

Should you not be able to view this newsletter correctly, then please [click here](#)
Collective bargaining newsletter main page [click here](#)
To subscribe/unsubscribe to the collective bargaining newsletter: [Mariya Nikolova](#)

collective bargaining

Issue 2/2012 February

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



etui.

contents

Austria

Private health sector with new agreements after long battle
Strike threat brings agreement in energy sector
New minimum wages after agreement in food industries
Pay deal for local workers in Carinthia

Belgium

Unions suspend industrial action at pension service
Dock workers end strike

Cyprus

Bases workers against freeze of cost of living allowance
Construction workers on strike

Denmark

Competitiveness first in transport and logistics agreement
New two-year agreement for manufacturing

Estonia

Law on collective bargaining amended under public pressure
Teachers to strike on 7 March

Finland

Unions fight cuts at Nokia Siemens

France

Air France and unions agree on procedure for strikes
Union criticizes lack of government initiatives on gender equality

Germany

Union wants 6.5% increase for public sector workers
Union demands more rights for precarious workers
Labour minister hails wage increases
Agreement on restructuring at E.ON

Greece

Unions envisage popular revolt over bailout

Hungary

Nokia cuts 2,300 jobs at Hungary plant

Mass lay-offs at Malév and Budapest airport

Ireland

Removal of JLC system has not created extra jobs

Italy

Firefighters' demonstration highlights impact of cuts

New agreement for bank sector

Luxembourg

Wage indexation limitation approved in parliament

Netherlands

Provincial government employers given deadline to negotiate

Strike action of cleaners continued

Union confederations reject zero wage increases

Printing employers return to negotiating table

Poland

Polish workers win non-compliance case in UK

Portugal

General strike called for 22 March

Romania

Strike at Electrolux ends, most claims won

Non-compliance by offshore subcontractor

Spain

Unions call for nationwide protest

Tripartite agreement on pensions and collective bargaining

Civil servants protest budget cuts in Madrid area

Sweden

Cabin crew strike over working hours

Union rejects lower pay for younger workers

Switzerland

Social plan signed at Novartis

United Kingdom

Local government workers face third year of pay freeze

Rally calls on Unilever to save UK pensions

Municipality angers unions

Equal pay victory for council workers

Austria

Private health sector with new agreements after long battle

February 28, 2012

The vida and GPA-djp service trade unions have reached three agreements in the private health care sector. This concerns the BAGS-KV agreement, covering around 90,000 workers for one year starting 1 February 2012, and the agreement covering 12,000 workers employed by the Caritas social welfare organisation. Wages in both agreements will increase by 3.4%. The increase in the third agreement, for the 6,000 employees of the Vienna Red Cross, is slightly lower at 3.3%. In all three cases changes to the treatment of parental and other leave will mean protect pay and will benefit women workers in particular. The unions had organised a variety of actions to support the negotiators, including a day of action on 1 February, mobilising over 6,000 protesters in four cities (See also this Collective Bargaining Newsletter Year 4 December 2011 and Year 5 January 2012).

English: <http://www.epsu.org/cob/461#a8480>

German: [http://www.gpa-djp.at/servlet ...](http://www.gpa-djp.at/servlet...) ; [http://www.vida.at/servlet ...](http://www.vida.at/servlet...)

Strike threat brings agreement in energy sector

February 28, 2012

Warning strikes across the electric energy sector slated for 15 February brought a national labour agreement to 21,000 workers. In a fourth bargaining round on 12 February the PRO-GE and GPA-djp unions reached a collective agreement. After bargaining failed the two unions had got strike endorsement from the Austrian Federation of Trade Unions (ÖGB) and were to start actions. Minimum wage levels in the utility sector will increase between 4 to 4.2%. Higher-level wages will rise between 3.8 and 4%, and apprentices' remuneration will increase with 4.2%. The agreement also includes arrangements for the unions and employers to look at age-related issues around pay, shift work and arduous employment as well as analysing gender equality aspects of the collective agreement (See also this Collective Bargaining Newsletter Year 5 January 2012).

English: [http://www.icem.org/en/3-Energy-Oil-and-Gas/4891-Threat-of-Strikes ...](http://www.icem.org/en/3-Energy-Oil-and-Gas/4891-Threat-of-Strikes...) <http://www.epsu.org/cob/461#a8480>

German: [http://www.proge.at/servlet/ ...](http://www.proge.at/servlet/...) ; [http://www.gpa-djp.at/servlet ...](http://www.gpa-djp.at/servlet...)

New minimum wages after agreement in food industries

February 16, 2012

On 13 February, the PRO-GE trade union concluded a new 12-months' agreement for the spice industry. The minimum wage according to the new agreement will be €1,223.60. Wages and apprenticeship payments will increase by 3.65%. In that same week a new agreement was concluded also in the yeast and spirits industries; here, the wages will raise with the same percentage. The minimum wage will be lifted to €1,553.48.

