

# collective bargaining

Issue 10/2019 | October

This newsletter presents up-to-date information on collective bargaining developments across Europe since February 2008. It aims to facilitate information exchange between trade unions and to support the work of the ETUC's collective bargaining committee.

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## European sources

### **Equal Pay Day**

*October 31, 2019*

Women in the European Union still earn on average 16% less than men, a slight improvement from last year's 16.2%. It marks the day when women symbolically stop getting paid compared to their male colleagues for the same job. Nine out of ten Europeans women and men think that it is unacceptable that women are paid less than men for the same job.

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### **Collective bargaining must be rebuilt**

*October 28, 2019*

In September, industriAll Europe launched its European campaign 'Together at Work', which aims to promote the benefits of collective bargaining for workers, but also for the economy and the entire society. Many European countries build or rebuild their collective-bargaining systems, to ensure that a large majority of workers will enjoy the protection of collective agreements. The 'Together at Work' campaign shows that Europe needs collective bargaining with solid structures, but also with strong trade unions and representative employers' organisations, which negotiate inclusive collective agreements of benefit to all.

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### **Relaunch of social dialogue in the gas sector**

*October 28, 2019*

The European trade union federations, industriAll and EPSU, and industry association Eurogas officially relaunched their European Social Dialogue in the gas sector. The Social Partners adopted their Work Programme for the two years ahead, with the key focus on the role of gas in a decarbonised European economy and the impact of the energy transition on workers in the European Gas Industry.

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### **Tripartite Social Summit**

*October 16, 2019*

The main theme of the autumn tripartite social summit of the European Union was 'Progressing on the social and economic dimensions for a competitive, fair and sustainable Europe: The role of social partners and social dialogue'. Discussions at this summit focused on three areas: a just transition to a climate neutral economy, investing in skills and improving access to adult training and designing an industrial policy fit for the future.

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### **International Day for the Eradication of Poverty**

*October 16, 2019*

According to Eurostat there is a downward trend in the share of persons at risk of poverty or social exclusion in the EU. But still around 109 million people are in this situation. In 2018, 109.2 million people, or 21.7% of the population, in the European Union (EU) were at risk of poverty or social exclusion. This means that they were in at least one of the following three conditions: at risk of poverty after social transfers (income

poverty), severely materially deprived or living in households with very low work intensity.

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## Austria

### **Agreement reached in metal industry**

*October 28, 2019*

In the fifth round of negotiations, employers and workers have agreed on a new collective agreement for the metalworking industry. Starting from November 2019 a wage increase by 2.7% is foreseen for the approximately 130,000 employees in the industry. This is somewhere between the 4.5% demanded by the union and the 1.8% offered by the employers.

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

### **Unions debate green technology**

*October 4, 2019*

At the meeting with the SKF top management IndustriALL European and world union council discussed the Green Technology and Industry 4.0. Over 40 delegates and observers from 20 countries met in Steyr to have a vital exchange among themselves as well as with the group's top management.

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## Belgium

### **Minister calls for a minimum pension**

*October 26, 2019*

A guaranteed minimum pension of €1,500 was a goal of many parties during the last election campaign. Now the Minister of Pensions explains the way this goal can be achieved. After a career of 45 years, the minimum guaranteed pension in Belgium today amounts to €1,266. In 2024, five indexations will raise the guaranteed gross minimum pension to €1,400 per month.

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### **Global Framework Agreement renewed**

*October 17, 2019*

Belgian based multinational materials company Umicore (employing 10,700 people worldwide) and IndustriALL Global Union renewed their Global Framework Agreement on Sustainable Development for another four-year period. The renewal is the third since 2007. It covers human rights, including collective bargaining and equal opportunities, violence and harassment at work (ILO Convention 190), safe and healthy working conditions and environmental issues.

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## Bulgaria

## **Wage growth forecast**

*October 31, 2019*

A report released by the Ministry of Finance estimates that the average monthly salary in the country will reach about € 767 in 2021. According to local news the ministry predicts that the average salary in the country will reach € 715 next year, and € 818 in 2022. Bulgaria is at the bottom of the EU population income list. In 2018, the average hourly labour cost in Bulgaria is the lowest in the European Union, equal to € 5.40.

