

collective bargaining

Issue 2/2022 | February

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

 DE BURCHT | 

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European sources

Towards a fair and sustainable digital platform labour

25 February 2022

Platform work, accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic, is at the top of the European agenda. It is estimated that 28 million people work through digital labour platforms in the EU today, while this number is expected to increase up to 43 million by 2025. In the hearing on the “Working conditions of platform workers package”, the European Economic and Social Committee highlighted the potential risks and how these challenges should be met. The package was welcomed by the participants, who raised the need for a common legal framework, given the diversified reactions and practices applied by the Member States when it comes to platform labour.

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

Communication on decent work

23 February 2022

The European Commission presented its Communication on Decent Work that reaffirms the EU's commitment to champion decent work both at home and around the world. The EU promotes decent work across all sectors and policy areas in line with a comprehensive approach that addresses workers in domestic markets, in third countries and in global supply chains.

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

Start of social dialogue on decent work for drivers and couriers

17 February 2022

The International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF), and Uber have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to begin social dialogue on the continued support of decent work for drivers and couriers globally. The agreement follows recent regulatory developments around the EU that aim to improve working conditions for platform workers. This engagement will enable dialogue on a variety of topics such as: trade union representation, freedom of association and bargaining, working conditions, health and safety, social protections, and dispute resolution.

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

Report on collective labour disputes

7 February 2022

Eurofound published an analysis of collective labour disputes. It found that collective bargaining was the context for over a third of disputes, with grievances over company-level policies making up another quarter and grievances over public policy accounting for a further 18%. More specifically, problems over pay accounted for over 40% of disputes, employment problems for 20%, other aspects of working conditions for 16%. In a period when the pandemic raised serious problems in terms of safety and staffing it wasn't surprising that health and social care was among the sectors most represented in the data.

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

Austria

Unions in public and private healthcare launch petition

24 February 2022

Four trade unions in public and private healthcare – younion, GÖD, vida and GPA – have joined forces with the ÖGB trade union confederation, the Chamber of Labour and Chamber of doctors to push for increased funding for health and long-term care. The organisations organised demonstrations across the country.

Read on: [in German](#)

New collective agreement for electricity industry

3 February 2022

The trade unions GPA and PRO-GE have negotiated a new collective agreement for the electricity industry that provides an annual pay increase from 1 February of at least 3.6%, with lower paid workers getting up to 4.0%. This raises the minimum monthly salary in the sector to €2,069.52. Pay for apprentices will go up by an average of over 6%. Other elements in the agreement include how previous periods of services are credited when workers are transferred to other employers and an increase of the overtime supplement to 50% for part-time workers.

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

Belgium

First steps towards improved work-life balance

17 February 2022

The federal majority parties reached a new deal on improving work-life balance. New measures were unveiled as the introduction of a right for employees to be offline. Companies with at least 20 employees will be obliged to respect this right and come to an agreement on the topic in consultation with the trade unions. The government believes that most employees cannot reasonably be expected to read or answer emails outside working hours. The collective agreement to be agreed at company level will have to clarify how this principle is to be applied throughout the business.

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

Towards the right to request a four-day week

15 February 2022

The government unveiled a reform proposal aimed at, among other things, encouraging the emergence of new forms of work, better protecting platform workers, strengthening the right to training, and facilitating a better work-life balance. Among its measures is the right for employees to split their working time over four days without any loss of pay.

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

Bulgaria

Parliament approves increase in minimum wage

23 February 2022

The Parliament approved on second and final reading an increase in the minimum wage and the social security ceiling proposed by the government as part of the budget for 2022. The monthly minimum wage will rise from 650 leva (€333) to 710 leva (€364), while the wage ceiling to which social security contributions are tied will increase from 3,000 leva (€1,537) to 3,400 leva (€1,742). Both changes will come into force as of April 1.

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Data on wage increases in fourth quarter of 2021

14 February 2022

Compared to the third quarter of 2021, average monthly wages and salaries increased by 6.1% in the fourth quarter of 2021 to 1,612 leva (€822), according to the National Statistical Institute (NSI). The highest increase was reported in 'Human health and social work activities' (15.1%), 'Education' (14.6%) and in 'Mining and quarrying' (7.4%).

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Croatia

Company raises wages by 30%

23 February 2022

As a reward to its employees for business results over the past year, the company Infinum, a design and development agency, has increased its engineers' salaries by 30%. Furthermore, the company-wide maximum number of days off per year has been increased to 30. In 2021, Infinum won the award for the best employer in all of Croatia, for the third time in a row.

