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collective bargaining

Issue 5/2012 May

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



AMSTERDAM INSTITUTE FOR ADVANCED LABOUR STUDIES
UNIVERSITEIT VAN AMSTERDAM



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Austria

Austrian Airlines dispute might go to court

May 18, 2012

The dispute at Austrian Airlines created by the management decisions to opt out from the existing collective agreement and to transfer the workforce to the cheaper agreement of subsidiary Tyrolean enters a new stage. The planned reform will come into effect on 1 July unless executive board and works council find an alternative solution in the coming weeks. Protest of the workforce has led to cancellation of flights. The trade union vida is considering juridical steps to declare the transfer null and void. Other demands are the respect for the existing agreements and the right for individual employees to oppose the planned company transfer.

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

English: <http://austrianindependent.com/news/Business/2012-05-15 ...>

Wage increase in new agreement for the chemical sector

May 16, 2012

The two unions PRO-GE and GPA-djp representing 43,000 Austrian chemical workers reached 2012-13 wage terms with the Chemical Industry Association Fachverband der Chemischen Industrie (FCIO). After a period of warning strikes and four rounds of negotiations the bargaining partners concluded an agreement that includes a pay increase of 4.5%, effective 1 May and with a duration of 12 months. The deal leads to actual increases for all workers of 4.35%, or at least a monthly minimum increase of €90 that, in essence, will lift the pay for lower salaried workers to over 5%.

English: [http://www.icem.org/en/78-ICEM-InBrief/5022-After-Testy-Talks ...](http://www.icem.org/en/78-ICEM-InBrief/5022-After-Testy-Talks...)

German: [http://www.gpa-djp.at/servlet/ContentServer?pagename ...](http://www.gpa-djp.at/servlet/ContentServer?pagename...)

[http://www.proge.at/servlet/ContentServer?pagename ...](http://www.proge.at/servlet/ContentServer?pagename...)

French: <http://www.icem.org/de/78-ICEM-InBrief/5022-?la=FR>

New wage terms in leather goods and luggage branches

May 10, 2012

The new agreement for the leather goods and luggage branches, effective 1 June 2012 for a twelve months period, will lead to a 3.8% increase of the minimum wage and the apprentices payment. This brings the collectively agreed minimum wage in this small section of the leather industry to €1122.34.

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

Belgium

Respect for agreements in case two power plants close

May 24, 2012

The Electrabel plan to close two plants (in Ruien and Les Awirs) with in total 130 workers involved is subject of actual consultations. The trade unions have the impression that the company is creating a situation of artificial scarcity. They have created a joint front and claim that the collective agreements have to be respected in a company that is flourishing; there is no reason for dismissals. The next round of talks is planned for 1 June.

French: [http://www.lavenir.net/article/detail.aspx ...](http://www.lavenir.net/article/detail.aspx...)

[http://www.dhnet.be/infos/belgique/article/396098/electrabel-la-direction-confirme ...](http://www.dhnet.be/infos/belgique/article/396098/electrabel-la-direction-confirme...)

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

[http://trends.knack.be/economie/nieuws/bedrijven/electrabel-centrales-niet ...](http://trends.knack.be/economie/nieuws/bedrijven/electrabel-centrales-niet...)

United front for quality jobs

May 15, 2012

The joint trade unions have formulated a critical statement related to the planned reduction of unemployment benefits, starting as from 1 November 2012. According to the program of the new federal government the benefit scheme will lead to cuts varying from 12% for households to 17.5% for individuals and 40% for cohabitants. As a consequence more people will end up below the European poverty threshold. The unions ask instead for more investment in training and employability programs.

French: [http://www.accg.be/BEFR/readMore.aspx ...](http://www.accg.be/BEFR/readMore.aspx...)

Dutch: [http://www.accg.be/BEDU/readMore.aspx ...](http://www.accg.be/BEDU/readMore.aspx...)

Bulgaria

More lay offs and strikes expected at national railroad company

May 8, 2012

After a large reorganisation last year in which nearly 2,000 employees were made redundant, state railways company, BDZ Holding, is planning new mass layoffs at both passenger and freight services. Unions claim the cuts will amount to over 1000 jobs and have threatened with new strikes. BDZ states fewer people will be laid off and says the company will continue on its road towards reform, union strikes notwithstanding. The passenger transport branch of BDZ has registered steady losses over the last years, however, the freight services have been profitable.

English: http://www.novinite.com/view_news.php?id=139141

Cyprus

Municipal workers step up their actions

May 18, 2012

The non-payment of municipal workers in north Nicosia has led to a long dispute with no solution in sight. After six weeks of industrial action and refusing to collect rubbish and litter the 'municipal' workers union (BES) has pledged the workers to step up their action by cutting water supplies to the northern part of the capital if mayor Bulutoguluri does not respond to their demand for prompt payment of their salaries and adherence to an earlier agreed pay protocol.

English: [http://www.cyprus-mail.com/rubbish/public-health-fears-over ...](http://www.cyprus-mail.com/rubbish/public-health-fears-over-...)

Czech Republic

Threat of general strike sidelined

May 23, 2012

The Bohemian and Moravian Confederation of Trades Unions (ČMKOS) announced that it would not proceed with a threatened general strike, at least until the end of June. Union leaders said they wanted to give more time for the government to meet their demands for a suspension of pension reforms. The trade unions are waiting for signals of a more conciliatory tone and willingness to make concessions from the government of Prime Minister Petr Nečas by June 4. ČMKOS chairman Jaroslav Zavadil said meetings in September and October might decide on whether a nationwide general strike should be called. In the weeks to come the unions will organise blockade of five ministries that are responsible for the reforms.

