

collective bargaining

Issue 4/2014 April

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



AMSTERDAM INSTITUTE FOR ADVANCED LABOUR STUDIES
UNIVERSITEIT VAN AMSTERDAM



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European sources

Euro Barometer reveals deterioration of working conditions

April 24, 2014

Over half of European workers perceive working conditions in their country to be good (53%), a majority (57%) nevertheless thinks that their working conditions have deteriorated in the last 5 years, according to a Eurobarometer survey, which looks at how the quality of work has been affected by the crisis. In addition, dissatisfaction regarding workload, pace of work and long working days (more than 13 hours) is widespread.

English: <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main ...>
http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/flash ...

Collective bargaining at risk

April 3, 2014

The Eurofound report *Impact of the crisis on industrial relations and working conditions in Europe* analyses the impact of the global financial, economic and public debt crisis on industrial relations and working conditions at national level in the EU Member States from 2008 to end 2012. The clearest finding has been an accelerated trend towards decentralisation in collective bargaining in many countries. The collective agreement itself is manifestly at risk and articulated multiemployer bargaining has come under further threat due to the ongoing crisis. Other changes have taken place in regard to collective bargaining and its related mechanisms: fewer extension mechanisms, more opt-out and derogation clauses, less

favourability and more non-continuation of collective agreements upon expiry.

English: <http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/publications ...>

OECD report with social indicators

April 1, 2014

The OECD report *Society at a Glance 2014* takes stock of available information about the social challenges emerging since the beginning of the economic crisis, and countries' policy responses to meet those challenges. Before the onset of the financial and economic crisis in 2007-08, social spending across the OECD area accounted for about half of all government outlays. But while there are big demands on social protection systems during all phases of the economic cycle, the need for social support measures is especially acute during deep and extended economic downturns. The report signals that of all the economic losses, the income drops suffered by workers have turned out to be the most difficult to reverse. In most countries, the recovery has not yet translated into significant improvements in labour market conditions. Employment and wages have continued to fall.

English: <http://www.oecd.org/els/soc/OECD2014-SocietyAtAGlance2014.pdf>

Austria

Public transport stands still

April 22, 2014

Vienna's public transport stood still as the trade unions held emergency meetings to discuss the safety of Wiener Linien staff. The services were reduced from the normal 900 buses, subways and trams to just 167 buses being run by private companies. The meetings were initiated by the company's works council. The workforce demanded that working conditions for transport staff, particularly for tram and bus drivers, were made safer.

English: http://austriantimes.at/news/General_News/2014-04-22/50762/Wiener_Linien ...

Gender wage gap 23,4 percent

April 16, 2014

Statistik Austria has published a report that reveals that women are earning on average 23.4% less than men in the country, one of the largest gender wage gaps. The EU average of the gender pay gap was 16.4% in 2012. The Law on Equal Treatment forces employers to publish the average employee wage by occupational groups and gender, which gives women the opportunity to see if they should be earning a higher salary.

English: http://austriantimes.at/news/Business/2014-04-16/50742/Austrian_women ...

German: http://www.statistik.at/web_de/statistiken/soziales/gender-statistik/einkommen ...

Agreement on wages in banking

April 1, 2014

The social partners in the banking sector, with a workforce of 80,000 workers, could come to an agreement after 4 rounds of negotiations. A wage increase was agreed of 1.93% plus a nominal 6 euro. This brings the increase for workers at the lowest pay level to 2.17%. Apprentice pay is raised by 2.3%. The agreement has is valid for 12 months, starting 1-4-2014.

German: <http://www.oegb.at/cms/So6 ...>

Belgium

Social plan at Heinz plant in Turnhout

April 17, 2014

Unions and management of the Turnhout H.J.Heinz plant agreed on a social plan for the 190 employees that will lose their jobs as the factory closes. Heinz decided to close the profitable factory in Turnhout without any substantial social plan. After the trade unions organised protests in Belgium as well as in Minnesota, the

company increased its offer.

English: <http://www.iuf.org/w/?q=node/3300>

Cleaners strike at Mercure hotel

April 2, 2014

Mercure workers responsible for cleaning the rooms started a strike to protest against the management's plans to outsource their jobs and employ them via a private firm. Trades unions say 30 to 40 employees took part in the action, to support their 18 colleagues working in the hotel's housekeeping section. The trades unions claim that the outsourcing will trigger a higher work pressure and redundancies. They say that cleaning girls will have to clean 3 to 4 rooms per hour, which is impossible.

English: [http://www.deredactie.be/cm/vrtnieuws.english/Economy ...](http://www.deredactie.be/cm/vrtnieuws.english/Economy...)

Bulgaria

One in five households lives in extreme poverty

April 24, 2014

According to an analysis of the Confederation of Independent Trade Unions in Bulgaria (CITUB) 80% of households in Bulgaria live on incomes below the monthly maintenance rate. According to CITUB data for the first three months of 2014, every fifth household in Bulgaria lives in extreme poverty and fails to cover basic needs. The number of people living in extreme poverty stands at around 1.5 million.