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

Government and unions aim for new public sector collective agreement

22 February 2022

The Government and the unions for government and public service employees met to negotiate a new collective agreement. The Government stated that it would extend the application of the existing collective agreements. The head of the union of Interior Ministry employees said the unions were asked to revise their demands given the impact of Government measures to buffer the impact of energy price hikes on the state budget.

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

Cyprus

Purchasing power of salaries below 2006 level

16 February 2022

According to a report by the Cyprus Labour Institute (INEK), the purchasing power of the average salary is currently 6.8% below 2006 levels, with real wages still on a downward trajectory. As the economy improved from 2015 to 2019 salaries regained much of the lost ground to reach -3.3% compared to 2006, only to be dealt another blow by the COVID-19 pandemic. Recovery has started but purchasing power remains reduced.

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Wage gap is declining

6 February 2022

According to the Labour Ministry, the wage gap between men and women has been declining over time but at the same time, efforts must continue to reduce it even further and eliminate it entirely. Based on the latest and revised data of the statistical service for 2019, the percentage gap has been significantly reduced and is now at 10.1%.

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Czechia

Unions criticize austerity measures

10 February 2022

The trade unions have criticized the austerity measures that were announced in the draft state budget for 2022. They are opposed to the freeze on health insurance contributions paid by the state on behalf of seniors, children and the unemployed. The unions are also seeking to negotiate salary increases for their members. Inflation is projected to average 8.5% in 2022 and the unions say that real wages could drop for the first time in eight years.

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

Denmark

New rules for remote working

16 February 2022

New rules for people who work from home have been announced by the Government. Employees are now allowed to use their own work equipment (desk, chair, private computer) when they are teleworking, as long as it complies with current standards. Otherwise, employers are obliged to provide the necessary tools with the only requirement that employees must work from home for an average of more than two days per week each month. The measures are expected to come into effect at the end of April 2022.

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

Plan to tackle labour shortage

14 February 2022

As part of planned measures to ease staff shortages, the Government has proposed setting up so-called pop-up hiring centers. The first wave of recruitment efforts could target nurses, a public-sector job category where numbers have dwindled in recent years. The government aims to hire as many as 1,000 new nurses, even though, according to an October report by the trade union, there is demand for almost five times more. Nurses are unhappy with their working conditions after putting in many extra hours during the pandemic and went on the longest strike in 50 years last summer after failing to reach an agreement with employers over pay.

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

Estonia

Employers plead for flexible work permits for Ukrainians

28 February 2022

According to the Employers' Confederation, the state should be very flexible in issuing or extending work permits to Ukrainians, as providing Ukrainians with work and shelter in Estonia helps them to support their families back at home in Ukraine. According to the employers, Ukrainian workers are very welcome and necessary in Estonia, especially in construction and manufacturing.

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

Finland

Union announces strike at Finnair

7 February 2022

The Transport Workers' Union (AKT) threatened a strike at Finnair airline from 22 February until 8 March, when most schools have winter breaks known as ski holidays. The union protests against the cuts in pay and working conditions announced by Finnair.

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

Paper workers extend strike

4 February 2022

Paperworkers at UPM-Kymmene's UPM.HE mills will extend their strike until March 12, their union said on Friday. Employees of UPM's paper, pulp and biofuels plants have been on strike since January 1, after the company and union failed to agree on a new collective agreement.

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

France

New agreement on telework

8 February 2022

MGEN the mutual health and social security insurance group for those working in the Ministry of National Education adopted a new agreement on telework. Signed unanimously by the representative trade unions (UNSA, CFE-CGC, CFDT, and CGT), this text extends teleworking to all the group's entities, including the health centres. It also provides for the possibility of employees working remotely from any location on French territory.

Read on: [in English](#)

Single national collective agreement for metallurgy industry

3 February 2022

While to date the metallurgy sector has been operating under 78 separate collective agreements, on 7 February 2022 the employers' federation UIMM and three representative trade unions, CFDT, FO, and CFE-CGC, signed a new single national sector agreement. After an almost 6-year period of negotiations until the end of December 2021, a single national text has been written down and will come into force in 2024. This collective agreement, which will concern 1.5 million employees, should in particular enable the streamlining of job classifications and the introduction of a minimum social protection scheme.

Read on: [in English...](#) Read on the communication by the social partners: [in French...](#)

Germany

Union demands more purchasing power for chemical and pharmaceutical workers

22 February 2022

In its demand for the 2022 collective bargaining round, the Federal Collective Bargaining Commission of the trade union IG BCE decided that the purchasing power of the 580,000 employees in the chemical and pharmaceutical industry must be sustainably increased by raising salaries and training allowances. In addition, IG BCE is calling for an increase in shift premiums for employees working night shifts to a uniform 25%.