English: [http://www.ceskapozice.cz/en/news/politics-policy/czech-general-strike ...](http://www.ceskapozice.cz/en/news/politics-policy/czech-general-strike-...)
[http://www.businessweek.com/news/2012-05-22/czech-premier-faces-growing ...](http://www.businessweek.com/news/2012-05-22/czech-premier-faces-growing-...)

Denmark

Decision on tripartite agreements is members business

May 23, 2012

Before the start of the negotiations on a new tripartite agreement the trade unions have reacted with consternation to an employer requirement that agreements reached with the government on increasing working hours must be passed into law by Parliament, thus making union member voting superfluous. According to FOA chairman Dennis Kristensen the foundation of the collective bargaining system is that there is member democracy.

English: [http://politiken.dk/newsinenglish/ECE1633949/union-boss-members-to-vote ...](http://politiken.dk/newsinenglish/ECE1633949/union-boss-members-to-vote-...)
Danish: [http://politiken.dk/politik/ECE1633791/foa-boss-loenmodtagere-skal-stemme ...](http://politiken.dk/politik/ECE1633791/foa-boss-loenmodtagere-skal-stemme-...)

Public services employers suggest unpaid breaks

May 3, 2012

Employers in the public service sector have suggested to stop paying staff during breaks. Unions have reacted that over half of hospital and elderly care staff reported regularly interrupting breaks to provide urgent care. The unions warned that staff would not interrupt unpaid breaks, leading to

chaos.

Danish: <http://www.foa.dk/Forbund/Presse?newsid ...>

Unions call on government to reduce gender pay gap

May 1, 2012

Danish trade unions 3F, HK, FOA, Sundhedskartellet, Dansk Magisterforening, Finansforbundet and the women's council have called on the Danish government to implement a range of measures to close the gender pay gap. Proposed measures include the extension of paternity leave and changes to equal pay legislation to make it easier to compare work of equal value across sectors.

Danish: <http://www.foa.dk/Forbund/Presse?newsid ...>

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Estonia

Dissatisfaction with pay proposals might lead to strike

May 25, 2012

Estonian Air pilots are considering a strike as the proposals by the company management for a new collective agreement are judged to work out very disappointing. According to the pilots and the flight attendants management's bid to increase the effectiveness entails tightening the work and rest conditions without any pay increase. Management has threatened to give up the collective agreement strategy and to initiate negotiations with every individual pilot.

English: <http://news.err.ee/economy/33818608-2c49-4688-92dd-dfcbb2998e8b>

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Finland

Report on wages and pay gap in the financial sector

May 14, 2012

The average salaries of the financial sector's salaried employees fall around €300 below the average of all wage and salary earners in Finland according to a report on the development of earnings in the financial sector from October 2010 to October 2011. And the average for women in the financial sector lags even further behind the average of all wage and salary earners. Women's pay was lower than men's pay at all task levels. The trade union Pro is of the opinion that this pay gap must be tackled when producing equality plans and pay redistribution.

English: <http://www.proliitto.fi/en/media/news/salaried-employees-in-the-financial ...>

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Large public support for trade unionism

May 4, 2012

A survey commissioned by the three trade union confederations SAK, STTK and Akava shows that 45% of Fins believe trade union membership to be "very necessary" and another 45% rates it as "rather necessary". Respondents mention earnings-based unemployment security and job and working condition security as the most important reasons to join a union. While respondents aged between 15 and 25 score lower on the highest category (24% calling membership "very necessary"), a considerable 65% of young people called workers organisation "rather necessary".

English: <http://www.artto.kaapeli.fi/unions/T2012/p18>

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France

Disneyland characters on strike

May 18, 2012

Staff at Disneyland Paris who dress up as characters are withdrawing from 'Meet and greet' events in

an industrial dispute over pay. They are also furious that a colleague who was accused of sexual harassment has been allowed back to work. Hundreds of trade union members have been taking part in demonstrations outside the amusement park.

English: [http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2146320/Mickey-Goofy-Snow-White ...](http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2146320/Mickey-Goofy-Snow-White...)

Public service unions organise action to protect health and safety of sewage workers

May 15, 2012

The public services federation of the CGT announced a day of action for the health and safety of sewage workers on the 29th of May. Recent changes have made it more difficult for sewage workers to retire early, while research conducted by the national health institute concluded that sewage workers live on average 7 years shorter than other workers, and 17 years shorter than the general population.

French: <http://www.spterritoriaux.cgt.fr/spip.php?article5496>

Unions protest against incentive payment in public sector

May 11, 2012

The CGT public services union has spoken out against a recent decree introducing incentive payments based on collective performance in public services. According to the union the principle of incentive payments introduces competition and profitability into the sector and undermines the level of services. The union is outraged that the incentives will be paid from funds freed by the non-replacement of staff.

French: <http://www.spterritoriaux.cgt.fr/spip.php?article5514>

Collective agreement for notary staff includes 2.5% pay increase

May 4, 2012

The new collective agreement for clerks and employees at notaries includes a 2.5% pay hike bringing the lowest employee pay scale to 1419 and technical staff to €1703. Force Ouvrière representatives report that while the wage increase is modest, they are satisfied an agreement has been found.

