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collective bargaining

Issue 10/2010 | 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
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Austria

Union targets Euro 7.50 minimum wage

November 25, 2010

The chairman of the vida services union, Rudolf Kaske, has said that the union is aiming for a minimum wage of at least ? 7.50 an hour (? 1,300 a month for a 40-hour week) across its agreements. This would be achieved, for example, in the cleaning sector from 1 January 2011 where there will be a monthly minimum of ? 1,302. Kaske added that the very high level of collective bargaining coverage in Austria meant that unions were not in favour of a legal minimum wage although they had to address those sectors where there was no coverage by collective agreements.

English: <http://www.epsu.org/cob/390>

German: <http://www.vida.at/servlet/ContentServer?pagename=S03/Page...>

Substantial pay rise in metalworking and mining

November 15, 2010

On 6 November, the PRO-GE union signed a new collective agreement, covering about 165,000 workers in the metalworking and mining industry and resulting in substantial pay increases. This result was reached in the third round after a 17-hour marathon negotiation, and was achieved due to pressure on the employers' side after nationwide works council conferences and some 400 staff meetings. The agreement includes an increase in minimum wages by 2.5%; an increase in effectively paid wages by 2.3% with a minimum pay rise of ? 45 (resulting in lower wage groups gaining increases up to 3%), and a new collectively agreed gross minimum wage of ? 1,515.84. The new agreement takes effect from November 1, 2010 and the deadline for renewal is 12 months.

English: <http://www.eucoban.eu/EMF/Reports/Conclusion-of-bargaining-round>.

German: <http://www.proge.at/servlet/ContentServer?pagename=P01/Page>.

Belgium

Unions organise action in asylum service

November 25, 2010

On 22 November, the CGSP/ACOD and SLFP/VSOA trade unions have organised a 24-hours' strike at Fedasil, the national body dealing with asylum seekers. The unions say that employees should be transferred to federal civil service status rather than being on fixed-term contracts that guarantee only the minimum civil service pay levels. They want a proper process of social dialogue to deal with the problems facing the service.

English: <http://www.epsu.org/cob/390>

French: <http://www.lesoir.be/actualite/belgique/2010-11-22/greve-de-24-h>.

Bulgaria

Agreement reached on pension reform

November 3, 2010

On 1 November government, employers and trade unions finally reached an agreement on the reform of the country's pension system, ending a month of negotiations. The reform stipulates an increase, starting from 1 January 2010, by four months in the number of work experience years needed for full retirement benefits so that by 2020, men would need 40 years of work experience to retire and women would need 37 years. After January 2021, the retirement age would start increasing by six months to reach 63 years for women and 65 years for men. Trade unions, which were threatening strikes over any increase in the work experience requirement before 2015, said they were pleased with the agreement (See also this *Collective Bargaining Newsletter* Year 3 October 2010).

English: http://www.sofiaecho.com/2010/11/02/985912_bulgarias...;

<http://www.businessweek.com/news/2010-11-01/bulgaria-unions-agree...>

Croatia

Unions call off general strike

November 25, 2010

Public sector unions have called off a series of actions that could have led to a general strike on 10 December. The unions were demanding a referendum on trade union and employment rights but have now got the agreement from Prime Minister Jadranka Kosor that a referendum will be held that would reduce the threshold of signatures required to call a referendum from 450,000 to 200,000. This will be on the same day as the referendum on joining the European Union (See also this *Collective Bargaining Newsletter* Year 3 June, July-August and October 2010).

English: <http://www.epsu.org/cob/390>;
[http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2010-11-24/croatia-general-strike-canceled ...](http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2010-11-24/croatia-general-strike-canceled...);
[http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2010-11-17/croatia-s-united-unions-threaten ...](http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2010-11-17/croatia-s-united-unions-threaten...)

Czech Republic

Public sector strike planned

November 25, 2010

Public sector unions are planning a one-day strike on 8 December in protest at the government plans to cut public sector pay by 10%. The unions argue that the cut is unacceptable and will be compounded by other cuts to social provision proposed by the government. They also argue that the cuts will have negative impact on the quality of public services. The CMKOZ confederation will organise rallies in the 14 regional capitals in support of the public sector unions. Police officers and firefighters who are banned from striking by law will join the rallies.