English: <http://www.novinite.com/articles/160056/>

Substantial increase of pay claimed

April 7, 2014

The Confederation of Independent Trade Unions of Bulgaria (CITUB) has claimed that a substantial pay increase is possible without resulting in bankrupting businesses and increasing unemployment. CITUB signals that at least 7-8 branches in the heavy industry sector report productivity rates growth of 17% to 30 %, which means that wages can be increased by 10% to 20%. However, though the productivity in certain sectors increases, at the moment this does not affect wages.

English: <http://www.novinite.com/articles/159598/>

Croatia

Strike over unpaid wages

April 4, 2014

Workers of the chemical industry company Kemoplast from the village of Policnik in the southern part of the country decided to go for a strike to protest after not receiving 17 consecutive wage packets. The workers are additionally worried as the future of the company is not certain and as there is a risk of bankruptcy.

English: [http://www.croatiantimes.com/news/Business/2014-04-04/35283/Kemoplast ...](http://www.croatiantimes.com/news/Business/2014-04-04/35283/Kemoplast...)

Cyprus

Opening hours of shops disputed

April 11, 2014

The organisation of small shop owners (POVEK) has appealed to the head of the Church of Cyprus to use his influence to change the opening hours of shops. POVEK said it has received many complaints from shop owners and employees that beyond other problems, the 'inhumane' hours limited the ability to exercise their religious rights. The organisation said that, according to the law issued by the government in July 2013, shops are allowed to remain open until 8pm, and 6pm on Friday and Saturday during the ten days before Easter. The

act extending shop hours allows staying open for longer, including Wednesday afternoons and Sundays.

English: <http://cyprus-mail.com/2014/04/11/late-shop-hours-not-christian-like/>

Czech Republic

Age discrimination at work reported

April 7, 2014

Three out of four of 2,000 respondents in a poll reported that they personally experienced discrimination at work and another 8% know someone who has experience with discrimination at work or when looking for a job. Most often reported was discrimination due to age (49%), which is alarming. Respondents also reported discrimination due to children (10%), health condition (7%), ethnicity (6%) and gender (5%).

English: [http://praguemonitor.com/2014/04/07/poll-three-four-people-experienced ...](http://praguemonitor.com/2014/04/07/poll-three-four-people-experienced-...)

Denmark

Unions criticise reward for not getting pregnant

April 29, 2014

The initiative launched by an au pair bureau to reward Filipino au pairs for not getting pregnant within the two-year period of their stay has been sharply criticised by the trade unions. Aupair Agency Denmark motivated it as a bonus that will be attractive for those who 'are only interested in money'. In future, Filipino au pairs must pay 3,500 kroner to come to Denmark for work, and if they manage to avoid becoming pregnant within a two-year period, they will be refunded the 3,500 kroner and receive a 6,500 kroner bonus on top. Trade union FOA qualified the initiative as illegal and sexually discriminatory. Therefore, the union intends to appeal to the equality tribunal at the moment the initiative comes into effect.

English: [http://cphpost.dk/news/new-initiative-to-reward-au-pairs-for-not-getting-pregnant ...](http://cphpost.dk/news/new-initiative-to-reward-au-pairs-for-not-getting-pregnant-...)

Care provider that cancelled collective agreement goes bankrupt

April 4, 2014

Private care company Kære Pleje, employing around 100 employees and servicing over 500 elderly in Kolding has gone bankrupt. The company has already found itself in conflict with trade union FOA in 2013, when it unilaterally cancelled the collective agreement in order to win the public procurement procedure set out by the municipality. FOA reports situations such as the bankruptcy of Kære Pleje are starting to become common place as more and more services are delivered by private companies and the competition in the sector is increased.

English: <http://www.epsu.org/a/10365>

Danish: [http://www.foa.dk/Forbund/Presse ...](http://www.foa.dk/Forbund/Presse-...)

Estonia

Gender gap discussed

April 10, 2014

On 'Equal Pay Day', an initiative of the Ministry of Social Affairs, debates took place on the gender gap. In Estonia, women earn on average 30% less than men - the greatest difference in salaries in the European Union. The pay gap affects the quality of life and in the future as it has consequences for the pension benefits. There are several reasons for the gender gap; there is a link with the unequal distribution according to gender in education and the labour market, difficulties in combining work with family life, and outdated pension practices.

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

No progress in pilot bargaining

April 8, 2014

The state-owned airline has not yet reached a deal on a new collective agreement with its pilots, although the previous contract expired on 1 February 2014. Central question in the negotiations is salary increases, with pilots asking for a 40% increase over the next three years. The Airline Pilots Association stated that the company only offered a 1% increase for the next three years, adding that for them, the main question is the organisation of work and rest periods and system of promotions. These are similar problems that plagued the negotiations at the end of 2012 when a strike was narrowly averted.

English: [http://news.err.ee/v/economy ...](http://news.err.ee/v/economy...)

Finland

Job cuts will lead to delays in services

April 22, 2014

The postal trade union is warning that mail workers that have to begin with new daytime delivery routes, to accommodate some of the 500 job cuts that postal services company Itella is making, will be confronted with longer distribution rounds. For the remaining staff this will result in slower delivery times. The union warns that the full effects of the cuts will become visible in the autumn.

