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# collective bargaining

Issue 11/2012 December

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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## **European sources**

### **Global wage report 2012-13 published**

*December 14, 2012*

Real average wage growth has remained far below pre-crisis levels globally, going into the red in developed economies, although it has remained significant in emerging economies. Global monthly wages grew by 1.2 % in 2011, down from 3 % in 2007 and 2.1 % in 2010. While wages grew significantly in emerging economies, differences in wage levels remain considerable. Fluctuations were widest in Eastern Europe and Central Asia, partly as a result of the strong post-transition recovery in wages before the global economic crisis, and the severe contraction in real wages in 2009. The global trend has resulted in a change in the distribution of national income, with the workers share decreasing while capital income shares increase in a majority of countries. The drop in the labour share is due to technological progress, trade globalisation, the expansion of financial markets, and decreasing union density, which have eroded the bargaining power of labour. Wage growth suffered a double-dip in developed economies where it is forecast at zero per cent in 2012.

English: [http://www.ilo.org/global/research/global-reports ...](http://www.ilo.org/global/research/global-reports...)

### **Pay clauses in public procurement effective in fight against downward wage pressures**

*December 13, 2012*

Most Europeans want public budgets for works, goods and services through public procurement to be spent 'socially' and over half of EU Member States support the inclusion of social criteria in public contracts through a range of measures. Among all social considerations, the most important are the wages of workers hired by the contracting companies. In labour intensive industries wage costs are the most important cost factor and so they also play a major role in determining the price of the tender process. An EPSU comparative study of pay clauses in public procurement procedures in Denmark, German, Norway, Switzerland and the UK shows that pay clauses help avert downward pressures on wages. In the study it is concluded that establishing minimum standards through social and pay clauses prevents a race to the bottom.

English: <http://www.epsu.org/a/9151>

### **Report finds stable industrial relations in electricity**

*December 12, 2012*

A report of the European Industrial Relations Observatory (EIRO) was published on reform and bargaining in the electricity sector. The report concludes that while the market has undergone drastic changes and employment has gone down, stable industrial relations have been maintained. In the last two decades, EU member states have liberalised their electricity markets, and sustainability concerns have shifted much of the market's growth towards renewable energies.

English: <http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/eiro/studies/tn1202028s/index.htm>

### **Austerity measures lame growth**

December 6, 2012

According to an INSEE study the austerity measures have a laming effect on the growth perspectives in the Eurozone. Restrictive budgetary policies put in place by European governments since the start of 2011 have put a strain on their economic activity, reducing Eurozone growth by 0.6 point in 2012. This negative impact results directly from cost-cutting measures and tax increases in each country as well as from external trade measures taken by countries' leading trading partners.

English: <http://www.europolitics.info/economy-monetary-affairs ...>

French: <http://www.lefigaro.fr/conjoncture/2012/12/06 ...>

### **Poverty figures show increase**

December 3, 2012

The EU statistical office Eurostat published data on the risk of poverty or social exclusion. In the EU27 24.2% of the population were at risk of poverty or social exclusion in 2011, compared with 23.4% in 2010 and 23.5% in 2008. The highest shares of persons being at risk of poverty or social exclusion were recorded in 2011 in Bulgaria (49%), Romania and Latvia (both 40%), Lithuania (33%), Greece and Hungary (both 31%); the lowest in the Czech Republic (15%), the Netherlands and Sweden (both 16%), Luxembourg and Austria (both 17%). 9% of the EU27 population were severely materially deprived, meaning that they had living conditions constrained by a lack of resources such as not being able to afford to pay their bills, keep their home adequately warm, or take a one week holiday away from home.

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

### **European Commission praises erosion of bargaining system**

December 1, 2012

In its Annual Growth Survey 2013 the European Commission praises the market reforms that are being implemented across Europe. The 'positive' reforms are for instance the measures that 'have been taken to facilitate flexible working arrangements within firms, reduce severance pay for standard contracts and simplify individual or collective dismissal procedures. Steps have also been taken to enhance flexibility in wage determination, such as easing the conditions for firms to opt out of higher-level collective bargaining agreements and the review of sectoral wage agreements'. In the annexed Joint Employment Report it is said that ambitious reforms are needed to modernise the labour markets and invest in human capital to create the conditions for a job-rich recovery.

English: [http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/pdf/ags2013\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/pdf/ags2013_en.pdf)

[http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/pdf/ags2013\\_emplr\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/pdf/ags2013_emplr_en.pdf)

[http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/making-it-happen/annual-growth-surveys/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/making-it-happen/annual-growth-surveys/index_en.htm)

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## **Austria**

### **Higher minimum wage in private kindergartens**

December 14, 2012

Minimum wages for assistants in private kindergartens regulated by the Ministry of Social Affairs will go up by €45 to €1325 per month from 1 January 2013 on. It is the first nation-wide minimum wage in private kindergartens. At the same time, minimum wages for au-pairs working a maximum of 20 hours per week will go up to €386.80. Private kindergartens, children's groups and child care providers receive funding, enabling most of these providers to accept a number of children free of charge. Besides, a compulsory kindergarten year for all five-year olds was introduced. Between the start of 2009 and 2011 a total of 6,500 new places in kindergartens were created.

English: <http://www.epsu.org/r/163>

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

## **Slight increase of unemployment figures**

*December 13, 2012*

According to Statistics Austria, the number of employed persons increased to a total of 4,242 million in the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter of 2012 (4,200 million in the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter of 2011). The number of unemployed people rose to a total of 192,000 in the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter of 2012, an increase of 31,300 persons compared to the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter of 2011, resulting in a higher unemployment rate (not seasonally adjusted) of 4.3% (3<sup>rd</sup> quarter of 2011: 3.7%). Men and women were affected similarly by the increase in the unemployment rate (men: 4.3%, women: 4.4%).

English: [http://www.statistik.at/web\\_en/dynamic/press/069008](http://www.statistik.at/web_en/dynamic/press/069008)

## **Local and regional government employees to get separate collective agreement**

*December 10, 2012*

In response to some regional governments' refusal to implement federal level wage increases, unions have started exploring the possibilities of negotiating separate collective agreements for local and regional government employees. The unions hope to reach the first collective agreement by 2015.

German: <http://www.gdg-kmsfb.at/servlet/ContentServer?pagename...>

## **Bilateral exchange on youth education**

*December 6, 2012*

Christoph Leitl, president of the Economic Chamber Austria (WKO), and Erich Foglar, president of the trade union confederation ÖGB, met with representatives of the French government, to discuss the Austrian model of youth education. Youth unemployment is unacceptably high in Europe, double the unemployment rate of adults. The dual vocational training is for many young people a model of success and it is a lived social partnership model that is constantly being developed and supported at all levels of social partnership.