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## **All pensions to rise by 6.7%**

*October 31, 2019*

The Bulgarian government has approved the bill on the 2020 state social security budget. The bill envisages increase in pensions by 6.7% as of 1 July 2020. The bill also proposes changes to the Social Security Code related to the implementation of the state social insurance budget, as well as some amendments that detail provisions on insured persons' rights.

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## **Croatia**

### **Fair pay for teachers**

*October 21, 2019*

Teachers in primary and secondary education have been on strike demanding a decent pay rise, which recognises the high workload and complexity of the profession. The EU trade union for education ETUCE stands on solidarity with the Croatian member organisations and supports their fair demand for a salary increase of on average 6.11% for all employees in primary and secondary education.

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### **Revoke of retirement age rise after trade union revolt**

*October 18, 2019*

Croatia backed down on changes to its pension system as parliament reinstated a retirement age of 65 after leading trade unions staged protests against a rise to 67. Like many European countries, Croatia has an aging population, and parliament approved a government proposal in December to raise the retirement age to 67 from 2033 instead of 2038 as previously planned, for both men and women. It also aimed to trim pensions for people who retire early.

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## **Cyprus**

### **Strike action of bank employees' union**

*October 7, 2019*

Bank employees' union Etyk called for a strike at Hellenic Bank, accusing the company of renegeing on prior commitments made to staff. According to Etyk, the bank is refusing to pay employees automatic wage increases as well as the cost of living allowance despite being advised to do so by the labour minister. Etyk also said the company is unfairly treating former employees of the Cyprus Cooperative Bank, absorbed into Hellenic last year.

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## Czechia

### **Controls and checks on taxi platforms**

*October 24, 2019*

The Tax Administration has introduced controls and checks on taxi drivers using the shared-economy platforms Uber, Bolt and Liftago. These controls and checks aim to detect tax fraud and will cover the past three years. The question is whether the taxi drivers paid the obligatory income tax, value added tax and road tax.

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### **Media freedom under pressure**

*October 16, 2019*

A report by the European Federation of Journalists (EFJ), the Syndicate of Journalists of the Czech Republic and some other partners reveals the state of media in the country. It notices that the prime minister's close link to the media he used to own is totally unacceptable for a democracy and how easy it is to put pressure on the media by the parliament and the government. It advises that the financing of media has to be addressed both within public service media and private media.

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

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## Denmark

### **The future of work: what can be learned?**

*October 15, 2019*

What can we learn from the future of work in Denmark? This article addresses collective agreements in the gig economy, a flexible approach to economic security and trade unions using technology to redesign jobs.

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### **Refugees necessary for the labour market**

*October 3, 2019*

Despite more repressive policies and a focus on sending them back to their origin countries, refugees are indispensable to the Danish labour market. Access to the labour market and finding employment are seen as the most urgent aspects of integration of refugees and are moreover often discussed as evidence of how integrated refugees really are. Recent refugee politics, however, have had profound consequences for refugees' conditions on the Danish labour market.

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## Estonia

### **Low interest in second pillar schemes**

*October 21, 2019*

In Estonia, the interest of consumers in free-of-choice pension funds, is the lowest as compared to other member states of the European Union, a study of Better Finance investor rights group found.

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### **Employers' Confederation proposes minimum wage increase by 8%**

*October 23, 2019*

The Employers' Confederation made a proposal to the Confederation of Estonian Trade Unions to increase the minimum wage by 8%. If the proposal is approved, the minimum wage would increase to € 583.2 next year, instead of the € 578 on which the Employers' Confederation and the Trade Unions' Confederation agreed in August. The trade unions keep stressing their demand that the minimum wage should account for no less than 40 percent of the projected average wage, which would total at least € 600.

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## Finland

### **Difficult collective bargaining in technology industry**

*October 30, 2019*

Several important collective agreements in the technology industry are nearing their expiry date. Altogether these agreements cover 296,000 employees. In spite of the tight schedule no results are near in sight during this current round of collective bargaining. The most difficult question is the fate of the 24 unpaid annual extra working hours, forced on employees by government in 2016. The negotiations between Trade Union Pro and the Federation of Finnish Technology Industries stopped altogether for several weeks due to the excessive list of demands presented by the employers. Now the negotiations have re-started.

