

collective bargaining

Issue 2/2013 February

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



AMSTERDAM INSTITUTE FOR ADVANCED LABOUR STUDIES
UNIVERSITEIT VAN AMSTERDAM



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European sources

Austerity is not working

February 14, 2013

Caritas Europe published an examination of the impact of austerity policies on people in the five EU countries worst affected by the crisis. Using EU statistics, the report highlights historically high levels of unemployment, with more than 10% of the labour force out of work. Among them is an entire generation of youngsters, with one in two unemployed in Greece and Spain. Through the austerity measures politicians are creating a structural poverty, a structural unemployment and a lost generation of young people.

English: <http://static.rasset.ie/documents/news/caritascrisis-report.pdf>

European workplaces in the economic downturn

February 8, 2013

Eurofound launched the fieldwork for a new edition of the European Company Survey (ECS), aimed at providing insights to changes in workplace and human resource management practices, employee participation and social dialogue at the workplace, and performance, since the onset of the economic downturn. The ECS is carried out every four years. In 2009, more than 60% of employees in Europe were covered by a trade union or a works council at the workplace, according to the ECS. At the same time, four out of five workplaces were found to have a good work climate.

English: [http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/press/releases/2013 ...](http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/press/releases/2013...)

Crisis in automotive and steel industries far from over

February 4, 2013

The road to recovery in Europe's auto industry will not be without obstacles. Many jobs are still on the line. Only a few carmakers are managing to pull through, by placing their bets on highly skilled labour. One of the consequences of the crisis in the European automobile market is the planned closure of several steelworks by Arcelor Mittal, such as in Liege in Belgium, and Florange in France. According to an analysis of the Belgian information centre CRISP, published in the daily Le Soir, it is first and foremost the system of globalisation that allows industrialists to open and close sites as and when it suits them. For any industrial group, every investment is seen as a source of profit and becomes an adjustable variable when so required by the market.

English: <http://www.equaltimes.org/news/europe-worst-yet-to-come-for-car-industry>

French: <http://www.crisp.be/2013/01/mittal-patron-voyou/>

Wage setting under pressure

February 2, 2013

In a meeting of the European Employment Committee the European and national-level social partners expressed serious worries and felt that the autonomy of the national level should be preserved. According to the ETUC it is unacceptable that reforms restricting collective bargaining coverage and the freedom of trade unions to set wages are deemed to be 'employment friendly' by EU institutions. A Eurofound background paper delivered the participants a comparative overview of the levels of collective wage setting and how they are set throughout Europe. It also reported on reforms, changes or debates linked to these processes between the different actors at both the Member State and the European level in 2011 and 2012.

English: [http://www.etuc.org/IMG/pdf/20130201 ...](http://www.etuc.org/IMG/pdf/20130201...)

<http://www.epsu.org/a/9206>

[http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/pubdocs/2013/07/en ...](http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/pubdocs/2013/07/en...)

The European newspaper industry portrayed

February 1, 2013

The European Restructuring Monitor (ERM) Quarterly of Eurofound provides data on macroeconomic trends and prospects. The first issue of 2013 has a focus on the European print media, where falling circulation and technological changes are squeezing the sector. The sector has experienced huge changes in recent years, due to competition from online media and the plethora of free news sources on offer. Changing reader habits, in particular those of young people, mean that online provision is gaining readership while print media is losing out. Thus, the sector has experienced significant business restructuring in many countries, which is likely to persist as newspapers continue to suffer from decreases in sales, subscriptions and advertising revenue.

English: [http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/pubdocs/2013/08/en ...](http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/pubdocs/2013/08/en...)

Unemployment on the rise as working conditions worsen

February 1, 2013

The International Labour Organisation has published its *Global Employment Trends* report, in which it concludes that unemployment is rising. The report reveals that in those countries where unemployment levels remained stable, working conditions tend to have deteriorated.

English: <http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public ...>

Austria

Case of gender discrimination won

February 21, 2013

The Chamber of Labour has won a case over gender discrimination. A woman working as a HR-manager earned a € 1000 less than her male colleague. After her complaint her salaries were equalized but shortly after the man received a pay increase. As the company refused to pay her the margin the woman handed in her notice. She then contacted the equal treatment consulting of the AK Upper Austria that won her case.

English: <http://austriantimes.at/news/Business/2013-02-21 ...>

German: <http://www.arbeiterkammer.com/online/beim-gehalt-diskriminiert ...>

Closure and transfer of production

February 19, 2013

The food group Eckes-Granini-Group announced the closing of the Pago-plant in Klagenfurt. The group that had just taken over the company from Brau Union has planned to close down the venue before the end of the year 2013. Talks will be held to support the staff and to create a social plan. Eckes-Granini is outsourcing the production to France and Spain. The Klagenfurt staff is left speechless and horrified. The salaries for the next 10.5 months will be guaranteed but it is unclear how the 110 employees will cope with the crisis the branch is facing at the moment.

English: http://austriantimes.at/news/Business/2013-02-19/47026/Pago_will_close ...

German: <http://derstandard.at/1360681825144/Pago-Gruendungsstandort-Klagenfurt ...>

Collective agreement in mineral oil sector

February 13, 2013

Blue collar trade union PRO-GE and white collar union GPA-djp have negotiated a new collective agreement in the mineral oil sector. The agreement includes a 3.4% increase of minimum wages and apprentices' remuneration and a 3.1% wage hike for all other workers. The agreement raises the monthly gross minimum wage in the sector to €1,753.04. Workers above 55 in continuous shift operations will be entitled to an additional day off each year and the option to replace the 30% jubilee bonus reward by time off. The agreement entered into force on 1 February 2013 and will last for one year.