English: <http://vergemm.com/featured/wko-and-ogb-in-paris-educational-system-reduces...>

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# **Belgium**

## **Ford Genk deal en route**

*December 20, 2012*

Trade unions and Ford Genk's European management board had several meetings to discuss the future of the plant's workers along the lines of the procedure stipulated in the Renault act. This act requires that an employer planning a closure or collective layoffs should first explain his plans to his employees and consult with them on the matter. The union intended to address a letter by registered post to the board in which they wanted to reproach them to have broken their promise of the Future Agreement forged as a collective labour agreement at the factory in September 2010. According to that agreement, jobs would be safe until 2020. In return the employees accepted in 2010 cost-cutting measures totalling 12% or 25 million euros. The closure will lead to unemployment for its work force (4,337 jobs) and for its suppliers (2,816). Another 1,042 jobs will be lost as a result of the drop in purchasing power. In total, the closure will leave more than 11,750 people unemployed. A draft agreement has been reached that will be balloted over the New year's break.

English: <http://www.expatica.com/be/news/belgian-news/unions-at-ford-genk-plan...>

<http://www.flanderstoday.eu/content/economists-discuss-closure-ford-genk>

Dutch: <http://www.tvl.be/nl/2012-12-25/jaaroverzicht-2012-sluiting-ford-genk...>

## **Union density is growing**

*December 9, 2012*

Political scientists Kurt Vandaele (ETUI) and Jean Faniel (CRISP) have published a report analysing

union density in Belgium. Contrary to the rest of Europe, density rose in the new millennium, from 56.9% in 2001 to 60.5% in 2010. The researchers conclude that unions thank their strong position to a combination of their crucial position in the social security system, strong representation on the work floor and member militancy.

English: <http://unionrenewal.blogspot.nl/2012/12/in-belgium-union-density-is-on-rise.html>

Dutch: [https://works.bepress.com/kurt\\_vandaele/108/](https://works.bepress.com/kurt_vandaele/108/)

[http://works.bepress.com/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1123&context=kurt\\_vandaele](http://works.bepress.com/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1123&context=kurt_vandaele)

**Focus** on industrial relations in Belgium:

<http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/eiro/country/belgium.htm>

### **Wage freeze in 2013 and 2014?**

*December 7, 2012*

The Belgian government has stated that wages in both the public and private sector will be frozen during 2013 and 2014 as part of its announced budget for 2013 designed to economize €3,700 million. The freeze is not total and involves only a prohibition of any new increases negotiated between companies and trade unions via the collective bargaining system. Individually negotiated salary increases will remain possible, as will already existing scale increases based on age and seniority. There are also exceptions for low income earners who do not earn more than the minimum wage, for whom a 0.9% increase during 2013-2014 will be possible. The automatic linking of wages to a special cost of living index has not been abolished and will remain in effect.

English: [http://legalknowledgeportal.com/2012/12/07/belgian-government-announces ...](http://legalknowledgeportal.com/2012/12/07/belgian-government-announces-...)

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## **Bulgaria**

### **Undeclared labour accounts for 25-30%**

*December 26, 2012*

A survey of the Bulgarian Industrial Capital Association (BICA) shows that 25% of sales in the country belong to the grey economy. According to the report labour law violations have changed. The share of employees working without a labour contract fell from 28.4% in 2010 to 22.2% in 2012. The survey of BICA shows that the trend has shifted in favour of contracts with fictitious clauses. The cases of payment of wages below the minimum for the respective sector are also decreasing. According to the comment of a representative of the Bulgarian Industrial Association (BIA) grey practices on the labour market are work without employment contract, lowered social security payments, envelope payments, etc.

English: [http://www.novinite.com/view\\_news.php?id=145726](http://www.novinite.com/view_news.php?id=145726)

[http://www.novinite.com/view\\_news.php?id=146367](http://www.novinite.com/view_news.php?id=146367)

### **New strikes at Sopot military plant as banks take salaries**

*December 18, 2012*

Workers at the country's largest military plant, VMZ Sopot, went on strike on 12 December over unpaid salaries. The plant, which has been confronted with fewer orders, was put up for privatisation (see the July newsletter), but slow progress is made due to there being only one bidder. In November, unions and the state reached an agreement over the payment of the wages. However, at the end of the month no wages were received and the workers decided to go on indefinite strike. On 17 December, the prime minister decided to free funds for the payment of salaries. Next day, however, it became clear that the salaries never reached workers' bank accounts because banks discounted delayed credit payments incurred by most workers while they were waiting to receive their wages.

English: [http://www.novinite.com/view\\_news.php?id=146008](http://www.novinite.com/view_news.php?id=146008)



<http://paper.standartnews.com/en/article.php?d=2012-12-18&article=40858>

### **12% wage increase for starting teachers**

*December 14, 2012*

The ministry of education announced that the starting salaries of junior, senior and supervising teachers will be increased by 12%. The hike of starting salaries is accompanied by a 7% increase across the board.

English: [http://www.novinite.com/view\\_news.php?id=146062](http://www.novinite.com/view_news.php?id=146062)

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## **Croatia**

### **Unemployed stone and marble workers protest for unpaid wages**

*December 21, 2012*

Workers who were fired from the Jadrankamen stone and marble plant in Pucisca on the island of Brac as the company went bankrupt are protesting for their wages. The workers never received delayed salaries when the firm seized operations.

English: [http://www.croatiantimes.com/news/General\\_News/2012-12-21 ...](http://www.croatiantimes.com/news/General_News/2012-12-21...)

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## **Cyprus**

### **Workers' pension money put at risk?**

*December 15, 2012*

The government has to come up with approximately €400m in December to meet its payroll obligations, including public workers' 13th salaries. It expects most of this sum from profitable semi-government organisations (SGOs) in the form of loans and is walking a fine line between international and domestic lenders, trying to convince both that it pays its debts, in an effort to keep the state afloat until the EU/IMF bailout arrives. Despite great opposition from the unions, the Cyprus Telecommunications Authority (CyTA) board has agreed on a €100m three-month loan from the company's pension fund at an interest rate of 5.5 per cent. Unions representing half of the CyTA staff only decided to call off an indefinite strike after the House Finance Committee agreed to discuss the issue.

English: [http://www.cyprus-mail.com/cyprus/state-needs-400m-december-payroll ...](http://www.cyprus-mail.com/cyprus/state-needs-400m-december-payroll...)

### **Public transport strike in Limassol, Nicosia to follow**

*December 1, 2012*

Workers at bus company EMEL went on a 24-hour strike to demand payment of delayed wages. It is not the first time EMEL and the union are in conflict over unpaid wages; the September Newsletter reported a strike that was narrowly averted after EMEL paid drivers last minute. Currently, EMEL is offering to pay 50% of the salaries of workers on weekly contracts and 60% of those employed on a monthly basis. Unions have rejected the offer and demand full pay. Drivers in Nicosia are expected to take the same action soon over unpaid November salaries.

