

collective bargaining

Issue 9/2017 | September

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



AMSTERDAM INSTITUTE FOR ADVANCED LABOUR STUDIES
UNIVERSITEIT VAN AMSTERDAM



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European sources

Productivity 'reserve' justifies wage increases

September 29, 2017

There is much debate about the consequences of the recent wage increases in CEE-countries. However, employers report more problems with labour shortages than with increased wages. The main cause for this is

productivity. While wage increases are currently outstripping efficiency gains, the opposite has been the case for a long period. CEE wage growth lagged behind productivity gains and average labour costs in the EU's 10 eastern members were about a quarter of Germany's at the end of 2016. Productivity, on the other hand, was two-thirds that of Europe's biggest economy, according to Bloomberg calculations based on Eurostat data.

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

Transport workers act against supply chain exploitation

September 28, 2017

The International transport trade union federation ITF has started talks with several larger multinationals about their supply chain policy. ITF was also involved in an investigation by the BBC into European truck drivers who are being pressured working more than their allowed hours. According to the ITF it is the pressure from the multinational retailers at the top of the supply chains that is causing the exploitation of truck drivers and the violations of regulations. One of the concrete activities, is the opening of a dialogue with furniture giant Ikea about conditions for drivers in companies contracted by the firm. IKEA told the ITF that it takes the concerns very seriously and wants to cooperate with unions to achieve a solution that assures decent working conditions for all drivers transporting IKEA goods.

Read on: [in English \(1\) ...](#) [in English \(2\) ...](#)

Labour rights of posted workers

September 26, 2017

For this Briefing Paper, in the frame of the PROMO project, the authors conducted an extensive survey of the literature in industrial relations, political science, economics, legal studies, and sociology dealing with the issues related to the posting of workers in the EU. On the one hand, posted work has created job opportunities for millions and there is some evidence that it is an important way for legitimate employers to send employees abroad for short periods of time. It might enhance the positive integration of the European labour markets and be beneficial to both sending and receiving countries' economies. On the other hand, most studies in a variety of national contexts indicate that posting has also opened up a segmented pan-European 'grey market' for cheap, exploitable workers, avoiding collectively agreed provisions, undermining labour standards and trade union rights, overwhelming national labour rights enforcement bodies.

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

Working life in Europe

September 25, 2017

Developments in Working Life in Europe is part of a series of annual reviews published by Eurofound. It provides an overview of the latest developments in industrial relations and working conditions across the EU and Norway. The review is divided into seven thematic chapters, which provide an overview of the current situation, explore developments at European and national level, and examine particular issues. Section 4 (Developments in national industrial relations 2016) treats the national developments in collective bargaining and the institutional changes in the social dialogue. Section 6 deals with pay inequalities.

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

The precarious situation of self-employed

September 21, 2017

In a study, commissioned by the European Commission, on support to jobseekers who want to become self-employed or start their own business several interesting findings are presented. The main concern for unemployed people wanting to start their own business is the lack of income security. Continued low income means that the self-employed cannot build up the necessary reserves for the future. They are likely to fall into poverty if the business fails or when they reach retirement age. The risk that this situation might occur is markedly higher where people have been pushed into self-employment. Another report, published by Eurofound, reveals that a quarter of all the self-employed belong to the groups of economically dependent, vulnerable or concealed workers. Most of these workers are self-employed for the lack of a better alternative. Their situation is characterised by economic dependence, low work autonomy and financial vulnerability.

Read on: [in English \(1\)...](#) [in English \(2\) ...](#)

Working poor in the EU

September 5, 2017

A Eurofound research report describes the main factors that influence in-work poverty. It explains how in-work poverty evolved in the aftermath of the financial crisis of 2008. Chapter 3 describes the social situation of the in-work poor compared with the working-age population, looking at subjective well-being, mental well-being, accommodation and living environment, and relationships and social exclusion.

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

Wage stagnation reported

September 1, 2017

Despite improved economic growth, real wage increases across Europe are averaging only 0.4% this year compared to 1.5% in 2016, according to the latest report from the trade union associated WSI research organisation. In several countries - Austria, Greece, Portugal and France - there is virtually no change in real wages while six countries - Cyprus, Spain, Italy, Finland, Belgium and the UK - are looking at a fall in real wages. The WSI points out that calls for an increase in pay to boost economic demand are even coming from the European Commission and European Central Bank. These are institutions that have been pushing for labour reforms whose effects have weakened collective bargaining across Europe, thereby undermining trade unions efforts to secure pay increases.

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

Austria

Parliament will vote on equal treatment of workers

September 21, 2017

It looks as if a long-term demand of the trade unions will be fulfilled; the parliament is about to vote on the equal treatment of workers and staff workers (the so-called 'Angestellte'). The proposal for a unified pay system (and also a unified dismissal procedure) is the result of a two-year preparation by a group of experts. The proposed system will not lead to higher expenses for the employers. Trade union confederation ÖGB criticised the employers that still opposes the introduction of a more harmonised definition of workers.

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

Building union starts Fair Work campaign

September 14, 2017

Trade union GBH has taken the initiative for a Fair Work campaign in the border region Steiermark (Styria). In the region, wage and social dumping are very topical was revealed in 2016 by a study. Together with the regional authorities, GBH has opened a service and advice centre for workers, mainly coming from Slovenia. Workers will receive information and advice in their mother tongue about the principle of 'equal pay for equal work'. The idea behind it is to force foreign companies to comply with the local wages and working conditions. The advice centre will also try to detect underpayment and abusive recruitment practices.

