

collective bargaining

Issue 7-8/2015 July-August

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



AMSTERDAM INSTITUTE FOR ADVANCED LABOUR STUDIES
UNIVERSITEIT VAN AMSTERDAM



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European sources

Recovery not based on the creation of full-time, permanent jobs

August 14, 2015

The 2015 annual report of the European Jobs Monitor, which looks at employment developments over 2011–2014, reveals that the actual recovery is not based on the creation of full-time, permanent jobs. Non-standard or atypical forms of employment – part-time and temporary work, as well as self-employment – are increasingly replacing the traditional, standard employment contract. The authors used wage data to generate a ranking of jobs. The jobs were assigned to job-wage quintiles, comprising five groups of jobs. When jobs are categorised by how much they pay, full-time, permanent jobs increased only in the highest pay category and declined in all others. Atypical employment, by contrast, increased in four of the five categories, with significant growth in the top and the bottom categories (of around 500,000 jobs in each).

English: [http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/sites/default/files ...](http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/sites/default/files...)
[http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/news/spotlight-on/employment ...](http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/news/spotlight-on/employment...)

ETUI report helps strengthen collective bargaining in a context of outsourcing

July 17, 2015

The European Trade Union Institute (ETUI) has published a report analysing employment relations in firms who contract out part of their value chain, looking at out/insourcing and off/in shoring. The report studies workers' participation in outsourcing decisions as well as its impact on working conditions and employment relations in the parent company. The researchers found both sector level collective bargaining institutions and supportive national institutions are essential to upholding decent working conditions. The report also recommends more policy measures aimed at addressing chain liability provisions.

English: [http://www.etui.org/Publications2/Books/The-outsourcing-challenge ...](http://www.etui.org/Publications2/Books/The-outsourcing-challenge...)

AFP unilaterally cancels 117 collective agreements

July 7, 2015

International news agency Agence France-Presse (AFP), headquartered in Paris, has announced it intends to cancel unilaterally the 117 collective agreements currently in force across the company's worldwide operations. Journalism unions EFJ and IFJ have called on its president, Emmanuel Hoog, to review the decision. Working conditions of news redactions and other AFP employees around the world have been protected by collective agreements for decades. Six trade unions have called for a 24-hour work stoppage.

English: [http://www.ifj.org/nc/news-single-view ...](http://www.ifj.org/nc/news-single-view...)
French: [http://www.ifj.org/nc/fr/news-single-view ...](http://www.ifj.org/nc/fr/news-single-view...)

Nestlé to guarantee maternity provisions in all its international operations

July 7, 2015

Multinational food giant Nestlé has announced a new policy around maternity provisions to apply to all its international and national operations. In meetings surrounding global agreements, trade union IUF has repeatedly asked for better maternity provisions. Nestlé now announced it will be adhering to the standards of the ILO Maternity Protection Convention (C183), guaranteeing amongst others the right to 14 weeks of paid maternity leave.

English: [http://www.iuf.org/w ...](http://www.iuf.org/w...)

Eurofound report finds persisting gender inequality in labour market

July 6, 2015

Eurofound published a report outlining different dimensions of persisting gender inequality in the labour market. The report is part of a European Commission consultation on gender equality. In the report, researchers point the large gender pay gap and unequal care tasks, as well as issues like sexual harassment and discrimination.

English: [http://www.epsu.org/IMG/pdf/gender_equality_in_the_eu ...](http://www.epsu.org/IMG/pdf/gender_equality_in_the_eu...)

Austria

Samaritan federation gets its first collective agreement

July 31, 2015

Trade unions PGA-djp and vida have negotiated a collective agreement covering 600 emergency and medical workers at the non-profit Samaritan federation. The agreement, which enters into force retroactively from 1 July, is the first at the federation, whose workers were previously not covered by collective agreements.

English: <http://www.epsu.org/a/11620>

German: [http://www.vida.at/servlet ...](http://www.vida.at/servlet...)

New provisions to raise wages at Diakonie welfare organisation

June 30, 2015

Trade unions vida and GPA-djp have negotiated new provisions with the Diakonie church welfare organisations that are expected to raise wages and holiday entitlements for its 6000 employees. The provisions related mainly to the calculation of service-related pay and conditions. In the new agreement, a maximum of 22 months of parental leave will be taken into account when calculating pay and benefits, as will 50% of work experience in unrelated occupations up to eight years. The provisions are to raise wages across the board and help women in particular.

English: <http://www.epsu.org/a/11580>

German: [http://www.vida.at/servlet ...](http://www.vida.at/servlet...)

Belgium

Action for more staff works

August 19, 2015

Workers at the federal asylum agency Fedasil have protested against the lack of sufficient staff. They stated they could no longer cope with the surging numbers of asylum seekers. The ACV trade union staged a protest action, using lemons to symbolise the workers' position: they have been squeezed out. Protesters also distributed water and cake to refugees. Quite soon after it became clear that their action was not ignored as the announcement followed that Fedasil wants to recruit 130 extra staff 'as soon as possible'.

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

Deal concluded for luggage handlers

August 11, 2015

Employees of luggage handlers Aviapartner reached an agreement with the management about new contracts, which wipes out the danger of more strikes. The employees had downed tools at Brussels Airport in a wildcat strike. Workers complained about a permanent staff shortage and an old-fashioned working environment. After a long meeting between trades unions representatives and the management, a deal was reached and the strike stopped. The talks ended with a positive outcome: 25 extra people will be engaged on a temporary basis while others with a temporary contract will see this extended to the end of 2015.

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

Chemicals multinational Solvay as best practice case

July 30, 2015

The Global Framework Agreement (GFA) adopted by trade unions and Belgian-based chemicals multinational Solvay was presented as a best practice in new global labour relations at the ILO. Going beyond generalistic commitments to standards and norms the Solvay GFA contains stringent procedures as well as enforcement mechanisms. The agreement has a strong health and safety component and joint visits to worksite across the globe.

English: [http://www.industriall-union.org/solvay-gfa-this-is-what-global-level-labour-relations ...](http://www.industriall-union.org/solvay-gfa-this-is-what-global-level-labour-relations...)

Bulgaria

Government attempts to index minimum wage

July 23, 2015

The government has submitted a proposal to the social partners, containing plans for the minimum wage to become between 35% and 55% of the average wage. The minimum wage has been an ongoing debate in the country, which currently has an administratively defined minimum wage. The minimum wage, however, is regularly raised, including twice in the current year, springing heated political debates every time. The new plan, which employers' Bulgarian Industrial Capital Association (BICA) has already objected to, would index the wage and thus curb the ongoing debate.

English: [http://www.novinite.com/view ...](http://www.novinite.com/view...)

Social workers stage warning strike

July 10, 2015

Social workers in Plovdiv held a one-hour warning strike while negotiations over wage increases are stalled. Social workers around the country have been asking for a 20% wage increase in order to be set on a par with other workers in the civil service. The workers furthermore demand, who are still printing their forms on dot-matrix printers from the 1980s, are asking for modern equipment. Little progress has been made in the negotiations; however, as the Social Assistance Agency claimed there is no money available in the budget to raise wages. Trade unions have announced further actions may follow.

English: [http://www.focus-fen.net/news/2015/07/10 ...](http://www.focus-fen.net/news/2015/07/10...)