English: [http://yle.fi/uutiset/postal_union_warns_of_delivery_delays ...](http://yle.fi/uutiset/postal_union_warns_of_delivery_delays...)

Unions keep close watch on health care reform

April 16, 2014

Trade union JHL has welcomed the health reform passed by the Parliament, but added it still has concerns over the situation of employees. The reform that covers social welfare and health care services will see all services are to be delivered by five regional providers, while municipalities retain their responsibility for services and care costs. In the course of the reform many municipal employees are likely to end up with a new employer. JHL has said it is happy with the five year employment guarantee that has been written into the legislation, but will be closely monitoring pay and working conditions.

English: [http://www.jhl.fi/portal/en ...](http://www.jhl.fi/portal/en...)

France

Teachers unions ask investment in education

April 23, 2014

The teachers' trade unions have reminded the newly appointed government of the urgent need for quality education and training as well as good working and living conditions for teachers. According to a spokesperson second stage education and orientation teachers have seen over the past few years a continuous deterioration of their working and employment conditions, a significant devaluation of their salaries, a loss of purchasing power leading to a downgrading of their occupations, and the inability to peacefully carry out their profession working towards the success of all students.

English: [http://www.ei-ie.org/en/news ...](http://www.ei-ie.org/en/news...)

Agreement on right 'to be disconnected'

April 9, 2014

Employers' organisations and trade unions have signed a legally binding collective agreement that will require employers to make sure staff 'disconnect' outside of working hours. The deal obliges staff to disconnect from work calls and emails after working hours to ensure they receive the full minimum rest periods already mandated in national employment regulations but there is no particular time at which they are required to do so. Under the deal, which affects directly around 250,000 employees in the technology and consultancy sectors (including the French arms of Google, Facebook, Deloitte and PwC), employees will also have to resist the temptation to look at work-related material on their computers or smartphones. Companies must ensure that their employees come under no pressure to do so. In the British press this has led to an exposure of the most hackneyed clichés about France

English: [http://www.theguardian.com/money/shortcuts ...](http://www.theguardian.com/money/shortcuts...)

Germany

Pay deal for federal and local authorities

April 17, 2014

After a series of warning strikes that was reported in last month's newsletter, a pay deal was reached for the 2.1 million federal and municipal workers. The agreement includes an immediate 3% pay rise, implemented retrospectively from 1 March 2014, and another 2.5% from 1 March 2015 onwards. As a part of the deal, the first pay hike will be at least €90 for any worker, bringing the effecting pay rise up to 3.3%, in order to afford extra consideration to the lowest paid workers. All workers will also be guaranteed a minimum 30 days of annual leave. Trade union Ver.di had also asked for additional allowances or rest days to compensate for high work pressure and to increase the additional pay rate for night shifts from 15% to 20%, but this was refused by employers.

English: <http://www.epsu.org/a/10382>

German: [http://www.verdi.de/themen/geld-tarif/tarifunde-oed-2014 ...](http://www.verdi.de/themen/geld-tarif/tarifunde-oed-2014...)

Wage deal at Deutsche Telekom

April 9, 2014

Deutsche Telekom quickly reached a two-year wage deal for about 72,000 of its workers, avoiding drawn-out negotiations which could have hampered the roll-out of its high-speed fibre optic broadband network. Effective 1 April 2014, about three-quarters of its workers will get a 2.9% or a 2.5% pay rise, depending on their position. As of 1 February 2015 all 72,000 workers will receive another 2.1% wage increase.

English: [http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/04/09/deutschetelekom-unions ...](http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/04/09/deutschetelekom-unions...)

Lufthansa dispute continues

April 8, 2014

After a turbulent first week in April with a three-day strike Lufthansa has stated that it will meet with its pilots' union to discuss union demands for an early retirement scheme and higher pay. The management declared it was not planning another offer to its staff, saying the company's previous offers had provided enough material to warrant fresh negotiations. The aim of the meeting is to lay the groundwork for the negotiations.

English: [http://www.dw.de/lufthansa-strike-ends-pilots-pay-dispute-stays-open ...](http://www.dw.de/lufthansa-strike-ends-pilots-pay-dispute-stays-open...)

Government presents draft law on €8.50 minimum wage

April 4, 2014

On the 2nd of April, the government has introduced an €8.50 national wage floor, which from 1 January 2015 will become the gross national minimum wage per hour. The law is expected to raise the salaries of 3.7 million workers, but also excludes several categories of workers from its scope. The minimum wage does not apply to long-term unemployed persons during the first six months that they are back on the job, underage employees without at least a vocational training diploma. Interns, trainees and voluntary workers are not covered by the law.

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

Greece

Sunday opening disputed

April 13, 2014

A protest of retail employees with banners reading 'Never on Sunday' led to a clash with the riot police. The trade unions said many of the workers protesting had not been paid, some for as long as 15 months, while claiming Sunday opening does not increase a shops' income but promotes 'medieval' working conditions.

