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collective bargaining

Issue 9/2015 | September

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

Collective bargaining under EU internal market conditions

September 28, 2015

The European Parliament has produced an interesting report, EU Social and Labour Rights and EU Internal Market Law. In analyses of EU case law and legislation tensions can be observed between Internal Market law and social and labour rights. Restrictions on collective bargaining and supporting industrial action emanating from economic freedoms and competition law have been at the centre of discussions. The report, provided to the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs explores responses by socio-economic and political actors at national and EU levels to such tensions. Based on the current Treaties and the CFREU, the constitutionally conditioned Internal Market emerges as a way to overcome the perception that social and labour rights limit Internal Market law. On this basis, alternative responses to perceived tensions are proposed, focused on posting of workers, furthering fair employment conditions through public procurement and enabling effective collective bargaining and industrial action.

English: <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2015 ...>

Social policy in the EU

September 23, 2015

The sixteenth edition of *Social policy in the European Union: state of play* has a triple ambition. The book, compiled by the Observatoire Social Européenne (OSE), provides easily accessible information to a wide audience about recent developments in both EU and domestic social policymaking. The volume provides also a more analytical reading, embedding the key developments of the year 2014 in recent academic discourses. Third, the forward-looking perspective of the book aims to provide stakeholders and policymakers with specific tools that allow them to discern new opportunities to influence policymaking. The book cites that ‘modernisation’ of collective bargaining has become ‘a widely used euphemism that, in practical terms, points to a higher political pressure (for) wage restraint and ... more decentralized wagesetting mechanisms’. The result has been ‘a Troika for everyone’. The impact of ‘structural reforms’ has been in many countries a rapid growth of a

low-wage sector with weak unionisation and little or no collective bargaining.

English: [http://www.etui.org/Publications2/Books/Social-policy-in-the-European-Union ...](http://www.etui.org/Publications2/Books/Social-policy-in-the-European-Union...)

UBS provides Prices and Earnings data free online

September 17, 2015

UBS released the 16th edition of its UBS Prices and Earnings study, which examines prices, wages and earners' purchasing power in 71 cities worldwide. The study, published roughly every three years since 1971, compiles over 68,000 data points reflecting economic events. The 2015 edition of the Prices and Earnings study is available on a new website, which for the first time also offers free access to all raw data collected from the first report in 1971 up to 2015.

English: www.ubs.com/pricesandearnings

<https://www.ubs.com/microsites/prices-earnings/edition-2015.html>

Collective bargaining prominent on the ETUC congress agenda

September 14, 2015

At its Congress in Paris (29 September - 2 October) the European Trade Union Confederation will adopt new policies and demands. Representatives of some 90 national trade union organisations from 39 European countries will be among the hundreds of delegates who will debate and vote on a draft Paris Manifesto and 'Action Programme 2015-2019'. A large section of the action programme is dedicated to the promotion and coordination of collective bargaining, including a call for stronger collective bargaining systems and binding agreements at national level covering workers in both public and private sectors, including workers in SMEs, in order to promote quality employment, equality, decent wages, pay increases and social progress.

English: <https://www.etuc.org/european-trade-union-confederation-13th-congress-etuc15>

[https://www.etuc.org/sites/www.etuc.org/files/press-release/files/action_programme-uk ...](https://www.etuc.org/sites/www.etuc.org/files/press-release/files/action_programme-uk...)

Travel time counts as working time says ECJ

September 14, 2015

The European Court of Justice has ruled that for workers with no fixed office, such as care workers and door-to-door salesmen, time spent travelling to work should be counted as working time under the EU's Working Time Directive. The ruling does not impact on those with long commutes to fixed work places. The Directive is designed to protect workers' health and safety; outlining how long employees can work and how much time off they are entitled to. The case was brought to the ECJ by the Spanish trade union CC.OO against security company Tyco. The action was prompted by the closure of Tyco's regional office in 2011 meaning staff had to travel for up to three hours every morning to install the company's products. The ECJ stated 'if a worker who no longer has a fixed place of work is carrying out

his duties during his journey to or from a customer, that worker must also be regarded as working during that journey’.

