

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

collective bargaining

Issue 7-8/2013 July-August

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



AMSTERDAM INSTITUTE FOR ADVANCED LABOUR STUDIES
UNIVERSITEIT VAN AMSTERDAM



etui.

contents

European sources

Austerity policy undermines collective bargaining
ETUI maps wage development in polarising EU
EIRO: working hours unchanged but real wages declining across Europe
Dynamics underlying the crisis
No right of association for religious workers
Alliance for apprenticeships

Austria

Improperly engaged worker killed
Metal sector employers refuse joint negotiations
Journalists sign inclusive collective agreement after four years of negotiations

Belgium

Air strike possible
Registration of posted self-employed revised
Dock workers block port after union delegates are denied access
End to status discrimination between blue and white collar workers in sight

Bulgaria

Industrial disputes and job losses in the mining industry
Trade union: general strike if government doesn't provide solution for corruption

Croatia

Sluggish negotiations in health sector
Support for migrant workers
Unions, state, employers start social dialogue over temp agencies

Cyprus

Domestic workers suffer 5% pay cut
Wage cuts in the banking sector
Collective agreement in hotel industry reduces pay
Water sports centres organise strike over tendering law

Czech Republic

CEO's more concerned on lack of skilled labour
Wages stagnate after five years in one job
Job losses in mining

Denmark

Beer production brought to a halt
Working conditions of pea pickers challenged
Outsourcing of cleaning work demarcates end of the fulltime job

Estonia

Norwegian trade union opposes media exit
Unions join forces
Unemployment fee plan not well received

Finland

Plans to hire strike-breakers
Wide variety of labour costs
Minister calls for centralised wage agreement

France

Protection for temporary workers
Divergence on the pension reform
Job losses at Air France

Germany

Lock workers cool off from strikes
Minimum wage in meat-packaging
Amazon workers continue strikes - Clash in US led companies
Trade unions applaud court ruling on temporary workers
Pay deal at Germanwings

Greece

Airport workers call off high season strike
National strike one of the biggest protests
Municipal workers on strike against layoffs

Hungary

Pay deal averts rail workers protest
Postal services dismisses in small groups

Iceland

Statistics on wages

Ireland

Religious orders not committed to pay compensation
Bus drivers reject agreement
ECJ: pension right for former Waterford Crystal workers
Workers at Milne Foods on strike

Italy

Fiat's landmark court ruling
Health care strike against cuts

Cap on top salaries

Ministry agrees for unions to be consulted in re-organisation of work and services

Latvia

Plan to promote re-emigration

Increase of minimum wage

Liechtenstein

Labour market statistics updated

Lithuania

Unions seek to raise wages of police and fire brigade

Luxembourg

Collective agreements at Cargolux and Luxair

Redundancies at Deutsche Bank Group

Wage increase at tobacco manufacturer Heintz van Landewyck

ArcelorMittal enters conciliation process

Last minute deal averts strike in construction sector

Malta

Employers organisation: fight precarious work is trade unions' responsibility

Netherlands

Social partners to tackle rising unemployment

Agreement in the rail & infra branches

Pay offer waste and environment sector rejected by union members

Pay deal at University Medical Centres

Norway

Row at Statoil over outsourcing and investment

Poland

Railway workers strike averted

Plea for higher minimum wage

Trade union platform calls anti-government protest

Wage development in 10 years

Portugal

Standstill as workers strike

Four month' strike threat

Workers' wage cuts among the biggest in Europe

Charity targets unemployed over 40s with online job forum

Romania

Railway workers rally against four-day working week

Life guards protest against delayed pay

Salaries make up half of average household income, social provisions one quarter

Serbia

Employers lobby against new bill on strike

Slovakia

Risk of poverty and working poor
No deal on minimum wage
Pay increases in metal and banking, zero increases in public sector

Slovenia

Police strikes loom as talks fail to yield results

Spain

Commissioner suggests 10% wage cut
Agreement at Galmed (ThyssenKrupp) on termination
Law limiting collective agreement extension comes into force
Swissport reported hiring temp workers to break strike
Dockers launch resistance against liberalisation of port recruitment practices
Ice cream workers on strike
Temporary workers' wages 35% below average; female workers earn even less

Sweden

IF Metall launches own job-placement scheme
Labour law challenged
Bus drivers get higher pay after strike

Switzerland

Post begins negotiations over 2015 collective agreement
Opening hours subject to a referendum
Referendum on the wage gap

Turkey

Textile workers reach agreement
Turkish Mint strike into second month
All out strikes in steel sector ended
Court forbids Turkish Airlines' strike-breaking actions
Workers at AMCOR Flexibles get new collective agreement after strike

United Kingdom

Firefighters back industrial action
Bakery actions
Weakening of the GLA competence wrong signal
Trade union recognition at Avenues Trust
Strike suspended after announcement of drastic restructuring
Set of spring laws change employment landscape

European sources

Austerity policy undermines collective bargaining

August 26, 2013

The reform policy promoted by the European Commission develops into a real threat for the collective bargaining process. In an article for the Global Labour Column Christoph Hermann, senior researcher at the Working Life Research Centre in Vienna, analyses the structural reforms implemented in eleven EU member states affected by the crisis. He argues that the 'structural reforms' adopted in Europe during the crisis have led to a dramatic change in collective bargaining systems, where various measures implemented enable a profound decentralisation, and an erosion of collective bargaining systems.

English: [http://column.global-labour-university.org/2013/08/the-crisis-structural-reform ...](http://column.global-labour-university.org/2013/08/the-crisis-structural-reform...)

ETUI maps wage development in polarising EU

July 29, 2013

The European Trade Union Institute (ETUI) has published a concise, visual map outlining wage developments in Europe between 2000 and 2012. The wage map is an illustration drawn from the earlier report *Benchmarking Working Europe 2013* and focuses on the connection between declines in real wages and austerity. The researchers show that austerity negatively impacts on wages, employment and poverty.

English: [http://www.etui.org/News/ETUI-wage-map-shows-failure-of-EU-s-wage-cutting ...](http://www.etui.org/News/ETUI-wage-map-shows-failure-of-EU-s-wage-cutting...)
<http://www.etui.org/Publications2/Books/Benchmarking-Working-Europe-2013>

EIRO: working hours unchanged but real wages declining across Europe

July 11, 2013

The European industrial relations observatory online (EIRO) has published two reports, one on monitoring developments in pay and the other on collectively agreed working time. The average collectively agreed working time in 2012 was 38.1 hours per week, which is equal to the year before. More changes were found in the pay report. Only Sweden (+1.7%), Austria (+0.8%), Germany (+0.6%), France (+0.4%) and Belgium (+0.4%, including indexation) experienced increases in real wages in 2012. The only sectors where real wages rose in 2012 were metal, banking and local government. EIRO researchers found that indexation mechanisms worked to compensate for rises in prices in 2012 to a much greater extent than in 2011.

English: <http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/eiro/studies/tn1303028s/index.htm>
<http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/eiro/studies/tn1305017s/index.htm>

Dynamics underlying the crisis

July 10, 2013

Political economist Andreas Bieler wrote a column on the dynamics underlying the crisis. He signals that public sectors across the EU have been cut back and working class gains from the post-war period have been seriously undermined. Overcoming austerity will require a strengthening of labour vis-à-vis capital. Considering that austerity is a European-wide phenomenon, pushed by Brussels and individual national governments, it will remain important that trade unions combine resistance to neo-liberal restructuring at the European level with resistance at the national level. To declare solidarity with Greek workers is a good initiative by German and British unions, for example. Nevertheless, the more concrete support is resisting restructuring at home. Any defeat of austerity in one of the EU member states will assist similar struggles elsewhere.

English: [http://column.global-labour-university.org/2013/07/austerity-and-resistance-politics ...](http://column.global-labour-university.org/2013/07/austerity-and-resistance-politics...)

No right of association for religious workers

July 9, 2013

Article 11 (freedom of assembly and association) of the European Convention on Human Rights states: 'Everyone has the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and to freedom of association with others, including the right to form and to join trade unions for the protection of his interests.' One of the longest and hardest disputes in this area is whether religious workers have the right (like any other sort of worker) to organise themselves and demand fairer treatment. In a ECHR verdict that concerns a dispute between Romania's Orthodox Church, to which the great majority of people in that country adhere, and a 35-strong group of priests and other religious employees who tried, in 2008, to form a trade union the ECHR upheld the church's point of view and said it was 'not unreasonable' to have stopped the union from establishing itself. The reasons cited by the court were that the Archbishop had objected to the establishment of the union and the state had no right to meddle in church business because of the constitutionally guaranteed separation of church and state. The Archbishop successfully appealed the initial decision of a lower court to register the priests' trade union, *Pastorul Cel Bun* (the

Good Shepherd) in 2008.

English: http://www.echr.coe.int/Documents/FS_Trade_union_ENG.pdf
<http://hudoc.echr.coe.int/sites/eng...>
<http://www.catholicculture.org/news/headlines/index.cfm?storyid=18419>
<http://ukhumanrightsblog.com/2013/08/01/no-trade-unions-for-clergy-if-the-archbishop-says...>

Alliance for apprenticeships

July 2, 2013

During the opening session of the WorldSkills 2013 contest the European Commission launched the initiative for the European Alliance for Apprenticeships. The Alliance aims to fight youth unemployment by improving the quality and supply of apprenticeships across the EU through a partnership of key employment and education stakeholders. Earlier on, the European social partners BUSINESSEUROPE, UEAPME, CEEP and ETUC (and the liaison committee EUROCADRES/CEC) decided on a Framework of Actions in Member States with four priorities to foster youth employment and smoother transition from education to work.

English: http://ec.europa.eu/education/apprenticeship/index_en.htm
http://www.etuc.org/IMG/pdf/201306_Framework_of_Actions_Youth_Employment.pdf

Austria

Improperly engaged worker killed

August 21, 2013

Foreign workers are often unaware of the safety risks, especially when they are engaged for special skills without having the necessary vocational training. A road worker was killed in an accident on a building site in Semriach near Graz. The 32-year-old worker from Slovakia was driving a street roller when he fell down an embankment. Colleagues who heard his screams ran to his aid but he had been decapitated in the accident. The worker was said to have been working on the building site chopping wood for excavation work.

