

collective bargaining

Issue 10/2009 November

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



AMSTERDAM INSTITUTE FOR ADVANCED LABOUR STUDIES
UNIVERSITEIT VAN AMSTERDAM



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Austria

No progress after four rounds of public sector negotiations

November 30, 2009

Four rounds of negotiations over the 2010 pay increase for public sector workers did not produce results. The GDG and GÖD public sector unions have rejected the employers' latest offer of a 0.5% pay increase. The unions have written a joint letter to the chancellor (prime minister) arguing that they should immediately get involved in the negotiations as the current negotiators do not have a full mandate. At the moment the employers are even refusing to offer a rise in line with inflation (0.9%), a position which the unions call unacceptable.

English: <http://www.epsu.org/cob/330>;

German: <http://www.gdg.at/servlet/ContentServer?pagename=C01/Page/Index&n ...>;

<http://www.goed.at/files/877/Information-4.Gehaltsrunde-hp.pdf>

Unions call for real pay increase health and social workers

November 16, 2009

Negotiations are underway between the GPA-DJP and vida trade unions and the BAGS employers' organization over a new agreement covering 75,000 workers in private health and social care services. The unions argue that it is vital to maintain increases in earnings for this group of workers particularly as the majority are women and their aim is to obtain a minimum amount of increase in Euros as well as an overall percentage rise. Vida is also in the middle of negotiations covering the 15,000 employees in private health institutions. The union is again looking for a real increase in pay along with proper compensation for changes to working hours as the employers have been demanding greater flexibility from workers without compensating them properly for changes to their rosters.

English: <http://www.epsu.org/cob/328>

German: <http://www.gpa-djp.at/servlet/ContentServer?pagename=GPA/Page/ ...>

Successful conclusion of bargaining round in metalworking

November 20, 2009

After five intensive negotiation rounds, the joint union negotiating team of the GMTN and GPA-DJP unions succeeded in signing a new collective agreement covering about 170,000 employees in the sector. The main point of controversy was the employers' demand for far-reaching unpaid extension of working time flexibility in exchange for pay increases. The unions estimated this demand to result in individual income losses up to Euro 3,500 per year. Under pressure of many works council actions, the employers agreed to

separate the discussion on changes in working time flexibility from the current bargaining round. Finally, main results were a 1.5% increase in collectively agreed minimum wages/salaries, with the new minimum at Euro 1,479, and a 1.45% increase in effectively paid wages/salaries. The start of the agreement is backdated 1 November 2009.

English: message EUCOBAN network European Metalworkers' Federation (EMF)

Belgium

Call centre campaign against long hours

November 5, 2009

Belgium's call centre unions, including CNE and SECTa, promoted their "Needs more hands?" campaign call centre action month. The campaign focuses on key issues for workers in the industry such as long and unsociable working hours which are incompatible with family and personal life. The unions are calling for a change to rostering systems which currently do not provide enough time and flexibility for workers to plan their private commitments.

English: [http://www.uniglobalunion.org/Apps/UNINews.nsf/vwLkpById/4B871F9F143 ...](http://www.uniglobalunion.org/Apps/UNINews.nsf/vwLkpById/4B871F9F143...);

French: <http://www.cne218call-center.blogspot.com/>

Finland

Chemical workers' pay rise exceeds employers' limit

November 26, 2009

On 24 November, negotiators from the chemical industry trade unions and employer federations agreed on new collective agreements. In 2010, wages and salaries will be raised by slightly more than the 0.5% limit the employer confederation EK has tried to force into agreements in all industries where collective bargaining is under way. Chemical workers' pay will go up in May 2010 by 0.6% at national level and by 0.3% at local level, and in June increases for the salaried employees will be 0.5% at national level and 0.4% at local level. In between, the boards of the Chemical Workers' Union and the Union of Salaried Employees TU have approved the outcome of the negotiations. The agreements expire on 31 January 2013. Negotiations on the second and third years' pay rises will take place later. The agreements cover 20,000 blue collar workers and 10,000 salaried employees.