Read on: [in German ...](#) [the study \(in German\) ...](#)

Belgium

Union makes up the socio-economic bill

September 25, 2017

Trade union confederation ABVV/FGTB has published its annual socio-economic barometer. The report maps out the detrimental ramifications of government policy on the economy and quality of life and uses figures and statistics to draw up a picture of the state of the country. The union claims that successive governments have demolished the existing social contract between the citizen, business and the government step by step, but that today's centre right administration has speeded matters up. The quality of the new jobs that have been created is simply too low and the country is the only EU state where wages have fallen in real terms cutting spending power.

Read on: [in English ...](#) [the barometer \(in French\) ...](#) [the barometer \(in Dutch\) ...](#)

Charleroi is home base for Ryanair crew

September 14, 2017

The Court of Justice of the European Union ruled that, in disputes relating to their employment contracts, air crew members have the option of bringing proceedings before the courts of the place where they perform the essential part of their duties vis-à-vis the employer. Workers of Portuguese, Spanish and Belgian nationality were hired by Ryanair or by Crewlink, then assigned to Ryanair, as cabin crew (air hostesses and stewards). Their contracts designated Charleroi airport as the workers' 'home base'. The workers started and ended their working day at Charleroi, and were contractually obliged to reside within an hour of their 'home base'. Taking the view that Crewlink and Ryanair had to comply with and apply the provisions of Belgian law and that the Belgian courts had jurisdiction to adjudicate on their claims, six employees brought proceedings before the Belgian courts in 2011. The CJEU stated that the concept of 'home base' amounts to a significant indicator to determine, in circumstances such as those at issue, the place from which the employee habitually carries out his work.

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

Transport union publishes Black Book on social dumping

September 5, 2017

Transport trade union BTB published its first Black Book on social dumping in 2010, followed by a second publication in 2012. These Black Books are quoted by the inspection services as a source of inspiration. After years of impartial investigations and on-site visits, BTB presents the third edition of the Black Book. The book documents how many transport businesses have set up letterbox companies, mainly in Slovakia, obliging Eastern European drivers to work for months on end in Belgium and to live in appalling conditions.

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

Bulgaria

Police wants pay increases

September 14, 2017

The police went on a protest, with the trade unions demanding for police wages to increase from 1 February. According to experts, this will require 70 million euro, which the Ministry does not have. The trade union representing officials from the Ministry of Interior will hold a briefing to the National Assembly asking for efficiency and security. Policemen are also protesting because of the problems in the Fire Departments and the negative trend in the institution, which will lead to even more serious troubles, as well as the lack of real social dialogue in the Ministry of Interior. The briefing will be followed by an official demonstration taken place at the Narodno Sabranie Square.

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

Croatia

Union comments wage study

September 22, 2017

In reaction to a ETUI-report on (large) differences in net monthly wages in Europe, the Alliance of Independent Unions said the low ranking of the country was the result of own decisions. If the country stays among the group with the lowest paid workers in the EU, prospects for the future will be poor. Low wages result in low investment in training, education and research, and a low level of innovation. Employment is only growing in the group of poorly paid jobs, with high risk of substitution by robots in the near future.

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

Better pay to reduce emigration

September 6, 2017

Since the spring of 2016, employers in several sectors, like construction, shipbuilding and tourism, report

difficulties to find suitable employees. Therefore, the Employers' Association urged the government to increase quotas for foreign workers. The trade unions believe that the problem is being exaggerated and that it can be solved by increasing wages and improving vocational training. The unions argue that this will motivate citizens to actively seek work and to stay in the country instead of going to work abroad. The trade unions are not against foreign workers entering the market, but they fear that this could be used as a method keeping wages low and permitting poor working conditions.

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

Cyprus

Healthcare workers strike over security

September 27, 2017

Nurses and doctors at state hospitals went on a two-hour work stoppage to protest for the authorities' failure to prevent attacks against them. A representative of the doctors' union said that the violent incidents against doctors and nurses in hospitals have become a frequent phenomenon and so far, despite own actions and the employer's announcements, not one step has been made to stop them. Striking nurses and doctors say they are no longer willing to tolerate such violent behaviour against them and claim that the authorities should take the necessary security measures.

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

Czechia

Pay rise for certain categories of public workers

September 26, 2017

The government has approved 10-percent rise in salaries in the public sector and security forces and a 15-percent rise for teachers in regional schools. The wages of the police, firefighters, customs officers, prison wardens and soldiers will increase. Early September, the school workers' union had declared strike alert in protest against the government coalition repeatedly postponing its decision on raising the wages of teachers and other professions in the school sector. The government reacted by the message that decisions were to be made before the end of the month. Due to the government austerity measures, the salaries in the public sector fell by 10% in 2011. In 2010, policemen lost their risk bonuses.

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

Call for better pay in private sector

September 25, 2017

The trade unions are planning a demand of 8 to 10% wage increase for private sector workers in 2018. The head of the main trade union group said that the unions demand higher wage increases than in the past due to the improvement in the economic situation. Employers have so far rejected the unions' demand for a raise in wages, with the president of the Confederation of Industry of the Czech Republic calling it 'pre-election coercion'. The unions stated that the aim is not to damage companies; they will consider the company's profit, how much is invested, how much goes to the mother company, and how much employees are getting.

Read on: [in English \(1\) ...](#) [in English \(2\) ...](#)

Skoda unions demand double-digit pay increase

September 21, 2017

The trade unions at the country's largest exporter, carmaker Škoda Auto, say they will push for double-digit pay rises in collective bargaining with the management. This autumn, the collective bargaining negotiations will be characterised by debates on flexible shifts and working schemes, with additional work on Friday night and Saturday morning. Agreements on working time will expire. The unions are awaiting proposals from the management and will consider industrial action if they fail to reach a pay increase in double-digits.