English: http://austriantimes.at/news/General_News/2013-08-21/49750/Worker_killed_by_street_roller

Metal sector employers refuse joint negotiations

July 23, 2013

During the 2012 autumn bargaining round in the metalworking sector efforts were made by the sector's largest (mandatory) employer organisation and subsector organisation, the Association of Austrian Machinery & Metalware Industries FMFI, to opt out from the communal bargaining process (see the archive www.cbnarchive.eu for more details). For forty years, a (voluntary) collective bargaining community on the employer side has taken part in the sectoral collective bargaining process, consisting of six different employer organisations, which are all subsector units, including the FMFI. In 2012, the specific subsector employer organisations all conducted separate negotiations and concluded six agreements. In the foreground of this year's negotiations the FMFI has refused to come to the joint table. According to the unions the FMFI aim is to destroy the collective bargaining system.

German: <http://www.oegb.at/servlet/ContentServer...>

English: <http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/eiro/studies/tn1301019s/at1301011q.htm>

Journalists sign inclusive collective agreement after four years of negotiations

July 1, 2013

After four years of difficult negotiations, during which employers withdrew from bargaining once and unions organised industrial actions, journalists now have a new collective agreement. The agreement is the first to apply to both print and online editorial staff of daily and weekly newspapers, permanent

freelance staff and to technical-editorial staff equally. The standard working week remains 38 hours, but work on a sixth day will not be counted as overtime and paid at a 50% supplement. In terms of pay the agreement represents a step back for the journalists. Starting pay is down to €2,185 (from €2,541) per month and increases to a 'standard wage level' in over three years. After that, journalists are entitled to pay increases every five years in a procedure that is also more sober than its predecessor. Where previously pay increases were given in full at the first year of the next five years period, the increases are now spread out over several years and the total percentage amounts are slightly lower. Both unions and employers have welcomed the agreement as a major step forward for the sector.

English: <http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/eiro/2013/05/articles/at1305011i.htm>

Belgium

Air strike possible

August 2, 2013

Strike action may go ahead if airport privatisation at the Ostend and Antwerp airports ignores workers' demands. When French company Egis takes over at the beginning of 2014, over 200 airport workers stand to lose out directly. The National Bank estimates that privatisation will have an (in)direct effect on over 2300 workers. When the union members learnt about state plans to privatise regional airports in June 2013, they took initial action to ensure existing standards were maintained. Egis, the only interested party, promised to respect all existing labour and working conditions.

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

Registration of posted self-employed revised

August 1, 2013

Companies with posted workers and self-employed workers from abroad that intent to work temporarily or partially in Belgium must first complete a declaration via the Limosa website. This electronic point of contact simplifies the administrative obligations. However, the European Court of Justice had serious doubts about this obligation for self-employed. Following the judgment of the ECJ of 19 December 2012 (Case C-577/10), the federal government has revised the Limosa-obligation to report a posting as a self-employed person. Starting July 1, 2013, the obligation is fully applicable again in a new form. The list of information required from posted self-employed workers and employed workers has been condensed.

English: http://www.belgium.be/en/news/2013/news_changes_to_the_limosa_declaration...
https://www.socialsecurity.be/foreign/en/employer_limosa/home.html

Dock workers block port after union delegates are denied access

July 8, 2013

Dock workers in the port of Antwerp blocked the Katoen Natie terminal for six days, after union delegates performing work place inspections were denied access. The delegates were attempting to enter a warehouse of transshipment and goods storage company Logisport, where they expected illegally hired agency workers being employed. The unions were there to investigate a suspected breach of the Law on Docker Labour, which prohibits the hiring of non-registered dock workers. The conflict was resolved after six days, when the port's employers' consortium, the Katoen Natie Group agreed to refer the case to the Social Inspection Services and to refrain from any measures against the personnel that participated in the strike.

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

End to status discrimination between blue and white collar workers in sight

July 11, 2013

After a government compromise in June, the constitutional Court has now ruled that the status of blue and white collar needs to be harmonised, ending a century of discrimination. The harmonisation implies that blue collar workers' notice periods will be extended, trial periods abolished and all days of sickness will be paid, from the first day onwards. The labour council still needs to rule on the calculation of annual leave, wage and salary payments, as well as short term work, which were all different for blue collar from white collar workers.

English: [http://www.industrial-union.org/belgium-ends-historic-discrimination ...](http://www.industrial-union.org/belgium-ends-historic-discrimination...)

Bulgaria

Industrial disputes and job losses in the mining industry

August 6, 2013

Miners will go out on strike after a tragic death of four of their co-workers. Four workers at the Oranovo coal mines perished after a deadly collapse that is believed to have been caused by poor maintenance of the facility. Trade union Podkrepa plans to block highways and roads. Consultations will be launched to decide on the timing of the rallies, which might be called after the end of Parliament's recess, September 4. Coal producing companies work under net losses, which affects both technologies used and workers' safety. According to Podkrepa, some of the demands of miners might require new legislation to better regulate the business, because companies are trying to cut their spending. During an extraordinary meeting with the economy and energy ministry, earlier this summer, the trade unions expressed their fear that 3,500 jobs might get lost in the mining industry. A spokesperson of Podkrepa said that the output of the Maritsa Iztok Mines by July 2014 was expected to register a nearly two-fold decrease to the level of 17 M tones. In Western Bulgaria, all mines except a part of the Pernik Mines and the open pit mine in Bobov Dol will be closed. This will lead to the loss of over 3500 jobs.

English: http://www.novinite.com/view_news.php?id=152464
http://www.novinite.com/view_news.php?id=152631

Trade union: general strike if government doesn't provide solution for corruption

July 7, 2013

One of the biggest trade unions, Podkrepa, has called on the government to convene a grand national assembly to provide solutions for the corruption problems that have called protesters to the streets for nearly a month now. The trade union said that if the national assembly fails to address the concerns of the people, the union will stage a general strike to defend the interests of workers.

English: http://www.novinite.com/view_news.php?id=151825

Croatia

Sluggish negotiations in health sector

August 7, 2013

Trade unions and the ministry of health are making little progress in collective agreement negotiations that are supposed to be finished by the end of August. Health unions coming out of a new bargaining round report no concrete points were yet discussed, as the ministry has not presented any updated proposals. The unions said they would consider industrial action if talks fail to yield a collective agreement.

English: [http://dalje.com/en-croatia/no-progress-on-collective-agreement-negotiations ...](http://dalje.com/en-croatia/no-progress-on-collective-agreement-negotiations...)

Support for migrant workers

July 15, 2013

Although the entrance for migrant labour is still restricted the German trade union confederation DGB has announced to take the interests for Croatian workers serious. The last two EU enlargement rounds in 2004 and 2007 already showed that employees from eastern European countries entered the labour market despite restrictions. Many of them became victims of shady job agents or irresponsible employers. Butchers and building workers, for example, had to take service contracts or work as sham independent contractors for starvation wages. Therefore, the project 'Fair mobility' that supports employees from the new EU member states in asserting their rights has been extended to help employees from Western Balkan countries.

English: [http://www.dw.de/german-trade-unions-set-to-help-croatian-workers ...](http://www.dw.de/german-trade-unions-set-to-help-croatian-workers...)
<http://www.faire-mobilitaet.de/en/ueber-uns>

Unions, state, employers start social dialogue over temp agencies

July 2, 2013

On the occasion of the entry into the European Union, trade unions, employers and government organised a round table on the future of temp agency work. The tripartite meeting was a first step towards a social dialogue in the sector and served primarily for the identification of the priorities of each of the partners.

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

Cyprus

Domestic workers suffer 5% pay cut

August 10, 2013

At the recommendation of the ministerial committee for the employment of third country nationals, the government has announced it will cut the fixed salary of foreign domestic workers by 5%, reducing gross salaries from €484 to €460. The cut reduces net salaries from €326 to €314. The government also announced it will terminate the indexation of the cost of living allowance for domestic workers.

English: [http://cyprus-mail.com/2013/08/10/pitifully-paid-domestic-workers-have-wages-cut ...](http://cyprus-mail.com/2013/08/10/pitifully-paid-domestic-workers-have-wages-cut...)
Focus on wage developments in Cyprus: [http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/eiro/country/cyprus ...](http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/eiro/country/cyprus...)

Wage cuts in the banking sector

August 1, 2013

Bank employees' trade union ETYK endorsed a proposal for wage cuts for all workers except those from the Bank of Cyprus (BoC). The proposal for salary reductions and for the creation of a solidarity fund was upheld by 78% of union members who took a vote at general meetings across the island. The proposal includes monthly cuts ranging from 5% for employees on salaries up to €2,000 to 30% for salaries above €10,000. BoC staff cuts had already been agreed previously. Late July the union called off a strike after BoC agreed to a new deadline for a proposed voluntary redundancy plan.

English: <http://cyprus-mail.com/tag/etyk/>

Collective agreement in hotel industry reduces pay

July 22, 2013

The 16,000 employees working in the hotel industry have a new collective agreement after the ministry of labour and social insurance presented a mediation proposal for the sector. The crisis-time collective agreement, which will be valid until the end of 2015, freezes pay and cost of living allowances at the current level and aims for labour cost reductions. Rates of pay on public holidays will be reduced to double, instead of the current triple rate; the Sunday rate will remain unchanged at 1.5 but

workers will be guaranteed two Sundays per month off. Easter bonuses are reduced from 30% to 7.5% and employer contributions to provident funds from 10% to 3%. Critics signal that 4,000 immigrants working in the sector will not be covered by the agreement.

English: [http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/eiro/2013/06/articles ...](http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/eiro/2013/06/articles...)

Water sports centres organise strike over tendering law

July 10, 2013

Water sports operators have organised a 48 hour strike along the Larnaca-Limassol motorway. The operators are protesting against a government plan to make all municipalities set up public bidding procedures for licenses of water sports centres. The established water sports operators fear many may lose their jobs as they are outbid.

English: <http://cyprus-mail.com/2013/07/10/water-sports-operators-begin-48-hour-strike/>

Czech Republic

CEO's more concerned on lack of skilled labour

August 13, 2013

A PricewaterhouseCoopers survey among company leaders reports worries on labour shortages in the next three to five years, although the unemployment rate is expected to grow again after a slight seasonal decrease. Companies will start creating job positions no sooner than in 2014. Many employees are nowadays afraid to leave their positions even if they get an advantageous offer. However, according to the CEO's, there are many professions on the market where there are not enough candidates.

English: <http://www.pwc.com/cz/en/ceo-survey/index.jhtml>

Wages stagnate after five years in one job

July 18, 2013

Research by Platy.cz, an online service to compare wages, shows that workers' wages grow in the first five years they hold a position, to stagnate for the next four and even drop after that. The results are influenced by the fact that many people are promoted to a higher position within five years, making a long stay in a single position a sign of lack of career advancement. The researchers report there are big differences between educational groups; workers without a secondary education degree see their wages rising for up to ten years, but earn considerable lower wages on average.

