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European sources

Benefits of collective bargaining to work-life balance and working hours

22 December 2023

New EU data show that the benefits of collective bargaining to work-life balance. Workers in countries with the highest levels of coverage enjoy up to a month more leisure time - without loss of pay - every year than other workers. An analysis to coincide with the holidays by the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) of Eurofound data on collectively agreed working time for full-time workers found that in countries where nine in ten workers are covered by a collective agreement, the average working time is 1,674 hours a year (excluding overtime). In countries where one in ten workers are covered, the average working time is 1,848 hours (excluding overtime).

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New Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive

14 December 2023

The European Union announced that it had reached political agreement on the new Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive (CSDDD or CS3D). Once adopted, the CSDDD will create new and far-reaching mandatory human rights and environmental due diligence obligations for EU and non-EU companies operating in the EU. It gives an important role to trade unions and workers representatives in due diligence strategies and plan of business. For the first time, large companies also will be required to adopt and put into effect a plan ensuring that their business model and strategy are compatible with limiting global warming.

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Directive on platform work

13 December 2023

The EU Parliament and Council reached a provisional agreement on a bill to improve the working conditions of persons performing platform work. The Platform Work Directive aims to ensure the correct classification of the employment status of people performing platform work and to introduce the first ever EU-rules on algorithmic management and the use of artificial intelligence in the workplace. Currently, at least 5.5 million persons performing platform work may be wrongly classified as self-employed and are missing out on important labour and social protection rights.

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Strike against austerity

13 December 2023

Thousands of trade unionists from across Europe gathered in Brussels for a 'Strike Against Austerity' ahead of budget discussions at an EU Summit. Led by the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC), between 5,000 and 10,000 members of trade unions from various Member States convened to "sound the alarm bells" about the EU's plans to reform its economic governance rules. Trade unionists say that this point, which consists of reforming the Stability and Growth Pact, signals a return to severe austerity measures. The strike aims to send a strong message that austerity is not the only option available to Europe.

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Evidence for strengthening industrial relations

5 December 2023

New findings by Eurofound provide evidence for policymakers to promote the strengthening of industrial relations. Previous Eurofound research developed three complementary tools to examine the dynamics of industrial relations and compare how national industrial relations systems are faring over time. This report builds on this previous research and has three main objectives: to update the index of each of the four key dimensions for 2018–2021; to analyse convergence trends from 2008 to 2021 across national industrial relations systems; and to update the typology of industrial relations systems to contribute to the cross-

country analysis of relevant patterns of change from 2008 to 2021, particularly in relation to collective bargaining.

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Austria

New collective agreemeent in metal industry

8 December 2023

Trade unions Pro-GE and GPA have negotiated a new collective agreement in the metal industry. The unions' efforts have resulted in significant gains for over 200,000 workers across six sub-sectors. All employees in the metal industry will receive a permanent increase, starting from 1 November 2023. The actual wage increase will be 10%, capped at € 400 per month. The agreement benefits workers in all wage categories and addresses different needs, paying particular attention to low- and middle-income groups. There will also be significant increases in minimum wages, allowances, reimbursements and apprenticeship pay.

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New collective agreement for health and social care employees

5 December 2023

Trade union Vida has negotiated a new agreement covering around 10,000 workers in health and social care employed by the religious provider Diakonie Austria. Wages will increase by 9.2%, establishing for the first time a minimum wage in the agreement of € 2,000. The agreement came into effect on 1 January 2024 and provides for other improvements including a flexibility payment for short-term replacements, easier access to partial retirement, better recognition of previous periods of service and better pay for upskilling.

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Pay increase for healthcare workers

4 December 2023

Following negotiations between the trade union “younion”, the municipality and the Health Association (VHA), a higher pay budget was made available for better working conditions, more leisure time and measures to combat labour shortages for healthcare workers in Vienna. The 9.15% pay rise follows the public-sector wide negotiations but in addition there will be extra payments for night work and for working on Sundays and public holidays. Night shift workers are set to get two hours credit per shift that can be taken as time off or extra pay if not used within six months.