English: <http://www.artto.kaapeli.fi/unions/T2009/m42>

via http://www.labourstart.org/cgi-bin/show_news.pl?country=Finland

Pilots' strike ended after mediation

November 27, 2009

On 25 November, a two days' strike of Finnair pilots, shutting down nearly all scheduled flights, ended as the Finnish Airline Pilots' Association (SLL) and Finnair accepted a mediation proposal by National Conciliator Esa Lonka. The conflict hinged on Finnair's plans to outsource services. SLL says that the contract that was accepted permits a certain degree of outsourcing - allowing Finnair to lease two jets to Finncomm, on the condition that the planes and their crews do not fly Finnair flights. The agreement means that only Finnair pilots can fly Finnair flights, though it also implies that the actual number of Finnair flights will decrease (See also this *Collective Bargaining Newsletter* Year 2 October 2009).

English: <http://www.hs.fi/english/article/Pilots+end+strike+-+Finnair+flight+schedules+getting+back+to+normal+/1135250850311>

via http://www.labourstart.org/cgi-bin/show_news.pl?country=Finland

France

Unions disagree over EDF pay offer

November 30, 2009

The CGT, FO and CFTC unions have refused to sign a new pay agreement with EDF, although the agreement is being implemented following the decision by the CFDT and CFE-CGC unions to sign. The deal involves a 1.2% general increase from January 2010, based on the predicted level of inflation next year. There is also 0.7% for individual increases, 0.3% related to changes to the pension system and 0.6% linked to seniority

increases in the pay scale. During energy sector campaigning and strike action earlier this year unions had been looking for a 5% increase to compensate for a loss in purchasing power in recent years.

English: <http://www.epsu.org/cob/330>;

French: <http://www.fnme-cgt.fr/pages/communiqu.php?id=45> ;

<http://www.fnem-fo.org/content/view/667/1/>

Plastic workers' day of action for wage increase

November 23, 2009

On 19 November, the Federation of Chemical and Energy Workers (FCE-CFDT) Union conducted a day of action against the country's plastics manufacturers over a long simmering wage dispute. Some 150,000 workers in plastics, employed by 3,700 big and small plastics companies, have not seen any wage increase since 2006. Early in 2008, the employers' federation abrogated a 2004 collective agreement which automatically gave wage increases that at least matched inflation. In the over three years since the last pay hike, three pay grids in French plastics have fallen below the national minimum wage (SMIC) levels. Despite ongoing negotiations since May 2008, the employers' grouping and the unions have been unable to reach acceptable wage standards, or a threshold on maximum seniority pay.

English: [http://www.icem.org/en/78-ICEM-InBrief/3501-French-Plastics-Workers ...](http://www.icem.org/en/78-ICEM-InBrief/3501-French-Plastics-Workers...)

Thousands of postal workers and teachers on strike

November 24, 2009

On 24 November, thousands of French postal workers and teachers went on strike in separate protests over the future of two of France's biggest public sector institutions. The protests are the latest in a series of strikes by public sector workers angered by reforms President Nicolas Sarkozy says are necessary to improve efficiency and reduce costs. According to the SNES-FSU union, 40% of secondary school teachers took part in the strike over job reductions and school reforms. Teachers' unions are angry at measures which include new training standards, changing the selection process to make it easier for parents to choose a school and steadily reducing the number of teachers. Education Minister Luc Chatel said the government would not back down on plans that aim to trim the overall public service payroll by replacing only half the public servants who retire.

English: <http://af.reuters.com/article/worldNews/idAFTRE5AN35H20091124>

via http://www.labourstart.org/cgi-bin/show_news.pl?country=France

Germany

Ver.di and Zara jointly promote global agreement

November 24, 2009

The global agreement reached between the UNI Global Union and the Inditex clothing conglomerate (with employees in over 50 countries) has been presented at a national conference in Germany of works council members and shop stewards on 16 November, by representatives of UNI affiliate ver.di and Zara Germany management. Both parties will also jointly inform all employees of the provisions and principles in the agreement. Ver.di and Zara Germany have agreed to increase their efforts in order to successfully negotiate a collective agreement for all staff. Ver.di has seen its membership among Zara workers continuously growing, and actually most of the stores have elected works councils.

English: [http://www.uniglobalunion.org/Apps/UNINews.nsf/vwLkpById/442900EE37C6F ...](http://www.uniglobalunion.org/Apps/UNINews.nsf/vwLkpById/442900EE37C6F...)

