

collective bargaining

Issue 8/2012 September

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

European sources

Pay increase not enough to maintain purchasing power

Quarterly report on labour costs

Eurostat publishes 2012 figures on hourly labour costs

Austria

Investment in training pays in public procurement

Temporary work act to guarantee equal rights for temp workers

Belgium

Rail strike announced

Tough negotiations at ArcelorMittal

Bulgaria

Hourly labour costs rise by 4,8%

Kardzhali Lead and Zinc complex sold at last

Minimum wages and pensions to be increased

Croatia

First collective agreement for container operations signed

Cyprus

Bus strike in Limassol

Czech Republic

Critical union and employer reactions to draft state budget

New pension indexation approved

Labour market stagnates

Teachers union on tour against cuts

Denmark

Conservative party proposal to undercut collective agreements

Estonia

Pay raise offered ahead of strike

Finland

Mini jobs undermine the basis of the welfare state

ID requirement on construction sites to fight grey economy

France

Cancellations due to strike at Brittany Ferries
More temp workers lose jobs
Day of solidarity with Apple workers
Peugeot Citroën workers direct anger towards Hollande government

Germany

Government claims outstanding social security payments of over 3000 staffing firms
Warning strike at DHL Fashion
Lufthansa stops hiring temp workers to end strikes

Greece

General strike
News black-out as journalists strike
Police, military, tax collectors, teachers and judges join protest
Troika may demand 6-day working week in exchange for bail-out

Hungary

Union opinion on IMF demands
Job protection action plan aimed at assisting elderly, young and unskilled
Hungarian PM: government committed to wage rises within reason

Ireland

Strike notice at Dublin Airport Authority
Restructuring at Bord na Móna after bad harvest
Hospital consultants reach vague and incomplete deal
Lagan Brick dispute comes to an end
Promises that no renegotiation of Croke Park will be sought
Court orders longer working hours for council staff

Italy

Anti-austerity general strike
Workers at NH Hoteles to strike against lay-offs and outsourcing
FIAT closures debated with the government
Protests against closure of Alcoa aluminium production plant

Latvia

Fighting back union-busting

Lithuania

Evolution of wages reported

Luxembourg

Wage indexation delivers small automatic pay rise
Workers at Cargolux fear outsourcing of plane maintenance to Qatar
Law to introduce more flexible working hours for new parents
Another 4171 workers to be placed on partial unemployment

Malta

Dockers organise one-hour solidarity strike
Industrial action at medicines authority

Netherlands

Protesters win new collective agreement to replace annulled agreement
Remak ordered to pay 800 Polish workers higher wages

Norway

Oil services workers to be balloted on pay deal
Row over temporary workers piloting NAS planes

Wage agreement for oil drillers

Poland

Increase of nominal labour costs

Portugal

Unexpected tripartite talks opened

Port workers strike over unpaid overtime

Large protests against new austerity wave

Romania

Statistics on wage development in 2010

Serbia

Construction workers on hunger strike

Slovakia

Teachers organise one-day warning strike

Slovenia

Draft labour market reform hails flexibilisation

Spain

New cuts announced

Demonstrators demand referendum on austerity cuts

Sweden

Crisis package saved municipal jobs

Switzerland

Austerity and low paid workers

Wage hike at Nescafé

Turkey

Tripartite deal to end disputes on contracts

Norwegian support for sacked Turkish Airlines employees

Swedish unions enraged over union bashing by IKEA Turkey

United Kingdom

Union victimisation and discrimination reported at Crossrail construction sites

Precarious work on the increase in women's employment

Modest pay increase in graphic industry to put collective bargaining back on track

FG Wilson to cut 760 jobs

TUC congress backs plans for general strike

European sources

Pay increase not enough to maintain purchasing power

September 20, 2012

In its annual update on pay developments in Europe Eurofound signals a considerable decline in real pay rates across almost all countries and sectors in 2011. The changes in collectively agreed pay increases in real terms were considerably lower in 2011 compared to 2010, with most countries presenting negative figures. According to the report Norway experienced the highest nominal collectively agreed pay increase (4.3%), followed by Slovakia (3.7%) and the Czech Republic (2.9%). Though the agreed increases in Austria, the Netherlands, Norway, Slovakia and Spain were higher in 2011 than in 2010, workers in Belgium, Germany and the UK did not see any considerable change year on year. The report also focuses on collectively agreed pay increases in three sectors, manufacturing (chemicals), services (retail) and the public sector (civil service), respectively. Finally it is noted that there were changes to the levels of statutory minimum wage in

15 of the 20 countries with such provision.

English: <http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/press/releases/2012/120919.htm> ...

Focus on the Pay developments 2011 report: <http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/docs/eiro> ...

Quarterly report on labour costs

September 19, 2012

Unit labour costs (ULCs) in the OECD area rose by 0.3% in the second quarter of 2012, according to OECD statistics. Since the beginning of the financial crisis, unit labour costs in the euro area have risen by about 9%, 3 percentage points higher than the OECD average. However, rebalancing between euro countries has in most cases been on the way since the beginning of 2009. In Ireland, Spain and Portugal, ULCs have continued to fall or remain moderate, mainly driven by labour productivity growth as a result of significant cuts in employment.

English: http://www.oecd.org/std/labourstatistics/ULC_2012Q2_%20Eng.pdf

Eurostat publishes 2012 figures on hourly labour costs

September 17, 2012

According to figures published by Eurostat, wages and salaries per hour worked grew in the euro area by 1.7% and the non-wage component by 1.2% in the year up to the second quarter of 2012, compared with 1.6% and 1.3% respectively for the previous quarter. In the EU27, hourly wages and salaries rose by 1.9% and the non-wage component by 1.4% in the year up to the second quarter of 2012, compared with 1.5% and 1.6% respectively for the first quarter of 2012.

English: <http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/cache> ...

Austria

Investment in training pays in public procurement

September 20, 2012

Contractors that train apprentices are likely to get a better chance at winning building contracts in the city of Vienna after a new pilot project was introduced (starting in 2013) that means companies who employ apprentices will get favourable treatment. The planned project foresees a change in the public procurement rules and is meant to encourage greater employment among youngsters by giving preferential treatment to building firms who take on apprentices. The trade union youth organisation ÖGJ is in favour of a countrywide application of the principle 'public works only for companies that train young workers'.

English: <http://www.austriantimes.at/news/Business/2012-09-20> ...

German: <http://derstandard.at/1347492987829/Wien-will-bei-Bauauftraegen> ...

Temporary work act to guarantee equal rights for temp workers

September 5, 2012

Social partners have come to an agreement over the amendment of the temporary work act to increase tempo workers' rights. The amendments aim to improve temporary workers' information about remuneration, safety measures and the duration of jobs. Additionally, the amended law increases legal certainty over pay and reduces the administrative burden on employers.

English: <http://www.staffingindustry.com/eng/Research-Publications> ...