German: [http://www.proge.at/servlet ...](http://www.proge.at/servlet...) ; [http://www.proge.at/servlet/Content ...](http://www.proge.at/servlet/Content...)

Pay deal for local workers in Carinthia

February 9, 2012

On 26 January 2 the GDG-KMSfB union negotiated a pay deal that applies from 1 April 2012 for employees of local authorities in the Carinthia region. Agreed is a 2.56% increase plus a flat-rate rise of €11,10 per month. There will be further negotiations in 2013 in contrast to the arrangements covering employees of the regional government in Carinthia who get the same increase in 2012 but a pay freeze in 2013.

English: <http://www.epsu.org/cob/458>

German: [http://www.gdg-kmsfb.at/servlet ...](http://www.gdg-kmsfb.at/servlet...)

Belgium

Unions suspend industrial action at pension service

February 28, 2012

On 28 February, public service unions have suspended strike action in the provincial offices of the National Pensions Service (RVP), which they started a week earlier. By then, the unions responded to excessive pressure on staff arising from a number of factors including the rise in the numbers claiming pensions, the increase in enquiries resulting from the national debate over pensions reform, difficulties arising from poor communications from the service and a transfer of responsibilities to the provincial offices without any appropriate allocation of additional resources. The interim manager of RVP has presented a number of possible solutions. The unions, though remaining sceptical, are willing to await concrete measures.

English: <http://www.epsu.org/cob/461#a8480>

Dutch: [http://openbarediensten.acv-online.be/#
http://www.demorgen.be/dm/nl/12077/Staking/article ...](http://openbarediensten.acv-online.be/#http://www.demorgen.be/dm/nl/12077/Staking/article...)

French: [http://csc-services-publics.csc-en-ligne.be/Nouvelles/Sectorielles/autorite ...](http://csc-services-publics.csc-en-ligne.be/Nouvelles/Sectorielles/autorite...)

Dock workers end strike

February 20, 2012

A new collective agreement and promises of the new coalition for smoothening of cuts in early retirement arrangements have cleared the air for dock workers at the port of Antwerp, Europe's second busiest. After a strike in late January, new industrial action included a five days' strike starting on Monday 13 February in particular in protest against a planned increase of their retirement age to 62 from 60, now also involving the ports of Ghent and Zeebrugge. The dockers ended their strike on Friday 17 February, when collective bargaining was resumed. On 20 February, a basic national collective agreement 2011-2012 was reached. It includes prolongation of the possibility for early retirement of dock workers at the age of 55. Both employers' and union membership still have to accept the agreement (See also this *Collective Bargaining Newsletter* Year 5 January 2012).

English: [http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/02/17/belgium-strike-ports ...](http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/02/17/belgium-strike-ports...)

Dutch: [http://www.demorgen.be/dm/nl/996/Economie ...](http://www.demorgen.be/dm/nl/996/Economie...)

Cyprus

Bases workers against freeze of cost of living allowance

February 18, 2012

Workers within the Sovereign British Areas (SBA) of Akrotiri and Episkopi say they will strike over wages. Around 800 Cypriots currently work on the bases while an additional 400 work in companies within the SBA. The workers are complaining about the decision to impose a freeze on the Cost of Living Allowance (CoLA). SEK union head over SBA matters, Christos Tziambouras, said that the measure was part of a protracted two-year SBA effort to violate its commitments to workers.

English: [http://www.cyprus-mail.com/cyprus/bases-workers-strike-threat ...](http://www.cyprus-mail.com/cyprus/bases-workers-strike-threat...)

Construction workers on strike

February 15, 2012

The construction industry came to a halt on February 14, after thousands of workers islandwide launched a 24-hour strike to protest employers' decision to freeze pay rises and the Cost of Living Allowance (CoLA). Another grievance was that permanent staff was being fired and being replaced with subcontractors and EU workers to save money. Work stoppage started at 7am, with strikers

guarding sites until 10am to ensure no work was carried out and all building sites were free of subcontractors. Workers claimed that the freeze of CoLA rises for 2012 was in violation of the agreement reached early February between the Employers and Industrialists Federation (OEV) and the SEK and PEO unions.

English: [http://www.cyprus-mail.com/cost-living-allowance/building-workers-warn ...](http://www.cyprus-mail.com/cost-living-allowance/building-workers-warn...)

.....

Denmark

Competitiveness first in transport and logistics agreement

February 28, 2012

The union section for the transport sector of 3F (United Federation of Danish Workers) and employers in DI (Confederation of Danish Industry) on Thursday 23 February agreed to renew the collective agreement for warehouse and transport employees. It is the first standard wage settlement in the 2012 round of bargaining, in which standard wages are established at central bargaining level between DI and the unions. The agreement (with a duration till 1 March 2014) focuses on perspectives aimed at strengthening the chances of increasing overall competence and productivity. The deal enables older employees to reduce the number of working days and includes provisions on increasing the qualifications of the employees.