French: [http://www.info-tpe.fr/journal/clercs-et-employes-de-notaires ...](http://www.info-tpe.fr/journal/clercs-et-employes-de-notaires...)

Germany

New collective agreement Deutsche Telekom

May 24, 2012

Trade union Ver.di and Deutsche Telekom have signed a 24-month collective agreement that guarantees a 6.5% wage increase to almost 20,000 employees in T-Systems. The wage increase will take effect in three stages: a retroactive increase of 2.3% from 1 May 2012, an increase of 2.1% as of January 2013, and an additional 2.1 increase as of September 2013. For the lowest pay grades, the increase is even higher, up to 7.2%. The agreement that guarantees job security in T-Systems until 31 December 2013 was concluded after a successful strike. The result comes near to the demands as formulated by Ver.di and as recommended by an independent mediator for the DT-AG.

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

German: <http://bit.ly/KWs4p>

Agreement for the metal sector concluded

May 21, 2012

After a period of warning strikes the partners in bargaining in the metal sector have concluded an agreement that includes a 4.3% wage raise for the sector's 3.6 million workers. The deal between IG Metall union and employers in southern Baden-Wuerttemberg state — home to carmakers Daimler

and Porsche — includes the wage raise, secures the position of apprentices and somewhat limits the use of temporary workers. The metal industry association president Martin Kannengiesser said the deal with a 13-month duration, initially reached for the state's 800,000 metal workers, will be applied to all of Germany.

English: <http://www.cnn.com/id/47485680>

[http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/05/19/us-germany-wages ...](http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/05/19/us-germany-wages...)

German: [http://www.igmetall.de/cps/rde/xchg/internet/style.xsl/tarifabschluss-sichert ...](http://www.igmetall.de/cps/rde/xchg/internet/style.xsl/tarifabschluss-sichert...)

[http://www.igmetall.de/cps/rde/xchg/internet/style.xsl/was-den-beschaeftigten ...](http://www.igmetall.de/cps/rde/xchg/internet/style.xsl/was-den-beschaeftigten...)

Reports on the strikes: [http://www.france24.com/en/20120502-strike-fans-out ...](http://www.france24.com/en/20120502-strike-fans-out...)

<http://www.morningstaronline.co.uk/news/content/view/full/118539>

[http://www.steelguru.com/international_news/IG Metall workers strike ...](http://www.steelguru.com/international_news/IG_Metall_workers_strike...)

[http://www.vancouversun.com/business/German+union+hits+Daimler ...](http://www.vancouversun.com/business/German+union+hits+Daimler...)

<http://www.imfmetal.org/index.cfm?c=29831&l=2>

Agency workers' position improved in the metal sector

May 21, 2012

A collective agreement for temporary agencies working in the metal sector has been concluded almost in parallel with the sector's new agreement. The agreement concluded between IG Metall and the employers' organisations in the agency sector (BAP and IGZ) is applicable as of 1 November 2012.

German: [http://www.igmetall.de/cps/rde/xchg/internet/style.xsl/tarifabschluss ...](http://www.igmetall.de/cps/rde/xchg/internet/style.xsl/tarifabschluss...)

Warning strikes in banking sector

May 21, 2012

The trade union Ver.di has called on bank employees in southern cities including Stuttgart, Karlsruhe and Mannheim to go on strike for several hours in order to put pressure on the negotiations for a new collective agreement in a sector with 220,000 workers. So far the employers have offered a pay increase of 4.2% over a 30 months period (but as this percentage is distributed over this period the effective increase is just 1.4%). Ver.di is demanding a 6% pay increase, after 5 years of modest wage developments.

German: [http://www.verdi-direkt-in-der-hvb.de/tarif/2012 verdi Presse ...](http://www.verdi-direkt-in-der-hvb.de/tarif/2012_verdi_Presse...)

English: [http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2012-05-21/union-calls-for-strikes ...](http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2012-05-21/union-calls-for-strikes...)

Minimum wage row in social care institutions

May 15, 2012

Ver.di has spoken out against the stated intention of the minister of Health to relieve social care institutions from their current obligation to pay locally recognised pay rates, arguing the sector's minimum wage makes local pay rates superfluous. Ver.di has warned that in some regions this may reduce wages from €14.95 to €8.75 per hour.

German: <https://drei.verdi.de/2012/ausgabe-42/standpunkt/seite-3/interview>

New collective agreement for Hamburg hospitals after warning strike

May 7, 2012

After 2000 workers went on a warning strike, a new collective agreement was reached for the 13,000 employees of hospitals in Hamburg. The agreement includes a pay increase of 3.5% (applicable retrospectively from 1 March 2012), two further increases of 1.4% to be paid on 1 January and 1 August 2013 and a guarantee of 26 weekends free each year. The union also reported worker intimidation during the period of negotiations, some employees having been threatened they'd be fired if participating in the warning strike.

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

Massive job reduction announced

May 7, 2012

Lufthansa has announced a plan that will lead to a substantial reduction of administrative jobs. The company wants to cut 3,500 office jobs overall (2,500 jobs in Germany).