English: <http://www.eucoban.eu/EMF/Reports/Austria-Successfull-conclusions ...>

Debate on seasonal workers from 3rd countries

February 13, 2013

The president of the Chamber of Labour (AK) in Salzburg refuses to take on more chefs and waiters from Non-EU countries. He criticized the fact that qualified workers from EU-countries in Eastern Europe such as Hungary were now substituted by cheap labour from outside the EU. The gastronomy and hotel industry are warning that, without the help of 3rd country workers, tourism would economically not be possible any more.

English: <http://austriantimes.at/news/Business/2013-02-13 ...>

German: <http://salzburg.orf.at/news/stories/2571065/>

Belgium

Demonstration against austerity

February 21, 2013

Approximately 30,000 protesters marched through the streets of Brussels to give the government a firm anti-austerity signal. The protest was organised by the joint trade unions with as key slogans: For the right to negotiation; No pay freeze; No discrimination between workers and the Preservation of indexation.

English: [http://www.demotix.com/photo/1827174/demonstration-against-austerity ...](http://www.demotix.com/photo/1827174/demonstration-against-austerity...)

Civil servants protest against national attrition policy and loss of bonus

February 7, 2013

Civil servants in Brussels took to the street to protest against government policy to reduce their workforce by not replacing retired employees. They also protested against the loss of bonuses from January 2014 onwards and demanded negotiations with the unions when the government wants to change the working conditions. The responsible secretary of state, Hendrik Bogaert, has said that reform is unavoidable.

English: [http://www.euronews.com/2013/02/07/belgian-civil-servants-strike ...](http://www.euronews.com/2013/02/07/belgian-civil-servants-strike...)

Bulgaria

Unemployed give up hope for a job

February 28, 2013

Unemployment in the fourth quarter of 2012 was 12.4% (a total of 417,300 people), representing an increase of 8.6% in the same period in 2011, according to figures released by the National Statistical Institute (NSI). Among young people aged 15 to 29, unemployment was 20.7%. The institute comes up with a figure of 'discouraged persons' – in NSI parlance, those who would like to have a job but have given up trying to get one – in the 15 to 64 age bracket of 210,200 people. The figures confirm earlier alarming data on long-term youth unemployment.

English: [http://sofiaglobe.com/2013/02/15/more-than-210-000-of-bulgarias-unemployed ...](http://sofiaglobe.com/2013/02/15/more-than-210-000-of-bulgarias-unemployed...)
<http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/ewco/2012/10/BG1210011I.htm>

Negotiations over lay-offs at Sopot military plant

February 25, 2013

Labour minister Mladenov has said talks about layoffs at the Sopot military plant (see Newsletter July-August 2012), whose privatisation failed again last month, are about to start between the state, specialists and trade unions. According to the minister 900 jobs would certainly be saved and some 400 workers would quit voluntarily under a privileged state assistance programme that will help them find new jobs. The Sopot workers will not need to go to the regular unemployment office but to a mobile office that will be set up on the plant's premises. Layoffs will start at the end of the month or beginning of March. However, 600 workers have already been dismissed and the fate of the factory remains unclear.

English: http://www.novinite.com/view_news.php?id=148167

Highway construction workers protest over unpaid wages

February 13, 2013

Over a 100 workers involved in the building of two highways staged a protest due to wages of the last 7 months to over a year have not been paid by the project subcontractors. The protesters raised signs stating that the highway had been built on the corpses of workers' families, who have gone deeper and deeper into debt as they awaited their salaries. The protesters initially tried to resolve the conflict via the ministry that ordered the building of the highway, but to no avail.

English: http://www.novinite.com/view_news.php?id=147796

Croatia

Wage cut for 231,000 public sector workers

February 20, 2013

From 1 April 2013 more than 231,000 public sector workers will be confronted with pay cuts. The government plans to reduce gross wages by 3% for all employees in the public sector, with only primary and secondary school teachers exempted. The trade unions say that reducing the spending power of over 230,000 people will lead the country further into crisis.

English: [http://www.croatiaweek.com/pm-slashes-wages-for-more-than-230000 ...](http://www.croatiaweek.com/pm-slashes-wages-for-more-than-230000...)

Protest against privatisation

February 16, 2013

A group of protesters, led by the movement Occupy Croatia, gathered on Zagreb's main square to 'defend the good of the country' and protest over the country's privatisation, in particular its banks.

English: <http://www.croatiaweek.com/croats-hit-the-streets-in-protest/>

Cyprus

Construction strike ends in renewal of collective agreement

February 14, 2013

Employers and trade unions reached an agreement in principle on the collective agreements in construction, bringing the indefinite building strike to an end after nearly three weeks. The two sides accepted proposals put forward by the Labour Minister, which provide for the collective agreement to run until 30 June 2014. Weekly salaries will remain the same with craftsmen, labourers and semi-skilled workers receiving €440, €380 and €403 respectively. Both sides also agreed to introduce licences to all those looking to work in the construction industry, with a certificate confirming their qualifications.

English: [http://www.news.cyprus-property-buyers.com/2013/02/13 ...](http://www.news.cyprus-property-buyers.com/2013/02/13...)

[http://www.cyprus-mail.com/collective-agreements/hi-ho-hi-ho-builders-go-back ...](http://www.cyprus-mail.com/collective-agreements/hi-ho-hi-ho-builders-go-back...)

Czech Republic

Women earn 16% less than men

February 21, 2013

The Czech statistical office (CZSO/CSU) has published a report on the gender pay gap between 1996 and 2011. Results indicate that women's gross median income was only 84% of men's. In 2011 women earned 22,389 Koruna (€ 874) a month on average, 5,845 Koruna (€ 228) less than men. Experts and women's organisations cite differences in remuneration between male and female dominated sectors as well as a lack of women in top positions, as the main explanations for the persisting gender pay gap.