English: <http://greece.greekreporter.com/2014/04/13/shop-staff-and-police-clash-in-athens ...>

First general strike of the year held ahead of Merkel visit

April 9, 2014

Following five general strikes in 2013, the first general strike of 2014 was held on 9 April. The strike disrupted all train and maritime transport in the country, while airports remained open. The protests were staged as the country negotiates another rescue package and rumours emerge that further public sector layoffs and restrictions to the right to strike may be expected.

English: <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/greeks-strike-against-more-eu-imf-reforms ...>

Hungary

Household income declined rapidly

April 11, 2014

According to the country specific social indicators in the OECD-report Society at a Glance 2014 real public social expenditure dropped by 11% between 2007/08 and 2012/13. Social spending as a percentage of GDP has declined to a level slightly below the OECD average. The average disposable income is among the lowest within the OECD. And although relative poverty is low, with a poverty rate of 6.8% (compared with the OECD average of 11.3%), the share of the population reporting that they cannot afford to buy sufficient food has increased more than in any other OECD country.

English: <http://budapesttimes.hu/2014/04/11/fact-and-fiction/>

Iceland

Teachers back to work after deal

April 4, 2014

A new collective wage agreement for teachers was signed and the strike, which lasted almost three weeks, came to an end, according to the head of the negotiating committee. Teachers have demanded that wages be increased in line with comparable professions, as previously promised in an agreement with the state. According to the new agreement teachers' work evaluation will include more areas such as the number and the workload of students and pupils, their background and combination in a group, teaching and learning methods, preparation and teaching hours, paper work, setting of assignments, examination, marking, feedback, competence level, and possibly more aspects.

English: <http://www.ei-ie.org/en/news ...>

Ireland

Trade union claims large pay increases in last two years

April 29, 2014

Trade union Mandate has published figures that reveal it has secured more than €20m in pay increases for its members in only the last two years. The agreed pay increases range from 2 to 4%. The increase was welcomed as it will secure more decent wages and improved purchase power for workers and their families.

English: <http://www.irishexaminer.com/ireland/union-wins-20m-pay-rises ...>

Public service unions prepare pay claim

April 25, 2014

Public service unions announced that they will be seeking pay increases in 2015 if public finances continue to improve. From the beginning of the financial and economic crisis, public service unions and the government have agreed on wage moderation in exchange for job guarantees. The unions feel that civil servants have borne a disproportional amount of the burden of the country's reforms and deserve to be recompensed as soon as the country situation improves.

English: [http://www.irishtimes.com/news/ireland/irish-news/civil-servants-set-to-seek-pay ...](http://www.irishtimes.com/news/ireland/irish-news/civil-servants-set-to-seek-pay-...)

Deal in sight at Dublin Street Parking Services

April 17, 2014

Hours before the start of an all-out strike, SIPTU and the Dublin Street Parking Services (DSPS) management confirmed industrial action had been cancelled and that negotiations were in the final stage. The 50 DSPS workers, responsible for the city's clamps to be put on wrongly parked vehicles, demanded a 2.5% pay rise in 2011 and decided in favour of industrial action in March 2014. Several DSPS offers, including performance-related bonuses were denied by the clampers.

English: [http://www.herald.ie/news/no-clamp-break-as-strike-is-called-off ...](http://www.herald.ie/news/no-clamp-break-as-strike-is-called-off-...)

Italy

Contract status Red Cross workers uncertain after legal status change

April 7, 2014

Trade unions Fp-Cgil, Cisl-Fp, Uil-Pa and Fialp-Cisal requested an urgent clarification on the employment status of 4000 Red Cross employees. In October 2013, the government changed the organisation's status from a public entity to one covered by private law. The change of legal status put into question the employment status of the employees, as well as going accompanied by rumours of an upcoming restructuring. Communications about the faith of the 4000 workers, including 1500 on temporary contracts, have been contradictory. As bilateral talks and two days of mobilisation on 31 March and 4 April have failed to clarify the matter, the unions have threatened further strike action if no comprehensive response from the ministry is forthcoming.

English: [http://brecht ...](http://brecht-...)

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

ILO Committee on freedom of association at FIAT

April 1, 2014

Soon after the adoption of Conventions Nos. 87 and 98 on freedom of association and collective bargaining, the ILO concluded that the principle of freedom of association needed a supervisory procedure to ensure compliance with it in countries. The created Committee on freedom of association dealt with the Fiat-dispute in its March 2014 meeting (see earlier issues of this Newsletter). In the published proceedings the committee asks the government to act quickly in the case, to bring together the parties concerned, to insure the deductions of membership fees, to watch over the reinstatement of the union FIOM-CGIL delegates and to take all other necessary measures.

English: [http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public ...](http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public-...)

Latvia

Finance union FNA teams up with Estonian counterpart

April 2, 2014

Latvian union FNA and Estonian union EFL, both representing workers in the financial sector, have signed a memorandum of cooperation. The unions aim to strengthen the representation of finance workers by pooling resources and following common strategies. The stated objectives of the cooperation are to fight for job security and to increase social security.

