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# collective bargaining

Issue 12/2014 December

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



AMSTERDAM INSTITUTE FOR ADVANCED LABOUR STUDIES  
UNIVERSITEIT VAN AMSTERDAM



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## **European sources**

### **IMF sticks to its doctrine in youth unemployment report**

*December 17, 2014*

In a staff discussion note on youth unemployment in Europe, recently published by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the IMF acknowledges that the critical cause of the surge of youth unemployment was the dramatic collapse of output, explaining up to 70 % of the job destruction for young workers in vulnerable crisis countries. However, this does not lead to the vision that a reversal is needed of the IMF and Troika policies that have been applied over the last five years, including the lowering of worker's protection and cuts in social spending. The paragraph *Unclear effects of collective bargaining* dedicated to collective bargaining is a mixed soup of neo-liberal wishful thinking and economic reasoning without strong evidence. The paper states, for instance, 'Firm-level bargaining tends to limit wage increases beyond productivity levels, thereby having less of a negative impact on overall employment and unemployment'.

English: [http://www.equaltimes.org/the-imf-s-lack-of-vision-on-youth ...](http://www.equaltimes.org/the-imf-s-lack-of-vision-on-youth-...)  
[http://www.imf.org/external/pubs ...](http://www.imf.org/external/pubs-...)

### **ILO Global Wage Report calls for policies to curb wage inequality**

*December 5, 2014*

The 2014/15 ILO Global Wage Report focuses on inequality. The authors find a trend of growing wage inequality and note that this 'places a heavier burden on efforts to reduce inequality through taxes and transfers'. The report emphasises the importance of minimum wages, collective bargaining, paid employment and redistribution.

English: [http://www.ilo.org/global/research/global-reports/global-wage-report/2014 ...](http://www.ilo.org/global/research/global-reports/global-wage-report/2014-...)

### **European agreement on well-being at work signed at GDF Suez**

*December 3, 2014*

The European trade union federations EPSU and IndustriALL signed a European agreement with utility company GDF Suez regarding well-being at work in all its European offices. The agreement recognises the responsibility of GDF Suez and its management to look after the 'physical, mental and social well-being' of all its employees. The agreement contains clauses on health and safety, professional development, work-life balance and gender equality.

English: <http://www.epsu.org/a/10965>

### **Report: EU economic governance has put pressure on collective bargaining**

*December 1, 2014*

A report by Foundation 1º de Mayo (Coordinator, Spain); Institute For Social And Trade Union Research (Bulgaria); Institute of Social and Economic Researches (France); Association Bruno Trentin (Italy); and Labour Institute of Greek General Confederation of Labour (Greece) states that EU economic governance during the crisis has negatively affected collective bargaining. The authors argue that in the member states that are dealing with large deficits, EU economic governance has put

downward pressure on wages agreed in collective agreements, as well as negatively affected the collective bargaining process.

English: <http://www.1mayo.ccoo.es/nova/files ...>

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## Austria

### **Regional wage development in 2013**

*December 19, 2014*

The statistical office has published interesting figures on the regional wage differences. All regions showed in 2013 positive nominal growth rates of gross regional product (GRP) compared to the previous year, ranging between +2.9% (Vorarlberg) and +0.3% (Carinthia). Total GDP at current prices for Austria increased by 1.7%. The national disposable income of private households increased by 0.1% and stagnated de facto in 2013. The highest disposable income per capita was again recorded in Lower Austria, at €22 800.

English: [http://www.statistik.at/web\\_en/press/080237](http://www.statistik.at/web_en/press/080237)

German: [http://www.statistik.at/web\\_de/presse/080235](http://www.statistik.at/web_de/presse/080235)

### **Collective agreement for private care workers**

*December 4, 2014*

In a first round of negotiations the trade unions GPA-djp and vida have concluded an agreement for the 100,000 workers in the private health and social care. As of 1 February 2015 wages will increase with 2.03%. Part of the agreement is the increase of the monthly minimum wage in the sector to 1,500 euro. In 2015 a wage differentiation over the regions will end; thus creating a unified wage scale for the whole country.

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

German: <http://www.gpa-djp.at/cms ...>

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## Belgium

### **Social dialogue leads to several mini-agreements**

*December 19, 2014*

In a harsh political climate the social partners met at confederal level to discuss several labour policy issues that the government has sought to cut. The talks resulted in creating space for collective agreements on the prolongation of early retirement provisions (at the age of 60, and for arduous work at the age of 58) for another 3 years, on the harmonisation of the sick leave schemes that apply separately to blue collar and white-collar staff and finally on the application of a time credit scheme at the end of a career. The question is how the government will react that also has announced the freezing of wages for 2015 and 2016 as well as suspending inflation indexation of wages.

French: <http://www.lesoir.be/737939/article/actualite/belgique/2014-12-18/accord ...>

Dutch: <http://www.demorgen.be/economie/sociale-partners-bereiken-compromis ...>

### **Rolling strikes, actions and general strike paralyse country**

*December 16, 2014*

A 24-hour general strike on 15 December brought the country to a standstill. The strike, as the culmination of a month of rolling strikes and actions, was organised to protest against the large scale austerity measures proposed by the government. Austerity measures being proposed include a wage freeze, including an end to indexation of wages and a ban on collective wage bargaining for the next

two years. The government also proposes to raise the pension age to 67 by 2030, reduce unemployment and pension benefits and to increase costs of childcare, health care and education. At the same time, the proposals include a wealth transfer to business of 4 billion euros, through cuts in employer contributions to social security.

English: <http://www.industrialunion.org/national-general-strike-in-belgium-rejects-austerity>

### **Unions meet to discuss global strategy for Holcim-Lafarge merger**

*December 4, 2014*

The building, industry and chemical workers union ACV/CSC-BIE, the European Federation of Building and Woodworkers (EFBWW), the Building and Wood Workers' International (BWI) and IndustriALL Global Union met to discuss a global trade union strategy for the merger of cement producers Holcim and Lafarge. Unions from 22 countries will work together in confronting a merger that will take place in the first half of 2015 and is expected to lead to large scale restructuring. Union priorities are respect for collective bargaining, equal pay for equal work and decent working conditions.