English: [http://praguemonitor.com/2013/02/21/women-earn-fifth-less ...](http://praguemonitor.com/2013/02/21/women-earn-fifth-less...)

Labour inspectorate cracks down in illegal employment

February 20, 2013

A spokeswoman from the State Labour Inspection Office (SUIP) informed the media that in 2012, inspectors imposed 818 fines for illegal employment, amounting to a total of 163 million Koruna (6.4 million euro). In total, 5078 people were found to have been illegally employed during 35,577 control visits. Most illegal practices were discovered in the construction sector.

English: [http://praguemonitor.com/2013/02/20/labour-inspectors-impose-fines ...](http://praguemonitor.com/2013/02/20/labour-inspectors-impose-fines...)

Statistical office produces regular pay figures

February 20, 2013

The statistical office CZSO/CSU regularly comes up with new figures and labour market statistics. The data comprise figures on unemployment, the structure of labour costs and the sectoral distribution of the labour force. Also available are figures on the average monthly gross wages and salaries of employees in the national economy. The average gross monthly wage in 2010 was 23,627 Koruna (€ 930). The highest wages were paid in the financial and it-sector, the lowest in accommodation and food services. The wage gap between sectors has increased in the last 5 years.

English: [http://www.czso.cz/csu/2013edicniplan.nsf ...](http://www.czso.cz/csu/2013edicniplan.nsf...)

[http://www.czso.cz/csu/2013edicniplan.nsf/engpubl ...](http://www.czso.cz/csu/2013edicniplan.nsf/engpubl...)

Denmark

Agreements signed for the public sector

February 18, 2013

Collective bargaining in the public sector covers approximately 800,000 employees in the state, regions and municipalities. Of these, about 410,000 are members of the LO affiliated unions. After the signature of a framework agreement the negotiations started for the different levels. Despite the difficult economic situation an agreement could be reached with the Ministry of Finance for the next two years' salary and working conditions of all national public sector workers. Negotiations at the level of the municipalities were concluded a week later with a consensus on the broad framework for the more than 500,000 municipal employees' salaries in the next two years. The deal includes a general wage increase of 1.97% over two years, complimented with an additional 0.25% increase for employees within certain areas.

English: [http://cphpost.dk/news/national/public-workers-handed ...](http://cphpost.dk/news/national/public-workers-handed-...)

Work less and longer

February 17, 2013

According to Professor James Vaupel of the University of Southern Denmark shorter days and longer careers lead to more leisure time and a healthier old age. He says that no-one should work more than 25 hours per week, but that we should keep working until the age of 80. Shorter working weeks would give young people more time to care for their families, exercise and lead healthier lives and part-time work later in life would improve the general health of the elderly.

English: [http://cphpost.dk/business/researcher-advocates-25-hour-working-week ...](http://cphpost.dk/business/researcher-advocates-25-hour-working-week-...)

380 job losses at Lego

February 9, 2013

Toy manufacturer Lego is to move the remainder of its Danish packaging facilities abroad, resulting in 380 job cuts. The initial cut will affect 75 workers in the coming months, followed by a larger move that will result in about 200 job cuts in 2014.

English: <http://www.icenews.is/2013/02/09/lego-announces-380-job-losses-in-denmark/>

Sex discrimination between fiction and facts

February 4, 2013

Although series like 'Borgen' often present a positive image for women at work the reality can be different. Employers tend to find out more about candidates before hiring them, and it is not unusual for interviewers to ask someone's age, marital status, and whether they have children. The Union of Public Employees, the third largest trade union in the country, reported that it was handling 30 cases of women who felt they had been wrongly dismissed, and others report violations of the law in the job application process. In 2012, one in eight newly qualified nurses were asked at interview if they had, or planned to have, children, according to the nurses' union Dansk Sygeplejeråd. The trade unions are encouraging members to stand up for themselves and make full use of the legal provisions that exist.

English: [http://www.guardian.co.uk/lifeandstyle/the-womens-blog ...](http://www.guardian.co.uk/lifeandstyle/the-womens-blog-...)

Estonia

Unfavourable working conditions push for migration

February 18, 2013

In a survey carried out by the daily newspaper Eesti Päevaleht, a considerably high number of Estonians expressed their wish to leave the country. Due to unfavourable labour market and working conditions, almost 37% of the Estonians consider leaving their home country. Most respondents complained about the low wages and the bad working conditions.

English: [http://news.err.ee/society ...](http://news.err.ee/society-...)

Finland

Contract compliance and liability

February 28, 2013

Vasama, the Electrical Workers' Union newspaper, reported in the December issue that Estonian electrical workers were underpaid on a major construction site (car park P-Hämppi) in the city of Tampere. After the visit of union representatives some of the Estonian electricians joined the union and asked for help. Since September 2012 all workers on new construction sites have been obliged to carry identification documents containing their personal taxation numbers. The Act on the Contractor's Obligations and Liability when Work is Contracted Out also stipulates that when subcontracting takes place, the onus is on the party who has delegated this work to check that all legal obligations of their counterparty are in order and that the latter pays wages and salaries in accordance with the collective agreements. From the beginning of March 2013 the Act also applies to all older construction sites.

English: <http://www.artto.kaapeli.fi/unions/T2013/q10>

Focus on the contractor's obligations and liability act:

<http://www.tem.fi/index.phtml?l=en&s=2643>

Paternity leave on its way

February 14, 2013

The law concerning paternity leave has been amended since the beginning of 2013, allowing the father to take longer paid paternal leave. The trade union confederations support the revised legislation and it is included in the framework agreement of the central labour market organisations from October 2011. The Confederation of Professionals STTK began a campaign in February 2013 to encourage fathers to make full use of their paternal leave.