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

Denmark

Former government orchestrated lock-out

September 28, 2017

A 2013 teacher lockout that kept over 550,000 public school students out of class for 4 weeks was orchestrated by the government, according to a former minister in a new book. The minister writes that the government of then PM Helle Thorning-Schmidt made an agreement with Local Government Denmark (Kommunernes Landsforening), the interest group that represents the 98 municipalities, to bar the nation's teachers from doing their jobs. The teachers' union refused in 2013 to sign a collective bargaining agreement that gave school leaders, rather than the teachers themselves, more responsibility for deciding teachers' work schedules. When the two sides were unable to reach an agreement, publicly-employed teachers and after-school instructors were locked out nationwide. The conflict lasted a month before the government stepped in and passed a bill that forced the teachers to accept the new working conditions.

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

Social clauses in outsourced public works

September 22, 2017

Trade union 3F has published a commissioned analysis of the local practices with regard to public procurement and labour clauses. In the Social dumping report, 3F concludes that the cities of Odense and Gentofte perform best among the municipalities that check if contractors comply with pay and working conditions. Overall, the application of social clauses has improved; in 2014 social clauses were used by 47% of all municipalities, this has increased to 51% in 2017. The union stated that public authorities should be obliged to apply social clauses in all outsourced public works, independent from the contract size.

Read on: [in Danish ...](#) [the report \(in Danish\) ...](#)

Union questions the membership on bargaining aims

September 18, 2017

Municipal trade union HK Kommunal collected ideas among the membership for the new round of collective bargaining. The union also launched a special webpage with a time schedule and other information about the process. Over 7000 contributions with 20000 suggestions have been submitted to the union covering a wide range of pay and conditions. Some of the key issues highlighted by the union include the need to maintain competence funds that provide for education and training and the call for action to tackle stress. Time off to deal with care responsibilities is a common demand, particularly from workers with caring responsibilities for older people. There are varied opinions on pay with some calling for a general wage increase for all while others see local pay deals as important.

Read on: [in English ...](#) [the webpage dedicated to the negotiations \(in Danish\) ...](#)

Estonia

Income convergence has slowed down

September 15, 2017

The OECD survey provide several interesting figures. The country performs well in recent years, and the economy is expected to grow by more than 4 percent in 2017. But the development of income and earnings of workers lag behind. Poverty (at 15.5%, compared to OECD average of 11.5%) and income inequality are among the highest in the OECD and around a quarter of the population is still at risk of poverty. An adequate social safety net should be implemented, including increased spending on subsistence benefits, relaxed eligibility conditions for unemployment benefits, and extended parental leave for fathers.

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

Finland

Public sector union prepares bargaining

September 21, 2017

The public-sector trade union JHL is preparing the demands for the upcoming round of collective bargaining by surveying members and activists over the key elements for negotiation across the 60 agreements that cover various sectors and companies. Most of the agreements expire in January 2018. This round will be without a national framework agreement negotiated with employers. However, the union will be in close discussion with other members of the SAK confederation with a view to setting some common demands.

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

Busy period for negotiators

September 18, 2017

Several unions get ready for the next round of collective bargaining as a long list of major collective agreements are due for renewal this autumn. The question concerning the level of pay rise is still open. The paper workers' trade union started first, with a collective agreement expiring at the end of September. The union said after a first round that all the original demands of both sides are all still on the negotiation table. The next major fields to negotiate will be the technology industry, the graphical and the chemical industry. Negotiations in the export industries are important for all unions, as they are expected to set a general ceiling for pay rises.

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

France

Pensioners march against pension plans

September 28, 2017

Thousands of pensioners demonstrated across the country over increases in their taxes, the latest group to take to the streets over President Macron's economic reforms. Around eight million pensioners on more than 1,200 euros a month will pay higher social security contributions from 2018 on as the government seeks to slash the budget deficit. The nine unions behind the protests said the increase, expected to bring in 20 billion euros in revenue, will set the elderly back hundreds of euros a year.

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

Labour reform protests

September 23, 2017

The trade unions launched several days of strikes and protests in a row against planned labour reforms. The changes to the labour code, which runs to around 3,400 pages in some editions, give small businesses more flexibility to negotiate pay and conditions with their staff, instead of being bound by national agreements. They also make it easier to lay off employees and cap compensation awards for unfair dismissal while also giving higher pay-outs to workers made redundant. Trade union CGT published a position with four main areas of criticism.

Read on: [in English \(1\) ...](#) [in English \(2\) ...](#) [the CGT position ...](#)

Automation without job losses

September 20, 2017

The trade unions have been involved from the scratch in an interesting automation process at Evian. Evian unveiled a carbon-neutral bottling site in the French alps. The plant is not new, but rather the culmination of a six-year effort to modernise a facility Evian has since 1965. The management had 28 consultations with the local unions during the six-year construction project, all of which came back with a favourable result. According to the management, this shows that you can achieve a lot when the people are part of the project. The modernised factory includes multiple automation upgrades, but rather than issuing mass layoffs, the company was actually able to bring on new workers. With a broad-sweeping retraining initiative designed to empower employees 600 out of 1,200 jobs could be modified.

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

Public service workers join forces for better pay and conditions

September 19, 2017

All public service trade unions will join hands in central government administrations, municipal town halls, public care institutions and hospitals. The workers fight for better pay. They oppose plans to scrap ten thousands of jobs and reject the privatisation of public services. The opposition of the workers against the plans of the government are well rooted in the day to day experience at workplaces. And each crisis shows how essential public service workers are to maintain good governance and administration and provide health, energy, water and so many other services we rely upon in our societies.