Labour code amendments formalise day labourer arrangements

July 1, 2015

Parliament has adopted amendments to the labour code that approve the use of one-day labour contracts for seasonal agricultural work. The amendments were criticised as reinstating and legitimating the practice of day labourers, as well as because work done under one day contracts will not be counted towards the worker's labour experience. Proponents, however, argue that the law provides workers access to full insurance, health care and retirement benefits. Workers will not be allowed to be employed on one-day contracts for more than 90 consecutive days.

English: [http://www.novinite.com/view ...](http://www.novinite.com/view...)

Croatia

Fair Hotels provides insight into industrial relations in the tourism sector

July 16, 2015

The Union of Tourism and Catering of Croatia (STUH) has started a Fair Hotels initiative. The Fair Hotels website provides a list of all hotels where workers' rights are respected and employees are covered by collective bargaining. The site, available in English and Croatian, follows the example of earlier initiatives in Ireland, North America and Sweden.

English: [http://www.iuf.org/w ...](http://www.iuf.org/w...)

Cyprus

Negotiations to avoid industrial action

August 20, 2015

After a meeting between the transport minister and port worker unions broke down a second meeting has been scheduled to avoid industrial action at Cyprus' ports. The two parties will meet again to discuss the planned port privatisations, the transfer of port workers to the civil service, the new structure of the ports

authority and the voluntary retirement scheme. Trade unions are not satisfied with the retirement scheme that is being implemented before ports are privatised. Members of three port trade unions are planning a two-day strike if their demands are not met. Workers at the port of Limassol went earlier on a 24-hour strike on citing lack of progress in the dialogue with the government. That strike ended as the government agreed to pressure the private investor to re-hire the employees and an extra €500,000 was reserved for compensations to the porters and their employees.

English: [http://www.hellenicshippingnews.com/cyprus-minister-tries ...](http://www.hellenicshippingnews.com/cyprus-minister-tries-...)
[http://cyprus-mail.com/2015/07/31/port-workers-call-off-industrial-action ...](http://cyprus-mail.com/2015/07/31/port-workers-call-off-industrial-action-...)

Agreement on working hours in banking

August 5, 2015

The association of banks has reached an agreement on longer opening hours with the trade unions. According to the agreement, banks will open earlier and close later. The agreement applies as of 10 August and provides that banks will remain open to the public from 8 am to 2.30 pm from Monday to Thursday, and from 8 am to 2 pm on Fridays. Working hours for bank staff will be 7.30 am to 3 pm from Monday to Thursday and 7.30 am to 2.30 pm on Fridays. The agreement will be valid until 31 December 2016.

English: <http://cyprus-mail.com/2015/08/05/new-banking-hours-effective-from-monday/>

Czech Republic

Flight attendants strike postponed

August 24, 2015

Flight attendants at the national carrier CSA announced on a three-day strike over low pay. However, the cabin crew trade union was confronted with a provisional court ruling. The CSA management considered the strike illegal and took measures to prevent flight cancellations. The action is in protest over low wages, after salary cuts were made in February 2015. The company management has refused to negotiate a long-term raise in salaries, until ČSA consolidates its finances. The latest news is that the strike has to be postponed.

English: [http://abcnews.go.com/Health/wireStory/czech-airline-flight-attendants-day-strike ...](http://abcnews.go.com/Health/wireStory/czech-airline-flight-attendants-day-strike-...)

Health care workers urge for wage improvement

August 18, 2015

Healthcare trade unionists want to meet the Prime Minister over their demanded pay raise for hospital staff because the Health Ministry could not promise them such an increase. The union said it appreciated that the health minister offered a 5-percent increase in the basic pay of hospital doctors and nurses, but the unions demanded a 10-percent increase, which the minister could not meet.

English: [http://praguemonitor.com/2015/08/19/healthcare-unions-want-meet-pm ...](http://praguemonitor.com/2015/08/19/healthcare-unions-want-meet-pm-...)

People take work with them on vacation

August 11, 2015

According to a study by Intel some two-thirds of the workers take their work with them – at the very least checking or responding to text messages and emails while on vacation. The survey found that of the people who continue to work while away, one-third works intensively. That goes against psychologists' warning that holiday time should be used primarily to break daily routines'.

English: [http://www.radio.cz/en/section/curaffrs/study-two-thirds-of-czechs-take-their-work ...](http://www.radio.cz/en/section/curaffrs/study-two-thirds-of-czechs-take-their-work-...)

Mass layoffs to put 500 out of work

July 27, 2015

The Czech Labour Office reported that layoffs announced by nine major companies are likely to put over 500 people out of work in the coming months. Most of the job losses are expected in engineering and steel production and are due to lower demand.

English: <http://www.radio.cz/en/section/news/nine-companies-announce-mass-lay-offs>

Denmark

Recruitment of migrant labour analysed

August 17, 2015

According to a report from the Economic Council of the Labour Movement (ECLM), the vast majority of workers arriving from central and eastern Europe (Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia, Czech Republic, Hungary, Slovenia, Romania and Bulgaria) work for a select group of companies within the agriculture and service industries. A small group of companies (1% of the country's total) is responsible for hiring close to two-thirds of the newly arrived labour force. The ECLM was founded in 1936 as a forum for trade union leaders and representatives of the parliamentary group of the Social Democratic Party.

English: [http://cphpost.dk/news/new-non-western-foreign-labour-force-concentrated ...](http://cphpost.dk/news/new-non-western-foreign-labour-force-concentrated...)

The report (in Danish): [http://www.ae.dk/sites/www.ae.dk/files/dokumenter/analyse ...](http://www.ae.dk/sites/www.ae.dk/files/dokumenter/analyse...)

Ryanair leaves Denmark after court-approved strike

July 16, 2015

After a massive clash with trade unions over the right to negotiate a local collective agreement, Ryanair has announced it will be leaving Denmark. The dispute between the trade unions and the Irish airline started over Ryanair's claim that it could employ local employees on Irish contracts; a dispute that resembles a previous clash with French unions reported in this newsletter in October 2013. Danish unions attempted to open collective negotiations, took the airline to court and now announced a strike in an attempt to be able to defend local employees' labour rights. Ryanair challenged the legality of the strike, but was overruled by the Labour Court, which recognised the union's right to strike and blockade Ryanair aircraft in case the airline refuses to negotiate a collective agreement. Ryanair has now said it will end operations at Copenhagen airport and will leave Billund airport too, unless the strike is called off. The city council of Copenhagen voted later on to stop all present and future investments in Ryanair because the working conditions offered by Ryanair are inconsistent with the values that the city adheres to.

English: [http://www.irishtimes.com/business/transport-and-tourism/ryanair-quits ...](http://www.irishtimes.com/business/transport-and-tourism/ryanair-quits...)

[https://www.etuc.org/press/danish-court-backs-trade-union ...](https://www.etuc.org/press/danish-court-backs-trade-union...)

Estonia

Pensioners keep on working

August 25, 2015

There are slightly more than 300,000 old-age pensioners and one fifth of them work after reaching the pension age. Statistics demonstrate that people mostly continue working until reaching the age of 70. According to the Tax and Customs Board, pensioners who continued working after reaching pensionable age mostly work in public administration, education and health care sectors.