English: <http://www.spiegel.de/international/europe/restructuring-plans-further-along...>

German: <http://www.sueddeutsche.de/wirtschaft/stellenabbau-bei-deutschlands-groesster...>

Hungary

Former Malev staff stages demo over unpaid wages

May, 2012

Hundreds of former employees of bankrupt national air carrier Malev staged a demonstration at the National Development ministry over their and the airline's situation. The airline cancelled all its flights and terminated operation on 3 February due to financial difficulties and is currently undergoing a liquidation process. Union representatives handed over a petition to a ministry official, requesting an explanation from the development minister, the government and parliament about the situation. The unions also demand payment of all due remuneration and benefits and the government's assistance in helping the more than 2,000 families affected by the Malev bankruptcy. Csaba Demeter, the deputy chairman of the pilots' union Hunalpa, told demonstrators that the ministry official gave them assurance that the ministry would make every effort to resolve the situation.

Audi Hungária workforce climbs to over 8,000

May, 2012

The number of people employed at Audi Hungária Motor, the Hungarian unit of German car maker Audi, has risen to above 8,000. The company added 1,450 to its workforce last year and hired 600 new employees since January. Audi Hungária Motor said that it expects to hire 2,100 more workers by the time it opens its new plant in the city of Győr (close to the Austrian border) next year. The unit currently employs 900 workers at the new plant.

Taxi drivers hold demo in Budapest

May, 2012

Taxi drivers demonstrated in Budapest to protest against the planned rules of the local government of the capital. Some 200 drivers of different taxi companies gathered in the centre of Budapest, holding a funeral procession to demonstrate burying the profession. Trade union leader Zsolt Farkas told that the new technical requirements would bar most vehicles currently used. The drivers are also demanding fixed tariffs for all companies and drivers.

Source: Maté Komiljovics

Ireland

Vita Cortex workers accept redundancy – sit-ins ended

May 23, 2012

Former workers of Vita Cortex that started a sit-in to receive promised additional redundancy payments have accepted the company's offer. While the payments are less than demanded, the former employees unanimously accepted the new deal, which represents a significant improvement to their current situation. The deal comes after the National Assets Management Agency (NAMA) announced last month (see April newsletter) it was willing to make free assets for Vita Cortex's agreed supplementary redundancy payments of 0.9 weeks per worked year (on top of the statutory

two weeks). As a part of the agreement, the 161-day sit-in at Vita Clean ended at the moment that Vita Cortex processed the payments.

English: [http://www.siptu.ie/media/pressreleases2012/featurednews ...](http://www.siptu.ie/media/pressreleases2012/featurednews...)
[http://www.irishexaminer.com/ireland/end-of-vita-cortex-sit-in-expected ...](http://www.irishexaminer.com/ireland/end-of-vita-cortex-sit-in-expected...)

Cement workers accept proposals that end strike

May 17, 2012

Workers from Irish Cement Ltd, a company owned by CRH group, accepted an agreement concluded between the company and workers representatives after following a mediation process overseen by an independent chairman. Pickets were placed on the entrances to Irish Cement Ltd plants on 3rd April after the company refused to oblige a labour court recommendation regarding unpaid compensation. Workers returned to work on Monday (21st May) and pickets at the plants were lifted with immediate effect.

English: [http://www.icem.org/en/78-ICEM-InBrief/5011-Pay-Dispute ...](http://www.icem.org/en/78-ICEM-InBrief/5011-Pay-Dispute...)
<http://www.siptu.ie/media/pressreleases2012/mainnews/fullstory.15886.en.html>

Labour relations commission meets on public servants sick leave

May 17, 2012

Public service management presented its proposals for the reform of public service sick leave to trade unions in the labour relations commission. The unions have rejected the offer, claiming it does not address abuse of current uncertified leave possibilities and, instead, will harm employees suffering from chronic or long-term illnesses. The unions furthermore argued that take-up of uncertified sick leave in all official reports is very low and employers have no proof of the contrary. A pay deal is said to be unlikely.

English: [http://www.impact.ie/iopen24/labour-relations-commission-meeting ...](http://www.impact.ie/iopen24/labour-relations-commission-meeting...)
<http://www.irishtimes.com/newspaper/breaking/2012/0517/breaking19.html>

Italy

Occupation of local bank branches

May 14, 2012

Former Fiat and automotive workers protesting against unemployment and hardship occupied local branches of banks in Sicily. The Fiom, Fim and Uil unions said the peaceful protest was aimed to raise awareness of the need to help the unemployed find work.

Italian: [http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/05/14/us-fiat ...](http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/05/14/us-fiat...)

Fire-fighters announce action day for 18 June

May 7, 2012

The three largest fire-fighters unions, CGIL, CISL and UIL, have announced a day of action for 18 June. The strike was originally planned for 5 June but was postponed to comply with election regulations.

Italian: <http://www.fpcgil.it/flex/cm/pages/ServeBLOB.php/L/IT/IDPagina/22327>

Latvia

Trade union initiates signature drive for dissolution of parliament

May 22, 2012

The Confederation of the Independent Unions of Latvia has launched a signature drive for dissolution of the 11th Saeima (the parliament). According to the trade union the coalition parties

and the government keep breaking their election promises, lying to the nation, and ignoring the social partners. The confederation had offered all parties to sign a social responsibility agreement and had suggested an increase of minimum wages and tax reform. According to the Constitution's Article 14, the motion for dissolution of parliament must be signed by at least one-tenth of voters for a referendum to be organised.

English: [http://www.baltic-course.com/eng/legislation ...](http://www.baltic-course.com/eng/legislation...)