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Belgium

Riders are employees

22 December 2023

Brussels' labour court has ruled in favour of couriers for food delivery platform Deliveroo, declaring them employees rather than independent contractors, reports the Belgian Transport Union (UBT-FGTB). The decision allows delivery workers involved in the case to claim unpaid wages for the period in question, as well as employee benefits. The National Social Security Office (ONSS), which also contested against Deliveroo, can now demand the company to pay additional social contributions for these workers for the relevant period.

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

Agreement with Ryanair

8 December 2023

After several strike days and a year and a half of negotiations, a historic agreement was finally reached between Belgian-based Ryanair pilots and the management of the low-cost airline. According to the trade union ACV, despite significant initial resistance, Ryanair has agreed to align itself with the Belgian social dialogue model. Key points from the agreement include: payment of outstanding holiday pay, adjustment of salary during technical unemployment and mandatory sectoral salary increase.

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Second 48-hour railway strike

5 December 2023

A second 48-hour railway strike started on 5 December. In October, a double two-day strike was announced by the two railway unions (for SNCB, Infrabel and HR Rail). The first action took place on 7 November. The unions said that the action, which was the largest railway strike since 2017, has so far been a success. Originally, the three railway unions organised the strike to voice their dissatisfaction with the company's restructuring and cost-cutting measures and the course of negotiations on these internal reforms. However, the Christian union ACV Transcom has since withdrawn its strike notice.

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Bulgaria

Labour costs rise by 15.1%

21 December 2023

In the third quarter of 2023, compared to the third quarter of 2022, the total hourly labour cost rose by 15.1%. The total hourly labour cost increased by 16.6% in industry, 13.9% in services and 17.0% in construction. The highest annual growth in total labour costs was recorded in 'Education' - by 21.9%, 'Accommodation and food service activities' - by 18.8%, and 'Transportation and storage' - by 17.4%.

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Croatia

Sectoral agreement signed in the wood and paper industry

11 December 2023

On 11 December, seven trade unions representing workers in the wood and paper industry and the employers' association HUP signed a groundbreaking sectoral agreement. The new agreement is one of only three sectoral collective agreement in the private sector in Croatia, along with the one for construction, hospitality and tourism. The collective agreement for the wood and paper industry is the result of an initiative of the Union of Independent Trade Unions of Croatia (SSSH) and its affiliates to launch collective negotiations in further sectors such as the food industry, metal industry and agriculture. The agreement for the wood and paper industry defines, among other things, seven pay categories, depending on the complexity of the work, as well as a minimum of 27 days for annual leave. The agreement entered into force on 1 January 2024.

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

Union calls for right to negotiate

2 December 2023

Trade union SDLSN is calling on the government to change the rules on representativeness for civil service pay negotiations. The union is involved in various working groups that are discussing the new pay structure for the public sector but it is concerned that the current rules on representativeness exclude SDLSN, and other trade unions, from formal negotiations. It argues that only the police trade union meets the

representativeness criterion for the main negotiations leaving many areas of the civil service without proper trade union representation as the SDLSN and other unions fall below the threshold.

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Cyprus

Post office workers on strike

11 December 2023

Around 300 postal delivery officers, members of the Isotita union, have decided to strike. According to the union, their demands primarily concern wage increases for overtime hours. The gradual increase in overtime hours led to professional disempowerment and job insecurity among post office workers. Members of the union have collectively agreed to abstain from overtime work from January 2024.

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Czechia

Minimum wage increase by 9%

14 December 2023

The Government approved a 9.2% increase in the minimum wage, signaling positive economic prospects for workers. The approved increase will raise the monthly minimum wage from the current CZK 17,300 (€ 701) to CZK 18,900 (€ 766). On an hourly basis, the minimum wage will rise from CZK 103.8 (€ 4.21) to CZK 112.5 (€ 4.56).

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Gross wage up by 7.1% compared to 2022

4 December 2023

In the third quarter of 2023, the average gross monthly nominal wage per full-time equivalent (FTE) employee was CZK 42,658 (€ 1,724), an increase by 7.1% compared to the corresponding period of the previous year, according to the Czech Statistical Office (CZSO). In real terms, it decreased by 0.8%. The median wage was CZK 37,492 (€ 1,515). Compared to the previous quarter, the seasonally adjusted average wage increased by 1.5% in the Q3 2023.