English: <http://www.baltictimes.com/news/articles/34643/>

Liechtenstein

Statistical yearbook 2013 published

April 22, 2014

The Office of Statistics published the statistics for the year 2013. Chapter 3 provides detailed figures on wages, according to sectors. Agriculture is the sector with the lowest monthly pay, followed by hospitality and gastronomy. Average wages are highest in education. The gender gap in monthly wages is substantial. Unemployment figures stabilised at the low level of 1.6% of the workforce. Migrant labour (in total 18,740 workers) represents a majority of the workforce and is mainly coming from Austria and Switzerland.

German: [http://www.llv.li/files/as/Jahrbuch ...](http://www.llv.li/files/as/Jahrbuch...)
<http://www.llv.li/#/1859/statistisches-jahrbuch>

Lithuania

Compensation for pension cuts

April 28, 2014

The government has approved a mechanism for court-mandated compensation for pension cuts made during the crisis, under which payments will be phased over several years starting in the fourth quarter of 2014. The Constitutional Court ruled in February 2012 that the government had to compensate pensioners for the pension cuts. The government will use surplus revenue in the state social insurance fund Sodra's budget as the source of funds for compensation payments.

English: [http://www.lithuaniatribune.com/67361/government-okays-mechanism ...](http://www.lithuaniatribune.com/67361/government-okays-mechanism...)

Luxembourg

16,000 work related accidents in 2012

April 28, 2014

A recent study by Statec has shown that Luxembourg has more work related accidents (2,900 per 100,000 workers) than the EU average (2,300). In 2010, a total of 16,000 work place accidents were reported, 14 of which resulted in the death of the worker. The most reported injuries were stress, depression and anxiety. This was followed by skeletal, joint and muscle issues, affecting above all the back, neck and upper body. Sectors where most injuries were reported were construction (8.1%) and catering (6.5%).

English: [http://www.wort.lu/en/view/16-000-workplace-accidents-in-luxembourg ...](http://www.wort.lu/en/view/16-000-workplace-accidents-in-luxembourg...)

More layoffs at Euroscript

April 3, 2014

Translation office Euroscript has announced it intends to lay off 13 employees over the next two years. In 2013 the company already cut 70 jobs via a social plan, which the company now tries to evade by spreading the layoffs over a period of two years. Unions have responded enraged, arguing Euroscript is using the loss of a big contract to cut as many jobs as possible and does so without due process.

English: [http://www.wort.lu/en/view/further-layoffs-expected-at-euroscript-luxembourg ...](http://www.wort.lu/en/view/further-layoffs-expected-at-euroscript-luxembourg...)

Malta

UHM demands health minister to keep promise

April 25, 2014

Trade union UHM urged the health minister to keep a set of promises that was made before the 2013 elections. Amongst other things the agreement between the union and minister that dates back to February 2013 states that workers who have obtained a master's degree or have the grade of Assistant Principal are automatically placed in Scale 7 of the civil service, that 16 persons were to be promoted to the post of managers and that professionals who had two-year experience should have been automatically promoted to scale. A year after the agreement, the changes have not been implemented. UHM announced that it will be preparing industrial action if the promised aren't kept.

Netherlands

Substantial wage fall recorded

April 23, 2013

The annual Loonwijzer/Monsterboard Wage Index report, based on a survey among 185.000 respondents, describes that wages have decreased in 2013 by 6% compared to 2012. The average hourly wage went down from €15.50 to €14.60. The wage decrease was the highest in IT (-8.5%) and banking (-7.9%), the lowest in tourism and gastronomy (-1%). The financial sector still has the highest proportion of high income earners, whilst workers in the tourism and gastronomy earn the lowest hourly wages (€10.40), with 22% of the workforce in tourism and gastronomy being paid at the level of the national minimum wage. In a reaction the trade union confederation FNV said that the report confirms that the crisis and the intensification of flex work have created hard times for workers. Workers are forced to accept low paid jobs with less job security and an uncertain future.

English: [http://www.iamexpat.nl/read-and-discuss/career/news/average-wages ...](http://www.iamexpat.nl/read-and-discuss/career/news/average-wages...)

Dockers win back pensions after years of fighting AEGON

April 16, 2013

After years of dispute in which trade unions teamed up with their US, UK and Australian counterparts (see June 2012 newsletter), 8000 dockers will regain access to their pension funds. In a long campaign 'Put the money back', both trade unions and seaport employers protested against insurance company AEGON pocketing 715 million euro of the workers' pension funds when it took over the old pension firm in 2007. The owners, who sold the old fund Optas, already compensated the fund with a contribution of 500 million, to which AEGON will add a 188 million redemption package.

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

Building workers treated as slaves

April 14, 2014

Building workers recruited by a German recruitment agency BS Rugovac Bau GmbH have been exploited on a Dutch building site. They received wages below the legal minimum, contracts in a language they didn't understand and were treated with blackmail tactics to keep them quiet. After they contacted the Spanish embassy the local branch of trade union FNV Bouw managed to get their hourly wages up from €6 to the legal minimum of €8 an hour.