English: [http://www.cyprus-mail.com/cyprus/limassol-public-transport-paralysed ...](http://www.cyprus-mail.com/cyprus/limassol-public-transport-paralysed...)

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## **Czech Republic**



### **Pay hike for judges and state attorneys**

*December 19, 2012*

Parliament's lower house passed a bill authorising the raise of judges' salaries from 2.5 to 2.75 times the public sector average pay from 1 January 2013. State attorneys, whose salaries are fixed at 90% of that of judges, therefore also receive a wage increase.

English: <http://praguemonitor.com/2012/12/19/chamber-deputies-approves-higher-pay...>

### **Near 2500 redundancies expected at national rail freight carrier CD Cargo**

*December 4, 2012*

Media report that national freight carrier CD cargo is standing ready to execute a far going restructuring plan, involving 2495 layoffs and sale of 87 redundant train engines and almost 5,000 wagons. Trade unions have not yet been consulted regarding the redundancies, but reacted that the firing of so many employees will lead to lower sales.

English: <http://praguemonitor.com/2012/12/11/plan-rescue...>

### **600 expected to go at ministry of defence**

*December 4, 2012*

As a part of on-going budget cuts, over 600 staff members are expected to be made redundant next year at the ministry of defence. The minister of defence said it is unclear whether the layoffs will concern civilian or military personnel but that they will most certainly be made from the civilian-administrative wing.

English: <http://praguemonitor.com/2012/12/05/over-600-employees-leave-defence-ministry>

### **Real wages fell by 1,8%**

*December 4, 2012*

Real wages, adjusted to inflation, fell by 1.8% in the third quarter, compared to the same period last year. The fall comes as a disappointment, as previous estimates predicted real wages would decline by just 1.1%. Nominal wages grew by 1.4% in the period, implying that although wages increase, inflation went up faster.

English: <http://www.rttnews.com/2016777/czech-wages-fall-more-than-expected...>

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## **Denmark**

### **Inflation outstripped wage increases for the third year running**

*December 13, 2012*

The private sector wages increased by an average of 1.4% in 2012, according to new figures from Statistics Denmark. The bad news is that prices increased by 2.3%, marking the third year running that inflation outstripped the salary increase. On average, real wages have increased by 1.1% since the 80s and from 1990 until the crisis set in, employees enjoyed an uninterrupted period of rising real wages. In the meantime, the outflow of jobs from Denmark seems to be slowing according to numbers from Statistics Denmark and reports from the business sector.

English: <http://cphpost.dk/business/wages-rose-last-year-prices-rose-even-more>  
<http://cphpost.dk/business/lost-jobs-starting-return>

### **Controversial bill on cheap labour approved**

*December 13, 2012*

Lawmakers in the Greenlandic capital have voted in favour of relaxing regulations on local mining

firms. The move, which will allow Chinese companies and other international groups to import cheap labour, comes as the increasing ice melt continues to expose the landmass' geology, which experts say is exceptionally rich in rare earths and other lucrative minerals. Opposition to the measure remains strong, not only within Greenland, but also from within the international community. Many cite ethical concerns about allowing companies to pay foreign miners' wages that are well below current minimums under Danish law.

English: [http://www.icenews.is/2012/12/13/controversial-greenland-mining-labour ...](http://www.icenews.is/2012/12/13/controversial-greenland-mining-labour...)

### **Court finds state employer guilty in age discrimination case**

*December 10, 2012*

The national equal rights agency, Ligebehandlingsnævnet, has ruled in favour of trade unions that brought a case of age discrimination against the government employment office. Trade unions accuse public sector employers of dismissing the oldest workers during restructuring processes, purely on the basis of their age. The unions argue that the policy, which the government denies, is utterly incompatible with policies of increasing the pension age. Unions have announced they will be bringing more cases to court, amongst others against the foreign affairs ministry and the tax office.

English: [http://cphpost.dk/news/national/state-employer-guilty-age-discrimination ...](http://cphpost.dk/news/national/state-employer-guilty-age-discrimination...)

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## **Estonia**

### **Collective agreement for cabin crew, pilots still in dispute**

*December 28, 2012*

The cabin crew union and national air carrier Estonia Air have reached a collective agreement. The agreement will be valid until the end of 2013 and keeps wages on the level of 2008, avoiding wage cuts. Cabin crew productivity is announced to go up. The Pilots Trade Association is still negotiating their collective agreement with Estonia Air. The airline's management has not contacted the union since a strike was announced December 21 and was not seeking ways of averting the strike

English: [http://news.err.ee/economy ...](http://news.err.ee/economy...)  
<http://news.err.ee/economy/30df99a7-06db-47a7-8139-9bf74daa1ff2>

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## **Finland**

### **Later retirement rejected**

*December 29, 2012*

An Yle-commissioned poll asked 1000 Finns what would be the best way to extend working careers. Less than 20% were in favour of later retirement. One in five of the interviewees in their 20's thought this would be a good idea. Meanwhile, those in the 25-34 year age group, many of whom are in the busiest period of their careers, were less enthusiastic. Of them, only about 10% said they would want to work beyond the standard age of retirement.

English: [http://yle.fi/uutiset/majority\\_rejects\\_later\\_retirement/6429204](http://yle.fi/uutiset/majority_rejects_later_retirement/6429204)

### **Record number of unemployed highly educated**

*December 20, 2012*

Akavalainen, the magazine of the union confederation Akava, recently published an article on the trend wise growth of the number of highly-educated unemployed people under the headline 'A record, not to be cheered'. The story describes the changes taking place concerning the unemployment of highly-educated people. Among the highly-educated people the risk of being unemployed is now somewhere around half of the risk in the entire labour force. At the beginning of the year 2000 the risk

of the highly-educated was a third of the risk faced by the entire labour force.

English: <http://www.artto.kaapeli.fi/unions/T2012/p52>  
<http://www.akava.fi/en/>

### **Gender pay gap in industry is narrowing**

*December 5, 2012*

Trade unions report that the gender pay gap in the industrial sector is narrowing, bringing women's wages up to 85.2% of men's. The gap has narrowed since 2002, when women in industry earned just 80.5% of men's wages.

English: <http://www.artto.kaapeli.fi/unions/T2012/p48>

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## **France**

### **Young doctors on holiday strike**

*December 24, 2012*

The National Association of Young General Practitioners (SNJMG), which claims to represent around 1,200 general practitioners, resident physicians, relief doctors and interns, says a limited strike during the Christmas holiday period over what it says are deteriorating working conditions will run until New Year's Day. Doctors are overloaded with work, and that creates frustration all around.

