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collective bargaining

Issue 4/2010 April

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

Health sector deal extended

April 1, 2010

The 1.5% pay increase agreed for the private health and social care sector has been confirmed and extended to cover employers who are not members of the BAGS employers' organisation. This means that a further 40,000 employees, on top of the 80,000 employees already covered, will be covered by the agreement which provides for a minimum wage of Euro 1,300 a month (See also this *Collective Bargaining Newsletter* Year 3 January 2010).

English: <http://www.epsu.org/cob/360>;

German: [http://www.gpa-](http://www.gpa-djp.at/servlet/ContentServer?pagename=GPA/Page/Index&n=GPA_0.a&cid=1269529707959)

[djp.at/servlet/ContentServer?pagename=GPA/Page/Index&n=GPA_0.a&cid=1269529707959](http://www.gpa-djp.at/servlet/ContentServer?pagename=GPA/Page/Index&n=GPA_0.a&cid=1269529707959);

[http://www.vida.at/servlet/ContentServer?pagename=S03/Page/Index&n=S03_0.a&cid ...](http://www.vida.at/servlet/ContentServer?pagename=S03/Page/Index&n=S03_0.a&cid...)

Belgium

Actions at Carrefour Belgium to continue

April 29, 2010

Carrefour Belgium continues to reel from the impact of strikes, and says it expects sales in April to drop by 15% year-on-year due to the action. The negotiations with the unions drag on, and the unions plan a second countrywide strike for Friday April 30. This strike will impact all of Carrefour's 117 company-owned outlets in Belgium, but not affect its 105 franchised stores. The unions resist various issues in the company's restructuring plan, like that to freeze wages until they have reached the level of competitors' wages (See also this *Collective Bargaining Newsletter* Year 3 February 2010).

English: <http://www.kamcity.com/namnews/asp/newsarticle.asp?newsid=53524>;

Dutch: [http://www.tijd.be/nieuws/ondernemingen_consumptie/-Staking_Carrefour ...](http://www.tijd.be/nieuws/ondernemingen_consumptie/-Staking_Carrefour...)

Demonstrations planned in non-profit sector

April 16, 2010

Unions organising workers in the non-profit sector are planning demonstrations in Brussels, Liege and Charleroi in protest at the fact that neither the French community government nor the Wallonian regional government have budgeted for pay increases. The non-profit sector covers a range of health and social services including childcare and housing. Unions have put forward a range of key demands some of which they have been pursuing for several years. Among other things they want the difficulty of their professions recognised and salaries brought in line with those in the health sector at federal level.

English: <http://www.epsu.org/cob/363>;

French:

<http://www.setca.org/News/Pages/Pourunnouvelaccorddanslessecteursnonmarchandsdes2010.aspx>

Croatia

ITUC pleas for advances in labour rights

April 2, 2010

According to a report of the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC), the Croatian government has used European integration and harmonisation requirements as a pretext for making extensive legal reforms and reducing workers' rights. As a result, more than 80% of newly-employed workers are employed on a short-term basis, and many fear their contracts will not be renewed if they join a union. The large number of fixed term employment contracts indicates the serious difficulties in realising freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining. The ITUC report also notes that though discrimination in employment is prohibited, legislative provisions are

insufficient to prevent women from being discriminated against and harassed at work.

English: http://www.ituc-csi.org/IMG/pdf/CLC_Croatia.pdf

Cyprus

Unions call on public to protest tax hikes

April 15, 2010

The Cyprus Democratic Labour Federation (DEOK) has urged the public to take to the streets and protest any new taxes the government decides to impose, "whether this involves fuel, food, pharmaceuticals or any other product of basic need". The union's General Secretary, Diomidis Diomidous, said DEOK was determined to strongly protest new tax increases, after it was announced that there would be almost a 10% increase in fuel tax. According to the government this hike, along with similar increases on taxation of foodstuff, water and pharmaceuticals, follows from Cyprus' obligations to the EU, but the parliamentary opposition claims that the country could actually be exempt from the hikes.

English: <http://www.cyprus-mail.com/cyprus/union-calls-public-protest-new-tax-hikes/20100415>
via http://www.labourstart.org/cgi-bin/show_news.pl?country=Cyprus

Denmark

Ballot in favour of main collective agreements

April 21, 2010

The ballot concerning the main private sector collective agreements, covering about 240,000 employees in manufacturing, transport, construction and other sectors, has ended up in a clear 'Yes', with overall 64% of unionists in favour. This implies that the agreements will enter into force retroactively from 1 March 2010, lasting until 1 March 2012. The agreements will provide minimum pay increases of 1.2% in 2010 and 1.8% in 2011, though the actual wage formation on top of these amounts will be realised in decentralized local negotiations, normally once a year, depending on initiatives of the local shop stewards (See also this *Collective Bargaining Newsletter* Year 3 February 2010).