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### **Postal workers call strike**

*October 22, 2019*

Postal workers' representatives have announced a possible strike in November. According to the PAU union they plan to stop all deliveries, sorting and transport services for the duration of the strike. PAU says the strike won't happen if they reach agreement with Posti, the government-owned postal monopoly, on a new deal covering wages, terms and conditions in the sector.

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## France

### **Pensions reform meets disapproval**

*October 6, 2019*

Millions of French workers fear they will be worse off under the pension reform. Earlier in September workers at RATP, the Paris public transport network that also has its own pension scheme, staged a big walkout that shut 10 of the capital's 16 metro lines. Unions have called for another strike by RATP and SNCF railway workers starting on December 5.

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### **Important changes retirement plans**



October 1, 2019

There are changes coming in October to simplify the individual retirements savings plan 'plan épargne retraite individuel (PERi)'. Separate to the state pension, this allows employees to save for their retirement, but it has been criticised for being too complicated, especially for people who switch between the public and private sectors during their careers. The French government is pushing for ambitious reforms to the French pension system, which has already put it on a collision course with unions.

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### **Decline in unemployment**

October 25, 2019

The unemployed population fell by 46,600 in September. In this respect, the third quarter was the best since 2007. However, if strikes were to increase in number, they could shorten what remains of positive momentum before the slowdown announced for 2020. The September figure brings the fall in unemployment to 55,900 in the third quarter.

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## Germany

### **Lufthansa strike minimized and prolonged**

October 20, 2019

After the union UFO (Unabhängige Flugbegleiter Organisation, Independent Flight Attendants Organization) called all Lufthansa flight attendants out on a five-hour strike, in the end only the Lufthansa group subsidiaries Eurowings, German Wings, SunExpress Germany and Lufthansa CityLine were called for a strike. The strike call planned for Lufthansa itself was cancelled because the airline met the unions demand for an increase in salary of 2% by the end of the year. The warning strike at the subsidiaries was prolonged to last until midnight.

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### **IG Metall Congress: Together for tomorrow in solidarity and justice**

October 10, 2019

Under the banner of 'Together for tomorrow in solidarity and justice' the 478 delegates of the 24th ordinary congress of IG Metall, held a congress in Nuremberg. IG Metall with a membership of 2.2 million members, represents workers in industrial sectors of the economy. The congress adopted a Manifesto of IG Metall in a new era defining the goal of its work for the next few years: Shaping the transformation. Protecting people, shaping work, using digital opportunities! With safety, justice and self-determination.

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

### **Deutsche Bank restructures, 18,000 jobs lost**

October 8, 2019

Deutsche Bank AG intends to make about half its planned 18,000 job cuts in Germany as it relies on savings at the retail units to lower costs, according to people familiar with the matter. This means that more than 40% of the personnel will lose their means of existence to lower costs for the company. Deutsche Bank is just one of many large lenders that have recently announced staff reductions, though its effort is the biggest by far.

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## **German Trade Union Confederation celebrates 70th birthday**

*October 1, 2019*

The German Trade Union Confederation (DGB, Deutscher Gewerkschaftsbund) was founded 70 years ago. At this occasion, employers' associations and political parties praised the DGB for its important role in representing the workers' interest in the broader context of the German social market economy which still is the fundamental ideological underpinning of German capitalism.

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## **Greece**

### **Unemployment falls**

*October 10, 2019*

Greece's unemployment rate fell to 16.9% in July from a revised 17.1% in the previous month, data from the country's statistics service ELSTAT showed. Seasonally adjusted data showed the number of unemployed at 797,218 people, with younger persons aged up to 24 being the largest demographic group of people out of work. Among younger persons aged 15 to 24, the unemployment rate fell to 32.9% from 37.8% in the same month in 2018.

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### **Major strike in public sector**

*October 2, 2019*

Public sector workers in Greece have staged a strike in protest against the conservative government's planned legislation to deregulate the labour market. The strike has immobilized transport links, banks and news agencies and caused widespread disruption. Athens airport services and railways in and beyond the capital were severely affected. Ferries serving islands also stopped their service and the journalists' union announced a media shutdown for the duration of the strike.

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## **Hungary**

### **Wage growth continues its ascent**

*October 30, 2019*

Wage growth remained in the double-digit territory with robust public sector data. The Hungarian average gross and net wage growth accelerated in August by 11.5% year-on-year. The strengthening wage pressure is mainly due to the public sector, where the pace of growth picked up. After a 7.1% reading in July, August wage growth came in at 11.7% year-on-year - the second-highest this year.