English: [http://praguemonitor.com/2013/07/18/wages-%C4%8Dr-stop-growing-after-five ...](http://praguemonitor.com/2013/07/18/wages-%C4%8Dr-stop-growing-after-five...)

Job losses in mining

July 16, 2013

The mining company OKD has announced a massive lay-off in the course of this summer. The company has to let go 250 technical support and administrative workers due to the adverse economic situation. The company's staff will be down to 2,700 by September 2013, ca. one-third less compared to the end of 2012. So far the company failed to find a buyer of the Dul Paskov mine in northern Moravia and it is considering a closure of that mine. In the negotiations between the management and the trade unions the unions presented a draft of the collective agreement in relation to the bad economic situation.

English: <http://praguemonitor.com/2013/07/16/nwr-fails-find-buyer-d%C5%AFl-paskov>
[http://www.okd.cz/en/media/press-releases/okd-continues-its-cost-cutting-actions ...](http://www.okd.cz/en/media/press-releases/okd-continues-its-cost-cutting-actions...)

Denmark

Beer production brought to a halt

August 22, 2013

Workers at the Fredericia brewery walked out over employment of a non-union member, bringing production to a halt. A total of 130 workers walked out of the plant because a new recruit was hired who was not a member of the brewers' union. In the meantime, the labour court has intervened to order striking workers at the plant to be fined for every hour they are on strike – but there's still no sign of production starting up any time soon.

English: <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/aug/22/carlsberg-brewery-strike-denmark>

Working conditions of pea pickers challenged

July 25, 2013

According to trade union 3F the country's largest pea producer, Peter Skov, is underpaying its employees, taking their passports and trapping them in employment. Two Portuguese pea pickers complained that Peter Skov did not ensure a promised minimum 30-hour working week to ensure that the pea pickers earned a decent minimum wage. The pay slips showed that they earned around 140 kroner (€18.8) per day over 19 days in June and July picking peas in Refsvindinge in southern Funen. After accommodation and transport costs were deducted, the two were left with about 70 kroner (€9.4) per day. 3F intends to bring the case to the agricultural employer's association, GLS-A, which has a collective bargaining agreement in place with 3F.

English: <http://cphpost.dk/national/union-and-pea-pickers-clash-over-working-conditions>

Outsourcing of cleaning work demarcates end of the fulltime job

July 2, 2013

Research by public services union FOA shows that cleaners, who perform work that has been outsourced to cleaning companies, are no longer able to attain one fulltime job. In response, some cleaners have seen their hours drastically reduced, whereas others have been forced to work two jobs. FOA reports that cleaners taking on two jobs regularly work from six in the morning to seven in the evening.

English: <http://www.epsu.org/a/9609>

Estonia

Norwegian trade union opposes media exit

August 16, 2013

The trade union of the Norwegian media group Schibsted has issued a statement in which it opposes the group's planned selling of Eesti Meedia. The union considers it regrettable that Schibsted has decided to leave the region, adding that the business model of Schibsted was balanced between its media business and web-based trading portals. Instead of pulling out, Schibsted should invest in the Baltic market and focus on transforming media companies and developing digital media of its newspapers, especially in quality press.

English: [http://balticbusinessnews.com/article/2013/8/16/norwegian-trade-union-opposes ...](http://balticbusinessnews.com/article/2013/8/16/norwegian-trade-union-opposes-...)

Unions join forces

August 8, 2013

The Estonian Trade Unions' Confederation (ETUC) has begun talks with the Finnish Trade Union for

Construction Workers to create a joint organisation. The aim is to provide Estonian construction workers similar help as the Finns offer. Though the discussion is in the initial stage, the confederation has already started to look for contacts that would help create a trade union with considerable influence and a good services package. Several major branches of labour are not covered by trade unions in Estonia, notably the banking and construction sectors.

English: <http://www.baltictimes.com/news/articles/33266/>

Unemployment fee plan not well received

July 30, 2013

A plan to revise the unemployment insurance fee regulation has neither received the backup of the employers, nor the support of the trade unions. Trade unions and employers agree more with each other than with the state, said a member of the Employers' Confederation, commenting the proposal to let MPs decide the level of next year's unemployment insurance fee. The debate concerns the fate of hundreds of millions of euros because all salaried workers pay 2% of their gross wages to the unemployment insurance fund, plus 1% paid by employers.

English: [http://balticbusinessnews.com/article/2013/7/30/employers-trade-unions-suspicious ...](http://balticbusinessnews.com/article/2013/7/30/employers-trade-unions-suspicious...)

Finland

Plans to hire strike-breakers

August 22, 2013

The airline Finnair is planning to hire 200 cabin crew members from a temporary work agency in Spain. According to the company CEO, Pekka Vauramo, they could be used 'possibly to replace the company staff in special situations'. The trade unions suspect that the company contemplates recruiting strike-breakers in advance of negotiations and that this means in practice that there is a willingness to use foreign staff as strike-breakers if the need arises. The collective agreement concerning Finnair cabin crew is due to end this October and a new round of bargaining is expected.

English: [http://www.jokinen.kaapeli.fi/index.php/trade-union-news-from-finland/173 ...](http://www.jokinen.kaapeli.fi/index.php/trade-union-news-from-finland/173...)

Wide variety of labour costs

July 23, 2013

A list with labour costs, published recently by the economics weekly Talouselämä (issue 20/2013), comprises figures from the hundred largest employers (not including public sector employers). Number one on the list, the minerals and metals processing company Outotec, last year paid out €81,373 per employee in direct and indirect labour costs. The other end of the list comprises retailers and companies that offer property maintenance services, such as cleaning. The lowest labour costs per employee were for the property services companies Contineo (€24,823) and Solemo (€25,612). Also the globally operating service providers ISS and Sodexo and the German retailer Lidl's Finnish subsidiary Lidl Suomi are to be found among the bottom-10 companies with their less than €30,000 per employee labour costs.

English: [http://www.jokinen.kaapeli.fi/index.php/trade-union-news-from-finland/161 ...](http://www.jokinen.kaapeli.fi/index.php/trade-union-news-from-finland/161...)

Minister calls for centralised wage agreement

July 11, 2013

Speaking about the challenges posed by the economic crisis, the minister of finance has called on the social partners to reach a centralised wage agreement. According to the minister, a moderate yet comprehensive wage agreement would be both good for purchasing power and for economic predictability.

English: [http://www.helsinkitimes.fi/finland/finland-news/politics/6944-urpilainen-hopes ...](http://www.helsinkitimes.fi/finland/finland-news/politics/6944-urpilainen-hopes...)

France

Protection for temporary workers

August 29, 2013

Recent rulings from the Court of Cassation clarify the rules that grant fixed-term contract workers the entitled right to severance payment once their contract has ended. The bonus (indemnité de précarité) applies to all temporary workers, including those on fixed-term contracts, known as 'contrat de travail à durée déterminée' (CDD). French courts have consistently supported the payment of such a premium due to the insecure nature of such contracts.

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

Divergence on the pension reform

August 28, 2013

The government has planned to come to a deal with the social partners to overhaul the pension system through a lengthening of people's working lives. Main scenario is to make workers pay pension contributions for a period of up to 44 years starting in 2020, government sources say. As things stand, a pay-in period of 41.5 years is to be made mandatory for all by 2020, whereas today people retire after around 40.5 years in work. Notwithstanding this rapprochement the CGT, together with FO and others, continues with the preparation for a general mobilisation on 10 September. According to the CGT the prime minister dismissed the CGT's proposals for a radical reform with short-term and long-term.

English: [http://www.english.rfi.fr/economy/20130828-unions-pledge-fight ...](http://www.english.rfi.fr/economy/20130828-unions-pledge-fight...)

[http://www.independent.ie/business/french-government-nears-deal-with-unions ...](http://www.independent.ie/business/french-government-nears-deal-with-unions...)

French: [http://www.liberation.fr/economie/2013/08/26/une-journee-de-concertation ...](http://www.liberation.fr/economie/2013/08/26/une-journee-de-concertation...)

Job losses at Air France

July 31, 2013

Trade unions officers have made public that Air France plans to cut as many as 3,000 jobs. Air France-KLM already renegotiated pay and conditions with airline staff, cutting 5,122 jobs and restructuring its network to cope with soaring fuel costs, a worsening cargo business and tough competition from Gulf and low-cost carriers. But, a new cost-cutting plan is expected to be outlined in broad terms to the trade unions at a meeting in August, followed by a detailed briefing on October 4. The measures would be implemented in early 2014.

English: [http://www.upi.com/Business_News/2013/07/31/Air-France-to-cut-up-to-3000-jobs ...](http://www.upi.com/Business_News/2013/07/31/Air-France-to-cut-up-to-3000-jobs...)

[http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/07/30/us-airfrance-jobs ...](http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/07/30/us-airfrance-jobs...)

French: [http://www.liberation.fr/economie/2013/07/31/air-france-supprime-encore ...](http://www.liberation.fr/economie/2013/07/31/air-france-supprime-encore...)

Germany

Lock workers cool off from strikes

August 27, 2013

Lock workers throughout the western parts of the country are protesting against an upcoming reform of publicly managed water ways and canal systems, in which a quarter of the staff is expected to be laid off. The lock workers walked off the job, bringing shipping to a standstill. Shipping companies have condemned both the reform plan and the strike. Strikes in the eastern states have been held off due to recovery works from the recent floods. The latest news is that the workers have decided to take a pause to give the country's Transport and Interior ministers a chance to rethink and offer to negotiate a wage

and security pact for 12,500-person workforce.

English: [http://www.platts.com/latest-news/shipping/bonn/german-lock-workers-to-return ...](http://www.platts.com/latest-news/shipping/bonn/german-lock-workers-to-return-...)
[http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/08/05/us-germany-canal-shipping ...](http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/08/05/us-germany-canal-shipping-...)
[http://www.platts.com/latest-news/shipping/bonn/german-lock-strikes-pile-up-waiting-lines ...](http://www.platts.com/latest-news/shipping/bonn/german-lock-strikes-pile-up-waiting-lines-...)
[http://www.platts.com/latest-news/shipping/bonn/lock-worker-strikes-on-german-river-canal ...](http://www.platts.com/latest-news/shipping/bonn/lock-worker-strikes-on-german-river-canal-...)