English: <http://www.industrialunion.org/holcim-lafarge-no-merger-without-workers-rights>

### **White paper with measures to improve transport sector**

*December 1, 2014*

During a seminar in November 2014 the transport workers union launched the results of a research project on the practice of letter-box companies and social dumping in the international road transport. The report, written in three languages, is now available online. It comes with 25 measures to improve the working conditions in the sector. Measure number 6 is the introduction of an EU regulation or European collective agreement prescribing a certain level of social conditions for the carriage of goods by road. Such an EU regulation could provide drivers with a minimum level of protection. Measure 13 asks for the inclusion of the place of employment in a law or collective agreement. Other measures include the harmonisation of social legislation in Europe, the introduction of a minimum wage and better access to local courts.

English (Dutch, French): [http://www.btb-abvv.be/images/stories/Wegvervoer/sociale\\_dumping ...](http://www.btb-abvv.be/images/stories/Wegvervoer/sociale_dumping...)

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## **Bulgaria**

### **Workers mobilise against pension reform**

*December 11, 2014*

Trade unions have organised a large march in Sofia to protest against the pension reforms announced by the government. In an attempt to reduce the deficit, the government intends to raise the pensionable age of manual workers by four months, which would affect 15,000 workers due to retire next year. The country's pension system is facing the consequences of a rapidly ageing population because young workers are migrating to other EU member states. The current retirement age for manual workers is 63 years and 8 months for men and 60 years and 8 months for women.

English: [http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/12/11/bulgaria-protest ...](http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/12/11/bulgaria-protest...)

### **Minimum wage to be increased after pressure from unions**

*December 1, 2014*

After insisting on a minimum wage freeze last month, the finance minister announced the proposal for an increase in plans for the 2015 budget in two steps from the current BGN340 (€173) to BGN360 on 1 January 2015 and to BGN380 from the middle of 2015. The proposal came after meetings with employers' organisations and trade unions. Earlier, the Confederation of Independent Trade Unions in Bulgaria (CITUB) had demanded the minimum wage be raised to BGN400. In an interview, deputy

health minister Vanyo Sharkov said he would strive to raise the pay of emergency care workers at a steeper rate of 20% per year for the next five years in order to boost motivation at work.

English: [http://www.novinite.com/view\\_news.php?id=165117](http://www.novinite.com/view_news.php?id=165117)  
[http://www.novinite.com/view\\_news.php?id=165126](http://www.novinite.com/view_news.php?id=165126)

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## Croatia

### Poverty rates increase rapidly

*December 19, 2014*

During a presentation of 2013 figures the Croatian Bureau of Statistics (DZS) confirmed that the poverty risk rate amounted in 2013 to 19.5% while the risk of poverty or social exclusion last year was 29.9%. According to the data more than one-third of the population or 36.2% could hardly make ends meet while 28.6% experienced problems in making ends meet. The at-risk-of-poverty rate was the highest for unemployed persons and amounted to 43.2%. It was 47.0% for unemployed men and 39.2% for unemployed women. The lowest at-risk-of-poverty rate by the most frequent activity status was recorded for employees, 4.8%. Self-employed are in-between with a poverty risk rate of 15.7%.

English: [http://dalje.com/en-croatia/poverty-risk-rate-in-croatia-grows-to-195-in-2013 ...](http://dalje.com/en-croatia/poverty-risk-rate-in-croatia-grows-to-195-in-2013...)  
[http://www.dzs.hr/default\\_e.htm](http://www.dzs.hr/default_e.htm)

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## Cyprus

### Bus drivers call off pay strike

*December 18, 2014*

Bus drivers of the Famagusta company called off a strike over pay-related grievances. Drivers started their action in protest at frequent delays and the risk of not receiving their 13th salary in time for Christmas. They also demanded the bus company to make its payment to the provident fund and other funds, which had not been made since May. The company said it was waiting for the transport ministry to give the money because even without a strike, the company did not have any fuel to run its service. In a statement workers called off the strike as a goodwill gesture, anticipating that the employer would pay their Christmas bonus before Christmas.

English: <http://cyprus-mail.com/2014/12/18/famagusta-bus-strike/>

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## Czech Republic

### Agency workers at carmaker TPCA to lose jobs

*December 17, 2014*

Car manufacturer TPCA, which produces Toyota, Peugeot and Citroen models, has announced it will dismiss up to 500 agency workers from March 2015 onwards. The company said the job cuts are in response to falling demand. TPCA employs 3,700 workers, including 800 agency workers.

English: <http://www.radio.cz/en/section/news/carmaker-tpca-to-cut-hundreds-of-jobs-in-march>

### Wage hikes expected in 2015

*December 16, 2014*

A survey by the Chamber of Commerce shows that almost half of the employers intend to raise their employees' wages in 2015. The employers quote increasing profits and economic growth as the reason for the wage hikes. Larger companies and employers in manufacturing, building and services most

often said they were planning to raise wages. The average intended wage hike was 3%.

English: <http://www.radio.cz/en/section/business/economic-growth-spurs-wage-hikes>

### **Row over salaries of parliamentarians**

*December 5, 2014*

The President of the Republic said he would veto a bill proposing to raise the salaries of members of Parliament by 14%. A row regarding deputies' salaries started when it became clear that the salaries of deputies and senators would automatically increase by 26% in January, unless a motion was passed specifying a different wage increase. The budget committee of the lower house then put forward a bill to raise salaries by 14% starting from 1 January 2015 that quickly gained support. The government, however, called the demand excessive and proposed a 3.5% increase, in line with the wage growth of public sector workers. After intensive parliamentary and public debate, parliament approved a bill, raising wages by 3%.

English: <http://www.radio.cz/en/section/news/lower-house-approves-lawmakers-pay-raise>  
[http://www.radio.cz/en/section/news/president-would-veto-a-14-percent-salary-hike ...](http://www.radio.cz/en/section/news/president-would-veto-a-14-percent-salary-hike...)

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## **Denmark**

### **ECJ rules in 'obesity' case**

*December 19, 2014*

Backed up by his trade union FOA a child minder, who said he was fired four years ago because he is obese, filed a suit to obtain damages and interest from the Billund municipality that employed him, claiming he was the victim of discrimination. The European Court of Justice was asked whether EU law itself prohibits discrimination on grounds of obesity and whether obesity can be considered a disability. The ECJ stated 'no general principle of EU law prohibits, in itself, the discrimination on grounds of obesity'. But it said the 'condition falls within the concept of "disability" where... it hinders the full and effective participation of the person concerned in professional life on an equal basis with other workers'.