English: <http://www.epsu.org/cob/390#a7063>;
<http://www.morningstaronline.co.uk/index.php/news/content/view/full/98046>
Czech: <http://statorg.cmkos.cz/>

Denmark

Union argues for flat-rate rise

November 11, 2010

Public sector unions are preparing for negotiations in the municipal sector where the three-year agreement is due to expire on 31 March 2011. The FOA union has been arguing for a flat-rate pay increase rather than a percentage increase, in order to provide more help for the lowest paid. Discussions between the unions are continuing but it appears that the flat-rate amount will apply to the 60,000 workers who are on or below level 17 of the pay scale (just below DKK 20,000 or ? 2,700 a month).

English: <http://www.epsu.org/cob/387>
Danish: [http://www.foa.dk/Forbund/Presse?newsid= ...](http://www.foa.dk/Forbund/Presse?newsid=...)

Finland

Flight attendants on strike

November 30, 2010

A strike by flight attendants of the airlines Finnair and Blue 1 is set to begin at 1:00 PM Finnish time on Tuesday 30 November. Attempts at negotiating a contract between the airlines and the flight attendants broke down in the early hours of Tuesday. Many flights of both airlines will be grounded. The two sides continue to disagree on issues such as overtime work and days off. According to the Finnish Cabin Crew Union (SLSY), the management aims at weakening the terms of the current collective agreement.

English: [http://www.hs.fi/english/article/BREAKING+NEWS+Flight+attendants+strike+ ...](http://www.hs.fi/english/article/BREAKING+NEWS+Flight+attendants+strike+...);
[http://www.hs.fi/english/article/Mediation+talks+to+avoid+cabin+attendants ...](http://www.hs.fi/english/article/Mediation+talks+to+avoid+cabin+attendants+...)
via http://www.labourstart.org/cgi-bin/show_news.pl?country=Finland

Public sector unions in support of migrant workers

November 25, 2010

Unions across the public sector have been taking a range of measures in support of migrant workers. In particular, they have been demanding tighter controls on sub-contracting to prevent migrant workers being exploited in a two-tier labour market. With more contracting out in the public sector and then further sub-contracting, it becomes harder to monitor the application of collective agreements, and unions want more effective legislation to solve this problem. A recent case taken up by the Electrical Workers' Union exposed how Turkish employees of a sub-contractor were not being paid the agreed rates.

English: <http://www.epsu.org/cob/390>; <http://www.artto.kaapeli.fi/unions/T2010/fipsu01>;
<http://www.artto.kaapeli.fi/unions/T2010/n38>

France

Unions organise joint action on 23 November

November 25, 2010

Following the repeated mobilisations in September, October and on 8 November against the government's pensions legislation, five union organisations organised a national day of action on 23 November. They challenged the government's statement that the question of pensions was now settled and also raised further issues such as employment, working conditions and gender inequality about which they want to make their voices heard both to the government and employers. The unions also announced their support for a further day of action on 15 December, joining other unions around Europe in protest against austerity measures (See also this *Collective Bargaining Newsletter* Year 3 September and October 2010).

English: <http://www.epsu.org/cob/390>
French: <http://www.cgt.fr/spip.php?article37895>;
<http://www.english.rfi.fr/france/20101106-french-protesters-defy-rain-march-again>

Prison officers take action

November 25, 2010

Unions in the prison sector organised strike action on 15 November and have planned further action from 24 November over jobs and working conditions. The unions are calling for negotiations over plans to shut facilities as well as over staffing levels and employment conditions. In general they are demanding a proper process of social dialogue in the sector.

