

# collective bargaining

Issue 9/2010 | October

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

### Employers and unions agree minimum wage initiative

*October 22, 2010*

In response to the opening up of the Austrian labour market to workers from Eastern Europe by 1 May 2011, the ÖGB trade union confederation has secured an agreement with the employers to monitor pay rates and ensure that employers are paying at least the minimum rates set in sectoral agreements, thus avoiding wage dumping. The country has no legal minimum wage but very high levels of collective bargaining coverage. Unions and employers have called on the authorities to take on more employees to ensure that pay can be effectively monitored.

English: <http://www.epsu.org/cob/384>

German:

[http://www.vida.at/servlet/ContentServer?pagename=So3/Page/Index&n=So3\\_o.a&cid=1286887282851](http://www.vida.at/servlet/ContentServer?pagename=So3/Page/Index&n=So3_o.a&cid=1286887282851)

## **Union highlights role of social clauses in procurement**

*October 8, 2010*

In a conference on defending public services, the GDG-KMSFB union set out a range of social and financial measures that could help ensure the provision of quality public services. The union's list of demands included the defence of public services in the face of the uncontrolled competition characterised by the single market and the application of social and environmental clauses in public procurement. The union also underlined the importance for public services of a well-trained, motivated and decently paid workforce.

English: <http://www.epsu.org/cob/381>

German: [http://www.gdg-](http://www.gdg-kmsfb.at/servlet/ContentServer?pagename=Co1/Page/Index&n=Co1_o.a&cid=1283862568034)

[kmsfb.at/servlet/ContentServer?pagename=Co1/Page/Index&n=Co1\\_o.a&cid=1283862568034](http://www.gdg-kmsfb.at/servlet/ContentServer?pagename=Co1/Page/Index&n=Co1_o.a&cid=1283862568034)

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## **Belgium**

### **Strike closes rail links**

*October 19, 2010*

On Monday 18 October, railway workers shut down virtually the entire national rail network and disrupted international services in protest at rail freight reforms which could cost hundreds of train drivers' jobs. The strike was called by the ACOD/CGSP union, affiliated with the ABVV/FGTB confederation, and supported by the independent OVS union. The protest focused on the terms of new flexible contracts that the management of rail operator SNCB/NMBS's freight unit is seeking to impose on staff. The union warned that the contracts would make it easier to lay off hundreds of train drivers. The resultant strike action coincided with the ongoing massive protests in neighbouring France, blocking rail transport across much of western Europe.

English: <http://www.morningstaronline.co.uk/index.php/news/content/view/full/96568>

Dutch: <http://knack.rnews.be/nl/actualiteit/nieuws/belgie/ovs-sluit-zich-aan-bij-treinstaking-acod/article-1194835156073.htm>

### **Strike against high work pressure**

*October 13, 2010*

On 12 October, 600 workers in three assembly departments of the Case New Holland (CNH) agricultural machinery plant in Zaventem held a strike at protest of high work pressure, after the unions had spread a leaflet questioning the effects of the World Class Manufacturing (WCM) system that CNH introduced some years ago. The workers argued that WCM goes at the expense of health and safety, and frustrates taking days-off. Moreover, it was argued that CNH was using temporary unemployment as a cheap form of flexibility. Negotiations between unions and management resulted in extra staff for the three departments at stake.

Dutch:

[http://www.abvvmetaal.be/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&catid=29%3Aabelgie&id=1475%3Aaspontane-staking-bij-case-new-holland-om-te-hoge-werkdruk-&Itemid=202&lang=nl](http://www.abvvmetaal.be/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&catid=29%3Aabelgie&id=1475%3Aaspontane-staking-bij-case-new-holland-om-te-hoge-werkdruk-&Itemid=202&lang=nl)

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## **Bulgaria**

### **Final decision due on pension reform**

*October 27, 2010*

Government, employers and trade unions are in the process of another attempt to finally reach an agreement on the steps to overhaul the country's pension system. Only the increase in social contributions payment by 1.8% percentage-points was agreed during the meeting of the so-called National Council for Tripartite Cooperation on Sunday 17 October. No consensus was reached on the number of years one has to work before drawing a full pension – whether this period starts to increase by four months as of 2013, as the government proposed, or as of 2015, as the trade unions demand. The decision was initially due on Wednesday 27 October, but was further delayed due to the

additional information that employers demanded from Finance Minister Simeon Djankov. Earlier, on 7 October, over 10,000 protested in front of the Bulgarian Parliament in Sofia, opposing the government plan to raise the retirement age. The rally was organised by the Confederation of Independent Trade Unions.