English: message of EUCOBAN network of EMF / EFFAT / ETUF-TCL / EMCEF;

Danish: [http://www.foa.dk/Forbund/Presse.aspx?newsid={EFF117AC-8F42-4802-A238 ...](http://www.foa.dk/Forbund/Presse.aspx?newsid={EFF117AC-8F42-4802-A238...)

Finland

Bus drivers protest unilateral "agreement shopping"

April 29, 2010

In Helsinki over 700 bus drivers have begun a strike on Wednesday 28 April, planning to return to work on Friday 30. The strike is a protest against their employer's unilateral announcement to replace the company-specific collective agreement by the bus traffic national collective agreement. The announcement came as a total surprise to the drivers, who accuse the employer (Helsingin Bussiliikenne Oy, owned by the City of Helsinki) of "agreement shopping", thus breaking the legislation on mandatory company-level consultation and undermining drivers' annual leave rights and present work schedules. The current agreement expires on 30 April 30 and is signed by the JHL union, the union for the public and welfare sectors, whereas the bus traffic national collective agreement is signed by the AKT union, organising transport workers and employees in the tourism industry.

English: <http://www.artto.kaapeli.fi/unions/T2010/jhl06>

Lockout in food industry debated

April 27, 2010

The labour dispute in the food industry continued. On Monday 26 April, the Finnish Food Workers' Union (SEL) rejected a mediation proposal put forward by National Conciliator Esa Lonka. The union claimed the proposal lacked crucial improvements and undermined benefits. ETL, the employers' association, approved the proposal and began a lockout affecting around 18,000 union workers at 235 establishments, to continue until Wednesday 28 April. However, less than two hours after it began ETL surprisingly announced that the lockout would end at 10 pm Tuesday 27. During that time, workers will not receive pay. Now the union argues that the management cannot unilaterally change the end of the lockout without consulting the union. The two sides are negotiating the lockout's impact on annual leave and holiday benefits under the national mediator. The owners' side said that it was cutting the lockout short in order to ensure the availability of groceries ahead of the May Day holiday weekend. It was also reacting to the union's announcement of more rolling strikes in May. Union members have already staged two strikes during the dispute, and are planning a major one beginning May 11.

English: [http://www.yle.fi/uutiset/news/2010/04/food_industry_negotiators_debate_lockout ...](http://www.yle.fi/uutiset/news/2010/04/food_industry_negotiators_debate_lockout...);
[http://www.yle.fi/uutiset/news/2010/04/responses_expected_to_mediation_proposal_in ...](http://www.yle.fi/uutiset/news/2010/04/responses_expected_to_mediation_proposal_in...) via
http://www.labourstart.org/cgi-bin/show_news.pl?country=Finland

Border guards cancel strike

April 23, 2010

Border guards have cancelled an announced two-day strike after reaching a compromise deal with the employer. The new contract covers 2.5 years. Salary levels for the second year will be negotiated in January 2011. Markku Pietikäinen, the chief shop steward of the Border Guard Union, says workers found the new terms tolerable.

English:

http://www.yle.fi/uutiset/news/2010/04/border_guards_cancel_threatened_strike_1628149.html
via http://www.labourstart.org/cgi-bin/show_news.pl?country=Finland

France

Unions reject further changes to pensions

April 29, 2010

Public service unions have made clear that they are unhappy about government proposals to change the pension age and calculation. The CGT local government federation wants to retain the right to retire at 60 and a pension worth 75% of salary after a full career. It also calls on the government to organise negotiations involving all public service federations. FO's civil service federation has attacked the conclusions of a report from the Pensions Advisory Council. The federation challenges some of the assumptions used in the Council's forecasts, claiming that it has tried to paint a negative picture to help justify further pension reforms. The CFDT also wants to retain 60 as the pension age and has criticised the government for trying to push through reforms too quickly and so not allowing enough time for proper consultation and negotiation. UNSA presented the government with a range of proposals to improve the financing of pensions but these were all rejected by the government (See also this *Collective Bargaining Newsletter* Year 3 February and March 2010).

English: <http://www.epsu.org/cob/364>;

French: <http://www.spterritoriaux.cgt.fr/spip.php?article3963>;

<http://www.fo-fonctionnaires.fr/flashinfo-suite.html>;

[http://www.cfdt.fr/rewrite/article/25703/actualites/retraites:le-gouvernement-propose ...](http://www.cfdt.fr/rewrite/article/25703/actualites/retraites:le-gouvernement-propose...)

Airbus workers on strike

April 29, 2010

Airbus workers across France halted work on Monday 26 April to highlight their demands for better pay and more staff. They continued to do so for the next three days. Thousands of workers in Toulouse, Nantes and Saint-Nazaire stopped working and blocked the delivery of airplane parts. Production of the A330 and A340 is to be disrupted and rotating strikes will affect production of the A320 and the A380 as well. Management is offering a 1.9% wage increase for this year but the unions

want a 3.5% hike. Unions are also calling for new positions to be created after a restructuring plan in 2007 cut 10,000 jobs. Airbus hired 1,700 new people in 2009 and is adding another 1,500 this year.