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Denmark

One in three part-time healthcare workers prepared to work more hours

29 December 2023

A new survey by the trade union FOA provides some insight into how increasing the number of part-time workers who work additional hours could help alleviate the major staff shortages currently affecting care for the elderly. The survey found that 36% of part-time employees in elderly care would be prepared to work additional hours with a higher salary and that 14% just want more hours but are not given the opportunity to do so at their workplace. However, job satisfaction is also key along with the potential to develop professional skills.

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

Agreement delivers boost for public sector pay

4 December 2023

Public sector unions DSR, FOA and HK have welcomed the outcome of negotiations with the employers and government which have delivered a package of pay-related measures. A number of different groups of workers across the public sector will benefit, particularly those affected by major staff shortages. The package will have a wider impact than anticipated, in addition to the higher pay for occupations like nurses and care workers, social educators and prison staff.

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Estonia

Minimum wage increase hikes benefits

22 December 2023

The national gross minimum wage is set to increase by € 95 to € 820 a month in 2024, bumping up with it both some benefits as well as some local governments' monthly kindergarten fees. Minimum maternity, paternity, adoptive parent and parental benefits are all to increase by €95 in 2024 – from €725 to €820 a month. Unemployment benefits will likewise rise along with the minimum wage from the new year, with the monthly maximum benefit to go up from € 327.05 to € 362.50.

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Disagreement on who can strike

18 December 2023

The national conciliator and the Estonian Educational Personnel Union (EHL) do not agree which educators can take part in next month's scheduled strike. The union says all teachers, including those at kindergartens, have the right while the conciliator argues for only general education schools. In a letter to the Ministry of Education and Research, the national conciliator reiterated only schools affected by the minimum salary dispute should be able to participate. This would limit the action. However, the union EHL believes all members of the union have the right to strike.

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Finland

Workers threaten two-day strike at oil refinery

28 December 2023

The Industrial Union said it planned two days of strike action at Neste's Porvoo oil refinery, likely shutting down the plant's production unless the government agrees to change its proposed labour market reforms. Unions have protested in recent months against the right-wing government's plan to favour local work agreements over centralised bargaining, limit strikes and make it easier to terminate work contracts.

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Protests and strikes against reforms

11 December 2023

JHL trade union members have been taking strike action as part of the continuing campaign against the government's plans to weaken welfare provision and employment rights and the right to strike. There is strong opposition in the union to the government proposals and further action has not been ruled out. The range of government measures include restrictions on the right to take political strike action which would, in future, prevent JHL from taking the kind of action it is currently engaged in.

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France

Eiffel Tower staff on strike

27 December 2023

The Eiffel Tower closed to the public because of a strike by its staff. Employees were protesting about the way the tower was being managed. The CGT union said that staff had decided on a strike because the management was "heading for disaster", with an economic model that was "over-ambitious and untenable", under-estimating the annual number of visitors as well as the costs of maintenance and renovation.

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Minimum wage to rise by 1.13%

15 December 2023

The minimum wage, known as the 'Smic', increased by 1.13% on 1 January 2024. As a consequence, the minimum gross hourly wage rose from the current level of € 11.52 to € 11.65. The decision to elevate the Smic has been based on a set of calculations factoring in the inflation rate in November, which touched a one-year high of 3.5%. However, the increase is notably lower than the 1.7% projected by a group of Smic experts.

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

Permit for foreign workers in shortage occupations

22 December 2023

The government passed a new bill on entry of foreign workers in shortage occupations. Prefects – state representatives in a department or region – will be able to grant a one-year temporary residence permit to foreign nationals who have worked for one year in a profession experiencing recruitment difficulties in their geographical area of residence.

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

Unions demand higher pay in public sector

18 December 2023

Public service unions CFDT, CFE-CGC, CGT, FA, FO, FSU, Solidaires and UNSA have issued a joint statement on the need for urgent action to improve pay for civil servants and public sector employees. They note that due to lack of sufficient investment, the policy currently pursued by the government continues to weaken the civil service and the public service missions that it assumes. The unions argue that the five index-point increase for public sector workers implemented this year was already foreseen in 2023 and that no further increase is planned for 2024.