English: [http://www.thelocal.es/20140414/spanish-builders-conditions ...](http://www.thelocal.es/20140414/spanish-builders-conditions...)

Production transfer of cigarette factory

April 4, 2013

Tobacco firm Philip Morris is closing its factory in Bergen op Zoom, the largest production facility world-wide, on 1 October 2014. The workers at the cigarette factory were summoned to hear a 'business update' that announced the loss of 1,230 jobs, about 90% of the total workforce there. Some 130 jobs will remain in marketing and sales. Production is being transferred to Greece and Portugal, among other locations. The company has been a major employer in the southern town since 1980. The authorities expect a total loss of some 3000 jobs, including supplying services.

English: [http://www.dutchnews.nl/news/archives/2014/04/philip_morris_closure ...](http://www.dutchnews.nl/news/archives/2014/04/philip_morris_closure...)
[http://online.wsj.com/news/articles ...](http://online.wsj.com/news/articles...)

Norway

Pension dispute continues

April 23, 2014

The trade union SAFE and Industri Energi lost a case in the Stavanger District Court but choose to continue their pension battle on behalf of 7,500 current and past rig workers at 18 companies. The workers think the

differential they receive for working at night should be counted in pensions calculations. According to trade unions the ruling contains weaknesses, amongst others how the night shift differential is to be interpreted. They have now chosen to take their case to the Court of Appeal.

English: <http://www.aftenbladet.no/energi/aenergy/article ...>

Wage deal for oil workers

April 2, 2014

The industrial workers struck a last minute wage deal, averting a strike that would have involved some of the country's top oil services firms, unions and employers said. The sides agreed on wage rises worth about 3.3%, which will favour lower paid employees. They also agreed on more beneficial terms for offshore workers and to negotiate new pension deals at a later stage.

English: http://www.rigzone.com/news/oil_gas/a/132388/Norway_Industrial_Workers ...

Poland

Transfer of tobacco production

April 17, 2014

Imperial Tobacco has outlined plans to close factories in Nottingham, UK and Nantes, France. As many as 900 workers may lose their jobs at the two factories. The production will be transferred to two Polish plants, one at Tarnowo Podgorne near Poznan, and the second in Radom. The group is the fourth biggest cigarette producer on the international market, with brands such as Gauloises Blondes and Lambert and Butler. The trade unions told the BBC that the company made 3.18 billion pounds in profits in 2014, and that the shift to 'Eastern Europe' was solely to make even more money.

English: <http://www.thenews.pl/1/12/Artykul/168557,Imperial-Tobacco-continues-shift ...>

Strike over job security

April 1, 2014

Three trade unions have stated the intention to organise a strike at Warsaw's Chopin International Airport on 7 May. The action follows an announcement that several hundred employees are due to be laid off as part of a restructuring programme. The unionists have slammed the fact that an agreement concerning job security is due to expire on 10 June.

English: <http://redaktorext.polskieradio.pl/1/12/Artykul/166876,Trade-unions-threaten ...>

Portugal

Independent national call centres union is founded

April 26, 2014

Sixty call centre workers have founded the *Sindicato Nacional dos Trabalhadores de Call Centers*, which aims to represent call centre workers and claims independence from established unions UGT and CGTP. The founders say their primary aims are to combat precariousness and to establish effective collective representation in a sector with extremely high turnover rates. The new union says the sector is full of young workers who are rarely paid more than €4 per hour and are forced to work on temporary contracts on a permanent basis. Trade unions CGTO and UGT have warned against the dangers of scattered workers' representation in the sector, but added that they look forward to a good cooperation if the national call centres union succeeds.

Portuguese: <http://www.esquerda.net/artigo/trabalhadores-de-call-center-fundam-sindicato ...>

Special edition with 40 years statistics

April 26, 2014

A publication of Statistics Portugal marks the 40th anniversary of this research and uses statistical data to illustrate the path taken and the major changes recorded in the last four decades (available only in Portuguese). Chapter 6 provides graphs and data on labour market participation, education, wage

development and sectoral distribution of the workforce.

Portuguese: <http://www.ine.pt/xportal ...>

Romania

Romanians unhappy about their working conditions

April 25, 2014

In a recent Eurobarometer poll, a mere one in three Romanians said they would consider their working conditions to be good and 55% stated their working conditions are worse than 5 years ago. The respondents judged their employment conditions less favourably than the average Europeans, 53% of whom considered their working conditions to be good. Some 79% of Romanians said they had been provided information or training about health and safety, 69% agreed their workplaces had taken measures to prevent problems or accidents, although only 29 percent thought their workplace had been adapted well for older people

English: <http://www.romania-insider.com/working-conditions-getting-worse ...>

Railway workers take industrial action

April 23, 2014

Railway workers went on a two-hour strike when collective agreement negotiations with the transportation ministry broke down. The workers lament not having received any wage increases in the last six years, bad working conditions and a looming mass layoff for 2,500 employees. The strike, which was organised during the morning rush hour, halted over 900 passenger and goods trains.