English: <http://www.epsu.org/cob/390>
French: <http://www.cfdt.fr/rewrite/article/29728/actualites/l-actu-des-ministeres>

Germany

Early pay increases for many metal and electronics workers

November 29, 2010

IG Metall has reported that companies employing 20% of total 3.4 million metal and electronics workers to date have moved the scheduled 2011 wage increase up from April to February. Companies and their Works Councils including Audi AG, Bosch GmbH, Siemens, the MAN Group, and Voith, the paper machine and engineering manufacturer, have agreed to pay the scheduled 2.7% increase in February. Several more companies are expected to do the same in the coming weeks. In collective agreements negotiated in February 2010, IG Metall agreed to a job preservation pact in exchange for two lump sum payments of ? 320 each in 2010 and early 2011. The union credits the early raises to a strong economic recovery in Germany (See also this *Collective Bargaining Newsletter* Year 3

February and October 2010).

English: [http://www.icem.org/en/78-ICEM-InBrief/4132-;](http://www.icem.org/en/78-ICEM-InBrief/4132-)
[http://www.automotiveworld.com/news/oems-and-markets ...](http://www.automotiveworld.com/news/oems-and-markets...)

Waste employers' offer angers union

November 25, 2010

The ver.di public services union has reacted angrily to the latest proposals from the BDE private waste employers' organisation. The union had called for a 3% pay increase backdated to May 2010 but the employers have offered nothing for an eight-month period and just 1% from January 2011 on. Ver.di is also concerned about the employers' aims to introduce a lower level pay structure which would mean some workers stuck on pay rates equivalent to those from the mid-1990s (See also this *Collective Bargaining Newsletter* Year 3 October 2010).

English: <http://www.epsu.org/cob/390>

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

Thousands march as unions protest government

November 14, 2010

Initiated by the DGB union confederation and its affiliates, on 13 November tens of thousands of protestors took to the streets of several German cities, marching against what they see as unfair social policies espoused by the coalition government of Chancellor Angela Merkel. Spokespersons of the DGB said nearly 100,000 people marched in Stuttgart, Dortmund, Nuremberg and Erfurt to voice their disapproval with the Merkel government. The demonstrations coincided with the start of the CDU, Merkel's party, annual congress. "We don't want a republic in which powerful interest groups decide the guidelines of politics with their money, their power and their influence," Berthold Huber, chairman of IG Metall, told demonstrators in Stuttgart.

English: <http://www.reuters.com/article/idUSTRE6AC21M20101113>

Greece

Strike action continues

November 30, 2010

Various sectors and occupational groups have continued strike activity against what is regarded as the government's one-sided austerity policies, and various unions have announced new strikes. Most recently a nationwide media strike has been called for Tuesday 30 November 30, from 6:00 a.m. to 6:00 a.m. on Wednesday. On Thursday 25 November various demonstrations took place in Athens. In the main demonstration, organised by public and private union federations, protesters marched through the center of the capital to the Finance Ministry. The federations also organised a three-hour work stoppage in the capital that disrupted public transport and state services such as tax offices. State television suspended their broadcasts during the stoppage. Meanwhile, in response to a call by the Panhellenic Seamen's Federation, seamen continued to be on strike from 23 November on, leaving Greek islands without ferry services for a week. The seamen are demanding job protection, creation of an independent unemployment fund and a 2% wage increase (See also this *Collective Bargaining Newsletter* Year 3 September and October 2010).

English: [http://www.ana.gr/anaweb/user/showplain?maindoc= ...;](http://www.ana.gr/anaweb/user/showplain?maindoc=...)
[http://www.businessweek.com/ap/financialnews/D9JN8LE02.htm;](http://www.businessweek.com/ap/financialnews/D9JN8LE02.htm)
<http://www.rttnews.com/ArticleView.aspx?Id=1491871>

Hungary

Unions to protest against government measures

November 29, 2010

A number of union federations will stage a demonstration in Budapest on 4 December if negotiations

with the government fail, said a statement by the joint committee of unions. According to the committee, most of the centre-right government's new laws and bills submitted to parliament "violate legal security and endanger the interests of employees." Among other things, they plan the dismissal of 25-30,000 public servants. The unions protest that the 2011 budget bill would result in reduced real wages for a large part of employees, in particular hurting the low-paid. The committee also protests that the government seeks to divert savings in private pension funds and argues that it is creating an atmosphere against public sector employees.

English: Máté Komiljovics, union correspondent;

[http://www.politics.hu/20101102/fidesz-mps-hand-in-proposal ...](http://www.politics.hu/20101102/fidesz-mps-hand-in-proposal...)