English: [http://www.novinite.com/view\\_news.php?id=121265](http://www.novinite.com/view_news.php?id=121265);  
[http://www.novinite.com/view\\_news.php?id=121541](http://www.novinite.com/view_news.php?id=121541);  
[http://www.google.com/hostednews/canadianpress/article/ALeqM5hSLBagojBVf6\\_oacsjYiuWYa7mA?docId=4765413](http://www.google.com/hostednews/canadianpress/article/ALeqM5hSLBagojBVf6_oacsjYiuWYa7mA?docId=4765413)

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## Croatia

### **Unions consider general strike**

*October 22, 2010*

Trade unions, angered by the Constitutional Court's decision, which had labeled the referendum on labour laws as unnecessary, are considering a general strike, protests across the country and a petition calling for early elections. The unions will vote on which one of the three actions to undertake in response to the Court's decision that they call "political" and "preventing democracy." They emphasise, however, that their main motive behind country-wide action would be the overall poor economic situation. The Court decided that the reasons for holding the referendum were no longer relevant after the government had withdrawn the proposed amendments to the labour laws (See also this *Collective Bargaining Newsletter* Year 3 June and July-August 2010).

English: [http://www.croatiantimes.com/news/General\\_News/2010-10-22/14604/Unions\\_threaten\\_with\\_general\\_strike\\_](http://www.croatiantimes.com/news/General_News/2010-10-22/14604/Unions_threaten_with_general_strike_)

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## Czech Republic

### **Political insecurity concerning civil service pay cuts**

*October 26, 2010*

On Tuesday 12 October, Prime Minister Petr Nečas met with national and public sector union leaders concerning their threat of strike action over government plans to cut wages and shake up wage scales. Nečas offered to leave current wage scales as they are but pledged to go ahead with the government's plans to cut wages in the civil service in 2011 by 10%, either through job losses or pay cuts. He added that the budget for state employees would not be touched from 2012 to 2014. Some union leaders indicated directly after the meeting that the government's offer changed little. Meanwhile, in the 15 October elections with 41 out of 81 seats the opposition Social Democrats gained a majority in the Senate, the upper house of parliament, and political analysts have suggested that this triumph could impact austerity measures and reforms put forward by the government.

English: <http://www.praguemonitor.com/2010/10/13/govt-not-give-unions-wages-be-cut>;  
<http://www.radio.cz/en/news#2>; <http://www.radio.cz/en/section/news/news-2010-10-24>

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## Finland

### **Collective agreement for personal helpers**

*October 26, 2010*

A new group of employees have won their first collective agreement. The agreement, in force from 1 December 2010 to 30 April 2012, covers almost 1,000 personal helpers attending to seriously disabled persons. The agreement regulates compensation for overtime, evening, night and Saturday work, for working hours, and many other issues. Helpers earn between Euro 7 and 10 per hour. Under the agreement, the employees are represented by the union for the public and welfare sectors, JHL, and the employers by the Personal Helpers' Employer Association, Heta. Heta's members are disabled persons who employ personal helpers independently.

English: <http://www.jhl.fi/portal/en/news/archive/?bid=479>

### **Considerable long-term wage increases for cleaners**

*October 20, 2010*

About 70,000 cleaners and other property service workers will see their wages rise significantly in

the next five years. The collective agreement between the Service Union United PAM and the employer association Kiinteistöpalvelut, announced on 19 October, will raise wages by over 20%. The minimum tariffs will rise by 16.5% and the rest will come from annual wage hikes. The agreement will raise minimum wages of property services to the level of other service industries, and the parties believe this will ease the recruitment problems cleaning and other property service companies are facing. Currently the lowest wage for cleaners is slightly below Euro 8 per hour.

English: <http://www.artto.kaapeli.fi/unions/T2010/n34> via [http://www.labourstart.org/cgi-bin/show\\_news.pl?country=Finland](http://www.labourstart.org/cgi-bin/show_news.pl?country=Finland)

### **Wood workers win almost 2% increase**

*October 8, 2010*

As the Wood and Allied Workers' Union and the employer association Finnish Forest Industry approved a new collective agreement on Thursday 7 October, the strike of 4,100 wood workers ended. The agreement covers 18,000 workers. All will receive, backdated 1 October, a 1.1% wage increase. In addition, a 0.8% rise is to be implemented on the basis of local negotiations. The biggest obstacle to an agreement was resolved by leaving the regulations on seniority allowance untouched. Originally it was the employers' side that demanded changes to these regulations.