English: [http://di.dk/English/News/Pages/Settlementonnewcollectiveagreement ...](http://di.dk/English/News/Pages/Settlementonnewcollectiveagreement...)

Danish: <http://forsiden.3f.dk/article/20120223/NYHEDER/120229945/2219/LONARBo2>

New two-year agreement for manufacturing

February 22, 2012

After a marathon bargaining round over the weekend of 11 and 12 February, the trade unions, led by the eight making up Co-Industri and including 3F, Dansk Metal and HK/Privat, concluded an agreement for 240,000 manufacturing workers and 6,000 enterprises, the latter represented by Dansk Industri. The recommended minimum wage increase is €18 per hour effective 1 March, and the same amount again on 1 March 2013. A pay supplement of 1.4% each year is available for performing difficult work, and apprentices, trainees and interns will get a 2.25% pay hike in each year. Exact wage increases will now be negotiated at local levels and inside company agreements. Improvements were also achieved concerning training (accumulation of training rights, new possibility for training during short-time), precarious workers (new measure against social dumping), senior workers, and dismissed workers (severance pay).

English: [http://www.co-industri.dk/uk/agreement-history ...](http://www.co-industri.dk/uk/agreement-history...)

Message on EUCOBAN network of EMF / EFFAT / ETUF-TCL / EMCEF

.....

Estonia

Law on collective bargaining amended under public pressure

February 21, 2012

Citing public pressure, the Parliament's Legal Affairs Committee on February 20 altered its draft amendments to the law on collective bargaining, mandating that parties give at least six month's notice before unilaterally pulling out of an indefinite agreement. Yet, the change marks a slight concession from the version of the Collective Agreement Act amendments approved by the committee on February 13, which allowed the parties to cancel with just three months' notice, but is nowhere near the two years that the unions had demanded. Under the law, a collective agreement becomes indefinite by default when it expires. But whereas the current law makes the terms of the agreement binding after that time, the amended version allows an employer to cancel the contract. On 18 February, several thousand workers on a union rally in Tallinn gathered to protest the planned changes to the law, which union leaders say are being rushed through without their input.

English: <http://news.err.ee/politics/619ee017-b510-42cc-81b5-od346dcaf7e1>

<http://news.err.ee/politics/61cce4da-ee2d-4a76-a9e3-03968caff6d8>

Teachers to strike on 7 March

February 14, 2012

On 14 February Sven Rondik, president of the Education Personnel Union, announced that teachers and day-care workers will go on strike for three days, starting on 7 March. The union wants a 20% increase in teachers' wages in 2012 and 15% in both 2013 and 2014. One day before Rondik's announcement on television, the State Conciliator signed the decision to declare the negotiations between education workers, local municipalities and the education and science ministry to raise minimum wage rates of teachers, a failure (See also this Collective Bargaining Newsletter Year 4 December 2011 and Year 5 January 2012).

English: <http://www.baltictimes.com/news/articles/30562/>

.....

Finland

Unions fight cuts at Nokia Siemens

February 9, 2012

The Finnish-German telecom equipment maker, Nokia Siemens Networks (NSN), said on 7 February a previously announced global restructuring plan would entail 2,900 job cuts in Germany and 1,200 in Finland. The German IG Metall union and NSN works council have organised constant protests against the announced cuts. On 1 February, protests started in Munich with about 2,000 participants attracting significant media attention. The Finnish unions will start a round of negotiations inside the company between the management and shop stewards from the trade unions inside NSN which include Finnish Metalworkers' Union, Trade Union Pro, Union of Professional Engineers in Finland (UIL) and Tekniikan Akateemisten Liitto (TEK), signatories of the collective agreement with the company. Secondly, they will start tripartite negotiations between the management, involved unions and the Ministry of Employment and Economy on alternative jobs. Separate from the NSN announcement, Nokia announced to cut 2,300 jobs at a Hungarian plant (See message under heading Hungary).

English: <http://www.imfmetal.org/index.cfm?c=28851&l=2>

.....

France

Air France and unions agree on procedure for strikes

February 28, 2012

After a four day strike from 6 until 9 February and a national protest in front of the Parliament on 22 February, air traffic unions and Air France have reached agreement on minimum services that government officials say weakens the bill to be adopted in Parliament on 29 February. Unions mobilised in February against the Diard bill that would oblige personnel on strike to register at least 48 hours in advance and would allow Air France to recall all non-registered off-duty personnel in order to maintain minimum services.

French: <http://www.liberation.fr/economie/01012392651-air-france-deroute>
... [http://www.unac.asso.fr/mon-unac/tracts/rassemblement ...](http://www.unac.asso.fr/mon-unac/tracts/rassemblement...)