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

Germany

35 hours working week at bank

19 December 2023

The Sparda-Bank Berlin and the trade union ver.di have agreed on a collective agreement. A 35-hour week with full wage compensation is being introduced for employees of the cooperative bank with the largest number of members in East Germany. The reduction in working hours from the current 39 weekly working hours to 35 hours will take place in 2 steps on 1 January 2024 and 1 January 2025. This corresponds to a wage increase of 11.4%. In addition, there will be a one-off payment of € 2,400 net in January 2024. The collective agreement runs until 31 March 2026.

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

Agreement in steel industry

16 December 2023

The trade union IG Metall reached an agreement with the employers for the east German steel industry. In January 2024, employees will receive an inflation compensation bonus of € 1,500 net (trainees € 1,000). A further € 1,500 (trainees € 800) will be paid out in installments until the end of 2024: from February 2024 to November 2024 there are monthly payments of € 150 net (trainees € 80). From 1 January 2025, salaries and trainee compensation will increase by 5.5%. Working hours can be reduced to 32 hours to safeguard jobs in the transformation process, with partial wage compensation. The collective agreement runs until 30 September 2025.

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New agreement for state public sector workers

12 December 2023

On 9 December in the third round of negotiations the unions ver.di, GEW, GdP and IG BAU reached an agreement with the Bargaining Association of German States. Warning strikes, demonstrations and other actions have been taking place across the country for weeks. Tens of thousands of state employees expressed their dissatisfaction with the difficult working conditions and real wage losses. The new agreement includes, among other things, a one-off inflation compensation payment of € 1,800 on 1 December 2023, as well as inflation compensation monthly payments of € 120 from January 2024 to October 2024. In addition, salaries will increase by a fixed amount of € 200 on 1 November 2024 and there will be a general increase of 5.5% on 1 February 2025. The term of the collective agreement is 25 months, i.e. from 1 October 2023 to 31 October 2025.

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

23% pay increase at airline company

11 December 2023

After long and difficult negotiations, the union ver.di has agreed on a collective agreement with the Ryanair subsidiary Malta Air. In addition to a significant improvement in working conditions, salaries increase by an average of 23.3%. In addition, there is an inflation compensation bonus of between € 1,925 and € 2,475, higher compensation for flight hours by an average of around 26% and an increase in flat rates for uniforms and aviation medical care by 50%.

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

Greece

Taxi drivers plan strikes

4 December 2023

The Federation of Taxis and Merchants has called on unionized taxi drivers to hold a series of strikes across the country. The purpose of the planned work stoppages is to protest against a tax bill. The Attica Taxi Drivers' Union (SATA) has also announced that affiliated taxi drivers in Athens will strike. The group may stage an additional labour action from 7 December. Taxi drivers in other locations across the country may take industrial action, as well.

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Hungary

Gross earnings up 14% compared to 2022

21 December 2023

According to the Central Statistical Office, in October full-time employees' average gross earnings were HUF 564,400 (€ 1,470) - 14.0% higher than a year earlier. Regular average gross earnings (without premiums and one-month bonuses) were estimated at HUF 540,200 (€ 1,407), being 14.5% higher than a year earlier. Average net earnings reached HUF 375,300 (€ 977), excluding tax benefits and HUF 389,300 (€ 1,014), including them, both of which being 14.0% higher than in October 2022. Real earnings were up by 3.7%, along with a 9.9% increase in consumer prices compared to the same period of the previous year.

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Iceland

Strike action of air traffic controllers

18 December 2023

Icelandic air traffic controllers conducted strike action because of their discontent with wage issues following the expiration of their collective agreement on 1 October. The strike was held on 12, 14 and 17 December at Keflavík and Reykjavík airports. Negotiations between the Air Traffic Controllers Association, the Icelandic Business Confederation, and airport operator Isavia have reached an impasse, leading to this strike action. The Air Traffic Controllers Association emphasises that the strike aims to prompt renewed negotiations, highlighting their discontent with the direction of the current discussions.

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

Ireland

Gender pay gap of 11.29% at public service media

22 December 2023

According to new data, the gender pay gap at RTÉ, the National Public Service Media, has narrowed slightly compared to last year. The figures, which measure the difference between what men and women earn, show that the mean gender pay gap at RTÉ for 2023 stands at 11.29%, down from the previous year's figure of 11.55%. The median gender pay gap decreased from 13.03% in 2022 to 12.75% in 2023. When considering employees in grades without overtime, the mean gender pay gap saw a reduction from 10% in 2022 to 9.82% in 2023. Companies with 250 or more employees are required to publish their latest gender pay gap reports in the month of December.