Belgium

Rail strike announced

September 21, 2012

Unions at the national rail company NMBS have called on their members to strike on 2-3 October after negotiations with the Federal Government Minister responsible for public sector companies Paul Magnette (Francophone socialist) reached a dead end. The rail unions have been involved in negotiations about the future structure of the state-owned rail company and are in favour of an integrated company structure that

includes both passenger services and the rail infrastructure. The governmental proposals do not include an integrated structure.

English: http://www.deredactie.be/cm/vrtnieuws.english/news/120921_Rail_strike

Tough negotiations at ArcelorMittal

September 20, 2012

After negotiations between the trade unions and the management on 795 dismissals ended up in a dead end street the company formulated a threat not to invest in the region of Liège. Roger Blanpain, professor in labour law, called this a clear breach of the OECD code of conduct for transnational companies that says that during negotiations on working conditions there will never be a threat of relocation. In the meantime, as a result of social arbitration the parties have agreed to reopen talks on investment plans and on a social plan.

English: http://www.deredactie.be/cm/vrtnieuws.english/news/120918_Arcelor_Mittal

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

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

Bulgaria

Hourly labour costs rise by 4,8%

September 17, 2012

The National Statistics Institute has reported that in the second quarter of 2012, total hourly labour costs rose by 4.8% compared to costs one year earlier. Sectors administering the highest labour cost increases were wholesale and retail trade, repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles, services and professional, scientific and technical activities. The largest decrease in labour costs was found in electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply and construction.

English: http://www.novinite.com/view_news.php?id=143299

Kardzhali Lead and Zinc complex sold at last

September 14, 2012

After more than a year of uncertainty over the future of the country's largest non-ferrous metal producer LZC, reported in previous newsletters, the Kardzhali plant was sold this month to Harmony 2012 Ltd. While four hours before the bidding deadline no offers had been submitted, three bids emerged last minute. The plant was sold for 8.6 million Lev (4.4 million euro) and includes the plant's premises and land but not its machines. The total debt of the plant under its current owner is estimated at 350 million Lev (179 million euro).

English: http://www.novinite.com/view_news.php?id=143224

Minimum wages and pensions to be increased

September 3, 2012

The Minister for social policy and labour has announced that the minimum wage will be increased to BGN 310 (€ 158) in 2013. This will be the third increase of the minimum wage by the current government. The ministry furthermore confirmed that a pension hike will be announced too, but could not comment on the amount thereof.

English: http://www.novinite.com/view_news.php?id=142892

http://www.novinite.com/view_news.php?id=143317

Croatia

First collective agreement for container operations signed

September 5, 2012

Unions at a container terminal in Rijeka have signed the first collective bargaining agreement (CBA) for container operations in the Adriatic region with the terminal operator, the Philippine-based container port

company ICTSI. According to the management of the subsidiary Adriatic Gate Container Terminal (AGCT), the agreement aims to guarantee a greater level of training, social development, safety and productivity.

English: [http://www.informare.it/news/gennews/2012/20121528-AdriaticGate ...](http://www.informare.it/news/gennews/2012/20121528-AdriaticGate...)
[http://positivenewsmedia.com/blog/2012/09/ictsi-croatia-subsiarys ...](http://positivenewsmedia.com/blog/2012/09/ictsi-croatia-subsiarys...)

Cyprus

Bus strike in Limassol

September 14, 2012

A planned 24-hour strike by Limassol bus drivers ended Friday morning 14 September. The bus company Emel agreed to pay wages that staff said had owed for two weeks. The work stoppage ended, following a vote by the unions. The strike was a warning of stronger measures to come if the company didn't pay up.

English: <http://www.cyprusdirectory.com/articleview.aspx?ID=26381>

Czech Republic

Critical union and employer reactions to draft state budget

September 25, 2012

Trade union and employer representatives have reacted critically to a draft budget presented by the finance ministry during tripartite consultations. Both unions and employers were critical of the budget being based on laws that have not been approved in Parliament yet. Unions furthermore warned against pension reform and salary freezes, whereas employers were disappointed with the lack of cuts to the state administration. Despite its cold reception, the budget will be approved in the council of ministers and sent to Parliament together with the opinions of the social partners. These were the first tripartite talks since the unions left the negotiation table in spring, claiming the government only presented proposals it had already decided upon.

English: [http://praguemonitor.com/2012/09/25/trade-unions-reject ...](http://praguemonitor.com/2012/09/25/trade-unions-reject...)

New pension indexation approved

September 13, 2012

The new law on the indexation of pensions has passed the Parliament and been signed by the President of the republic, despite protests from left wing parties and the council of the elderly. Starting from 2013, pensioned will be indexed over a three-year period based for one third of the growth in prices and one third of the rise in real wages. The slowing down of pension growth is expected to save 2 billion euros (48 billion crowns) over the next three years. The old indexation system adjusted the pensions at the same level as the inflation rate.

English: [http://praguemonitor.com/2012/09/13/slowing-down-pensions-growth ...](http://praguemonitor.com/2012/09/13/slowing-down-pensions-growth...)

Labour market stagnates

September 12, 2012

Results from the Manpower labour market index study predict a continuation of the labour markets stagnation in the fourth quarter of 2012. A total of 87% of Czech companies are planning no changes. Five per cent of companies are planning to lay off staff, and the same percentage of companies intend to take on new employees. Employers expect most new job hires in electricity, gas and water production and distribution and manufacturing. Employers in manufacturing industry, finance, insurance, real estate and other services to companies in majority expect additional lay-offs.

English: [http://praguemonitor.com/2012/09/12/manpower-czech-labour-market ...](http://praguemonitor.com/2012/09/12/manpower-czech-labour-market...)

Teachers union on tour against cuts

September 4, 2012

The school workers' union has announced to kick off the school year with a tour around the country to discuss the adverse effects of the cut backs on the quality of education. Amongst others, salary increases promised by the government have been halved and subsidies for aids for first-grade pupils have been cut.

The 'Tour for the salvation of education, schools and culture', scheduled for September and October, includes public discussions and concerts. The news of national cuts was followed by more bad news, when it became clear the country would miss out on EU funds for educational programs due to project mismanagement.

English: [http://praguemonitor.com/2012/09/04/education-unions-launch ...](http://praguemonitor.com/2012/09/04/education-unions-launch-...)
[http://praguemonitor.com/2012/08/31/school-workers-union-plans-protest-tour ...](http://praguemonitor.com/2012/08/31/school-workers-union-plans-protest-tour-...)
[http://praguemonitor.com/2012/09/05/edumin-admits-it-will-not-be-able-draw ...](http://praguemonitor.com/2012/09/05/edumin-admits-it-will-not-be-able-draw-...)