English: <http://www.heraldeparis.com/france-airbus-workers-down-tools-2/85367>;
http://online.wsj.com/article/BT-CO-20100429-716747.html?mod=WSJ_World_MIDDLEHeadlinesEurope via
http://www.labourstart.org/cgi-bin/show_news.pl?country=France;
French: http://www.toulouseblog.fr/article-9177-greve_chez_airbus_quelle_suite.html

Union maintains campaign over child-care regulations

April 16, 2010

Following strike action on 8 April, the CGT local and regional government federation is continuing its campaign against new regulations on childcare. The union argues that the changes will reduce the level of trained staff required at a crèche, a matter of concern not just for the workers in the sector but also for parents. The union is preparing for further strike action on 6 May and a national demonstration on 29 May and is also urging local councils to protest against the new regulations and to refuse to implement them. The CFDT is also campaigning against the changes and has attacked Minister for the Family, Nadine Murano, for making false claims about the impact of the regulations.

English: <http://www.epsu.org/cob/363>;
French: <http://www.spterritoriaux.cgt.fr/spip.php?article3938>;
[http://www.cfdt.fr/rewrite/article/25614/salle-de-presse/communiquelafederation-interco ...](http://www.cfdt.fr/rewrite/article/25614/salle-de-presse/communiquelafederation-interco...)

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Germany

Pay offer from energy employers fails to impress

April 29, 2010

The second round of bargaining over the AVE (energy) sectoral agreement failed to produce a result. The employers, dominated by E.ON, offered a 2.3% increase. However, the ver.di union wants a 5.5% increase over 12 months for the 30,000 employees covered by the agreement, and was not impressed by the offer. Ver.di argues that the employers remain highly profitable and have not suffered as much from the crisis as other sectors. Bargaining resumes on 5 May.

English: <http://www.epsu.org/cob/364>;
German: [http://presse.verdi.de/pressemitteilungen/showNews?id=4c988406-4ebb-11df- .](http://presse.verdi.de/pressemitteilungen/showNews?id=4c988406-4ebb-11df-)

Church continues to block moves to collective bargaining

April 29, 2010

Service union ver.di has again criticised the Evangelical Church for trying to prevent the union negotiating a collective agreement to cover the church's 130,000 workers who deliver a range of health and social services. The church wants a so-called Employment Commission (ARK) to regulate pay and conditions and was putting pressure on worker representatives to support this option by saying that collective bargaining was not an option (See also this *Collective Bargaining Newsletter* Year 3 February 2010).

English: <http://www.epsu.org/cob/364>;
German: [http://presse.verdi.de/pressemitteilungen/showNews?id=51852670-4af3-11df- .](http://presse.verdi.de/pressemitteilungen/showNews?id=51852670-4af3-11df-)

Limitations for outsourcing at Coca-Cola Germany

April 26, 2010

The German Food and Allied Workers (NGG) have secured an agreement with Coca-Cola's German bottler Coca-Cola Erfrischungsgetraenke AG (CCEAG) that provides extensive guarantees on job security. CCEAG, with 11,000 employees, is Germany's largest soft drink producer. The new agreement, valid through the end of 2012, was signed at the end of several months of collective

bargaining and membership mobilization culminating in a marathon 4 days and nights of negotiations and threatened warning strikes. The agreement provides for a commitment to no future outsourcing of production, services or sales; no operational layoffs for NGG members during the agreement, with any production job transfers between production sites resulting from overcapacity limited to the same sales region; the distribution fleet to be kept within the parent company; all trainees to be retained for at least 12 months following the end of the training period. The existing framework agreement regulating working time (37.5 hour week), vacation and vacation allowances is preserved, while the company can, in response to market fluctuations, extend the workweek to 48 hours. Weekend work is to remain the exception. The agreement also gives a modest annual wage increase with compensation for inflation.

English: <http://cms.iuf.org/?q=node/344>; <http://www.iuf.org/drupal/?q=node/306>

German: <http://www.handelsblatt.com/archiv/coca-cola-tarifvertrag-gibt-garantie> .

Union sets out bargaining guidelines in waste sector

April 16, 2010

The waste sector of the ver.di services union has agreed a set of collective bargaining guidelines to provide a framework for its negotiations in the industry. The union argues that in the past it has had to react to continuing pressure from the employers to cut jobs and keep wages low. Instead of reacting to events, the union wants to develop a more strategic approach to its collective bargaining work in a sector characterised by intense wage competition a trend for employers to pull out of the private sector industry agreement. The 11 guidelines include maintaining the industry agreement, securing collective agreements with employers who are not covered by that agreement, ensuring that recruitment of members is a key element of any disputes with employers, and getting increases to the new sectoral minimum wage.