English: <http://www.thelocal.dk/20141219/danish-union-calls-eu-obesity-ruling-a-great-victory>

### **Foreign metro workers claim unpaid overtime pay**

*December 8, 2014*

Recruitment company Jobco was found guilty of violations by not paying Polish and Italian metro workers overtime pay. The case was brought to court by the construction section of the 3F trade union, on behalf of five Polish members who had not received overtime payments for half a year. An arbitration court now ordered Jobco to pay the unpaid overtime payments.

English: [http://www.dr.dk/Nyheder/Andre\\_sprog/English ...](http://www.dr.dk/Nyheder/Andre_sprog/English...)

### **Presidency of the Nordic council envisages to combat social dumping**

*December 3, 2014*

In 2015, it will be Denmark's turn to hold the Presidency of the Nordic Council of Ministers. The Presidency will concentrate on four themes designed to strengthen and focus the partnership: growth and employment, Nordic welfare, enhanced knowledge of Nordic values by bolstering the Nordic 'brand', and a focus on the Arctic. The recent economic crisis poses challenges to social cohesion and underlines the need for new, up-to-date solutions. The Presidency wants to pay greater attention to the problem of inequality on the labour market via ongoing efforts to combat social dumping.

English: [http://norden.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva ...](http://norden.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva...)

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## Estonia

### **Medical workers reach agreement**

*December 23, 2014*

The largest collective agreement in the country that covers approximately 20,000 health care workers has been concluded. The medical employees' collective labour agreement that was signed at the National Conciliator in the Ministry of Social Affairs includes a wage increase. The minimum gross hourly wages of doctors, nurses and caregivers will be increased from 8 euro to 9 euro, 4.5 euro to 5 euro for nurses and from 2.6 euro to 3 euro for caregivers.

English: [http://www.baltic-course.com/eng/markets\\_and\\_companies ...](http://www.baltic-course.com/eng/markets_and_companies...)

### **Employment and labour turnover**

*December 8, 2014*

The number of job vacancies increased in the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter of 2014 by 0.3% compared to the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter of 2013 and by 12.7% compared to the previous quarter. 30% of job vacancies were in the public sector and 70% in the private sector, where the largest share was in Estonian-owned enterprises. Compared to the same period of the previous year, labour turnover has increased by 4%, with a total of 77,000 employees that were hired or left their jobs. Labour turnover was the highest in wholesale and retail trade (15,500 employees), followed by manufacturing, administrative and support service activities and construction.

English: <http://www.stat.ee/72395>

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## Finland

### **Retailer reorganises activities in Finland and the Baltics**

*December 18, 2014*

Retailer Stockmann has completed negotiations with the staff of Seppälä and announced that a total of 70 jobs will be reduced at the head office and warehouse of the struggling fashion chain. The traditional retailer stated that it will downsize the Seppälä-operations to concentrate solely on its best-performing stores in Finland and Estonia. Seppälä pulls out of the Latvian and Lithuanian market entirely in the course of 2015.

English: [http://www.helsinkitimes.fi/business/13090-70-employees-face-the-axe-at-seppaelae ...](http://www.helsinkitimes.fi/business/13090-70-employees-face-the-axe-at-seppaelae...)

### **Employers' attitude endangers bargaining system**

*December 18, 2014*

After the case of the ABB shop steward dismissal was resolved the trade unions criticised the hardening attitude of employers that is challenging the whole labour market negotiation system. The reason for the hardening climate at workplaces is economic insecurity. Employers are dismissing employees, changing the organisation, increasing outsourcing and trying to replace collective agreements with less costly ones. Thus, shop stewards are put in a very difficult position. The growing demand for more effective production and increased stress also creates challenges in terms of occupational health. All this is creating a negative trend and atmosphere at workplaces.

English: [http://heikkijokinen.info/en/trade-union-news-from-finland/666-dismissal-of ...](http://heikkijokinen.info/en/trade-union-news-from-finland/666-dismissal-of-...)  
[http://www.jhl.fi/portal/en/jhl\\_info/news/?bid=4797](http://www.jhl.fi/portal/en/jhl_info/news/?bid=4797)

### **Shop steward fired for instigating illegal walk-outs**

*November 15, 2014*

In the middle of ongoing negotiations over a bargaining system, a shop steward at ABB factory in Helsinki was fired for instigating illegal walk-outs. The Metal Workers Union and Swiss based power and automation technology company ABB have been in negotiations over reforms of the company's bargaining system. The trade union and several media reacted outraged to the dismissal for unwarranted reasons. Two days after the dismissal, the union announced that the case had been resolved, but did not disclose the details of the deal.

English: [http://heikkijokinen.info/en/trade-union-news-from-finland/666-dismissal-of ...](http://heikkijokinen.info/en/trade-union-news-from-finland/666-dismissal-of-...)

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## France

### **Christmas strike of doctors**

*December 23, 2014*

Thousands of doctors went on strike to protest against a health reform modelled on Britain's NHS system, and which they say will make them victims of state red tape. The general practitioners and specialists began an eight-day walkout in protest against changes that would adopt the principle of 'free at the point of delivery', a system the NHS adopted at its birth in 1948. Trade unions are also unhappy with a clause that will allow chemists to make routine vaccinations. They say that this will further reduce doctors' already low incomes. They are among the lowest paid in Western Europe.

English: [http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/france/11310892/French-doctors ...](http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/france/11310892/French-doctors-...)

### **Amazon France workers also on strike**

*December 23, 2014*

The trade union CGT at Amazon has called on workers to go on strike, just before Christmas. Strike action could seriously impact deliveries of last minute presents. France has seen a surge in orders because of strikes in neighbouring Germany. The union wants the retailer to open negotiations on working conditions and better salaries. The union also wants what it calls a less strenuous routine.

English: <http://www.euronews.com/2014/12/22/amazon-workers-walk-out-at-french-depots/>

### **Angry Easyjet attendants announce strike**

*December 20, 2014*

EasyJet flight attendants, angry over scheduling and pay, announced a strike expected to force the low-cost carrier to cancel about half its flights in France the day after Christmas. The workers are upset over the number of changes made to their schedules and have demanded a larger share of the company's profits. EasyJet employs some 600 flight attendants among its roughly 1,000 workers in France.