Ver.di calls on government to honour commitment to minimum wage

November 30, 2009

The ver.di services union has called on Chancellor Merkel to honour a commitment made by the previous Grand Coalition government to introduce a minimum wage in the waste sector. Following elections the new centre-right coalition now looks less like to endorse this sectoral minimum wage. Ver.di says that many workers in the waste industry face poverty wages of Euro 4 - 6 an hour, whereas the initial target for the minimum wage in the sector would guarantee them Euro 8.02 an hour.

English: <http://www.epsu.org/cob/330>;

German: [http://presse.verdi.de/pressemitteilungen/showNews?id=558e76a2-dd84 ...](http://presse.verdi.de/pressemitteilungen/showNews?id=558e76a2-dd84...)

Official short-time arrangement extended

November 25, 2009

On 25 November, the new German administration approved a 12-month extension of the official short-time ("Kurzarbeit") arrangement. The latest data from September showed that around one million workers were covered by the short-time scheme. The scheme had been due to expire on 31 December 2009, and is now set to be extended by a year, although for employers applying in 2010 the state will only pay out for a period of 18 months instead of 24 months (See also this *Collective Bargaining Newsletter* Year 2 January and May 2009).

English: <http://www.thelocal.de/money/20091125-23521.html>

Repeated strike actions secure pay increase

November 30, 2009

Church employers, providing mainly health and social services, have finally conceded the first increase to pay rates since 2004 following several actions by members of ver.di in October 2008, May 2009 and again in September 2009. There are three elements to the pay increases. There is a flat-rate rise that benefits the lowest paid workers in particular, following the example of the public sector agreement negotiated in 2008. Then there are two percentage increases of 4% (backdated to 1 June 2009) and 1.5% in March 2010 (or from December 2009 for hospital workers covered by the agreement).

English: <http://www.epsu.org/cob/330>;

German: [https://gesundheit-soziales.verdi.de/kirchen_diakonie_caritas/diakonie_tarif ...](https://gesundheit-soziales.verdi.de/kirchen_diakonie_caritas/diakonie_tarif...)

Hungary

Government concludes railway agreement with smaller unions

November 23, 2009

After a long period of industrial unrest, including a nationwide railway strike in October called for by all five unions involved, on 23 November the government on behalf of the MAV Hungarian Railway Company concluded an agreement with four small railway unions on plans to cut funding and carry on restructuring. Yet, the largest railway union, VDSZSZ, did not sign the agreement (See also this *Collective Bargaining Newsletter* Year 2 October 2009).

English: <http://www.bbj.hu/?keyword=M%C3%81V>

Ireland

Public sector unions plan further action after national strike

November 30, 2009

On 26 November, the chairman of the 24/7 Frontline Services Alliance --consisting of Association of Garda Sergeants and Inspectors, Garda Representative Association, Irish Nurses Organisation, Prison Officers Association, Psychiatric Nurses Association and SIPTU--, Des Kavanagh, welcomed the resumption of talks between the Public Services Committee of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU) and the government over how to address the current economic crisis in a fair and equitable way. "We hope that further industrial action can be avoided but we will be carefully monitoring the talks to ensure that any proposals emerging from them take into account the special conditions in which frontline emergency workers operate", he said. The chairman of the ICTU Public Services Committee, Peter McLoone, went on record on 10 November stating that ICTU intended to protect all pay in the talks. This means that allowances, overtime and other premium payments will have to be taken into account. On Tuesday 24 November, about 250,000 Irish government employees staged the biggest strike in the country in at least three decades, protesting against plans to cut pay to contain the budget deficit. Nurses, teachers and tax officials were among those taking part in the 24-hour nationwide stoppage. Public sector unions have called on the government to negotiate or face another national strike on 3 December.

English: <http://www.siptu.ie/PressRoom/NewsReleases/2009/Name,11290,en.html>;
<http://www.epsu.org/cob/330>

Employers' association withdraws from national pay agreement

November 26, 2009

IBEC (Irish Business and Employers Confederation) has formally withdrawn from the terms of the current national pay agreement, and warned that it will withdraw from social partnership entirely unless agreement with trade unions can be reached soon. The employers' association reiterated that there should be no pay rises before 2011 and said it would take unilateral action if no agreement was reached with the Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU) between now and mid-December.