Union criticizes lack of government initiatives on gender equality

February 28, 2012

In reaction to a Parliamentary report on gender equality in the civil service, FO Fonctionnaires civil service federation has called for action to deal with gender inequality in the public sector and in particular the very low percentage of women in senior positions. The federation wants negotiations with the government on direct and indirect discrimination in pay, child care, the reconciliation of family life with higher positions, and gender sensitive recruitment and training practices. It points

out that while women make up 60% of the public sector workforce they account for only 22.2% of managerial staff and just 10.8% of the most senior appointments. The union has criticised the government for failing to come up with concrete legal and financial proposals to tackle the issue.

English: <http://www.epsu.org/cob/461#a8480>

French: <http://www.fo-fonctionnaires.fr/2012.html>

.....

Germany

Union wants 6.5% increase for public sector workers

February 28, 2012

In the upcoming negotiations covering workers in federal and local government, the ver.di services union is calling for a 6.5% pay increase with a minimum guaranteed rise of €200 that would benefit lower paid employees. The union also wants to see apprentices offered permanent jobs and an increase of €100 to the apprentice allowance. Ver.di argues that public sector workers saw the value of their pay fall by 0.6% in real terms last year and they need a decent increase so that they don't get left behind by the private sector. The union also maintains that the pay rise will be an important boost to the economy.

English: <http://www.epsu.org/cob/461#a8480>

German: <http://www.verdi.de/themen/nachrichten...>

Union demands more rights for precarious workers

February 17, 2012

The IG Metall union puts the rights of precarious workers at the centre of its collective bargaining this year, along with demands for a 6.5% wage increase in the metal and electrical engineering sector and permanent contracts for young people completing apprenticeships. The upcoming bargaining round starts 6 March. One of the union demands is more co-determination rights for works council members on the use of temporary work. The objective is to limit the use of temporary and agency work within the sector. In addition, through its bargaining in the temporary sector starting on 22 February, the union is demanding "sectoral bonuses" for agency workers engaged in the metal industry to ensure they earn the same wages as permanent employees in the same job.

English: <http://www.imfmetal.org/index.cfm?c=28916&l=2>

German: <http://www.igmetall.de/cps/rde/xchg/SID...>

Labour minister hails wage increases

February 11, 2012

In a journal interview, Labour Minister and vice-president of the governing CDU party, Ursula von der Leyen, has hailed real wage increases for German workers. She referred to the "reserved" wage development of the last few years that, in her view, substantially helped to get the German economy out of the crisis. Now that economy is on steam and profits are rising, von der Leyen went on, it is fully justified that workers get their fair share, which actually means wage increases higher than inflation – the exact levels to be decided by the social partners.

German: <http://www.spiegel.de/politik/deutschland/0,1518,814650,00.html>

Agreement on restructuring at E.ON

February 9, 2012

The ver.di and IGBCE trade unions have negotiated a collective agreement with the E.ON energy company covering restructuring in Germany under the E.ON 2.0 restructuring programme. The agreement runs until 2016 and covers issues such as early retirement, severance payments and the setting up of a company to deal with employment and training. The aim of the agreement is to avoid compulsory redundancies. The E.ON 2.0 programme will involve around 6,000 job cuts in Germany

out of a worldwide total of 11,000.

English: <http://www.epsu.org/cob/458>

German: <http://www.verdi.de/themen/nachrichten...>

Greece

Unions envisage popular revolt over bailout

February 23, 2012

After the latest bailout deal was secured by the parliamentary vote on Tuesday 22 February, the popular fury at the terms of the rescue showed no signs of ebbing. "Two years ago we were demonstrating about wage and pension cuts but now they want to take away everything," said Ilias Iliopoulos of the civil service confederation ADEDY, adding: "People are literally hungry and the number of homeless is growing every day ... soon they won't take anymore. There'll be a popular revolt." The unions, ADEDY and the GSEE private sector confederation, emphasize that the new austerity measures include a 22% cut in the minimum wage, 15% cut to supplementary pensions and a further cut of 15,000 public sector jobs. International union federations have also reacted on the social effects of the measures and the exclusion of the unions from decision-making. For example, on 21 February David Cockroft, general secretary of the International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF), said in a letter to the Greek government that Greek workers were being "disregarded and damaged" by efforts to meet the conditions, imposed on the country by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the Eurozone countries.

English: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2012/feb/22/greek-unions...>
<http://www.itfglobal.org/news-online/index.cfm/newsdetail/7076>

Hungary

Nokia cuts 2,300 jobs at Hungary plant

February 27, 2012

Besides job cuts at Nokia Siemens in Finland and Germany (see message under heading Finland), Nokia has announced to lay off 2,300 workers at its plant in Komarom in northwestern Hungary. According to the cell phone giant, assembly would be replaced to Asia from Komarom, which currently employs around 4,400. The 2,300 jobs will be axed in two or three steps by the end of 2012, Nokia told its workers, adding that most of the losses would be blue-collar, manufacturing positions. The move hurts the labour market in Hungary as well as in Slovakia, from where about a third of Komarom workers have commuted.