Denmark

Conservative party proposal to undercut collective agreements

September 7, 2012

According to the Employment Ministry a proposal by Dansk Folkeparti (DF) and Venstre (V), if approved by a majority in Parliament, would force some workers to work for salaries as low as 30 kroner an hour and without the right to strike. The proposal was made to limit the rights of trade unions to enter into conflicts with businesses that sign collective bargaining agreements with independent unions that tend to leave their employees worse off. According to the Employment Ministry, this would open up the possibility of employers getting away with substantially lower salaries and could undermine the working conditions that have been secured through the Danish employment model.

English: [http://cphpost.dk/news/national/venstre-proposal-could-mean-30-kroner-hour ...](http://cphpost.dk/news/national/venstre-proposal-could-mean-30-kroner-hour-...)

Estonia

Pay raise offered ahead of strike

September 27, 2012

The Health Insurance Fund has announced that wages can rise next year by 3% for doctors and 6% for nurses and caregivers in an effort to avoid a strike, organised by the doctors' and health care workers' trade unions, that begins on 1 October. The unions want to stop the exodus of doctors and nurses to other countries. They want the health care system to return to growth from what they call a state of collapse. 'We seek a national collective agreement so that we can treat patients in our homeland working under normal load and for a motivational salary,' said Iivi Luik, chair of the health care workers' union. The doctors' trade union stated that it has enough funds to compensate its members' foregone salaries for a few months, should the strike last that long. Meanwhile the railway workers have announced that they might support the strike.

English: <http://news.err.ee/health/b59b61f9-ef4c-4d80-8957-2ea2e92a6740>
<http://news.err.ee/health/9a02ba86-6e8f-47bf-ac70-d9fece8b80e8>
<http://news.err.ee/health/b59b61f9-ef4c-4d80-8957-2ea2e92a6740>
<http://news.err.ee/economy/9daf0331-3089-4727-902c-d3721ba864eb>

Finland

Mini jobs undermine the basis of the welfare state

September 18, 2012

A report published in early August by the Federation of the Finnish Technology Industry indicated that the country's cost competitiveness had declined in comparison with its main competitors. In the following debate the employer representatives have repeatedly referred to the strength of the German export industry, in particular, and hinted that Finland should copy this example. According to the unions employers have totally ignored the employee perspective when referring to Germany's example. The unions categorically reject any model that attempts to curtail living incomes.

English: <http://www.artto.kaapeli.fi/unions/T2012/p36>

ID requirement on construction sites to fight grey economy

September 5, 2012

The tax office has introduced a new requirement for all construction workers to carry IDs with their taxation numbers in order to fight undeclared work. The revised legislation also compels contractors to check that sub-contractors meet their obligations towards their employees. Tax evasion and underpaid, often foreign workers have been a big problem for years in the construction sector.

English: <http://www.bwint.org/default.asp?Index=4313&Language=EN>

France

Cancellations due to strike at Brittany Ferries

September 24, 2012

Several ferries were cancelled at Brittany Ferries due to strikes by its French crew. The crews are engaged in actions over working conditions. Crew members took strike action over proposed plans to take away bonuses and change certain shift patterns. The company is offering passengers alternative arrangements, such as ferries departing from different French ports. Brittany Ferries said despite 'constructive' talks, no agreement had been reached. Although the talks continue with the trade unions ferry services operating between France and Spain have been cancelled 'indefinitely'.

English: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-19700401>
[http://www.connexionfrance.com/Brittany-Ferries-strike-bonus-Roscoff ...](http://www.connexionfrance.com/Brittany-Ferries-strike-bonus-Roscoff...)

More temp workers lose jobs

September 21, 2012

Another 18,900 temp jobs were lost over the second quarter of 2012, reports the Ministry of labour. The number of temporary workers fell in all sectors and reportedly continued to fall in July, leading to expectations for a further drop in the third quarter. Worst hit was the industrial sector, shedding 13,600 temporary workers, corresponding to over 5% of the total.

English: <http://www.staffingindustry.com/eng/content/view/full/70920>

Day of solidarity with Apple workers

September 21, 2012

A strike was called by one of the main unions representing workers at Apple's stores in Paris and other cities after the breakdown of talks over working conditions. Demands by the union, which represents about a quarter of Apple Store employees, included the installation of water fountains, providing meal vouchers and paying a thirteenth month of salary as is common at French companies. The union also says it wants better conditions for employees at Foxconn and other Chinese factories that act as supplying industries for Apple products. Foxconn has long been criticised for poor labour conditions, especially after a rash of worker suicides in the past. On 23 September it came to an outburst of protest with thousands of workers demonstrating, finally leading to a closure of one of the largest Foxconn plants in China.

English: [http://news.cnet.com/8301-13579_3-57517598-37/apple-unions-day-of-solidarity ...](http://news.cnet.com/8301-13579_3-57517598-37/apple-unions-day-of-solidarity...)
[http://www.nytimes.com/2012/09/25/technology/foxconn-plant-in-china-closed-after ...](http://www.nytimes.com/2012/09/25/technology/foxconn-plant-in-china-closed-after...)
Focus on the Working conditions at Foxconn in China: <http://sacom.hk/>

Peugeot Citroën workers direct anger towards Hollande government

September 18, 2012

After protests against SPA Peugeot Citroën's announcement it will be cutting 8000 jobs, reported in last month's newsletter, demonstrations have now been announced in front of the Elysée palace. The management's restructuring plan came as a heavy blow to the auto industry. Earlier, President Hollande vouched to do everything in his power to prevent the job losses, yet little progress has been made.

English: [http://www.equaltimes.org/news/france-greve-a-venir-lavenir-est-sombre-pour ...](http://www.equaltimes.org/news/france-greve-a-venir-lavenir-est-sombre-pour...)

Germany

Government claims outstanding social security payments of over 3000 staffing firms

September 24, 2012

The government launched 3200 investigations into underpayment of salaries and social security benefits by staffing firms that signed up to a collective agreement declared illegal by the Federal Labour Court in May. The aforementioned collective agreement was closed between employers and a number of smaller Christian unions and provided for lower wages and social security contributions than the regular collective agreement. The labour court ruled that the agreement 'lacked bargaining capacity' and declared it retrospectively void.

English: <http://www.staffingindustry.com/eng/content/view/full/70968>

Warning strike at DHL Fashion

September 14, 2012

Trade union ver.di has called a warning strike at DHL Fashion. The union is negotiating higher wages and better working conditions for workers at DHL warehouses that store and process clothing and consumer goods for retail outlets. Some 2,100 workers in Hamburg, Essen and Oranienburg participated in the strike.

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

Lufthansa stops hiring temp workers to end strikes

September 10, 2012

Lufthansa has announced it will quit temporary staffing without further pre-conditions in an attempt to stop the strikes and return to the bargaining table. The 200 flight attendants hired via temp agencies will receive permanent job offers. Earlier this month, unions at Lufthansa organised warning strikes leading to the cancellation of 50% of all Lufthansa flights and stranding over 100,000 travellers. Lufthansa expressed a wish to return to constructive negotiations. Next to the demand to end temporary staffing, unions have asked for a 5% wage increase to compensate for three years of wage moderation.