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Five percent wage increase demanded in printing industry

13 February 2022

Union Ver.di is demanding 5% higher wages and salaries over a period of 12 months for the 120,000 employees in the printing industry. The challenges of the industry - especially under the conditions of the COVID-19 pandemic - were considered in 2020 with a special collective agreement, which postponed previously agreed wage and salary increases by several months. According to the union, this contribution of the employees must be taken into account in the current negotiations.

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

Real wages fall for second year in a row

16 February 2022

Real wages have fallen for the second year in a row as high inflation continues to erode people's earnings. The Federal Statistical Office estimates that wages fell by around 0.1% in real terms last year. Even though employees saw a higher-than-average pay rise that amounted to an average 3.1% increase in earnings, this was eroded by a concurrent 3.1% increase in consumer prices.

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

Textile workers in East Germany demand six percent higher wage

10 February 2022

The union IG Metall demands 6% higher wages for the 12,000 workers in the textile industry in East Germany. In addition, the annual special payment is to be increased to 100% of an average monthly salary. IG Metall also wants to extend the collective agreement on demographic partial retirement, which expires at the end of April.

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Greece

Strike of port workers

7 February 2022

Members of the Union of Container Workers staged a 24-hour strike at the piers of Piraeus (ENEDEP). According to a union statement, this is a 24-hour warning strike and workers are demanding the signing of a BCC that will cover all employees, the application of the BAE law to all employees at the port, the re-employment of contractors whose contracts have not been renewed and permanent and stable jobs for all.

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

Hungary

Largest minimum wage increase in EU

7 February 2022

The increase of the nominal minimum wage by 20% in 2021 was the highest in the European Union. The statutory rate was increased from monthly gross HUF 167,400 (€473) to HUF 200,000 (€542), in January 2021.

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Iceland

Collective agreements raise wage index

22 February 2022

According to Statistics Iceland, the monthly wage index increased by 3.7% in January 2022 from the previous month. The increase can largely be attributed to collective agreements for a large proportion of the labour market. In the last twelve months the monthly wage index has risen by 7.3%. Collective agreements from 2019 and 2020 stipulated a pay rise in January 2022 in the form of a nominal increase of monthly wages aiming to improve wage terms for low wage earners.

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

Ireland

Union calls for pay rise for low-paid workers

8 February 2022

Trade union Siptu has called on the Government to “step up” and protect the rights of low-paid workers, ensuring they get pay rises in line with inflation. According to Siptu, pay awards were running at 3.5 to 4%, while inflation was running at 5%. Siptu advised officials currently in negotiations to seek increases linked to inflation.

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Strike action hospital pharmacists called off

10 February 2022

Planned industrial action on 16 February by 500 hospital pharmacists, members of the trade union Forsa, was called off as the dispute was referred to the Labour Court. The workers had voted overwhelmingly in favour of action in a dispute over pay and improvements in the hospital pharmacy service which had been put forward by the union but was blocked by the public service ministry. The changes would deliver estimated cost savings of €55 million per year.

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Italy

Unions call for strike against Telecom spin off

11 February 2022

The main telecom unions, SLC-CGIL, FISTel-CISL and UILCOM-UIL, called for a general strike against a possible spin off of Telecom (TIM) network. The unions have raised concerns over a potential break-up of the company and a fallout on jobs as the former telephone monopoly considers a split of its network assets as an alternative to a takeover approach by the fund KKR. Employees of all the TIM group companies will strike and not work extra shifts for a month.

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

Union proposes measures for health sector

2 February 2022

The public services union Fp-Cgil put forward a series of measures to address the serious challenges of understaffing in healthcare. The union says that the country needs to recruit 60,000 nurses just to maintain current standards and another 140,000 to reach European standards. It warns that the next five years will see over 52,000 nurses leave for retirement and says that surveys reveal around 50% of nurses are dissatisfied with their work due to the inability to maintain the expected standards of care and their lack of involvement in decisions.

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Latvia

Union wants to cancel rules preventing work without COVID-19 certificate

14 February 2022

The trade union confederation LBAS invites the government and the parliament to lift restrictions that prevent employees from doing their job without a valid COVID-19 certificate. The trade union explained its

position by pointing to the Ministry of Economy's report on the vaccination coverage among working people for January, which indicates that 96% of employed people have undergone vaccination. This is why LBAS believes the time has come to put an end to excessive regulation in the context of COVID-19 restrictions.

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

Liechtenstein

Many apprenticeship positions vacant

13 February 2022

There are still 173 apprenticeship positions vacant. According to the head of 100pro! it is the craft trades that get your hands dirty that are less easy to fill. The "clean" professions are in greater demand. In addition, fewer and fewer Swiss young people are coming to Liechtenstein to be trained. The market is exhausted, there are no young people available.