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

Germany

Wages and working conditions in meat processing

September 26, 2017

After the introduction of the statutory minimum wage, trade union NGG, works councils and political actors have continued to criticise the precarious nature of work in the meat processing industry. In 2015, the four big companies along with the Federal Minister for Economic Affairs and Energy, agreed to improve the working conditions in the meat industry through a voluntary, instead of a regulatory binding, agreement. This study assesses the functioning of the agreement. The positive impact of the voluntary agreement on working conditions seems to be rather limited. There are still considerable gaps in both collective representation (weak organisation on both the employers' and employees' sides, small number of collective agreements and only a few works councils) and enforcement of labour rights in the industry.

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

Working group to implement merger Tata Steel and ThyssenKrupp

September 23, 2017

The signing of a memorandum of understanding between Tata Steel and the ThyssenKrupp AG led to reactions in several involved countries. Thousand steel workers took to the streets of Bochum in Germany's industrial heartland to protest against the deal, which would include up to 4,000 job cuts, about 8% of the combined workforce. Opposition from ThyssenKrupp's workforce could mean prolonged negotiations with management and delay the approval of the plan by the supervisory board, scheduled for early next year. Thyssenkrupp stated that it will set up a joint working group of board members and workers representatives to help implement the plan to merge with Tata Steel, after a supervisory board meeting.

Read on: [in English \(1\) ...](#) [in English \(2\) ...](#) [in English \(3\) ...](#)

US base workers strike over pay

September 19, 2017

About 70 workers from U.S. military bases at Ansbach, Katter Bach and Hildesheim went on strike to demand higher wages. Members of the trade union Verdi held a protest at Katter Bach after rejecting a 1 percent pay increase offered by the U.S. The union is asking for a 5 percent pay raise for the roughly 300 German workers at the three bases. The demand is based on compensation for workers for inflation, productivity and the years when wages weren't increased. If planned negotiations fail more strikes could be called.

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

Partnership for Sustainable Textiles is growing

September 2, 2017

The Partnership for Sustainable Textiles is a multi-stakeholder initiative with about 150 members from the economy, politics and the civil society. The trade unions are a member of the initiative from the start. The stakeholders strive to improve the working conditions in the global textile production – from the production of raw goods for textile production to the disposal of textiles. The Partnership was founded in October 2014 in response to the deadly accidents in textile factories in Bangladesh and Pakistan. The current members of the Textiles Partnership cover more than half of the German textile market. Until 2018 they are expected to cover 75 percent of it.

Read on: [in English ... the partnership website \(in English\) ...](#)

Wage policy and income distribution

September 1, 2017

A report of the Macroeconomic Policy Institute IMK on the role of nominal wages in trade and account surpluses is now available in English. The authors explain that a macroeconomically-oriented wage policy in Germany between 2001 and 2015 would have significantly curbed the growth in real net exports. However, it would have done little to contain the country's nominal trade and current account surpluses. Moreover, such a macroeconomically-oriented wage policy would have fuelled stronger domestic growth, as well as having a significant positive impact on income distribution (i.e. a higher wage share).

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

Greece

24-hour rail strike

September 14, 2017

Railway workers protested against the privatisation of the services with a 24-hour strike. The trade unions have stated that they are firmly against the planned transfer of the undertaking to the Italian state operator. 'Ferrovie Dello Stato' will receive 100% of the capital of the company for a total of 45 million euro. The government considers the privatisation of the debt-ridden railway company as a great success. The railway workers, in turn, are afraid of mass layoffs.

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

Workers in asylum services protest against pay delay

September 6, 2017

Asylum service employees on short-term contracts have launched a two-day strike to protest what they say are months-long delays in their salary payments. Their trade union says they have not been paid for two or three months. Together with the strike, the union planned a protest in central Athens. The country's asylum service faces a huge workload due to the increase of applications from refugees and migrants.

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

Hungary

Tesco workers disputing over pay

September 25, 2017

Following two days of strikes by employees of retail chain Tesco, talks on wages and workforce numbers between management and trade unions are set to continue at the beginning of October, with unions promising no further stoppages will occur until then. The management submitted its reaction to wage demands and workforce numbers to the two trade unions representing workers at the company, the Independent Union of Commercial Workers (KDFSZ) and the Trade Union of Commercial Employees (KASZ). It looks as if Tesco accepts the unions' demands for pay rises and will raise the monthly wages of its lowest-earning employees retroactively from September 1 to a gross HUF 179,000.

Read on: [in English \(1\) ...](#) [in English \(2\) ...](#)

Iceland

Migrant labour drives growth

September 13, 2017

Over 24,000 foreigners were active on the labour market in June and their numbers increased by 17 percent over the last 12 months. Foreign labour has prevented a wage drift and driven economic growth forward.

There is a persistent shortage of labour. The stress on the labour market is peaking and 1,000 more foreign workers will be needed to meet demand.

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

Ireland

Rail workers in pay dispute

September 28, 2017

Unions representing Irish Rail staff are carrying out ballots for industrial action, and the company will have to be informed at least a week in advance of any work stoppage, meaning the probable dates mooted for strikes are Friday 27th to Monday 30th of October 2017. Staff at the company are seeking a 3.75% pay rise without any additional productivity measures attached. They link the demand to concessions around pay and conditions made by workers during the recessionary period. However, the company has offered a 1.5% salary increase with conditions attached, including outsourcing and the closure of some rail lines.

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

Stormy weather for Ryanair

September 27, 2017

Whilst Ryanair is struggling with a reduction of services and cancellation of a myriad of flights as a consequence of mismanagement, the company's pilots have started to organise themselves. In a letter to the management the pilots have outlined their demands for better contracts and negotiating rights. In the letter from Employee Representative Councils on behalf of around 60 Ryanair bases, the pilots say they want permanent local contracts, with employment terms to be benchmarked with regional competitor airlines, following national laws and rights, to be concluded by 1 January 2018. If that deadline cannot be met, they want agreed interim arrangements put in place. Earlier this month, the pilots rejected a proposed bonus scheme to encourage them to work through annual leave. Ryanair offered bonuses of up to €12,000, deferred for a year, if they would give up some of the annual leave entitlements to address staff shortages.