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

Pension holders blame suspension of payment transfers

November 29, 2010

Hundreds of demonstrators gathered in front of the Parliament building on 14 November to protest against the government for diverting private pension fund contributions to the central budget. In a letter addressed to Prime Minister Viktor Orban, organisers of the protest voiced their dismay that the government had not consulted the private pension funds, representing some three million members, before deciding to divert payment transfers to the state budget for 14 months. Pension fund holders are "aware of the difficult financial situation the country is in, but find it unacceptable that the government is trying to solve the problem by seizing contributions," the letter, calling to withdraw the pension law, stated.

English: Máté Komiljovics, union correspondent

Ireland

National demonstration over austerity budget and bailout package

November 30, 2010

On Saturday 27 November, the ICTU confederation organised a national demonstration outside Dublin's General Post Office in protest at what is expected to be another austerity budget with major cuts in public spending. The unions claim that the main meeting was attended by more than 100,000 people. As independent media stressed, at the heart of the protest were ordinary people, braving freezing temperatures -- parents with their children, pensioners and young people struggling to find a job. Speakers strongly criticised the government's four-year plan for economic recovery. ICTU general secretary, David Begg, said the country could not afford to pay the terms of the proposed ? 85 billion EU-IMF bailout package. In an interview, SIPTU general president Jack O'Connor branded the package a shameful indictment of the right-wing policies that informed the government's approach for the last 13 years and which now dominate thinking in EU institutions. Following the mass rally, the UNITE union has called for a "campaign of civil disobedience" ahead of Budget day on 7 December.

English: <http://www.irishtimes.com/newspaper/ireland/2010/1129/1224284370848.html>;

<http://www.irishtimes.com/newspaper/ireland/2010/1129/1224284372120.html>;

[http://www.independent.ie/national-news/trade-unions-call-for-national-strike-and-civil ...](http://www.independent.ie/national-news/trade-unions-call-for-national-strike-and-civil-...);

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/business/2010/nov/27/ireland-bailout-dublin-protest>

Confederation queries government power to reduce wages

November 25, 2010

One of the measures envisaged in the government's austerity package is to lower the National Minimum Wage (NMW) by ? 1 to ? 7.65 per hour for an adult worker, arguing that the current level causes higher levels of unemployment in the sectors where it is most prevalent and prevents small and medium sized enterprises from adjusting wage costs downward. Besides that these arguments can be questioned on good grounds, the ICTU union confederation queries the entitlement of the government to reduce the NMW. ICTU's legislation officer Esther Lynch argued, "There is nothing in the minimum wage legislation that provides the minister with power to reduce the minimum wage without going through the review mechanism." Lynch also said that according to the ILO conventions the Enterprise Minister is not allowed to rewrite the current arrangements protecting

the low-paid, the so-called Registered Employment Agreements (REAs) and Employment Regulation Orders (EROs), himself, as these are collective agreements from which he should refrain.

English: [http://www.irisht Examiner.com/ireland/unions-query-states-power-to-reduce ...](http://www.irisht Examiner.com/ireland/unions-query-states-power-to-reduce...)

Italy

Confederation calls national demonstration

November 25, 2010

The CGIL trade union confederation has called a national demonstration in Rome on 27 November for "The future of our youth and work." The demonstration is in protest at government cuts and in defense of decent work and collective bargaining. According to Rossana Dettori, general secretary of FP CGIL, the public servants' federation of CGIL, the demonstration will be aimed in particular against the planned dismissal of 80,000 fixed-term workers across the public sector and against attempts by employers to undermine collective bargaining. Another aspect is to denounce the terrible living and working conditions in which many migrant workers find themselves into.

English: <http://www.ep su.org/cob/390>; <http://www.ep su.org/a/7082>

Italian: <http://www.fpcgil.it/flex/cm/pages/ServeBLOB.php/L/IT/IDPagina/15962>

Luxembourg

Doctors' and dentists' strike ended

November 27, 2010

On 25 November, the doctors' and dentists' strike came to an end as their union AMMD and health ministers reached an agreement over the health reform bill, though the details are still lacking. Doctors and dentists began minimal services as an action against the reform on 22 October because they found that the tighter financial framework of hospitals would lead to the deterioration of patient health.