English: Máté Komiljovics, union correspondent

Mass lay-offs at Malév and Budapest airport

February 27, 2012

Malév Hungarian Airlines, the state-owned Hungarian airline, on 3 February ceased flying after the government withdrew financing. It has been announced that the airline will lay off 2,060 of the total of 2,600 employed. Budapest Airport has announced that a process of mass redundancy, covering 250 workers, has been started in connection with the bankruptcy of Malév. The Airport management has notified the labour market authorities and has called on the unions to start consultations about the lay-offs (See also this *Collective Bargaining Newsletter* Year 5 January 2012).

English: Máté Komiljovics, union correspondent

Ireland

Removal of JLC system has not created extra jobs

February 16, 2012

Research carried out by SIPTU has discredited claims by employers' organisations that the abolition of the Joint Labour Committee (JLC) wage-setting mechanism has resulted in the creation of extra jobs. Addressing the parliamentary Committee on Jobs, Social Protection and Education on 14 February, SIPTU Vice President Patricia King said that this research established that no extra catering and hotel jobs have been created since a July 2011 High Court decision suspended the operation of the JLC system. Instead, staff hours were cut and there was also evidence that pay and conditions had deteriorated since the abolition of the system (See also this Collective Bargaining Newsletter Year 4 January, February, March, May, July-August and December 2011).

English: [http://www.siptu.ie/media/pressreleases2012/featurednews ...](http://www.siptu.ie/media/pressreleases2012/featurednews...)

Italy

Firefighters' demonstration highlights impact of cuts

February 28, 2012

Firefighters mobilised in Rome on 22 February to expose the scale of the problems facing the service, particularly in Rome, because of underfunding. The service is understaffed and there is inadequate training while firefighters have seen a decline in their pay in real terms along with serious delays in payments for overtime work.

English: <http://www.epsu.org/cob/461#a8480>

Italian: <http://www.fpcgil.it/flex/cm/pages/ServeBLOB.php/L/IT/IDPagina/21572>

New agreement for bank sector

February 6, 2012

The trade unions have signed a new national collective agreement for the banking sector (320,000 workers) that raises workers' salaries and will add at least 16,500 jobs to the sector in the next three years. The deal foresees an increase of the monthly salaries of €170 over 3 years, receiving a €50 euro increase in 2012, €50 increase in 2013 and the final €70 hike in 2014. At the moment, cooperative bank workers, who are not covered by this agreement, are negotiating their own national agreement.

English: [http://www.uniglobalunion.org/Apps/uni.nsf/pages ...](http://www.uniglobalunion.org/Apps/uni.nsf/pages...)

Luxembourg

Wage indexation limitation approved in parliament

February 15, 2012

The parliament voted on 31 January 31 for a limitation of the wage index. Tripartite negotiations came to a halt in December 2011. Trade unions did not accept proposals put forward by the employers on the introduction of a 2-year moratorium, a modulation of wage indexation, a study to analyse the legitimacy of wage setting suspension and a revision of the minimum wage. The government then stipulated a temporary modulation of wage indexation for 2012-2015. For this period, salaries to be indexed in accordance to inflation are augmented only once a year. An interval of 12 months is to be respected between each index payment. The payment due initially in March 2012 (as inflation is still high) is postponed to October 2012 while a next forecasted index payment, if applicable, is postponed to October 2013 at the earliest. Social minimum salary is not frozen as demanded by employer' associations, but will continue to rise with a next augmentation on 1 January 2013.

French: <http://www.ogbl.lu/blog/opposition-contre-la-regression/>

German: <http://www.ogbl.lu/de/blog/opposition-contre-la-regression/>

Netherlands

Provincial government employers given deadline to negotiate

February 28, 2012

The FNV Abvakabo and CNV Publieke Zaak public service unions have given provincial government employers a deadline till 2 March to provide a better offer, or they will consult with their members and consider industrial action. After lengthy negotiations the employers have offered a basic pay increase of only 0.69% over 19 months and nothing in respect of the unions' calls for employment guarantees, disability benefit and a cut in the use of contract staff. The unions want a 1.5% pay increase over 12 months and are also calling on the employers to implement unfulfilled commitments included in the last collective agreement covering 11,000 workers.