English: [http://www.staffingindustry.com/eng/Research-Publications ...](http://www.staffingindustry.com/eng/Research-Publications...)
<http://www.thelocal.de/national/20120908-44843.html>

Greece

General strike

September 27, 2012

The traditional summer break that has allowed the conservative-led government of prime minister Antonis Samaras to enjoy relative calm on the streets is over. Trade unions are holding mass demonstrations in Athens – and some 65 cities and major towns nationwide – before protesters march on the Greek parliament. The union anger is directed at spending cuts worth nearly €12bn over the next two years that the country has promised the EU and the IMF to secure its next tranche of aid. The bulk of cuts are expected from slashing wages, pensions and welfare benefits, heaping a new wave of misery on the population.

English: [http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2012/sep/26/greek-workers-begin ...](http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2012/sep/26/greek-workers-begin...)
[http://greece.greekreporter.com/2012/09/26/tens-of-thousands-of-greeks-marched ...](http://greece.greekreporter.com/2012/09/26/tens-of-thousands-of-greeks-marched...)

News black-out as journalists strike

September 25, 2012

Radio, television and newspaper news came to a standstill on 24 September as journalists joined the strikes against austerity cuts. In preparation of the general strike on the 26th, there was no television or radio reporting on the 24th and no print media on the 25th.

English: [http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/no-news-today-greek ...](http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/no-news-today-greek...)

Police, military, tax collectors, teachers and judges join protest

September 22, 2012

Military personnel and police officers have joined the protest against the new round of austerity measures that will further cut down wages and benefits whilst increasing the costs of public services. Teachers and judges too, have announced they will be joining the general strike that has been announced for the 26 September. The European Trade Union Committee for Education (ETUCE) expressed its solidarity with the Greek teachers and stated that Greece in many ways has been turned into an austerity laboratory under

control of purely economic interests.

English: <http://mg.co.za/article/2012-09-16-greek-protests-enter-menacing-phase>
http://english.ruvr.ru/2012_09_20/Athens-in-grip-of-strikes-again/
http://www.ei-ie.org/en/news/news_details/2294
[http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/greece-general-strike-with-a-silver ...](http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/greece-general-strike-with-a-silver-...)

Troika may demand 6-day working week in exchange for bail-out *September 5, 2012*

A leaked email from the EU, ECB and IMF to the Greek government has revealed further demands for labour reform. One of the suggestions is the introduction of a six-day working week. Further proposals in the letter, which comes on the eve of another troika inspection visit, include increased flexibility of work schedules; setting the minimum daily rest to 11 hours; delinking the working hours of employees from the opening hours of the establishment; eliminating restrictions on minimum/maximum time between morning and afternoon shifts; and allowing the consecutive two-week leave to be taken anytime during the year in seasonal sectors. The demands come at a time that many European leaders have criticized the lack of progress in Greece.

English: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/business/2012/sep/04/eurozone-six-day-week-greece>
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-19491266>

Hungary

Union opinion on IMF demands *August 23, 2012*

Prime Minister Viktor Orbán told union leaders that he would seek their opinions on any measures demanded by the IMF in return for a second bailout, the state news agency MTI reported. After meeting István Gaskó, leader of the trade union federation LIGA, Orbán said the government is prepared to reconsider tax policy. However, the Federation of Independent Unions dismissed Orbán's meeting with LIGA as window dressing. The government has abandoned nationwide consultation and the new labour code that took effect on 1 July restricts workers' rights to the benefit of the government and employers.

English: <http://www.budapesttimes.hu/2012/09/17/orban-listens-to-certain-unions/>

Job protection action plan aimed at assisting elderly, young and unskilled *September 20, 2012*

The government is set to launch a 10-point job protection action plan, which aims to improve the situation of disadvantaged employees, jobseekers and enterprises. The primary objective of the package is to create and preserve existing jobs as one of the keys to the economic growth of Hungary. The budgetary resources required for the action plan will be provided by the financial transaction duty. Prime Minister Viktor Orbán stressed in his weekly interview with public radio MR1, that the government will have the funds for the job protection action plan under any circumstance, even if it has to modify the financial transaction tax. The country's financial transaction tax, which the cabinet plans to introduce on 1 January 2013, has taken the centre stage over the past few days after the European Central Bank (ECB) said it would impair the MNB's functional and institutional independence. The government hopes to collect HUF 120 billion next year from the Bank in form of the FTT, but it would need to pay this back in 2014 so it would help improve the budget balance only on the surface.

English: [http://www.kormany.hu/download ...](http://www.kormany.hu/download...)

Hungarian PM: government committed to wage rises within reason *September 12, 2012*

Hungary's government is a government of wage rises and minimum wage rises within the limits of economic reason, Prime Minister Viktor Orbán said after a meeting with the leaders of unions association LIGA. Mr Orbán said he agreed with union leaders that any wage increase is justified in Hungary at present, but an economic policy that finances a lack of economic output from loans cannot be continued. He asked LIGA chief Istvan Gasko to support the implementation of the government's workplace protection plan, adding that without it there can be no talk of wage increases.

Ireland

Strike notice at Dublin Airport Authority

September 25, 2012

Trade union SIPTU has served a strike notice on Dublin Airport Authority (DAA) in an on-going conflict over pension entitlements. As reported in previous newsletters, the Aer Lingus and DAA Irish Aviation Pension Scheme has been found to have a €700 million deficit that unions have tried to get the companies to close. The case is currently in front of the Labour Relations Commission, who has adjourned the talks in order to formulate a settlement proposal. SIPTU stated the blame lies with the pension regulator rather than the companies, because new and stricter legislation has forced pension schemes to be closed rather than protected them. The strike is announced for 1 October. Meanwhile, Aer Lingus has announced it will establish a new legal committee, headed by one of its non-executive directors, to step up the efforts to address the issue.

English: <http://www.rte.ie/news/2012/0911/strike-action-at-aer-lingus-and-daa ...>
<http://www.irishtimes.com/newspaper/ireland/2012/0912/1224323911890.html>
<http://www.independent.ie/business/irish/aer-lingus-steps-up-its-efforts-to-solve ...>

Restructuring at Bord na Móna after bad harvest

September 18, 2012

Trade unions are meeting the management of Bord na Móna, who lost 2.5m tons of peat over the last four months due to bad weather. While restructuring plans were already underway, the bad harvest has worsened the company's financial situation. Closure of the workshop at Boora and staff reductions in Longford, Westmeath, Laois, Offaly, Kildare, Roscommon and Mayo are expected. In direct response to the bad harvest, 105 seasonal employees who would work in the company's feedstock business this winter will lose their job, 90 employees will be affected by a short-time working scheme and several full-time staff will be redeployed to the feedstock business.