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

More attention to vocational training

August 7, 2015

The education minister signed a package of support for the vocational education, establishing over the next three-year period 4,700 apprentice training positions to provide students with work experience and integrate training more closely with the labour market. Apprenticeship or work-based learning takes place in at least 2/3 amount in a company, under the supervision of a mentor appointed by the company. This gives the student the opportunity to get experience of working while studying and the company can train new and existing employees. Apprenticeship training participants are entitled to all the customary rights of vocational school students but also wages are paid to the apprentice.

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

Finland

Unions ready to negotiate new ‘social contract’ – but attempts failed

August 22, 2015

Trade union confederation SAK announced it was ready to join in tripartite negotiations for a ‘social contract’ aimed at making business and industry more competitive. Earlier on, trade union confederation of salaried employees STTK and the white-collar academic trade union confederation Akava had announced that they were ready to take part in talks. Notwithstanding this positive attitude, the attempt to draft a social contract for the labour market failed. Both, the prime minister and the employers’ associations called for longer working hours without any pay rises. The employers also proposed several other ways to cut pay. Besides, the government programme promises to fulfil one of the employers long time wishes, to remove legal obstacles for short fixed term employment. These positions blocked a deal with the trade unions.

English: [http://heikkijokinen.info/en/trade-union-news-from-finland ...](http://heikkijokinen.info/en/trade-union-news-from-finland...)
[http://yle.fi/uutiset/sak_ready_for_talks_on_broad_labour_accord ...](http://yle.fi/uutiset/sak_ready_for_talks_on_broad_labour_accord...)

Municipal and Central government accord follows national wage agreement

July 1, 2015

Trade union JHL and the employers’ organisations for municipal and central government have signed a collective agreement, following the terms of the national wage agreement that was reached in June. In accordance with the agreement, base salaries will be raised by €16 per month for salaries up to €3404.26 and by 0.43% for salaries above that threshold. Fees paid by the shop stewards and industrial safety delegates will also be raised by 0.43 per cent.

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

France

Working conditions in education

August 20, 2015

The so-called UNSA Barometer, a survey with 21,200 respondents, was addressed at all professionals working in education. The report highlights some of the problems current education employees experience. 82% of the respondents deplore that their remuneration does not reflect their qualifications and 59% cite dwindling purchasing power as problematic. Other points highlighted by the survey’s respondents were the lack of career development opportunities (45%) and the high workload (40%).

English: [http://www.ei-ie.org/en/news ...](http://www.ei-ie.org/en/news...)
The report (in French): [http://extranet.unsa-education.com/Docs ...](http://extranet.unsa-education.com/Docs...)

Restart of Total plant

August 5, 2015

A strike at the La Mede Total plant (see our June Newsletter) has come to an end. The oil company plans to convert the unprofitable plant near Marseille to process biofuels, part of a plan that will also reconfigure its Donges refinery on the Atlantic coast. Under its plans for refining unveiled in April, Total will invest 200 million euro at La Mede for a biorefinery that will process 500,000 metric tons of fuel annually. The company has said that processing of crude oil will stop at the end of 2016 and that it will cut 180 jobs at the site without firing any workers.

English: [http://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2015-08-05/total-to-restart ...](http://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2015-08-05/total-to-restart...)

Calais ferry workers continue actions against layoffs

July 31, 2015

Calais ferry workers continue actions to protest against a layoff that would cost 600 colleagues their jobs. As reported in last month’s newsletter, employer MyFerryLink is selling off two ferries to a rival firm, which would result in massive job losses. After large-scale actions in June affecting both the port and tunnel, ferry workers are now blocking the entrance roads to the port by burning tyres across the road.

English: [http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/jul/31/striking-french-ferry-workers ...](http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/jul/31/striking-french-ferry-workers...)

Germany

Dispute in childcare continues

August 12, 2015

The family ministry has called for local governments to use the summer to resolve the conflict on pay and working conditions with day-care and social workers so that there is no threat of further strikes. Trade unions Ver.di and GEW rejected a suggested compromise from the mediator appointed to end rolling strikes that have hit much of the country. The mediator had suggested pay increases of between 2 and 4.5% for day-care and social workers in a proposal at the end of June. While union negotiators present at the talks accepted the deal by a large majority, union members rejected it when they were polled.

English: <http://www.thelocal.de/20150812/minister-calls-for-end-to-childcare-strikes>

Employers in several sectors lobbied hard against minimum wage

July 30, 2015

Seven months after the introduction of the mandatory minimum wage information, based on an official parliamentary request, showed that lobbyists from a number of different sectors have urged the government to add exceptions to the rule that no one in the country should earn less than 8.50 euro an hour. Particularly persistent were representatives of the farmers' and newspaper publishers' associations, who met government representatives 15 times in the months leading up to the law being passed in parliament. Notwithstanding this, 3.7 million people have received a pay raise because of the minimum wage, and dependence on social benefits has declined. Fears that the law would lead to a sharp rise in unemployment figures have so far proved untrue.

English: [http://www.dw.com/en/business-lobbying-against-german-minimum-wage-revealed ...](http://www.dw.com/en/business-lobbying-against-german-minimum-wage-revealed...)

Deutsche Post workers stop outsourcing and get job guarantee

July 7, 2015

Following long negotiations and intensive strike action, reported in the last newsletters, trade union Ver.di and Deutsche Post-DHL have reached an agreement over job security and wages. The dispute started when Deutsche Post announced it would re-employ letter and parcel delivery staff at regional subsidiaries against lower wages. Ver.di reacted by industrial actions, including a four week strike this summer, which led the parties back to the negotiation table. As a result, a deal was reached including job guarantees for all workers until the end of 2019 and a moratorium on outsourcing until the end of 2018. The agreement furthermore ensures that 4,500 employees who have been on fixed-term contracts for at least two years, will get permanent jobs and that all 2015 trainees and apprentices will be hired on a full time basis after completing the apprenticeship. While wage demands have not been fully met, the agreement does include a one-off payment on 1st October 2015, a 2 per cent increase on 1st October 2016 and an additional 1.7 percent increase on 1st October 2017.

English: [http://www.itfglobal.org/en/news-events/news/2015/june/strike-wrests-job-security ...](http://www.itfglobal.org/en/news-events/news/2015/june/strike-wrests-job-security...)

Dragging wage conflict at Deutsche Bahn resolved

July 1, 2015

After months of wage conflict, including nine crippling strikes, an agreement was reached for train drivers at Deutsche Bahn. After a year of conflict, political players volunteered to mediate the dispute that had been causing large-scale inconvenience to commuters. An agreement was now reached, including a €350 one-off payment, a 4.5% wage increase per 1 July and another 1.6% by 1 May 2016.

English: [http://www.dw.com/en/deutsche-bahn-ends-wage-conflict-with-train-drivers ...](http://www.dw.com/en/deutsche-bahn-ends-wage-conflict-with-train-drivers...)

Greece

Mine closure leads to grave dispute

August 24, 2015

Workers at a Canadian-run gold mine in northern Greece staged a counter-protest against its threatened closure, a day after scuffles broke out at a demonstration by activists opposed to the project. About 200 workers gathered at two sites in the scenic Halkidiki region, briefly blocking roads in protest at a government decision that Canadian Eldorado Gold said put all 2,000 jobs at the site at risk. The police arrested two union leaders who were charged with disrupting transportation and later on released.