English: <http://www.artto.kaapeli.fi/unions/T2010/n32> via [http://www.labourstart.org/cgi-bin/show\\_news.pl?country=Finland](http://www.labourstart.org/cgi-bin/show_news.pl?country=Finland)

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## France

### **Marseille's oil port workers to continue strike**

*October 27, 2010*

Workers at the Fos-Lavera oil terminal near Marseille who have been on strike for a month will continue their action until a deal is found with management, the local CGT union spokesman said on Wednesday 27 October. Pascal Galeote, the union spokesman, said contact had not been broken with management, but there were still several issues to be resolved. The protests at Fos-Lavera started on 27 September over working conditions and the planned port reform. They intensified in conjunction with the nationwide strikes over the pension reforms. The Fos-Lavera oil terminal is the world's third-largest and key to the supplying of French refineries.

English: <http://af.reuters.com/article/energyOilNews/idAFLDE69Q18W20101027> via [http://www.labourstart.org/cgi-bin/show\\_news.pl?country=France](http://www.labourstart.org/cgi-bin/show_news.pl?country=France)

### **Massive and sustained mobilisation against pension changes**

*October 26, 2010*

Public and private sector unions have managed to mobilise millions of people in protest against the government's planned pension changes. An estimated 3.5 million joined the latest protests with demonstrations and strikes taking place across the country, with many university and school students joining the action. With the pension bill through the Senate and set to be signed into law the last week of October, on Monday 25 October CFDT union leader Francois Chereque and Laurence Parisot, head of the MEDEF employers' group, said on television they were open to talks on youth and senior citizen employment (See also this *Collective Bargaining Newsletter* Year 3 May, June, July-August and September 2010).

English: <http://www.epsu.org/cob/384>;  
<http://af.reuters.com/article/worldNews/idAFTRE69O1DE20101026>

French: <http://www.cgt.fr/spip.php?article37842>; [http://www.force-ouvriere.fr/page\\_principal/semaine/index.asp?id=2076&2010/10/20/Retraites-L-epreuve-de-force-se-poursuit-sur-le-terrain](http://www.force-ouvriere.fr/page_principal/semaine/index.asp?id=2076&2010/10/20/Retraites-L-epreuve-de-force-se-poursuit-sur-le-terrain)

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## Germany

### **Rail delays as unions strike over pay increase**

*October 26, 2010*

In the morning of Tuesday 26 October rail passengers in various regions faced delays as

transportation unions held a warning strike, calling for greater wage equality. They say private rail operators pay significantly less than national operator Deutsche Bahn. Rail unions Transnet and GDBA were asking for pay rises from six regional operators, stating that Abellio, Benex, Keolis, Veolia, Hessische Landesbahn and Arriva pay staff as much as 20% less than the national operator pays its rail workers. Unions have warned that further strikes could be staged if a deal will not be reached. The strike, involving about 1,600 workers, ended on Tuesday afternoon.

English: <http://www.dw-world.de/dw/article/0,,6150094,00.html>

German: [http://www.boeckler.de/show\\_chronik.html?chronik\\_eintrag=/html/109521.html](http://www.boeckler.de/show_chronik.html?chronik_eintrag=/html/109521.html)

### **Early pay rise at Bosch**

*October 26, 2010*

Bosch, the German auto parts and power tools group, decided Tuesday 26 October to raise pay for 85,000 workers two months earlier to thank them for concessions which have helped turn the company's results around. Bosch top management and its supervisory board decided to apply a 2.7% wage increase in February 2011 instead of in April, a company statement said, quoting personnel director Wolfgang Malchow saying, "In difficult times we benefited from the strong loyalty of our staff." Helga Schwitzer of the IG Metall union reacted that the decision was fair, "workers will thus share in the growth."

English: <http://www.thelocal.de/money/20101026-30761.html>

### **Collective bargaining in paper industry covers East and West**

*October 18, 2010*

For the first time collective negotiations in the paper industry will cover both the western and eastern regions of Europe's largest economy. Those talks between the IG-BCE union and VAP, the employers' association, started 7 October in Dresden, covering 39,000 workers. The union delegation insisted in the first round of talks that orders in the industry have picked up and that recovery is apparent, and thus wage increases are justified for both regular workers and apprentices. VAP contended that the financial crisis is still in effect due to high raw material and high energy costs. Without specifying an exact pay gain, the union said it seeks a noticeable remuneration gain, improvements in general conditions of work, and common collective agreement time frames between enterprises in the east and in the west (The current contract in the west expired on 31 August, while in the east the two-year agreement will run until 30 November).