English: <http://www.thelocal.fr/20141220/easyjet-strike-grounds-france-flights>

### **Reports raise alarm on private pensions**

*December 18, 2014*

In a short period of time two reports have pointed to a funding crisis in the pension system. The Cour des Comptes state audit body raised the alarm on private pensions, followed by a report from the pension watchdog COR that monitors the system's evolution. The Cour des Comptes state audit body concludes that the shortfall in the system of private-sector supplementary pension provision risks growing faster than forecasted. The audit body reveals that the initiatives taken by the social partners have contributed to important reserves that could be acquired between 1998 and 2008. However, the sustainable growth of the funds has been obstructed since the crisis started.

English: [http://uk.reuters.com/article/2014/12/15/uk-france-deficit-pensions ...](http://uk.reuters.com/article/2014/12/15/uk-france-deficit-pensions-...)

French: [https://www.ccomptes.fr/Actualites/A-la-une/Garantir-l-avenir-des-retraites ...](https://www.ccomptes.fr/Actualites/A-la-une/Garantir-l-avenir-des-retraites-...)

## **Railroad controllers on strike over automation**

*December 4, 2014*

Railroad controllers organised a three day strike to protest against job losses and deteriorating working conditions as personnel is being replaced by computers. The general workers confederation CGT and the SUD-Rail Union have stated that the sector suffers from a systematic elimination of jobs, as selective ticket controls, ticket machines and modern technology is being introduced to cut staffing levels.

English: <http://www.plenglish.com/index ...>

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## **Germany**

### **Christmas strike at Amazon**

*December 21, 2014*

Workers at Amazon have started the latest in a series of strikes, reported in this newsletter. Trade union Ver.di and American based parcel company Amazon have been involved in a conflict over application of the collective agreement. Amazon refuses to apply the retail collective agreement, arguing that it considers its employees logistics workers and applying that (lower paid) collective agreement. The current strike targets Amazon in the busiest days of the year, as Christmas orders are at a peak. Workers at three warehouses will extend their strike until Christmas Eve to increase pressure on the online retailer.

English: <http://technology.canoe.ca/News ...>

<http://www.dw.de/amazon-workers-in-germany-to-stage-three-day-strike ...>

### **Provisional WSI Wage report 2014**

*December 16, 2014*

The provisional report on collective bargaining in 2014 reveals that most sectoral negotiations resulted in wage increases in a range between 2 and 4%, with a majority in between 3 and 3.5%. This would bring the real wage increase of workers falling under the agreements to an average of 2%. The report quotes the wage development in several industries and notes that some industries introduced minimum wages scales.

German: <http://www.boeckler.de/pdf ...>

**Focus** on the 2014 Monthly Reports on Wage Policy (in German): <http://www.boeckler.de/pdf/p ...>

### **Lufthansa pilots on strike again over early retirement scheme**

*December 3, 2014*

Lufthansa pilots have organised the ninth strike of the year in a dispute over early retirement, reported in this newsletter. The first two days of the strike affected about 150,000 passengers of mainly short and medium haul flights, whereas the third day hit long haul flights. Lufthansa wants to abolish an early retirement scheme that allows pilots to retire at 60% of pay when they are 55 years. Pilots' union Vereinigung Cockpit (VC) has pointed out that pilots at British Airways and KLM enjoy similar programmes. Lufthansa management, in competition with low budget carriers like Ryanair and EasyJet, says it can no longer afford to maintain the scheme.

English: <http://www.iol.co.za/business/companies/lufthansa-pilots-to-strike-again ...>

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## **Greece**

### **Slight decrease of unemployment in official figures**

December 18, 2014

Data published by the statistical office show that in the 3rd quarter of 2014 the unemployment rate slowly decreased to 25.5%, compared to 26.6% in the previous quarter, and 27.2% in the 3rd quarter of 2013. The number of employed persons increased by 1.4% compared with the previous quarter, and by 1.5% compared with the 3rd quarter of 2013. Unemployment among women (29.2%) is considerably higher than among men (22.6%), whilst the unemployment rate for youngsters (the age group 15-24 years) stays high (49.5%).

English: [http://www.statistics.gr/portal/page/portal ...](http://www.statistics.gr/portal/page/portal...)

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## Hungary

### **Protest of tobacco union**

December 15, 2014

The trade union of tobacco industry workers has organised a full-day demonstration against the government's new measures affecting the industry. Some 1,200 employees in tobacco sales and logistics positions will be affected by the government's amendments which seek to place a middleman between retailers and wholesalers on the market with a monopoly of state-licensed tobacco retailers.

English: <http://www.politics.hu/20141211/tobacco-union-to-stage-demo-against-govt-changes/>

### **Report on labour market focuses on public sector employment**

December 1, 2014

The Institute of Economics of the Hungarian Academy of Science with support from the National Employment Foundation (OFA) has published its 2012-2013 Hungarian Labour Market Yearbook. The annual report analyses developments on the labour market, presenting main characteristics and trends. Additionally, the report contains an in-depth analysis of public sector employment and wages.

English: <http://econ.core.hu/kiadvany/mt.html>

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## Iceland

### **Unemployment back to 2008 level**

December 22, 2014

According to the most recent labour market data the activity rate of the labour force in November 2014 was 80.9%, the employment rate was 78.4% and the unemployment rate was 3.1%. Comparison between November 2013 and 2014 shows increases both in activity and employment rate and decrease in unemployment. The unemployment rate has not been lower since October 2008 when it was 2.4%.

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

### **Wage index data**

December 19, 2014

The wage index in November 2014 is 0.2% higher than in the previous month. In the last twelve months the monthly wage index has risen by 6.6%. Real wages increased by 0.7% from the previous month. In the last twelve months the real wage index has increased by 5.5%.

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

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## Ireland

### **New act on bargaining one step further**

*December 22, 2014*

The government has approved draft legislation on collective bargaining, in the form of a revised Heads of Bill that will amend the 2001 Industrial Relations Act, to be enacted by mid-2015. The act has to bring Irish law in line with European Court of Justice rulings. In order to improve the working of the act, legislative provision will be made to provide a definition of what constitutes 'collective bargaining', guidelines to help the Labour Court identify if internal bargaining bodies are genuinely independent of their employer, clarity in the process of trade unions advancing a claim under the act and policies and principles for the Labour Court to follow when assessing those workers' terms and conditions. The unions have reacted positively.