English: <http://www.epsu.org/cob/363>;

German: https://ver-und-entsorgung.verdi.de/abfallwirtschaft/tarifarbeit_tarifpolitik/tarif .

Greece

Confederations plan to continue strike action

April 29, 2010

The major union confederations for the public and private sectors, ADEDY and GSEE, have scheduled a 24-hour strike for 5 May, stressing that this year's May Day sees both the employees and the Greek society having come up against an unprecedented attack on their key and fundamental social rights. In the meantime, the Hellenic Union of Radio Technicians has been on a 48-hour strike since Wednesday 26 April. The primary school teachers' association has called for four-hour work stoppages starting from 3 May and a 48-hour strike on 4 and 5 May.

English: <http://news.ert.gr/en/domestic/society/35979-apergiakos-pyretos>;

Greek: <http://www.adedy.gr/adedy/site/home/ws/primary+menu/deltia/2010/April/> .

Hungary

Pilots' strike planned

April 25, 2010

As of 31 March and with four months' notice, the Board of Directors of Malév Hungarian Airlines has terminated the currently valid collective contract, at the same time authorizing management to initiate negotiating a new agreement. Malév (re-nationalised in February 2010) has put in place a restructuring programme, including raising revenues, further rationalization of costs and flexibilisation of employment more flexible. Malév pilots, affiliated with the Hungarian Airlines Pilots' Association (HUNALPA), have threatened to conduct industrial action following disagreement over labour contract negotiations. No date has yet been specified for the strike.

English: Máté Komiljovics, union correspondent

Gender pay gap at 13%

April 25, 2010

In 2009 women on average earned 13% less than men, according to a recent salary survey of the Workania jobsite. According to the survey the gender pay gap was 8% for starting employees, reaching 16 % for those employees with at least 6 years professional experience. With 27% the largest gap was found for top level managers. Workania stressed that among public servants the gap was relatively small, for example 9 % for policemen and 5 % for teachers. Interestingly, female doctors earned on average 3 % more than their male colleagues. In 2009, 82,000 employees took part in the survey.

English: Máté Komiljovics, union correspondent

Ireland

Unions divided over public sector agreement

April 26, 2010

The government will offer the unions "clarifications" of aspects of the public service pay deal in the last week of April as part of an attempt to rescue the Croke Park agreement. The revelation came after Taoiseach (Prime Minister) Brian Cowen warned that if public sector workers did not sign up to the agreement, it could prompt strikes and industrial unrest which would lead to "lost productivity" and "further job losses." Fresh talks will be attended by the government, the public services committee of the Irish Trades Union Congress (ICTU) and the Labour Relations Commission (LRC) which brokered the deal. Balloting is getting under way among the unions involved but it will be May before the final outcome is known. A number of unions have said that even if there is an overall majority, they will not necessarily be bound by the vote. The latest to take this line is the Irish Federation of University Teachers (IFUT), which is recommending a 'No' vote to its members. Earlier, the SIPTU general union called for some clarification of the agreement but argued for acceptance.

English: [http://www.independent.ie/national-news/unions-offered-clarifications-in-new ...](http://www.independent.ie/national-news/unions-offered-clarifications-in-new-...)
<http://www.siptu.ie/PressRoom/NewsReleases/Headline/Name,11494,en.html>

Italy

Ministry of Justice workers get broad support

April 29, 2010

A demonstration on 24 April in Rome by workers at the Ministry of Justice, organised by the FP-CGIL public services federation, was supported by a range of legal and political organisations that are concerned about cuts to legal services. The union federation argues that the combination of precarious employment conditions and major job cuts are making it increasingly difficult to deliver effective services.

English: <http://www.epsu.org/cob/364>
Italian: <http://www.fpcgil.it/flex/cm/pages/ServeBLOB.php/L/IT/IDPagina/13777>

New collective agreement in electricity industry

April 1, 2010

The three union federations in the electricity industry --FILCEM-CGIL, FLAEI-CISL and UILCEM-UIL-- have signed a new agreement that sets out pay increases during 2010-2012. There will be a 2.8% increase this year backdated from 1 March and a 3.1% increase from 1 January 2011. In 2012 there will be two increases: 3.0% from 1 January and 1.75% from 1 July. The agreement covers around 59,000 employees in 130 companies, including ENEL and E.ON.

English: <http://www.epsu.org/cob/360>
Italian: <http://www.filcemcgil.it/index.php?module=CMpro&func=viewpage&pageid=101>
<http://www.flaei.org/indexold.asp>
http://www.uilcem.com/uilcem/primopiano.asp?id_articolo=1982

Luxembourg

Rail workers rally for public services and secure jobs

April 21, 2010

On 21 April, European transport workers expressed their anger over the liberalisation of the railways and its impact on public services and jobs at a rally in Luxembourg. Some 375 unionists representing transport unions in Belgium, France, Germany and Luxembourg joined forces under the banner of the European Transport Workers' Federation (ETF). The rally, part of the ETF's European railway workers' action day, was calling for an end to liberalisation. This, the unionists stated, was responsible for deteriorating public services and a lack of job security. Luxembourg union leaders also met with the minister of development and infrastructure, Claude Wiseler, to send home the anti-liberalisation message.