Minimum wage in meat-packaging

August 20, 2013

Following a campaign of the food workers union NGG and growing media exposure of abusive practices the governments of 4 cities in the State of Lower Saxony signed an agreement with meat-packing companies and their labour contractors establishing a minimum hourly wage of €8.50. NGG describes the local governments' actions as a step in the right direction, but insists that transport, tools, and clothing must be paid for by employers - the deal still allows deductions - and will continue the struggle against abusive practices.

English: <http://cms.iuf.org/?q=node/2700>

Amazon workers continue strikes - Clash in US led companies

August 7, 2013

The series of strikes at mail order company Amazon, reported in the June newsletter, continue as workers fight for collective bargaining rights. Amazon currently employs around 9000 workers in Germany, most of which have short term contracts or work via temporary work agencies. The company has refused to enter collective bargaining negotiations with its employees or to classify them as retail employees, which would bring the workers under the sector wide collective agreement applied by the other mail order companies. With the dispute on wages at Amazon as a striking example the NY Times reports on the antipathy to organised labour among imported American-style business practices. Amazon has been criticised for its working conditions in the United States - but not nearly to the same extent as in Europe. Amazon's tactics, along with its refusal to even enter into talks with the unions, created an image of being against its own workforce that could hurt it in the long run.

English: [http://www.uniglobalunion.org/Apps/uni.nsf ...](http://www.uniglobalunion.org/Apps/uni.nsf-...)
[http://www.nytimes.com/2013/08/05/business/workers-of-amazon-divergent ...](http://www.nytimes.com/2013/08/05/business/workers-of-amazon-divergent-...)

Trade unions applaud court ruling on temporary workers

July 17, 2013

The federal labour court has ruled that it is illegal for companies to hire temporary workers for an indeterminate period of time. Trade unions applauded the ruling, saying the practice to hire cheap temporary workers instead of permanent staff while not setting an end date for the employment contract goes against the spirit of labour law. The unions stated that the court ruling will close a loophole and will make it more difficult to exploit the replacement of permanent staff by temporary workers.

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

Pay deal at Germanwings

July 6, 2013

A pay deal reached between trade union UFO and budget carrier Germanwings has avoided the crippling strikes suffered by mother company Lufthansa. After intensive, marathon negotiations the agreement includes a 5.9% wage increase over two years, a one-off payment of €1,500 and the right to an unlimited contract after successfully completing the probation period.

English: [http://uk.reuters.com/article/2013/07/06/uk-germanwings ...](http://uk.reuters.com/article/2013/07/06/uk-germanwings-...)

.....

Greece

Airport workers call off high season strike

August 5, 2013

Workers at Athens International Airport have suspended strikes scheduled to take place from 9 to 11 August after government officials agreed to resume negotiations. The workers object to an impending mobility scheme, in which 40,000 public sector workers could be involuntary transferred to other positions or fired if no alternative position is found for them within eight months. At the government's willingness to negotiate, the unions have called of the work stoppage.

English: <http://greece.greekreporter.com/2013/08/05/athens-airport-workers-call-off-strike/>

National strike one of the biggest protests

August 2, 2013

A national strike to try to head off thousands more public sector lay-offs, new taxes on workers, wage cuts and removal of employment protections was called for 16 July. The strike was called by the confederation GSEE and civil service union grouping ADEDY. Over 30,000 demonstrators - including police and teachers targeted in the layoff scheme - gathered in the central square before parliament beating drums and blowing whistles in one of the biggest anti-austerity protests in 2013. The strike actions continued during the following weeks with marches and protests in the streets of Athens.

English: <http://www.ituc-csi.org/national-strike-in-greece-as?lang=en>

[http://uk.reuters.com/article/2013/07/16/uk-greece-strike ...](http://uk.reuters.com/article/2013/07/16/uk-greece-strike...)

<http://greece.greekreporter.com/2013/08/01/public-workers-union-on-strike-today/>

Municipal workers on strike against layoffs

July 9, 2013

Municipal workers went on strike in anticipation of massive layoffs in the public sector. The government has been charged by the Troika to reduce its civil service by 15,000 workers by the end of the year. Having missed the first deadline to transfer 12,500 workers within the public sector on a voluntary basis, the government announced it will take the next three months to hand eight month suspensions with reduced pay to 4,200 employees, including teachers. The municipal workers are taking to the streets in rolling strikes and have attempted called for the occupation of municipal buildings.

English: <http://www.timesunion.com/news/world/article/Greek-municipal-workers-strike...>

Hungary

Pay deal averts rail workers protest

August 22, 2013

Railway workers had announced large scale protest on 23 August after wage talks failed. The trade unions representing railway workers have decided to call off the planned demonstration after a deal reached on to hike wages by 2.4%. Employees of the state-run MAV railway will get the hike dated back to 1 July with their September pay. MAV also promised to delay mass lay-offs at least until 30 June 2014.

English: <http://www.politics.hu/20130822/wage-deal-averts-rail-worker-protest...>

Postal services dismisses in small groups

July 10, 2013

The public postal service, Magyar Posta, is reported in the media to have been letting go of up to 250

workers in small groups of under 30 people at a time. The groups are said to be released in mutual agreements and in small waves in order to avoid mass layoffs. Media speculate the 500 of the 33,000 staff will be let go in this manner.

English: <http://www.budapesttimes.hu/2013/07/10/letters-of-dismissal-for-250-postal-staff/>
http://hate.hu/editor_article.php ...

Iceland

Statistics on wages

July 24, 2013

The statistical office came up with new figures on real wages and the monthly wage index. The wage index in June 2013 was 0.3% higher than in the previous month. In the last twelve months the monthly wage index has risen by 5.7%. However, the real wage index in June 2013 ended 0.2% lower than in the previous month. In the last twelve months the real wage index has increased by 2.3%.

English: <http://www.statice.is/Pages/444?NewsID=9502>

Ireland

Religious orders not committed to pay compensation

August 27, 2013

The religious orders that were called to pay compensation to survivors of the so-called Magdalene laundries (see our Newsletter of June 2013) have refused to contribute to the State's redress scheme. The four religious orders which operated the laundries proclaimed full cooperation with all the recommendations contained in Mr Justice John Quirke's report into a compensation scheme. However, all the orders have refused to contribute to the fund that could amount to €58 million.

English: <http://www.irishexaminer.com/ireland/magdalene-survivors-plan-protest ...>

Bus drivers reject agreement

August 5, 2013

Bus drivers rejected the labour court recommendations agreed with trade unions and Dublin Bus for an €11.7 million cost-cutting plan and started an all-out strike protesting against the implementation of the package. Having little hope of reaching an agreement, Dublin Bus management said it would no longer wait for an agreement and started implementing the labour court recommendation, including longer working hours and cuts in annual leave of clerical workers and management unilaterally. Bus services were resumed, after Dublin Bus suspended the implementation of the cost-cutting measures in favour of further talks mediated by the labour court. The parties then agreed on a temporary package of cuts on overtime pay and allowances that would be implemented for 19 months, after which working conditions would go back to normal. Some 72% of SIPTU members and 67% of NBRU members have rejected the recommendation; six other grades of workers have yet to be balloted.

English: <http://www.rte.ie/news/2013/0816/468628-dublin-bus-ballot-result/>
<http://www.independent.ie/irish-news/bus-drivers-win-no-pay-cuts-deal ...>
<http://www.irishtimes.com/news/ireland/irish-news/full-dublin-bus-service-from-tomorrow ...>

ECJ: pension right for former Waterford Crystal workers

August 5, 2013

The European Court of Justice has ruled that member states have an obligation to protect workers' pensions in double insolvency cases. The case was brought by former employees of glassware company Waterford Crystal, which became insolvent in 2009 and whose pension scheme became insolvent two

months later, leaving workers with only 18% or 28% of their entitlements. The European Court of Justice ruled that the Irish state failed its obligation under the EU Insolvency Directive (2008/94/EC) to 'ensure that necessary measures are taken to protect the pension-related interests of employees and of former employees, at the date of their employers' insolvency'. The Irish High Court will now make a decision on the exact amount the state is to pay the 1,700 former Waterford Crystal employees, which in accordance with the ECJ ruling will not be lower than 49% of entitlement and will probably amount to at least 300 million euro.

English: [http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/eiro/2013/07/articles ...](http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/eiro/2013/07/articles...)

Workers at Milne Foods on strike

July 11, 2013

Workers of Milne Foods in Birr, County Offaly, have gone on strike over pay and working conditions. The workers have previously sought constructive negotiations and even took the case to the labour court. While the labour court recommended Milne Foods to revise its pay and working conditions policies, nothing has been done. A trade union representative stated they felt all other options had been exhausted and explained that strike action was the only recourse left to the workers.

English: [http://www.siptu.ie/media/pressreleases2013/mainnews/fullstory ...](http://www.siptu.ie/media/pressreleases2013/mainnews/fullstory...)

Italy

Fiat's landmark court ruling

August 26, 2013

FIOM, the metalworkers' trade-union of the confederation CGIL, won a July ruling before the Constitutional Court after having petitioned against being excluded from the company union representation bodies (RSAs) at Fiat's plants for not having signed the company's labour agreements. The recent landmark ruling ordered the carmaker to expand its worker representation base to include the unions that refused to sign the company's labour agreement. The Constitutional Court said in a statement that it considered illegitimate the part of the article that said unions who did not sign the collective agreements applied at a company's plant could be excluded from RSAs, even if they had taken part in the negotiations. First talks after the ruling between the management and FIOM give the impression that Fiat doesn't intend to apply the Constitutional Court sentence.

English: [http://www.lagazzettadelmezzogiorno.it/english/fiat-won-t-apply-court-ruling ...](http://www.lagazzettadelmezzogiorno.it/english/fiat-won-t-apply-court-ruling...)
<http://english.cntv.cn/20130726/100364.shtml>
[http://www.nbcnews.com/id/52432626/ns/business-autos/t/fiat-halts-new-investments ...](http://www.nbcnews.com/id/52432626/ns/business-autos/t/fiat-halts-new-investments...)