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Public service unions plan industrial action

20 December 2023

Trade union Forsa reports that the breakdown of public sector negotiations in December, has led to public service unions planning possible ballots on industrial action. The trade unions that make up the Public Services Committee of the Congress of Trade Unions are set to meet on 11 January to decide whether to ballot if there is no progress on negotiations with the government. Negotiations mainly on issues other than pay began at the end of November with 11 meetings taking place in December but without conclusion and without moving on to pay bargaining.

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Italy

New collective agreement for senior public sector staff

11 December 2023

Three trade unions, FP-CGIL, CISL-FP and UIL-FPL have signed a collective agreement with the ARAN agency for public sector employers that covers over 13,000 managers and senior staff in local and health authorities. The agreement is the last in the public sector covering the 2019-2021 period and means the unions can now focus on the next round of bargaining. There are three main pay grades covered by the agreement and along with a basic increase of € 135 a month there will be additional increases related to each occupational group ranging from € 104 to € 174. The unions are positive about the deal including its provisions on industrial relations and the broadening of matters subject to information and bargaining.

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Health professionals staged nationwide strike

6 December 2023

Health professionals staged a 24-hour nationwide strike over the government's proposal to cut pensions and other measures affecting healthcare. Some 85% of medical staff abstained from work and consequently up to 1.5 million medical appointments may have been missed as a result, say trade unions. "We are talking about a cut in the pension allowance of at least 50,000 people, amounting to up to € 26,347 per year for life," the unions said.

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Trade unions agree on four-day week at car manufacturer

5 December 2023

Car manufacturer Lamborghini has reached a deal with unions to introduce a four-day week for its production workers, as more manufacturing groups re-consider the structure of the working week for their employees. The trade unions Fiom and Fim-Cisl said the agreement is "historical" as it is the first in the automotive industry in Europe to achieve a significant reduction in working hours without cutting wages, but rather increasing them. "Work less and work better, this is the principle that guided this negotiation, and which is part of a comprehensive reasoning," according to a statement from Fiom and Fim-Cisl.

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Latvia

Gross earnings up 11.8% compared to 2022

1 December 2023

Central Statistical Bureau (CSB) data show that in the third quarter of 2023 gross average wages and salaries for full-time work amounted to € 1,549, according to working-day and seasonally non-adjusted data. Compared to the third quarter of 2022, the average monthly earnings increased by € 164 or 11.8%. Hourly earnings before taxes went up to € 10.45 or by 14.9%. Compared to the second quarter of 2023, the gross average earnings increased by 1.5% and hourly earnings reduced slightly by 0.3%.

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Liechtenstein

Wages keep up with inflation

13 December 2023

This year's wage negotiations between union LANV and the various trade sections of the Chamber of Commerce have been completed. Inflation has been below 2% for six months. In November, it fell to its lowest level of the year at 1.4%. The results of the 17 wage negotiations include the following aspects: working hours in 10 different industries were reduced by half an hour to an hour per week to promote a better work-life balance. Conversely, this means wage increases of 1.2-2.3% for the affected employees.

There are also wage increases of up to 2.5% as well as various increases in minimum wages and vacation entitlement. Wages will rise in all sectors in 2024 by an average of 2.4%. Wage growth is therefore above inflation.

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Lithuania

Real wages increase by 7%

7 December 2023

The social insurance fund Sodra, has announced that the average salary of employed persons in the third quarter of the year has reached € 1,989 before the deduction of taxes, or € 1,235 net. Considering inflation which hovered in single digits in the second half-year, the real growth of labour income was about 7% in the quarter, up by 12% from a year ago. The total workforce was 1.35 million employees in the third quarter, and the numbers continued to decrease only in two sectors – trade and processing industry.