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

Lithuania

Strike at chemicals factory

10 February 2022

600 workers, almost half of the 1,300 workers at the fertilisers and industrial chemicals factory, AB Achema, started an open-ended strike. The strike was the result of the unanimous decision of the Achema Workers' Trade Union Council. The union is demanding that the employer signs a collective agreement for a two-year period, with key provisions to review wages at least once per calendar year, to establish a procedure for one-time incentives for the achieved annual work results, to legalise overtime when working beyond the permitted annual duration, and to coordinate annual work schedules with the trade union.

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

Luxembourg

Medical staff struggles with labour shortages

15 February 2022

Representatives of medical staff urge the Government to launch a university programme to counteract labour shortages in the sector. The shortage of doctors affects every specialised field, 'work doctors' being no exception, the Association of Work Doctors (ALSAT) said in a written statement. The sector currently needs an additional 25 practitioners. ALSAT therefore demands that a study programme be introduced at the University of Luxembourg.

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

Malta

Union opposes mandatory vaccination

1 February 2022

The General Workers' Union (GWU) has confirmed its opposition to making the COVID-19 vaccine mandatory for all citizens. According to the secretary general of the GWU, "Free choice should be respected." However, he added that the right to free choice should be accompanied with responsibility in attitude.

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

Netherlands

Collective agreement for public transport workers

16 February 2022

The trade unions have agreed on a new collective agreement with the management of the Rotterdam public transport company RET. Agreements have been made about a structural pay increase, additional birth leave and a pool for extra temporary capacity. All wages will increase by €80 per month from 1 February 2022. In February 2023 wages will increase by 2%, with a minimum of €65. It has also been agreed that if inflation exceeds 2% in 2023, the difference will be supplemented by the RET.

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

New agreement for general practitioner care

16 February 2021

Trade unions FNV and CNV and employers' organisations NvdA and NvvPO negotiated a new collective agreement covering workers in general practice that will run from 1 January 2022 to 1 January 2024. In May 2022 there will be a pay increase of 3% for the lower pay scales (1-9) and 2% for pay scale 10 and above. The end-of-year bonus will be increased by one percentage point to 7.5%. In May 2023 there will be a general pay increase of 2.6% and the end-of-year bonus will be increased to 8.33%. There will be a number of other changes in relation to registration fees and training.

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

Norway

Statement on collective bargaining in 2022

22 February 2022

The union LO presented its policy statement for collective bargaining in 2022. Nationwide collective agreements and negotiations at a central level facilitate coordination in wage formation. This means that the parties take the economy as a whole and competitiveness into account in their wage demands. In several sectors, there is a need for adjustments in individual collective agreements. Against this background, the negotiations in the private sector are carried out as federal settlements.

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

Poland

Wages up by 9.5%

18 February 2022

According to the Central Statistical Office (GUS), the average corporate gross wage rose by 9.5% year on year to PLN 6,064.24 (€1,339) in January 2022. In monthly terms, the average wage fell by 8.7%. January's corporate employment increased by 2.3% year on year and by 1.5% month on month. This compares to the economists' expectations of a 1.7% annual rise in employment and a 0.9% monthly increase.

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

Portugal

Metro employees plan strike

23 February 2022

The workers of the Lisbon underground, Metropolitano de Lisboa, presented a strike notice for 11 and 18 March. According to a statement of the Federation of Transport and Communications Unions (FECTRANS), the strike notice has to do with working conditions, the lack of staff and management's treatment of workers. The unions also want the company to "put into practice a series of commitments made to workers a long time ago".

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

Minimum wage not adequate to avoid poverty

23 February 2022

A study by Cáritas Portugal reveals that the minimum wage is not enough to stop poverty for those who work. The minimum wage is not adequate to cover the costs of living in the country, which are rising much faster than workers' income. According to this Cáritas report, adequate minimum wages are essential to help guarantee decent working and living conditions, to prevent in-work poverty and to reduce job insecurity.

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

Romania

Employees of aluminum company protest against closure

17 February 2022

Employees of the Alro Slatina aluminum production plant protested against the closure of the third (of the factory's five) production halls. The employees fear the entire plant may be closed down. Alro Slatina, one of the largest vertically integrated aluminum producers, has already started a program of total closure because of the high energy prices.

