to the union as a result of the strike production was limited to 65% of capacity. Trade union FNV also prevented maintenance at Shell's Moerdijk facility. On April 25, 2019 court allowed the workers to continue the strike. A day later Shell made the union a new offer after which the strike actions were stopped.

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

Ryanair pilots win financial compensation

April 23, 2019

After the August and September 2018 strikes by pilots at Eindhoven airport the company decided to close its affiliation in Eindhoven and offer the pilots a contract from another airport. The pilots originally struck because of too much flexibility in the working scheme and demanded the company to stop operating according to Irish law. This fight was part of a European struggle. Since the strikes several court cases were all won by the pilots. The last was when the judge decided that the pilots' contracts will be terminated on May 1, 2019 while they will be compensated from 380,000 to 480,000.

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

Norway

Gender inequalities in the world of work

April 12, 2019

According to figures from the annual Norwegian Work Research Institute's 2019 barometer the gender pay gap among full-time employees in the country remains at 20%. After adjusting for age, education, sector and several other factors, there is still a 13 % gender difference. The barometer also measures the difference between how much influence the responders felt they had over their own work situation. While 47 % of the men said they had a lot of influence only 42 % of the women said the same. Asked whether they felt they could control how their organised their own work, the difference was considerably larger. While 63 % of the men put themselves on 4 to 5 on a scale to five, where 1 was no influence at all and 5 was a lot of influence, only 45% of the women respondents did the same.

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

Poland

Unions formulate strategy to protect workers' rights at Inter-Ikea

May 15, 2019

Representatives of plant-level unions discussed joint strategies to protect workers' rights at Inter-IKEA Industry factories. The meeting took place at the headquarters of Solidarnost. The common issues the

unions discussed were: wages, retirement programs, seniority benefits, and occupational health and safety preventive fund. The representatives think that to solve these issues an open dialogue with national management and negotiations are needed.

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

Disposable income grew 6% in 2018

May 10, 2019

The average monthly disposable income per household member last year was 394 euro, according to the Ministry of Entrepreneurship and Technology. Over the past four years, disposable income of households for consumption and saving has increased by 22% per person. The improvements were the result of a strong economy and growing social transfers. State benefits for families and children account for 2.7% of GDP.

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

Teachers' strike suspended after 18 days

April 26, 2019

Thousands of schools across the country have cancelled classes after teachers on April 8, 2019 went on a nationwide strike of unlimited duration. In an ongoing wage dispute (see our March newsletter) strikers demanded higher wages and unions called for the strike after being urged by unsatisfied teachers. Government officials asked for suspension of the strike when high school exams were endangered but the unions refused. Then government organized a debate on the state of education in the country. First the unions also refused to attend the debate but they finally suspended the strike.

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

Portugal

Renewed strike action fuel-tank workers called off

May 10, 2019

After an earlier strike action between 15-18 April 2019 fuel-tanker drivers threatened a new strike to back up their demands for better pay and conditions. In the previous stoppage in April 2,000 petrol stations ran low on fuel supplies and government was prompted to declare an energy crisis. This meant reduced airports' fuel reserves to emergency levels, disrupted flights and forced motorists to queue for hours outside petrol stations. Further strike actions that were planned to happen in May 2019 are called off as negotiations re-opened. According to the unions their demand for a minimum wage of 1,200 euros had not been agreed to but bosses have accepted to raise salaries to very near that figure.

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

UPS workers get first ever contract

April 10, 2019

SNTCT trade union members have negotiated their first-ever collective agreement with UPS that entered the countries' market in 1993. The five-year agreement provides annual wage increases, new avenues for advancement in the company, more vacation days, and more pay for night and supplementary work.

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

Four-year collective agreement Ryanair pilots

April 2, 2019

Ryanair pilots have voted in favour of a collective-labour agreement that covers the next four years. After multiple strikes across the continent more than a year ago Ryanair decided that it would recognise trade unions and has been negotiating collective-labour agreements with pilots and cabin crew. The agreement governing pay and conditions was negotiated between Ryanair and the pilot union SPAC to cover all of the airline's directly employed pilots in the country.

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

Romania

General strike at Electrolux plant still going on

April 23, 2019

After 6 weeks of struggle the more than 420 workers at the Electrolux plant in Satu Mare are still striking for a pay increase of 3 euro a day (see our March newsletter). Management announced on April 17 2019 that the trade union rejected their second proposal for ending the strike. According to the union management is still refusing to change its position and negotiate on wages allowing for a decent life for the workers and their families offer only an increase of 1 euro a day. A caravan of workers from the Electrolux plant now started a 600-km march towards the Swedish Embassy in Bucharest to protest the way the Swedish multinational has been treating its employees.

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

Serbia

Fiat workers worried about paid leave

May 24, 2019

Workers of FIAT Chrysler Serbia (FCA) factory in Kragujevac got worried when they learnt from some media that the company management would ask ministry to consent to additional 95 days (besides the legally allowed 45) of paid leave. The trade union was not informed of this on forehand and states that workers are anxious because they have no clear knowledge of the factory's future. Since the beginning of this year 30 non-working days have been used.