English: <http://www.station.lu/?p=edito&a=external&id=90577>

Malta

Teachers' union calls for strike at College

November 29, 2010

The MUT (teachers') union has called for a one-hour strike on Monday 6 December at MCAST, the Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology, due to what it said the College's repeated failure to abide by established agreements, work practices and legislation. Among the union's grievances are that promotion criteria are not being respected and provisions are being enforced contrary to the current agreement, in spite of various meetings held with the MCAST management. Another is that part-timers are being requested to register themselves as self-employed, contrary to established legal frameworks.

English: <http://www.independent.com.mt/news.asp?newsitemid=116001> via
http://www.labourstart.org/cgi-bin/show_news.pl?country=Malta

Netherlands

Three strike days at TNT Post

November 27, 2010

The conflict between TNT Post and the trade unions concerning the dismissal of full-time delivery workers ("postbodes" in Dutch) and their replacement by part-time, lower paid distributing clerks ("postbezorgers") has reached a climax in three days of strike, in which the country had to do

without regular postal delivery. As TNT Post did not react positively on the ultimatum the three unions involved, Abvakabo FNV, CNV Publieke Zaak and BVPP, had posed to diminish the number of forced dismissals to under 3,100, a 24-hour strike was called on Tuesday 16 November, followed by a 48-hour strike on Thursday 25 and Friday 26 November. The unions have called the industrial action "successful" (See also this *Collective Bargaining Newsletter* Year 3 June and October 2010).

Dutch: <http://www.abvakabofnv.nl/nieuws/nieuws/15000-handtekeningen>;
NRC-Handelsblad, November 15, 16, 25, 26 and 27, 2010

Unions finally agree care sector deal *November 25, 2010*

After lengthy and difficult negotiations the four unions involved (Abvakabo FNV, CNV Publieke Zaak, NU'91 and FBZ) have managed to negotiate a new basic collective agreement covering around 400,000 workers in nursing homes and home care. The deal runs backdated from March 2010 to March 2012 and results in a total pay rise of 3.1%. It includes a 0.5% increase from 1 September 2010 plus a lump sum in December worth 0.6% of annual salary. There are then two increases of 0.75% in 2011, in January and July, with the end-of-year bonus increased by 0.5%. Employers commit to allocating 2% of the payroll to training and additional leave provisions for older workers are retained along with new possibilities to save hours for younger workers. Union members can vote the basic agreement until 15 December (See also this *Collective Bargaining Newsletter* Year 3 October 2010).

English: <http://www.epsu.org/cob/390#a7069>

Dutch: <http://www.abvakabofnv.nl/nieuws/nieuws/eindelijk-onderhandelingsakkoord-vvt>
<http://www.mijnvakbond.nl/Stemmen-CAO-VVT?referrer=266>
<http://www.nu91-leden.nl/cao.asp?grp=5&uid=131>

Poland

Union needed on stadium building site *November 21, 2010*

By the end of October and in the framework of the Fair Play - Fair Work Euro Sport 2012 Campaign, the building site of the new stadium in Wroclaw was visited by representatives of Building and Wood Workers' International (BWI), from the building unions of Solidarnosc and ZZ Budowlani, from Swedish and Dutch BWI affiliates as well as by inspectors from the Polish Work Inspection (PIP). The stadium is being built by German contractor Max Bögl and about 20 subcontractors, employing workers from Poland, Germany, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Serbia, and Ukraine. It turned out that except the German workers the construction site is not organised by any union, and that there is no collective bargaining agreement in place. The Polish unions intend to organise construction sites and continue to push for an increase of the minimum wage (actually ? 330 gross per month) and the conclusion of collective agreements for the construction sector (see also this *Collective Bargaining Newsletter* Year 2 November 2009).