English: <http://www.impact.ie/impact-welcomes-draft-laws-collective-bargaining/>

### **Justice for nurses coming back from foreign service**

*December 17, 2014*

The trade union for nurses and midwives INMO has won an interesting case for two of its members. The public sector employer HSE refused 2010 salary scales to two nurses who returned from working in the UK Public Service to work in Ireland and instead placed them on new entrant salary scales. The INMO appealed the decision via the Labour Relations Commission, the Labour Court and latterly the EU Commission as a breach of Article 45 TFEU that settles the fundamental right of EU workers to free movement in the EU.

English: [http://www.inmo.ie/Home/Index ...](http://www.inmo.ie/Home/Index...)

### **Waterford Crystal workers get their pensions**

*December 14, 2014*

Former employees of Waterford Crystal have reached a deal over pension payments with the government. As reported in the newsletter of August 2013, the Waterford Crystal workers lost about 80% of their pension entitlements after the company and its pension scheme became insolvent. Subsequently, the European Court of Justice ruled that the Irish state had an obligation to protect workers in double insolvency cases and was responsible for compensating the workers by guaranteeing at least 49% of the entitlements. The 1,700 former employees now voted in favour of a proposal that includes an average €40,000 lump sum payment and annual pension payments. The cost of the €188 million scheme is borne by central funds.

English: [http://www.rte.ie/news/2014 ...](http://www.rte.ie/news/2014...)

### **Second level schools closed as teachers strike**

*December 2, 2014*

Second-level schools across the country were closed, sending around 350,000 students home, as teachers staged a strike against the Junior Cycle reforms. In the reforms, teachers' assessment of student performance would form 40% of the certification. Teachers' unions, however, have insisted that external assessment is critical to educational standards. Another day of strike has been announced for January 2015.

English: [http://www.rte.ie/news/2014 ...](http://www.rte.ie/news/2014...)

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## Italy

### **Labour reform stays controversial**

*December 24, 2014*

The labour reforms, which went to cabinet before Christmas, have been very controversial and have triggered widespread protests by organised labour. The cabinet approved key parts of the so-called Jobs Act to ease firing restrictions, extend the duration of jobless benefits and introduce a new contract type offering compensation in case of dismissal that gradually increases with seniority. According to the trade unions the reforms will undermine a fundamental labour right by softening protections against unfair dismissal and encouraging employers to fire workers 'with fewer rights for everyone'. The unions have also protested against the Stability Law, which introduces a package of public spending cuts that will hit the education and health care sectors.

English: [http://uk.reuters.com/article/2014/12/24/uk-italy-economy-reform ...](http://uk.reuters.com/article/2014/12/24/uk-italy-economy-reform...)  
[http://www.equaltimes.org/italian-workers-strike-against ...](http://www.equaltimes.org/italian-workers-strike-against...)  
[http://www.ansa.it/english/news/politics/2014/12/23/renzi-govt-focuses-on-jobs-act-decrees ...](http://www.ansa.it/english/news/politics/2014/12/23/renzi-govt-focuses-on-jobs-act-decrees...)

### **Assembly workers approve deal**

*December 23, 2014*

Workers at a former Fiat auto assembly plant in Termini Imerese in Sicily approved a deal aimed at saving more than 700 jobs. The trade union said that the agreement involves transferring operations from Fiat to new management at Metec components group, as well as an incentive plan for up to 130 workers to resign.

English: [http://www.ansa.it/english/news/2014/12/23/workers-approve-deal-to-end-crisis ...](http://www.ansa.it/english/news/2014/12/23/workers-approve-deal-to-end-crisis...)

### **ThyssenKrupp dispute solved**

*December 19, 2014*

One of the longest and most difficult labour disputes at Acciai Speciali Terni (AST), a steel factory owned by the multinational German group ThyssenKrupp has come to an end. AST workers voted by an 80% majority to approve the agreement negotiated by the trade union representatives and the company management. The company has revised its plans to reduce steel production at ASTI; it will keep two furnaces running for at least 4 years with a guaranteed production volume. There will be dismissals, but only on a voluntary basis. The position of outsourced third-party companies is still under negotiation.

English: <http://www.industrialunion.org/labour-dispute-resolved-at-thyssenkrupp-in-italy>

### **Rome Opera House jobs saved**

*December 1, 2014*

The Rome Opera House cancelled its decision, reported in the October newsletter, to dismiss all of the institution's 182 musicians and choir members. An agreement signed between unions and management, and approved by 97% of the staff, saves the jobs of the Rome Opera House artists. The Opera House wanted to lay off its entire in-house orchestra in order to cut back on costs, which was met with national and international outrage. The agreement makes provisions for a saving of €1.5 million, but saves the jobs.

English: <http://www.fim-musicians.org/rome-opera-end-of-conflict>

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## **Latvia**

### **Dismissals lead to high unemployment in community**

*December 23, 2014*

The number of unemployed persons in the community of Ventpils could increase about 25% after the planned dismissal of workers from the Ventpils zivju konservu kombinats (Ventpils Fish Cannery plant). The company's management has said that approximately 80 out of a total of 400 workers will continue to work at the cannery in January 2015, the rest will be hired on a temporary basis and

officially have the status of unemployed persons.

English: [http://www.baltic-course.com/eng/markets\\_and\\_companies ...](http://www.baltic-course.com/eng/markets_and_companies...)

### **Minimum wage to be raised in 2015**

*December 2, 2014*

From 1 January, the minimum wage will be increased from €320 to €360 per month. The minimum wage hike follows the approval of amendments to the Law on Minimum Monthly Wage and Minimum Hourly Wage by the Government. The hourly wage is raised from €1,933 to €2,166.

English: [http://www.baltic-course.com/eng/legislation ...](http://www.baltic-course.com/eng/legislation...)

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## Liechtenstein

### **Annual wage report (2012) published**

*December 19, 2014*

The average median wage increased in 2012 with 2% compared to 2011. This monthly average amounted 5314 euro. The gender gap between men and women slightly decreased with 0.6%, but women still earn 17.2% less on average. Wages are lowest in agriculture and gastronomic services, highest in education.

German: [http://www.llv.li/files/as/lohnstatistik-2012 ...](http://www.llv.li/files/as/lohnstatistik-2012...)

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## Lithuania

### **Teachers go on indefinite strike**

*December 1, 2014*

After a warning strike in November, teachers from 120 schools have gone on indefinite strike, during which some schools will close down altogether. The teachers have made a list of demands to be met by the ministry in order to end the strike. The demands include the reinstatement of education vouchers to pre-2009 level from LTL 3,348 to LTL 3,774 (from EUR 970 to EUR 1,093); to reinstate the basic monthly salary from LTL 1202 to LTL 1280 (from EUR 350 to EUR 370). Further demands include equal pay for pre-school teachers, the signing of a collective agreement, retirement at age 55 and smaller classes.