English: <http://www.artto.kaapeli.fi/unions/T2013/q08>

France

Agreement on early exit at Peugeot

February 16, 2013

With the exception of the CGT PSA Peugeot Citroen unions agreed to let the carmaker start to move workers from its troubled Aulnay plant, effectively beginning the wind-down of the site a year ahead of its scheduled closure. The works council approved the transfers to another Paris area plant. The early departures were backed by the CFDT, CFTC, CGC, FO and SIA unions, with only the CGT voting against, workers' representatives said.

English: [http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/02/15/peugeot-cuts ...](http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/02/15/peugeot-cuts...)

Goodyear closes Amiens plant

February 1, 2013

Goodyear announced it is closing its tyre plant in Amiens, leading to 1173 losing their jobs. Goodyear had been in negotiations with trade unions for over five years to salvage the plant, but the parties did not reach an agreement. Goodyear said plant closure was the only option left and that a social plan had been sent to the works council.

English: [http://www.france24.com/en/20130131-goodyear-plan-close-tyre-plant ...](http://www.france24.com/en/20130131-goodyear-plan-close-tyre-plant...)

Civil servants strike over pay freeze

January 31, 2013

Civil servants across the country have protested against the pay freeze imposed on them by the government. The unions said that the lack of pay increase is particularly harsh on nearly a million civil servants who are earning the minimum wage. Civil Service Minister Lebranchu reacted she understands the situation is difficult, but added that there is no space in the budget for any wage increase.

English: [http://www.news24.com/World/News/French-civil-servants-go-on-strike ...](http://www.news24.com/World/News/French-civil-servants-go-on-strike...)

Germany

Strike and talks airport security staff

February 28, 2013

Security workers at Düsseldorf and Hamburg airports started a one-day warning strike after wage negotiations failed to make any progress. The trade union Ver.di called on security workers at Hamburg airport to walk off the job. The union demand is an hourly wage of €14.50 and better working conditions. The federal association for safety BDSW offered €12.75 from March and then €13.50 from January 2013 – an offer that was rejected by trade union Ver.di. Negotiations will be reopened on 28 February.

English: [http://www.timesunion.com/news/article/Hamburg-airport-security-staff ...](http://www.timesunion.com/news/article/Hamburg-airport-security-staff...)

Teachers' strike started

February 18, 2013

Teachers and child care workers began their nationwide public sector strike when staff from nearly 100 schools in Berlin went out on the street. The warning action is part of a wage dispute in which the teachers insist, among others, for a 6.5% salary rise. The trade union Ver.di is also campaigning for a guarantee of €100 more per month for some 800,000 public sector employees.

English: <http://www.neurope.eu/article/german-teachers-begin-nationwide-strike>
<http://www.thelocal.de/education/20130218-48025.html>

Neo-Nazi guards used to control workforce?

February 18, 2013

The ARD television channel made the allegation in a documentary the online shopping giant Amazon employed security guards with neo-Nazi connections to intimidate its foreign workers. More than 5,000 temporary staff from across Europe works at Amazon's German packing and distribution centres. ARD said the temporary staff worked eight-hour shifts packing goods at the company's logistics centres in Bad Hersfeld, Konstanz and Augsburg. Many walked up to 17 kilometres per shift and all those taken on could be fired at will. On arrival, most were told their pay had been cut to below the rate promised when they applied for jobs at Amazon. According to a spokesman of trade union Ver.di the workers did not complain because they were all too frightened of being sent home without a job. In the meantime the case has led to investigations from the side of the Ministry of Labour and Amazon has terminated the cooperation with the agency that operated under the name H.E.S.S. The Austrian-based agency Trenkwalder that was involved as intermediate risks to lose its licence in Germany.

English: [http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/amazon-used-neonazi-guards ...](http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/amazon-used-neonazi-guards...)

German: [http://diepresse.com/home/wirtschaft/international/1346090/Dumpingloehne ...](http://diepresse.com/home/wirtschaft/international/1346090/Dumpingloehne...)

Greece

A crisis of insolvency feared

February 22, 2013

The austerity policies could create a crisis of insolvency, undermining the very reason they were implemented - to repay the country's debt - says the country's biggest trade union confederation. People can't pay their taxes. That's why state revenue fell 300 million euros short of January targets. If that continues, it is questionable whether the state will be able to meet its obligations by June or July. It may not have the cash to pay salaries and pensions.

English: [http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2013/02/2013 ...](http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2013/02/2013...)

Protest against austerity measures and planned strike barriers

February 20, 2013

A 24-hour protest on 20 February by unions representing private and public sector workers has disrupted flights, halted ferries and crippled public services, in a renewed confrontation between labour

representatives and the conservative-led government. The trade unions protest against the job cuts and tax rises being demanded by the country's international lenders. A wave of early retirements has likely satisfied creditors' demands for cutbacks in the state sector. But the troika has also pushed for layoffs. In addition the government is considering making changes to labour regulations that will make it more difficult for unions to call strikes. The unions are also angry at a government decision to scrap collective wage agreements across the public sector as part of an overhaul of state pay scales that will usher in further salary cuts.

English: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-21515012>

[http://www.globalnews.ca/canada/world/greece+hit+by+new+strikes+as+jobless+rate ...](http://www.globalnews.ca/canada/world/greece+hit+by+new+strikes+as+jobless+rate...)

[http://www.ekathimerini.com/4dcgi/_w_articles ...](http://www.ekathimerini.com/4dcgi/_w_articles...)