Italian: <http://www.eguaglianzaeliberta.it/articolo.asp?id=1644>
[http://www.repubblica.it/economia/finanza/2013/07/23 ...](http://www.repubblica.it/economia/finanza/2013/07/23...)
[http://www.repubblica.it/economia/2013/08/02/news/fiat_linea_dura_con_la_fiom ...](http://www.repubblica.it/economia/2013/08/02/news/fiat_linea_dura_con_la_fiom...)
Spanish: <http://lopezbullablogspot.nl/2013/08/centro-de-trabajo-y-sindicato-fiat.html>

Health care strike against cuts

July 22, 2013

Medical professionals organised a nation-wide strike against cuts in the health care sector, which forced hospitals to cancel 500,000 check-ups and 30,000 non-emergency procedures. The doctors are protesting against the enormous reduction in the health care budget, which they claim undermines the quality of services as well as working conditions. Currently, only 10 new doctors are hired for every 100 that retire and hospitals are cutting back on the costs of equipment and maintenance to square budgets.

English: <http://www.thelocal.it/20130722/30000-operations-scrapped-as-Italian-doctors-strike>

Italian: [http://www.fpcgil.it/flex ...](http://www.fpcgil.it/flex...)

Cap on top salaries

July 13, 2013

The banking trade union FIBA has calculated that in 2012 directors and CEOs of the major Italian banking and insurance groups have earned, on average, salaries about 42 times higher than the average wage prescribed in the respective national collective bargaining agreement, with peaks of 108 times. Together with the confederation CISL the trade union wants to introduce clear and enforceable rules. FIBA proposes a cap on fixed remuneration of €294,000 (equal to that of public managers) and a 1:1 ratio for the variable salary (as per EU directives) and therefore, the reduction of the average contractual relationship between figure and maximum pay to 1:20.

English: <http://sindacale.wordpress.com/2013/07/>

Ministry agrees for unions to be consulted in re-organisation of work and services

July 11, 2013

Public service federations FP-CGIL, CISL-FP, UIL-Fp and UIL-Pa have concluded an agreement with the Ministry of Economy and Finance. The agreement commits both parties to cooperate in the reorganisation of the civil service in order to cut expenditure where possible. Important for the trade unions is that the agreement specifically includes their consultation in all reorganisations.

English: <http://epsu.org/a/9647>

Latvia

Plan to promote re-emigration

August 12, 2013

The government has formulated an 8-point plan to stimulate re-emigration. The plan stipulates setting up an institution with representations in all regions to provide information and consultation on various matters connected with moving to or residing in Latvia, ensuring the availability of labour market information and attracting a highly qualified labour force. According to a survey 72% of the population doubts that the re-emigration plan will be successful.

English: <http://www.baltictimes.com/news/articles/33249/>
<http://newswave.eu/72-of-latvian-residents-doubt-that-re-emigration-plan-will-be-successful/>

Increase of minimum wage

July 2, 2013

Starting from 1 January 2014, the minimum wage will be LVL 225 (or €320) a month; it currently stands at LVL 200. The ministry of Welfare had prepared three suggestions: raising the minimum wage to LVL 210, to LVL 220 or to LVL 225: The government approved the highest increase and presented this as a proof that it is addressing social issues seriously. However, the increase will have a limited impact as the wage still remains low. Besides, several methods are used to pay less than the minimal wage, for example, mark the workers as half-time hires, even though they work full-time.

English: <http://www.bbn.ee/Default.aspx?Publication...>

Liechtenstein

Labour market statistics updated

August 2, 2013

The unemployment level stays stable and very low. In absolute figures the unemployment among youngsters is also low, though the percentage has increased. On the other hand the labour demand, in

terms of job vacancies decreased. In the recent past some companies applied for the scheme of shorter working hours, motivated by economic reasons. This has almost vanished in the July figures.

German: <http://www.amsfl.li/ams/presse-statistik/index ...>

Lithuania

Unions seek to raise wages of police and fire brigade

July 12, 2013

Government officials, statutory officers and trade unions are in negotiations over raising the wages for police and fire-and-rescue officers and border guards. A spokesperson confirmed the government is considering allocating 100 million litas (28.9 million euro) to increase salaries. The president of the association of national trade unions of officers welcomes the concession, explaining this amount would allow monthly salaries to increase by 150 litas (€43.15).

English: <http://www.lithuaniantribune.com/44573/100-million-litas-may-be-allocated-to-raise ...>

Luxembourg

Collective agreements at Cargolux and Luxair

August 8, 2013

Overcoming a chaotic end-stage of bargaining, LCGB and OGBL have signed collective agreements with both Cargolux and Luxair, with new negotiations already looming. Earlier, LCGB reached a partial agreement with Cargolux, while OGBL refused to back any incomplete agreement, citing lack of trust in the word of Cargolux management. The Cargolux agreement includes a renewal until 31 December 2014 of the collective agreement that was repudiated by Cargolux in October 2012 (see October newsletter). The agreement also establishes a working group for each Cargolux service to assess possible gains in productivity. Both unions will be members of all working groups and any proposals coming out of one of the groups will have to be approved by the bargaining committee that will amend the collective agreement when approving a measure. Meanwhile, OGBL and LCGB have signed an agreement with Luxair extending the current collective agreement until 30 September 2013 and agreeing to repudiate it by then in favour of a new agreement. In preparation, working groups will be established to identify possible efficiency gains for the company.

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

<http://www.wort.lu/en/view/trust-issues-halt-cargolux-collective-agreement ...>

<http://www.wort.lu/en/view/luxair-and-unions-concur-on-collective-working-agreement ...>

Redundancies at Deutsche Bank Group

August 1, 2013

Deutsche Bank Group has signed a social plan with trade unions OGBL, ALEBA, and LCGB for the 175 workers it intends to layoff in a cost-cutting measure. The majority of the cuts will occur at Deutsche Postbank International SA (104); the rest of the job losses will come from Deutsche Bank Luxembourg (33), Sal. Oppenheim Luxembourg (26) and DWS Investment SA (12). DBG agreed to a social plan, which in addition to statutory redundancy payments includes voluntary severance, outplacement measures and training, social assistance and the possibility of extended notice for those who do not find a job after the legal notice.

English: <http://www.wort.lu/en/view/cargolux-and-unions-sign-collective-agreement ...>

<http://www.wort.lu/en/view/deutsche-bank-group-in-luxembourg-signs-social-plan ...>

<http://www.chronicle.lu/categoriesworkingjobs/item/4131-deutsche-bank-to-let-go-25-of-staff>

French: <http://www.paperjam.lu/article/fr/deutsche-bank-plan-social-pour-175-personnes>

Wage increase at tobacco manufacturer Heintz van Landewyck

July 23, 2013

Trade unions LCGB and OGBL have negotiated a collective agreement with tobacco manufacturer Heinz van Landewyck. Workers are to get a 1.5% pay increase from 1 September 2013 onwards and a one-off €300 bonus in 2014. The agreement, which will be valid for two years, also includes a raise in year-end bonuses for employees over fifty.

English: <http://www.wort.lu/en/view/wage-increases-at-heintz-van-landewyck...>

ArcelorMittal enters conciliation process

July 17, 2013

Trade unions and ArcelorMittal will meet at the national conciliation office on 1 August, after efforts to come to a bilateral agreement have failed. As reported in the December 2012 newsletter, ArcelorMittal announced last year that it wanted to renegotiate its collective agreement. The atmosphere of the negotiations after the one-sided termination of the previous agreement has been strained and not led to any agreement. Ahead of the conciliation meeting, trade union OGBL demanded a one-off bonus for 2012 and 2013 for all employees before negotiations for 2014 can begin. OGBL demands the 2014 collective agreement include guarantees of social benefits, employee training and equipment. Reacting to the company's closure of one of the steel plants in 2012 (see the October 2012 newsletter), the union has requested the parties discuss the production of steel 'on a permanent and sustainable basis'.

English: <http://www.wort.lu/en/view/unions-and-arcelormittal-conciliation-date-set...>

Last minute deal averts strike in construction sector

July 12, 2013

After four years of negotiations, trade unions OGBL and LCGB have reached an agreement with employers in the construction sector. The collective agreement narrowly averts a strike that was called for 17 July 2013 and includes hikes in tariff wages as well as end-of-year premiums and better safety provisions on the work site. A working group will be established to investigate how former employees can benefit from the wage increases. The new agreement does neither include re-negotiated working hours, annual leave and bad weather compensation, which employers wanted, nor any retroactive wage increases, demanded previously by the trade unions.

English: <http://www.wort.lu/en/view/construction-sector-strike-averted...>
<http://www.wort.lu/en/view/lcgb-and-ogbl-at-odds-over-construction-sector-strike...>
<http://www.wort.lu/en/view/construction-workers-to-strike-in-july...>

Malta

Employers organisation: fight precarious work is trade unions' responsibility

July 3, 2013

Employers association MEA has reacted negatively to proposals intended to curb precarious employment, describing it as 'a problem blown out of proportion'. MEA said atypical work should not be labelled as precarious, because its flexibility benefits both employers and employees. MEA continued to say that no new laws are needed to battle illegal employment, but better enforcement, and that unethical working conditions are the responsibility of trade unions to countervail through collective bargaining. Employers are reacting to a government effort against precarious employment, in which a list of seven mandatory conditions for all subcontractors is formulated. The conditions include requirements regarding pay administration, employment status and against bogus self-employment, as well as a requirement to specify pay rates in tender proposals. The government announced on 2 July that it will revise all existing contracts and future contracts to ensure that all its

subcontractors provide decent working conditions.

English: [http://www.maltatoday.com.mt/en/newsdetails/news/national/Precarious ...](http://www.maltatoday.com.mt/en/newsdetails/news/national/Precarious...)
[http://www.maltatoday.com.mt/en/newsdetails/news/national/Government-steps-up-fight ...](http://www.maltatoday.com.mt/en/newsdetails/news/national/Government-steps-up-fight...)

Netherlands

Social partners to tackle rising unemployment

August 5, 2013

The ministry of Social Affairs and Employment has announced it will make available €600 million for projects tackling unemployment if the social partners are prepared to contribute an equal amount to the programme. Trade unions and employers associations have been asked to submit realistic plans against unemployment, targeted towards the worst hit groups of employees, regions and sectors. Young people, older workers and disabled people are among the target groups. The plans will be assessed by an action team, comprised to representatives from the social partners, municipalities and the unemployment office.

English: <http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/eiro/2013/07/articles/nl1307039i.htm>

Agreement in the rail & infra branches

July 12, 2013

An agreement concluded by the employers and 4 unions in the rail & infrastructure building was backed up by the affiliates on both sides. The agreement starts retroactively per 1 January 2013 and runs 18 months. As per 1 July 2013 the wages increase with 2%. The partners also signed a 4-years convention with a job security clause and a guarantee that dismissals, if necessary, only take place through natural turnover.