English: <http://www.nzherald.co.nz/business/news ...>

Serbia

No job security for civil servants

April 8, 2014

The editor of the report *Macroeconomic Analysis and Trends* commented on recent statements that pensions will have to be cut. He stated that it is no correct that the IMF is requesting from the Serbian government to reduce salaries and pensions as the media reported. However, a member of the government's fiscal council said that layoffs could begin in the government sector in 2014 in order to save the by the IMF requested 400 million euro in the budget.

English: <http://www.eurasiareview.com/02032014-russia-workers-fall-victim ...>

Slovakia

Strike cancelled after agreement on wages

April 11, 2014

The trade union action that was announced in the engineering company PPS Group Detva has been cancelled thanks to an agreement between the unions and the company's leadership on an across-the-board pay rise of €25 per month and on retaining all social benefits. The salary rise represents an increase from 2.6 to 5.9% depending on the pay grid. The resulting basic monthly salary will be €450.58 (excluding bonuses).

English: <http://spectator.sme.sk/articles ...>

Slovenia

Effects of the crisis analysed

April 1, 2014

In an extensive report that is now available in English the effects of the crisis are analysed. The decline in economic activity during the crisis was among the largest in the EU. Several years of unfavourable economic conditions have brought a significant deterioration in the situation on the labour market, which alongside the cuts in pensions and social transfers in 2012 has deepened the decline in disposable income seen in the last few years, and hence the material welfare of households.

English: <http://www.umar.gov.si> ...

Spain

Authors join FNAC staff in strike on St. George's Day

April 23, 2014

Authors have supported a 24 hours strike by FNAC staff in Barcelona on St. George's Day. Trade unions have been reporting that book retailer FNAC has put the majority of its staff on part-time contracts and meagre wages as well as the company's policy to continuously pressure its staff into reaching unattainable sales targets. When the staff announced a 24 hour strike on St. George's Day, the city's annual book festival day, FNAC reacted by hiring temp agency staff to replace them. In response, celebrity authors who were scheduled to do book signings joined the strike and cancelled their participation.

English: <http://www.thelocal.es/20140423/barcelona-book-day-hit-by-shop-staff-strike>

Judge rules over wild cat strike

April 4, 2014

A Madrid magistrate has ruled that the wildcat strike by air traffic controllers that caused chaos at the country's airports over a holiday weekend in December 2010 after the closure of national airspace was neither 'legitimate' nor a protected right. The ruling, which represents the prior step before a trial, goes against those made by 21 other courts on similar cases and is based on the fact that the decision to close down national airspace on December 3 and 4, 2010 'was not what caused the inaction of the controllers, as they insist on saying [...] but rather the contrary: the abandonment of posts of work, carried out in a concerted, conscious and deliberate manner, was what triggered the adoption of the said measure.'

English: <http://elpais.com/elpais/2014/04/04/inenglish> ...

Sweden

Flat rate pay deal in voluntary sector

April 17, 2014

Trade union Kommunal and the employers' organisation in the health and social care have reached a collective agreement that will run from 1 April 2014 to 31 March 2016. The deal includes a pay rise across the board of SEK 550 (€60) in 2013 and SEK600 (€66) in 2014. The wage deal was negotiated as a flat rate in order to close the gender pay gap between the male and female dominated industries in the sector. The deal includes higher payments for unsocial hours and an additional month of parental leave. Under the new agreement, minimum wages in the sector will be SEK19,720 (€2170) from 1 April 2014 and SEK20,320 (€2235) as of 1 April 2015 for those aged 19 with a secondary education.

English: <http://www.epsu.org/a/10366>

Experiment with 6 hours working day

April 8, 2014

Municipal staff in Gothenburg will act as guinea pigs in a proposed push for six-hour workdays with full pay, with hopes that it will cut down on sick leave, boost efficiency, and ultimately save money. The municipal council will use two different departments - a test group and a control group. Staff in one section will cut down to six-hour days, while their colleagues in a different section stick to the ordinary forty-hour week. All employees will be given the same pay.

English: <http://www.thelocal.se/20140408/swedish-workers-to-test-six-hour-work-days>

Deal on main contractor liability in construction sector

April 4, 2014

Trade union Byggnads and the Swedish Construction Federation (BI) have reached an agreement on main contractor liability in the construction sector. Abuses of labour rights by subcontractors have long been on the agenda in construction. In the 2013 round of collective negotiations, trade unions and employers agreed to set up a committee that would have to come up with solutions within one year. As the committee failed to do so, Byggnads terminated the three-year collective agreement and announced that the construction workers would go on strike. On the eve of the strike actions mediated negotiations led to a deal on a sector wide mechanism for main contractor liability. According to the agreement, employers will set up a fund from which unpaid or underpaid construction workers can receive compensation for work carried out when all other possibilities have been exhausted. In first instance, however, unions and main contractors will work together to ensure that sub-contractors will pay the proper wages and take common action when this is not the case. Main contractors will also provide trade unions with up to date lists of all subcontractors in the chain, in order to facilitate workers' representation and compliance checks. The mechanism on main contractor liability has been included in a collective agreement, which remains otherwise unchanged from the one that was repudiated by Byggnads earlier.