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Slovakia

Wages grow fastest in accommodation, wholesale and sale of motor vehicles

10 February 2022

In 2021, wages grew the fastest, year-on-year, in accommodation, wholesale and sale of motor vehicles. Compared to 2019, all trade activities achieved double-digit growth. In 2021, the average wage increased, year-on-year, in all ten sectors, monitored by the Statistical Office. The year-on-year employment growth continued only in two activities, and compared to 2019 more employed persons were recorded only in information and communication. The most significant decrease in employment was recorded in accommodation, it lost a tenth of the employed persons year-on-year, and more than a fifth compared to 2019.

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Slovenia

Health and social care unions call for strike

1 February 2022

Trade unions organising in health and social care called for strike action on 16 February. They are unhappy that the government has postponed negotiations on pay levels and job rankings to which it made a commitment in an agreement signed last year. The unions want to adjust pay levels across the health sector to ensure fairness across the public sector. They have been further angered by the government's unilateral decision to deal separately with doctors and dentists which previously had been part of the public sector-wide negotiations.

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

Spain

Unions demand action on temporary work

11 February 2022

The unions UGT, CCOO and CSIF called on the government to urgently address the continuing problem of temporary work in the public services. The unions say that the government needs to set out the criteria that should apply in transferring temporary staff to a permanent status. The unions want to ensure that all those who have been temporarily employed for at least three years have the opportunity to move to a permanent contract and that the process of doing so is clear, certain and fair.

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

Minimum wage increased to €1,000

10 February 2022

The Government agreed with the trade unions to increase of the interprofessional minimum wage (SMI – Salario Mínimo Interprofesional) by €35 per month from €965 to €1,000 gross. As provided for in labour legislation the €1,000 is paid in 14-month periods (a double payment in July and December) making it €14,000 per year. This increase takes effect retroactively from 1 January 2022.

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Sweden

Construction workers lack collective agreement

4 February 2022

Workers on the construction of the Karlgårdsbron bridge in Skellefteå, the longest wooden bridge in Sweden, do not have a collective agreement. This is criticized by both the trade union Byggnads and the employers' organization Byggföretagen. The main contractor and a number of its subcontractors who are building the new bridge for Skellefteå municipality do not have a collective agreement.

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

Switzerland

Higher wage for hospital workers

10 February 2025

The approximately 10,000 employees of the cantonal hospitals in Aarau and Baden and the psychiatric services in Aargau will receive higher wages this year. The increase corresponds to at least 1.1% of the current collectively agreed wage. Nursing professionals in particular will benefit from this. The hospitals rejected the

wage increase of 1.7% demanded by the unions. According to the hospitals, the necessary financial resources are not available.

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Turkey

Workers go on strike as inflation rises

23 February 2022

Soaring inflation has propelled a wave of strikes unlike any the country has seen since the 1970s, as workers demand more money to counter the shrinking value of their pay. After the workers at the Migros supermarket chain went on strike, they won back their jobs as well as salary increases and other demands, giving inspiration to dissatisfied employees across the country. The annual inflation rate officially reached 48.7% in January, and workers have struggled to keep up with the sky-rocketing cost of living. The country has seen more than 60 strikes, factory occupations, protests and boycott calls involving at least 13,500 workers in less than two months.

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Food delivery couriers on strike

8 February 2022

The riders of online food delivery company Yemeksepeti have pursued better wages and working conditions. Founded in 2001, the company now has 20 million users for its home-ordered takeaway service. The couriers demand a 5,500 lira (€354) monthly wage — workers say the company's most recent pay offer equals the minimum wage of 4,250 liras (€274) — and the right to unionize. Safer working conditions are also an important goal for couriers, who say delivery time targets mean they face huge risks navigating the streets in treacherous weather.

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United Kingdom

Salary increases and free health check screening at retail chain

16 February 2022

The retail chain Marks and Spencer announced its intention to increase minimum pay by more than 5% to £10 (€11.94) an hour and enhance its employees' health and wellbeing benefits by offering a Virtual GP service, free health check screening, and advice on financial management. The pay rise is the latest in a wave of increases across retail and hospitality.

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

University staff on strike

14 February 2022

Thousands of university staff went on strike in a new wave of industrial action over pensions, pay and working conditions, claiming they have overwhelming support from students. According to the University and College Union (UCU), which represents lecturers and support staff, staff at 68 universities across the UK were taking action.

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

Pay boost for care workers

10 February 2022

The union UNISON has welcomed the announcement by the Welsh government that care workers in the country are to receive a bonus of £1000 after tax (€1200) in April, alongside the introduction of the real living wage. However, the union has warned that more needs to be done to encourage care workers to stay or to come into the sector. UNISON has also been arguing for the early implementation of fair work recommendations, such as a unified pay and progression structure, which will offer the same rates of pay, dependent on role, experience and skills.

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