English: <http://www.itfglobal.org/news-online/index.cfm/newsdetail/4393>

Netherlands

Street cleaners on strike for local government deal

April 30, 2010

Negotiations for a new local government collective agreement remained in a deadlock, with the organisation of Dutch municipalities (VNG) sticking to their pay freeze position and the unions continuing to demand a 1.5% increase, in line with the social accord agreed in 2009 in the national, intersectoral negotiations. In three cities the unions are focusing on strikes of street cleaners. The Amsterdam and The Hague municipalities went to court in an effort to have such strikes banned, arguing that strikes would jeopardize public safety, but both lost their case. In these two cities street cleansing departments went on a warning strike on Queen's Day (30 April), a celebration that produces immense loads of garbage to be collected. In Amsterdam another strike is planned from 6 May on, while in the city of Utrecht municipal cleansing plans to strike between 1 and 5 May. This pressure seems to have enlarged the willingness on the side of VNG to resume talks (See also this *Collective Bargaining Newsletter* Year 3 January, February and March 2010).

English: <http://www.epsu.org/cob/364>

Dutch: [http://www.abvakabofnv.nl/cao%27s/Alle-Cao%27s/gemeenten1/?OverviewType](http://www.abvakabofnv.nl/cao%27s/Alle-Cao%27s/gemeenten1/?OverviewType.....)
<http://www.mijnvakbond.nl/Rechter-Acties-Den-Haag-toegestaan!?referrer=266>

Cleaners reach agreement after nine weeks' strike

April 30, 2010

After a strike lasting nine weeks the unions have reached agreement with the employers' organizations on behalf of 150,000 cleaners. The agreement, covering 1 January 2010 till 1 January 2012, includes a wage increase of 3.5% over 2 years, with a 1% increase by 1 July 2010, 1% by 1 January 2011, 0.75% by 1 July 2011 and 0.75% as a end-of-years' payment from 2011 on. The selective strike, each day involving about 1,000 cleaners, has been successful: the unions had demanded 4%, while the employers had initially offered a wage freeze and subsequently a 2.5% hike. Dutch language lessons are to be introduced for all new entrants to the industry ; if they complete the 3 month course they receive a Euro 750 bonus. A fund is to be set up to compensate the strikers for the loss of their holiday entitlements while striking. In July 2010, large principals like Dutch Railways and Schiphol Airport will sign a covenant on socially responsible procurement. A large majority of cleaners has voted in favour of the agreement. Ron Meyer, official of the FNV Bondgenoten union and major campaigner, said: "The longest strike in the Netherlands since 1933 has opened people's eyes all over the Netherlands for the fate of low-paid workers. This is the achievement of the cleaners, who are no longer invisible" (See also this *Collective Bargaining Newsletter* Year 3 February and March 2010).

Dutch: http://www.fnvbondgenoten.nl/nieuws/actueel/schoonmakers_22_4/

English: <http://unionrenewal.blogspot.com/2010/04/dutch-cleaners-reach-agreement.html>;

<http://www.uniglobalunion.org/Apps/iportal.nsf/pages/homeEn?OpenDocument&exURL=> .

Unions agree energy deal and splitting of agreement

April 29, 2010

The three unions involved have negotiated a new 12-month collective agreement, from 1 May 2010 to 1 May 2011, in the energy sector with a 1.1% pay increase as of 1 June 2010. There will also be a lump sum payment worth 0.4% of annual salary to be paid in January 2011 into a so-called benefit budget. This is for employees to use according to their personal preferences and so could provide greater working time flexibility. The agreement also includes provisions on training and initiatives to take on young unemployed workers. From 2011 on there will be separate negotiations for two collective agreements, acknowledging that production and supply companies face a competitive environment differing from regulated network companies. Deadline for the membership ballot is 15 May.

English: <http://www.epsu.org/cob/364>

Dutch: http://www.abvakabofnv.nl/PDF/3944/219647/nieuwsbrief_energie_27_april_2010.pdf
<http://www.mijnvakbond.nl/Stemming-over-CAO-Energie?referrer=266>

Job security central in Corus agreement

April 21, 2010

The FNV Bondgenoten union and the Corus steelworks, subsidiary of the Tata Steel Group and employing 9,500 workers, have reached a basic collective agreement prolonging job security and excluding forced dismissals till 1 October 2012. According to Aad in 't Veld, FNV Bondgenoten officer, "This accord is of crucial importance in view of the major reorganisation Corus is actually planning." He emphasized that the union prioritised job security over wage hikes. The agreement includes a wage increase for 2010 of 0.75%, as of 1 July 2010, and a lump sum payment of Euro 200. Pay and conditions for 2011 will be negotiated later (See also this *Collective Bargaining Newsletter* Year 3 March 2010).