Liechtenstein

New general binding collective agreement for the retail sector

May 8, 2012

Negotiations between the Wirtschaftskammer and the LANV have led to a generally binding collective agreement for the retail trades. Although the Liechtenstein retail sector is under pressure while losing a lot of business across the border - due to a very strong Swiss Currency – the unions succeeded to sign a generally binding collective agreement as of 1 May 2012 with a duration till the end of 2013. The minimum wages increase by € 210. In other sectors (catering and security) the negotiations will continue. In the private transport sector the bargaining process was suspended as no deal on decent minimum wages could be envisaged.

German: [http://www.wirtschaftskammer.li/news/2012/04/30/news/detailhandel ...](http://www.wirtschaftskammer.li/news/2012/04/30/news/detailhandel...)

Lithuania

Disagreement on changes to Labour Code

May 23, 2012

The Trilateral Council disagreed on proposed changes to the Labour Code which suggest introducing an opportunity for an employer to terminate a labour contract after an employee turns 65 giving a three months warning not four months, as it is right now, before dismissal.

English: [http://www.baltic-course.com/eng/legislation ...](http://www.baltic-course.com/eng/legislation...)

Luxembourg

OGBL meets government on pension reform

May 21, 2012

During a meeting with the ministry of social security a delegation of the OGBL has expressed the trade union criticism related to the planned reform of the pension system. The primacy is on reduction of costs that will have an impact on future payments and the usual adjustment to inflation and general wage increase. Notably workers in sectors with a heavy workload will suffer a deterioration of their pension rights. According to the union the purpose of any reform must be to improve the working conditions for elderly workers and to create adequate end-of-career job opportunities.

French: [http://www.ogbl.lu/blog/unterredung-zwischen-dem-ogbl-und-dem-minister ...](http://www.ogbl.lu/blog/unterredung-zwischen-dem-ogbl-und-dem-minister...)

German: [http://www.ogbl.lu/de/blog/unterredung-zwischen-dem-ogbl-und-dem-minister ...](http://www.ogbl.lu/de/blog/unterredung-zwischen-dem-ogbl-und-dem-minister...)

Malta

Industrial dispute registered in public service sector

May 2, 2012

Public sector union Union Haddiema Magħqudin (UHM) has announced that unless collective agreement negotiations for all government employees are resumed, it will schedule industrial action. Negotiations have been ongoing since the previous agreement expired in 2010 but recently

government officials have cancelled meetings and refused to schedule new dates.

English: <http://di-ve.com/Default.aspx?ID ...>

General Workers Union condemns British high commissioner

May 1, 2012

The General Workers' Union (GWU) Professionals, Finance and Services Section has condemned the anti-union approach and attitude of the British High Commissioner in Malta after the Commissioner refused to meet with trade unionists claiming GWU does not represent the majority of workers any longer. GWU reports the refusal to negotiate follows a series of selective redundancies in which trade union members with indefinite contracts were laid off while non-unionised worker's temporary contracts were prolonged. The British High Commission has been subject to several cases before the Maltese Industrial Tribunal regarding breaches of employment law, which is either settled or lost.

English: <http://www.gwu.org.mt/news/1890-details.aspx>

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Netherlands

Police unions suspend industrial action

May 15, 2012

Police unions had planned further actions after Parliament approved a pay freeze for two years. Union representatives called the freeze in salaries unacceptable because other civil servants do receive pay increases of 2%. Following previous public-friendly actions involving closing police stations and stopping to write out small fines, the unions announced larger scale actions and warned that events requiring a large police presence might be endangered. After the justice ministry agreed to return to the negotiating table the actions were suspended.

English: <http://www.rnw.nl/english/bulletin/police-unions-suspend-collective-action>
http://www.dutchnews.nl/news/archives/2012/04/police_unions_to_step_up_pay_c.php

Negotiations stalled in child care

May 9, 2012

The employers' organisation of childcare providers has rejected the collective agreement reached by trade union and employer negotiators. The rejection of the agreement follows its acceptance by trade union members, who accepted moderate pay increases in return for more investments in improving the quality of services. The employers announced to have no intention of returning to negotiations until September 2012. Unions will convene meetings to discuss possible actions.

Dutch: <http://www.abvakabofnv.nl/nieuws/archief/390461/414882/afwijzing...>
<http://www.mijnvakbond.nl/Werkgevers-wijzen-CAO-Kinderopvang-af...>

Negotiations of social plan at Cargill broken off

May 4, 2012

Negotiations between management and unions at the protein factory of American company Cargill were broken off after management presented its concrete proposals for a social plan. According to trade union representatives, the previously promised job guarantee turned out to be no more than a longer dismissal period. Workers at the factory organized a work stoppage mid-April when it became clear that the total vacancies in the company exceeded the number of foreseen lay offs.

Dutch: <https://www.fnvbondgenoten.nl/mijnbranche/branches/voedingsindustrie...>

Dutch and Polish metal workers at Eemshaven site demand equal pay

May 3, 2012

Dutch and Polish metalworkers are offering a petition to RWE/Essent demanding equal pay on 11

May. Around 600 workers at the Eemshaven complex work for Polish subcontractor Remak, that does not comply with the same collective agreement as Essent does. The Dutch and Polish workers have united in FNV Eemshaven to fight the unequal pay and working conditions together.

Dutch: http://www.fnvbondgenoten.nl/nieuws/acties_en_campagnes/gewoon_goed...

