European sources
Meeting of social partners at tripartite social summit
Impact of the crisis on employment and working life
Ruling on working time during stand-by
Proposal for pay transparency

Austria
Negotiations on additional collective agreement for pharmacies
Airline cuts another 650 jobs

Belgium
National day of action
Strike at airport over hourly regime
Railway workers strike

Bulgaria
Wage support scheme extended
Large gender pay gap

Croatia
Railway workers’ unions call off strike after agreement

Cyprus
Port workers call off strike
Taxi drivers call off strike

Czechia
Employers obliged to test their employees

Denmark
Petition for equal pay for all public servants
Gender differences and pensions
Estonia
Wage growth slows down

Finland
Employers withdraw from collective bargaining
Small effect of basic income on employment

France
Agreement on professional gender equality
Ikea employees on strike
Gender Equality Index: new publication obligations

Germany
Collective agreement in metal and electrical industry
Collective agreement in the dairy industry
Collective agreement in iron and steel industry
Annual report on collective bargaining

Greece
Decline of temporary jobs

Hungary
Renegotiating collective agreement at B Braun

Iceland
Equal Pay Certification

Ireland
Amendment of Gender Pay Gap Information Bill
Review could compel all employers to talk to unions
Government to review employment law

Italy
Employment contract for Just Eat riders
Amazon workers on 24-hour strike
Job supporting measures

Latvia
State Audit bashes employment termination compensation in public sector
Decision on remote work for public and private sector

Liechtenstein
Extension of collective agreement for cleaning

Lithuania
Stagnation of number of knowledge-intensive jobs

Luxembourg
Social plan at bank

Malta
Little training for people with disabilities
Netherlands
Collective agreement for Participation Act employees
Collective agreement for the meat products industry
Airport workers strike for quality jobs

Norway
Annual wage negotiations start

Poland
Labour market index drops
Remote work requires new regulations
Saving jobs policies

Portugal
Remote work compulsory

Romania
Strike of subway workers
Hourly labour costs rise nearly 9%

Serbia
Average salary growth

Slovakia
Amendment labour code related to working from home

Slovenia
Amended act on employment of foreigners
Average net wage decreases

Spain
Collective agreement for retailers
Labour rights for platform workers
Unions worried about job losses

Sweden
Volvo announces 24-week parental leave
Amendments to the law on short-time layoffs
Cooperation between union and H&M

Switzerland
Emergency aid and compensation for short-time work

Turkey
Government prolongs layoff ban by two months

United Kingdom
Transition deal with oil and gas companies to safeguard jobs
Uber agrees to classify drivers as ‘workers’
Gender pay gap reporting narrows the gap
European sources

Meeting of social partners at tripartite social summit
March 24, 2021

EU leaders and social partners met digitally at the tripartite social summit to discuss “how to achieve a fair and sustainable recovery?”. The summit participants focused on the following three topics: the handling the health, economic and social crisis while maintaining emergency measures; the contribution of social partners at EU and member state level for an economic and social recovery; and the road to the Porto social summit.

Read on: in English...

Impact of the crisis on employment and working life
March 11, 2021

Eurofund published a report on the initial impact of the COVID-19 crisis on employment in Europe including its effects across sectors and on different categories of workers. It also looks at measures to limit the negative effects of the crisis. It first provides an overview of policy approaches adopted to mitigate the impact of the crisis on businesses, workers and citizens. The main focus is on the development, content and impact of short-time working schemes and income support measures for self-employed people. Furthermore, it explores the involvement of social partners in the development and implementation of such measures.

Read on: in English...

Ruling on working time during stand-by
March 9, 2021

The Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU) handed down two rulings affirming that a period of stand-by duty can constitute working time in its entirety only when the constraints imposed on workers very significantly affect their ability to manage their free time during that period. These constraints however must result from the employer’s instructions and the CJEU has provided some new indications to help national judges assess the level of ‘intensity’ of such constraints.

Read on: in English...

Proposal for pay transparency
March 4, 2021

The European Commission has presented a proposal on pay transparency to ensure that women and men in the EU get equal pay for equal work. The proposal sets out pay transparency measures, such as pay information for job seekers, a right to know the pay levels for workers doing the same work, as well as gender pay gap reporting obligations for big companies. The proposal also strengthens the tools for workers to claim their rights and facilitates access to justice.