English: <http://www.english.rfi.fr/france/20121224-young-doctors-france-go-holiday-strike>

### **Labour law talks deadlocked**

*December 22, 2012*

Negotiations between employers and trade unions about labour market flexibilisation that are due by the end of 2012 are reported to be very far from a deal. After taking office, President Hollande charged the social partners to come up with common proposals that would ensure greater flexibilisation in the labour market whilst providing more security at the bottom. So far, only small agreements have been reached about health care coverage, wage and work-time adjustments and joblessness entitlements for people who already found a new job. Underscoring the challenges facing the Presidency, predictions released by the national statistics agency INSEE forecast the economy stagnating until mid-2013 while the jobless rate creeps up to a 15-year high of 10.9%.

English: <http://www.morningstaronline.co.uk/news/content/view/full/127550>

French: [http://www.liberation.fr/economie/2012/12/28/l-insee-rabote-le-chiffre ...](http://www.liberation.fr/economie/2012/12/28/l-insee-rabote-le-chiffre...)

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## **Germany**

### **Opel to end production in Bochum**

*December 13, 2012*

US based Opel owner, General Motors (GM), has announced it will halt the production of cars in its Bochum plant in 2016. While GM has not said it is closing the plant entirely, unions argue that the shutting down of the production of Opel implies the plant's closure. The end of production puts 3,300 jobs at the plant itself and 40,000 at various subcontractors on the line. Opel is the biggest single employer in the region.

English: [http://www.guardian.co.uk/business/2012/dec/10/opel-shut-bochum-factory ...](http://www.guardian.co.uk/business/2012/dec/10/opel-shut-bochum-factory...)  
<http://www.equaltimes.org/news/germany-takes-latest-hit-in-auto-industry-crisis>

## **Agreement to limit precarious work**

*December 6, 2012*

The Volkswagen Group Board of Management, the European Group Works Council and the Volkswagen World Works Council and IndustriALL signed an agreement limiting temporary work at the plants of the Group, worldwide. In the Charter, signed in Munich, the signatories agreed among others a moderate use of temporary work at Volkswagen as a necessary tool of flexibility that should not exceed 5%, the put in place of the equal pay – equal treatment principle and the principle that temporary work is used solely to balance economic volatility and address particular tasks for which there is a temporary need of workforce.

English: [http://www.volkswagenag.com/content/vwcorp/info\\_center/en...](http://www.volkswagenag.com/content/vwcorp/info_center/en...)  
<http://www.industriall-union.org/volkswagen-limits-precarious-work-globally>

## **Santa Claus in favour of minimum wage**

*December 4, 2012*

Members of the trade union confederation DGB dressed in Santa Claus costumes held a placard with a number of €8.50 as a demanded minimum wage per hour prior to the opening of the Christian Democratic Union (CDU)'s annual party meeting in Hanover, December 4, 2012. 1001 delegates elected party leader and Chancellor Merkel as top candidate for the 2013 general elections during the three day party convention.

English: <http://news.yahoo.com/photos/demonstrating-members-germanys-union...>

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## **Greece**

### **New public sector strike**

*December 19, 2012*

Public sector employees held a new 24-hour strike in protest against the latest austerity package. The latest measures, which include plans to lay off 27,000 civil servants, have increased the general outrage. The strike was organised by public sector union ADEDY and supported by GSEE and PAME. Train personnel joined the strike to protest against plans to privatise the railways.

English: <http://uk.reuters.com/article/2012/12/19/uk-greece-strike...>

### **Trade union institute GSEE publishes overview of public sector reforms**

*December 13, 2012*

Trade union GSEE has made available an overview of public sector reforms in Greece via the European Observatory for Industrial Relations (EIRO). In the report, the GSEE outlines the pay cuts, reforms, the weakening of the position of collective bargaining and increasing dismissals.

English: <http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/eiro/2012/02/articles/gr1202019i.htm>

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## **Hungary**

### **Minimum wage up by 5.4%**

*December 21, 2012*

Government, employers and trade unions have agreed on a pay increase of 5.4% from 1 January 2013. A long time union demand, negotiations started in October (see that the October newsletter) and brought the first increase in the minimum wage since 2007. The monthly minimum wage will be increased to €339, whereas the guaranteed wage minimum for skilled labour will go up to €394.

English: <http://www.xpatloop.com/news/72173>

### **Outlook 2013 not bright**

*December 18, 2012*

A report published by staffing company Manpower has revealed that employers see an uncertain future in the first quarter of 2013, with only nine per cent planning to hire extra staff and 11 per cent saying they will release employees next year. The landscape of hiring and layoffs varies greatly from one sector to the next and even within sectors in their respective niche areas.

English: <http://www.budapesttimes.hu/2012/12/18/new-year-new-fear-for-jobs/>

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## **Iceland**

### **Bankruptcies for small town fish processors**

*December 11, 2012*

Fish processors in small towns across the country are facing hard times, many of them being threatened with bankruptcies. Increasing numbers of workers are being laid off by about 10 to 30 per company. Fish processors are an important part of small town economies. Representatives explain the fish market is hit by a fall in demand in salt fish in Southern European member states, lack of haddock quota and unsold lumpsucker roes.

English: [http://www.icelandreview.com/icelandreview/daily\\_news ...](http://www.icelandreview.com/icelandreview/daily_news...)

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## **Ireland**

### **Boycott of lower paid nursing jobs urged**

*December 21, 2012*

The HSE has announced details of a plan to recruit graduate nurses and midwives on 80% of the current entry pay scale. The proposed rate of pay for the newly recruited graduates is approximately €22,000 per annum. The Irish Nurses and Midwives Organisation and Psychiatric Nurses Association, which represent more than 45,000 nurses and midwives, have called for a boycott of the scheme. Siptu welcomes the recruitment of 1,000 graduate nurses and midwives, but calls it abhorrent that the HSE would seek to exploit them by offering vastly reduced rates. The unions have called on all 2012 graduates not to apply for any posts until they are offered the full salary.

English: [http://www.irishtimes.com/newspaper/ireland](http://www.irishtimes.com/newspaper/ireland...)  
<http://www.irishtimes.com/newspaper/breaking/2012/1221/breaking40.html>  
[http://www.irishexaminer.com/budget/news/government-to-appoint-1000-nursing ...](http://www.irishexaminer.com/budget/news/government-to-appoint-1000-nursing...)

### **Breach of minimum wage rule**

*December 18, 2012*

Between January and October 2012, the National Employment Rights Agency (NERA) conducted 1,064 inspections for compliance with the National Minimum Wage Act and in 530 it found that employers were not meeting their legal responsibilities. The hourly rate of the national minimum wage is €8.65. The inspections resulted in the recovery of €264,835 in unpaid wages, along with 56 District Court convictions for non-compliance with the minimum wage requirement and other offences and 34 prosecutions for breaches of Labour Court orders.