Dutch: [http://www.fnvbondgenoten.nl/branches_bedrijven/branches/metaal/fnv_metaal/corus ...](http://www.fnvbondgenoten.nl/branches_bedrijven/branches/metaal/fnv_metaal/corus...)

Agreement finally reached at ECT

April 22, 2010

The FNV Bondgenoten union and European Container Terminals (ECT), subsidiary of Hongkong-based Hutchison Whampoa with its main container-handling facilities in the Rotterdam port, have reached a basic accord for a collective agreement. The agreement covers 2,400 employees and 3.5 years, from 1 April 2009 to 1 October 2012. It includes a wage increase of 1.42% backdated 1 April 2009, increases for 2010 and 2011 of 1% each, and an increase of the basic monthly wage of Euro 20 by 1 May 2012. Pension rights will be lifted considerably, the employer will fully take over sickness insurance fees, and improvements in shop-floor safety have been agreed. Further, a joint study will be undertaken on the impact of the Second Maas Plain, the major Rotterdam port expansion under way, on incomes and job security of port workers, as many in the ECT workforce are concerned about the over-capacity effects of this expansion. Niek Stam, FNV Bondgenoten officer, comments: "It took nine negotiation rounds and a number of short strikes, but in the end the result is satisfying." ECT kept out of a sectoral agreement, which was an earlier union demand. The deadline for the membership ballot is the end of May.

Dutch: *De Volkskrant*, 22 April 2010;

http://www.fnvbondgenoten.nl/branches_bedrijven/branches/vervoer/havens/eindelijk_ .

Norway

Equal pay key in demands of state sector unions

April 29, 2010

The three trade unions representing around 100,000 employees in the state sector, LO Stat, YS Stat and Unio, have set out their main demands for this year's collective bargaining round. Equal pay is a key element, with a call for 0.25% of the wage bill to be set aside as to deal with the 8% gender pay

gap. YS Stat is arguing for workers to be put on a higher pay grade when they return from parental leave to ensure that time away from work does not impact on their progression up the pay scale. Unions are also concerned to keep up with pay in the private sector, where average pay is around 10% higher than in the public sector.

English: <http://www.epsu.org/cob/364>

Norwegian: [http://www.ys.no/kunder/ys/cms.nsf/%28\\$All%29/73CC84DB369961D4C1 ...](http://www.ys.no/kunder/ys/cms.nsf/%28$All%29/73CC84DB369961D4C1...)
http://www.fagforbundet.no/forsida/tariff/?article_id=51307

Collective agreements with extra increases for the low-paid

April 16, 2010

On Sunday 11 April, the mediator together with the employers' organisation Norsk Industry and the Fellesforbundet union presented a proposal for a new collective agreement for the coming two years covering the metal, packaging and textile and clothing sectors. The proposal has been recommended by the two parties; the result of the ballot among Fellesforbundet members will be presented to the mediator before 30 April noon. The agreement envisages a general wage increase of NOK 1 per hour (worth NOK 1,950 or Euro 245 annually) with the right to local wage negotiations, and NOK 1.50 per hour without the right to local negotiations. Further, a local addition of NOK 0.50 per hour to level out documented discriminating low wages for women in any given workplace. The total value of the agreement is estimated at 3% wage increase. Fellesforbundet president Arve Bakke says: "The result gives an extra increase for the lowest paid and we have constructed a model intended to level out discriminatory inequalities in pay between men and women in the individual company". Five days later, unions in the LO and YS confederations negotiated an agreement at nearly the same terms with the Spekter employers' organisations, covering around 190 firms with 180,000 employees in a range of sectors but mainly health, transport and energy.

English: message of EUCOBAN network of EMF / EFFAT / ETUF-TCL / EMCEF

<http://www.epsu.org/cob/363>

Norwegian: http://www.fagforbundet.no/forsida/?article_id=50435

Portugal

Widespread strikes in response to government austerity plans

April 28, 2010

The government austerity plan, designed to cut the budget deficit to 2.8% of gross domestic product in 2013, includes freezing public sector wages, capping recruitment and privatising several public companies. In response, the public transport workers joined postal workers, who on Monday 26 April started a strike set to continue until May 7. "We question whether it should be the workers who pay for this crisis. We don't think it should be, it cannot only be the workers who pay," said Manuel Leal, spokesman for the Fedtrans transport union. According to the unions involved, some 20,000 workers took strike action from 26 to 28 April at 16 public transport companies affecting around one million passengers. Parliament administration workers started their strike on Wednesday 28 April, whereas truckers' unions plan a walkout in May.