Dutch: [http://www.spoorpro.nl/personeel/2013/07/12/vakbondsleden-stemmen-in ...](http://www.spoorpro.nl/personeel/2013/07/12/vakbondsleden-stemmen-in...)

Pay offer waste and environment sector rejected by union members

July 9, 2013

Unions balloted a pay proposal of 1.5% in the waste and environment sector. Members in majority rejected the deal, arguing it falls far behind the 2.7% inflation rate. The union's national advice committee has advised members to vote against the proposal. A spokesperson said the union is now considering a strategy for industrial action.

English: <http://www.epsu.org/a/9645>

Dutch: [http://www.abvakabofnv.nl/nieuws/nieuws/538213-onderhandelaarsakkoord ...](http://www.abvakabofnv.nl/nieuws/nieuws/538213-onderhandelaarsakkoord...)

Pay deal at University Medical Centres

July 5, 2013

A renewed collective agreement covering the University Medical Centres (67,000 workers) has been reached. Under the agreement, workers will receive a 1% wage increase in October and another 1% in August 2014, plus a one-off payment of €500. Youth pay rates will be brought up to the general wage level and personal development budgets will be increased and these funds can also be allocated for extra holidays. The agreement will run for two years.

English: <http://www.epsu.org/a/9646>

Dutch: [http://www.abvakabofnv.nl/nieuws/nieuws/537898-koopkrachtbehoud ...](http://www.abvakabofnv.nl/nieuws/nieuws/537898-koopkrachtbehoud...)

[http://www.mijnvakbond.nl/Onderhandelaarsakkoord-nieuwe-CAO ...](http://www.mijnvakbond.nl/Onderhandelaarsakkoord-nieuwe-CAO...)

Norway

Row at Statoil over outsourcing and investment

August 14, 2013

Trade unions and Statoil have been fighting over the number of jobs to be outsourced since the country's Oil Minister backed relocation plans that were much further going than unions had expected. Directly after the minister's public remarks, unions criticised both the government and Statoil management. Unions claim the government overestimates the savings from outsourcing, as the cost of the jobs lost would outsize profits from the relocation. Unions also accused Statoil of violating the main reform agreement, in which they were informed of 350 outsourced jobs, rather than the current number of 1,000 posts. On 13 August, Statoil and the trade unions initiated new talks. Moreover, the global trade union UNI accuses in an FT article Norway's state owned oil fund's investment policy. An OECD body said recently that the fund lacks a strategy for identifying and dealing with possible human rights violations at the companies in which it invests.

English: [http://www.aftenbladet.no/energi/aenergy/Parties-silent-following-Statoil-meeting ...](http://www.aftenbladet.no/energi/aenergy/Parties-silent-following-Statoil-meeting-...)
[http://www.aftenbladet.no/energi/aenergy/Union-taken-aback-by-Norway-Oil-Minister-statements ...](http://www.aftenbladet.no/energi/aenergy/Union-taken-aback-by-Norway-Oil-Minister-statements-...)
<http://www.uniglobalunion.org/Apps/uni.nsf.....>

Poland

Railway workers strike averted

August 27, 2013

Cargo transport workers at Polish State Railways (PKP) voted to take industrial action over the company's privatisation, unless their demands were met. The PKP Group wants to sell a 50% stake in its freight company, which is the second largest cargo carrier in Europe. The workers asked for an average wage increase of 450 Zloty per person (€106), the payment of pending bonuses and a six year job guarantee. PKP management first reacted that the demands were unrealistic given the company's turnover. But, according to the Dziennik Gazeta Prawna daily, the board of PKP Cargo is due to sign an agreement with the workers.

English: <http://www.thenews.pl/1/12/Artykul/145451.Polish-railways-privatisation-in-October>
<http://www.thenews.pl/1/12/Artykul/141691.Polish-railway-workers-threaten-strike-action>

Plea for higher minimum wage

August 26, 2013

Trade union confederation OPZZ wants a minimum wage of 11 zloty (€2.5) an hour, as part of a campaign against so-called 'junk' employment contracts. This minimum should apply to all employment contracts and be enshrined in the country's labour legislation. The joint trade unions have promised a month of protest in September against government policies and 'junk' employment contracts, which give employees no job stability or social insurance rights.

English: <http://www.thenews.pl/1/12/Artykul/145309.Trade-union-pushes-for-minimum-wage>
<http://www.wbj.pl/article-63048-unions-oppose-government-proposal-on-minimum-wage.html>

Trade union platform calls anti-government protest

August 19, 2013

A platform of the trade union confederation Solidarity and OPZZ and the Trade Unions Forum has called for a protest march against the government on 14 September. The trade union platform aims to mobilise over 50,000 people in Warsaw to protest against government proposals for more flexible working hours and cuts in overtime payments.

English: <http://www.wbj.pl/article-63512-unions-announce-september-protest-plans.html>

[http://www.thenews.pl/1/12/Artykul/143859,Trade-unions-to-paralyse-Warsaw ...](http://www.thenews.pl/1/12/Artykul/143859,Trade-unions-to-paralyse-Warsaw...)

Wage development in 10 years

August 15, 2013

A study released by the Central Statistical Office has revealed that the average wage rose by 67% between 2002 and 2012. The most recent statistics (covering the second quarter of 2013) show that the average national wage over that period was 3612 zloty (€860).

English: <http://newswave.eu/polish-wages-up-67-percent-since-2002/>

Focus on labour statistics: [http://www.stat.gov.pl/gus/praca_wynagrodzenia ...](http://www.stat.gov.pl/gus/praca_wynagrodzenia...)

.....
.....

Portugal

Standstill as workers strike

August 28, 2013

The two biggest trade union confederations, which together represent around one million workers, staged a general strike against government austerity measures, causing disruption to public transport, flights and hospitals. The walkout was their fourth joint protest in 25 years. UGT-P and CGT-P want the country's centre-right government to ease off austerity measures that they say are contributing to a downward economic spiral and surging unemployment rate. The latest plans include increasing the working time of state employees to 40 hours a week from 35, increasing their monthly pension deductions while lowering the pension entitlements and laying off some 50,000 government workers out of the total of about 583,000.

English: [http://www.france24.com/en/20130627-portugal-brought-standstill-workers-strike ...](http://www.france24.com/en/20130627-portugal-brought-standstill-workers-strike...)

[http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/06/27/portugal-general-strike-austerity ...](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/06/27/portugal-general-strike-austerity...)

Four month' strike threat

August 21, 2013

The National Civil Aviation Workers Union (SINTAC) has issued a strike action advance notice regarding a stoppage to be carried out by SATA Airlines' workers from 1 September through 31 December. Workers have concerns over the labour policies drafted in a memorandum of understanding by SATA Airlines regarding working overtime, breaking time, on-call employee policies and working on holidays. The dispute involves a discrepancy over work benefits allowed to workers at the national carrier TAP Air Portugal that do not apply to employees at the Azores based SATA Airlines. Both companies are public, owned and run by the State.

English: [http://portuguese-american-journal.com/travel-alert-satas-workers ...](http://portuguese-american-journal.com/travel-alert-satas-workers...)

Workers' wage cuts among the biggest in Europe

August 14, 2013

The British House of Commons library has gathered data showing that Portuguese workers saw their wages drop by 7% in 2010, while EU wages on average dropped by 0.7%. As such, Portuguese workers are amongst the most affected in Europe, together with Greek and Dutch workers.

English: [http://www.theportugalnews.com/news/value-of-portuguese-workers-wages ...](http://www.theportugalnews.com/news/value-of-portuguese-workers-wages...)

Charity targets unemployed over 40s with online job forum

July 26, 2013

A church-run charity organisation Cáritas Portuguesa, has started an initiative to help unemployed workers over forty get a job. The organisation aims to bring employers and unemployed together

through an online network that focuses on the exchange of skills.

English: [http://www.theportugalnews.com/news/national-church-charity-devises-on-line ...](http://www.theportugalnews.com/news/national-church-charity-devises-on-line-...)

.....

Romania

Railway workers rally against four-day working week

July 25, 2013

Thousands of railway workers have marched on the government headquarters to protest against the impending privatisation of the national railways. Trade unions also protest against measures, to be implemented awaiting a new owner; some workers will be put on four-day working weeks even after the railways laid off 1,100 workers in 2012.

English: [http://www.nzherald.co.nz/business/news/article ...](http://www.nzherald.co.nz/business/news/article-...)

Life guards protest against delayed pay

July 8, 2013

Some 400 life guards in Constanta county have started a work-in strike, while continuing to offer their lifesaving services to swimmers in distress. The life guards, most of whom are young workers, have not been paid for two months. According to local media, the Constanta county has already earmarked the funds to pay the life guards and other medical personnel on the beaches, but is awaiting government approval of the transfer of funds. The life guards' wages amount to about 1,500 RON per month, the equivalent of €340.

English: [http://www.romania-insider.com/romanias-lifeguards-go-on-strike ...](http://www.romania-insider.com/romanias-lifeguards-go-on-strike-...)

Salaries make up half of average household income, social provisions one quarter

July 8, 2013

Research by the Romanian Statistics Institute has shown that in the first quarter of 2013, salaries made up half of the average household income and social provisions made up 23 per cent. The institute reports average monthly income decreased slightly to RON 2,521 (€567) per household or RON 882 (€200) per person. The researchers report that families spend nearly 92 per cent of their income immediately.

English: [http://www.romania-insider.com/average-romanian-household-spent-almost-entirely ...](http://www.romania-insider.com/average-romanian-household-spent-almost-entirely-...)

.....

Serbia

Employers lobby against new bill on strike

July 22, 2013

The government has presented a new bill on strike, intending to replace the current legislation dating from 1996. Amongst other things, the bill covers minimum service, venues for staging strikes, protection of property, and the method of resolving labour disputes. One of the controversies revolves around the venues where industrial actions can be undertaken. Currently actions can only take place on the premises of the employer, whereas the new law proposes to allow strikes on other locations as well. Trade unions have declared their general satisfaction with the draft bill, while they would prefer the principle of collective bargaining to be more firmly anchored in the text; employers have protested against the bill, arguing foreign investment will dry up if it comes into force.

English: [http://inserbia.info/news/2013/07/serbia-what-is-so-controversial-about ...](http://inserbia.info/news/2013/07/serbia-what-is-so-controversial-about-...)

[http://www.b92.net/eng/news/business ...](http://www.b92.net/eng/news/business...)

Focus on Serbian industrial relations: [http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/publications ...](http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/publications...)