Read on: in English...

Austria

Negotiations on additional collective agreement for pharmacies
March 20, 2021

Trade unions and professional representatives are currently discussing an additional collective agreement for 17,000 pharmacy employees. The Association of Pharmacy Employees (VAAÖ) and the GPA union want to stipulate special pandemic regulations that apply to pharmacies, for example, in retail outlets. However, the Austrian Pharmacists’ Association does not agree. In January, a so-called general collective agreement
was agreed upon between trade unions and employers. It stipulates that regular corona tests, which employees have to take due to legal requirements, are counted as working hours and paid accordingly.

Read on: in German...

**Airline cuts another 650 jobs**  
*March 25, 2021*

Austrian Airlines already cut back on its total staff by 650 full-time positions up until the end of February 2021 through natural attrition. However, the airline will further reduce its staff by cutting more than 650 additional jobs by the year 2023. Comprehensive multi-year anti-crisis packages were put together in 2020 on the basis of agreements reached with the staff as well as suppliers and system partners in order to ensure a favourable long-term earnings development and the airline’s ability to repay loans.

Read on: in English...

---

**Belgium**

**National day of action**  
*March 29, 2021*

On 29 March, the two largest trade union confederations ACV/CSC and ABVV/FGTB held a national day of action with strikes in various private sector companies and institutions. The unions demanded: An indicative margin for wage increase instead of a maximum ceiling preventing free collective bargaining; a significant increase in the minimum wage and in low wages; agreements to improve career and early retirement schemes; and amendments to the wage norm law of 2017.

Read on: in Dutch (1) Read on: in Dutch (2) Read on: in French (1) Read on: in French (2) Read on: in English...

**Strike at airport over hourly regime**  
*March 23, 2021*

Workers active in the freight section of Liège Airport went on strike. As the staff responsible for refuelling aircraft are not working, dozens of aircraft were stranded at the freight section of the airport. The dispute between workers’ representatives and the airport management mainly concerns a change in the hourly regime for new recruits (which would go from a 12-hour shift to an 8-hour day shift) as well as the granting of a seniority bonus.

Read on: in English...

**Railway workers strike**  
*March 21, 2021*

The Syndicat Indépendant Cheminots (SIC – Independent railway workers union) announced that its members would join a 24-hour railway strike called for by the two main trade union confederations, CSC and FGTB. The announcements came amid difficult negotiations on wage and working conditions in the private sector that have been ongoing since January.

Read on: in English...

---

**Bulgaria**

**Wage support scheme extended**  
*March 30, 2021*

The European Commission has approved the extension and modification of a wage-support programme under the EU state aid temporary framework to support the economy during the COVID-19 pandemic. The
measure is aimed at providing wage support for employers and income support for self-employed people in several sectors most affected by the coronavirus pandemic. The duration of the scheme is extended until December 2021 and its budget is increased.

Read on: in English...

**Large gender pay gap**  
*March 7, 2021*

Women receive salaries which are on average 14% lower than the salaries of men. The gender pay gap is also leading to a pensions gap which places women at greater risk of poverty. CITUB statistics show that 59% of retired women run the risk of finding themselves in a state of poverty, whereas with men this percentage is 43.

Read on: in English... Read on: in English (2)...

---

**Croatia**

**Railway workers’ unions call off strike after agreement**  
*March 24, 2021*

Three railway workers’ unions whose members are employees of the HŽ Infrastruktura railway company have called off a strike after reaching a compromise solution with a new collective agreement. According to the leader of one of the three unions involved, the dispute with the employer had been about a non-taxable wage supplement and about meal allowances.

Read on: in English...

---

**Cyprus**

**Port workers call off strike**  
*March 16, 2021*

Port workers employed by DP World who began an indefinite strike over layoffs agreed, after the Labour Ministry intervened, to begin a dialogue with the company. DP World agreed to freeze the layoffs during the dialogue and unions called off their strike.

Read on: in English...