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Luxembourg

Workers and pensioners see higher incomes

28 December 2023

Workers and pensioners are set to see their incomes increase from 1 January, amid changes to tax brackets and pension payments. The monthly pension will rise by 1.1%, a change already reflected in the January payments made in December. There will be an additional increase in salaries for state employees, thanks to an agreement signed by the previous government and the union CGFP at the end of last year. Under the agreement, wages will go up by 1.95% for all state workers, and replaces a temporary points-based system, depending on grade and role, which was in place this year.

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Malta

Trade union welcomes change in law on temp work

5 December 2023

The General Workers Union GWU welcomed a legal change in the laws for temporary employment and recruitment agencies, being debated in the House of Representatives. The GWU had long been insisting on such requirements for contractors that outsource employees to businesses, and therefore welcomed the new legislation, which the union expects to reduce the abuse of migrant workers. The proposed law will grant just one licence for each recruiter of workers for employment in Malta or abroad, or to act as a temporary work or outsourcing agency.

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Netherlands

Negotiation result for public transport workers

19 December 2023

After intense negotiations the union FNV reached an agreement with the Rotterdam public transport company RET. The new collective agreement comes into effect on 1 January 2024 and runs until 30 June 2025. From 1 February 2024, wages will increase by 3.5% with an additional increase in all salary groups of € 200. This wage increase will be no less than € 335. From 1 March 2024, the minimum hourly wage will be € 16. From 1 February 2025, wages will increase by another 3%. In January 2024, employees will receive a one-off payment of € 1,500.

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7.5% pay raise for insurance company staff

11 December 2023

After the trade union FNV first rejected the salary offer of insurance company Achmea of 5% with a minimum increase of € 300 and 4% in the second year, an agreement was reached on 7 December. Salaries in the lower pay groups will rise by 7% with a minimum of € 300 and salaries in the higher pay group by 6%. There will also be a one-off payment of € 2,000 no later than 28 February, 2024. On average, Achmea employees get a pay raise of 7.5%.

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

Energy workers get 10% more

8 December 2023

Trade union FNV has negotiated a new agreement in the energy network sector covering around 17,500 employees which will deliver a pay increase of at least 10% over the next 18 months and a minimum wage of € 16 an hour. As of 1 January 2024, employees will receive a wage increase of at least 7% but with a minimum of € 275 for workers on the lower wage scales. There will be a further increase of 3% next year. Other benefits include six weeks of parental leave on full pay and improvements to early retirement and the social plan on restructuring. In addition, employers will pay a one-off allowance of €120 to both existing and new members of the union.

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

Higher pay for water companies

5 December 2023

Employees of drinking water companies will receive an average wage increase of almost 7%. This is the outcome of collective negotiations between trade unions FNV and CNV and the employers. This proposal will be submitted to the members of the trade unions. The collective agreement also includes a minimum wage of € 16 per hour. The new agreement will come into effect on 1 January 2024, and has a term of 18 months. As of 1 January 2024, all employees of drinking water companies will receive an additional € 50 gross (for full-time employment). This will be followed by an increase of 4.25%. There will be an additional increase of 2.5% from next year.

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Highest pay rise in 40 years

4 December 2023

In the third quarter of 2023, collectively agreed wages per hour (including special payments) rose by 6.2%, which is the highest increase in four decades. Contractual wage costs (i.e., gross wages plus employer contributions) went up by 6.0% in the third quarter. The public sector saw the largest increase in contractual wages, namely 7.6%. Wages at private enterprises and subsidised institutions rose by 6.1% and 5.3%, respectively. The strong increase in collectively agreed wages was a response to the high inflation in 2022.

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Norway

New framework agreement in municipalities

15 December 2023

Trade unions in local government have negotiated a new framework agreement which updates the rules and processes regulating the relations between local government, unions and employers. The agreement covers continuing discussions about the need to develop the rights of employee representatives and the framework conditions in which they operate, a review of the main agreement to identify provisions that may be out of date or no longer relevant, consideration of how the provisions are applied in practice and to assess the need for amendments.

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Poland

Wage growth 11.8% year-on-year

29 December 2023

New labour market data show both strong wage growth and employment deteriorating very slowly. Wage growth in November came at 11.8% year-on-year. This result was slightly weaker than in October (12.8% year-on-year) due to, among other factors, the lack of significant bonus payments. Wage growth in the corporate sector should remain in double-digits in 2024. As inflation stabilises, fairly high real wage growth is set to be one of the main drivers of consumption and economic growth next year.