English: <http://www.epsu.org/cob/461#a8480>

Dutch: [http://www.abvakabofnv.nl/nieuws/nieuws/provincies-niet-bereid ...](http://www.abvakabofnv.nl/nieuws/nieuws/provincies-niet-bereid...) <http://www.mijnvakbond.nl/Ultimatum-Provincies?referrer=266>

Strike action of cleaners continued

February 28, 2012

Cleaners continued their strike combined with creative action, demanding a new collective agreement for 150,000 workers laying down better pay, including sick pay, but also enough time to do the job properly, and more respect and appreciation. In already nine cities they organised, jointly with their union, FNV Bondgenoten, "Marches for Respect". On 27 February, some 2,000 cleaners held a sit-in at the Utrecht University campus. The strikers have got quite some support, both national and international. For example, on 28 February, a delegation of the 10,000-member Union of Clients of Financial Institutions, employees of the ING Bank and cleaners handed over a petition in support of the cleaners' demands to ING management in Amsterdam. Earlier, on 15 February, a delegation from the Belgian ABVV/FGTB confederation and UNI Europa gathered in front of the Dutch Embassy in Brussels and met with the representative for Social Affairs to express their solidarity (See also this *Collective Bargaining Newsletter* Year 4 December 2011 and Year 5 January 2012).

English: [http://www.uniglobalunion.org/Apps/uni.nsf/pages ...](http://www.uniglobalunion.org/Apps/uni.nsf/pages...)

Dutch: <http://www.fnvbondgenoten.nl/mijnbranche/branches/schoonmaak/>

Union confederations reject zero wage increases

February 10, 2012

On 9 and 10 February, the chairpersons of the three union confederations, FNV, CNV and MHP, unanimously rejected the idea of nominal zero wage increases. A few days earlier, president Bernard Wientjes of the main employers' association VON-NCW had held a plea for a "national zero line". FNV president Agnes Jongerius reacted that the average wage increase is already lower than inflation, and that realisation of Wientjes' plan would aggravate economic stagnation. CNV chairman Jaap Smit said that in some industries and companies collective bargaining would remain to allow for real wage increases.

Dutch: *De Volkskrant*, 10 February 2012;

[http://www.nrc.nl/nieuws/2012/02/09/werkgevers-willen-nullijn ...](http://www.nrc.nl/nieuws/2012/02/09/werkgevers-willen-nullijn...)

Printing employers return to negotiating table

February 9, 2012

Since November 2011, the printing unions have been trying to include both a wage hike repairing purchasing power damage and a ban on toxic solvents in the new collective agreement for the so-called grafimedia sector. The old agreement expired on 31 January. After the employers' associations did not react on a union deadline by that date, the largest union, FNV KIEM, organised industrial action in some large printing companies, broadly supported by its membership. As a result, on 9

February the employers' delegation agreed to return to the negotiating table.

Dutch: *NRC-Handelsblad*, 8 February 2012

<http://www.fnv-kiem.nl/nieuws/grafimedia-en-techniek/1458>

Poland

Polish workers win non-compliance case in UK

February 16, 2012

GMB, the union for engineering construction workers, successfully pursued a claim for UKP 251,204 (€ 297,700) in the Employment Tribunal in Cardiff for 14 Polish migrant workers who were employed as ladders by Darmar in the construction of the Uskmouth Power Station in South Wales. The compensation for the unlawful deductions amounts to almost UKP 18,000 (€ 21,330) per migrant worker and shows the extent of exploitation by contractors of migrant workers in the engineering construction sector. GMB officers had found that sums on pay slips bore no relation to the money going into the workers' bank accounts. The tribunal backed the claims.

English: [http://www.theconstructionindex.co.uk/news/view/tribunal-payout ...](http://www.theconstructionindex.co.uk/news/view/tribunal-payout...)

Portugal

General strike called for 22 March

February 17, 2012

The country's main union confederation, GCTP, has called for a general strike on 22 March, in protest at the austerity measures being imposed by the troika of European Commission, European Central Bank (ECB) and International Monetary Fund (IMF). "This is a general strike for everyone, all workers must unite and participate in the fight against this package," CGTP Secretary General Armenio Carlos said (See also this Collective Bargaining Newsletter Year 4 November and December 2011).

English: <http://www.neurope.eu/article/portugal-union-announces-march-general-strike>

Romania

Strike at Electrolux ends, most claims won

February 24, 2012

After a 20-day strike the workers at the Satu Mare plant of the Swedish giant Electrolux went back to work on 21 February after management agreed to most of their demands. These included a wage increase of RON 100 (€23) per month to be implemented in January and another negotiable increase of up to RON 100 in September 2012, as well a new collective agreement providing for more advantages (bonuses and overtime pay), facilities for carrying out trade union duties and compensation in case of layoffs (severance pay) than that provided by legislation alone. The workers also maintained the breaks they were entitled to and need to take given the nature of their work (at conveyor belts). The local unions expressed their thanks for all the support and expressions of international solidarity they received.