Slovakia

Risk of poverty and working poor

August 28, 2013

The latest figures released by the Slovak Statistics Office (ŠÚ) show that some 13.2% of the population, or 715,000 people, was faced with the risk of poverty. The poverty limit was at €4,156 per year, which equals €346 a month for single-member households. The highest degree of risk was observed among jobless people, measured at 44.6%. This was a rise of 2% on a yearly basis. Households with three or more dependent children or single-parent households were also included among the groups at highest risk. Poverty among the working population decreased slightly, as 6.2% of working individuals faced the risk of poverty in 2012. The findings were extrapolated from data gathered from 6,000 households.

English: [http://spectator.sme.sk/articles/view/51144/10/in_slovakia_715000_people_faced_risk ...](http://spectator.sme.sk/articles/view/51144/10/in_slovakia_715000_people_faced_risk...)
<http://portal.statistics.sk/showdoc.do?docid=359>

No deal on minimum wage

August 13, 2013

The tripartite talks did not end in an accord on an increase in the minimum wage as of 2014 at a session of the Economic and Social Council (HSR). If the tripartite does not reach an agreement, the government will discuss a proposal from the ministry to increase the minimum wage 2.4% as of 2014. This would mean a rise from €337.70 to €349.50. Meanwhile, the trade unions suggest that the wage be increased by 8% as of 2014. Employers, for their part, oppose any increase whatsoever.

English: [http://spectator.sme.sk/articles/view/51002/10/tripartite_fails_to_strike_deal ...](http://spectator.sme.sk/articles/view/51002/10/tripartite_fails_to_strike_deal...)

Pay increases in metal and banking, zero increases in public sector

July 11, 2013

The annual update on pay for 2012, published by the European Industrial Relations Observatory (EIRO) shows that public sector pay increases have fallen behind private sector developments. In 2012, collectively agreed wages in the metal industry increased by 3.6%, those in banking at 2.5% and no increases were agreed on in local government.

English: [http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/eiro/studies ...](http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/eiro/studies...)

Slovenia

Police strikes loom as talks fail to yield results

July 31, 2013

Police unions have ended strike actions after their union signed an agreement with the government guaranteeing that budget funds for their work will not be reduced and that there will be no redundancies. As reported in the January 2013 newsletter, the police unions have been at odds with the government since the beginning of the year, when officers went on strike claiming the government have failed to fulfil promises made in May 2012. Police unions were demanding the implementation of the pay agreements from May 2012, which ended a strike over pay cuts set off in April 2012. The unions furthermore demanded a 10% pay increase for the current period.

English: <http://www.sloveniatimes.com/police-strike-formally-ends>

Spain

Commissioner suggests 10% wage cut

August 9, 2013

European Commissioner Olli Rehn provoked Spain's unions, employer groups and political parties with a blog piece he published. In the blog, Rehn appeared to give his support to an International Monetary Fund (IMF) model which would see Spain slashing wages by 10% to trigger economic growth and tackle unemployment. Later on an EC official said these prescriptive measures were already contained in the EC's country-specific recommendations, adding that these had been accepted by Spain. That document advises to bring the budget deficit below 3% of GDP by 2016 through 'expenditure restraint' and 'revenue-increasing' measures. The trade unions said Rehn's statements were completely unacceptable both because the IMF proposal wouldn't help the country emerge from the crisis and for the suffering the plan would cause.

English: <http://www.thelocal.es/20130809/eu-backs-officials-spain-wage-cut-comments>

Agreement at Galmed (ThyssenKrupp) on termination

August 2, 2013

The plans to close the troubled ThyssenKrupp subsidiary Galmed have led to activities at national and European level. The company's goal is 'to centralise production in Germany' since, 'there are no economic reasons, not productive, not logistics' to continue. Negotiations, with the participation of the works council of ThyssenKrupp Galmed and its advisors from the trade union CCOO (Confederación Sindical de Comisiones Obreras) as well as the European Works Council, resulted in a provisional agreement. The deal provides for the termination of all employment contracts of the subsidiary and the closure of the facility in the city of Sagunto. The agreement that was approved by the workers includes a plan for early retirement, compensation of 45 days per year worked and relocations within the ThyssenKrupp Group for 'an important part' of the workers. Latest press statements say that ThyssenKrupp never intended to sell the plant.

English: <http://www.thyssenkrupp-steel-europe.com/en/presse/pressrelease.jsp?cid=2777515>

Spanish: [http://www.europapress.es/comunitat-valenciana/noticia-asamblea-trabajadores ...](http://www.europapress.es/comunitat-valenciana/noticia-asamblea-trabajadores...)

[http://www.eleconomico.es/galmed/item/110928-thyssenkrupp-vuelve-a-rechazar ...](http://www.eleconomico.es/galmed/item/110928-thyssenkrupp-vuelve-a-rechazar...)

Law limiting collective agreement extension comes into force

July 7, 2013

A new law on collective bargaining has come into force, which severely limits the extension of collective agreements. In accordance with the new law, all agreements that have not been renegotiated by 8 July will automatically lapse. Unions throughout the countries had called on employers' organisations to press their members to ensure agreements had been renegotiated by then, but this does not appear to have happened. In the public sector the trade unions were disappointed because the FEMP local government employers' organisation failed to act on the question. Nevertheless, agreements have been reached at regional level in Castilla y León, Valencia and Castilla la Mancha.

English: <http://www.epsu.org/a/9620>

<http://www.epsu.org/a/9648>

Swissport reported hiring temp workers to break strike

July 5, 2013

The Confederacion Sindical de Comisiones Obreras (CCOO), Union General de Trabajadores (UGT), and Union Sindical Obrera (USO) have raised the alarm over strike-breaking actions by Swissport. Swissport workers at eight airports have been organising strikes since last month, when negotiations

over a collective agreement broke down. The unions report that Swissport is hiring temporary agency workers to replace the employees on strike, as [well](#) as forcing administrative personnel to perform tasks usually done by the striking workers.

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

Dockers launch resistance against liberalisation of port recruitment practices

July 5, 2013

Trade unions have come together to design a common strategy against an upcoming liberalisation in the ports, which would allow de facto social dumping. The European Commission's directorate general for mobility and transport has recently challenged the practice that port workers can be hired only through a private company owned by the employers in the port. Arguing the practice constitutes an impediment to the freedom of establishment, the European Commission has taken the case to the European Court of Justice.

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

Ice cream workers on strike

July 5, 2013

After staging a number of smaller industrial actions, ice cream workers went into a 24 hour strike and threatening an indefinite strike. The ice cream workers have been in a conflict with the Spanish Association of Ice Cream Makers (AEFH) over a new collective agreement and are anxious to press for a solution the agreement expiring under the new law on collective bargaining.

English: <http://www.thelocal.es/20130705/ice-cream-strike-leaves-employers-sweating>

Temporary workers' wages 35% below average; female workers earn even less

July 2, 2013

New figures from the National Statistics Institute (INE) show that in 2011, temporary workers earned 32.8% less than employees on permanent contracts and saw their wages decrease by 1.4% compared to 0.3% for permanent workers. The report also reveals a significantly larger gender pay gap for temporary workers: female permanent workers earned 8.9% less than their male peers, whereas female temporary workers earned 32.4% less. Women form the majority of workers with low earnings (64%). The INE furthermore said third-country nationals earn 25% to 35% less than Spanish workers.

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

.....

Sweden

IF Metall launches own job-placement scheme

August 27, 2013

Dissatisfied with the functioning of the country's scandal-hit jobs agency (Arbetsförmedlingen) the trade union IF Metall has launched its own job-placement scheme. Despite high demand for welders and machinists the funds to educate job seekers are not adequately used. Among the union's members, almost 10% are out of work at present. The union's Competence Database (Kompetensbanken) will help the union's 340,000 members to find jobs.

English: <http://www.thelocal.se/49874/20130827/>
<http://www.staffingindustry.com/eng/Research-Publications ...>

Labour law challenged

July 22, 2013

Trade union TCO came up with the results of a Novus opinion poll that surveyed 1,125 people on close-ended contracts. Some 11% said they had worked without an open-ended contract for five or more years. According to TCO such a long chain of close-ended contracts normally means the employer has to skirt the rules meant to protect against abuse of close-ended contracts. The survey result therefore is concrete evidence that Swedish legislation permits this abuse. While the union recognises that many employers need to be able to call in subs, often at short notice to cover for illness or staff staying at home to care for a sick child, TCO argues that a longer period of uncertain working conditions put employees' wellbeing and health at risk.

English: <http://witnesshr.blogspot.nl/2013/07/sweden-flouts-eu-law-worsening-workers.html>
<http://www.thelocal.se/49078/20130716/>

Bus drivers get higher pay after strike

July 3, 2013

Following a massive nine-day strike by bus drivers in Stockholm, reported in last month's newsletter, municipal union Kommunal and the bus company have agreed on a pay increase of SEK 1732 (€195) over a period of three years. The drivers will also gain greater control over their working time and shifts, which was the second major demand of the strike last month.

English: [http://www.itfglobal.org/news-online ...](http://www.itfglobal.org/news-online...)
<http://www.epsu.org/a/9605>

Switzerland

Post begins negotiations over 2015 collective agreement

August 14, 2013

Following its legal transformation into a public limited company, national postal operator Swiss Post has announced it intends to start talks over a new collective agreement with trade union syndicom and the staff association transfair. Swiss Post is required by law to negotiate a labour contract within two years and expressed its intention to reach an agreement by 2014 in order to have the agreement come into force in 2015. Swiss Post said it is committed to being a socially responsible and attractive employer, offering decent wages and working conditions.

English: [http://postandparcel.info/57301/news/human-resources/swiss-post-begins ...](http://postandparcel.info/57301/news/human-resources/swiss-post-begins...)

Opening hours subject to a referendum

July 22, 2013

Voters will have a final say in September on a step towards liberalisation - allowing shops at some petrol stations to do business around the clock. A broad alliance of trade unions, left-wing parties and church groups sees the initiative for this referendum, heavily sponsored by the centre-right Radical Party, but also backed up by centrist parties, as a further episode in the fight to protect labour rights, as the reform might open the floodgates for the whole retail sector. The fear is that, if petrol station shops are allowed to sell the full range of products 24 hours a day, seven days a week, it will soon become the rule in the retail trade.

English: [http://www.swissinfo.ch/eng/swiss_news/Unions_challenge_parliament ...](http://www.swissinfo.ch/eng/swiss_news/Unions_challenge_parliament...)