English: <http://www.ibec.ie/IBEC/IBEC.nsf/vPages/Home?OpenDocument>;
<http://www.irishtimes.com/newspaper/ireland/2009/1126/1224259485711.html>

Italy

Draft national collective agreement for metal workers concluded

November 4, 2009

On 15 October a draft national collective agreement for metal workers 2010-2012 was achieved, signed by the FIM and UILM union federations and the FEDERMECCANICA employers' association. The General Council of FIM and a joint national assembly of FIM and UILM have already approved the draft that, finally, will be voted in a referendum of all union members from 25 to 27 November 2009. The agreement provides for an income support solidarity fund for workers suffering from income reductions over longer period of time, to be set up with the employers' organisation and to which workers can voluntarily subscribe. Minimum wages per level will raise by Euro 68.75 till Euro 144 over the contract period, starting with Euro 17.50 – 36.75 per 1 January 2010.

English: message EUCOBAN network European Metalworkers' Federation (EMF)

Public sector unions plan national protest

November 30, 2009

The three main public sector union federations are all planning to protest against government policy on funding public sector pay. On 2 December the CISL FP and UIL FPL federations have called for a day of action demanding that the government honours agreements negotiated for the 2008-2009 period and ensures that funding will be available for the next bargaining round, covering 2010-2012. The FP CGIL federation has called a national public sector strike on 11 December with a specific demand of an increase of Euro 150 monthly over 2010-2012. The union has several other key demands including protection for women's and casual workers jobs.

English: <http://www.epsu.org/cob/330>;
Italian: <http://www.fpcgil.it/flex/cm/pages/ServeBLOB.php/L/IT/IDPagina/12315>;
<http://www.fp.cisl.it/>

Netherlands

Demonstrations against government pension plans

November 30, 2009

On Saturday 21 November thousands of people joined union-organised demonstrations in four cities throughout the country, Rotterdam, Assen, Deventer and Eindhoven, against the government's proposals to increase the state pension age from 65 to 67. A survey commissioned by the FNV union confederation found three quarters of Dutch citizens are opposed to the increase and want the unions to campaign to stop the plans (See also this *Collective Bargaining Newsletter* Year 2 October 2009).

English: <http://www.epsu.org/cob/330>
Dutch: [http://www.abvakabofnv.nl/cao/bericht/duizenden_mensen_op_de_been ...](http://www.abvakabofnv.nl/cao/bericht/duizenden_mensen_op_de_been...)

Workers agree with agreement in disabled care sector

November 16, 2009

Over 90% of the voting membership of the union involved, ABVAKABO FNV, agreed with the result of union negotiators in the disabled care sector. According to the new collective agreement, employees in this sector will see their salaries increase by 1.5% in December 2009 and will by then receive a lump sum worth 1.25% of their annual salary. This is part of the new collective agreement that runs from 1 January 2009 to 1 March

2011. There will also be a 1% pay increase from 1 July 2010. The year-end bonus is increased by 0.5% in 2009 and by 0.65% on 2010, taking it to 5.75%.

English: <http://www.epsu.org/cob/328>;

Dutch: [http://www.abvakabofnv.nl/cao/bericht/leden_abvakbo_fnv_akkoord_met_cao ...](http://www.abvakabofnv.nl/cao/bericht/leden_abvakbo_fnv_akkoord_met_cao...)

Innovative draft agreement in metal and engineering

November 19, 2009

An innovative draft collective agreement has been concluded in the metal and engineering sector, covering about 400,000 workers and 35,000 employers, and running from 1 December 2009 to 31 March 2011. The wage increase for 2010 will have the character of temporary working days or “anti crisis days” (ACDs), awarded to a maximum of 3.5 days. Latest 1 October 2010, employers can change these days into a payment of 1.5%. On 1 February 2011, the actual wage scales will be lifted by 1.5%. In October 2010, the unions and the employers’ association will decide whether the ACD arrangement will be continued in 2011. If so, the wage increase as of 1 February 2011 will not be materialized.