**Taxi drivers call off strike**  
*March 1, 2021*

A nationwide strike by taxi drivers was called off after the intervention of the Transport Minister and a meeting with representatives of the drivers. According to a statement, the parties involved will work on finding a solution. The drivers are also calling for a solution regarding operating problems of airport taxis. They strongly object to the licencing authority playing a role in the way taxis operate at the airports.

Read on: in English...

---

**Czechia**

**Employers obliged to test their employees**  
*March 4, 2021*
Under the recently introduced decree of the Ministry of Health, employers with at least 250 employees must test their employees for COVID-19 as of 3 March 2021 and as of 5 March 2021, for employers with 50-249 employees. Employees are obliged to undergo the test. If they don’t, they will be refused access to the workplace (without receiving a salary).

Read on: in English...

---

**Denmark**

**Petition for equal pay for all public servants**  
*March 16, 2021*

A so-called citizens’ petition calling for equal pay for public servants in different sectors has reached the necessary 50,000 signatures to qualify for parliamentary discussion. The petition asks lawmakers to revoke a 1969 wage reform, which placed public servants on 40 different pay grades, with sectors traditionally seen as dominated by women, such as nursing and childcare, given lower pay than jobs such as teachers or police officers. Parliament is now required to consider the petition in the form of a bill and the parties must decide which group will officially submit it.

Read on: in English...

**Gender differences and pensions**  
*March 8, 2021*

Younger women are on track to have larger pension pots than their male contemporaries by the time they retire – even though females retiring now are doing so on pension savings that are a fifth lower than that of men, according to data published on International Women’s Day by the Danish pensions industry association.

Read on: in English...

---

**Estonia**

**Wage growth slows down**  
*March 3, 2021*

According to Statistics Estonia, the average monthly gross wages and salaries in 2020 were €1,448, 2.9% higher than the year before. Trade, accommodation, catering and arts and entertainment however saw a decline in average wages during the corona-riddled year. The nearly 3% increase is the lowest in last ten years.

Read on: in English... Read on: in English (2)...

---

**Finland**

**Employers withdraw from collective bargaining**  
*March 25, 2021*

Technology Industries of Finland, one of the country’s largest employer organisations, has announced that it intends to partially withdraw from collective bargaining by dividing future activities between two separate associations. The association announced that the responsibility for national collective agreements will be transferred to a new employers’ association called Teknologiateollisuuden työnantajat (Technology Industry Employers).

Read on: in English... Read on: in English (2)...

---
**Small effect of basic income on employment**

_March 19, 2021_

The basic income that was implemented during an experiment led only to a small increase in employment. Finland is the only country that carried out a complete nationwide randomized control trial of a basic-income program. Despite the considerable increase in work incentives for the participants, days in employment remained statistically unchanged in the first year of the experiment, somewhat higher in the second.

Read on: [in English](#)

---

**France**

**Agreement on professional gender equality**

_March 30, 2021_

The social partners of the mutuality branch (ANEM for employers, CFDT, CGT-FO and CFE-CGC for employees) signed a new agreement on professional equality between women and men, aiming to rebalance the diversity in all occupations in the sector. The agreement provides assessment and action tools at the service of mutuality employers in order to change daily behaviour and challenge cultural stereotypes that may stand in the way of professional equality.

Read on: [in French](#)

**Ikea employees on strike**

_March 29, 2021_

Employees of FM Logistic, Ikea’s subcontractor for Île-de-France went on strike. About 70 employees stopped working to denounce their working conditions and demand an increase in their salaries. The demands are a 3% wage increase, the establishment of a seniority bonus, and a vacation bonus.

Read on: [in French](#)

**Gender Equality Index: new publication obligations**

_March 18, 2021_

A decree of 10 March has modified the publication modalities of the gender equality index and has imposed specific obligations on companies benefiting from the stimulus plan introduced by the Finance Act for 2021. At present, the obligation to publicize a company’s performance only concerns the overall score obtained when the index is calculated. As a result of the new decree, companies will have to publish not only the overall score obtained, but also the results obtained for each indicator.