English: [http://www.baltic-course.com/eng/education ...](http://www.baltic-course.com/eng/education...)

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## Luxembourg

### **Automobile Club workers reach agreement after strike**

*December 18, 2014*

Workers at automobile club ACL went on strike after 2 years of collective agreement negotiations failed. ACL, which offers a broad range of services to car owners, and trade unions met with an arbitrator in an attempt to unlock the sluggish negotiations, but did not reach an agreement and workers went on strike. Trade unions LCGB and OBGL asked for a 1% wage increase per year, which ACL management rejected. The new agreement will be valid retroactively from 1 January 2013, until the end of 2015. The agreement foresees a one-off bonus of 400 euros paid to workers on New Year's Day 2015. Employees covered by the agreement will also get a 1% pay rise on 1 January 2015.

English: [http://www.wort.lu/en/business/automobile-club-strike-acl-and-unions-reach ...](http://www.wort.lu/en/business/automobile-club-strike-acl-and-unions-reach-...)

### **Use of temporary reduced working time shrinks**

*December 16, 2014*

The so-called 'chômage partiel' scheme allows companies to save labour costs, with workers compensated for lost wages by the state. The cost-cutting method was increasingly used in recent months; over 2,600 employees worked reduced hours during December. However, this number is to halve next month. The state economic committee approved 20 requests by companies to place employees under reduced working hours; only 1,227 workers will be affected by the measure. This will mark the first dip in the number of workers placed under reduced working hours since August 2014, when 844 people worked reduced hours.

English: [http://www.wort.lu/en/business/chomage-partiel-number-of-people ...](http://www.wort.lu/en/business/chomage-partiel-number-of-people-...)

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## Malta

### **Deal in health care**

*December 19, 2014*

Trade union UHM reached an agreement with the government on timeframes for the employment of new foreign health care graduates. This is the result of the protest at unaddressed staff shortages by some 800 state healthcare workers, including physiotherapists, radiographers and occupational therapists.

English: [http://www.timesofmalta.com/articles/view/20141219/local/agreement-on ...](http://www.timesofmalta.com/articles/view/20141219/local/agreement-on-...)

### **Collective agreement for WasteServ employees**

*December 2, 2014*

After four years of negotiations, employees at waste recycling company WasteServ have been awarded their first collective agreement in the company's 12 years of existence. WasteServ management and trade union UHM closed the agreement, which includes clauses on pay, benefits, family friendly measures and continuous training and development.

English: [http://www.independent.com.mt/articles/2014-12-02/local-news/First-collective ...](http://www.independent.com.mt/articles/2014-12-02/local-news/First-collective-...)

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## Netherlands

### **Merger creates single FNV union**

*December 20, 2014*

The congresses of four trade unions affiliated to the confederation FNV voted in favour of a merger that will create a single FNV trade union organisation. Following the positive vote by FNV Bondgenoten, which voted against the merger earlier on in October, the merger will go ahead. From 1 January 2015, former unions Abvakabo FNV (public sector), FNV Bondgenoten (private sector), FNV Bouw (construction), FNV Sport and the FNV confederation will merge to become the new FNV. With FNV Bondgenoten on board, all large affiliates have opted into the merger. The congress of a fifth FNV affiliated trade union, FNV Kiem (artists and printing industry), voted on 20 December with a 66% majority to enter talks for joining the new FNV later on, while several smaller unions have voted to remain affiliated but not to participate in the merger.

English: [http://unionrenewal.blogspot.nl/2014/11/dutch-unions-approve-merger ...](http://unionrenewal.blogspot.nl/2014/11/dutch-unions-approve-merger-...)

Dutch: [http://www.fnv.nl/over-fnv/pers ...](http://www.fnv.nl/over-fnv/pers-...)

## **Report lifting heavy loads reviewed with Lidl management**

*December 15, 2014*

The lifting of heavy loads at distribution centres of the retail chain Lidl has been discussed with the management. The FNV Commerce section and the management came to an agreement based on a report with recommendations that was published in May 2014. It will lead to the abolition of the existing performance standard system, to health and safety training for management and workers, to the introduction of mechanical equipment for the lifting of heavy loads and to the supply of protective clothing.

Dutch: [http://www.fnv.nl/over-fnv/pers ...](http://www.fnv.nl/over-fnv/pers...)  
[http://www.fnv.nl/site/over-de-fnv/perskamer ...](http://www.fnv.nl/site/over-de-fnv/perskamer...)

## **Payroll companies concerned about new legislation**

*December 2, 2014*

Payroll companies have said that legislation coming into force on 1 January 2015 is unclear. A new law will align the protection of payroll employees against dismissal with that of permanent employees at the client firms. The major change with the current regime is that firms will no longer be able to dismiss workers on payroll contracts without stating the reason. Under the new law, dismissals will fall under the regular procedure, in which justifications of economic reasons for dismissal need to be provided to the public employment services (UWV). The payroll companies are saying that they support the legislation, but that its broad scope means that some temporary agency workers will inadvertently fall under the new law too.

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

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## **Norway**

### **Industrial action looms as management refuses negotiations**

*December 18, 2014*

In recent months the industrial relations in the oil and affiliated trades have hardened. In Rowan, an oil company, the management has refused to step into local wage negotiations. The trade unions are considering a strike that could hit onshore employees. The Industri Energi union has made clear that it can't accept a dictate regarding pay in 2014, where there is a clear negotiations right. According to the union the management move is in breach with a deal between the union and the Norwegian Shipowners' Association.

English: [http://www.aftenbladet.no/energi/aenergy ...](http://www.aftenbladet.no/energi/aenergy...)

### **Strike threat over job losses at Statoil**

*December 2, 2014*

SAFE trade union has threatened to organise labour disruptions if the government does not intervene to prevent further job losses at Statoil. Oil producers have cut about 7,000 jobs in the last months to compensate for rising costs and falling oil prices. The industrial actions by SAFE would constitute a political strike, last roughly eight hours and will probably not interrupt production.

English: [http://www.businessweek.com/news/2014-12-02/norway-oil-workers-threaten ...](http://www.businessweek.com/news/2014-12-02/norway-oil-workers-threaten...)