English: <http://www.rte.ie/news/2012/0907/bord-na-mona-peat-harvest.html>
<http://www.rte.ie/news/2012/0918/105-bord-na-mona-seasonal-staff-to-lose-jobs.html>

Hospital consultants reach vague and incomplete deal

September 17, 2012

Hospital consultants and the Health Service Executive (HSE) have announced that a deal has been made regarding new pay and working conditions. However, much remains unclear. As reported in last month's newsletter, the consultants and the HSE were in conflict over a lower entry pay, more flexible scheduling and the elimination of the so-called historic leave, under which several hundred consultants are entitled to a final year off as a compensation for past overtime. Scheduling issues have been solved as a part of the agreement, allowing consultants to be scheduled in any five of seven days during night or day, rather than from Monday to Friday. The historic leave will be referred to the labour court for non-binding adjudication and the issues of rest days and second opinion fees for binding adjudication. Whilst no agreement was found on lower entry rates for new consultants, the HSE has announced it will unilaterally press ahead with the measure, lowering annual salaries by about €50,000.

English: <http://www.rte.ie/news/2012/0917/consultant-hse-talks.html>
<http://www.irishtimes.com/newspaper/breaking/2012/0917/breaking2.html>

Lagan Brick dispute comes to an end

September 13, 2012

The dispute over redundancy payments at Lagan Brick that started in December 2011 has been resolved as the laid-off workers and management agreed on new terms that have been kept confidential. The dispute, reported repeatedly in this newsletter, started when twenty-five former employees of closed down Lagan Brick plant in Kingscourt sought improved redundancy packages and payment of the statutory redundancy rates. The labour court recommended improved redundancy packages and payment terms in a ruling marked by the absence of Lagan Brick management. After another brief period of non-communication from the side of the company, a settlement has now been announced, ending the long lasting conflict.

English: <http://www.siptu.ie/media/pressreleases2012/mainnews ...>

<http://www.rte.ie/news/2012/0913/lagan-brick-protest-cavan.html>

Promises that no renegotiation of Croke Park will be sought

September 11, 2012

After weeks of rumours that the government might seek to renegotiate the Croke Park agreement, the government has put an end to uncertainty stating it will not attempt to renegotiate the agreement before its expiration in 2014. Contradictory statements by various cabinet members and reform measures in local authority and health services that seemed to stretch the terms of the agreement led to great worries the agreement might not stand. Trade unions published statements welcoming the confirmation that the deal will be respected and outlining the effort made by all public sector workers to meet its terms.

English: [http://www.irishtimes.com/newspaper/ireland/2012/0911 ...](http://www.irishtimes.com/newspaper/ireland/2012/0911...)

<http://www.impact.ie/12/09/11/No-Croke-Park-renegotiation-sought-.htm>

Court orders longer working hours for council staff

September 10, 2012

The labour court rules that the working week in local authorities will be increased to at least 34 hours for current personnel and 35 for newly hired or promoted staff. Local authorities announced their intentions to up working hours earlier this year but were taken to court by trade unions, who argued this would constitute a de facto wage cut, which is precluded under the Croke Park agreement. The ruling will affect over 5,000 employees in clerical, administrative, engineering, technical and related grades. They will see their working time increase by between 15 and 65 minutes a week – or between 3 and 13 minutes a day – depending on their current hours.

English: [http://www.impact.ie/12/09/10/Labour-Court-introduces-minimum-34-hour ...](http://www.impact.ie/12/09/10/Labour-Court-introduces-minimum-34-hour...)

<http://www.rte.ie/news/2012/0910/council-staff-to-work-longer-hours.html>

Italy

Anti-austerity general strike

September 28, 2012

The trade unions have mobilised for a long announced strike with demonstrations all over the country on 28 September. Protesters – ranging from university professors, public administration and health employees, and garbage collectors – took to the streets as part of a strike organised by the Italian General Confederation of Labour (CGIL) and the Italian Union of Labour (UIL). In the preceding weeks PM Mario Monti tried to calm down the international audience with statements that Italy no longer risks being a source of turmoil amid the on-going Eurozone debt crisis.

English: <http://www.lifeinitaly.com/news/en/156767>

<http://rt.com/news/italy-general-strike-austerity-200/>

Italian: <http://www.milanotoday.it/cronaca/sciopero-milano-28-settembre-2012.html>

[http://www.mainfatti.it/sciopero/Sciopero-28-settembre-2012-pubblico-impiego ...](http://www.mainfatti.it/sciopero/Sciopero-28-settembre-2012-pubblico-impiego...)

<http://www.genovatoday.it/cronaca/sciopero-pubblico-impegno-28-settembre-2012.html>

Workers at NH hoteles strike against lay-offs and outsourcing

September 21, 2012

Three unions at the Spanish-owned NH hotels announced a strike for 21 September. The unions are protesting against the announced loss of 400 jobs, a 120 of which are to disappear and the rest to be outsourced. NH has around 400 hotels in 26 countries. The participation was impressive. In Milano more than 75% of the workforce went on strike in a procession from one hotel to the other. Workers in Florence joint forces with Siena and in Rome 200 workers gathered in front of the Hotel Leonardo da Vinci.

English: <http://cms.iuf.org/?q=node/1926>

Italian: [http://www.filcams.cgil.it/home.nsf ...](http://www.filcams.cgil.it/home.nsf...)

FIAT closures debated with the government

September 19, 2012

Unions from Spain, Poland, Austria, Germany, France and Italy gathered in front of the FIAT Iveco

headquarters on 7 September to protest against the unilateral closure of five plants in France, Austria and Germany and the loss of 1000 jobs. The first and core demand of the unions was to get full information and start bilateral talks at the national and European level about the intended restructuring in order to be able to defend the interests of the employees as best as may be. Shortly after, the country's labour minister stated that the company still has responsibilities in Italy that include clarifying its industrial plans. As PM Mario Monti stepped in talks were opened with the company leadership, and later on with the trade unions.

English: <http://www.industriall-europe.eu/news/list2.asp?stid=41>
[http://www.corriere.it/english/12_settembre_19/monti ...](http://www.corriere.it/english/12_settembre_19/monti...)

Protests against closure of Alcoa aluminium production plant

September 12, 2012

Hundreds of workers and trade unionists have participated in protests against the closing down of the US owned Alcoa aluminium production plant on Sardinia. Alcoa announced the plant's shut down in March but agreed with union and government representatives to stay in business until 1 September to seek a new buyer for the plant. Following rumours that two companies might be interested to take over the plant, unions have asked for another 20 day delay in the closure of the plant. Alcoa is one of the few large employers on the Sardinian island where unemployment rates have soared.

English: [http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp ...](http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp...)
[http://www.steelguru.com/metals_news/Alcoa_workers_stage_protest_to_slow ...](http://www.steelguru.com/metals_news/Alcoa_workers_stage_protest_to_slow...)
[http://www.corriere.it/english/12_settembre_13/alcoa ...](http://www.corriere.it/english/12_settembre_13/alcoa...)