English: <http://www.icem.org/en/78-ICEM-InBrief/4067-IGBCE-Seeking-Wage-Gains-as-East-West-Enjoined-in-German-Paper-Talks>

### **Energy section union leader expects tough bargaining round**

*October 8, 2010*

Over 100 works and staff council representatives attended ver.di's 2010 waste sector conference. They received a stark warning from Erhard Ott, head of the union's energy, waste and transport section, that they were facing the prospect of very tough bargaining in the sector, much tougher than previous bargaining rounds. The conference also discussed the impact of an ageing workforce. With the average age of workers in the sector now reaching 50, delegates focused on the importance of improvements in health and safety and the need to reduce the impact of heavy lifting.

English: <http://www.epsu.org/cob/381>

German: <https://ver-und-entsorgung.verdi.de/abfallwirtschaft/br-pr-konferenz-2010/betriebe-spielen-auf-zeit>

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## **Greece**

### **Substantial support for latest strike action**

*October 25, 2010*

ADEDY, the civil service union federation, organised a strike on 7 October against the government's austerity measures and its agreement with the European Union and the International Monetary Fund, which was supported by thousands of civil servants. One element of the agreement is a reform of the public sector pay system; however, ADEDY does not want to enter into talks on this unless the government reverses the cuts in public sector pay implemented earlier in 2010. After a 24-hours'



railway strike on Thursday 14 October, starting Monday 25 October a series of rail strikes are planned (See also this *Collective Bargaining Newsletter* Year 3 September 2010).

English: <http://www.epsu.org/cob/384>; <http://greece.greekreporter.com/2010/10/07/strike-against-austerity-thousands-hit-streets/>;  
[http://www.setimes.com/cocoon/setimes/xhtml/en\\_GB/newsbriefs/setimes/newsbriefs/2010/10/14/nb-02](http://www.setimes.com/cocoon/setimes/xhtml/en_GB/newsbriefs/setimes/newsbriefs/2010/10/14/nb-02); <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/report-on-business/economy/greek-strikes-halt-train-services/article1771151/>

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## Hungary

### **Unions negotiate mass lay-offs at railway company**

*October 27, 2010*

The Austrian railway company OBB plans mass lay-offs at its Hungarian railway-cargo subsidiary Rail Cargo Hungaria. OBB also plans talks with the Hungarian government regarding track-usage fees. According to reliable sources, austerity plans prepared by OBB could result in lay-offs of 700 to 1,000 employees in 2011, while the dismissal of 460 in the first half of 2011 would already have been decided on. The trade unions have had talks with the Austrian owner, which agreed not to dismiss any employees during the negotiation phase.

English: Máté Komiljovics, union correspondent

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## Ireland

### **Warnings that budget cutbacks will damage society and recovery**

*October 25, 2010*

Government attempts to implement cutbacks in line with European Commission (EC) demands will result in permanent damage to the fabric of society, general secretary of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU), David Begg, told a conference of economists. Begg said he did “not subscribe to the accepted orthodoxy that the budget deficit must be reduced to 3% by 2014”, as demanded by the European Commission. The ICTU leader said the 2014 deadline was “arbitrary”, adding “more importantly they cannot be attained without doing permanent damage to our economy and the fabric of our society”. Some days earlier the Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI) warned the Croke Park agreement may have to be torn up as the economy faces massive cutbacks of € 15 billion to correct the budget deficit: twice the sum agreed by the government and the EC under the 2014 deadline. ESRI report author Ide Kearney said that unemployment could stay above 10% indefinitely if the economy gets stifled under the burden of budget cutbacks. She suggested the timeframe to correct the deficit to be extended to 2016. Co-author Alan Barrett said not to be convinced that Ireland would further damage its credibility with the markets if a longer adjustment time was negotiated with the EC.

English: <http://www.irishexaminer.com/ireland/ictu-warns-cutbacks-will-damage-society-134485.html>; <http://www.irishexaminer.com/business/esri-warns-croke-park-deal-may-have-to-be-scrapped-134117.html>

### **Smaller pensions planned for new civil servants**

*October 10, 2010*

Public servants recruited from January 2011 will have to make do with a reduced pension and a later retirement age under new pension cutback plans announced by the Ministry of Finance. Under the plan, designed to cut back on the public service pensions' bill, the minimum retirement age for new recruits is to be raised to 66. The current minimum retirement age is 65 but most public servants can stop work on a full pension at age 60 as long as they have 40 years' service. Moreover, in a move that will significantly cut back a public servant's pension, the final pension will be based on 50% of career average earnings rather than 50% of final salary, as at present. Originally put forward by Finance Minister Brian Lenihan in last year's budget, the announcement has been the subject of negotiations between the public service unions and the finance department at the Labour Relations Commission for the last few months. The unions have yet to endorse the plan though it is understood the department will proceed regardless.