English: <http://curia.europa.eu/jcms/upload/docs...>

<https://www.theparliamentmagazine.eu/articles/news/european-court-justice-rules...>

Growth is wage-led

September 10, 2015

In a research report of the New Economics Foundation (NEF), an independent think-tank, it is noted that, for nearly all European countries, economic growth is ‘wage-led’. This means that the boost to demand from rising wages outweighs other impacts on profits and international competitiveness; growth in national income is driven by growing wages more than by growing company profits. The authors conclude that the slide in the wage share, an outcome of deliberate government policy, has resulted into lower growth overall. Far from boosting growth, and therefore promoting a ‘trickle down’ effect, it has both worsened inequality by squeezing the wage share, and at the same time hampered overall economic development. Restoring the wage share is a win-win: improving both equality and development.

English: <https://b3cdn.net/nefoundation...>

Collectively agreed real wages grow for second consecutive year

September 1, 2015

Research foundation Eurofound has issued its annual report on pay developments in collective bargaining in Europe. In the report, *Developments in collectively agreed pay 2014*, Eurofound concludes that the real wage growth that set in in 2013, continued in 2014. The researchers found that nominal pay was the same or even lower than last year in most countries, but that real wages were increasing due to low inflation.

English: <http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/news/news-articles/eurofound-publishes...>

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Austria

Collective bargaining in metal stranded from the scratch

September 25, 2015

The trendsetting autumn negotiations in the metal sector stranded already from the very beginning. The employers’ Association of Machinery & Metalware Industries (FMMI - the biggest of the six employers’ bodies involved in the negotiations) suspended their participation on 24 September with the argument that FMMI was not informed about a governmental campaign to reduce unemployment. Trade unions PRO-GE and GPA.djp formulated a resolution and announced company gatherings on 7 October in order to inform

the membership about the FMMI position. The FMMI attitude towards bargaining has changed in recent years from partnership into confrontation (see earlier Newsletters).

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

Trade union resolution (in German): <http://www.gpa-djp.at/cs/Satellite ...>

Shift from fulltime to part-time work signalled

September 10, 2015

The latest data of the statistical office indicate that there is a shift from fulltime to part-time work among women. Part-time employees increased (+27 700) and full-time employees decreased (-10 600). However, this hides men's and women's different patterns of employment: mostly men were affected by the increase of employees (+16 300), with their numbers slightly increasing in full-time as well as in part-time. The number of female employees remained on the level of the previous year, hiding a drop of full-time and a rise of part-time to a similar extent (-18 300 full-time and +19 100 part-time).

English: http://www.statistik.at/web_en/press/104091.html

German: http://www.statistik.at/web_de/presse ...

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Belgium

Threat of railway strike

September 29, 2015

The socialist public workers trade union has announced plans to strike early October. The strike call should only be made to rail workers in the capital but because of the nature of the rail network with most services being directed through Brussels disruption could be extensive. The rail workers are protesting against government plans. According to the rail workers section of the union the 'bleeding' of rail workers with life tenure must be avoided at any cost.

English: <http://deredactie.be/cm/vrtnieuws.english/News ...>

Updated wage report 2013

September 17, 2015

The statistical office published updated 2013 figures for the total workforce and the average wages. The calculated monthly average wage for men was 3,356 euro. Women earned 7% less and the gender pay gap did not change compared to 2012. In the Flemish community the average monthly wage in 2013 was 3,243 euro (2012: 3,196 euro), in the Walloon community it amounted 3,103 euro (2012: 3,058 euro). The Brussels average was substantially higher,

3,813 euro (2012: 3,780 euro).