English: [http://www.siptu.ie/media/pressreleases2012/mainnews/fullstory\\_16834\\_en.html](http://www.siptu.ie/media/pressreleases2012/mainnews/fullstory_16834_en.html)

### **Major protests on debt burden announced**

*December 12, 2012*

The Executive Council of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions has endorsed a proposal to hold a series of major demonstrations on 9 February 2013 to demand a restructuring of the country's debt burden as a prerequisite for recovery and a necessary condition for the maintenance of social cohesion. Demonstrations are to be held in Dublin, Cork, Galway, Sligo, Limerick and Waterford and are timed to coincide with the EU Council of Ministers' meetings. Ireland will hold the EU Presidency for the first six months of 2013. The Executive stated that the policy prescription forced upon the Irish Government and people by the EU/ECB/IMF Troika is not the correct course.

English: <http://www.ictu.ie/press/2012/12/12/congress-to-hold-major-protests>  
... <http://www.irishtimes.com/newspaper/breaking/2012/1212/breaking47.html>

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## Italy

### **Teachers' job wanted**

*December 24, 2012*

When the country held examinations to fill teaching positions in its public schools for the first time since 1999, it set off something of a nationwide frenzy among the country's despairing, underemployed and unemployed educators. More than 321,000 people applied to take the tests, pursuing just 11,500 job openings. The unemployment rate is over 11% generally and nearly 14% for people ages 24 to 35. But it was a sign of how widely the country's economic pain has spread that the average age of candidates taking the test this year was over 38.

English: [http://www.nytimes.com/2012/12/25/world/europe/italys-woes-are-visible ...](http://www.nytimes.com/2012/12/25/world/europe/italys-woes-are-visible-...)

### **Compass workers strike**

*December 3, 2012*

Italian workers of British catering, cleaning and facilities management company Compass went on strike to protest against announced redundancies. Compass intends to lay off 824 workers. Trade unions demand the withdrawal of the notices, saying the salaries could easily be paid from the money that is being used to buy back company shares in the same period.

English: <http://cms.iuf.org/?q=node/2125>

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## Latvia

### **Remittances calculated**

*December 21, 2012*

Each year, Latvians abroad send home around 350 million lats (€500 million), according to Foreign Ministry data. The diaspora numbers 350-400,000 people and the largest communities are in the UK - approximately 100,000 persons, the US - 96,000 persons, Canada - 26,000, Ireland - 25,000-30,000, Sweden - 5,000-30,000 (depending on various sources), Australia - 25,000, Russia - 20,000, Brazil - 20,000, Germany - 20,000. The population dropped by around 300,000 persons in 2000-2011, mostly due to emigration.

English: <http://www.baltictimes.com/news/articles/32279/>

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## Lithuania

### **Teachers rank the striking list**

*December 7, 2012*

Data published by the Statistics Department indicate that the majority of strikes staged in Lithuania over the past 12 years were held in education institutions. Over the first nine months of 2012, education workers went on 193 strikes, including 187 warning strikes. A total of 5,558 employees participated in the strikes.

English: [http://www.15min.lt/en/article/in-lithuania/teachers-are-the-most-active ...](http://www.15min.lt/en/article/in-lithuania/teachers-are-the-most-active-...)

### **Economic and social development reporting**

*December 1, 2012*

Statistics Lithuania publishes regularly data (in English) related to the labour market, including wages and employment. In the last report an overview of the employment situation is provided. In the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter of 2012, 1302.2 thousand persons were employed; compared to the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter, this figure grew by 15.3 thousand (1.2 per cent). The employment rate of persons aged 15-64 stood at 63.3 per cent, the youth (persons aged 15-24) at 22.1 per cent, the elderly (persons aged 55-64) at 53.1 per cent. The unemployment rate in the country stood at 12.3%, which is by 0.9 percentage points less than in the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter of 2012.

English: [http://www.stat.gov.lt/en/catalog/list/?cat\\_y=1&cat\\_id=1&id=2079](http://www.stat.gov.lt/en/catalog/list/?cat_y=1&cat_id=1&id=2079)

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## **Luxembourg**

### **Protests against collective agreement renegotiation**

*December 21, 2012*

ArcelorMittal, which just recently announced the closure of its Schiffange site as reported in the October newsletter, has now said it intends to re-negotiate the collective agreement governing the firm's employees. Unions have reacted angrily and claim the company aims to lower wages and increase working time. The LCGB union had previously said that this announcement was 'a declaration of war against social peace', and 250 unionists joined the demonstration in Esch/Alzette to voice their anger.

English: [http://www.wort.lu/en/view/lcgb-protests-against ...](http://www.wort.lu/en/view/lcgb-protests-against-...)

### **Job retention plan at Luxguard**

*December 20, 2012*

Trade unions and glass manufacturer Guardian Luxguard have come to an agreement to save jobs at the company's Dudelange plant. Decrease d labour costs, amongst others via government led shorter working time measures, and investment in reparations of one of the oven's mean the site can stay online for at least another four years. The agreement secures 263 jobs at the Dudelange plant.

English: [http://www.wort.lu/en/view/263-jobs-saved-at-luxguard-in-dudelange ...](http://www.wort.lu/en/view/263-jobs-saved-at-luxguard-in-dudelange-...)

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## **Malta**

### **Participation of women**

*December 19, 2012*

According to a trade union spokesman of the trade union UHM the participation of women in the work place is important to help improve the economy and the UHM has formulated proposals to increase equality particularly in the case of parental leave instead of maternal leave which will give a couple the option of deciding who will stay at home and who will go to work. The creation of free



childcare centres, through a public-private partnership scheme, will allow more women to enter the workforce.

English: <http://www.di-ve.com/news/penisons-cannot-be-sustained-uhm>

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## Netherlands

### **Dutch-German job initiative**

*December 30, 2012*

The national television channel NOS reported on a cross-border jobs initiative that has been set up along the northern Dutch-German border in an effort to help German firms fill their vacancies. The unemployment rate in the northern German border regions varies from 2% to 3% while it can be over 9% in the Dutch northern provinces. Many of the German firms are family-run companies which need staff, prompting the development of the *euregio* jobs platform Jobroboter, which now has some 60,000 jobs online.

English: [http://www.dutchnews.nl/news/archives/2012/12/dutch\\_german\\_jobs\\_initiative](http://www.dutchnews.nl/news/archives/2012/12/dutch_german_jobs_initiative)  
... <http://www.euregio-jobroboter.com/>

### **Collective agreement reached at PostNL**

*December 12, 2012*

After intensive negotiations, trade unions and PostNL have concluded a collective agreement that will run until April 2013 and foresees in a 1.7% wage increase and another 0.4% once an agreement is also reached in the matter of pension fund contributions.

English: <http://www.4-traders.com/POSTNL...>

### **Court enforces collective agreement for Turkish contractor workers**

*December 12, 2012*

A court in Groningen imposed a €250,000 in damages on Turkish steel braiding company Ha-Sa Insaat, performing work in the Dutch Eemshaven. Trade unions and employers organisations, who brought the case to court for alleged violations of the collective agreement in the construction sector, expressed their satisfaction with the judgement. Ensuring equal pay and working conditions at the Eemshaven construction site, where companies from many different countries deliver services, has been a union priority for years and recently its legal strategy has started to pay off.