English: <http://www.tribune.ie/news/home-news/article/2010/oct/10/smaller-pensions-and-later-retirement-for-new-civi/> via [http://www.labourstart.org/cgi-bin/show\\_news.pl?country=Ireland](http://www.labourstart.org/cgi-bin/show_news.pl?country=Ireland)

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## Italy

### **Thousands march in peaceful protest in Rome**

*October 20, 2010*

On Saturday 16 October hundreds of thousands of Italian metalworkers demonstrated in Rome in a rally organised by FIOM, the metalworkers' federation of the CGIL union confederation, demanding workers' rights, democracy and jobs. Two separate protests marched peacefully to Piazza San Giovanni, where a final rally took place and the general secretary of FIOM, Maurizio Landini, as well as the general secretary of CGIL, Guglielmo Epifani, addressed the public. Landini said, "We take to the streets to defend the national contract, which risks to be cancelled, to defend work and democracy and to show a different exit from this crises from that shown by the government and the Italian Association of Employers, given one of the biggest assaults of all times on the rights of workers." The CGIL stated it will take again to the street on November 27, and if no response from the government, the union will call a general strike.

English: <http://www.imfmetal.org/index.cfm?c=24389&l=2>

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## Netherlands

### **Union ultimatum at TNT Post**

*October 27, 2010*

The long-lasting 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") is moving towards a climax. The three unions involved, FNV Abvakabo, CNV Publieke Zaak and BVPP have posed TNT an ultimatum to diminish the number of forced dismissals to under 3,100; if not, a 24-hours' strike will be held in the second week of November. Although the unions earlier succeeded to bring down forced job losses from 4,500 to 3,100, they argue that the speed of restructuring is still too high, with the workload in the TNT distribution centres growing to unacceptable levels. As a number of wildcat strikes has already shown, a new efficiency regime in these centres is said to have spoiled shop-floor relations totally. By contrast, a TNT spokesman argued, "It is inevitable that such things are happening" (See also this *Collective Bargaining Newsletter* Year 3 June 2010).

Dutch: <http://www.fd.nl/artikel/20593311/donderdag-ultimatum-vakbonden-tnt>; *NRC-Handelsblad*, October 27, 2010.

### **New agreement for youth workers**

*October 22, 2010*

The FNV Abvakabo and CNV Publieke Zaak unions have agreed a new deal with the MOgroep employers' organisation in youth care. The agreement covers more than 30,000 employees and includes a wage increase of 1.25% with a one-off payment of € 180. The agreement runs until 1 May 2011 and also includes provisions on training, mobility, social innovation and managing the workload. Employers and unions hope that the measures will lead to improved employability and retention of youth care workers in the industry.

English: <http://www.epsu.org/cob/384>

Dutch: <http://www.abvakabofnv.nl/nieuws/nieuws/onderhandelingsakkoord-cao-jeugd zorg>  
<http://www.mijnvakbond.nl/Onderhandelingsakkoord-CAO-Jeugd zorg?referrer=266>

### **Employers threaten to impose pay deal**

*October 22, 2010*

The four unions negotiating the agreement for nursing homes and home care (Abvakabo FNV, CNV Publieke Zaak, NU'91 and FBZ) have been stunned by the proposal of the employers to implement a pay increase rather than agree a deal with the unions. The unions point out that employers are demanding increased flexibility from employees who are facing rising workloads. The employers claim that they have agreed to most of the union demands apart from the percentage pay increase. Unions challenge this, saying that there are still unresolved issues around working time and training.

English: <http://www.epsu.org/cob/384>



Dutch: <http://www.abvakabofnv.nl/nieuws/nieuws/oproep-eenzijdige-loonsverhoging-actiz-btn>

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## Norway

### **Strike possible in private nurseries if mediation fails**

*October 22, 2010*

The Fagforbundet and Delta unions are involved in negotiations in the private nursery sector. There is currently a process of mediation going on, but if this fails the unions will organise strike action across the country. They want to make sure that the pay increase in the private nursery sector is line with that already agreed in the municipal sector and so far the employers have not made an adequate offer.