Latvia

Fighting back union-busting

September 21, 2012

Attempts to intimidate members of the Liepaja Port Staff Professional Organisation were successfully neutralised. Port managers had made accusations of theft against workers after attempts failed to breach the union's collective agreement by manipulating wages. The union disputed all the allegations. Appeal to the court with support from the Water Transport Unions' Federation of Latvia led to seven rejected applications from the employer to dismiss workers.

English: <http://www.itfglobal.org/news-online/index.cfm/newsdetail/7905>

Lithuania

Evolution of wages reported

September 7, 2012

Average wage in Lithuania is very low comparing to other EU countries – close to LTL 2,000 (€ 580) per month; moreover during 2008-2010 it decreased by almost 8% on average. In some sectors (e.g., manufacturing) the crisis has affected the number of employees, while in other sectors (e.g., public administration and defence; compulsory social security) it has rather hit the level of wages. Average wage decreased sharply in 2009 and remained relatively stable throughout 2010 and 2011. Gross wage growth remains modest, and net real wage growth was still negative in the second quarter of 2012, a trend that has been continuing for three-and-a-half years.

English: [http://www.swedbank-research.com/english/lithuanian_economy ...](http://www.swedbank-research.com/english/lithuanian_economy...)
<http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/ewco/studies/tn1203015s/lt1203019q.htm>

Luxembourg

Wage indexation delivers small automatic pay rise

September 20, 2012

Due to indexation of wages, aligning them to fluctuations in living costs, pay will rise marginally by 1 October. The minimum wage will be increased from €1801.49 to €1846.51; personal pension insurances goes

up to €1661.58, unemployment benefits to €1315.31 and child allowances increase by €76.88 per child. The price indexation is applied once a year.

English: [http://www.wort.lu/en/view/indexation-brings-welcome-cash-boost ...](http://www.wort.lu/en/view/indexation-brings-welcome-cash-boost...)

Workers at Cargolux fear outsourcing of plane maintenance to Qatar

September 20, 2012

After Cargolux announced that all its departments will undergo an assessment due to the company's financial losses, rumours have started the company intends to move its plane maintenance operations to Qatar. Cargolux would neither confirm nor deny the rumours but has agreed to meet with trade union representatives.

English: [http://www.wort.lu/en/view/employees-fear-outsourcing-of-plane-maintenance ...](http://www.wort.lu/en/view/employees-fear-outsourcing-of-plane-maintenance...)

Law to introduce more flexible working hours for new parents

September 13, 2012

A law has been announced that will grant new parents the right to more flexible working hours in the first year after the end of the parental leave period. Currently, both men and women have the right to paid parental leave (€1,709.78 per month for full time leave and €854.88 for part-time leave). In 2010, 76% of women and 34% of men took up parental leave. The new law is in addition to the parental leave schemes.

English: [http://www.wort.lu/en/view/law-change-to-allow-new-parents-greater-flexibility ...](http://www.wort.lu/en/view/law-change-to-allow-new-parents-greater-flexibility...)

Another 4171 workers to be placed on partial unemployment

August 30, 2012

Public schemes for partial unemployment remain popular among employers seeking to reduce costs in the on-going economic crisis. For September, 35 companies have requested entry to the scheme, affecting 4171 workers. This is a slight increase compared to August (32 companies) but less than July (36 companies).

English: [http://www.wort.lu/en/view/35-companies-to-place-staff-on-reduced-working ...](http://www.wort.lu/en/view/35-companies-to-place-staff-on-reduced-working...)

Malta

Dockers organise one-hour solidarity strike

September 21, 2012

Dockers unions have announced they will be organising a one-hour solidarity strike on 25 September in order to support their Portuguese colleagues. The strike that will last from 8 to 9 am was called by the International Dockworkers Council. Portuguese workers are fighting a new Port Law, whilst European unions fear an attempt by the European Commission to enact legislation on European port labour services.

English: <http://www.independent.com.mt/news.asp?newsitemid=150957>
[http://www.timesofmalta.com/articles/view/20120921/local/Dockers-to-strike ...](http://www.timesofmalta.com/articles/view/20120921/local/Dockers-to-strike...)

Industrial action at medicines authority

September 11, 2012

Trade union UHM has initiated industrial action at the Medicines Authority in an attempt to unlock the stalled negotiations. The union tabled its demands in 2010 but has not yet received any counter-offer from the authority. As part of the industrial action, workers at the Medicines Authority will not answer phones or reply to faxes and e-mails. They will not be engaging in any form of communication in dealing with the registration of medicines and the inspection or renewal of licences.

English: [http://www.timesofmalta.com/articles/view/20120911/local/Action-at ...](http://www.timesofmalta.com/articles/view/20120911/local/Action-at...)

Netherlands

Protesters win new collective agreement to replace annulled agreement

September 9, 2012

Workers at an Amsterdam nursing home, Osira Amstelring, went on strike after their employer closed a company level collective agreement excluding the main trade unions in the sector. After a parliamentary vote annulling the selective collective agreement, the workers negotiated a new collective agreement. The agreement includes sections on workload, the right to an 8-hour working day and union rights.

English: [http://unionrenewal.blogspot.nl/2012/09/breakthrough-for-protesting ...](http://unionrenewal.blogspot.nl/2012/09/breakthrough-for-protesting-...)

Remak ordered to pay 800 Polish workers higher wages

August 29, 2012

Trade union FNV has won a court case against subcontractor Remak, active as labour recruiter at a power station site in the port Eemshaven. Remak was paying its Polish employees €9 per hour, instead of the €11.50 that was agreed in the sector's collective agreement. In court, the parties agreed that Remak would pay the collective agreement wage as well as respect working hour reductions and holidays of the collective agreement. The deal still has to pass the Remak board of directors. In general collective agreements in the Netherlands are made generally binding for an entire sector by the ministry of Labour. Generally binding agreements have to be respected by all employers active in the sector, even those that were not part of the negotiations. The court case is part of a long trade union campaign against unequal pay in the Eemshaven, as reported in the May newsletter. Labour recruitment agency Remak is notoriously known for not respecting local pay and working conditions all over Europe.

English: <http://www.bnr.nl/topic/beurs/889140-1208/fnv-cao-loon-voor-800-polen>
[http://processengineering.theengineer.co.uk/anger-over-foreign-worker-wage-rates ...](http://processengineering.theengineer.co.uk/anger-over-foreign-worker-wage-rates-...)
<http://www.world-psi.org/en/dutch-unions-ensure-wages-polish-workers>

Norway

Oil services workers to be balloted on pay deal

September 21, 2012

On-shore oil workers unions and employers have reached a preliminary agreement that will be voted upon by union members. The deal includes a 4.5% wage increase and further increases. Trade union negotiators said the deal is very good in monetary terms but less so in regard to shift-work. The negotiations between on-shore workers and the oil industry were moved into state-led mediation after bilateral talks failed. If the deal is accepted, it will avoid a strike by services workers.