English: <http://business.financialpost.com/news/mining/workers-at-eldorado-gold-mine ...>

General strike against bailout agreement

July 15, 2015

Trade union Adedy has called a general strike against the terms of the bailout agreement reached between the Eurogroup and the Tspiras government. The agreement contains clauses that would make it easier for employers to layoff large groups of workers, as well as further privatisation of state assets.

English: <http://www.epsu.org/a/11573>

Hungary

Social workers threaten to strike

August 9, 2015

The head of the independent health care trade union announced that tens of thousands of underpaid, overworked social workers are preparing to go on strike. According to the union the HUF 209 (0.67 euro) hourly wage supplement offered to social workers through November 2015 does not come close to meeting their demands. Some 30,000 social workers with less than 11 years' work experience are excluded from receiving supplemental wages.

English: <http://budapestbeacon.com/public-policy/hungarian-social-workers-threaten-to-strike ...>

Job losses from Sunday closure affect part-time employees

July 23, 2015

Newspaper *Népszabadság* has researched the effects of the obligatory Sunday closure imposed by the government on employment levels in the retail sector. Using data from the Central Statistical Office, the paper reports that 2600 fewer people were employed in retails now than before the Sunday closure. The newspaper also found out that a stunning 2300 of the job losses affected people who had previously been employed on a part-time basis.

English: <http://budapestbeacon.com/public-policy/part-time-employees-bear-brunt ...>

Nurses vow to quit jobs unless wages are raised

July 2, 2015

Health care workers staged a protest outside of parliament demand a significant pay hike. The protestors, who turned out on their sector-wide free day to express their concern, demand living wages. The nurses also presented a petition, allegedly signed by several hundred of them, declaring they will quit their jobs unless wages significantly increase by 30 September.

English: <http://www.politics.hu/20150702/health-care-workers-demonstrate-for-higher-wages ...>

Iceland

Top earners enjoy giant pay rise

July 30, 2015

Extrapolated tax figures for 2014 showed that the average salary of the CEOs of the country's 200 biggest companies is around ISK 2.6 million (17,580 euro) per month. The two highest-earning CEOs skewed the figure so much that they were taken out before the average was calculated. Financial services workers saw among the highest year-on-year pay increase, with the top-earning 200 financiers increasing their monthly wages from ISK 1.9 million (12,847 euro) to ISK 2.1 million (14,199 euro).

English: <http://icelandreview.com/news/2015/07/30/bankers-enjoy-big-pay-rise>

Health ministry to replace nurses who resigned by foreign nurses

July 17, 2015

The health ministry is looking into options to replace nurses who resigned after an industrial dispute with foreign nurses. As reported in last month's newsletter, an ongoing wage conflict was halted by political players who ordered all striking nurses back to work and forced the conflict into arbitration. After the Icelandic Association of Nurses (FÍH) and the State mediator signed an agreement as an outcome of that arbitration process, nurses' resignations started flowing in. As the resignations have topped 300, the health ministry says it is considering recruiting nurses from abroad. In the meantime, the members of the nurses association have rejected a wage agreement that was finally made on 23 June between representatives of the association and the state negotiator after almost thirteen hours of negotiations with 1677 votes against 219.

English: [http://grapevine.is/news/2015/07/16/health-minister-looking-into-hiring-foreign ...](http://grapevine.is/news/2015/07/16/health-minister-looking-into-hiring-foreign...)
[http://icelandmonitor.mbl.is/news/politics_and_society/2015/07/15/nurses_reject ...](http://icelandmonitor.mbl.is/news/politics_and_society/2015/07/15/nurses_reject...)

Ireland

Industrial action looms in transport

August 26, 2015

The threats of strike action by transport workers have entered the public arena. The anger and frustration among both Irish Rail and Transdev drivers has been building for some time. For many, it has now reached fever pitch. Morale is low because pay has been cut or kept stagnant over a lengthy period. Drivers point to the higher wages enjoyed by their counterparts in other European countries and wonder why they should be treated any differently. According to workers and trade union officials, the relations with both respective senior managements are fractious and issues of staff safety are of constant concern.

English: [http://www.independent.ie/irish-news/politics/the-time-for-action-is-coming ...](http://www.independent.ie/irish-news/politics/the-time-for-action-is-coming...)
[http://www.irishtimes.com/news/ireland/irish-news/train-drivers-expect-strike-ballot ...](http://www.irishtimes.com/news/ireland/irish-news/train-drivers-expect-strike-ballot...)

Report on earnings

August 24, 2015

The trade union-backed Nevin Economic Research Institute (Neri) examines in a paper low pay both in the context of the distribution of earnings within the income distribution and the distribution of hourly earnings across all employees. While the analysis in the paper focuses on the latter, the paper grounds that assessment within the context of earnings among all workers, both employees and the self-employed. As signs of economic recovery continue to emerge, issues relating to quality of life, living standards, the provision of public services and adequacy of income are returning to the policy sphere.

English: [http://www.nerinstitute.net/download/pdf/earnings_and_lowpay_in_roi_neri ...](http://www.nerinstitute.net/download/pdf/earnings_and_lowpay_in_roi_neri...)

Report of the low pay commission published

July 22, 2015

The government has indicated that it will back a recommendation by the Low Pay Commission. This commission has stated that there would be little to no effects on job numbers if the minimum wages were increased from €8.65 to €9.15. The commission's report concludes that the economy is recovering but that it is a two-tier recovery. Some 4.4% of employees are on the minimum wage (70,400 people), two thirds of whom are women. Nearly 40% are under the age of 30. Three of the nine members of the commission wanted higher increases for minimum wage workers. Two wanted wages increased to €10 an hour, while a third wanted the hourly rate increased to €9.65.

English: [http://www.lowpaycommission.ie/publications/national-minimum-wage ...](http://www.lowpaycommission.ie/publications/national-minimum-wage...)

Amended industrial relations bill to strengthen workers and unions

July 16, 2015

Trade unions have welcomed the new Industrial Relations Bill as strengthening workers and their representatives. Under the amended bill, trade unions will be allowed to represent workers at the Labour Court, even in cases where employers refuse to recognise them, in order to reach legally binding solutions. The bill also contains guidelines for the Labour Court to determine whether representative bodies are

sufficiently independent of the employer.

English: [http://www.impact.ie/new-collective-bargaining-legislation-vitally-important ...](http://www.impact.ie/new-collective-bargaining-legislation-vitally-important...)
[http://www.siptu.ie/media/pressreleases2015/othernews/fullstory ...](http://www.siptu.ie/media/pressreleases2015/othernews/fullstory...)

Italy

Dispute at McDonalds on dismissals

August 4, 2015

McDonald's workers and their trade unions are fighting the company's dismissal of 4 union workers following the closure of its flagship restaurant in Milan's city centre. The conflict began on 19 July when managers told employees on duty that the restaurant would be closing the next day. Union representatives were not given any previous information. On 20 July, workers were called to a meeting in a hotel and given transfer letters to one of the company's ten directly-owned restaurants. Out of 50 workers, 46 were transferred to other restaurants, but on a temporary basis or to lower positions. 4 union activists were dismissed. The unions want the company to restore the climate of normality respecting the role of the union.

English: [http://www.iuf.org/w ...](http://www.iuf.org/w...)

Unions demand public sector social dialogue

July 31, 2015

Public sector unions have demanded the reinstatement of collective bargaining in the public sector. The government is in the process of reforming the public sector, but has so far refused to enter into dialogue with trade unions. Public service federations FP CGIL, CISL FP, UIL FPL, and UILPA have organised a protest on 29 July to reiterate the call for social dialogue and warned more actions will follow.