Read on: [in English](#)

---

**Germany**

**Collective agreement in metal and electrical industry**

_March 30, 2021_

According to the new collective agreement between trade union IG Metall and employers’ association Metall NRW for the metal and electrical industry in Nordrhein-Westfalen, employees will receive a one-off €500 corona premium in June. In July, wages will increase by 2.3%, but the accumulated pay rise will only be paid out in February 2020 as a so-called “Transformation Money” or “T-Money” which amounts to 18.4% of a monthly salary. In 2023, the T-Money will amount to 27.6% of the monthly salary. For the next three years all jobs will be guaranteed.

Read on: [in English](#) ... [in German](#)
**Collective agreement in the dairy industry**
*March 29, 2021*

Around 2,500 employees of the dairy farms in Baden-Württemberg will receive a wage increase of 2.3% from April 1, 2021. On March 26, 2021, the collective bargaining commission of the Food, Tobacco, Hotel & Allied Workers’ Union (NGG) reached an agreement with the cooperative employers’ association. The trainees receive an increase in the training allowance of €60. The collective agreement has a term of 12 months and can be terminated on March 31, 2022 at the earliest.

Read on: in German...

**Collective agreement in iron and steel industry**
*March 27, 2021*

Trade union IG Metall agreed a wage deal for the roughly 70,000 workers in the iron and steel industry in Nordrhein Westfalen. Under the agreement, which runs for 15 months, workers will receive lump-sum payments of €250 euros each on December 28 this year and February 28, 2022. From February 28, 2023, the steelworkers will then receive an additional payment of €600 a year. The parties also agreed on a one-off coronavirus allowance of €500 which is to be paid out as early as the end of June.

Read on: in English...

**Annual report on collective bargaining**
*March 1, 2021*

The Institute of Economic and Social Research (Wirtschafts- und Sozialwissenschaftliches Institut, WSI) of the Hans-Böckler-Stiftung published its annual Collective Bargaining report for 2020 which provides an overview of collective agreements concluded in 2020, agreed wage increases and sectoral minimum wages as well as collectively agreed increases in short-time work allowances. The 2020 bargaining round took place in a context dominated by the COVID-19 pandemic and its economic and social consequences. The COVID-19 crisis had widely varying impacts on different areas of the economy. Many industries suffered a severe initial effect. Conversely, many areas of the economy were not affected by the pandemic and, in some instances, even gained from it.

Read on: in English...

---

**Greece**

**Decline of temporary jobs**
*March 24, 2021*

According to data from the Statistical Authority (ELSTAT), the number of temporary jobs in the fourth quarter of 2020 fell by 23.2% compared to the same quarter of the previous year. Compared to the previous quarter, the number of temporary jobs in Greece decreased by 10.6%. Overall, the number of temporary jobs in the fourth quarter stood at approximately 251,700. This compared to 2.38 million permanent jobs during the same period.

Read on: in English... Read on the press release: in English...

---

**Hungary**

**Renegotiating collective agreement at B Braun**
*March 22, 2021*

Trade union Vasas is renegotiating the collective agreement of the provider of healthcare products B Braun, demanding a wage increase for its members. B Braun is offering wage increases between 0% and 5%, depending on the employee category, and proposes to increase bonuses. The union is demanding an 8%
increase of the base salary for all staff and is rejecting increased bonuses, because they often have unreachable targets.

Read on: in English...

Iceland

Equal Pay Certification  
March 9, 2021

As part of the equal pay policy enterprises with more than 25 employees have to apply an Equal Wage Management Standard, which rates the job itself, rather than the person doing it. If they can show they pay equally for the same positions, they receive an Equal Pay Certification. Those that fail to do so get fined €397 per day. To further drive gender equality, Samkaup, one of the largest retailers, adopted an Equality and Equal Pay Policy, which forms part of its Human Resources Policy and covers all employees regardless of gender, age, race, religion and sexual orientation.

Read on: in English... Read on about the Equal Pay Certification: in English...

Ireland

Amendment of Gender Pay Gap Information Bill  
March 31, 2021

The Government has approved to amend the Gender Pay Gap Information Bill and to introduce the strengthened Bill at Report Stage. Once implemented, the Gender Pay Gap Information Bill will require employers over a certain size to publish pay differences between female and male employees, including any bonuses.