English: <http://www.bwint.org/default.asp?Index=3075&Language=EN>

Portugal

High level of support for national strike *November 25, 2010*

The CGTP and UGT trade union confederations joined on Wednesday 24 November in a general 24-hours strike in protest against the government's austerity measures, the first since 1988. Public sector unions reported a high turnout with widespread closures across local government and the transport system. The industrial action, in which reportedly over three million workers participated, brought the country to a halt. Most flights departing from Lisbon and Oporto were grounded and Lisbon's metro was shut. Schools, hospitals and public transport terminals were managed by skeleton staff.

English: <http://www.epsu.org/cob/390> ; <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-11825643> ;

<http://www.theportugualnews.com/cgi-bin/article.pl?id=1089-1>

Portuguese: http://www.stal.pt/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=582&Itemid=1;
<http://www.sintap.pt/>; <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-11825643>

Slovakia

Tug-of-war on labour code likely

November 1, 2010

The government of Prime Minister Iveta Radicová is meeting different opinions in realising its intention of making the country's labour law more flexible, and the negotiations over changes that have just begun could easily turn into a lengthy tug-of-war. The trade unions are happy with the law's current form, while the National Union of Employers (RÚZ) is demanding that it be made as brief as possible and more flexible. All in all, the current wording of the Labour Code suits the Confederation of Trade Unions (KOZ) and the confederation will resist any substantial changes to it, Otto Ewiak, the spokesman of KOZ, told a Slovakian magazine.

English: http://spectator.sme.sk/articles/view/40616/3/tug_of_war_on_labour_code.html

Spain

Prison unions demonstrate over working conditions

November 25, 2010

The five trade unions in the prison sector, ACAIP-USO, CC.OO, CIG, CSI-F and FSP-UGT, have organised a national demonstration on 25 November in Madrid to protest over pay, working conditions and overcrowding. The unions are angry that the prison employers have failed to abide by collective agreements and accuse them of presiding over a chaotic management system.

English: <http://www.epsu.org/cob/390>

Spanish: http://www.fspugt.es/Los_empleados_publicos_de_prisiones_protesta...

High Court ruling challenges pay cuts

November 11, 2010

The FSC-CCOO and FSP-UGT public service federations have welcomed a ruling by the High Court that the imposition of pay cuts may have contravened constitutional rights to freedom of association and collective bargaining. The case also raises issues of equal treatment as the pay cut was imposed at the Royal Spanish Mint but not in other public companies such as the RENFE railways. The particular legal challenge relates to employees of the Royal Mint but if the result is confirmed then it may well be applicable much more broadly across publicly owned companies and even across the public sector.

English: <http://www.epsu.org/cob/387>

Spanish: http://www.fspugt.es/Parece_que_la_Audiencia_Nacional_a_va_elevar...

Sweden

New rules abused to exploit migrant workers

November 23, 2010

According to a report in the Dagens Nyheter (DN) daily, Swedish companies are exploiting labour migration legislation, with work permits on the black market being sold for amounts up to SEK 30,000 (? 3,270) and either non-existent or poorly paid jobs offered in return. The Hotel & Restaurant Workers Union (Hotell och Restaurang Facket, HRF) has confirmed these practices and argues that an under-class labour force is being created in Sweden, with low pay and non-existent job security. HRF as well as the main union confederations LO and TCO blame the new law on labour migration that has eased the immigration of foreign workers. Yet, Minister for Migration

Tobias Billström, after meeting the labour market parties involved, denied that unscrupulous companies are abusing the new rules, and insisted that he will not change the law. According to the minister, it is the enforcement of the law that is important.

English: <http://www.thelocal.se/30042/20101105>; <http://www.thelocal.se/30388/20101123/>;
<http://www.thelocal.se/30116/20101109/>

Switzerland

Mediation to tackle labour dispute at the ILO

November 19, 2010

After a week of tension, the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and the ILO staff union have agreed to seek mediation over complaints that the ILO has failed to apply its own guidelines on good labour standards to its employees. The parties agreed to the proposal by the Director-General of the ILO, Mr. Juan Somavia, that union and management have recourse to a process of external, independent mediation. The union had threatened to take industrial action over its complaint that too many of the ILO's 3,000 workers were on precarious short-term contracts.