Plans for modernised trade union confederation presented

May 1, 2012

On the first of May, a commission lead by former social affairs deputy minister Jetta Klijnsma presented its plans for a reformed trade union confederation, De Nieuwe Vakbond (*The new union movement*), to replace the country's largest union FNV. The commission stated the new confederation should be more democratic, more modern and transparent and its membership should have direct influence and say at every level. Proposals include the right for members to choose the union leader in direct elections and to call for referendums on strategy. The proposals will be put to a vote during the FNV congress at the end of June.

English: <http://www.rnw.nl/english/article/dutch-trade-union-federation-gets...>
http://www.dutchnews.nl/news/archives/2012/05/newlook_trade_union...

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Norway

May marked by industrial action

May 26, 2012

With negotiations going on in several sectors the country is marked by industrial disputes, but also by the conclusion of a long list of wage agreements. Fellesforbundet concluded this month a long list of agreements in several sectors (pulp and paper, glass, agriculture and horticulture, hotel and restaurant sector, the graphical trades, forestry, fish farming and rental services) whilst the public sector entered into a period of strikes affecting a wide range of workplaces and townships all over the country. Meanwhile also the oil workers have threatened with a strike after talks, centred on changes in the workers' pension system, between the unions and the Oil Industry Association failed.

English: <http://www.newsinenglish.no/2012/05/25/heres-whos-out-on-strike...>
<http://online.wsj.com/article/BT-CO-20120525-704180.html>

Norwegian: <http://www.fellesforbundet.no/Lonns--og-arbeidsvilkar/Tariffoppgjoret...>

State sector negotiations become a battle

May 24, 2012

The negotiations in the state sector have turned into a battle on wage compensation after mediation failed. It is the first time in 28 years that civil servants at state level go on strike. A demonstration is announced for 30 May in Oslo, with other meetings planned all over the country. Government and union negotiators are arguing over the size of raises won by workers within industries that negotiate their wage agreement first, when annual talks get underway in the late winter and early spring. The union demands are in line with the wage development in several other branches. Negotiations were held on the hiring in of workers, on inconvenient working hours and work in evenings and on weekends.

English: <http://www.newsinenglish.no/2012/05/25/nationwide-strike-set-to-spread/>

Norwegian: <http://www.lostat.no/loenn-og-avtaler-i-staten/streikero-i-pinsen...>
<http://www.lostat.no/forsiden/streik-i-staten-article497-6.html>
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-18188917>

New collective agreement for building industries

May 8, 2012

Trade union Fellesforbundet and employers organisation BNL concluded a two-year collective agreement for the building industries. The agreement includes a wage increase of 1,25 NOK, higher

minimum wages, an addition for skilled workers, greater shift premiums and the introduction of two weeks of paid paternal leave.

English: <http://www.bwint.org/default.asp?Index=4160&Language=EN>

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Poland

Strikes ruled out until after the Euro 2012 tournament?

May 25, 2012

The confederation of railway trade unions KKZZ has ruled out a prospective strike. Following a general assembly of union delegates the union declared that the battle for security on Polish tracks would continue, but not during the tournament. A non-fatal crash in the week of the assembly together with an earlier fatal collision and other less critical incidents stress that change is urgently needed. Piotr Duda, head of the Solidarność trade union, has indicated that he will not resign from all protests, in spite of appeals from both the government and adverse public opinion.

English: [http://www.thenews.pl/1/9/Artykul/100563,Railway-workers-rule-out ...](http://www.thenews.pl/1/9/Artykul/100563,Railway-workers-rule-out-...)

Pension reform leads to firm protest

May 11, 2012

Plans to lift the retirement age have led to some of the biggest protest in recent years. Under the reform, men and women will eventually retire at 67. Union activists of Solidarność blocked the parliament building after the bill passed. The government says that the reform prepares the country for a demographic shift. Solidarność considers renewing the protest during the Euro 2012 tournament.

English: <http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/05/11/us-poland-pensions>
[... http://www.timesunion.com/news/article/Poland-s-lawmakers-approve ...](http://www.timesunion.com/news/article/Poland-s-lawmakers-approve-...)

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Portugal

Porto labour tribunal refers public sector pay cuts to European Court of Justice

May 2012

The Porto labour tribunal has referred a case of three trade unions against the Banco Português de Negócios to the European Court of Justice. The unions challenged pay cuts on the basis of equal treatment as well as being in violation of the right to working conditions that respect dignity. The pay cut was without consent and unexpected by the employees and puts at risk the standard of living and the financial commitments of employees and their families.

English: [http://curia.europa.eu/juris/document ...](http://curia.europa.eu/juris/document-...)

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Romania

Romania set to raise public sector wages to pre-austerity levels

May 6, 2012

After an IMF statement allowing Romania to ease its austerity policies, the new leftist government has announced the 25% pay cut for public sector workers will gradually be undone. As of June, salaries will be increased by 8% and go on to a 15% increase in the following months. In combination with other recent increases, this raises the salaries to pre-austerity levels. Public sector unions have claimed that the real lost income amounts rather up to 40% than 25%, due to foregone bonuses and allowances than have not and will not be restored.

English: [http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/05/06/us-romania-politics ...](http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/05/06/us-romania-politics-...)

Slovakia

Additional budget for nurses

May 7, 2012

During a congress of nurses and midwives the government has promised to resolve a pay dispute by allocating €50 million from the state reserve. However, representatives of the health-care sector say the money will not be enough to cover both the salary increase of nurses and midwives – who were supposed to get more as of April 2012 – and the salary increase for doctors, whose pay is to rise from July.