Read on: in English...

Review could compel all employers to talk to unions  
March 30, 2021

Plans for a major review of industrial relations, which trade unions hope could ultimately lead to a legal requirement for employers to negotiate with them, are to come before Cabinet. The Minister for Enterprise and Employment proposes the establishment of a special review group. The high-level review is considered within the Government as an opportunity to look at collective bargaining and the industrial relations landscape. Trade unions have long argued that it is a fundamental human right for workers to be permitted to bargain collectively with their employer for fair pay and conditions of employment.

Read on: in English...

Government to review employment law  
March 10, 2021

The government is to review the employment law concerning workers in the gig economy. It follows a meeting between the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Trade and Deliveroo riders who were accompanied by union representatives and groups representing immigrants. Many of the riders are immigrant students who do not qualify for self-employed work with their visas and so have to rent accounts from others. They would like a more secure visa status and an extension to their permission to work. The co-founder of the English Language Students’ Union has also called on the government to be more active in allowing Deliveroo workers to be considered as employees rather than sub-contractors.

Read on: in English...
Italy

**Employment contract for Just Eat riders**  
*March 30, 2021*

Online food delivery company Just Eat said it would hire some 4,000 riders in order to comply with a decision by a prosecutor aimed at improving conditions for workers of the gig economy. The company agreement was signed between the representatives of Just Eat Takeway.com Express Italy Srl, and the representatives of the trade unions FILT CGIL, FIT-CISL, Uiltrasporti and the representatives of atypical workers NIDIL, Felsa, Ultemp. The negotiations saw the participation of some rider associations belonging to the Rider X i Diritti network, who called for a strike of delivery riders on March 26.

Read on: in English... Read on: in English (2)... Read on: in Italian...

**Amazon workers on 24-hour strike**  
*March 22, 2021*

Amazon workers held their first nationwide strike as unions claimed employees were being pushed harder than ever during the coronavirus pandemic. The unions FILT CIGL, FIT CISL and Ultrasporti claimed that an average 75% of workers stayed out, rising to 90% in some areas. According to the unions, workers should have lower work burdens, better pay, more union rights and an indemnity in case they fall ill with COVID-19.

Read on: in English...

**Job supporting measures**  
*March 19, 2021*

The Government adopted a support decree (Decreto Sostegni), which features measures including an extension to the layoff freeze and the use of wage guarantee schemes due to the pandemic, as well as new funding for the so-called citizens and emergency income for those in need, and non-repayable support for small and medium-sized companies, very small entities and entrepreneurs. Overall, the government is to fork out some €32 billion, of which €8 billion will go towards supporting jobs and fighting poverty.

Read on: in English... Read on: in Italian...

Latvia

**State Audit bashes employment termination compensation in public sector**  
*March 23, 2021*

Following an audit of whether or not employers in the public sector act in accordance with regulations when it comes to termination of employees and subsequent payment of compensations, the State Audit concluded that in most cases employers do not sign agreements with their employees to prevent competition among public sector employers, but rather to resolve problematic situations when employees refuse to terminate their employment or provide certain employees with special treatment.

Read on: in English...

**Decision on remote work for public and private sector**  
*March 12, 2021*

People employed in the state administration, municipal councils and the private sector will have to start working remotely, the Government decided. This requirement will not extend to the manufacturing industry and other sectors in which it is unable to perform work remotely. Up till now the order regarding the declaration of the state of emergency included a requirement to organize work remotely whenever possible.

Read on: in English...
Liechtenstein

**Extension of collective agreement for cleaning**
*March 29, 2021*

From April 1, 2021, the collective agreement for building cleaning and caretaking (GAV) will apply to all employers who carry out maintenance and cleaning work of all kinds on and in buildings. The work includes in particular the cleaning of buildings inside and outside, house maintenance and cleaning of machines. As the Central Joint Commission (ZPK) also announced, the collective agreement also applies to all employees who are employed in such companies and parts of companies.

Read on: in German...