English: <http://epsu.org/a/11625>

Latvia

Political debate on minimum wage continues

August 26, 2015

On 1 January 2015, the monthly minimum wage was raised from 320 to 360 euro. Since that time a heated debate is going on about the level of this wage. Recently, the welfare minister stated that the country's minimum wage should be kept at its current level of 360 euro per month. The ministry has prepared possible scenarios for 2016. A first option is keeping the minimum wage at 360 euro, the second a slight increase to 367 euro, and the third to 375 euro. According to the minister last year's increase was too steep. However, the prime minister of the ruling Unity party has expressed that the minimum wage should be raised to 380 euro per month in 2016. The party leader of Unity stated that the minimum wage should be increased by another 20 to 400 euro.

English: [http://www.leta.lv/eng/home/important ...](http://www.leta.lv/eng/home/important...)

Workers take a stand for working conditions at steel company

August 4, 2015

Several former and current workers at the joint-stock metallurgical company *KVV Liepajas metalurģs* have sent an open letter to top state officials, to inform them about the complicated situation at the company and calling for a solution. The letter says that the investor chosen for the *Liepajas* plant was a fatal mistake, and severely criticises the new owner of the plant. Workers emphasise the humiliating situation at the company: 'People who trusted promises by the company's new owners, quit the jobs they had found after the plant's insolvency and returned to work at the metallurgical plant, have been laid off again'. Workers have earned very little and were laid off on the pretext of failing the period of probation. The remaining workers had their wages cut, social contributions were last made in April, many have been told not to take vacations, and wages are now paid under the table.

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

Liechtenstein

Mobile camper for equal pay

August 14, 2015

During the summer, a mobile home is transported through the country in the frame of a campaign for equal pay between men and women. Equal pay has been established by legislation in 1999, but in practice, this has never been realised. The 'wage camper', a red container, is touring through the east of Switzerland and Liechtenstein with a temporary exhibition that informs about the gender wage gap and promotes equality of pay. In August, the camper is stationed in the city of Vaduz.

German: <http://lohnmobil.ch/tour/fuerstentum-liechtenstein/>

Lithuania

Pension benefits might increase

August 11, 2015

Pensions in Lithuania may increase in July 2016 by an average of 6%, or 16 euro per pensioner. This was announced by the responsible minister during a press conference. The increase will be an average of 6% for all pensioners and requires 75 million euro from the state social insurance budget, in addition to another 10 million euros from the central government budget. On 1 July 2015, the government raised the basic state social insurance pension by 3 euro to 108 euro.

English: [http://www.baltictimes.com/lithuanian_pensioners_may_receive_pension_raise ...](http://www.baltictimes.com/lithuanian_pensioners_may_receive_pension_raise...)

Luxembourg

Law on social dialogue at company level

July 27, 2015

The government has published a draft law that does away with the so-called joint committees (Comité Mixte). These committees formerly had to be implemented in companies with more than 150 employees. In the proposed law that leads to changes in the Labour Code the rights of the committees will be transferred to the employee representatives. According to the Labour Code workers representatives have to be elected in companies with more than 15 workers (in a reference period of 12 months). The act sets the legal frame for the workers' representation and provides a renewal of the information and consultation rights at company level.

French: [http://www.legilux.public.lu/leg/a/archives/2015 ...](http://www.legilux.public.lu/leg/a/archives/2015...)

Cargolux pilots on strike

July 24, 2015

Pilots from freight airline Cargolux went on strike on 23 July over unsafe working conditions. A quarter of Cargolux pilots called in unfit to fly on account of the safety policies not being up to standard. The pilots, who have been negotiating a collective agreement in an ongoing conciliation procedure, said that trust was lacking in the negotiations and the company. One of the main issues has been to get greater transparency into management's disciplinary practices. Pilots report being put under pressure and investigated if they call in sick, when colleagues breaking safety protocols are not penalised. Cargolux has denied the allegations and called the strike action illegal, because of its timing in the middle of a conciliation procedure.

English: [http://www.wort.lu/en/business/pilots-say-unfit-to-fly ...](http://www.wort.lu/en/business/pilots-say-unfit-to-fly...)

[http://www.wort.lu/en/business/union-threatens-further-action-planes-grounded ...](http://www.wort.lu/en/business/union-threatens-further-action-planes-grounded...)

Teachers and minister back to the table

July 16, 2015

After a failed mediation process, reported in the June and January newsletters, the ministry of education has prepared new proposals to be presented to teachers' unions. The dispute between the teachers and the ministry is about an educational reform, which would cut costs by reducing teachers' pay during exam times and abolishing the shorter working hours older teachers enjoy. After a medication attempt failed last month and teachers' unions announced strike actions for September, the ministry of education has now tabled new

proposals. Trade unions have reacted disappointed that the proposals reached the press before the negotiators, but have agreed to consider them.

English: <http://www.wort.lu/en/politics/following-teacher-strike-threat-education-minister ...>

Malta

Work stoppages at ST Microelectronics

August 28, 2015

Workers at ST Microelectronics started with two-hour stoppages (two in a row) in an attempt to put pressure on the negotiations for a new pay deal. Trade union GWU that ordered the industrial action called on the company not to play for time. The trade union demanded talks with the overseas management and said its proposals were not unreasonable, given the austerity measures, which the workers had endured over the years. The company is one of the biggest exporters and employs 1,600 workers.

English: <http://www.timesofmalta.com/articles ...>

Health inspectors to cease work

August 7, 2015

Trade union UHM has ordered all health inspectors to cease work carried out in bays and beaches and any other work including the transportation of samples. The action was initiated after various complaints were received by the UHM that new work measures were put in place without prior consultation of workers.

English: <http://www.independent.com.mt/articles/2015-08-07 ...>

Netherlands

Pay deal in public sector contested

August 14, 2015

Shortly before the summer parliamentary recess, the responsible minister struck a deal with a number of trade unions for a 5% pay increase and a one-off bonus payment of €500 in the public sector. However, the FNV trade union has not signed the deal and is threatening strikes by public transport workers, teachers, tax and customs officials and prison workers. These strikes would come on top of the action already being taken by the police whose unions say the deal is made up of a 2.28% rise over two years, and 2.2% from changes to the pension policy, which may affect eventual pension payouts.

English: <http://www.dutchnews.nl/news/archives/2015/08/no-more-money ...>

PostNL resolves conflict with independent drivers

July 20, 2015

A conflict between PostNL and independent delivery drivers was resolved, putting all parcel deliverers back to work. The conflict emerged over the low remuneration of the self-employed independent parcel deliverers, who were backed by trade union FNV. On 13 July, PostNL invited all independent deliverers to either become direct employees or accept a 10% increase in remuneration as independents. Most, but not all drivers accepted the offer immediately. By 20 July, all parcel deliverers were back to work.

English: <http://postandparcel.info/66363/news/postnls-independent-parcel-delivery ...>

Collective agreement for general practitioners

July 24, 2015

Trade unions and employers in general practice have reached a collective agreement that will run retroactively from 1 March 2015 to 1 March 2017. The agreement contains an average 3.75% wage increase, broken down to 1.5% per 1 March 2015, €20 per 1 January 2016, and 1.1% and 10.5% increases by 1 April 2016 and 1 January 2017 respectively. The collective agreement contains several other clauses, including the abolition of obligatory night shifts for employees of 62 years and older, the possibility to buy or sell up to 38 hours of paid leave per year and an increase of interns' allowances from €100 to €150 per month. From 1

January 2016, unemployment benefits will start being reduced in length and build up with tenure.