Referendum on the wage gap

July 3, 2013

On 2 March 2013 a referendum came out in favour of tougher rules on the setting of managers' remuneration. 68% of the voters wanted to put limits to the millions handed out in bonuses and severance payments to top managers (see also the March issue of this Newsletter). Coming up is a further referendum on a binding reduction of top pay and an increase in minimum wages. This referendum on the wage gap will stipulate that the highest remuneration within a firm should not be

more than twelve times the lowest wages paid. Andreas Rieger reports on these themes in a column.

English: [http://column.global-labour-university.org/2013/07/swiss-referendums ...](http://column.global-labour-university.org/2013/07/swiss-referendums...)

Turkey

Textile workers reach agreement

August 30, 2013

Four trade unions were leading 12,000 textile workers from more than thirty producers in a sector wide strike. The strike started on 15 August, four months after the last collective agreement expired and fruitless negotiations began. Textile is a low wage sector, many workers are reported to live in poverty, 55% earn no more than the legal minimum wage of 978.60 Liras (€380) and the average pay of the unionised workers is 1,165 Liras (€450). The trade unions reached an agreement on 23 August, putting an end to the strike. The main point of conflict were the temporary wage cuts, which trade unions accepted in the previous agreement in order to help the company survive in crisis times. Trade unions demanded bonuses and an end to the crisis wages, whereas management wanted to keep the lower wages. The agreement will see bonuses return to previous levels of a 120-day salary instead of the current 72. The three-year agreement includes a 5% rise on salaries in the first six months, 3% in the second, 3% in the third, 4% in the fourth, 3% in the fifth, and 4% in the sixth. If inflation surpasses these rates, additional payments will be made. Workers who work overtime on weekdays, general holidays, national holidays and regional holidays will receive double pay.

English: [http://www.just-style.com/news/turkey-strike-ends-as-apparel-workers-reach-deal ...](http://www.just-style.com/news/turkey-strike-ends-as-apparel-workers-reach-deal...)
[http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/textile-workers-strike-ends-with-deal ...](http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/textile-workers-strike-ends-with-deal...)
<http://www.industrialunion.org/12000-turkish-textile-workers-on-strike>
<http://www.industrialunion.org/12000-turkish-textile-workers-win-o>

Turkish Mint strike into second month

August 26, 2013

Workers at Darphane ve Damga Matbaası (a Mint & Stamp factory, producing gold, coins and security printings like passports, ID cards, driving licences, official stamps and banderols) went on strike on 8 July over wages, working conditions and trade union rights. With the strike entering the 40th day, 205 workers continue to be on strike despite strike breaking and union bashing practices of management. On 22 August the labour minister announced that the wages will be increased in line with demands. This direct involvement from the side of the government may put an end to the strike.

English: [http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/hike-on-mint-workers-wage-may-end-strike ...](http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/hike-on-mint-workers-wage-may-end-strike...)
[http://www.uniglobalunion.org/Apps/uni.nsf ...](http://www.uniglobalunion.org/Apps/uni.nsf...)

All out strikes in steel sector ended

August 5, 2013

After half a year of negotiations for a collective agreement, 5000 out of 5300 workers on the Isdemir integrated steel and iron plant went on strike. In addition, 1800 steel workers at the Russian owned Magnitogorsk Iron and Steel Works (MMK) went on strike after a similar failure of collective negotiations to yield results. The workers organised by the Iron, Steel, Metal and Metallic Products Workers' Union Celik-Is reached an agreement after a two weeks strike.

English: [http://www.habermontor.com/en/haber/detay/isdemir-happy-ending-strike ...](http://www.habermontor.com/en/haber/detay/isdemir-happy-ending-strike...)
[http://www.industrialunion.org/7000-turkish-steel-workers-on-strike ...](http://www.industrialunion.org/7000-turkish-steel-workers-on-strike...)

Court forbids Turkish Airlines' strike-breaking actions

July 9, 2013

The Istanbul Labour Court has ruled that attempts by Turkish Airlines to hire new workers to replace those cabin crew on strike, is a strike-breaking action and therefore forbidden. Since some 1,600 crew personnel went on strike in May, Turkish airlines has hired 700 new workers and drawn more crew members from its SunExpress joint venture and an Indian partner. The court ruled the hires undermine the strike action and must be undone. The crew personnel who are on strike are demanding higher pay, fewer flight hours and the reinstatement of 305 former colleagues who were fired during a previous strike.

English: [http://www.businessweek.com/news/2013-07-09/turkish-air-barred ...](http://www.businessweek.com/news/2013-07-09/turkish-air-barred...)

Workers at AMCOR Flexibles get new collective agreement after strike

July 9, 2013

After negotiations over a collective agreement broke down, workers at AMCOR Flexibles Istanbul went on strike on 3 July 2013. The source of the dispute was a wage offer by AMCOR, which fell behind the inflation rate. AMCOR also refused to negotiate over decreasing the pay inequality inside the company. Two days after the start of the strike, management and unions agreed to a wage increase of at least the inflation rate.

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

United Kingdom

Firefighters back industrial action

August 29, 2013

Members of the Fire Brigades Union have voted in favour of industrial action, in a dispute over pensions. The outcome of this vote could trigger the first national firefighters' strike in more than a decade. FBU members in England, Scotland and Wales were balloted, with 78% of them voting in favour. Under government plans, firefighters in England will get their full pension at 60. Changes to pensions in Scotland and Wales have yet to be settled. FBU says many fire fighters will not be able to maintain fitness standards into their late 50s and this will endanger the public and firefighters.

English: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-23884078>
<http://www.fbu.org.uk/?p=7089>

Bakery actions

August 28, 2013

More than 200 production staff at Wigan's Hovis bakery began a week-long strike in a row over contracts and pay. Subject of the dispute are the introduction of agency staff and a reduction in hours. The workers fear replacement of full-time staff with agency labour. The walkout follows 26 redundancies in April, with a further five expected in October and a reduction in hours allowed from 52 to 40 per week. The management said limited use of agency labour was 'commonplace'.

English: [http://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2013/aug/21/hovis-bakery-workers-strike ...](http://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2013/aug/21/hovis-bakery-workers-strike...)
[http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-manchester](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-manchester.....)

Weakening of the GLA competence wrong signal

August 27, 2013

The announcement by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) that it is to reduce the role of the Gangmasters Licensing Authority (GLA) has been criticised by the TUC. Under the GLA-scheme the forestry sector, land agents and cleaning contractors operating in the food processing industry are regulated. Agencies in these sectors will no longer have to get a GLA licence before they start operating or be subject to inspections by the GLA. The TUC says the moves will put

thousands of vulnerable workers at risk and encourage rogue employment agencies to flout basic rights at work.

English: <http://www.tuc.org.uk/workplace/tuc-22501-fo.cfm?>

Trade union recognition at Avenues Trust

August 21, 2013

UNISON signed a recognition agreement with South East and London-based Avenues Trust, a specialist social care organisation that supports people facing significant disadvantage through disability and illness. Around 130 UNISON members work there as social workers, support workers and welfare assistants. The agreement means that the union, alongside the RCN, is recognised for collective bargaining purposes, will have application packs at starters' inductions, and facility time for reps activity and steward development.

English: <https://www.unison.org.uk/content/conNewsArticle/4119>

Strike suspended after announcement of drastic restructuring

July 18, 2013

Workers at Crown Speciality Packaging went on strike after management refused to implement a wage increase of 7% that had been agreed earlier. Part of US-owned packaging group Crown Holdings, the Bootle site employs around 150 staff and produces metal cans and packaging for UK firms such as Cadbury, Jacobs and Jeyes. The wage increase is a compensation for higher productivity due to the intensification of work and new equipment. The action was suspended a week later as the management announced a proposed restructure, as part of a cost-cutting exercise, prompting staff to concentrate on action related to expected dismissals.

English: <http://www.printweek.com/news/1191822/> - <http://www.uniglobalunion.org/Apps/uni.nsf...>

Set of spring laws change employment landscape

June 28, 2013

A set of unemployment laws and a new labour contract cleared the houses of parliament this spring, which will drastically change industrial relations. Changes are focused on family policies and dismissal. In order to comply with EU legislation, the parental leave regulations bring the allowed parental leave up from 3 to 4 months and includes agency workers in its scope, giving them the right to flexible working hours after parental leave as well. Rates of maternity, paternity and adoption pay were increased from £135.45 (€159.19) to £136.78 (€160.77) per week. On the issue of dismissals and redundancies, a range of measures has made it cheaper and easier to fire employees. The statutory minimum redundancy consultation period for cases affecting more than 100 employees was shortened, the possibilities for workers to bring claims against unfair dismissal have been limited, protection for whistle-blowers reduced, a cap of 12 months' pay on dismissal compensation was introduced and the Agricultural Wages Board, which set minimum wages in agriculture, has been abolished. From 29 July, fees will be introduced for employment tribunal claims: a £160 (€188) issue fee plus a £230 (€270) hearing fee for claims regarding breaches of collective laws, such as unlawful deduction of wages, and a £250 (€294) issue fee plus a £950 (€1,117) hearing fee for cases such as unfair dismissal, discrimination, equal pay and whistleblowing. From 1 September, employers will be able to hire personnel under an 'employee shareholder contract', in which shares, exempt from capital gain tax, of between £2,000 (€2,351) and £50,000 (€58,794) of value, are given to employees in exchange for weaker protection against dismissal and redress. Under the Enterprise and Regulatory Reform Act, changes are expected to enhance the powers of the advisory, conciliation and arbitration service.

English: <http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/eiro/2013/05/articles...>

.....

For more information, please contact the editor Jan Cremers, Amsterdam Institute for Advanced Labour Studies (AIAS) cbn-aias@uva.nl or the Head of communications at the ETUI, Willy De Backer wdebacker@etui.org. For previous full issues of the *Collective bargaining newsletter* please visit www.etui.org/E-Newsletters/Collective-bargaining-newsletter. Since June 2013 readers can consult our archive and search through all articles in our database [at www.cbnarchive.eu](http://www.cbnarchive.eu).

You may find further information on the ETUI at www.etui.org, and on the AIAS at www.uva-aias.net.

© ETUI aisbl, Brussels 2013. All rights reserved. We encourage the distribution of this newsletter and of the information it contains, for non-commercial purposes and provided the source is credited. The ETUI is not responsible for the content of external internet sites. The ETUI is financially supported by the European Union. The European Union is not responsible for any use made of the information contained in this publication.

To subscribe or unsubscribe, please contact Willy De Backer wdebacker@etui.org.