English: <http://www.epsu.org/cob/384>

Norwegian: [http://www.fagforbundet.no/forsida/tariff/?article\\_id=56618](http://www.fagforbundet.no/forsida/tariff/?article_id=56618);

[http://www.fagforbundet.no/forsida/tariff/?article\\_id=56618](http://www.fagforbundet.no/forsida/tariff/?article_id=56618)

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## Poland

### **Supermarket strike opposes worsening conditions**

*October 7, 2010*

The Solidarnosc National Section of Commerce Employees called for a strike on 7 October as to highlight the worsening conditions in stores of a number of large supermarket chains, including Biedronka, Carrefour, Real, Bomi, Praktiker, and Makro Cash and Carry. Union members will work-to-rule, following every single regulation to the letter in order to disrupt the pace of trade. They will hand out leaflets to customers explaining their grievances, which include the low rate of pay of shop-floor workers (hardly above the minimum wage) and the ever-increasing number of duties they are expected to perform. They also complain that they are rarely employed on full-time contracts and that jobs are lost when big supermarkets cut costs by allowing suppliers to stack shelves. The protests coincided with the World Day for Decent Work.

English: <http://www.wbj.pl/article-51469-supermarket-strike-to-hit-poland-thursday.html?typ=ise>  
via [http://www.labourstart.org/cgi-bin/show\\_news.pl?country=Poland](http://www.labourstart.org/cgi-bin/show_news.pl?country=Poland)

Polish:

[http://www.gazetaprawna.pl/wiadomosci/artykuly/456789,dzisiaj\\_strajk\\_wloski\\_w\\_sieciach\\_handlowych\\_przygotuj\\_sie\\_na\\_kolejki\\_w\\_sklepach.html](http://www.gazetaprawna.pl/wiadomosci/artykuly/456789,dzisiaj_strajk_wloski_w_sieciach_handlowych_przygotuj_sie_na_kolejki_w_sklepach.html); <http://www.tvn24.pl/1,1676772,druk.html>

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## Portugal

### **Unions plan national demonstration followed by general strike**

*October 22, 2010*

Public service unions in the Frente Comum have called a national demonstration of public administration workers on 6 November in protest at the government's decision to freeze public sector pay, increase the VAT, freeze promotion and a range of other measures aimed at cutting costs. Unions will also be building for the general strike on 24 November called by both the CGTP and UGT trade union confederations in protest at the government's austerity policies.

English: <http://www.epsu.org/cob/384>;

Portuguese: [http://www.stal.pt/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=557&Itemid=1](http://www.stal.pt/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=557&Itemid=1);

<http://www.sintap.pt/>

### **Firefighters protest over government plans**

*October 22, 2010*

Over 400 firefighters joined a demonstration in Lisbon on 20 October to protest against government proposals for the fire service. The STAL and STML unions argue that the plans are about getting a fire service on the cheap; they fail to provide for a professional service with proper pay and career structure and taking full account of appropriate health and safety standards and working time.

English: <http://www.epsu.org/cob/384>;

Portuguese: [http://www.stal.pt/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=556&Itemid=1](http://www.stal.pt/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=556&Itemid=1)

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## Romania

### **Joint union protest in Bucharest**

*October 27, 2010*

The five trade union confederations, the Cartel Alfa National Trade Union Confederation, the National Trade Union Bloc (BNS), the Fratia National Confederation of Free Trade Unions in Romania (CNSLR), the Confederation of Democratic Trade Unions of Romania (CSDR) and the Meridian National Trade Union Confederation, on 27 October organised a protest march and rally in Bucharest during the parliamentary debate and vote on the opposition's no-confidence motion (which the government coalition was to survive). Leader of the Cartel Alfa, Bogdan Iuliu Hossu, explained that the union confederations decided to organise the extensive demonstration after they had talked about the union claims with the representatives of the government and with parliament delegates. Dumitru Costin, BNS president, confirmed that the talks did not result in solutions for meeting the union claims.

English:

<http://www.actmedia.eu/2010/10/27/top+story/trade+union+protest+rally+and+march+today+in+bucharest+/30288>;

<http://www.actmedia.eu/2010/10/28/top+story/romania+government+survives+austerity+confidence+vote/30314>

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## Slovakia

### **Unions mobilise around the country**

*October 22, 2010*

A demonstration in Bratislava on 12 October was the third major protest organised by trade unions against the government's austerity measures. The government is planning cuts of € 986 million in 2011, € 154 million of which is due to come from public sector pay cuts. Unions are calling for measures to boost employment and protect social security and are still hoping for negotiations with the government but are also considering continuing their protests. One day before the Bratislava rally, Prime Minister Iveta Radičová met the union leaders and said they are entitled to express their stance through protests. However, she rejected the claim that her government is not interested in improving people's living standards.