---

Lithuania

**Stagnation of number of knowledge-intensive jobs**
*March 24, 2021*

Before the COVID-19 crisis the country experienced a significant boost in knowledge-intensive jobs. Between 2012 and 2019, 21,000 jobs were added in knowledge-intensive companies. However, that trend was reversed in 2020, as 1,300 of this kind of jobs were lost during the year. Thus, the share of the labour force employed in knowledge-intensive occupations decreased slightly during the year, from 5.2% in 2019 to 5.1% in 2020.

Read on: in English...

---

Luxembourg

**Social plan at bank**
*March 15, 2021*

The trade unions OGBL, ALEBA and LCGB signed a social plan at the bank Mitsubishi UFJ Investor Services & Banking (Luxembourg) SA, which will impact 16 employees. The Japanese bank, which has 164 employees in Luxembourg, had announced a plan for collective redundancies following the relocation of services and fund operations to other sites of the group. During the various negotiation meetings, the number of employees affected by the social plan was reduced from 22 to 16, mainly thanks to the internal redeployment of employees.

Read on: in French...

---

Malta

**Little training for people with disabilities**
*March 27, 2021*

The majority of people with disabilities have never participated in employment training schemes that can boost their chances of finding and retaining a job, a new study has found. The research found that out of 336 people with disabilities interviewed, 61.3% are in employment. Of these, 55.3% never had any form of job training. When it comes to those who were unemployed, 62.3% never had job training, even though 59.2% would be willing to participate in a job training scheme.

Read on: in English...
Netherlands

Collective agreement for Participation Act employees
March 30, 2021

A collective agreement was reached for the employees who fall under the Participation Act. This collective agreement will apply to people with disabilities who work in sheltered workplaces and employees who are seconded to a guaranteed job with an employer. There will be one wage structure with three job levels. These run from the minimum wage to 118% of the minimum wage in the highest scale. The working time is 37 hours.

Read on: in English and in Dutch...

Collective agreement for the meat products industry
March 18, 2021

After a tough negotiation process a new collective agreement was reached between trade union FNV and the employers in the meat products industry. The agreement has a term of one year and runs until February 1, 2022. As of February 1, 2021, the wage increases by 1.75% and the pension premium will be increased by 1%-point with effect from 1 January 2022. Moreover, an early retirement scheme has been agreed. The end-of-year bonus will increase by 0.25%-points to 3% from 2021.

Read on: in English and in Dutch...

Airport workers strike for quality jobs
March 2, 2021

Cleaners, ground crew and security workers at Schiphol Airport were striking to send a final warning to airport management to end the race to the bottom in their wages and conditions. According to trade union FNV, Schiphol Airport management seems only to have one goal: reduce costs by increasing the competition among external contractors that provide ground handling, security and cleaning services. FNV is urging Schiphol Airport management to stop the fierce competition and provide permanent and safe jobs with a living wage.

Read on: in English...

Norway

Annual wage negotiations start
March 24, 2021

The annual wage talks started between the largest trade union confederation LO and the national employers’ organization NHO. Prospects for strikes this spring are high, even in the midst of the pandemic, after NHO demanded that workers accept an actual decline in purchasing power even before talks began. NHO thinks workers should not receive any more than a 2.2% wage increase this year, even though average price growth has been set at 2.8%. LO is demanding at least 2.8%, so its members won’t lose purchasing power and can keep up with expected inflation.

Read on: in English...

Poland

Labour market index drops
March 30, 2021

According to the Bureau for Investments and Economic Cycles (BIEC), the Labour Market Index (WRP), which predicts future changes in the level of unemployment fell by 0.7 points to 67.5 points in March. The
study reports visible tendencies to retain employees in anticipation of an improvement of the situation on
the market, which is reinforced by protective measures.

Read on: in English...

**Remote work requires new regulations**  
*March 8, 2021*

According to business lobby group Pracodawcy RP clear regulations should be introduced that would
provide employers and employees who work remotely with an appropriate level of flexibility. According to a
report prepared by the group, 30% of workers say that it was impossible for them to combine their
professional work with family life. Some 45% have experienced a sense of isolation, lacking social contact.

Read on: in English...