Government attempts to break seafarers' strike

February 8, 2013

On 31 January, seafarers went on strike to demand payment of delayed wages and a new law that would weaken union rights. In reaction, the government has implemented a civil mobilisation order, which forces the seafarers back to work. Workers who continue to strike risk being arrested.

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

<http://www.equaltimes.org/news/siege-laws-to-end-strikes-in-greece>

Hungary

Teachers' strike after 'total failure' of talks

February 18, 2013

The teachers' trade union PDSZ will announce a national strike for an unspecified period after March 15 because talks with the government on the reform of education have failed. According to PDSZ, 66% of the teachers and two-thirds of the public consider the government's education reform unacceptable.

English: [http://www.politics.hu/20130218/teachers-union-vows-national-strike ...](http://www.politics.hu/20130218/teachers-union-vows-national-strike...)

Hunger march to Budapest

February 5, 2013

The pay pressure group 'Work! Bread! Fair Pay!' organised a hunger march. Protesters demanded that the government restored the minimum pay for public works to 60,200 forints (€202) a month and that it should be paid monthly, not weekly. They are also pushing for more access to public works for families in need. Accommodation was offered by various cultural and political organisations throughout the itinerary.

English: [http://www.politics.hu/20130204/hunger-marchers-depart-from-miskolc ...](http://www.politics.hu/20130204/hunger-marchers-depart-from-miskolc...)

Iceland

Labour market statistics 4th quarter 2012

February 11, 2013

In the 4th quarter of 2012 the number of the total labour force was 176,800 which corresponds to an activity rate of 78.8%. The number of employed persons was 168,400 and unemployed persons were 8,400. The employment rate was 75% and the unemployment rate was 4.7%. The number of employed persons increased by 3,000 and the number of unemployed persons decreased by 2,200 from the 4th quarter of 2011. The unemployment rate among males was 5.4% and 4% among females.

English: [http://www.statice.is/?PageID ...](http://www.statice.is/?PageID...)

[http://www.statice.is/Pages/444 ...](http://www.statice.is/Pages/444...)

Ireland

Croke Park II leads to heated debates

February 25, 2013

The debates inside the trade unions on the so-called Croke Park II proposals from the Labour Relations Commission (LRC) are heated. Under the agreement there will not be compulsory redundancies. The agreement outlines how additional working hours would be applied in the various sectors of the public service where management is seeking greater flexibility in rostering and additional hours in order to reduce headcount, overtime and the use of agency staff. Trade union leaders warned their members that working time extension was a core government demand that they could not relinquish. Four unions walked out of the talks saying the government's agenda was unacceptable. In the face of the far-going cuts that were to be implemented if no Croke Park II deal was reached, other unions said their first goal was to find an acceptable agreement.

English: [http://www.irishtimes.com/newspaper/ireland/2013/0227 ...](http://www.irishtimes.com/newspaper/ireland/2013/0227...)
<http://www.rte.ie/news/2013/0225/369441-croke-park/>
<http://www.rte.ie/news/2013/0224/369295-croke-park-agreement/>
[http://www.siptu.ie/media/pressreleases2013/mainnews/fullstory ...](http://www.siptu.ie/media/pressreleases2013/mainnews/fullstory...)
[http://www.lrc.ie/documents/2013/LRC ...](http://www.lrc.ie/documents/2013/LRC...)

Teachers' union in pay battle

February 20, 2013

The teacher unions are battling to get government negotiators to drop plans to axe the €125m-a-year supervision and substitution pay. The government initially tabled plans to abolish the payments but unions are fighting for a compromise that will exempt lower-paid staff from any cuts.

English: [http://www.independent.ie/lifestyle/education/teacher-unions-in-125m-pay-battle ...](http://www.independent.ie/lifestyle/education/teacher-unions-in-125m-pay-battle...)

Italy

Employment in large firms stable

February 28, 2013

The official statistical office ISTAT has a page with regular publications. It recently reported on labour indicators for large firms. In December 2012 the seasonally adjusted employment index in large firms was unchanged compared with November (+0.1% in industry and unchanged in services); net of workers in short-time working allowance increased by 0.1% (+0.2% in industry and unchanged in services). The quarterly data on (un)employment are published in the 1st week of March.

English: <http://www.istat.it/en/archive/83531>

Indefinite strike at ILVA plant

February 20, 2013

The trade union representing railway workers at the troubled ILVA steel plant in the southern port city of Taranto called an indefinite strike and revoked a 2010 agreement in a protest against safety and security issues arising from a reorganisation that was part of the November 2010 agreement. Last October an investigation was launched after a 29 year old worker at the plant was found dead near a locomotive engine inside the plant. ILVA has for months been at the centre of a major industrial and environmental dispute since a court in the port town ordered the shutdown of its smelting facilities and said that the steelwork was the source of an on-going environmental disaster.

English: [http://www.steelguru.com/international_news/Railway_workers_union_calls ...](http://www.steelguru.com/international_news/Railway_workers_union_calls...)

Latvia

Social services not in a good shape

February 20, 2013

According to a report of the national Ombudsman the social services currently do not meet the needs of people with mental disabilities and adds that alternative services are accessible only to a small number of people. Therefore many with mental disabilities are forced to choose long-term social care and rehabilitation institutions. The report says that the management and personnel of social care centres should undergo

immediate training.