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

Slovakia

Employees of U.S. Steel Košice protest for higher salaries

May 17, 2019

The local trade union organisation organised a protest in which more than 1,000 employees demanded higher tariff salaries. Last April they already declared a strike alert expressing their dissatisfaction with the salary hike negotiations. In response the company's management points to the worsening situation on the steel market. Although the trade unionists are aware of the difficult situation within the sector, they believe employees deserve adequate salaries.

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

First Collective Bargaining Agreement at IKEA factory

April 9, 2019

IKEA Boards trade union signed their first Collective Bargaining Agreement with the company. At the end 2018 the trade union took the initiative that was successful after several rounds of negotiations. According to union officials the negotiations were tough they did not get everything they wanted. However the union believes it is crucial is that have established their first collective bargaining agreement and gained experience in negotiating with the management.

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

Slovenia

Unions ready to fight for minimum wage increases

May 17, 2019

Trade unions have dismissed claims by the Chamber of Commerce and Industry that the recent minimum wage increase would have a profound negative impact on society and the economy. According to the

unionists there is no data to back up claims by economists that higher minimum wage could cause job losses. As more and more signs arise that employer organisations want to prevent planned increases in the minimum wage that will come into effect in 2020 unions have announced they will fight with all available means what they believe are concealed attempts to change the law on minimum wage.

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

Spain

Thousands of metalworkers engage in industrial action

May 26, 2019

With a collective agreement that has been frozen since 2011 and after more than a year of negotiations, metalworkers of the Bizkaia region decided to call out a five day strike. The strike started with a mass demonstration in Bilbao in which 10,000 workers participated. The four other days that strike actions are planned are 6, 7, 20 and 21 June 2019. According to the unions the employers proposals are unacceptable. Because salaries have been frozen for years and the sector has undergone a serious precarization the unions believe the metalworkers deserve a fair pay rise.

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

Union calls walkout nursery schools in demand of better wages

May 10, 2019

Trade union CCOO has called out a national walkout because nursery school teachers are not being paid an adequate salary for their levels of responsibility and training and to protest lack of job security. Salaries in the sector have been frozen for the last seven-and-a-half years. According to union CCOO current salaries of fulltime working nursing school teachers do not reach 900 euro a month gross.

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

Airport strikes

April 16, 2019

Airline Air Nostrum and pilot union SEPLA have reached an agreement. This means a two times three-day strike with one of them planned to happen during the Easter holidays is now called off. The union and Air Nostrum's disagreed on the outsourcing of contracts to third parties. The agreement with Air Nostrum does however not mean that there will be no industrial action at the airports. Ground staff at Spanish airports have confirmed they will go on strike between April 21-24 over a failure to reach an agreement on their wages and working conditions.

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

Nationwide port strike called off

April 16, 2019

Spanish trade unions CCOO, UGT and CIT called a 24-hours strike of port workers because of a standstill of the collective labour agreement talks. According to the unions over the last 9 years workers have seen a wage cut close to 30%. The strike was called off the 24-hour strike was eventually called off as the president of Ports of the State committed to a definitive solution for a new collective agreement.

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

Sweden

Earning differences temporary workers

April 23, 2019

New research describes the earnings differences associated with employment sequences among temporary workers in the country. The authors find that the type of employment sequence varies with differences in earnings relative to predominantly constant temporary employment. In particular, workers who go from

temporary work to permanent work exhibit gains. Workers transitioning from permanent work to temporary work also increase their earnings.

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

Switzerland

New report shows teachers are overworked and underpaid

May 9, 2019

Teachers are often overworked and underpaid. Especially those on part-time contracts, according to the latest report on working time of two trade unions. Every ten years a similar report is published, previous editions dating from 1999 and 2009. The most recent report shows that most teachers spend between 8.6% and 16% extra hours at work. The unions are both demanding paid extra hours for educators, a reduction of compulsory extra education hours for teachers, more resources for the classrooms and more time for educators to interact with parents.

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

Pay your interns

May 1, 2019

Dozens of young interns working at the United Nations and other international organisations in Geneva joined the May 1 demonstration to demand fair and quality paid internships. Unpaid work placements are considered as 'a form of discrimination against those who cannot afford to work for free.' The interns want equal access to fundamental labour rights. Their complaint is understandable because around 80% of UN internships are unpaid in Geneva, one of the most expensive cities in the world.

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

Higher wages in scaffolding

April 2, 2019

Trade union Unia announced both the general and the minimum wages in scaffolding will rise. The general salary increase is 50 francs per month, starting from 31 March 2018. The minimum wage for employees without specialist knowledge increases by 100 to 4,293 francs; the minimum wage for group leaders with a certificate of 78 to 5160 francs. This rise will apply to Swiss companies and foreign companies and also for temporary employment agencies.