**Saving jobs policies**  
*March 2, 2021*

Saving jobs during the COVID-19 pandemic is one of the government’s main priorities, according to the
Minister for Family and Social Policy. To achieve this objective, the government has made available over
€42.3 billion. The Deputy Minister for Development, Labour and Technology said the government was
prepared, over the coming weeks and months, to extend existing aid schemes for enterprises if the pandemic
makes this necessary.

Read on: in English...

---

**Portugal**

**Remote work compulsory**  
*March 30, 2021*

An extension of the exceptional, provisional work reorganisation regime to fight against the COVID-19
pandemic has been decreed. Remote work is compulsory unless an agreement is negotiated between
employers and workers. If work duties are not compatible with remote work or conditions are not conducive
to such work, the company must implement staggered working hours. The law requires a 30-minute gap
between the arrival and departure of different groups of employees.

Read on: in English...

---

**Romania**

**Strike of subway workers**  
*March 26, 2021*

Protesting subway workers occupied tracks in a station in Bucharest blocking trains from running and
disrupting public transport in the capital. Members of the subway trade union staged the protest over a
conflict with management of subway company Metrorex which said it would shut down underground kiosks
that were a fire hazard. 80% of the lucrative kiosks and other commercial spaces are owned by the subway
trade union USLM.

Read on: in English...

**Hourly labour costs rise nearly 9%**  
*March 5, 2021*

According to the statistical board, INS, the seasonally adjusted hourly labour costs rose by 8.69% year-on-
year in the fourth quarter of 2020 and were 2.61% higher over the third quarter,. On an annual basis, the
hourly labour costs increased in most sectors in the fourth quarter of 2020. The highest increases of the
adjusted hourly labour cost were found in arts, entertainment and recreation (22.25%), financial and insurance activities (14.09%), information and communication (11.95%), and in human health and social work activities (11.73%).

Read on: in English...

Serbia

Average salary growth
March 5, 2021

The average net salary increased by 10% in one year. The average salary in December 2020 was €562. According to statistical data, the average salary went up by 9.2% in real terms.

Read on: in English...

Slovakia

Amendment labour code related to working from home
March 15, 2021

An amendment of the labour code has introduced new rules on regular working from home. The employer and the employee must agree on working from home in the employment contract. Such work does not necessarily need to be performed from the employee’s home; it can be performed at any agreed place outside the employer’s workplace. It is also possible to agree that the employee will determine unilaterally the place where the work will be performed.

Read on: in English...

Slovenia

Amended act on employment of foreigners
March 27, 2021

The National Assembly passed amendments to the act on employment, self-employment and work of foreigners which transpose a 2016 EU directive. The directive sets down the conditions of entry and residence of third-country citizens for the purposes of research, studies, student exchange, paid and unpaid training, voluntary service and au pair services. A new combined residency and work permit and a new temporary residence permit will be available under the changes.

Read on: in English...

Average net wage decreases
March 15, 2021

Provisional data from the statistical office showed that average net monthly earnings decreased by a real 3.1% month-on-month to €1,269.18 in January, after declining by 1.0% in December 2020. Annually, the average net earnings in the country rose by a nominal 8.2% in January, following a 6.6% increase a month earlier.

Read on: in English...
Spain

Collective agreement for retailers
March 25, 2021

The trade unions CCOO, Fagsa, Fetico and UGT concluded an agreement with Anged, the association of large retailers which partially renews the sector’s collective agreement. The agreement will last for two years and concerns the El Corte Ingls department stores, as well as Carrefour Leroy Merlin, Fnac, Alcampo, Conforama, Ikea, Apple, and Makro, applying to some 230,000 employees in the sector. It covers arrangements for remote working, which were recently defined under law, as well as the right to disconnect and the creation of a salary register to ensure equal pay, and even provides a framework for e-commerce work on Sundays.

Read on: in Spanish...

Labour rights for platform workers
March 10, 2021

After negotiations the Government and the social partners reached an agreement on the labour rights of people working for digital platforms. The agreement aims to establish the employment status of those engaged in the delivery or distribution of any consumer product or merchandise via a digital platform. It does so on two basic premises: a presumption of employment and algorithm transparency.

Read on: in English... Read on: in Spanish...