English: [http://www.emf-fem.org/Areas-of-work/Solidarity/Successful-end ...](http://www.emf-fem.org/Areas-of-work/Solidarity/Successful-end...) <http://www.planetlabor.com>

Non-compliance by offshore subcontractor

February 17, 2012

48 workers, contracted by the Romanian company Grup Servicii Petroliere (GSP) to work on its

offshore rig GSP Britannia, berthed in Hartlepool, are complaining that they have not been paid since October 2011. An inspection of International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF), as part of the week of action launched in Aberdeen on 7 February by North Sea trade unions and ITF affiliates, revealed that many workers appear to have been paid half the UK minimum wage – receiving only UKP3.50 (€4.15) per hour for a 12-hour day, seven days a week. One hundred other GSP company employees are seeking assistance from the ITF office in Constanta, Romania, for non-payment of wages. There are reports that the company and the “yellow” (employer-run) union threaten the workers if they seek ITF assistance.

English: <http://www.itfglobal.org/news-online/index.cfm/newsdetail/7042>

.....

Spain

Unions call for nationwide protest

February 28, 2012

As a response to a recent reform of labour law by the federal government to increase flexible hiring and firing practices, the two main union confederations, UGT and CCOO, have announced mass protests. UGT and CCOO state that the reform is an attack both on labour rights and on collective bargaining. Local protests held in 57 cities on 19 February mobilized as many as 1,800,000 people. More actions have been announced for 29 February. The confederations have initiated legal actions against the law and its adoption without consultation of the social partners, before the Spanish constitutional court as well as the ILO. They argue that the reforms will make dismissals easier and will undermine collective bargaining, allowing company-level agreements to undercut branch-level bargaining and giving employers more scope to impose changes unilaterally.

English: [http://www.eucoban.eu/EMF/Reports/Massive-demonstrations ...](http://www.eucoban.eu/EMF/Reports/Massive-demonstrations...) <http://www.epsu.org/cob/461#a8480>

Spanish: <http://www.ccoo.es/cscceo/menu.do?Informacion:Noticias:310718>
[http://www.fspugt.es/Cientos de miles de trabajadores se movilizan contra ...](http://www.fspugt.es/Cientos_de_miles_de_trabajadores_se_movilizan_contra...)

Tripartite agreement on pensions and collective bargaining

February 8, 2012

The two main union confederations, UGT and CCOO, the employers' organisations and the government have reached an agreement on the sustainability of pensions and the restructuring of collective bargaining. The agreement includes clauses on the coverage of unemployment benefits, the pension age, the restoration of the social dialogue in the public sector, measures to improve transition into the labour market for young people and long term unemployed as well as a reference to further talks on industrial policies. Trade unions have announced they will oppose other aspects of the labour reforms announced by the government.

English / French / Spanish: [http://www.eucoban.eu/EMF/Reports/Spain ...](http://www.eucoban.eu/EMF/Reports/Spain...)

Civil servants protest budget cuts in Madrid area

February 8, 2012

On Tuesday 7 February, thousands of civil servants protested against cut backs by the Madrid local government, which they claim would jeopardize vital services like fire brigades and hospitals. The biggest objections to the local government's plans include the extension of the working week, expected to lead to layoffs in the near future, and the cut in sickness benefits.

English: [http://www.euronews.net/2012/02/08/thousands-protest ...](http://www.euronews.net/2012/02/08/thousands-protest...)

Spanish: [http://ccaa.elpais.com/ccaa/2012/02/06/madrid ...](http://ccaa.elpais.com/ccaa/2012/02/06/madrid...)

.....

Sweden

Cabin crew strike over working hours

February 14, 2012

According to officials of the Unionen union, about 400 air stewards working for TUIfly Nordic, Novair and Primera Air went on an indefinite strike on Tuesday 14 April, after they failed to reach an agreement with the three airlines over working hours. The union says it wants its members to work a maximum of 42 hours a week, while the employers want to be able to schedule the cabin crew to work up to 60 hours a week. The three airlines fly for package holiday organizers, which argue they have arranged to use alternative airlines.

English: <http://www.businessweek.com/ap/financialnews/D9ST3OUO1.htm>
<http://tripsentry.com/AdviceDisplay.aspx?aid=32527>

Unions rejects lower pay for younger workers

February 9, 2012

The Kommunal local government union has rejected a proposal by the mayor of Stockholm that workers under the age of 25 should be offered jobs on pay rates at 75% of the minimum of the collective agreement. The union argues that there is a high demand for workers, particularly in the social care sector, but these workers need to be properly trained. It says it is willing to negotiate about the provision of training for young workers and also calls for more funding from central government.

English: <http://www.epsu.org/cob/458>

Swedish: [http://www.kommunal.se/Kommunal/Nyheter/2012/Ungdomsloner ...](http://www.kommunal.se/Kommunal/Nyheter/2012/Ungdomsloner...)