English: <http://uk.reuters.com/article/idUKTRE63Q1P720100427> via

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

Romania

One-day teachers' strike as a warning

April 23, 2010

As part of the widespread protest in the country's public service against planned job cuts felt to be dictates from the International Monetary Fund (IMF), unionists in education organised a one-day general strike on 22 April. The education unions demand the integration of the amendments proposed by the union federations into the education law, the removal of plans to dismiss 15,000 employees, the amendment of the law on unified salaries by including the teaching staff in the upper part of the salary grid, the granting of two 10% hikes for hard working conditions, and the

enforcement of the court rulings through which employees won their rights. Union leaders emphasized that the one-day strike was just a warning. "If our demands will not be met, we will hold a national strike for an unlimited period starting the first half of June," Marius Nistor of the Spiru Haret union told a press agency.

English: [http://www.financiarul.ro/2010/04/23/hundreds-of-teachers-are-on-general ...](http://www.financiarul.ro/2010/04/23/hundreds-of-teachers-are-on-general-...)
<http://www.nytimes.com/reuters/2010/04/22/world/international-uk-romania-strike.html> via
http://www.labourstart.org/cgi-bin/show_news.pl?country=Romania

Spain

Union confederation expects labour accord

April 22, 2010

The Secretary General of CCOO, one of the two major union confederations, has told a press agency that his confederation will likely sign an accord with employers about labour reforms in the first half of May. Ignacio Fernández Toxo said that the agreement will focus on a reduction in working hours, an overhaul of hiring incentives as well as measures to incorporate youth workers and the long-term unemployed into the workforce, adding "We have more than four million unemployed in Spain and at least some of them could have been spared if some measures such as a reduction of the working day had been introduced earlier." An initial agreement between unions and employers is seen as a first step for the introduction of labour reforms by the government.

English: <http://www.forexyard.com/en/news/Spains-largest-union-expects-labour-accords> .

Union federations criticize low replacement rate

April 1, 2010

The FSC-CCOO and FSP-UGT public sector federations have attacked the government for recruitment plans and its decision to replace only one in 10 public servants when they leave their jobs. The FSC-CCOO federation was already critical of the 15% replacement rate included in the 2010 budget and warns that a 10% replacement rate will threaten to undermine the quality of public services. The cuts are particularly of concern in the current period when defending employment is a key part of the response to the crisis. It is also pointed out that the 25% replacement rate imposed in the 1990s had a negative impact on service delivery and was the impetus for widespread privatisation and outsourcing.

English: <http://www.epsu.org/cob/360>;

Spanish: [http://www.fspugt.es/La_FSPUGT_considera_insuficiente_la_Oferta_Pblica_de_ ...](http://www.fspugt.es/La_FSPUGT_considera_insuficiente_la_Oferta_Pblica_de_...)

Sweden

Union leader puts pressure on employers to act on equality

April 29, 2010

With pay negotiations underway, the President of the Kommunal municipal workers' union, Ylva Thorn, has called on local government employer organisations SKL and SALAR to put words into action and tackle the gender pay gap. Writing in the Dagbladet national newspaper, Thorn argues that employees working in female-dominated professions face higher levels of part-time work, job insecurity, work-related ill health and above all lower pay. She points out that local authority workers, the vast majority of them women, are among the lowest paid among workers represented by the LO-affiliated unions. She asks in particular the SKL how this squares with their claims to be delivering equality.

English: <http://www.epsu.org/cob/364>

Swedish: [http://www.kommunal.se/Kommunal/press/I-debatten/2010/Jamstallda-loner ...](http://www.kommunal.se/Kommunal/press/I-debatten/2010/Jamstallda-loner...)

New agreements in manufacturing and mining

April 19, 2010

The IF Metall union has concluded new collective agreements in manufacturing (engineering, steel, and chemicals) and mining. These agreements cover 22 months, from 1 April 2010 to 31 January 2012. Pay increases will be 0.9% by 1 June 2010 and 2.3% by 1 June 2011, implying 1.7% increase on an annual basis. In those sectors where companies still have problems due to the crisis, temporary agreements as of March 2009 are prolonged until 31 October 2010. This means that local parties can negotiate a temporary reduction of working hours with 20% and reduced wages, in order to avoid losing skilled workers. In order to be prepared for a new recession, parties agreed to create a training system within the agreement period. Concerning gender issues, it was agreed to take further steps to diminish the gender pay gap, through common information, training, common recommendations for wage analysis, and finding common measurement instruments. Parties also agreed to expand the extra benefit of 10% for one more month for workers on parental leave, thus up to six instead of five months.

English: message of EUCOBAN network of EMF / EFFAT / ETUF-TCL / EMCEF

Municipal union pulls out of agreement

April 16, 2010

On 6 April, the SKTF municipal union has announced that it is pulling out of an agreement because its members are not getting the pay increases that have been negotiated. The union has signed three agreements in the private health sector, two of which expire this year. The third agreement should run until 2011 but SKTF has found that around 30% of its members in health companies have not had pay increases that are due to them. The union accuses the Almega employers' organization of failing to monitor implementation of the agreement.