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### **No sign of labour market weakness**

*October 29, 2019*

The Hungarian unemployment rate increased marginally, on seasonal factors. The unemployment rate for the 15-64 age group came in at 3.5% in September, up 0.1 ppt month-on-month. Developments of

recent months reveal a minor upward trend that, however, has nothing to do with the signs of a slowdown seen in the real economy. Seasonally adjusted data is stable. The number of employed remained above 4.44 million.

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## Iceland

### **Happiness and wages**

*October 18, 2019*

Families need decent wages in order to afford all the essentials. But high wages do not necessarily make families happy. There is no direct correlation between money and happiness, unless the family has real economic problems. The key to happiness is mainly spending time with family and friends. Icelanders are considered to be the world's happiest people, along with their Nordic neighbours. Iceland has been ranked among the five happiest countries in the world for many years now.

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## Ireland

### **Operators weekend strike**

*October 16, 2019*

Operators of GoSafe speed vans went on weekend strike over the October Bank Holiday weekend in a dispute over working conditions and union recognition. The employees were on strike for 72 hours. The workers, who are members of the union SIPTU, have also begun additional industrial action.

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### **Minimum wage increase deferred due to threat of no-deal Brexit**

*October 8, 2019*

The introduction of a 30 cent increase to the minimum wage has been deferred due to the threat of a no-deal Brexit. The hike, which was recommended by the Low Pay Commission, was set to bring the national minimum wage for adults up to €10.10 per hour.

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## Italy

### **Solidarity with metalworkers**

*October 31, 2019*

IndustriAll European Trade Union and IndustriALL Global Union stand in solidarity with metalworkers in Italy that are today engaged in a nation-wide strike action called for jointly by the affiliates FIM-CISL, FIOM-CGIL and UILM. Two-hour long workers' assemblies are held in each workplace to discuss with workers urgently needed policies for a sustainable future of industry. Core demands include the need to end industrial and employment crises, to revive economic and social growth, to restart investments, to increase wages, to respect fundamental workers' rights. The strike comes at a time of great uncertainty about the future of the metal industry in Italy.

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### **Agreement against harassment in the workplace**

*October 22, 2019*

The first agreement against harassment in the workplace was signed by the management of SIAM and the three Italian unions CGIL-CISL-UIL represented in this company that is providing water services in the Syracuse area of Sicily. The agreement commits the Parties to cooperate in maintaining a working environment that respects the dignity of each person and to foster relations based on the principles of equality and fairness. In addition, it establishes a Guarantee Commission, consisting of a company representative and a worker representative who will ensure a fair assessment of acts linked to harassment that could then lead, if proven, to sanctions imposed by the company.

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## Latvia

### **Doctors, teachers ready for strike**

*October 27, 2019*

Many professionals expressed their readiness to go on strike. Latvian doctors, dissatisfied with what the state has earmarked in the national budget to health care, announced a strike, when all medical staff, except ambulance workers, are called not to go to work. Latvian teachers threatened once again to hold a strike. If the government will not provide guarantees to the pay rise of the teaching staff, they will be out in the streets in March, 2020.

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

### **Firefighters warn of strike over low pay**

*October 22, 2019*

Lithuanian firefighters have warned of plans to hold a strike over low funding that makes paying wages and attracting new workers difficult. Fire services are alarmingly short on funds not just to hire more fighters, but even to pay the existing ones. With night shifts, firefighters make less than 500 euros a month after taxes.

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## Liechtenstein

### **Employers discuss the workplace of tomorrow**

*October 29, 2019*

Every year entrepreneurs from Ruggell meet to find out about current trends. This year over 200 people gathered in the community hall. The following question was the guiding theme: What does the 'workplace of the future' look like? The panel discussion after the presentation showed that the workplace of tomorrow has not yet arrived.

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## Lithuania

### **Teacher trade union initiates strike over education funding**

*October 18, 2019*

One of the largest teacher trade unions in Lithuania is initiating a strike over the government's planned education funding. The strike will be held over the government's planned education funding for 2020 under consideration along the next year's state budget. The trade union's representatives pointed to the fact that the government pledged to allocate almost 118 million euros next year under the collective agreement signed earlier this year with representatives of the education and science area.