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Portugal

Series of actions for better pay in local government

11 December 2023

Members of the STAL trade union were mobilising for a series of actions to push for improved pay and conditions in several branches of local government. There is a long-running strike related to special payments for workers in municipal swimming pools. Public transport workers are demanding decent facilities for drivers and are on strike. There are also various actions by municipal workers.

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Union finalises agreement for health technicians

1 December 2023

Public sector union SINTAP and the government signed an agreement on the changes to the Integrated System for Management and Performance Assessment in Public Administration (SIADAP) and the valorization of the general career of senior technician and the special careers of senior technician specializing in budget and public finances and senior technician specializing in statistics at INE, IP. SINTAP has welcomed the creation of the new occupational category of auxiliary health technician. Around 24,000 workers who are currently classified as operational assistants and supervisors will transfer to the new category and will move up the pay structure and should benefit from an increase of around € 100 a month. This has been a longstanding demand of SINTAP.

Rad on: [in Portuguese...](#)

Romania

Health union declares labour conflict

14 December 2023

Trade union Sanitas has declared a labour conflict following longstanding problems in ensuring full implementation of the law on salaries that applies to health and social care staff. For over two years the government has blocked full implementation of the law and the proper calculation of salaries. Bonuses are stuck at levels dating back to 2018 and overtime is unpaid. A holiday allowance has not been granted and the food allowance is also linked to 2018 pay levels rather than current salaries.

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Real wages bounce back

14 December 2023

In October 2023, the net wages were, on average, 17% higher nominally and 8.3% larger in real terms compared to a year earlier. The net wages adjusted for inflation (real terms), have bounced back quickly from the fall caused by the inflationary shock during 2022, helped by the wage hikes in the budgetary sector (such as education) but mainly as employers accepted gradually to compensate for the sharp rise in consumer prices.

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Pay rise for teachers

8 December 2023

Under an emergency ordinance drafted by the Finance Ministry the school teachers' wages will increase by 13% as of January 2024 and by another 7% in August 2024, resulting in an overall increase of 20%. Other wages in the public sector will increase by 5% in January, while a series of bonuses and benefits (such as holiday vouchers) will be suspended during 2024.

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Serbia

Wages increase by 15%

25 December 2023

According to the Statistical Office, average gross salaries and wages calculated for October 2023 amounted to 119,791 RSD (€ 1,022), while average net salaries and wages amounted to 86,738 RSD (€ 740). The increase of gross and net salaries and wages in the period January–October 2023, relative to the same period last year amounted to 15.0% in nominal terms and 1.4% in real terms. Compared with the same month last year, average gross and net salaries and wages for October 2023 increased by 15.1% in nominal terms, and 6.1% in real terms.

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Slovakia

Wage increase exceeds inflation

13 December 2023

In October 2023, according to the first data of the Statistical Office, wages increased faster than inflation in all 10 sectors monitored monthly resulting in real wage growth. This was recorded for the first time since August 2021. The average nominal monthly wage increased year-on-year in all 10 sectors, the most, by 17.6%, in food and beverage services to € 721. The wages of employees also grew at a double-digit in industry to € 1,477, in wholesale to € 1,441, in retail trade to € 1,088 and in accommodation to € 1,093. In October 2023, the real wages of employees also rose more than a year ago, i.e. the wage growth in all sectors exceeded the inflation.

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Slovenia

Protest by public sector unions

7 December 2023

Public sector trade unions organised a national rally to push for government action on a range of key pay and employment conditions issues. The unions want the government to commit to implement the wage indexation in 2024 and completion of the reform of the public sector wage system by 30 June 2026. They are also calling for the elimination of wage discrepancies across different parts of the public sector which should ensure that large parts of the public sector get the level of wage increases already agreed for some groups of workers. The reform should also ensure that no basic wages fall below the national minimum wage.

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Spain

Telecom group plans layoffs

21 December 2023

According to the trade union UGT, telecoms group Telefonica will lay off more than 3,400 people by 2025 to reduce costs and adapt the company's size to the current market. The layoffs will mostly occur in late February 2024. Trade unions said earlier that the firm was seeking to cut around 5,000 jobs, but after weeks of negotiations, the number has been reduced. Unions are also negotiating a collective agreement to improve working conditions.