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

Turkey

Uni Global Union supports president of UNI affiliated care-worker union

April 1, 2019

UNI Global Union stands in solidarity with Arzu Çerkezoğlu, president of UNI affiliate Dev Sağlık-İş, who faces up to three years in prison. The case against Çerkezoğlu, is related to comments she made during a public panel in June 2016 in Sapanca which had been organised by Turkey's largest opposition party. UNI supports Çerkezoğlu's right to free speech and her right to call for peaceful protest. In court, Çerkezoğlu is expected to repeat her testimony that to fulfil labour rights we need a democratic and egalitarian society in line with international law, including the relevant ILO conventions.

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

United Kingdom

Glasgow City council sends women equal pay offers of up to 100,000 pounds

May 24, 2019

Payments of up to 100000 pounds are being offered to Glasgow city council workers in a long-running equal pay row. Settlement letters are being sent to thousands of current and former Glasgow City Council workers after the local authority agreed to pay out at least £500 million earlier this year, more than a decade on from the dispute arising (see our February 2019 newsletter). The claimant group reached a deal with the council months after around 8,000 Glasgow council workers walked out on strike for 48 hours in October in a bid to settle the pay claim. According to GMB union settlements that are now being offered average out to around 22000 pounds while some are up to 100000 pounds.

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

Homework up with 27.7% in last decade

May 17, 2019

A TUC analysis shows that 374,000 more employees are working from home than 10 years ago. But working from home is still not an option for everyone as their bosses are not giving them the option of homeworking. The TUC estimates that around 4 million more UK workers would like to work from home for at least some of their working week but aren't given the chance. The analysis furthermore shows that are almost twice as many men as women homeworkers, older workers are more likely to work from home and that managers work at home more than any other group does.

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

More workers are paid below minimum wage

April 25, 2019

A new report from the Low Pay Commission, that made use of the most up to date statistical evidence on the extent of non-compliance with the hourly minimum wage, found that the number of people paid less than the statutory minimum wage in the UK increased in 2018. Almost a quarter of those paid less than the National Living Wage were workers 25 and over. Women are more likely than men to be paid less than the minimum wage. Underpayment is also higher for the youngest and oldest workers. Childcare is the occupation with the highest proportion of underpaid workers.

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

Ground-breaking deal gives Herms couriers more workers' rights

April 16, 2019

Courier service Herms has agreed upon a deal with trade union GMB that will give their approximately 15000 couriers the choice of being 'self-employed plus'. Herms used to consider their couriers as self-employed which means that they were not entitled to the rights a normal workers has. A ruling from the employment tribunal last year however stated that Hermes drivers should be considered 'workers' and not self-employed. Union and Hermes have negotiated a middle way solution that is unique in the landscape of the gig-economy. Couriers can now chose to be self-employed plus. If they do so they are entitled to the national minimum wage (if over 25 the national living wage applies, working time rights which include breaks, paid holiday and a limit to weekly working hours, the right to join a union, health and safety protection, protection from unlawful discrimination and data protection rights. Couriers working under the self-employed plus conditions do have to give up a large part of their autonomy as they no longer can decide upon their own daily scheme but must follow a specific route as decided by the company.

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

Glasgow airport strike suspended

April 15, 2019

Union members of Unite voted in favour of industrial action at Glasgow airport with an overwhelmingly majority of 95% in support as negotiations over the airport's plan to close the defined benefits pension scheme and a pay rise proved unfruitful. Whilst the airport made more than 74 million pounds in profit last year it only offered its employees a pay rise of 1.8% which effectively means a real terms pay cut. Under the threat of strike actions negotiations reopened with a new offer of 3% pay rise now on the table. In a joint statement both parties declared that strike actions are suspended for now. A deal on the pension scheme is however still not in sight.

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

National Living Wage rises with 4.9%

April 1, 2019

The National Living Wage that was introduced in 2015 for workers aged 25 and over has risen by 4.9% to 8.21 pounds an hour. This is the highest increase rate since its introduction. The National Living Wage is not to be confused with the so-called real living wage. According to the UK government, 1.8 million workers earning the National Living Wage will receive an additional 690 pound. This is still 1500 pounds a year short in comparison with the real living wage. The National Minimum Wage is also increasing to 7.70 pounds per hour for 21 to 24-year olds. The TUC stresses that young workers are still getting a raw deal on pay: 'their bills aren't any cheaper, but they have to make ends meet with less'.

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

For more information, please contact Sanne van der Gaag or Sjaak van der Velden, De Burcht (Scientific Bureau for the Dutch Trade Union Movement) sannevandergaag@deburcht.org or the Head of communications at the ETUI, Steve Coulter scoulter@etui.org. For previous full issues of the *Collective bargaining newsletter* please visit www.etui.org/E-Newsletters/Collective-bargaining-newsletter or consult the archive with all articles in our database at www.cbnarchive.eu.

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