English: <http://www.epsu.org/cob/384>;

[http://spectator.sme.sk/articles/view/40471/3/unions\\_rally\\_against\\_austerity\\_package.html](http://spectator.sme.sk/articles/view/40471/3/unions_rally_against_austerity_package.html)

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### **Government agrees to raise minimum wage**

*October 13, 2010*

The minimum wage will rise from the current € 307.70 by 3% to € 317 per month as of next year, following a decision by the government of Prime Minister Iveta Radičová taken on 13 October. The leaders of the four governing coalition parties agreed to the rise despite strong opposition from employers' groups and protests by representatives of regional governments. Unions, by contrast, had argued in favour of a rise. The Labour Ministry proposed the increase in line with the law on the minimum wage that says that, if social partners fail to agree on the level of the minimum wage, the ministry has to propose an increase by the percentage of the average wage increase in the preceding year, 2009.

English:

[http://spectator.sme.sk/articles/view/40446/10/slovak\\_government\\_agrees\\_to\\_increase\\_minimum\\_monthly\\_wage\\_to\\_317.html](http://spectator.sme.sk/articles/view/40446/10/slovak_government_agrees_to_increase_minimum_monthly_wage_to_317.html)

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## Slovenia

### **Compromise sought over energy restructuring**

*October 13, 2010*

The SDE energy sector union has called off a strike that was announced for Tuesday 12 October in order to put pressure on the government in negotiations over restructuring of the electricity distribution sector. It was agreed with Prime Minister Bortolussi Pahor that a compromise solution

would be found as soon as possible. Trade union representative Franc Dolar and Economy Minister Darja Radic told the press that an active dialogue would be established between unions and government. In the restructuring plan the five majority state-owned distributors would be split into market and network divisions, with the market divisions to be sold to major energy traders or producers.

English: <http://www.epsu.org/cob/381>; <http://www.balkans.com/open-news.php?uniquenumber=74578>

### **Public sector strike suspended**

*October 8, 2010*

Public sector unions agreed to suspend their strike in response to a government commitment to abide by the current collective agreement. One of the main issues of dispute is the timetable for paying salary adjustments arising from changes in the public sector pay system. The adjustments were meant to be paid in four installments but the government wants to suspend payment of the third quarter until economic growth reaches 2.5% a year.

English: <http://www.epsu.org/cob/381>; <http://www.emg.rs/en/news/region/134840.html>

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## **Spain**

### **Iberia reaches deal with unions for low-cost carrier**

*October 13, 2010*

The Iberia airline has reached a deal with the transport unions of CCOO and UGT which opens the way to the creation of a new low-cost carrier to handle its short and medium-haul routes, it announced. The collective agreement covers 14,750 employees, or 70% of the total airline's workforce, and will remain in place until December 2012. It includes wage increases and "a guarantee of employment" for workers once the new carrier is established. Since Iberia announced in October 2009 that it planned to start a low-cost airline to handle its short- and medium-haul routes, unions have been negotiating with its management on a new collective agreement covering the new airline.

English: [http://www.expatica.com/es/news/spanish-news/iberia-seals-union-deal-for-new-low-cost-carrier\\_103342.html](http://www.expatica.com/es/news/spanish-news/iberia-seals-union-deal-for-new-low-cost-carrier_103342.html)

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## **Sweden**

### **Aviation maintenance workers win agreement**

*October 22, 2010*

A dispute by aircraft maintenance technicians has been settled after an agreement. On 7 October these workers, represented by the Svenska Transportarbetareförbundet (ST) union, began a two-day strike and an indefinite overtime ban over the terms of their collective agreement. The overtime ban ended on 15 October after an agreement was reached with the Swedish federation of enterprises; as a result, a strike planned for 16 October was called off. The main sticking point was which technicians were covered by the collective agreement and the need to protect local agreements, which had been reached outside the auspices of the collective agreement. Jonny Fransson of ST commented: "We were worried that the employers could give notice to terminate the local agreements, leaving members with lower wages and poorer conditions. We have prevented this from happening with this new agreement", adding: "We also got the Swedish aircraft engineers' union involved in the agreement as a third party. This means that all the workers are now covered by the collective agreement."

English: <http://www.itfglobal.org/news-online/index.cfm/newsdetail/5279?frmSessionLanguage=ENG>

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## **Switzerland**

### **Striking cleaners take protest to ISS offices**

*October 22, 2010*

Striking workers are maintaining their protests against the ISS cleaning multinational that terminated the collective agreement covering employees at Geneva Airport. Earlier this month the

strikers, supported by local trade unionists, protested outside the ISS offices in Zürich. Their union, VPÖD/SSP, criticised ISS for spending money on a legal action against a local Genevan community and trade union group that had called on international organisations based in the city, such as the International Labour Organisation, to terminate their contracts with the company (See also this *Collective Bargaining Newsletter* Year 3 July-August and September 2010).