English: [http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2012-09-21/norway-oil-services-strike-may ...](http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2012-09-21/norway-oil-services-strike-may-...)

Row over temporary workers piloting NAS planes

September 12, 2012

The pilot union has threatened to take low-cost carrier NAS to court over the use of temporary workers based in Spain as pilots on well-established Scandinavian flights. Earlier this year NAS and the union, who is against the use of temporary workers, agreed that temporary staff would only be hired on new flight routes and not on well-established routes. NAS claims it has not broken the agreement.

English: [http://www.staffingindustry.com/eng/Research-Publications ...](http://www.staffingindustry.com/eng/Research-Publications-...)

Wage agreement for oil drillers

September 4, 2012

After 159 oil drillers won a labour court case about the legality of their strike, union Industri Energi announced a strike for Sunday 2 September unless negotiations would yield an agreement. During late night negotiations on the eve of the strike, a wage agreement was found. The sides agreed to a 4.5% wage increase plus a one-off 3,641 crown (€490) cash supplement for 650 workers at services firm KCA Deutag. The settlement was reached after a crippling 16-day strike in July and amidst a breakdown of negotiations between on-shore workers and the oil industry.

English: [http://in.reuters.com/article/2012/08/31 ...](http://in.reuters.com/article/2012/08/31-...)
[http://in.reuters.com/article/2012/09/02 ...](http://in.reuters.com/article/2012/09/02-...)

Poland

Increase of nominal labour costs

September 18, 2012

Eurostat revealed that during the second quarter of 2012, nominal labour costs in Poland rose by 3.9% in comparison to the same period a year earlier. The European statistical agency said that the rise was due largely to pay rises, and not new overhead costs or taxes. However, with inflation at nearly 4% for that period, according to Poland's statistical office, in real terms, the country labour costs remain about even. In the meantime unemployment has remained a serious problem in since the economic transformation in the early 1990s. It currently stands at 12.3%.

English: <http://www.wbj.pl/article-60387-wages-rising-in-line-with-inflation.html>

Portugal

Unexpected tripartite talks opened

September 24, 2012

After fierce protests against the latest austerity lashing proposed by the centre-right government Prime Minister Pedro Passos Coelho has withdrawn his proposal to raise social charges that workers pay out of their salaries from 11% to 18%, while dropping employers' charges to 18% from 23.75%. The government decided to open talks with the leaders of the trade unions who oppose a planned austerity drive in return for last year's 78 billion euro rescue package.

English: <http://www.euronews.com/2012/09/24/portuguese-force-austerity-plan-back ...>
<http://www.euronews.com/2012/09/24/portugal-pm-negotiates-with-union-and-business ...>

Port workers strike over unpaid overtime

September 21, 2012

Workers at the Portimão Port, a popular cruise destination, have gone on strike over unpaid overtime and being made to perform tasks not mentioned in the labour contracts. The strike will last until 24 September, while more strikes have already been scheduled. Local politicians have voiced concern over the income losses from turning away cruise ships and have called on the government to resolve the industrial conflict.

English: <http://www.algarveresident.com/0-48897/algarve/no-endsight-to-port-workers ...>

Large protests against new austerity wave

September 15, 2012

Large protests took place in over 40 cities against a new wave of austerity measures. In a recent statement, the government announced measures including the raising of workers' social security contributions from 11% to 18% (roughly a monthly salary's wage cut) and the cancellation of Christmas or holiday bonuses (equivalent to another month's wages). Further increases in income taxes are also expected.

English: <http://www.washingtonpost.com/business/large-anti-austerity-demonstrations ...>
<http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2012-09-11/portugal-labor-unions-plan-strikes ...>

Romania

Statistics on wage development in 2010

September 26, 2012

The National Institute of Statistics released the results of an earnings survey (year 2010) that is carried out every four years. One of the findings is that women earn about 10% lower than men. In 2010, the average annual gross earnings were 23,561 lei/person (approximately €5,900 in 2010), with significant differences

by gender (22,772 lei/person for women compared to 24,264 lei/person for men). The figures also provide evidence for inequalities in the earnings distribution. Employees in the upper deciles (10th deciles) earned over 13 times more at year level than the employees in the lower deciles (1st deciles).

English: [http://www.insse.ro/cms/files/statistici/comunicate/com_anuale ...](http://www.insse.ro/cms/files/statistici/comunicate/com_anuale...)

Serbia

Construction workers on hunger strike

September 13, 2012

Workers of the bankrupt construction company Ratko Mitrovic went on hunger strike for the second time this year in order to demand unpaid wages. The workers have previously attempted to take legal action in order to force payment.

English: <http://www.bwint.org/default.asp?Index=4327&Language=EN>

Slovakia

Teachers organise one-day warning strike

September 13, 2012

The Trade Union of Workers in Education and Science of Slovakia (OZ PŠaV) has organised a one-day warning strike against the lack of investment in education. As reported in last month's newsletter, unions fear that the €7.85 million cuts in the state budget for education will lead to a cut in salaries for all categories of employees in the education sector. Currently, a teacher's starting salary is €508 gross and the total education budget, including European funds, is less than 4% of GDP.

English: http://www.ei-ie.org/en/news/news_details/2286

[http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/sns-rt-us-slovakia-teachers ...](http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/sns-rt-us-slovakia-teachers...)

Slovenia

Draft labour market reform hails flexibilisation

September 4, 2012

A draft of the government's labour market reform proposals that is to be discussed by the social partners has been made public. The plans include a new indefinite term contract that allows employers to end the employment relation without stated cause in the first five months and makes firing very easy for the first two years. The proposal furthermore lowers severance pay, the abolition of paid lunch breaks and a provision allowing pensioners and unemployed to work up to sixty hours per month. Polls show that a (small) majority of voters is both against the labour market and the pension reform.

English: [http://www.sloveniatimes.com/poll-shows-majority-rejecting ...](http://www.sloveniatimes.com/poll-shows-majority-rejecting...)

[http://www.sloveniatimes.com/labour-market-reform-flexible-contracts-shorter-notice ...](http://www.sloveniatimes.com/labour-market-reform-flexible-contracts-shorter-notice...)

Spain

New cuts announced

September 27, 2012

Amid a week of protests it is expected that the government will outline 39bn euros worth of savings, tax rises, and structural reforms. Demonstrators said they were angry that the state has poured funds into crumbling banks while it is cutting social benefits. In the meantime regional tension has grown as well, after calls for more tax autonomy were rejected by the central government.

English: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-19733995>

[http://in.reuters.com/article/2012/09/25/us-spain-budget ...](http://in.reuters.com/article/2012/09/25/us-spain-budget...)

Demonstrators demand referendum on austerity cuts

September 15, 2012

A new mass demonstration against austerity was organised on 15 September. The demonstration was organised against the cuts in the public sector, reform of the labour law and the removal of Christmas bonuses and overtime pay, reported in the previous edition of this newsletter. Hundreds of thousands demonstrated in Madrid, whilst police estimates show around 1.5 million people mobilised in another protest in Barcelona.