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## **Poland**

### **Average wage increase of 2.7% in 12 months**

*December 16, 2014*

The average wage in November increased at an annual pace of 2.7%, according to figures that were

revealed by the Central Statistical Office (GUS). Wage growth fell short of analyst expectations of a roughly flat pace of expansion from previous month's 3.8%. The average wage broke the barrier of PLN 4,000 (950 euro) per month for the first time ever in November after rising 0.6% on the previous month to PLN 4,004.80.

English: [http://www.thenews.pl/1/12/Artykul/190788,Polands-average-wage-up ...](http://www.thenews.pl/1/12/Artykul/190788,Polands-average-wage-up-...)  
[http://stat.gov.pl/en/topics/other-studies/informations-on-socio-economic-situation ...](http://stat.gov.pl/en/topics/other-studies/informations-on-socio-economic-situation-...)

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## Portugal

### **TAP Portugal workers against privatisation**

*December 27, 2014*

The 12 trade unions representing the workers at TAP Air Portugal had announced a four-day general strike over the festive period, between Christmas and New Year. Poor working conditions, and the government privatisation plans were cited by trade union representatives as the reasons for the strikes. TAP employs over 12,000 workers. Representatives of the national union of civil aviation workers (SNPVAC) submitted a petition to the parliament opposing the privatisation of the state run flag carrier and demanding a national referendum on the matter. The TAP management stated the day before the strike that the strike was averted.

English: [http://portuguese-american-journal.com/travel-alert-tap-air-portugal ...](http://portuguese-american-journal.com/travel-alert-tap-air-portugal-...)

### **Trade unionism in times of austerity**

*December 15, 2014*

In a global labour column the effect of the austerity policy as dictated by the Troika is analysed. As a result of the Memorandum of Understanding with the Troika (May 2011), of the social pact (January 2012), of the changes in the labour legislation (Law 23/2012, in force since August 1, 2012), there is a series of threats that are being imposed on the trade union movement. This has been enhanced by the crisis: individualisation of labour relations and destructive collective hiring; weakening of the power of unions in social dialogue; reduction in the rights and duties regulated by collective bargaining, which is attested by the abrupt drop in the issuing of 'extension decrees' from 101 in 2009 to 9 in 2013.

English: [http://column.global-labour-university.org/2014/12/austerity-policies ...](http://column.global-labour-university.org/2014/12/austerity-policies-...)

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## Romania

### **Latest labour market figures**

*December 19, 2014*

In the third quarter of 2014 unemployment has slightly gone down from 6.7% in the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter to 6.5% in the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter. The unemployment rate was highest (22.5%) among young persons (15-24 years), with a stark regional difference between the rural areas (17.2%) and the urban area (30.9%).

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

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## Serbia

### **ILO convention helps naming and shaming**

*December 9, 2014*

The parliament ratified ILO Convention 94 on labour clauses in public contracts in October 2014. The Autonomous Trade Union of Road Maintenance Workers ATURMWS has been lobbying and

advocating for its ratification ever since 2006. The ratification has been used as a basis for the work on 'blacklisting' of socially irresponsible companies in the sector of road construction and maintenance. The Ministry of construction, traffic and infrastructure has formed a working group on blacklisting of socially irresponsible companies in which representatives of ATURMWS participate. The outcome of such black lists is that companies which do not pay taxes, salaries and contributions of employees and which have undeclared workers will not be eligible as contractors in the public procurement processes where the investor is the state or local authority.

English: <http://www.bwint.org/default ...>

### **Collective agreement in road maintenance**

*December 9, 2014*

The Autonomous Trade Union of Road Maintenance Workers of Serbia, ATURMWS, and the Association of Employers in the road maintenance and construction sector have signed a collective agreement. As the main investor, representatives from the Ministry of construction, traffic and infrastructure and the General manager of the Public Enterprise "Roads of Serbia" were present at the signing of the agreement too. ATURMWS has made it known that it will ask the minister to make the agreement generally binding in the sector.

English: <http://www.bwint.org/default ...>

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## **Slovakia**

### **Labour market, demography and wage development**

*December 22, 2014*

The unemployment rate was measured at 12.25% in November, falling from the 12.35% recorded the month before. On an annual basis, the jobless rate shrank by 1.25 percentage points. However, analysts of the Slovak National Bank (NBS) stated that unemployment continued falling partly thanks to demographic developments. In Chapter 3 of its Monthly Bulletin the NBS provides graphs on wage development and wage growth over a longer period.

English: [http://spectator.sme.sk/articles/view/56354/10/unemployment\\_down ...](http://spectator.sme.sk/articles/view/56354/10/unemployment_down ...)  
[http://www.nbs.sk/\\_img/Documents/\\_MonthlyBulletin/2014 ...](http://www.nbs.sk/_img/Documents/_MonthlyBulletin/2014 ...)

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## **Slovenia**

### **Health care trade unions disagree with pay cuts**

*December 5, 2014*

The trade unions representing health care workers have decided not to sign an agreement on pay cuts and measures to bring in additional savings in the public sector in 2015 with the government. The deal that was recently reached enjoys the support of some 30 out of a total of 38 public sector trade unions and will most likely be implemented.

English: <http://www.sta.si/en/vest ...>

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## **Spain**

### **Minimum wage increases with 3.3 euro**

*December 26, 2014*

The government has finally announced an increase of the statutory minimum wage (SMI) with 0.5%.

As of 1 January 2015 this will bring the minimum wage to the level of 648.6 euro. The minimum wage was frozen in 2012, increased with 0.6% in 2013 and again frozen in 2014. The trade unions have already stated in a reaction that the increase is far from what is necessary to keep pace with the purchase power that has been lost since the start of the crisis. According to UGT and CC.OO and increase with 12.5%, to the level of 725 euro, would be more appropriate.

Spanish: <http://economia.elpais.com/economia/2014/12/23/actualidad ...>

### **Supreme court rules that expired agreements remain valid**

*December 19, 2014*

The Supreme Court has given a blow to one of the pillars of the labour reform: the termination of expired collective agreements. The social section of the High Court ruled by eight votes to six that rights contained in collective agreements remain effective even after an agreement expires. A labour reform in 2012 ended the legal concept which prescribed that collective agreements are automatically prolonged indefinitely until employers and workers have negotiated a new agreement. The trade unions brought the case successfully to the court after having been confronted with non-respect of an expired agreement in the company ATESA.