English: <http://www.epsu.org/a/11618>

Dutch: [http://www.fnv.nl/over-fnv/nieuws/nieuwsarchief/2015/juli ...](http://www.fnv.nl/over-fnv/nieuws/nieuwsarchief/2015/juli...)

Norway

Laid off foreign workers deprived from unemployment benefits

August 10, 2015

As layoffs in the oil industry abound, many foreign workers and expatriates who have lost their jobs are discovering that they are being denied unemployment benefits. They are often forced to leave the country when faced with the loss of income. The trade union for engineers and other workers in the technology sector talks about a 'lose-lose' situation because employers lose valuable competence and the workers run into serious problems.

English: <http://www.newsinenglish.no/2015/08/10/laid-off-foreigners-denied-benefits/>

Culture sector employers refused invitation to re-negotiate pension scheme

July 31, 2015

Employers in the culture sector have refused to start negotiations over a new pension scheme for workers in theatre, ballet, opera and orchestras. The Fagforbundet trade union of the sector had proposed a new hybrid pension scheme to replace the current defined benefits scheme. Employers' organisation Spekter refused to discuss hybrid options and wants to change to a full-defined contributions scheme.

English: <http://epsu.org/a/11622>

Poland

Dockworkers launch global campaign for right to bargain collectively

August 28, 2015

Dockworkers at the port of Gdansk staged a protest demanding a collective bargaining agreement. Employer DCT has refused to open negotiations for a collective agreement, leaving the dockers uncovered by any social dialogue. Trade union organisers explained the workers do not just want to negotiate for higher wages, but prioritise having secure employment contracts and decent working conditions. Despite the growth of the union, management has repeatedly failed to address adequately members' concerns over important issues including temporary contracts, pay, holiday working and meaningful negotiation. It also brought in a legal firm to handle negotiations with the union over a collective bargaining agreement. Members have reported intimidation and threats of dismissal, while ten union activists have been forced to leave.

English: [http://www.itfglobal.org/en/news-events/news/2015/august/global-campaign ...](http://www.itfglobal.org/en/news-events/news/2015/august/global-campaign...)

Strikes loom for mine rescue

August 25, 2015

The mining trade unions have threatened possible strikes from October if the government fails to find investors for coal producer Kompania Weglowa. In an agreement signed in January, the government promised miners that by the end of September it would find investors to safeguard Kompania Weglowa's survival. The agreement followed a series of miners' protests, which forced the government to back away from a plan to shut down some mines.

English: [http://af.reuters.com/article ...](http://af.reuters.com/article...)

Portugal

Groundforce workers announce actions

August 21, 2015

The trade union representing Groundforce's workers announced new strikes. It said the action could involve employees and human resource companies that work for it. The strike action is being staged in protest to the use of temporary workers, work hours and salaries. Groundforce provides services to over 150 airline companies at the airports in Lisbon, Porto, Funchal and Porto Santo. Earlier on ground handling baggage workers had organised a five-hour strike at Lisbon Portela airport on 31 July. The handlers protested against the privatisation in the sector and demanded a pay raise. The baggage handlers have not received any pay raise since 2008.

English: [http://www.theportugalnews.com/news/groundforce-handlers-strike ...](http://www.theportugalnews.com/news/groundforce-handlers-strike...)
[http://portuguese-american-journal.com/travel-alert-portuguese-baggage-handlers ...](http://portuguese-american-journal.com/travel-alert-portuguese-baggage-handlers...)

Nurses on strike

August 19, 2015

Nurses are organising a wave of strike actions, with health workers staying away in protest at the lack of government proposals concerning their salaries. The trade unions organised three consecutive strikes across the country and continue with similar action in central and northern Portugal. The main demand is a revision of nurses' salaries, work contracts and overtime pay.

English: [http://www.theportugalnews.com/news/nurses-launch-new-action ...](http://www.theportugalnews.com/news/nurses-launch-new-action...)

Teachers take to the streets

July 6, 2015

Teachers and researchers organised a demonstration in Lisbon to sound their commitment to professional and quality education, warning reforms in the past years have made that harder to deliver. Budget cuts have left schools with 3.2 billion and 20% lower staff levels. Teachers report their work pressure has increased tremendously, as they teach more hours, have to take on additional non-teaching tasks and receive less training.

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

Romania

Court rules air traffic controller strike legal

August 28, 2015

Air traffic controllers staged a two-hour strike on 15 July after collective agreement negotiations broke down. The strike delayed flights scheduled to land and take off from Bucharest's Henri Coanda International Airport. The Administration of Air Traffic Services (ROMATSA) challenged a strike announced for 1 September in court. The Bucharest Court ruled that the announced strike was legal. The court's decision is not final, however, and can be appealed. The traffic controllers put forward fourteen demands, including a pay hike and the right of traffic controllers to move to other positions inside the company after they reach the age limit of 55 years. Negotiations over a collective agreement have been going on for months without yielding any results.

English: [http://www.romania-insider.com/romania-air-flight-controllers-strike ...](http://www.romania-insider.com/romania-air-flight-controllers-strike...)
<http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/romania-s-capital-airport-hit-by-strike>
[http://www.novinite.com/view ...](http://www.novinite.com/view...)

Wage increases for doctors after strike threat

August 27, 2015

The government approved an Emergency Ordinance that increases the wages in the healthcare system by 25%. The measure will come into force from 1 October, according to the executive. The government decided to increase the salaries in the healthcare system after thousands of doctors threatened to start a general strike. Over 32,000 doctors joined a Facebook group where they were discussing about a general strike due to the low salaries.

English: [http://www.romania-insider.com/romania-s-government-doctors ...](http://www.romania-insider.com/romania-s-government-doctors...)

Pay cuts at national television broadcaster

July 29, 2015

National television broadcaster TVR is reducing working time from five to four days, resulting in a 20% wage cut across the board. TVR has been experiencing financial difficulties, culminating in the tax authority's decision to block its accounts last week. TVR said it is reducing working time, cutting expenses on external contractors by 75% and giving up high-cost television productions. The station has also communicated to trade unions that it intends to start negotiations over layoffs.

English: [http://www.romania-insider.com/romanias-national-television-cuts ...](http://www.romania-insider.com/romanias-national-television-cuts-...)

Serbia

Pay increase promised

July 27, 2015

The government has stated that 360,000 public sector workers can expect a pay raise in 2015, although this increase will not be the same as the cuts resulting from the government's austerity measures. The government's plan is that educational workers get the highest raise, followed by health care workers, doctors, nurses, soldiers, police officers and social workers. A further increase of salaries and pensions in 2016 was also promised.

English: [http://inserbia.info/today/2015/07/vucic-salaries-and-pensions-will-be-increased ...](http://inserbia.info/today/2015/07/vucic-salaries-and-pensions-will-be-increased-...)