English: <http://www.bwint.org/default.asp?Index=4593&Language=EN>

### **New law closes loophole in minimum wage legislation**

*December 4, 2012*

A new legislation enacted by the government has brought all flex workers under the minimum wage legislation. While the previous law already foresaw in the application of the minimum wage to all employees, loopholes made it possible for companies to contract people under assignment agreements ('ovo') and pay less. The so-called 'ovo' contracts are most common in the construction sector and among postmen. The new legislation closes the loophole.

English: <http://www.staffingindustry.com/eng/content/view/full/96415>

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## Norway

### **Oil workers fear for staff safety**

December 16, 2012

100 employees could be made redundant at oil service company Kaefer. Union representatives fear for staff safety as there is a lot of hiring-in employees, people move around, work a lot, and cannot always prepare themselves as properly as they should. They get tired, fed-up, and become unfocused. Unions at Kaefer and other ISO-certified companies tell of many disputes over so-called average calculation of working hours. Trade union Safe reacts to the fact that employers believe the scheme allows staff to work a lot at times, against time off at others, and without compensation for changes to the normal work schedule.

English: [http://www.aftenbladet.no/energi/aenergy/Oil-workers-extremely-uneasy ...](http://www.aftenbladet.no/energi/aenergy/Oil-workers-extremely-uneasy...)

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## Poland

### **Growth expected to slow**

December 17, 2012

According to World Bank estimates, growth is expected to slow to as little as 1.5% in 2013, from 2.1% in 2012. That still compares favourably with the neighbouring euro zone, where most countries are either in recession or just barely growing. With a gross domestic product of €369.7 billion in 2011, according to the European data agency Eurostat, Poland ranked ninth among the 27 E.U. countries, just below Belgium and a rung above Austria.

English: [http://www.nytimes.com/2012/12/18/business/global/poland-finds-its-not-immune ...](http://www.nytimes.com/2012/12/18/business/global/poland-finds-its-not-immune...)

### **Employment figures published**

December 7, 2012

According to preliminary findings by Poland's Ministry of Labour, unemployment rose from 12.5 to 12.9% in November. The rate is expected to rise still further in December, to between 13.2 to 13.3%, due to a suspension of construction sector over the winter months. Data from the Central Statistical Office show that, in the years 2007-2011, (with the exception of 2009), a growth in the number of the employed in the national economy was observed. It reached the level of 14,232.6 thousand persons at the end of 2011, which means an increase by 0.9 % as compared to the previous year.

English: [http://www.thenews.pl/1/12/Artykul/120779.04-percent-rise-in-November ...](http://www.thenews.pl/1/12/Artykul/120779.04-percent-rise-in-November...) [http://www.stat.gov.pl/cps/rde/xbcr/gus/lis\\_empl\\_in\\_nat\\_economy\\_2011.pdf](http://www.stat.gov.pl/cps/rde/xbcr/gus/lis_empl_in_nat_economy_2011.pdf)

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## Portugal

### **Unemployment data published**

December 20, 2012

Data from the Social Security website revealed that there were 374,277 people on unemployment benefit in October 2012, while in September the number was even higher with 375,041 receiving the social aid. Data from the National Statistics Institute indicate that 870,000 people were jobless at the end of the third quarter of 2012, when the unemployment rate stood at 15.8%. Eurostat revealed that the unemployment rate in Portugal had risen to 16.3% in October.

English: [http://www.algarveresident.com/0-50496/algarve/october-is-second-month ...](http://www.algarveresident.com/0-50496/algarve/october-is-second-month...)

### **Police officers to get average 11% pay increase**

December 19, 2012

The ministry of home affairs has announced that the country's city police will receive a 13.2% pay

increase in 2013, whereas the militarised policy will get a 9.9% pay hike. The news comes in a series of Christmas announcements, including permission for all civil servants to take the two Mondays before Christmas and New Year's Day off.

English: <http://www.theportugalnews.com/news/police-awarded-11-percent-pay-rise/27375>  
[http://www.theportugalnews.com/news/government-allows-civil-servants-to-bridge ...](http://www.theportugalnews.com/news/government-allows-civil-servants-to-bridge...)

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## Romania

### Large restructuring at Kloeckner

*December 24, 2012*

The German based metal parts distributor Kloeckner has sold its Czech, Bulgarian and Romanian operations as part of a restructuring program. According to a company press statement the plan is to relieve the firm of its entire East-European block of operations. The workforce will be cut by 1,800 employees and 60 sites will be closed or sold. By the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter of 2012, the company had already closed 20 sites and cut 800 jobs. Poland and Lithuania are next on the list, with plans for sale to be completed in the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter of 2013.

English: [http://www.romania-insider.com/kloeckner-sells-romanian-czech-bulgarian ...](http://www.romania-insider.com/kloeckner-sells-romanian-czech-bulgarian...)  
<http://online.wsj.com/article/PR-CO-20121221-906540.html?mod=crnews>  
German: [http://www.wallstreetjournal.de/article ...](http://www.wallstreetjournal.de/article...)

### First nine months data published

*December 5, 2012*

The National Institute of Statistics released a report that states that the first 9 months in 2012 were fruitful for the economy, with a 17.9% increase in investments. As much as €5.5 billion fuelled new building works, more than half of total investment. The Institute also updated its overview of monthly gross and net earnings (for the period 1991-2012).

English: [http://www.insse.ro/cms/files/statistici/communicate ...](http://www.insse.ro/cms/files/statistici/communicate...)  
<http://www.insse.ro/cms/rw/pages/castiguri91-2012.en.do>

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## Serbia

### Labour market survey published

*December 28, 2012*

The share of the unemployed in the total active population (employed and unemployed) increased to 22.4%, i.e. 21.5% for male and 23.7% for female workers. The unemployment rate in October 2012 decreased by 3.1%, compared to April 2012. The percentage of the employed in the total population aged 15 and over in October 2012, increased to 36.7%. The employment rate of males was 44.0%, of females 29.8%. Also the informal employment in the non-declared (black) sector of the economy increased.

English: <http://www.friedlnews.com/article/serbia-labor-market-still-tensioned>

### Industrial relations profile

*December 1, 2012*

Eurofound published a revised industrial relations profile. The collective bargaining coverage (in 2010) was 55%. The role of central bodies of industrial relations actors has remained the most important despite a shift towards sectoral and company-level bargaining over pay and working

conditions. The private sector is characterised by low union density and a low incidence of collective bargaining and collective agreements. Determination of the minimum wage is fully centralised, within the Social and Economic Council, and the minimum wage is binding for the whole economy, including sole proprietorships and employees outside the corporate sector.