English: message EUCOBAN network European Metalworkers’ Federation (EMF)

Dutch: http://www.fnvbondgenoten.nl/metaal/weblog_jan_berghuis

Poland

Unions campaign for Fair Play, Fair Games

November 26, 2009

The two building workers’ unions in Poland, Solidarnosc and OPZZ Budowlani, and the Building and Wood Workers International (BWI) with support of the Warsaw Office of the Friedrich Ebert Foundation started on 18-19 November 2009 the “Campaign for Decent Work” at EURO 2012 building sites in Poland. After a successful campaign in South Africa before the World Cup 2010, trade unionists want to use the awareness of the public in connection with the EURO 2012 in Poland and Ukraine, which will be used by both governments as an image campaign for these countries. Yet, there is no collective agreement for the Polish building sector; guaranteed is only the (low) minimum wage of Euro 310 Euro pre-tax per month. Unionists cannot visit building sites if they have no representation in the firm, and a worker can only join if there is a union in the firm. Earlier in November, workers at the construction site of the National Stadium in Warsaw, being built for EURO 2012, are having trouble getting paid. There have already been some strikes and walkouts. Workers are reported to be not even sure who they are working for.

English: <http://www.bwint.org/default.asp?Index=2453&Language=EN&Print=1>;

[http://pracownik.net.pl/workers_at_national_stadium_construction_site_not_paid_work ...](http://pracownik.net.pl/workers_at_national_stadium_construction_site_not_paid_work...)

Romania

Court rules subway strike illegal

November 19, 2009

On Wednesday 18 November the Bucharest Court ruled the strike of the city’s Metrorex subway workers illegal. After learning of the court ruling, subway union leader Ion Radoi announced the protesters will observe the law. He stressed, however, that the conflict remains open, with the negotiations to be resumed, and that in two or three weeks the same situation could be reached if claims are not solved. On 17 November the subway went on strike as a consequence of the refusal of the Metrorex administration to negotiate salaries. Minister of Transport Radu Berceanu argued that the union could only negotiate in January, when the subway budget was established.

English: [http://www.financiarul.ro/2009/11/19/bucharest-court-rules-subway-workers ...](http://www.financiarul.ro/2009/11/19/bucharest-court-rules-subway-workers-...);

[http://www.financiarul.ro/2009/11/18/minister-berceanu-asks-trade-unions-to-wait ...](http://www.financiarul.ro/2009/11/18/minister-berceanu-asks-trade-unions-to-wait...)

Slovenia

Demonstration for higher minimum wage

November 28, 2009

On Saturday 28 November, braving the rain a sea of people filled the main square in capital Ljubljana with two key demands : for lifting the national minimum wage from Euro 430 to Euro 600 per month, and for the

government to withdraw its plans to increase the retirement age. Trade union representatives urged the government to heed the call for solidarity or face an even greater backlash. The government maintains a rise in the minimum wage would endanger the country's competitiveness and result in job cuts. Slovenia has been badly hit by the global financial crisis, with its economy expected to shrink by over 7% in 2009.

English: <http://www.euronews.net/2009/11/28/slovenians-demand-higher-minimum-wage/>;
http://www.sta.si/en/vest.php?s=a&id=1453776

Spain

Unions demonstrate against privatisation plans

November 16, 2009

Around 1,000 firefighters and emergency service workers took to the streets of Santiago de Compostela on 30 October to demonstrate against plans by the Galician government's privatization plans. The three main union federations – CCOO, UGT and CSI – supported the march, warning of the impact of privatization on the quality of services and of an increase in precarious employment conditions.

English: <http://www.epsu.org/cob/328>;

Spanish: <http://www.fsc.ccoo.es/webfsc/menu.do?Actualidad:Federal:Actualidad:67132>

Iberia strikes called off after agreement

November 16, 2009

Unions representing Spanish airline Iberia's cabin crew have called off strikes planned for November and December after reaching a wage agreement with management. The unions already carried out strike actions in October and November. Yet, on Thursday 19 November Iberia management announced it had agreed an average 4% salary increase in 2009 for its nearly 4,000 cabin crew. A week earlier, a merger was proposed between British Airways and Iberia Airlines.