English: <http://www.baltic-course.com/eng/legislation/?doc=70669>

Liechtenstein

New collective agreement in industrial sector

February 2, 2013

Despite the economic and financial crisis a collective agreement has been signed between the Employees Association (LANV) and the Chamber of Industry and Commerce (LIHK). After twelve rounds of negotiations which were held in a fair and objective atmosphere, the new agreement became effective by January 2013. Trade union priorities in the negotiations were the non-discrimination of atypical working conditions, the protection of personal rights and equal opportunities and improved arrangements relating to the compatibility of family and work. The Chamber of Industry and Commerce focused on more flexibility during the economic downturn, especially on more flexibility regarding working hours. However, a working hour variance must be agreed with trade union or by the works council members. Over 9,000 employees will benefit from the new agreement.

German: www.lanv.li

Lithuania

Youth perspectives and brain drain

February 26, 2013

Data from the Statistics Department reveal that the country's official unemployment rate has fallen from 15.3% in 2011 to 13.2% in 2012. This is still above the EU average and the true figure is thought to be much higher as many people prefer to engage in seasonal work abroad instead of registering unemployed at home. With a population of around 3 million people, the country has a large and growing migrant worker population in the UK, Ireland, Sweden and other European countries. The academic community is hoping that reforms will bring about changes in the style of decision-making. So far the concept of 'social dialogue' in Lithuania is often more of a monologue where stakeholders are informed about decisions that have already been made.

English: [http://www.equaltimes.org/news/what-changes-will-lithuanian-education ...](http://www.equaltimes.org/news/what-changes-will-lithuanian-education...)

New portal opened

February 20, 2013

Statistics Lithuania has finalised the implementation of a project 'Official Statistics Services Portal'. In the near future visitors will find on the Portal statistical indicators, including statistical data on employment and LFS, links, references and other information in English.

English: <http://www.osp.stat.gov.lt/en/web/guest/home>

Luxembourg

Reform in company level bargaining coming up

February 11, 2013

A draft legislation reforming company level representation has been sent to parliament and is expected to be voted before the summer. The law sets out a reform of the country's joint committee policy, which has been on the political agenda since the end of the 1990s. Joint committees consist of equal numbers of employer and employee representatives and offer a place for negotiations on the company's HRM and health & safety policies. The law abolishes the joint committees and shifts the responsibility to the staff representation (works councils), who will receive greater legal protection than currently, as well as more dispensation from normal work.

English: [http://www.wort.lu/en/view/luxembourg-labour-law-reform-moves-ahead ...](http://www.wort.lu/en/view/luxembourg-labour-law-reform-moves-ahead...)

Focus on Luxembourg's joint committees:

http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/eiro/country/luxembourg_4.htm

Conflict looms in construction sector

February 7, 2013

In a joint press conference, trade unions LCGB and OGBL have made known they fear stalled talks in the construction sector may escalate into a full blown strike. The core point of contention concerns employer demands of longer working hours, that unions say are inhumane in a heavy line of work like construction. The first round of collective agreement negotiations is due to take place this month, but unions have already warned that they are prepared to resort to industrial action if no agreement is found.

English: [http://www.wort.lu/en/view/construction-industry-talks-hit-a-wall ...](http://www.wort.lu/en/view/construction-industry-talks-hit-a-wall...)

Parliament ups protection for au pairs

February 7, 2013

A new law providing a legal framework for au pair placements will come into effect after it was approved in Parliament. The law sets limits on the amount of work that au pairs can be asked to do, minimum conditions for living circumstances and obligations to help the au pair integrate into the host society. The law also brings the practice of au pairs under the youth ministry, who will have to co-sign the hosting agreements together with the au pair and the host family. Outgoing au pairs will start receiving training from the National Youth Service.

English: [http://www.wort.lu/en/view/law-creates-framework-for-au-pairs-in-luxembourg ...](http://www.wort.lu/en/view/law-creates-framework-for-au-pairs-in-luxembourg...)

Talks start over Cargolux collective agreement

January 31, 2013

Trade unions and Cargolux have started negotiating a new collective agreement after the company unilaterally repudiated the running agreement in October (see newsletter). Trade unions have stated the company first needs to present its new business strategy before negotiations can start over concrete issues.

English: [http://www.wort.lu/en/view/cargolux-collective-agreement-talks-begin ...](http://www.wort.lu/en/view/cargolux-collective-agreement-talks-begin...)

Malta

Collective agreement at Education and Training Corporation

February 25, 2013

A collective agreement was reached between trade union UHM and the Education and Training Corporation. The agreement, which will last until 2016, includes pay hikes across the board each year as well as better leave arrangements and reduced working hours for parents.

English: <http://www.di-ve.com/news/etc-workers-receive-pay-bump>

Netherlands

IT employer wants to cut pay of older employees

February 20, 2013

Union officials have told the media that IT company CapGemini is looking to cut the pay of some older workers by up to 30%. In January 2013 it was admitted that the company had begun talks on cutting the pay of less productive older staff because they 'cost more than they deliver'. This was motivated with the argument that there was a 'mismatch between what people earn and what they can do' and the relationship between older and new workers' pay.

English: [http://www.dutchnews.nl/news/archives/2013/02/capgemini_wants ...](http://www.dutchnews.nl/news/archives/2013/02/capgemini_wants...)

Strike at Sabic hits output

February 5, 2013

Disagreement over payments to staff who might become redundant in the future has led to a strike at the Sabic plant in Geleen (see the January Newsletter). The company has not been able to successfully negotiate the issues with the trade unions, and it also has not been able to draw a real picture of the impact that the strike would have on the production and profits.

English: [http://uk.reuters.com/article/2013/02/02/uk-sabic-europe-strike ...](http://uk.reuters.com/article/2013/02/02/uk-sabic-europe-strike...)