English: <https://eurofound.europa.eu/eiro/country/serbia.pdf>

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## Slovakia

### Teachers' dispute continues

*December 7, 2012*

Due to the government's willingness to engage in negotiations the trade union of Workers in Education and Science of Slovakia (OZ PŠaV) announced the suspension of its strike after three days. OZPŠaV was asking for an increase of 10% in teachers' and education employees' salaries. Education Minister Dusan Caplovic said he understood the trade union's demands but would not allow for more than a 5% pay hike and tenure – i.e. guaranteed employment – for teachers aged 55 and older. This was confirmed by the government after marathon negotiations with trade union leaders. On December 6, the government announced that it would increase the salaries of teachers and non-pedagogical employees in the education sector by 5% regardless of whether the unions agree to or reject the deal. The trade union will decide about potential further strikes and protests after January 8, 2013.

English: [http://spectator.sme.sk/articles/view/48577/2/relay\\_strikes\\_by\\_teachers...](http://spectator.sme.sk/articles/view/48577/2/relay_strikes_by_teachers...)  
[http://spectator.sme.sk/articles/view/48481/2/teachers\\_reject\\_pay\\_offer.html](http://spectator.sme.sk/articles/view/48481/2/teachers_reject_pay_offer.html)

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## Slovenia

### Protests continue

*December 4, 2012*

Slovenia, which joined the euro zone in 2007, is now struggling to avoid a bailout amid recession, high unemployment and a rising number of bad loans in local banks. The government plans to cut public sector wages, reduce most welfare benefits and cut spending on schools and health in order to reduce the budget deficit to some 3% of GDP next year from 4.2% expected in 2012. In the meantime parliament approved a long-delayed pension reform without a single vote against it. The reform lifts the retirement age to 65 from 58. Last year a similar reform drafted by the previous centre-left government was rejected at a referendum demanded by trade unions.

English: <http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/12/06/us-slovenia-bailout...>

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## Spain

### Strike over hospital privatisation ended

*December 28, 2012*

The second strike of health care workers in the Madrid region (following a two-day strike reported in the November newsletter) ended after five weeks. Doctors called off the strike after failing to halt plans to privatise six hospitals and dozens of clinics. Rallies organised by healthcare unions in the capital drew thousands of doctors and their supporters. To reinforce the protestors' demands of stopping the planned privatisation, more than 100 directors announced they wanted to present their resignations to the regional parliament on 27 December – the day the deputies voted on the privatisation plan. However, the region's elected assembly approved the plan.

English: <http://uk.reuters.com/article/2012/12/28/uk-spain-doctors...> [http://elpais.com/elpais/2012/12/21/inenglish/1356090936\\_624875.html](http://elpais.com/elpais/2012/12/21/inenglish/1356090936_624875.html) [http://elpais.com/elpais/2012/12/21/inenglish/1356090936\\_624875.html](http://elpais.com/elpais/2012/12/21/inenglish/1356090936_624875.html)

[ais/2012/12/14/inenglish/1355517635\\_085624.html](ais/2012/12/14/inenglish/1355517635_085624.html)

## **Carmakers expand**

*December 27, 2012*

Four years of economic turmoil and the euro zone's highest jobless rate have made the Spanish labour market so inviting — the New York Times estimates the labour costs 40% less expensive than those of Europe's other biggest car-making countries, Germany and France — that Ford and Renault recently announced plans to expand their production in Spain. Unlike most other industries, car manufacturing has no sector-wide collective bargaining agreement with unions. As a result, each carmaker has been able to adjust working hours with its own employees.

English: <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/12/28/business/global/car-factories-offer-hope...>

## **BA in the offence against strikers**

*December 12, 2012*

A day after Iberia crews said they would strike for six days before Christmas to protest against job cuts Spanish pilots were sued by BA over strikes late 2011 and early 2012. BA's lawsuit is against Sepla, the Iberia pilots' union, and the International Federation of Airline Pilots Association in relation to the strikes that Sepla embarked on to protest against the creation of Iberia's low-cost subsidiary Iberia Express, which it said violated its collective wage bargaining agreement with Iberia. Later, unions have made known they will not be organising any strike before Christmas, in order to avoid hurting passengers. In the absence of any agreement, however, unions are leaving the way open for new actions in January.

English: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/business/2012/nov/30/international-airlines-group...>  
<http://www.thenewsonline.es/news/national/8717-iberia-strike-called-off>

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## **Sweden**

### **OECD comments on Sweden**

*December 17, 2012*

The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development said in a report that Sweden should do more for those excluded from the job market, saying high minimum wages and poorly targeted integration policies were leaving some groups mired in poverty. To boost employment in some groups such as youth with limited education, some immigrants, and those on sickness and disability benefits the country should lower wages for entry-level jobs, improve vocational and academic training, and ensure active labour market policies were better targeted to individual needs. The unemployment rate stood at 7.6% in 2011, compared with an 8.2% average for the organisation's member countries. However, youth unemployment was comparatively high at 22.9%, compared with 16.2% in the OECD.

English: <http://www.thelocal.se/45122/20121217/#.UOAuyKxXuSo>  
<http://www.oecd.org/sweden/sweden2012.htm>

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## **Switzerland**

### **Social responsibility in a chain of subcontracting**

*December 5, 2012*

Construction firms employing workers from EU countries will in future be responsible for making sure their subcontractors follow Swiss wage and employment laws or face penalties. After the Senate and the cabinet the change, which is meant to maintain fair competition across Swiss' borders under its free labour accord with the EU and prevent so-called 'wage dumping' was approved by the House of

Representatives by 104 votes to 82. The law holds contractors responsible for making sure that their workers from the European Economic Area who become employed in Switzerland earn the correct retirement, health insurance and other social benefits prescribed by Swiss law.

English: [http://www.swissinfo.ch/eng/swiss\\_news/Lawmakers\\_put\\_onus\\_on\\_building...](http://www.swissinfo.ch/eng/swiss_news/Lawmakers_put_onus_on_building...)

### **Social partnership tested: talk or take the street**

*December 1, 2012*

End of October 2012, employers, trade unionists, academics and politicians gathered in Tolochenaz, where the business federation of canton Vaud is based, to discuss the future of social relations. Strikes have been an extremely rare occurrence over the past 75 years. Collective labour contracts and institutionalised dialogue between management and unions are the main reasons. According to historian Olivier Meuwly the Swiss 'myth' was the result of a constructed phenomenon through which Swiss people learnt to deal with conflicts and come up with solutions. Meuwly pointed out that the religious and cultural tensions, which caused unrest after the creation of modern Switzerland in 1848, were followed in the 1860s by violent social conflicts, necessitating new ways of viewing relations with the enemy.