Read on: [in English \(1\) ...](#) [in English \(2\) ...](#)

Majority of unions back public-sector agreement

September 18, 2017

Following votes across all the public-sector unions, a majority of the unions, accounting for 80% by membership, supports the new agreement on pay and conditions. The three-year deal includes six pay increases (two targeted at the lower paid only) and will mean that the majority of public sector workers (73%) will see an overall increase of 7% by the end of the agreement. There is a range of other conditions that have been confirmed as part of the deal including the retention of outsourcing protections, the option to negotiate on returning to a shorter working week and provisions on work-life balance.

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

National minimum wage not enough for decent living

September 11, 2017

Think tank Social Justice Ireland stated that the national minimum wage does not allow people to live 'what is considered a minimum socially acceptable standard of living' and said that the planned increase in 2018 won't change this. The national hourly minimum wage currently stands at 9.25 euro and is expected to rise to 9.55 euro. The Living Wage Technical Group raised what it considers the minimum hourly pay rate a worker needs to cover basic cost of living expenses from €11.50 to €11.70 in July 2017. The organisation published data in its Employment Monitor that underpin the increase of low-paid work.

Read on: [in English ...](#) [the Employment Monitor \(in English\) ...](#)

Italy

On-call jobs boom

September 28, 2017

Joint statistics of the statistical office ISTAT, the social security agency INPS and the labour ministry reveal that there was a substantial increase in employment (437,000 jobs in the 2nd quarter of 2017, compared to the same period in 2016). However, 329,000 of these jobs were on temporary contracts, and only 108,000 jobs were permanent (including apprenticeships).

Read on: [in English ...](#) [the data \(in Italian\) ...](#)

Construction unions formulate joint demands

September 28, 2017

The trade unions in construction have one important joint aim: to work towards more legality in the sector. They presented a document that lists a series of proposals aimed at encouraging and supporting a culture of legality and security as a key factor for the country's economic and social development. It is a priority for construction and for the whole country, and a call for robust intervention and joint action against mafia lawlessness and infiltration, in support of the legal economy and fair business competition. The unions want the industry to promote and restore production and employment of companies confiscated from the mafia. Among the proposals presented, there is also the establishment of a national institute for the monitoring of information, the social use of confiscated assets, the establishment of a list of managers of seized and confiscated companies and the strengthening of interventions on labour recruitment flows.

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

Healthcare negotiations get underway

September 13, 2017

The three main public-service trade unions in the health sector participated in the first round of negotiations with the ARAN employers' organisation over renewing the collective agreement covering 550000 health workers. As well as ensuring that the basic pay agreement foresee for a monthly increase of on average €85, across the public sector, the unions are particularly concerned to address issues around work organisation and working time. They also emphasise that after eight years without any negotiations, there have been many changes in the sector in terms of service provision and staff responsibilities that need to be addressed.

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

Latvia

More inclusive growth needed

September 15, 2017

Driven by the recovery of exports and investment as well as strong private consumption, real GDP growth is expected to strengthen from 2% in 2016 to around 4% in 2017 and 2018. However, poverty and the gap in health status between rich and poor households are among the highest in the OECD countries. Poor health outcomes and limited access to care undermines inclusion, employment and growth: according to official estimations, around 7% of the labour force were out of work in 2015 due to illness, injury or disability.

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

Liechtenstein

Demands for bargaining formulated

September 14, 2017

The trade union confederation LANV has formulated its pay demands for the next bargaining round. The union comes up with a range from 1 to 2% pay increases, depending on the sector and branch. The union is in favour of nominal increases, in order to not widen the gap between high and low-income earners. Other demands are longer holidays for elderly, reaching in the long term to 5 weeks at the age of 50 years.

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

Lithuania

Minimum wage goes up

September 22, 2017

The minimum monthly salary will grow by 20 euro to 400 euro, as of January 2018. This is the result of talks in the Tripartite Council. The final decision must be endorsed by the government. The Tripartite Council also agreed that the future increase of the minimum will be linked with the size of the average salary – it will have to be between 45 and 50% of average monthly salary. Minimum wages will be reviewed once a year.

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

Luxembourg

Cleaners on top of pay comparison

September 13, 2017

A study listing 30 countries across the continent (including Russia and the Ukraine) ranks the Luxembourg cleaners as the best paid in Europe, with an average hourly wage for cleaners of 13.87 euro. Next in the list, just under a euro less, are Belgium at 13.89 euro, Finland at 12.27 euro, and the Netherlands at 11.71 euro. At the bottom of the listing is the Ukraine, with an hourly wage of 0.62 euro.

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

Malta

Powerplay around Air Malta

September 19, 2017

Under the current tourism minister demands from the Union of Cabin Crew and the Airline Pilots Association (ALPA) have led to a tight deadlock. The government threatens with the closure of Air Malta and re-open with new staff, under a cheaper collective agreement, if the trade unions stick to their demands. The unions have formulated a demand for a 10% wage increase for the cabin crew and the pilots are asking 30%. In the meantime, a new state-owned company was set up for the ground handling operations. An agreement with the General Workers' Union, which represents some 400 to 500 ground handlers, guarantees the employment conditions of all employees.