Switzerland

Social plan signed at Novartis

February 22, 2012

In October 2011 Novartis announced the closure of a plant in Nyon and cuts in the rest of the country up to 1.100 jobs. After in mid-January, through trade union campaigning and mass mobilisation, the closure decision was reversed, a social plan was concluded on 22 February. Trade union Unia is satisfied with the overall result. The company has created a fund of CHF4.5 million (€3.7 million) for hardship cases and for training and retraining. Part of the deal are an early retirement scheme (from 58), compensation for workers over 55 to bridge the gap till the age of 58 and additional pay for dismissed workers (See also this Collective Bargaining Newsletter Year 5 January 2012).

German: [http://www.unia.ch/index.php ...](http://www.unia.ch/index.php...)

United Kingdom

Local government workers face third year of pay freeze

February 28, 2012

Local government unions UNISON, GMB and Unite have attacked the municipal employers' organisation for imposing a pay freeze for another year and again refusing to pay out the minimum UKP250 (€295) increase to the lowest paid, allowed for by the government. The unions estimate that taking account of inflation the three-year pay freeze will leave municipal workers 13% worse off. Local government workers in Scotland are also facing a second year of pay freeze.

English: <http://www.epsu.org/cob/461#a8480>

http://www.unison.org.uk/asppresspack/pressrelease_view.asp?id=2613 http://www.gmb.org.uk/newsroom/latest_news/gmb_action_on_pay_freeze_sct.aspx

Rally calls on Unilever to save UK pensions

February 16, 2012

On 16 February, some 250 trade union militants from all over Europe turned out at Unilever's Rotterdam headquarters in the Netherlands to protest the world's third largest consumer products company's unrelenting shut-off of a final salary pension scheme for 5,200 UK workers. The manifestation, under the banner "Unilever, Don't Make Workers Pay for Your Profits", saw representatives from no less than 23 European union organisations. It was organised by Unilever's European Works Council (EWC) and the European union federations EMCEF and EFFAT. Thousands of workers across the multinational's twelve UK sites have been on strike since December 2011 in protest at pension cuts. Unilever UK management did finally agree to meet with the unions on 9 February, with the assistance of the ACAS conciliation service, but the company is still adamant on closing the final salary pension scheme effective 1 July 2012 (See also this Collective Bargaining Newsletter Year 5 January 2012).

English: [http://www.icem.org/en/4-Chemicals-Pharmaceuticals ...](http://www.icem.org/en/4-Chemicals-Pharmaceuticals...)

Municipality angers unions

February 15, 2012

Trade unions involved in the long-running dispute over pay cuts at Southampton City Council in the south of England are taking legal action over the authority's failure to consult properly over redundancies and over the unfair dismissal of 1,000 workers. The response of the Council was to allocate UKP 600,000 (€ 706,000) from the money it has saved on salaries to a fund to pay compensation. The unions organised a demonstration on 15 February in Southampton outside the Council and have announced a major demonstration in London and industrial action for 10 April (See also this Collective Bargaining Newsletter Year 4 May, June, July-August, September and October 2011, and Year 5 January 2012).

English: <http://www.epsu.org/cob/458>; [http://www.unison.org.uk/news ...](http://www.unison.org.uk/news...)
<http://www.soton-unison-office.org.uk/latestnews.htm>

Equal pay victory for council workers

February 9, 2012

Around 1,000 women workers at Bury Council in north west England are set to benefit from an equal pay deal negotiated with the unions. The women, working mainly in care, cleaning and catering jobs, have been paid less than the predominantly male workforce in comparable jobs. The council has decided to agree to the long-running claim before it was due to go to the Court of Appeal. The UNISON union estimates that the council has wasted more than UKP1 million (€1,179,000) of public money by fighting the claims through the courts for nearly five years.

English: <http://www.epsu.org/cob/458>
http://www.unison.org.uk/asppresspack/pressrelease_view.asp?id=2592

.....
For more information, please contact the future editor – as from the March 2012 issue – Jan Cremers, at the Amsterdam Institute for Advanced Labour Studies (AIAS) cbn-aias@uva.nl, or Mariya Nikolova mnikolova@etui.org, communications officer at the ETUI. The editor of this issue was Maarten van Klaveren, M.vanKlaveren@uva.nl. For previous issues of the *Collective bargaining newsletter* please visit <http://www.etui.org/E-Newsletters/Collective-bargaining-newsletter>. You may find further information on the ETUI at www.etui.org, and on the AIAS at www.uva-aias.net.

© ETUI aisbl, Brussels 2012. All rights reserved. We encourage the distribution of this newsletter and of the information it contains, for non-commercial purposes and provided the source is credited. The ETUI is not responsible for the content of external internet sites. The ETUI is financially supported by the European Union. The European Union is not responsible for any use made of the information contained in this publication.

To unsubscribe, please contact Mariya Nikolova.