English: [http://www.swissinfo.ch/eng/business/Should\\_workers\\_talk\\_or\\_take\\_to\\_the\\_streets...](http://www.swissinfo.ch/eng/business/Should_workers_talk_or_take_to_the_streets...)  
[http://www.swissinfo.ch/eng/swiss\\_news/Labour\\_relations\\_enter\\_reign\\_of\\_terror.html?cid=34017154](http://www.swissinfo.ch/eng/swiss_news/Labour_relations_enter_reign_of_terror.html?cid=34017154)

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## **Turkey**

### **Unionists released pending trial**

*December 19, 2012*

The last detained women of the 15 women KESK leaders and activists arrested in February 2012 (see the April and June Newsletter) – were released on bail pending trial. The ITUC has once again urged the Turkish government to stop the judicial harassment against trade unionists and ensure a fair and timely judicial process.

English: <http://www.ituc-csi.org/turkey-kesk-trial-three-women.html?lang=en>

### **Symposium against discrimination**

*December 16, 2012*

For the 'Symposium Against Discriminations', unionists from Belgium, the Netherlands and Turkey were gathering in Ankara for the labour rights of LGBTs. During the symposium, organised by Kaos GL during the International Human Rights Day, the access of LGBTs to the health and labour rights were discussed.

English: <http://www.kaosgl.org/page.php?id=12946>

### **Union busting at DESA**

*December 6, 2012*

The Leather and Shoe Workers' Union (Deri-Is) is facing systematic pressure and discrimination at DESA's leather factories. DESA, producing for many well-known brands such as Prada, Gucci, Debenhams, Whistles, Marks and Spencer, is one of the leading exporting companies in the leather sector with three factories in Istanbul, Duzce and Corlu employing around 2,000 workers. Since 2008, over 50 cases of unfair dismissals and mobbing were brought to the legal courts, and DESA has lost the majority of them and been described by the courts as anti-union. In a campaign IndustriALL Global and European Trade Union are calling for the right to freedom of association and an end to

union busting.

English: <http://www.industrial-union.org/union-busting-at-desa-in-turkey-soars>

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## United Kingdom

### **Postal strikes end**

*December 30, 2012*

Watford postal workers had objected to changes in working patterns and staged an official strike, which quickly spread when other workers refused to accept mail held up in Watford. Around 15,000 workers joined the unofficial walkouts in several regions, including London, the North West, the North East and Kent, paralysing 19 mail centres and 72 delivery offices. As officials of the Communication Workers Union and the Royal Mail reached a peace deal the strike ended.

English: [http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-48994/Massive-mail-backlog ...](http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-48994/Massive-mail-backlog...)

### **Tube drivers' strike**

*December 26, 2012*

Members of the Aslef union have walked out for 24 hours from after voting 9-1 in favour of strike action. The London Underground drivers have gone on strike in a long-running row over bank holiday pay. Large parts of the service have been disrupted as a result and more buses were brought in. According to an Aslef spokesman the members voted by over 90% to take industrial action on Boxing Day because London Underground refused to open discussions until a few weeks ago. The union has been seeking extra pay for its members for working on 26 December; at the discussions the company offered 'precisely nothing'.

English: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-london-20842799>

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-20757141>

<http://union-news.co.uk/2012/12/why-were-on-strike-today-aslef/>

### **Strike at West Midlands food company ended**

*December 20, 2012*

About 1,200 workers at the 2 Sisters Food Group in the West Midlands had decided to stage three days of 24-hour strikes after voting nearly unanimously for industrial action. In a dispute over pay and working conditions the workers voted by 98.5% for strike action and 97.2% for industrial action short of a strike. The turnout was 57%. The first 24-hour strike started on Friday 14 December when workers walked out in a dispute over pay and conditions. Further strikes planned at the 2 Sisters Food Group were cancelled after management made an improved offer to workers at the West Midlands company. The key elements of the package are an improved above-inflation one-year pay award, backdating of the pay increase to 1 August 2012 and 'significant' joint training with the company on dignity and respect at work.

English: [http://union-news.co.uk/2012/12/breaking-unite-calls-off-tomorrows ...](http://union-news.co.uk/2012/12/breaking-unite-calls-off-tomorrows...)

### **Reform of collective redundancies regulations to hit fixed term workers**

*December 18, 2012*

The government has announced new regulations for collective redundancies, which will reduce the notice period from 90 to 45 days and exclude fixed term workers from obligations for collective redundancies consultation. The Trade Union Congress called the reform outrageous. It will not create any new jobs but hit the least protected employees hardest. The new regulations will come into force in April 2013.



English: <http://www.staffingindustry.com/eng/content/view/full/97026>

### **Strike at E.on**

*December 17, 2012*

Meter staff at E.on have organised a one-day strike and will refuse overtime and goodwill from 2 January. The meter staff is protesting against a loss in real wages of employees, while managers receive substantial wage increases. The strike will be followed by an overtime ban and removal of goodwill from midnight on Wednesday, 2 January 2013 until the dispute is resolved.

English: [http://www.unitetheunion.org/news/eonmeterstafftostageonedaystrike ...](http://www.unitetheunion.org/news/eonmeterstafftostageonedaystrike...)  
<http://union-news.co.uk/2012/12/e-on-strike-today/>

### **Payroll scandal in construction**

*December 3, 2012*

A report published by construction union UCATT exposes the increasing use of payroll companies in the construction industry. The report establishes how payroll companies are being used to codify false self-employment in the industry and how this is costing the Exchequer hundreds of millions of pounds a year in lost revenue. Workers are forced to sign contracts with payroll companies in order to obtain work. By signing the contract, while the worker is in reality an employee for a construction company, they are officially classed as self-employed. Due to their self-employment status the workers are stripped of even their most basic employment rights.

English: <https://www.ucatt.org.uk/visageimages/greatpayrollscandal.pdf>  
<http://www.contracteye.co.uk/construction-payroll-ni-avoidance.shtml>

### **Gap between rich and poor is not in property but in pensions**

*December 3, 2012*

A report by the Office for National Statistics reveals that the top 10% of households are 850 times wealthier than the bottom. The bottom 50% of households in Britain has just £4,400 of cash, property and pensions compared to the £1.2m held by the top 10%. While the top 10% owned property averaging £340,000 in value, they had built up pension savings averaging £742,000. The bottom 50% of households had no net property wealth and just £4,000 in pension savings.

English: [http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/dcp171776\\_289407.pdf](http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/dcp171776_289407.pdf)  
[http://www.guardian.co.uk/money/2012/dec/03/richest-10-uk-households-40-per-cent ...](http://www.guardian.co.uk/money/2012/dec/03/richest-10-uk-households-40-per-cent...)

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For more information, please contact the editor Jan Cremers, Amsterdam Institute for Advanced Labour Studies (AIAS) [cbn-aias@uva.nl](mailto:cbn-aias@uva.nl) or the communications officer at the ETUI, Mariya Nikolova [mnikolova@etui.org](mailto: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](http://www.etui.org), and on the AIAS at [www.uva-aias.net](http://www.uva-aias.net).

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To subscribe or unsubscribe, please contact Mariya Nikolova [mnikolova@etui.org](mailto:mnikolova@etui.org).