English: <http://www.epsu.org/cob/384>;

French: [http://www.ssp-vpod.ch/actualites/nouvelles/ansicht/article/iss-les-grevistes-et-leurs-soutiens-manifestent-a-zurich.html?tx\\_ttnews%5BbackPid%5D=34&cHash=baa51f1dea](http://www.ssp-vpod.ch/actualites/nouvelles/ansicht/article/iss-les-grevistes-et-leurs-soutiens-manifestent-a-zurich.html?tx_ttnews%5BbackPid%5D=34&cHash=baa51f1dea)

### **Wage increase and social plan negotiated for postal workers**

*October 19, 2010*

At a special conference of the Swiss Communications Union, Syndicom, postal workers have agreed to a negotiated wage increase of 2.8%. This consists of 1% increase granted to all employees, 0.8% of payroll to be devoted to individual increases, and finally, the Post will pay the entire employee's contribution to the improvement of the Post Office Pension Fund, worth 1% of the wage sum. The wage negotiations have been conducted this year in parallel to negotiations on a broad package of measures to maintain security of employment for all staff in the event of future restructuring. The new social plan that was also approved includes support for job search in-house or external special financial assistance for professional job search, part-time work made available from 58 years of age, and the opportunity to take early retirement from 62.

English:

<http://www.uniglobalunion.org/Apps/iportal.nsf/pages/homeEn?OpenDocument&exURL=http://www.uniglobalunion.org/Apps/UNINews.nsf/vwLkpById/ED89351DA06A9CA7C12577C1002F038A?OpenDocument>

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## **United Kingdom**

### **Union to ballot Royal Mail postal managers on strike action**

*October 26, 2010*

The Unite union reports that 8,500 managers based in head offices at the Royal Mail, Parcelforce and the Post Office will vote on whether to launch a campaign of industrial action over forced redundancies. The ballot is being held in protest at plans to make between 1,500 managers redundant, of which between 300 and 400 managers will be have to go compulsorily. Paul Reuter, national officer for Unite, said: "Managers are so concerned about their futures that for the first time in over 30 years they will vote on industrial action. Unite will not allow managers to be forced out because of the poor decisions made at the very top of Royal Mail Group."

English:

<http://www.uniglobalunion.org/Apps/iportal.nsf/pages/homeEn?OpenDocument&exURL=http://www.uniglobalunion.org/Apps/UNINews.nsf/vwLkpById/D9451EBF5CF2DFE1C12577C800692037?OpenDocument>

### **Thousands attend nation-wide union protests**

*October 23, 2010*

Union activists have taken part in a series of protests across the UK as part of a union campaign against the government's spending cuts. On Wednesday 20 October, Chancellor (Finance Minister) George Osborne announced deep public spending cuts. About half a million public sector jobs are likely to be lost as part of the cuts - the deepest and most wide-ranging by a British government in decades. Rail, Maritime and Transport (RMT) union general secretary Bob Crow told a London rally collective action was needed to fight the cuts. He said the movement needed to be built up "into the housing estates, into the workplaces, into every part of society and say we aren't paying the price for the corruption of the bankers" (See also this *Collective Bargaining Newsletter* Year 3 September 2010).

English: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-11612012>

### **Local government unions put in wage claim**

*October 22, 2010*

The three local government unions – UNISON, GMB and Unite, representing more than 1.6 million workers – have submitted a claim for a UKP 250 (€ 282) wage increase for next year (covering April 2011-March 2012). The unions argue that their members cannot put up with another year of pay freeze. This year local government pay was frozen even though the government said that workers on less than UKP 21,000 (€ 23,700) could get UKP 250. Two thirds of local government workers earn below the UKP 21,000 threshold.

English: <http://www.epsu.org/cob/384>;  
[http://www.unison.org.uk/asppresspack/pressrelease\\_view.asp?id=2010](http://www.unison.org.uk/asppresspack/pressrelease_view.asp?id=2010)

### **Union continues to resist government plans to cut redundancy pay**

*October 8, 2010*

The PCS civil service union is challenging the government over its plans to make substantial cuts in the redundancy compensation scheme. The union it is still prepared to negotiate with the government over the scale of the reductions. The union took the previous government to the High Court over the scheme. The Court confirmed that the scheme could not altered without the agreement of all six unions in the civil service (See also this *Collective Bargaining Newsletter* Year 3 April, May, June and July-August 2010).

English: <http://www.epsu.org/cob/381>;  
[http://www.pcs.org.uk/en/news\\_and\\_events/news\\_centre/index.cfm/id/4C2BAAA5-1961-4A07-9054C7A804ADC896](http://www.pcs.org.uk/en/news_and_events/news_centre/index.cfm/id/4C2BAAA5-1961-4A07-9054C7A804ADC896)

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