English: [http://www.reuters.com/article/rbssIndustryMaterialsUtilitiesNews/idUSLK ...](http://www.reuters.com/article/rbssIndustryMaterialsUtilitiesNews/idUSLK...)

via http://www.labourstart.org/cgi-bin/show_news.pl?country=Spain

Switzerland

Cleaners win better pay and conditions

November 11, 2009

Earlier this year cleaners working at the federal parliament took strike action to prevent their jobs from being outsourced. Recently, following negotiations, they have won improved pay and conditions. There will be a higher starting rate for cleaners with experience. The VPÖD public sector union believes this is an important recognition of the work done by cleaners. There will also be improved training provision for them and in the future they will be able to carry over some additional hours rather than just losing overtime hours.

English: <http://www.epsu.org/cob/328>;

German: [http://www.vpod.ch/aktuell/nachrichten/ansicht/article/bundeshausputzfrauen ...](http://www.vpod.ch/aktuell/nachrichten/ansicht/article/bundeshausputzfrauen...)

Union concerned about widening gender pay gap

November 30, 2009

The VPÖD public service union has expressed concerns about the latest statistics that show a widening of the gender pay gap among lower paid federal government workers. While there is some evidence of the pay gap narrowing among higher pay workers, the gap at lower levels rose from 6.7% in 2006 to 9.3% in 2008. Figures for local and cantonal (regional) government are not yet available but there past evidence has revealed a wider pay gap here than at federal level.

English: <http://www.epsu.org/cob/330>;

German: [http://www.vpod.ch/aktuell/nachrichten/ansicht/article/lohnschere-oeffnet-sich-im ...](http://www.vpod.ch/aktuell/nachrichten/ansicht/article/lohnschere-oeffnet-sich-im...)

United Kingdom

Union welcomes report on quality social care

November 16, 2009

Public services union UNISON has endorsed one of the key conclusions of a report on social care from the non-profit organization, the National Care Forum. The report emphasizes the point that quality care depends on the level of resources provided including the pay and conditions of social care workers. UNISON's response highlighted the continuing problems of low pay and high staff turnover in the sector and the need to improve pay and conditions as well as training provision.

English: <http://www.epsu.org/cob/328>;
http://www.unison.org.uk/asppresspack/pressrelease_view.asp?id=1640

New negotiating body for school staff

November 16, 2009

The pay and conditions of around 700,000 workers in schools are now negotiated in a new structure - the School Staff Negotiating Body. The SSNB will cover teaching assistants, nursery staff, administrators, secretaries, policy officers, technicians, cleaners, special needs staff, caretakers and school meals workers. Unions believe that this is an important development that will help ensure a fair and equal pay system for school support staff across the country. The three trade unions on the body are UNISON, GMB and Unite. Says Christina McAnea, Head of Education for UNISON, "The body will oversee and ensure fair and equal pay alongside a robust training and career structure to apply in all schools."

English: <http://www.epsu.org/cob/328>;
http://www.unison.org.uk/asppresspack/pressrelease_view.asp?id=1645

Council waste workers win pay dispute

November 30, 2009

After 11 weeks on strike, 300 workers at Leeds City Council's refuse collection department have decided to return to work following guarantees by the council that their pay would not be cut. The council had threatened to cut pay by up to UKP 6,000 (Euro 6,590) a year for some employees. This was the council's response to an equal pay claim and rather than increase pay rates for women, the council had wanted to cut the pay of the male-dominated refuse collection service.

English: http://www.unison.org.uk/asppresspack/pressrelease_view.asp?id=1657;
<http://www.gmb.org.uk/Templates/Internal.asp?NodeID=99343>

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For more information, please contact the editor Maarten van Klaveren, Amsterdam Institute for Advanced Labour Studies (AIAS) M.vanKlaveren@uva.nl. For previous issues of the Collective bargaining newsletter please visit www.etui.org/publications. You may find further information on the ETUI at www.etui.org, and on the AIAS at www.uva-aias.net. © ETUI aisbl, Brussels 2009. All rights reserved. We encourage the distribution of this newsletter and of the information it contains, for non-commercial purposes and provided the source is credited. The ETUI is not responsible for the content of external internet sites. The ETUI is financially supported by the European Community. The European Community is not responsible for any use made of the information contained in this publication. To unsubscribe, please contact Veerle Raes vraes@etui.org.