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

### **Ministry proposes to raise minimum wage**

*October 1, 2019*

The Lithuanian Social Security and Labour Ministry proposes to raise the minimum monthly wage by € 30 to € 430 next January, but the actual amount will be € 555 due to taxation changes. The ministry's proposal came after the Tripartite Council, which brings together the government, some employers and trade unions, failed to reach a compromise on an increase in the minimum wage.

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## Luxembourg

### **Trade unions urge UEL to abandon boycott policy**

*October 11, 2019*

Three trade union confederations criticised the Union of Luxembourgish Enterprises (UEL). The three urge the UEL to abandon its 'empty chair' policy at the Standing Committee on Labour and Employment. The unions also stated that the UEL's provocative attitude undermined their achievements of the last 40 years.

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### **Cactus collective bargaining proceedings reach deadlock**

*October 5, 2019*

Despite excellent results Cactus Management wants minor pay rises. The Independent Luxembourg Trade Union Confederation and the Luxembourg Confederation of Christian Trade Unions conveyed in a press release that there can be no collective agreement with Cactus because of the attitude of the management. The unions may fall back on 'other union' methods if necessary. The collective agreement affects 3,200 employees.

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## Malta

### **School heads are warning staff not to strike**

*October 24, 2019*

Some state heads of school have forwarded a warning by a teacher union to their staff that disciplinary action could be taken against them if they follow a new rival teacher union's industrial action directives. The Malta Teachers' Union (MUT) last week emailed a circular to state heads, requesting that they forward it to

educators and place it on a noticeboard where all can see it.

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### **Low percentage of union members**

*October 15, 2019*

In its recently published Annual Review of Working Life 2018, Eurofound reported that Malta has recorded its lowest ever percentage of workers belonging to a union, despite the fact that the Registrar of Trade Unions had reported that Trade Union membership increased by 1,562 during that year. Yet, that year saw an increase of some 13,000 in the working population. This means that less and less persons joining the official working force are becoming trade union members.

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## Netherlands

### **Union membership continues to decline**

*October 25, 2019*

New figures published by Statistics Netherlands (CBS, Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek) reveal that trade union membership is declining rapidly. Ten years ago 1.9 million people were members of a union, but this number has fallen to 1.6 million in 2019. Over the past two years alone, union membership fell by 100,000. The Dutch Trade Union Federation (FNV, Federatie Nederlandse Vakbeweging) felt the biggest loss. Membership is now below one million.

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

### **Many agency workers can't make ends meet**

*October 22, 2019*

The Christian Trade Union Confederation (CNV, Christelijk Nationaal Vakverbond) concludes in a survey that one in three people employed through a temporary employment agency needs a second job. Almost half find it difficult to make ends meet. Six in 10 of the interviewed people said they would rather have a permanent job. Staffing agency workers are no longer being used to replace sick workers or take up the slack in peak periods but have become a structural part of the workforce.

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

### **Best pension system for second year in a row**

*October 22, 2019*

According to the Melbourne Mercer Global Pension Index (MMGPI), the Netherlands has the best pension system in the world; this is the second year in a row that the Low Country has come out on top. The indicators in the study inform the three sub-indices: adequacy, sustainability and integrity. The scores on these indices contribute to the final aggregate score. The Netherlands does well on all categories, with its highest score being for integrity.

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## Norway

### **Workers protest implementation of EU's 4th railway regulations package**

October 12, 2019

Rail workers in Norway went on a two-hour strike, bringing the country's railway system to a halt. They were protesting the implementation of the European Union's fourth railway regulations package, which is likely to weaken the country's control of its services. The workers raised the demand that railway regulations in the country be formulated and decided on by Norwegian officials. Several railway unions, including the Norsk Lokomotiv-mannsforbund (NLF) and the Norsk Jernbaneforbund (NJF), participated in the strike.

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### **Budget to promote employment and welfare**

October 7, 2019

The Norwegian economy is in its third year of economic expansion. Employment growth is strong and the registered unemployment rate has fallen to levels last seen in 2008. Non-oil business investments are at a 10-year high. These positive developments are expected to continue. Unemployment has declined across the country, and employment growth is strong. With economic growth picking up and unemployment declining, the Government has moved to a neutral fiscal policy stance in recent years.