English: <http://in.reuters.com/article/idINIndia-53030120101119>;
<http://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/press-and-media-centre/press-releases> .
French: <http://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/press-and-media-centre/press-releases> .

Union and ISS reach agreement and cleaning strike ends

November 19, 2010

On 8 November, the 121-day strike by cleaners employed by ISS at the Geneva Airport ended with a contract settlement between the SSP-VPÖD public services union and ISS Switzerland. All striking workers will return to the job on 1 December. The UNI Global Union contacted ISS management to appeal for intervention in a dispute that was damaging the company's reputation, and succeeded to bring the parties back to the bargaining table. The Swiss union succeeded in its key demand of improving the salary scale. It was agreed, effective 2012, to increase the new pay scale from ISS's proposal of CHF 3,800 to 4,510 (? 3,460) per month at the top step and to increase the entry level pay rate to CHF 3,550 (? 2,725) per month, CHF 50 more per month than the ISS proposal. The parties also agreed to 2012 wage increases for auxiliary staff who are paid by the hour (See also this *Collective Bargaining Newsletter* Year 3 July-August, September and October 2010).

English: <http://www.uniglobalunion.org/Apps/UNINews.nsf> .
German and French: <http://www.vpod.ch/aktuell/nachrichten/ansicht> .

United Kingdom

Renewed action at London Underground

November 29, 2010

On Sunday 28 and Monday 29 November, London Underground services were subject to industrial action over servicing and safety issues as part of a long-running dispute over 800 ticket office job cuts, when the Rail Maritime and Transport union (RMT) and the Transport Salaried Staffs' Association (TSSA) organised a 24-hour walkout. Union leaders said they would not be recommending any walkouts over the festive season, virtually ruling out any more strikes before 10 January, but they raised the threat of longer stoppages after that. The TUC confederation supported the action. TUC General Secretary Brendan Barber commented: "It should be remembered that tube staff are not striking over pay and conditions but over ticket office closures and the impact of cuts on passengers. They are sacrificing another day's pay in the interests of passenger safety."

English: <http://www.google.com/hostednews/ukpress/article> .;
<http://www.tuc.org.uk/industrial/tuc-18863-f0.cfm>;
<http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2010/nov/28/tube-workers-begin-strike>?

Workers fear sack for being ill

November 25, 2010

Against a background of recession and looming widespread job cuts many employers are tightening up their sickness absence procedures, while sick workers are increasingly reluctant to take time off for fear of being sacked or made redundant. This is the main conclusion of a new report of the Labour Research Department (LRD). A survey of 800 union and safety reps conducted in October 2010 found that some managers in private firms were setting "zero absence" targets or cutting year-end and Christmas bonus pay if people were off sick. Some public service workers said they were losing sick pay if they were off ill for more than four days a year.

English: LRD Press Release (news@1.lrd.org.uk);
<http://www.google.com/hostednews/ukpress/article>.

Cleaners' campaign secures living wage

November 25, 2010

In the future contractors working for the University of East London will have to pay their workers at least the living wage. Currently, the living wage for London, as calculated by the Greater London Authority, is UKP 7.85 an hour (? 9.30). This is higher than the official national minimum wage of UKP 5.93 (? 7.00) an hour for workers aged 21 and over. The University agreed to introduce the living wage minimum following a campaign by cleaners organised by UNISON with the support of academic staff and the London Citizens community group.

English: <http://www.epsu.org/cob/390>;
http://www.unison.org.uk/asppresspack/pressrelease_view.asp?id=2039

Dispute over redundancy pay continues

November 25, 2010

The PCS civil service union has criticised the government for refusing to support a proposal for changes to the redundancy compensation scheme that would provide better protection for lower paid workers. The government is pressing ahead with changes that would introduce new limits of 12 months' pay for compulsory redundancy and 15 months' pay for voluntary redundancy in the short term, with the prospect of a 21-month maximum for voluntary redundancy in the longer term (See also this *Collective Bargaining Newsletter* Year 3 April, May, June, July-August and October 2010).

English: <http://www.epsu.org/cob/390>;
http://www.pcs.org.uk/en/news_and_events/news_centre/index.cfm...

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