English: http://spectator.sme.sk/articles/view/46265/3/ministry_finds_way_to_pay...

Slovenia

Police unions call for anti-cuts referendum

May 18, 2012

Two unions representing the interests of employees of the Interior Ministry and of police forces have announced that they will start collecting the 40,000 signatures required to call a referendum that could cancel the financial legislation introduced by the centre-right. The parliament's vote in favour of austerity, with deep cuts in all sectors including wages in the public sector, could now be delayed or even overturned.

English: <http://www.ansamed.info/ansamed/en/news...>
<http://www.sta.si/en/vest.php?s=a&id=1762042>

Spain

Freeze of wages for Iberia pilots after arbitration

May 25, 2012

As a result of an arbitration in the pay dispute related to a transfer of personnel (see our Newsletter in April) the wages of the Iberia pilots will be frozen until the end of 2014. According to the binding arbitration the creation of the cheap carrier Iberia Express is legitimate. The union of airline pilots SEPLA contested the transfer of the pilots. According to the arbitration text Iberia has to reduce the costs, increase productivity and improve the social climate.

English: http://elpais.com/elpais/2012/04/29/inenglish/1335726245_918880.html
Spanish: <http://economia.elpais.com/economia/2012/05/25/actualidad...>

Education strike unites teachers, parents and students associations

May 22, 2012

Following the education cut backs reported in last month's newsletter, trade unions, parents and students associations announced a day of action for 22 May. Teachers went on strike in cities across the country by the thousands, seeking to defend the education sector against a package of spending cuts – €10 billion, or \$12.7 billion – approved by Parliament as part of the government's plan to meet its stringent budget targets. The strike was the first ever coordinated by Spain's five main teachers' unions, across the whole of the state education sector, from nursery school to university. While the unions claimed that 80 percent joined the strike, the government put the level at 19.4 percent.

English: http://www.ei-ie.org/en/news/news_details/2164
<http://www.nytimes.com/2012/05/23/world/europe/education-and-health-care-cuts...>

New Inditex agreement on social audits along company supply chain

May 16, 2012

Spanish union FITEQA-CC.OO and the International Textile, Garment and Leather Workers' Federation (ITGLWF) reached an agreement with Spanish retailer Inditex Group that monitors compliance and guarantees union intervention throughout Inditex's supply chain. The agreement guarantees the ITGLWF and its affiliated unions access to all Inditex information on suppliers' workplaces, commits Inditex to giving the unions the schedule of planned social audits and listing of suppliers to be inspected and provides rights for the trade unions to inspect the sights themselves.

English: [http://www.icem.org/en/78-ICEM-InBrief/5023-ITGLWF-Inditex ...](http://www.icem.org/en/78-ICEM-InBrief/5023-ITGLWF-Inditex...)

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Sweden

Right to minimal pay

May 27, 2012

During its Congress the Trade Union Confederation LO has expressed concern over the reduction of minimum pay levels and the creation of low-paid jobs. This policy contravenes the modernisation of the labour market and the goal of fair wages. LO will work to safeguard the collective agreement model with collectively agreed minimum pay levels. The growing pay gap between white and blue-collar workers has to be reduced.

English: [http://www.lo.se/home/lo/home.nsf/unidView ...](http://www.lo.se/home/lo/home.nsf/unidView...)

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Switzerland

No big deal for hairdressers

May 24, 2012

CoiffureSuisse, the employers' organisation in the hairdressing branches, has blocked further improvements of the working conditions for the 13,000 employees by rejecting a negotiated moderate pay deal. In the sector important fundamental rights are missing or formulated at a minimum level (13th month, parental leave, basic wages) and workers have been confronted with a wage freeze (since 2009). Trade union Unia will table new demands after this defeat.

German: [http://www.unia.ch/Keine-hoeheren-Mindestloehne ...](http://www.unia.ch/Keine-hoeheren-Mindestloehne...)

French: [http://www.unia.ch/news_aktion_fr.9.0.html ...](http://www.unia.ch/news_aktion_fr.9.0.html...)

Serono workers march successfully in favour of union consultation

May 15, 2012

Local employees of Merck Serono started a protest against the shutdown of their headquarter in Geneva. According to trade union Unia up to 1,500 jobs, including 250 long-term contract workers, are affected. A strike that was announced in case company officials were not willing to extend the timeframe for consultations with the union leadership was averted. The management has accepted a prolongation of the consultations with three weeks.

English: [http://www.fiercepharma.com/story/serono-workers-threaten-strike ...](http://www.fiercepharma.com/story/serono-workers-threaten-strike...)

German: [http://www.unia.ch/Aussetzung-des-Streiks-beschlo ...](http://www.unia.ch/Aussetzung-des-Streiks-beschlo...)

French: [http://www.unia.ch/news_aktion_fr.9.0.html ...](http://www.unia.ch/news_aktion_fr.9.0.html...)

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Turkey

Rally against attempts to ban aviation strikes

May 29, 2012

In a protest against the government's plans to ban strikes in the aviation sector thousands of aviation workers went on the streets in Istanbul earlier this month. The workers, represented by the Hava-Is trade union, protested in front of Turkish Airlines' (THY) general management building.

They were calling for an end to planned legislation that singles out Hava-Is, the only aviation union in Turkey, by banning strikes in the industry. The action was followed by a strike and work slowdown at Istanbul's main airport that forced Turkish Airlines to cancel more than 100 flights.