Norway

Guide 'New in Norway'

February 1, 2013

The public agencies have produced a practical guide for immigrants. The booklet was edited by the Norwegian Directorate of Integration and Diversity (IMDi) in cooperation with a large number of official institutes like the Directorate of Labour and Welfare, the Norwegian Directorate for Children, Youth and Family Affairs, the Directorate for the Labour Inspection Authority, the Agency for Public Management and eGovernment, the Directorate for Civil Protection and Emergency Planning. The trade union confederation LO was involved as well.

English: [http://www.nyinorge.no/Documents ...](http://www.nyinorge.no/Documents...)

Poland

Poles rarely strike

February 7, 2013

Research by *The Economist* shows that strikes are relatively rare in Poland. Only Swedes, Dutch and Germans strike less often. Additionally, Poles go against a European trend by striking less often since 2008. Experts say the downward trend in strikes is due to higher unemployment levels, fewer regular contracts and lower trade union density.

English: [http://www.wbj.pl/article-61812-poles-not-big-strikers ...](http://www.wbj.pl/article-61812-poles-not-big-strikers...)

Collective agreement at Swedwood

February 6, 2013

Trade unions Budowlani, Solidarnosc and Dialog have closed their first collective agreement with Swedwood Poland, part of the IKEA Industry Group. The negotiations took place over a period of six months in conjunction with the unions' organising campaigns. The agreement includes clauses on pay, working time, break times, training, health and safety. The collective agreement will cover all 11 Swedwood plants, employing over 9,000 people. The unions worked in cooperation with the Builders and Wood Workers' International and Swedish unions, who put pressure on IKEA's global management to come to a constructive solution.

English: <http://www.bwint.org/default.asp?Index=4675&Language=EN>

Portugal

Socorama closes half of its cinemas, 75 to be laid off

February 14, 2013

Cinema chain Socorama Castello-Lopes has announced it is closing 49 of its 106 cinemas in the country, expecting to lay off 75 staff. Despite attempts by trade unions and the works council, the company has refused to open negotiations on the number of job losses or the height of the redundancy pay. Socorama has made known it will be paying out the legal minimum redundancy pay of one month per year of work. Unions have expressed worries that the cinema giant will not come through on its payments.

English: [http://www.theportugalnews.com/news/cinema-giant-refuses-negotiation ...](http://www.theportugalnews.com/news/cinema-giant-refuses-negotiation...)

Self-employed to wait two years before being eligible for unemployment benefits

February 2, 2013

A law broadening the scope of unemployment benefits to include self-employed workers came into effect the 1st of February. However, as it turns out the people concerned will still have to work for two years (until 2015) to become eligible. The benefit level is set at 65% of the workers' base salary.

English: [http://www.theportugalnews.com/news/self-employed-entitled ...](http://www.theportugalnews.com/news/self-employed-entitled...)

Government asks troika for higher minimum wage in line with metal sector

January 30, 2013

The national government has requested the European Commission, European Central Bank and the International Monetary Fund to be allowed to raise the monthly minimum wage from €485 to €500. The increase has been a core union demand and has recently been put in place as the minimum in the metal sector through a sector-wide collective agreement.

English: <http://www.eucoban.eu/EMF/Reports/Increased-minimum-wages-in-Portugal>

Romania

Strike for redundancy pay

February 27, 2013

100 laid off workers that were made redundant at the former Mechel factories, after the new owners asked for insolvency, started a protest in front of the factory. The former employees said they were entitled to receive three salaries as redundancy pay within 45 days of being laid-off. In total, 700 people were made redundant in January and February.

English: [http://www.romania-insider.com/former-mechel-campia-turzii-employees ...](http://www.romania-insider.com/former-mechel-campia-turzii-employees...)

Serbia

National Council for Economic Recovery calls for re-industrialisation

February 26, 2013

As the country continues to struggle with high unemployment rates, the National Council for Economic Recovery has set reindustrialisation as the country's new goal. According to the council, the attraction of foreign direct investment is the country's best shot at economic recuperation.

English: [http://voiceofserbia.org/content/national-council-serbian-economy-has-future ...](http://voiceofserbia.org/content/national-council-serbian-economy-has-future...)

Slovakia

Mixed picture of employment figures

February 11, 2013

Compared with December 2011, the employment in December 2012 increased relatively most in selected market services by 10.5 %. It was also higher in information and communication, in accommodation, in food and beverage service activities, transportation and storage. In the rest of the surveyed sectors the number of employed persons continued to decrease. It decreased relatively most in construction and in sale and repair of motor vehicles. The average nominal monthly wage increased in most surveyed sectors. It increased relatively most in information and communication, in selected market services equally by 9.5% and in industry by 6%.

English: [http://www.friedlnews.com/article/slovakia-growing-employment ...](http://www.friedlnews.com/article/slovakia-growing-employment...)

Slovenia

Warning strikes in metal

January 28, 2013

Trade union SKEI has organised warning strikes in the electro industry, the metal industry, basic materials and foundries, employing about 14,000 employees in more than 100 companies. The warning strikes took place on 23 and 24 January and were a reaction to low wage offers in the electro and metal industry and employer hesitation to even start collective bargaining in the other branches. SKEI has said that due to the absence of a wage agreement in 2012, they are demanding a 6.5% increase in electro, 7.5% in metal and 9% in basic materials and foundries.

English: [http://www.eucoban.eu/EMF/Reports/Slovenia-Warning-strikes ...](http://www.eucoban.eu/EMF/Reports/Slovenia-Warning-strikes...)