Read on: [in English \(1\) ...](#) [in English \(2\) ...](#)

Netherlands

Debate about necessary wage increases

September 22, 2017

In recent months, there has been a plea for substantial wage increases. The employers' organisation has reacted with a statement that employers see a 'potential' for an average 3% pay rise in 2018. However, the organisation is not in favour of a general increase and wants the sectors and unions to talk to each other. Trade union FNV published a demand for an average increase of 3.5% to be achieved in the coming bargaining round.

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

Union talks with Deliveroo

September 19, 2017

Trade union CNV and the FNV backed Riders Union have started talks with the Deliveroo management about whether or not all the company's cyclists are or should be self-employed. Earlier on the company had declared all workers to be self-employed, as the self-employed model best suited the flexibility its cyclists wanted. The unions criticise this move and claim that the company is evading its responsibilities.

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

Social economic council poverty report

September 11, 2017

The Social Economic Council (SER) published an executive summary of its advice on poverty, launched in March 2017. Despite the economic upswing and all efforts thus far, many children – some 8 to 12% of the child population – continue to live in poverty. Strikingly, 60% of these children have working parents. The SER argues that all children should have access to assistance that compensates for poverty, for example by supporting their participation in sport and cultural activities. This policy should be supplemented by more structural measures that focus on minimum wage earners and tackle the root causes of poverty.

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

Norway

Union recognition key dispute at fish processor

September 25, 2017

Workers - many of them migrants from Poland and Lithuania - have been on strike since September 8 at the fish processing company Norse Production near Bergen on the west coast. The Norwegian Food and Allied Workers trade union (NNN) is demanding the right to a collective bargaining agreement in the company. The NNN has a long-running dispute with the company over working conditions and the treatment of foreign workers. Most employment contracts provide no secure working hours and workers are threatened with the dismissal if they join the union.

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

Strike shock at SAS

September 14, 2017

Trade unions representing pilots for Scandinavian Airlines (SAS) had announced a 'strike shock'. However, soon after an agreement could be reached. Union officials had blamed SAS for a deadlock in the bargaining negotiations, claiming they had dropped many of their initial demands and that they merely were fighting to uphold a 'defensible' level of security. The pilots have been calling for pay hikes and more weekends off that SAS management claims will raise costs by 25 percent. In a joint statement the trade unions said that the agreement was good enough to recommend it to the members. The agreement ensures full-time contracts be given to pilots, leave can be taken during school holidays, and a six percent pay increase over three years.

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

Poland

Staff must be consulted says CJEU

September 21, 2017

The Court of Justice of the European Union has ruled in a case of a Specialist Hospital that had notified its workers of a change in the calculations of a years of services award scheme without having consulted the employee representatives. The hospital considered that, in the light of the economic difficulties it faced, it had to make the proposed amendments. The national courts had decided to turn to the CJEU. In a landmark decision, the CJEU ruled that an employer is obliged, in line with the EU Directive 98/59 on collective redundancies, to consult with employee representatives when the employer intends, to unilaterally amend working conditions. The directive on collective redundancies provides employee representatives with information and consultation rights.

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

Study shows long working hours

September 20, 2017

A study, dedicated to working time, reveals that a third of full-time workers on direct employment contracts work overtime. High wage earners put in longer hours than other income groups. Workers with earnings

over PLN 3,999 (around 930 euro) work on average 50 hours per week. However, it is the self-employed who work the hardest, with an average 55-hour working week.

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

Portugal

Negotiations going on after nurses' strike

September 23, 2017

Nurses started a five-day strike to ask for better pay and an improvement of the working time. The government reacted by calling the strike that affected several specialised services illegal. After the strike, there were efforts made to find a way out. So far meetings with the trade unions ended without agreement. There is still openness to continue talks with a view to understanding the future of the career structure of nursing professionals. The existing career structure negotiated in 2009 was under public discussion for two years (2003 and 2004) with dozens of meetings, in all institutions and across the country.

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

Talks at Volkswagen's AutoEuropa continue

September 14, 2017

After a strike at a vehicle assembly plant of Volkswagen's AutoEuropa at Palmela, the trade unions and the management started a series of meetings to discuss the shift system. According to the unions the channels of dialogue remained open. Workers oppose a planned move to a new shift system that would involve Saturday working without being paid overtime. The management said that it wants to enter into final and formal negotiations on the working hours with the works council (that is to be elected in October).

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

Low skills, growth and well-being

September 1, 2017

An OECD working paper reviews the situation on the labour market for low-skilled workers. Low levels of skills are an obstacle to higher productivity and material living standards, which are low relative to OECD or EU averages. But low skills also affect the well-being of citizens and stand in the way of reducing income inequality, as education is often a prerequisite for higher job quality and earnings opportunities.

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

Romania

Posted workers tell the true story

September 28, 2017

Euronews brings the story of hundreds of thousands of people working within the European Union as posted workers. They have to face several harsh realities, like having to make endless trips to and from their own countries and Western Europe, where they hold jobs which are often very poorly paid and insecure. One worker, employed by a subcontractor who was linked to a shady Serbian businessman, carried out work within a large company building offices at Frankfurt airport. He received only half the salary he had been promised for the first two months and then absolutely nothing for the following six months. Another worker tried his luck in Germany in a large company dealing with parcel deliveries, through the intermediary, yet again, of a sub-contractor. His working day would begin at half past four in the morning and finish at nine in the evening. And there were other things that didn't come up to scratch.

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

Serbia

Education workers rally for better wages

September 28, 2017

Several hundred employees of the public education sector have rallied in the centre of the capital, Belgrade, urging the government to withdraw proposed new legislation on public-service employees and calling for a 25 percent increase in their salaries. The average monthly income for teachers is about 360 euro. The organising trade unions will continue the protest until authorities agree to meet their demands. The bill adopted by parliament in September gives the Education Ministry the power to fire teachers without any independent control. Critics say the law, still to be signed by the president, will deprive public service employees of their rights.