English: [http://www.havais.org.tr/eng/index.php ...](http://www.havais.org.tr/eng/index.php...)
[http://www.havais.org.tr/eng/index.php ...](http://www.havais.org.tr/eng/index.php...)
[http://www.khaleejtimes.com/biz/inside.asp ...](http://www.khaleejtimes.com/biz/inside.asp...)

Strike in public service

May 24, 2012

Public service workers supported by a vast majority of railway workers went on a one-day strike after collective bargaining failed between the three trade unions (Memur-Sen, Kamu-Sen and KESK) and the government. The unions were dissatisfied with the proposal of 3% pay raise. According to the unions further demands on economic, social, personal, professional and democratic issues, such as the right to strike and the improvement of working conditions, were completely neglected.

English: <http://www.bianet.org/english/people/138574-public-servants-on-strike> <http://www.balkans.com/open-news.php?uniquenumber=146090>

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United Kingdom

Median pay rise in first quarter of 3%

May 29, 2012

The Labour Research department's database of collective agreements shows a midpoint (median) pay rise of 3% in the three months to April 2012. The increases average 3.0% across all sectors, apart from the public sector where the average is only 1.8% as a result of the public sector pay freeze. An important contributory factor to the rise is long-term, inflation-linked deals in the private sector based on the Retail Prices Index (RPI) inflation figures.

English: [http://1.lrd.org.uk/rp/334/process.clsp ...](http://1.lrd.org.uk/rp/334/process.clsp...)

Drivers strike at East Midlands Trains

May 23, 2012

Drivers at East Midlands Trains have scheduled six one-day strikes in May after the company announced it plans to reduce contributions into the occupational pensions scheme. While the firm states that recent evaluations show benefits will not be affected, unions claim those calculations are unreliable and that reduced contributions are unwanted at a time that pension funds' assets have been reduced by the crisis. The union demands were indirectly backed up in a letter from the Under Secretary of State who wrote that the government is disappointed that EMT pressed ahead with reducing contributions.

English: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-18184455> [http://www.aslef.org.uk/information/100012/132949/even the government backs ...](http://www.aslef.org.uk/information/100012/132949/even_the_government_backs...)

Contract dispute at Tilbury dock

May 16, 2012

Unions reacted outraged at the unilateral decision by Enterprise Distribution Centre (EDC) at Tilbury port to introduce so-called "follow-the-ship" contracts, which defines the start of working time as the moment that the ship is ready to be unloaded, rather than as assigned shift times. The dockers have organised their first 24-hour strike in 23 years and have warned more actions will follow if EDC continues to refuse negotiations.

English: [http://www.itfglobal.org/news-online/index.cfm ...](http://www.itfglobal.org/news-online/index.cfm...)

Truck drivers agree with ACAS brokered terms fuel distribution services

May 16, 2012

A small majority of 51% of truck drivers voted in favour of an ACAS brokered compromise in the fuel distribution sector that will be effective from 1 June. Majorities of drivers at DHL, Wincanton, Hoyer, and Turners voted against the proposals, while those at BP, Norbert Dentressangle, and JW Sucklings voted in favour. The compromise includes the introduction of an accreditation system called "Passport," which cover health, safety and training and serves as a deterrent for distribution companies to use sub-contract workers to deliver fuel.

English: [http://www.icem.org/en/78-ICEM-InBrief/5027-UK-Truck-Drivers-Agree ...](http://www.icem.org/en/78-ICEM-InBrief/5027-UK-Truck-Drivers-Agree-...)

400,000 public workers protest against government cuts

May 10, 2012

Hundreds of thousands of public sector workers – including at least 100,000 civil servants – took industrial action across the country in protest against government changes to their pensions and other cuts. The Wales's Labour government distanced itself from the UK government and appeared to side with the strikers. (In the Guardian: a detailed blog including pictures.)

English: [http://www.guardian.co.uk/society/blog/2012/may/10/public-sector-pensions ...](http://www.guardian.co.uk/society/blog/2012/may/10/public-sector-pensions-...)

Unions call for living wage for local government workers

May 8, 2012

UNISON, GMB and Unite unions are calling for a living wage of £7.20 per hour for local government workers. The unions are also calling for a £1,000 flat payment for workers; inclusive of £500 for this year and £500 for last year. The unions claim the lowest paid council workers have been hit hardest by the budget cuts, their salaries having been frozen despite declining purchasing power. Council workers have been left out of the £250 flat rate increase promised to other public service employees by the government.

English: <http://www.unison-scotland.org.uk/news/2012/mayjune/0805.htm>

Hundreds of jobs at risk as airlift carrier Bmibaby closes

May 4, 2012

Despite large-scale reorganisations that cost approximately 1200 jobs, no new owner has been attracted for low cost carrier BMI. The International Airline Group, owner of British Airways, said immediately after the take-over of the company, that bmibaby and bmi Regional were not a part of its long-term strategy. IAG has now announced closure for September and has started negotiating a social plan with unions. Reductions in bmibaby's flying programme will be introduced from June to control the company's losses.

English: <http://www.thefreelibrary.com/JOBS+SHOCK+AS+BMIBABY>
... [http://www.thisisnottingham.co.uk/Long-term-unemployment-fears-Bmibaby ...](http://www.thisisnottingham.co.uk/Long-term-unemployment-fears-Bmibaby-...)

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