Slovakia

Data on wage increase in first half of 2015

August 11, 2015

The statistical office published data over the first half of 2015. In this period, the monthly average wage rose, compared with the same period of 2014, in accommodation by 4.7% (it stood at 623 euro), sale and repair of motor vehicles by 3.7% (845 euro), transportation and storage by 3.7% (791 euro), food and beverage service activities by 2.7% (375 euro), construction by 2.4% (595 euro), industry by 2.3% (937 euro), retail trade by 2.2% (591 euro), selected market services by 0.3% (806 euro), information and communication by 0.1% (1 752 euro). It was reduced only in wholesale by 1.5% (808 euro).

English: <http://spectator.sme.sk/c/20059409/salaries-increased-the-first-half-of-2015.html>

Health workers demand law on guaranteed salaries applies to entire sector

July 28, 2015

Health workers have submitted a motion to ensure that a new law guaranteeing their salaries will apply across the sector and not just in state hospitals. The workers are supportive of the plan that improves both remuneration and the security of workers by guaranteeing salaries. However, the draft law is foreseen to apply only to state hospitals. Unions and professional health care organisations are demanding it be extended to cover the entire sector and have announced they are prepared to organise industrial action.

English: [http://spectator.sme.sk/c/20059087/health-workers-want-guaranteed-salaries ...](http://spectator.sme.sk/c/20059087/health-workers-want-guaranteed-salaries-...)

Slovenia

Union front in favour of redefining minimum wage

August 27, 2015

The trade unions have started to collect 5,000 authenticated signatures in support of their proposal to amend in the shortest time possible the law on the definition of the minimum wage, to enter into force on January 1, 2016. Once again, they emphasised that it would not mean an increase of the minimum wage, but exclusion of bonus for inconvenient working hours from the present definition.

English: [http://www.rtv slo.si/news-in-english/unions-have-closed-ranks-and-call ...](http://www.rtv slo.si/news-in-english/unions-have-closed-ranks-and-call-...)

Company puts workers on unpaid leave

August 13, 2015

State owned stockings maker Polzela placed 265 of its workers on unpaid leave. The company is unable to resume operations because the Slovenian Financial Administration froze Polzela's account after the company failed to pay 500,000 euros in outstanding taxes.

English: [http://www.rtv slo.si/news-in-english/polzela-has-employees-take-another-2-weeks ...](http://www.rtv slo.si/news-in-english/polzela-has-employees-take-another-2-weeks...)

Spain

Train drivers call for strike

August 15, 2015

The train drivers and workers trade unions have called for a series of strikes during September. The 24-hour strikes will probably take place on 4, 11, 14 and 15 September. The reason is a lack of progress in the negotiations on a collective bargaining agreement by rail company Renfe, as well as a failure to reach an agreement on the subject of human resources. According to the unions, hiring of large groups of workers is required to stop the deterioration of the public company, which already has plans to sell 49 percent of the company's goods and to privatise the maintenance of trains, threatening nearly 5,000 employees.

English: [http://www.plenglish.com/index ...](http://www.plenglish.com/index...)

Baggage handlers IBERIA on strike

August 14, 2015

IBERIA baggage handlers at Malaga-Costa del Sol Airport have been called out on strike on 21 and 28 August by the UGT trade union. The trade union explained that it felt forced to call the strike in protest as more than 10 percent of staff were off sick and regardless of the hectic rhythm of work at the busy airport, nobody had been taken on to cover leaves. The workers claim bad planning on the management's part is to blame and say they are paying with their health.

English: [http://www.euroweeklynews.com/3.0.15/news/on-euro-weekly-news/costa-del-sol ...](http://www.euroweeklynews.com/3.0.15/news/on-euro-weekly-news/costa-del-sol...)

Public service workers receive pay increase of 1%

August 1, 2015

Public sector workers will receive a 1% pay increase in 2016. They will also recover part of their Christmas bonuses that the government had cut as part of 150 billion euro worth of cash-saving measures that fuelled angry street protests. Public sector pay was cut in 2010 under the former Socialist government and frozen in the following years as recession engulfed the country, sparked by the busting of a construction boom. In 2012 the conservative administration cut the Christmas bonus. It was announced that workers would get a quarter of that bonus back this year and a further half in 2016.

English: <http://www.thelocal.es/20150801/spanish-public-workers-to-get-pay-rise>

Ryanair sues workers who did not accept pay deal and remain on strike

July 14, 2015

Ryanair is suing its baggage handlers from one trade union, who remain on strike after the other unions accepted a deal. A dispute broke out between Ryanair and four trade unions at Madrid's Barajas airport over low wages, late or underpayment of holiday allowances, lack of basis timetables for full-time workers and respect for the remuneration of medical visits. All unions declared a strike, which led to an agreement on employment conditions that was signed by UGT, CCOO and CGT on 12 June. Trade union CTA, however, did not accept the agreement and continued its strike actions. Ryanair, which has also found itself in court in disputes with Danish staff and is facing strike actions in Denmark and Sweden this month, is now trying to take legal action against these employees in the Madrid court.

English: [http://www.independent.ie/business/irish/ryanair-sues-its-spanish-staff ...](http://www.independent.ie/business/irish/ryanair-sues-its-spanish-staff...)

Sweden

Strawberry packers exploited

July 27, 2015

A union organiser, who has looked at bad practises in the strawberry trade during the summer, found out that the summer workers have no decent contracts, are being paid off the books, and have been the subject of threats and harassment. Besides, it was found that Spanish berries are being repacked and sold as Swedish products. The Kommunal trade union stated that around 20,000 workers from Poland, Lithuania, Rumania and Ukraine are picking berries in Sweden, for a few kronas per litre, while living in old mouldy caravans. But employers says that if the workers pick enough per day, they can make a wage similar to one from a collective bargaining agreement, and that while the caravans may be old, they are not mouldy.

English: [http://sverigesradio.se/sida/artikel ...](http://sverigesradio.se/sida/artikel...)

Swedish unions to back Danish Ryanair strike

July 8, 2015

Trade unions Seko and ST have announced they will be backing any Danish strike at Ryanair. Danish unions, as reported above, are in a conflict over the right to collective bargaining. Swedish unions have now said that if Ryanair diverts any planes from the Copenhagen and Billund airport strikes to Sweden, they will refuse to service the planes.

English: <http://www.thelocal.se/20150708/swedish-unions-join-ryanair-strike-threat>

Switzerland

Cross-border work under fire

August 26, 2015

Whilst the economy is drawing more cross-border workers than ever before, this trend has given rise to a heated debate in the Italian-speaking canton of Ticino. The close to 63,000 foreign-based workers in Ticino make up roughly a quarter of all workers in the canton, with many residents complaining about what they see as an influx of workers prepared to work for lower wages. The spotlight came on Ticino after France's Le Monde newspaper reported on a controversial scheme in the region, which has seen businesses placing stickers in prominent positions declaring what percentage of their workforce is Swiss-based. The move instigated by the mayor of Claro has been described as a form of 'apartheid' on the Italian side of the border.

English: [http://www.thelocal.ch ...](http://www.thelocal.ch...)

[http://www.bfs.admin.ch/bfs/portal/en/index ...](http://www.bfs.admin.ch/bfs/portal/en/index...)

French: [http://www.lemonde.fr/europe/article/2015/08/25/la-suisse-italienne-stigmatise ...](http://www.lemonde.fr/europe/article/2015/08/25/la-suisse-italienne-stigmatise...)