English: [http://www.industriall-union.org/spanish-unions-lead-workers-in-protest ...](http://www.industriall-union.org/spanish-unions-lead-workers-in-protest...)

[http://www.timesunion.com/business/article/Large-anti-austerity-protests ...](http://www.timesunion.com/business/article/Large-anti-austerity-protests...)

<http://cms.iuf.org/?q=node/1895>

Sweden

Crisis package saved municipal jobs

September 3, 2012

A report from the Kulturinstitutet (The National Institute of Economic Research) shows that the government's decision to inject a total of 20 billion kroner (240,000 Euro) in temporary grants to the municipalities led to an increase in local government spending in 2010. At the level of the entire economy the temporary grants are estimated to have saved almost 9,500 jobs in 2010 and 4,000 jobs in 2011.

English: [http://www.world-psi.org/en/sweden-crisis-package-rescued-8500-municipal ...](http://www.world-psi.org/en/sweden-crisis-package-rescued-8500-municipal...)

[http://www.konj.se/download/18.2 ...](http://www.konj.se/download/18.2...)

Switzerland

Austerity and low paid workers

September 20, 2012

The case of Ana B. – a 50-year-old Portuguese woman – illustrates the increasing difficulties that public sector workers face since the beginning of the crisis and demonstrates the effects of the austerity measures on their position. Ana has been living in Switzerland for about six months. She moved there to work as a cleaner and caretaker. But Ana is no ordinary cleaner. She is a secretary at a government agency in the Portuguese city of Porto who took a one- year career break to come to Switzerland for a job that would allow her to pay her bills back home.

English: [http://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/newsroom ...](http://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/newsroom...)

Wage hike at Nescafé

September 5, 2012

After almost a year of wage conflict, unions and management have agreed upon a wage increase for workers at the Nescafé factory in Orbe. All wages will be increased by 75 Swiss Francs, amounting to a 2% increase for the lowest earning employees and 1.5% for the average worker. Wage negotiations stalled immediately in November 2011 when Nescafé refused a wage offer but were suddenly re-opened in July.

English: <http://cms.iuf.org/?q=node/1900>

Turkey

Tripartite deal to end disputes on contracts

September 22, 2012

The government, employer unions and representatives from trade union confederations reached an agreement regarding a draft bill on 'Collective Labour Relations' that has to put an end to problems

concerning collective contracts, which have lingered for about nine months. A trade union should have at least 3% of the total number of workers in any sector to have a right to negotiate for a collective agreement with the employers, according to a draft law revealed in January. Although the current ratio is 10%, lowering it to 3% will still cause many trade unions to lose collective bargaining rights as the Ministry of Labour says the actual number of unionised workers is way below the number trade unions pronounce. The agreement foresees on a transition period of six years regarding the 3% sector threshold for trade unions to qualify. There was no representative from the Confederation of Progressive Trade Unions (DİSK) at the meeting.

English: [http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/wage-woes-of-340000-near-end ...](http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/wage-woes-of-340000-near-end...)

Norwegian support for sacked Turkish Airlines employees

September 14, 2012

Norwegian aviation unions have called on the state-owned Norwegian Investment Bank to disinvest in Turkish Airlines following the sacking of 305 trade union activists. The unions argue that since the blatant violations of workers' rights by Turkish Airlines, investment in the company would be against the bank's charter of principles. The Norwegian unions' support is one in a growing list of solidarity actions by European unions.

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

Swedish unions enraged over union bashing by IKEA Turkey

September 9, 2012

Swedish unions Handels and Unionen have teamed up with local trade union Koop-Is, representing IKEA workers in Turkey. Local union activists have received home visits from IKEA representatives to pressure them into leaving the union.

English: <http://www.thelocal.se/43086/20120907/>

[http://www.uniglobalunion.org/Apps ...](http://www.uniglobalunion.org/Apps...)

United Kingdom

Union victimisation and discrimination reported at Crossrail construction sites

September 24, 2012

Various reports have come to light about contractors and subcontractors working on London's Crossrail project that have fired union activists and refused health and safety officers onto the construction sites. Unions have expressed concerns about low wages, bogus self-employment and anti-union tactics. They demand that workers on the project will be brought under the same or similar collective agreements as those regularly applied in construction. In several separate instances, unions have already organised workers for better wages, working conditions and safety on sites. Crossrail project management has so far refused to engage with the unions.

English: [http://www.unitetheunion.org/news__events ...](http://www.unitetheunion.org/news__events...)

Precarious work on the increase in women's employment

September 18, 2012

The TUC's latest economic report looks at male and female employment trends since the recession. While male unemployment rose fastest during the first two years of the recession, female unemployment has risen more sharply in the last two years, mainly due to public sector job losses. The report shows that the type of work women are doing has changed considerably since the recession. While the number of women in full-time employee jobs has fallen by 170,000, nearly 200,000 more women now describe themselves as being self-employed. The proportion of women in part-time jobs who would prefer full-time is also rising – continuing a trend that began in 2004.

English: <http://www.tuc.org.uk/equality/tuc-21429-f0.cfm>

http://www.tuc.org.uk/tucfiles/376/Economic_Report_Four.pdf

Modest pay increase in graphic industry to put collective bargaining back on track

September 17, 2012

Trade unions and employers' organisation Graphic Enterprise Scotland have closed a new collective agreement, containing a 2% wage increase. The collective agreement is the first since 2008 and both parties have committed to strengthening collective bargaining in the sector. The agreement will benefit over 700 workers and covers negotiations for wages, overtime premium, shift premium, holidays, and all other aspects of work.

English: [http://www.unitetheunion.org/news__events ...](http://www.unitetheunion.org/news__events...)

FG Wilson to cut 760 jobs

September 13, 2012

Engineering firm FG Wilson, owned by Caterpillar, has announced it will shed 760 jobs in four Northern Irish sites. The company has set up a voluntary redundancy programme for employees to leave with improved redundancy packages and aid in the transition to a new job. FG Wilson said it will make redundancies known to workers as they go along, whilst trade unions have criticised the lack of dialogue and a proper social plan.

English: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-19582758>

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-19596343>

TUC congress backs plans for general strike

September 10, 2012

The annual trade union congress has voted in favour of plans for a co-ordinated general strike. The protests are a response to years of budget cuts in the public sectors while inequality is rising. Until now, trade unions have resorted to large-scale demonstrations rather than strikes.

English: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-19544483>

Focus on general strikes in the UK: [http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2012/sep ...](http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2012/sep...)

For more information, please contact the editor Jan Cremers, Amsterdam Institute for Advanced Labour Studies (AIAS) cbn-aias@uva.nl or the communications officer at the ETUI, Mariya Nikolova mnikolova@etui.org. 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 subscribe or unsubscribe, please contact Mariya Nikolova mnikolova@etui.org.