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

Increase of minimum wage

September 13, 2017

Following an agreement in the Socio-Economic Council the statutory hourly minimum wage will increase from 130 to 143 dinars (1.08 to 1.19 euro). Companies were promised that gross salaries would not go up, which, in practice, means that the Socio-Economic Council has to find a way to increase the non-taxable segment of salaries. The council is composed of the government ministers, representatives of trade unions and the representatives of the employers' organisations. It is estimated that around 350,000 workers earn the monthly minimum salary of 22,800 dinars (190 euro).

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

Slovakia

Government launches social package

September 28, 2017

The government came up with a new budget that includes a social package. The package introduces an increase in the statutory minimum wage, introduction of the 13th and 14th salaries and supplementary payments for night, weekend and holiday work and more. However, the government still needs to consult on the content with the social partners. It was said that the minimum wage should grow to over 500 euro by 2020. In the announcements, it was also said that pay proposals for the public sector will be made at the beginning of 2018 that should become effective as of 2019.

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

Unions still fighting for better pay guaranty in education

September 4, 2017

The Education and Science Employees Trade Union (OZPŠaV's) has announced that it will not sign a memorandum on social reconciliation with the government, which was supposed to guarantee teachers' salary increases of in total 26.25 percent by 2020 on condition that the educators would forget their right to organise strikes until 2020. In response to the trade union's move, the coalition leaders announced that the cabinet will increase salaries only by the first promised 6% as of September 2017, while further increases by the same percentage planned for September 2018 and 2019 are not guaranteed. The PM said that the unionists rejected an offer for record salary hikes, so the cabinet can only provide the first part of the deal.

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

Slovenia

Employment and skills

September 12, 2017

A case study, published by the OECD, analyses the management and implementation of policies in the Drava and South-East regions of Slovenia. It provides a comparative framework to understand the role of the local labour market policy in matching people to jobs, engaging employers in skills development activities, as well as fostering growth and economic development opportunities. The first chapter provides interesting data on wage developments since the start of the economic crisis and other economic indicators.

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

Spain

Hospitality workers have a big deal

September 29, 2017

As a result of collective bargaining between the trade unions and the employers in hospitality, salaries in the Balearic hospitality sector will increase by 17% between 2018 and 2021. The deal will affect 137,000 people employed in this key sector of the regional economy, but has an impact far beyond the sector. In the booming tourism industry, a driver of economic growth and job creation, this should also lead to higher salaries. The agreed increase will be 5% in 2018, 5% in 2019, 3.5% in 2020, and 3.5% in 2021. This is well above the annual figure in the expiring 2014 collective bargaining deal that included an increase of 1.3% until August. The agreement also makes it harder to cut labour costs through subcontracting. Subcontractors are not only forced to ensure that their wages are the same as those specified in the agreement, but also have to comply with working hours and breaks.

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

Working conditions in retail

September 22, 2017

An article on Equal Times looks at the impact of the rise of big stores. Every time a supermarket chain or a shopping centre moves into an area, the same argument is used to legitimise it: job creation. However, this argument conceals the jobs destroyed when the arrival of a supermarket drives out traditional local retailers. There is also a qualitative shift in the jobs provided: a share of the people hired go from being small independent shop owners to being salaried employees who depend on these major companies for their livelihoods. It is not a question of idealising traditional small retailers, but about holding to account the big companies responsible for ever-declining labour rights.

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

Unions calling for better pay offer

September 22, 2017

The main public-sector unions in the CCOO and UGT confederations are calling on the government to improve its pay offer for the next three years. The current offer provides a guarantee for a 5.34% increase (1.5% in 2018, 1.75% in 2019 and 2.0% in 2020). However, this could reach 8% overall if target growth in economic output (GDP) is reached, along with a further target for deficit reduction. The unions want to see guaranteed increases that would begin to make up for the significant loss of purchasing power of public sector workers. The unions also want to see progress on working hours and an end to the replacement rates that restrict recruitment.

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

UGT launches digital helpdesk

September 14, 2017

Trade union confederation UGT has created a web-based application for platform workers. It is a specific site that can be contacted and consulted. The initiative is organised with affiliates of UGT that work on digital platforms. In collaboration with the union, they created the platform as a way to achieve real social balance and justice. The initiative is meant to halt practices of labour exploitation and precariousness.

Read on: [the platform \(in Spanish\) ...](#)

Train strike announced

September 8, 2017

The transport section of trade union confederation CCOO called for a rail strike, following on from a strike at the beginning of the summer, to protest restructuring on the rail network. The union said to have no other choice, but to strike again after a breakdown in negotiations with the Ministry of Public Works, Renfe and Adif. The union claims that since 2005, the workforce employed by the two companies in charge of the rail

network has been depleted by 6,000 workers. It calls for more jobs, better rail quality standards and improved pay.

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

Sweden

Agreement on minimum pay for posted workers in construction

September 13, 2017

The 2007 Laval judgement made it necessary to define which of the elements of remuneration in different collective agreements are included in 'minimum rates of pay', as defined in the directive on the posting of workers. In that judgment, the Court of Justice of the EU established that a member state cannot force foreign companies to pay their posted workers more than this minimum. It took the construction union (Byggnads) and the employers in construction nearly ten years to get to an agreement. The lowest hourly wage for posted workers will be slightly higher than the 'basic salary' that is laid down in the collective agreement for the construction sector. According to the deal these conditions should also apply as special labour law contract performance conditions in public procurement.