[http://www.bfs.admin.ch/bfs/portal/fr ...](http://www.bfs.admin.ch/bfs/portal/fr...)

German: [http://www.bfs.admin.ch/bfs/portal/de ...](http://www.bfs.admin.ch/bfs/portal/de...)

Global action against Glencore

July 7, 2015

Trade unions from across the world have organised actions against workers' rights violation by Swiss mining giant Glencore. The actions, which were organised in front of Swiss embassies and consulates as well as the company's headquarters, called attention to workers' rights abused and union bashing going on at the company's holdings outside of Switzerland. The actions are accompanied by a people's initiative that aims to make Swiss companies legally responsible for abuses against labour rights and the environment taking place beyond the country's borders.

English: [http://www.industrialunion.org/switzerland-under-pressure-from-unions-worldwide ...](http://www.industrialunion.org/switzerland-under-pressure-from-unions-worldwide...)

Turkey

Public service negotiations lead to pay deal

August 24, 2015

Representatives from the trade unions meet each year with the government to reach an agreement on a pay raise for public workers. During the third round of this year's collective bargaining meetings, the responsible minister announced that the government's offer would increase public workers' salaries by 4% in each half of 2016 and by 3% in each half of 2017. The government intended to give a one-time indemnity payment to

public service workers if the inflation rate eclipses the rate of wage increase. However, unions rejected the offer and rebuked the minister's failure to listen to their objections to what they call small alms granted by the government. Later on in August, a deal was concluded. The collective agreement includes a wage raise of 6% for the first half of 2016 and 5% for the second half. In 2017, salaries will increase by 3% in the first six months and 4% in the second half of the year. However, two of the unions involved have rejected the deal.

English: http://www.todayszaman.com/anasayfa_govt-announces-deal-with-unions ...

Enpay fires 65 workers for union activity

July 30, 2015

Enpay, manufacturer of electro power transformers that supplies to several large multinationals has sacked up to 65 workers in a dispute over unionisation of the plant. The dispute started when Enpay fired all elected workers' representatives. Further rounds of dismissals started as union members organised protests demanding their representatives be reinstated. By 20 July, Enpay has sacked 65 workers.

English: <http://www.industrialunion.org/supplier-for-multinationals-enpay-sacks-65 ...>

SF leather fires union members, sues for damages to commercial interest

July 9, 2015

Handbag manufacturer SF leather, amongst others delivering products to luxury brand Mulberry, has fired fourteen workers for joining trade union Deriteks. The company has made it clear it does not intend to reinstate the workers and is additionally suing the fired workers and Deriteks for damages to its commercial interests, caused by the union's protest rally. Unions have appealed to Mulberry to intervene, but its headquarters have refused to comment, as the court case is ongoing.

English: <http://www.industrialunion.org/mulberry-must-act-now-at-turkish-supplier>

United Kingdom

McDonalds largest zero-hours employer

August 30, 2015

McDonald's has admitted 90% of its employees in the UK are on zero-hours contracts. The admission indicates the fast-food chain (92,000 workers) is potentially the largest zero-hours employer in the private sector, with 82,800 contracted staff not guaranteed work or a stable income. The controversial practice requires employees to be available for work when it is required but, as they are contracted for zero hours a week, employers are under no obligation to use them or pay them a set wage.

English: <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/they-wont-be-lovin-it ...>

Major strikes at London tube – temporarily suspended

August 25, 2015

Major strikes have disrupted traffic on the London tube and Northern Rail. Both tube and rail workers organised work stoppages that halted transport. The 48 hour London tube strike held from Wednesday 8 July onwards was the largest in a decade, halting all 11 metro lines. More strikes followed 5 August. The conflict centres around pay and weekend work in a new work roster due to be implemented in September. The tube workers said they find it more and more difficult to balance work and family life, as weekend work and shifts at anti-social hours continuously increase, scheduling some drivers to work 14 weeks of nights per annum. Following what representatives called 'constructive' talks the trade unions called off the walkouts for the last week of August, but strikes would still go ahead on 8 and 10 September unless a deal was achieved.

English: <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/tube-strike ...>

<http://news.sky.com/story/1530497/tube-strike-huge-queues-as-london-grinds-to-halt>

<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/tube-strike-live-london-braced ...>

Polish migrants protest and give their blood

August 20, 2015

Polish people working in Britain have organised their first ever migrant workers actions in the UK in two contrasting ways: some Polish workers planned to down tools in a daylong strike and head to a

demonstration at Westminster, while others intended to donate their blood to the NHS in a gesture laden with historic symbolism. The protest, on 20 August, was the result of discussions on Polish internet forums by people angry at immigrants being blamed for Britain's economic problems.

English: [http://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2015/aug/20/polish-migrants-strike-blood ...](http://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2015/aug/20/polish-migrants-strike-blood...)
[https://www.facebook.com/events ...](https://www.facebook.com/events...)

Cinema workers get a binding agreement

July 31, 2015

Trade union members at the Rio Centre (Dalston) Limited went to the CAC (Central Arbitration Committee) in March 2015 and formally won the right to collective union representation for their chosen bargaining unit, covering all staff except the Chief Executive. During the following negotiations the delegations were unable to reach agreement over the method for collective bargaining. The CAC heard and discussed the arguments put by the Board in defence of their method and, in particular, their request that the contents and existence of the agreement should remain confidential. The CAC pointed out that agreements of this kind are public documents and not generally perceived as sensitive information. The CAC then ruled to impose the CAC's own 'specified method' which is a legally binding contract. If one party believes the other is failing to respect the method, the first party may apply to the court for an order of specific performance, ordering the other party to comply with the method. Failure to comply with such an order can constitute contempt of court.

English: [https://www.bectu.org.uk/news ...](https://www.bectu.org.uk/news...)

Multinational Sodexo attempts to avoid redundancy payments

July 27, 2015

Multinational company Sodexo has offered redundancy payments to 436 laid off staff that amount to less than 50% of their contractual entitlements. Sodexo bid for and won a contract to run probation in six regions. The company is now laying off nearly 40% of its staff, amounting to 436 redundancies. In addition, the redundancy package offered by Sodexo is far less than the workers are contractually entitled to. Trade union GMB has now suggested Sodexo won the contracts by underplaying the cost of reducing staffing levels.

English: <http://www.gmb.org.uk/newsroom/stop-sodexo-cheating-probation-staff>

Outrage at draft Trade Union Bill

July 15, 2015

Trade unions have called the draft Trade Union Bill presented by the government an outright attack on workers' rights. The Conservative government has submitted a bill in the Parliament that can seriously impede trade union rights in the public sector, first and foremost making it nearly impossible to take industrial action. The draft law intends to change the way trade union members are balloted over industrial action. Instead of counting all votes cast against and in favour, the bill sets out a policy in vital services to count abstentions and uncast votes as opposed to industrial action; the list of vital public services currently includes nurses, teachers, train drivers, border force staff, fire fighters and workers in nuclear decommissioning. In non-vital public services, a 50% turnout threshold is introduced. Furthermore, the law would limit any industrial action to a four month time period, after which a new ballot would be required, and the ballot needs to include a clear description of both the dispute and the planned actions.

English: [http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/key-public-sector-workers-face-ban ...](http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/key-public-sector-workers-face-ban...)
[http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/trade-union-strike-law-reforms-qa ...](http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/trade-union-strike-law-reforms-qa...)

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