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## Poland

### **Teachers' union starts work-to-rule protest**

October 23, 2019

The Polish Teachers' Union (ZNP) issued a call for a work-to-rule protest of unlimited duration. The union wants to secure the dignity and prestige of the profession by raising wages. The demanded pay rise was not won during the nationwide strike of unlimited duration that started in April and was later suspended.

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### **Ruling political party wants to regulate journalists**

October 8, 2019

The ruling Law and Justice (PiS) party wants to create a 'new media order'. The party published a manifesto in which a new regulatory framework for the conduct of journalism is described. The journalist profession should be regulated in a similar ways as the medical and legal professions, according to the manifesto. The European Federation of Journalists calls on the public authorities to refrain from any initiative to regulate the profession. 'A proposal during the election campaign about regulating of journalism will de facto end press freedom,' warns the President of the European Federation of Journalists (EFJ).

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## Portugal

### **Dock workers protest violation of collective bargaining agreement**

October 31, 2019

The union of dock workers has given an ultimatum to the Setúbal port authorities to review the recent hiring of an external worker, in violation of the collective labour contract signed with the dockers. The Turkey-based port operating group, Yilport Holding Inc., has admitted to hiring a worker who does not belong to the temporary workers' dockers group that is engaged in the operations at Setúbal.

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### **Minimum wage to be raised by 25%**

*October 26, 2019*

Portugal's Prime Minister promised to raise the monthly minimum wage by 25% to € 750 by 2023 as he started his second term in the office, while reiterating the goal to cut public debt to below 100% of GDP. The national minimum salary will evolve every year after discussions with the collective bargaining partners, depending on the employment dynamics and economic growth.

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## Romania

### **One in three part-time employees would like to work more**

*October 23, 2019*

The share of part-time employees in Romania who are willing and able to work more, also known as underemployed persons, was 31% in 2018, according to Eurostat data released on October 22. This was the seventh-highest share among the European Union's 28 states and is relevant in the context of the tight labour market in Romania. Romania had 655,800 part-time employees in 2018, representing some 7.5% of the 8.7 million active population. The number of underemployed persons in Romania, 203,200 in 2018, accounted for 2.3% of the active population

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### **Advertising campaign to come home**

*October 11, 2019*

The government in Bucharest has launched an advertising campaign to encourage workers to come home. It is putting in place a range of incentives made up of grants and loans. The labour minister said: 'We want all Romanians to come home if possible'.

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## Serbia

### **Unions against new law on occupational health and safety**

*October 31, 2019*

The law on occupational health and safety is expected to be adopted by the end of this year, but it has not been approved by the government and Parliament, yet. One of the main challenges is the lack of consensus in the Economic and Social Council, where both representative unions - CATUS and TUC Nezavisnost - were against the government/employers' proposal.

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### **Number of peacefully settled labour disputes increased**

*October 20, 2019*

The number of peacefully settled cases doubled compared to 2018, as more and more workers avoid strikes and complicated court procedure and choose mediation of the Agency for Peaceful Settlement of Labour



Disputes. The main reasons for such growth are the amendments to the legislation which gave the Agency more powers, as well as the adoption of its Code of Ethics. In last few years, the Agency has become a more important player in Serbian social dialogue.

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## Slovakia

### **Number of people living at risk of poverty has fallen**

*October 22, 2019*

The country has the third lowest at risk of poverty and social exclusion rate in the European Union. Numbers have decreased over the last ten years. Now every sixth person, or a total of 872,000 people, is at risk of poverty or social exclusion. The risk is unevenly distributed among the country. The Prešov Region and Banská Bystrica Region are worse off than the Bratislava Region, where only 7.9% are threatened by poverty.

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## Slovenia

### **Quality employment in focus of World Day for Decent Work**

*October 8, 2019*

Slovenian trade unions urge employers to provide for decent work and reflect on the workers' contribution to economic growth and prosperity at the World Day for Decent Work. The ZSSS confederation of trade unions also highlights the increasingly blurred line between work and spare time, especially when digital technologies enable employers to reach workers at any time. The country's largest association of trade unions thus promotes a good work-life balance, repeating its demand for eight hours of work, eight hours of spare time and eight hours of rest.