English: <http://www.epsu.org/cob/363>;

Swedish: https://www.sktf.se/Templates/Page_____35669.aspx

Switzerland

Confederation proposes national minimum wage

April 29, 2010

The SGB/USS trade union confederation has drafted a policy calling for a national minimum wage that it will put to delegates at a meeting on 17 May. The confederation argues that too many workers are not covered by collective agreements. Even though collective agreements can be extended, there are some sectors without any collective agreements and so this would still leave many workers without pay protection. The union wants a national minimum wage for 2011 set at CHF 22 (Euro 15) an hour or CHF 3,500 (Euro 2,385) a month, with the cantons (regional governments) having the right to implement higher minimum wages if they want to.

English: <http://www.epsu.org/cob/364>;

German: <http://www.sgb.ch/presse.php>;

French: <http://www.sgb.ch/f-presse.php>

Union plans action over childcare workers' pay and conditions

April 16, 2010

The VPÖD/SSP public services union is considering what action it can take to improve pay and conditions of childcare workers ("Kitas"). The union argues that the responsibilities and physical strains of the job are not properly recognised. VPÖD/SSP has noted the success of the German ver.di union last year in its campaign to win higher pay and improved working conditions for childcare workers; meetings at the end of April in Zürich and Bern will discuss strategy with contributions from colleagues in ver.di.

English: <http://www.epsu.org/cob/363>;

German: <http://www.vpod.ch/aktuell/nachrichten/ansicht/article/kitas-unsere-arbeit> .

United Kingdom

Equal pay victory for women council workers

April 30, 2010

Hundreds of women working as cleaners and care assistants, represented by the UNISON and GMB unions, have won an equal pay case against Birmingham City Council, the biggest municipality in the country. The Employment Tribunal agreed with the union's case that the women had been unfairly denied bonuses that were paid to gardeners, refuse collectors and gravediggers, who are overwhelmingly male workers, worth up to 160% of their basic pay. The Tribunal will now go on to assess the amount of compensation to be paid to the employees in each case. The likely bill will run into several million pounds.

English: http://www.unison.org.uk/asppresspack/pressrelease_view.asp?id=1848;
http://www.gmb.org.uk/newsroom/latest_news/gmb_wins_huge_equal_pay_case.aspx

Union challenges government in courts over redundancy scheme

April 29, 2010

The PCS civil service union has earlier been taking industrial action over government changes to the civil service compensation scheme which governs payments for redundancy and early retirement based on years of service. However, it is also pursuing a case in the High Court, arguing that the government had no right to make unilateral changes to the scheme as any amendments had to be negotiated and agreed with the union (See also this *Collective Bargaining Newsletter* Year 2 December 2009 and Year 3 February 2010).

English: <http://www.epsu.org/cob/364>
[http://www.pcs.org.uk/en/news_and_events/news_centre/index.cfm/id/87EE0863- ...](http://www.pcs.org.uk/en/news_and_events/news_centre/index.cfm/id/87EE0863-...)

Royal Mail and postal workers reach agreement

April 27, 2010

Postal workers have voted to accept a deal on pay, hours and conditions, ending the long-running Royal Mail dispute. In October 2009, postal workers staged a series of strikes in a bitter row over job losses and working conditions. On 27 April, the Communication Workers Union (CWU) announced its members backed the agreement by two to one. The agreement includes a three-year wage rise worth 6.9%, while further payments will accompany the phased introduction of change in the workplace. The working week will reduce by one hour with no loss of pay. Job security guarantees include full-time staff making up at least 75% of the workforce. CWU stated over the next three years, modern machinery and improved operational methods will be introduced and a "culture of co-operation" will see the union fully involved with the phasing in of each stage. Dave Ward, CWU's deputy General Secretary, commented: "The deal recognises the importance of staff in successfully implementing change and rewarding people for the work" (See also this *Collective Bargaining Newsletter* Year 2 October 2009).

English: <http://www.cwu.org/royal-mail-dispute.html>
<http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2010/apr/27/royal-mail-postal-workers>

Gas engineers strike threat wins concessions

April 1, 2010

The GMB general union has come to an agreement with British Gas, implying that possible industrial action by engineers will be avoided. The union had been balloting members for strike action in response to management threats to cuts jobs. The GMB and British Gas management have now issued joint statements that confirm that any restructuring in the company will only follow a proper process of consultation and negotiation. Said GMB General Secretary Paul Kenny, "The discussions have not been easy, but we do now have a platform on which to build relations. It is positive that the company respects the position of GMB" (See also this *Collective Bargaining Newsletter* Year 3 March 2010).

English: http://www.gmb.org.uk/newsroom/latest_news/british_gas_settlement.aspx

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