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Breastfeeding leave for 28 days

21 December 2023

The Council of Ministers approved a draft reform of breastfeeding leave. All workers (women as well as men) will now be able to accumulate breastfeeding hours and benefit from paid leave of up to 28 consecutive days.

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Three days strike at online retailer

18 December 2023

Workers at a logistics centre of online retailer Amazon in northern Spain are planning a three-day strike ahead on January 6. Around 160 workers at the Trapagaran centre plan to strike to demand higher wages, LAB union informs.

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New collective agreement in veterinary services

11 December 2023

Trade unions UGT-SP and FSS-CCOO have negotiated a new agreement with the CEVE employers' organisation covering 35,000 workers in veterinary services. Wages will increase by 11% over three years with annual increases of 4.5%, in 2023, 3.5% in 2024 and 3% in 2025. The agreement also includes a salary review clause linked to inflation and increases to mileage allowances and extra payments covering night work as well as holiday allowances. There are also measures to improve work-life balance and career progression.

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Sweden

23% of employees in private sector lack collective agreement

12 December 2023

In the report 'Coverage of collective agreements and white spots' Professor Anders Kjellberg from Lund University has investigated how many people are covered by collective agreements in various industries. According to his report, approximately 23% of all employees in privately owned companies work without a collective agreement. But the degree of coverage differs greatly between different industries. For white-collar workers, the percentage is lowest in companies dealing with game development, tech in the financial industry, IT, media, advertising and PR, as well as law firms and audit firms.

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Metal union takes action at electric car manufacturer

4 December 2023

Trade union IF Metall has been taking strike action to put pressure on Tesla, the electric car manufacturer, to sign a collective agreement. Although the direct dispute involves a small number of members, the union is determined to prevent Tesla from undermining the strong system of collective bargaining not only in the metal sector but across the whole economy. Many unions in other sectors have taken solidarity action and public service trade unions are showing their support and urging their members to get involved in the campaign.

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Switzerland

Strike at airport ends after agreement

24 December 2023

Unionized ground staff affiliated with Dubai National Air Travel Agency (Dnata) went on strike at Geneva Airport (GVA) over working conditions and wage issues. Negotiations between the union and management finally led to an agreement. The staff obtained a collective agreement which had been lacking since 2017 and a bonus for arduous work. The agreement also provides for a 3% increase in wages while the strikers asked for 5%. Salaries have also been uncapped. Finally, management has planned a one-time bonus of 500 francs (€ 538) for each employee, depending on the work rate.

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Turkey

Minimum wage rises by 49%

28 December 2023

The minimum wage will rise by 49% in 2024. The monthly net minimum salary will be set at TL 17,002 (€ 518) as part of a single adjustment, the Labour Minister announced. This decision, finalized by the Minimum Wage Determination Commission after several days of discussion, marks a cumulative 100% increase from the previous year. The commission, comprising representatives from the government, trade unions, and employers' associations, operates on a simple majority vote for decision-making.

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United Kingdom

Junior doctors on strike

22 December 2023

Junior doctors have returned to work after a three-day strike, with the next spell of industrial action announced in two weeks time. Junior doctors are demanding a 35% pay rise to make up for the 26.2% fall in the value of their pay since 2008. They were offered a 3% rise on top of the average 8.8% increase they were given in the summer..

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Unions determined to fight attack on right to strike

6 December 2023

Trade union confederation TUC organised a congress to discuss its strategy to fight the government's attack on the right to strike. The TUC says that one in five workers – 5.5 million people – the vast majority in public services, are at risk of losing their right to strike as a result of the Strikes Act. Some public service employers have said the law will poison industrial relations and drag out disputes.

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For more information, please contact Paul de Beer or Oana Ciuca, De Burcht (Scientific Bureau for the Dutch Trade Union Movement) p.t.debeer@uva.nl or the Head of communications at the ETUI, Mehmet Koksall mkoksall@etui.org. For previous full issues of the *Collective bargaining newsletter* please visit <https://www.etui.org/Newsletters/Collective-bargaining-newsletter> or consult the archive with all articles in our database at www.cbnarchive.eu.

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