Spain

Three five-day strikes at Iberia

February 18, 2013

Representatives of employees at Iberia have announced they will be holding three five-day strikes in February and March to protest against large scale layoffs that have been announced. As reported in the November-December newsletters, Iberia's mother company, the International Airlines Group, has made known it intends to lay off 4,500 people, amounting to 23% of the staff. After talks with management broke down, unions have now announced strike. The strikes will take place from 18 to 22 February, 4 to 8 and 18 to 22 March. Both cabin crew and ground personnel participated massively in the first of the three five-day strikes, grounding hundreds of flights and affecting over 70,000 travels.

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

[http://uk.reuters.com/article/2013/02/18/uk-iberia-strike ...](http://uk.reuters.com/article/2013/02/18/uk-iberia-strike...)

Seville garbage strike ends

February 8, 2013

A weeklong strike of garbage collectors came to an end as an agreement was reached over pay cuts. The garbage collectors went on strike on 27 January, as the local government announced a 5% pay cut and 2.5 hour extension of working time. The garbage collectors walked off work, pointing at not having received a pay rise since 2008 and therefore already being worse off, leading garbage to pile up across the city. Under the agreement reached, the workers accept a 3.5% wage cut.

English: [http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/world/2013/02/08/spain-garbage ...](http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/world/2013/02/08/spain-garbage...)

Carmakers expand after wage deal

February 4, 2013

Nissan Motor Co. announced the expansion of production and the hiring of an additional 1,000 workers following an agreement by unions. Nissan's management and the trade unions signed a competitiveness plan, which includes a 20% cut in wages for new employees, but guarantees the rights of the current workforce in the event of future layoffs. The decision followed six months of negotiations between union representatives and management. Talks broke off on 17 January before being renewed again. In addition to new hiring by Nissan, the expansion could create an estimated 3,000 jobs at supplier companies and other firms doing business with the plant.

English: [http://elpais.com/elpais/2013/02/04/inenglish ...](http://elpais.com/elpais/2013/02/04/inenglish...)

Sweden

Report on temporary jobs

February 17, 2013

New figures published by the Public Employment Service show that 19,000 temporary jobs disappeared from the labour market in 2012. More than half of those in work aged 15-24 do so under temporary

contracts. The office sees the figures as an indication that unemployment continues to hit young workers the hardest. Youth unemployment is high and also disproportionately higher even prior to the 2008-2010 crisis.

English: <http://www.thelocal.se/46242/20130217/>

Switzerland

Commitment to employment and social rights

February 5, 2013

During a working visit Switzerland has formalized the ratification of the International Convention on employment policy. Also signed was an agreement intended to strengthen collaboration between the country and the ILO on technical cooperation. The agreement is for 12.4 million Swiss francs, allocated to the ILO's Better Work programme for 2013-2016.

English: [http://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/media-centre/press-releases ...](http://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/media-centre/press-releases...)

Turkey

Fight for union recognition

February 28, 2013

In several factories the union recognition is at stake. 150 workers gathered in front of the stores for which DESA produces leather goods, and of the well-known brand Ermenegildo Zegna, supplied by ISMACO. Both companies refuse to recognize Deri-Is, the leather workers' union, and continue to violate workers' fundamental rights. A similar

case related to union recognition has led to protests at Fontana Pietro, an auto supplier plant. Here, the management began a systematic campaign to harass the members of the Birlesik Metal-Is union, including dismissals, and challenged the union's legal recognition in court.

English: [http://www.industriall-union.org/struggle-continues-for-ismaco-and-desa ...](http://www.industriall-union.org/struggle-continues-for-ismaco-and-desa...)
[http://www.industriall-union.org/global-solidarity-ensures-union-at-auto-supplier ...](http://www.industriall-union.org/global-solidarity-ensures-union-at-auto-supplier...)

Unionists arrested

February 19, 2013

On Tuesday 19 February, the police issued arrest warrants for 167 people in 28 of the country's 81 provinces for alleged links with a terrorist organisation. The police raided the headquarters of public sector union KESK in Ankara. Over a hundred members of KESK, including Steering Committee member Akman Simsek, were arrested. The attack carried out by the authorities on the public sector unions is strongly condemned by the international trade union confederation ITUC.

English: <http://www.ituc-csi.org/turkey-more-than-100-trade?lang=en>

United Kingdom

Journalist union concludes deal

February 27, 2013

The NUJ has reached agreement with the Guardian and Observer as compulsory redundancies have been withdrawn. They are now committed to a 12-month process of negotiating the changes necessary to bring about further cost reductions and the digital transition at the papers. Any future reductions in staffing levels will be achieved by negotiation.

English: <http://www.nuj.org.uk/innerPagenuj.html?docid=2827>

Strike at BBC broadcasting

February 19, 2013

The National Union of Journalists (NUJ), Unite and Bectu organised a strike at broadcasting company BBC against compulsory redundancies. The unions are particularly enraged that compulsory redundancies are being executed, while the corporation is advertising vacancies in other fields. The redundancies are part of the former BBC director's programme 'Delivering Quality First', which according to the unions are so far reaching that they endanger the quality of the news. Unions are demanding a six month moratorium on the cuts from the new BBC director. In these six months, the unions want to assess the consequences of the cuts on the quality of the news.

English: <http://www.ifj.org/en/articles/ifj-backs-nuj-strike-over-job-cuts-and-future-of-bbc>
<http://www.nuj.org.uk/innerPagenuj.html?docid=2815>

Agency workers London tube to go on strike *February 1, 2013*

Agency workers on the London Underground, organised in the RMT rail union, have announced they will go on strike to protect their jobs. Until recently, the agency workers were paid less than their directly hired colleagues. As they organised in the RMT and started defending their rights, the workers were granted equal pay. Shortly after, however, London Underground abruptly ended its contract with the agency, placing the agency workers' jobs in jeopardy. RMT is demanding the agency workers are incorporated as direct hires.

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

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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.

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