Unions worried about job losses
March 2, 2021

Inditex, owner of fashion brand Zara, rolls out its plan to close up to 1,200 stores worldwide, despite a company agreement with unions to project jobs. The world’s biggest clothes retailer is closing smaller outlets while expanding flagship stores and the Spanish closures are the first of up to 700 expected this year in Europe. Two unions agreed with Inditex to provide all affected staff with new vacancies matching their old contracts and seniority within 25 km of where they used to work.

Read on: in English...

Sweden

Volvo announces 24-week parental leave
March 30, 2021

As of April 1, 2021, Volvo Cars will introduce a new all-gender, paid parental leave policy for its over 40,000 employees around the globe, in all plants and offices. The ‘Family Bond’ policy will give all employees with at least one year’s service a total of 24 weeks of leave at 80% of their base pay by default. The policy applies to either parent and the leave can be taken anytime within the three first years of parenthood.

Read on: in English...

Amendments to the law on short-time layoffs
March 31, 2021

The state support for short-time layoffs has been extended and now applies over the entire period from 16 March 2020 until 30 June 2021. There is also a new template for local collective agreements on short-time layoffs and a local agreement on short-time work with state support, for those who negotiate locally.

Read on: in English and in Swedish...

Cooperation between union and H&M
March 15, 2021
Since the beginning of the crisis, H&M and IndustriALL Global Union have acted in different forms, both bilaterally and in multi-stakeholder initiatives. This cooperation has been integral in supporting the supply chain and sector through this period. In order to minimize the impacts of the global COVID-19 pandemic and strengthen the cooperation beyond, H&M and IndustriALL Global Union now publicly reaffirm and strengthen their commitments to work together with the suppliers.

Read on: in English...

---

**Switzerland**

**Emergency aid and compensation for short-time work**

*March 18, 2021*

The Government signed off funds for emergency aid, compensation for short-time work and unemployment schemes. This is CHF 2 billion (€1.81 billion) more than the government had proposed. Over the past weeks, discussions took place in the parliament about special conditions for potential beneficiaries of government aid, including event organisers and sports clubs as well as one person companies and low-income earners.

Read on: in English...

---

**Turkey**

**Government prolongs layoff ban by two months**

*March 9, 2021*

The Government has extended a ban on layoffs for two months from March 17. The ban was introduced last year to limit the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on employment and the economy in general. The unemployment increased to 12.9% in November and labour participation slipped as a second wave of Covid-related curbs started to hit businesses.

Read on: in English...

---

**United Kingdom**

**Transition deal with oil and gas companies to safeguard jobs**

*March 25, 2021*

The government announced the implementation of a sectoral agreement called the ‘North Sea Transition Deal’, the goal of which is to safeguard North Sea oil and gas jobs while the U.K. tries to achieve its target of carbon neutrality by 2050. The North Sea Transition deal aims to support workers, businesses, and the supply chain through the transition to cleaner energy. It aims to reskill the oil and gas workforce and create 40,000 direct and indirect supply chain jobs.

Read on: in English... Read on the deal: in English...

**Uber agrees to classify drivers as ‘workers’**

*March 16, 2021*

Uber said it would reclassify more than 70,000 drivers as ‘workers’ who will receive a minimum wage, vacation pay and access to a pension plan. The decision, Uber said, is the first time the company has agreed to classify its drivers in this way, and it comes in response to a landmark Supreme Court decision last month that said Uber drivers were entitled to more protections. The decision represents a shift for Uber, though the move was made easier by labour rules that offer a middle ground between freelancers and full employees that doesn’t exist in other countries.
Gender pay gap reporting narrows the gap
March 5, 2021

The Centre for Economic Performance has published a paper which analyses policies which require employers to publicly report gender pay gap statistics. Proponents argue that increasing the information available to workers and consumers places pressure on firms to close pay gaps, but opponents argue that such policies are poorly targeted and ineffective. This paper contributes to the debate by analyzing the UK’s recent reporting policy, in which employers are mandated to publicly report simple measures of their gender pay gap each year. It finds that the introduction of reporting requirements narrowed the gender pay gap by 1.6%.