English: <https://euro-insight.com/posts/morning-digest-december-22 ...>

Spanish: <http://economia.elpais.com/economia/2014/12/19/actualidad ...>

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## Sweden

### **Labour market tendency survey 2014 online**

*December 9, 2014*

The Labour Market Tendency Survey is a sample survey that has been published annually since 1959. It provides information about the labour market situation and the outlook for 71 educational and training categories. The newest report highlights a particularly high demand for engineers (Bachelor of Science) in structural engineering. There is a relatively high share of employers who have looked for first-level nurses and nurses in anaesthetic care, intensive care and surgical care. The report signals also a shortage of educated preschool teachers, special needs teachers, qualified recreation instructors, and teachers in mathematics and natural science.

English: <http://www.scb.se/Statistik/ Publikationer ...>

### **Labour cost in the private sector – data updated**

*December 1, 2014*

The national labour cost index (AKI) for wage-earners and salaried employees in the private sector is produced monthly and describes the total labour cost development over time. The data production started in January 2008.

English: <http://www.scb.se/AM0301-EN/>

<http://www.scb.se/en /Finding-statistics/Statistics-by-subject-area/Labour-market ...>

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## Switzerland

### **Second public transport strike averted after successful negotiations**

*December 4, 2014*

A second Geneva transport strike was called off after the trade unions representing employees of the canton's public transport authority reached a deal with management. Drivers and technicians had threatened to walk off the job to protest planned job cuts and an austerity budget. The strike could be lifted after management pledged not to go ahead with a reduction of staff. The SEV trade union stated

that the agreement reached assures there will be no layoffs related to the level of services between now and 2018 and no reduction in staff for 2015.

English: <http://www.thelocal.ch/20141204/second-public-transport-strike-averted-in-geneva>

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## Turkey

### **Trade union campaigns for better minimum wage**

*December 23, 2014*

Trade union DISK has called on the government to increase the national minimum wage ahead of a possible change in the base pay of Turkish workers. The demand is to increase the actual level of the monthly net minimum wage (of 891 liras) to a minimum of 1,800 lira (635 euro). According to an OECD report on Income Inequality and Poverty, Turkey's relative income poverty increased significantly between the start of the global economic crisis and 2011.

English: <http://www.disk.org.tr/2014/12/net-minimum-wage-777/>

### **Family doctors on strike over on-duty system**

*December 12, 2014*

Doctors working as family doctors in local health centres have staged a one day strike against a newly introduced on-duty system. The Full-Day law, which was passed in April, obliges family doctors to be included in on-duty systems in nearby hospitals. The law has been widely criticised because it gave doctors holding academic positions three months to close their private clinic if they had one, otherwise their contract with public and university hospitals would be cancelled. Fear exists that many doctors will leave the public institutions in favour of private practice.

English: [http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/family-doctors-to-go-on-one-day-strike ...](http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/family-doctors-to-go-on-one-day-strike-...)

### **Union campaign leads to ratification of ILO mining convention**

*December 9, 2014*

After a long and ardent union campaign, Turkey has ratified ILO convention C176 on safety and health in mines. Turkish trade unions campaign for ratification in an international trade union alliance. Amongst other things, the convention guarantees miners the right to genuine consultation on and participation in the preparation and implementation of safety and health measures concerning the hazards and risks they face in the mining industry. The ratification follows a bill adopted in Parliament in September, which included new rights on working hours, severance payments, retirement age, and wages. Over 3,000 people have been killed and over 100,000 have been injured since 1941 to the present day in mining accidents in Turkey. There are 740 coalmines and 48,706 miners in the country.

English: [http://www.industrial-union.org/global-campaign-victory-turkey-ratifies-ilo ...](http://www.industrial-union.org/global-campaign-victory-turkey-ratifies-ilo-...)

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## United Kingdom

### **Pay offer leads to suspension of airport strike**

*December 22, 2014*

A two-day strike planned by ground handling workers at some airports in the run up to Christmas Day has been suspended. Members of the Unite trade union working for the firm dnata - one of Heathrow's biggest cargo handlers and one of the biggest ground handlers across Heathrow, Manchester and Gatwick airports - had been due to walk out. The Unite members will be balloted after a new pay offer

was made.

English: <http://www.bbc.com/news/uk...>

### **Three day strike over pay cuts suspended**

*December 16, 2014*

The advice and support workers of housing charity Shelter are angry over the imposition of a new pay scale at the charity leading to pay cuts of up to £5,000 for new starters, with the pay of current frontline staff only being guaranteed until 2016. Therefore the trade union Unite announced that 400 of its members would be walking out. The action was suspended following talks. The Shelter management came with a fresh offer which includes improved rates of pay for new starters and the withdrawal of controversial proposals to review existing staff pay in 2015.

English: <http://www.unitetheunion.org/news/shelter-strike-suspended-following-breakthrough...>  
<http://www.unitetheunion.org/news/three-day-strike-over-pay-cuts-to-hit...>

### **TUC report: zero-hours workers earn far below permanent staff**

*December 15, 2014*

Workers on zero-hours contracts earn nearly £300 a week less than permanent employees. This is the conclusion in a TUC-report. The trade union confederation based its report on unpublished data from the Office for National Statistics (ONS). Average weekly earnings for zero-hour workers are £188, compared with £479 for permanent staff. The ONS has estimated there are 1.4 million contracts with no guaranteed minimum hours. The publication of the report *The Decent Jobs Deficit: The Human Cost of Zero-Hours Working and Casual Labour* marked the beginning of the TUC's Decent Jobs Week.

English: <http://www.bbc.com/news/business...>  
<http://www.tuc.org.uk/sites/default/files/DecentJobsDeficitReport.pdf>

### **Firefighters' dispute over pensions continues**

*December 10, 2014*

The dispute over the firefighters' pensions drags on. Fire Brigades Union (FBU) members were taking strike action on 9 December over government proposals that will force firefighters to work until they are 60 instead of 55, pay more into their pensions and get less in retirement. This month strike was the 48th period of industrial action since the pensions row began well over a year ago. The last strike lasted four days, the longest period of industrial action firefighters have taken in at least 10 years.

English: <http://www.fbu.org.uk/news/2014/12/firefighters-complete-24-hours-strike-march...>  
<http://www.theguardian.com/society/2014/dec/09/firefighters-strike-pension-entitlements...>

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