English: <http://www.nordiclabourjournal.org/nyheter/news-2014/article.2014-04-03 ...>

Switzerland

H&M introduces minimum wage

April 1, 2014

The Swedish-owned clothing retail chain has announced that it will introduce a minimum wage on January 1st 2015. H&M said a fair and proper wage policy allows it to attract the best employees. The hourly minimum translates to a monthly wage of around 4,100 francs (3,360 euro) for a 42-hour week. The planned wage is close to the minimum of 20 francs an hour proposed in an initiative to be decided by Swiss citizens in a May 18th referendum.

English: <http://www.thelocal.ch/20140331/hm-plans-hefty-swiss-minimum-wage>

Turkey

Collective agreement for DHL workers

April 23, 2014

After 2.5 years of negotiations, trade union TUMTIS and DHL management have concluded a collective agreement. The long struggle, which was backed by a number of international unions, started picking up speed at TUMTIS was recognised as the lawful union of choice for DHL Turkey Supply Chain staff in November 2013. In April 2014, a nationwide collective agreement was reached that secures pay rises between 32 and 46 percent. The agreement provides DHL worker with social security and assistance with family education and at times of marriage, maternity and death in the family. The collective agreement regulates the use of subcontracting and 750 subcontracted employees will become permanent employees.

English: <http://www.itfglobal.org/press-area/index.cfm/pressdetail/10388>

Violation of union rights by Swiss multinational

April 3, 2014

Trade unions have demanded the Swiss-based multinational company Georg Fischer to put an end to violations of union rights in Turkey and demands immediate reinstatement of 37 dismissed workers. The Georg Fischer management has reacted harshly against union organising, and so far, 37 members of the Lastik-Is trade union have been dismissed by the local management. The simple reason is that workers exercised their legitimate fundamental rights of freedom of association guaranteed by international labour conventions of the ILO as well as the country's Constitution and national trade union legislation. Along with this, instead of settling peaceful labour relations at the plants, Georg Fischer management continues to use intimidation and pressure over the union members to rescind their affiliation with Lastik-Is.

English: <http://www.industrialunion.org/georg-fischer-consistently-spurns-union-rights ...>

United Kingdom

London tube strike halts inner city traffic

April 29, 2014

Members of the Rail, Maritime and Transport (RMT) union have organised a 48 hour strike in the London Underground and have announced further action for 5 May. While three other unions decided against industrial action, RMT members voted in favour of opposing the looming closure of every one of the underground's ticket offices. Last minute talks mediated by ACAS failed to resolve the conflict as hours of discussion did not yield any breakthrough. RMT members have also voted in favour of strike action on the Heathrow Express, where half of the workers are expected to lose their jobs in a reorganisation.

English: [http://news.sky.com/story/1251353/tube-strike-leads-to-long-queues ...](http://news.sky.com/story/1251353/tube-strike-leads-to-long-queues...)
[http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/tube-strike-april-2014-london ...](http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/tube-strike-april-2014-london...)

Strike called off after pay rise deal

April 4, 2014

GMB called off a strike action at Ealing Hospital after members accepted an offer following talks. The offer accepted by the members includes an increase in the hourly rate from £6.31 to £7.31 per hour, effective 1/4/2014. This equates to a 16% increase. Two additional days leave effective from 1/4/2014 and the harmonisation of pay rates across the Trust from April 2015. This should deliver an hourly rate between £9.10 and £9.30 per hour. The members are employed as domestic, catering, porters and help desk workers.

English: [http://union-news.co.uk/2014/04/breaking-gmb-calls-ealing-strike ...](http://union-news.co.uk/2014/04/breaking-gmb-calls-ealing-strike...)

Agreement on pensions after 5 years

April 2, 2014

Trade union Unite has reached a settlement to offer compensation to eligible ex-Visteon employees who filed legal claims in connection with reductions in their pensions resulting from Visteon UK being put into administration in 2009. The Visteon Pension Action Group has been campaigning for years for action to restore pensions to those affected, some of whom lost up to half of their pensions following the administration.

English: [http://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/local-national/northern-ireland/visteon ...](http://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/local-national/northern-ireland/visteon...)

Plea for no minimum wage for youngsters

April 2, 2014

The Institute of Economic Affairs (IEA), a conservative think-tank, has opened the attack on the statutory minimum wage for youngsters and the demand for a significant increase in the National Minimum Wage (NMW). According to IEA, a statutory implementation of a minimum wage at the Living Wage level could have a significant impact on employment and the viability of firms in a range of sectors. IEA quotes estimations that it can cost 150,000 jobs, with substitution for older workers meaning 300,000 fewer young people employed. The trade unions and the National Union of Students have sharply criticised these 'backward looking proposals'.

English: [http://www.morningstaronline.co.uk/a-348e-Scrap-min-wage,-think-tank-urges ...](http://www.morningstaronline.co.uk/a-348e-Scrap-min-wage,-think-tank-urges...)
[http://www.iea.org.uk/publications/research/the-minimum-wage-silver-bullet-or ...](http://www.iea.org.uk/publications/research/the-minimum-wage-silver-bullet-or...)

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