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

Agreement on rights in the supply chain

September 5, 2017

The trade union Unionen and its international federation IUF signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Systembolaget, the Swedish state-owned alcohol retail monopoly. While Systembolaget operates only in Sweden, it has an international supply chain. The MoU arose from shared concerns about working conditions in the Systembolaget supply chain, especially agricultural raw materials. Under the agreement there will be regular meetings to exchange information and address concerns raised by the IUF. The MoU recognizes that Systembolaget and the unions have a common interest in improving working conditions in the alcohol industry and its supply chain, including the right of workers to exercise their rights to be in a trade union and to negotiate collectively.

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

Switzerland

Worsening working conditions in health care sector

September 28, 2017

Healthcare workers are being overburdened with work. Staff are facing burnout, and absenteeism has risen to 10%. The situation is particularly terrifying at the Geneva University Hospitals, HUG, which operates 8 hospitals in the Canton of Geneva and also runs 40 outpatient clinics. A 10-hour working day was recently introduced, a step that was much criticised by the trade unions. The 2012 Health Insurance Act entrenches the commercialisation and outsourcing of healthcare delivery, leading to the depletion of resources available for running public healthcare delivery and consequently undermining the quality of health services.

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

Alarming studies over working conditions in education

September 19, 2017

On the occasion of the Swiss Education Day, teachers' unions demanded that efforts be made by employers to improve their health protection, with the slogan 'Healthy Schools - Good Schools'. The unions presented a joint position with demands, which would oblige the employer to contribute to improved health protection for teachers. A study commissioned by the trade union LCH shows that 70% of German teachers work part-time, one third of them for health reasons. In the spring of 2017, a study commissioned by the union SER revealed that almost 37% of teachers have reduced their teaching time in the past five years, mostly for health reasons or to reduce their workload. A third study demonstrated that normative injuries caused by inadequate room conditions, air and light quality as well as a constantly high interaction density can have a negative impact on the students' well-being and performance. According to fourth study, the incidence of teachers for professional reasons amounts to 37.6 million Swiss francs (32,8 million euro) annually.

Read on: [in English ...](#) [The joint position \(in German\) ...](#)

Turkey

Teachers reassigned against their wish

September 29, 2017

The Union of Education Workers (Eğitim-Sen) announced that 682 of its member teachers in the south-eastern provinces of Şanlıurfa, Diyarbakır, and Gaziantep have been assigned to different schools against their wishes, just a few days before schools are reopened for the new academic year. One of the reasons cited for the compulsory reassignments is reported to be ‘participation in marches not in line with the Turkish Republic’s fight against terrorism, in which slogans of “murderer state” were shouted’. The union said in a press meeting that its members had been reassigned to various Central Anatolian provinces, and the union fears the teachers may face attacks in their reassigned areas.

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

United Kingdom

Uber loses licence to operate in London

September 29, 2017

Due to a lack of corporate responsibility, Uber loses the licence to operate in London. Uber has expanded by ignoring existing rules. This has prompted protests against the ride-hailing company by drivers, run-ins with national authorities, and new laws designed to curb its activities. The decision by Transport for London to strip Uber of its licence was the latest in a long line of clashes between the US firm and the regulators. Prominent Tory politicians and prime minister May criticised the decision as ‘disproportionate’.

Read on: [in English \(1\) ...](#) [in English \(2\) ...](#) [the decision \(in English\) ...](#)

Addison Lee drivers are workers

September 26, 2017

A Central London employment tribunal has ruled that drivers at Addison Lee are entitled to workers’ rights such as minimum wage and holiday pay. Addison Lee argued that its drivers were self-employed. The drivers, supported by the trade union GMB, were heard by the tribunal in July 2017. They claimed that they deserved basic workers’ rights. Addison Lee has announced appealing the decision. Its drivers very often work very long hours, in excess of a weekly 60 hours, in order to earn enough to cover their basic living costs.

Read on: [in English \(1\) ...](#) [in English \(2\) ...](#)

Luggage handlers vote for strike

September 21, 2017

Baggage handlers and other Swissport staff at Belfast City Airport have voted in favour of industrial action, according to union Unite. The ballot produced a clear vote in favour of action, as sixty per cent of our membership in the airport voted for strike action in a secret ballot conducted over the past weeks. Workers are determined to defend their Unite the union-rep who was dismissed by management as part of a sustained campaign targeting him for his trade union activities.

Read on: [in English ...](#) [statement by the union \(in English\) ...](#)

Casual teaching staff wins against precarious conditions

September 18, 2017

A Global Labour Column is dedicated to the struggle of casual teaching staff from the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) at the University of London. With their Fractionals for Fair Play (FFFP) campaign, they won an impressive victory against precarious working conditions and indecently low pay. The achieved deal, which represents a significant improvement not only in terms of remuneration but also in the way it promises to overcome an identified mechanism of exploitation, marks a crucial step in the struggle against casualisation in higher education. The campaign’s latest outcome and the way it was organised may provide

inspiration for worldwide campaigns against the marketisation of universities and the deterioration of jobs which comes with it.

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

Joint pay claim by health workers' unions

September 15, 2017

Fourteen health sector trade unions, representing over one million members, submitted a joint pay claim to the government. Pay negotiations in the sector are normally carried out in a special pay review body that includes employer and trade union representatives. However, the unions decided to bypass this mechanism and ask the government directly for extra funding in next year's budget for health workers' pay. The basic claim would be an increase in line with inflation plus £800 (910 euro). The unions joined together to ask for the increase, saying pay has fallen by 15% since 2010, once inflation is taken into account.

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

For more information, please contact Jan Cremers or Nuria Ramos Martin, Amsterdam Institute for Advanced Labour Studies (AIAS) cbn-aias@uva.nl or the Head of communications at the ETUI, Willy De Backer wdebacker@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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