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## Spain

### **Job creation falls to lowest level since 2013**

*October 2, 2019*

Spain's labour market is feeling the economic slowdown. According to figures released by the Labour Ministry, job creation in September was up by 3,224 people from August, as measured as the number of new contributors to the Social Security system. While employment is growing in aggregate terms, there is a lot of instability due to the high number of temporary positions. Registered unemployment rose by 13,907 new claims in September. This is a smaller increase than in previous years, and places the total number of people without a job at 3,079,711.

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### **Retirement in modernisation efforts**

*October 1st, 2019*

Telefonica has announced a deal with major trade unions that will offer voluntary retirement to employees. The collective bargaining agreement was agreed between Telefonica Spain and trade unions UGT and CCOO

and will be valid through to December 31 2021 with the possibility of a one year extension. In addition to the offer of voluntary retirement, the deal promises an annual salary increase of 1.5% across the board and an annual bonus of €300.

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## Sweden

### **Strengthen preventative work against discrimination**

*October 18, 2019*

Many employers are not aware that they must work on active measures to promote equal rights and opportunities for their employees. So says the Swedish government, which has appointed a commissioner tasked with coming up with proposals for how to make the monitoring of the discrimination act more effective. The discrimination act does not only prohibit discrimination. It also makes employers responsible for working on active measures in order to achieve equal rights and opportunities for all.

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## Switzerland

### **Real wages set to rise for first time in three years**

*October 27, 2019*

Employees may receive above-inflation pay rises for the first time since 2016, according to expectations in a company survey. On average, workers are forecast to take home a 1.1% pay hike which means a real wage raise of 0.9%. In real life, of course, the wage hikes are unevenly distributed among industries. The winners will be information technology employees (+1.3% real hikes), the pharmaceutical and chemical branches (+1.1%), while people working in the hospitality industry will have to make do with an average real salary rise of +0.4% and teachers can only expect to receive +0.3%.

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### **Google attempts to shut down unionization meeting**

*October 21, 2019*

A group of full-time Google employees in Zurich met to discuss unionization in defiance of their employer's attempt to cancel the meeting. The tensions reflect Google's growing struggles with employee discontent over workplace issues that go beyond just labour organizing. The company's leadership tried to cancel the meeting and replace it with a company meeting on labour laws and workers' rights. Despite this effort employees met anyway. This may be a sign of a growing voice among white-collar workers at tech companies.

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## Turkey

### **Minimum wage not enough**

*October 29, 2019*

A typical four-member family living off the minimum wage would not be able to make ends meet, with even

basic food expenditure exceeding the minimum wage, says Turkey's biggest trade union confederation. The Turk-Is research, which has been conducted every month for 32 years, is prepared independently, without using the price data collected by the Turkish Statistical Institute, the authority responsible for producing official statistics in the country. The minimum monthly wage, enforced by law, applies to a large number of employees in the country as more than one-third of Turkey's 30 million-strong labor force is paid it.

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### **Auto supplier union-busting**

*October 25, 2019*

Safe Demo Plastik, the Turkish subsidiary of French auto supplier Safe Group, is conducting an extensive strategy of union busting against members of IndustriALL Global Union's Turkish affiliate Petrol-İş in the city of Bursa, centre of the auto sector in the country. Without grounds, the company's local management challenged the ministry's certification in court, claiming that Petrol-İş did not have a sufficient majority to be a collective bargaining agent.

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## United Kingdom

### **University workers vote in favour of industrial action**

*October 31, 2019*

Disillusioned university workers have voted in support of strike action on campuses across the UK following separate ballots over pensions, pay and working conditions. The union urged universities to address members' concerns and warned that if they failed to do so strike action was "inevitable", potentially disrupting the studies of about one million students.

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### **Gender pay gap widens**

*October 29, 2019*

The gender pay gap has widened for the first time in six years despite the disparity narrowing to almost nothing among younger workers, new figures have shown. Among full-time workers, women were paid 8.9% less than men this year, a rise of 0.3 percentage points from 2018, the Office for National Statistics (ONS) said. Although the increase was small, it reversed the long-term pattern in which the gap has narrowed. The figure has been falling since 2013, when it stood at 10 per cent for full-time employees.

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### **Precarious workers**

*October 23, 2019*

Millions of people in the UK are in work, but unable to afford the basic needs of life. Nearly two thirds of families living in poverty, as defined by the Social Metrics Commission, have at least one adult in work. Last year the TUC found that one in nine workers – nearly four million people – are in precarious work.

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