Dutch: <http://bestat.economie.fgov.be/BeStat ...>

French: <http://bestat.economie.fgov.be/BeStat ...>

Taxi drivers protest against Uber

September 16, 2015

Registered taxi drivers in Brussels organised a large protest against the controversial riding-share app Uber on 16 September. The taxi drivers are opposed to the Uber app, which allows private car owners to use their vehicles to carry passengers, bypassing all regulations in the sector. An international convoy of around 300 taxis caused huge tailbacks and blocked off Brussels airport.

English: <http://www.rte.ie/news/2015/0916/728294-anti-uber-protests ...>

<http://www.itfglobal.org/en/news-events/news/2015/september/taxi-drivers-rise-up ...>

Bulgaria

Employers expect to be hiring more workers

September 9, 2015

Employers in all regions expect to be hiring more people during the last quarter of 2015. In a survey by ManpowerGroup, employers indicated their hiring to be up by 10% in the last quarter, a 2% improvement compared to last year and 7% stronger than the third quarter. Employers were most optimistic in Plovdiv and Rousse and least in Burgas.

English: <http://www.balkans.com/open-news.php ...>

Croatia

Employment and wages in 2014

September 1, 2015

The Employment and Wages 2014 report, published by the bureau for statistics, provides data on the workforce and average paid off earnings. The aim of the underlying survey is to obtain data on basic characteristics of persons in employment, sex, education, type of employment, working time, working hours, structure according to the amount of net earnings and net earnings by professional attainment.

English: [http://www.dzs.hr/Hrv_Eng/publication ...](http://www.dzs.hr/Hrv_Eng/publication...)

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Cyprus

Union puts pressure on negotiations

September 16, 2015

Banking trade union ETYK has threatened to escalate industrial action at Hellenic Bank after asking members to refrain from overtime work at the lender, citing the bank's decision to appoint managers without union approval. The union's reaction was also related to a number of pending issues following last year's renewal of the collective agreement by the bank, which withdrew from the Cyprus Bankers Employers' Association and to the operating hours and loans to staff. The union stated that workers are determined to continue until the directors of Hellenic Bank respect staff, existing agreements and labour institutions.

English: [http://cyprusbusinessmail.com ...](http://cyprusbusinessmail.com...)

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Czech Republic

Pay increase health workers stuck at 5%

September 18, 2015

During a meeting with the government, it became clear that doctors and other health workers will see their pay rise by the previously envisaged 5 percent as from January 2016. The trade unions wanted to push through a higher pay rise. According to the government the sum the state will pay to health insurers for selected groups of people, including children, students, pensioners and the disabled, does not make a steeper pay rise possible. The trade unions said this decision may cause the staff to leave hospitals and pointed to Slovakia's decision to raise the monthly pay of nurses by 17 percent, i.e. 200 to 300 euros, as from 2016.

English: [http://praguemonitor.com/2015/09/18/health-unions ...](http://praguemonitor.com/2015/09/18/health-unions...)

Civil servants reach deal, teachers still negotiating

September 15, 2015

Civil servants receive a pay hike of 3% as of November 2015. The wage deal was reached after negotiations between the finance ministry and the trade unions and will cover all civil servants paid out of the state budget, including fire fighters, police officers, the culture sector and labour and tax offices. Teachers and health care workers are not covered by the pay increase and are both still negotiating their sectoral agreements (the health workers hike was

decided a few days later - see the news item beyond).

English: <http://praguemonitor.com/2015/09/16/public-sector-employees-pay-rise-3>

Wage increase not in line with economic growth

September 4, 2015

Data from the Labour Force Sample Survey in households show record-breaking values of the employment rate in the second quarter of 2015. The general unemployment rate further declined (year-on-year). Data of the statistical office show a significant increase in the number of registered employees. The purchasing power of earnings has been increasing, though the average wage increase has been falling behind the economic development.

English: [https://www.czso.cz/documents ...](https://www.czso.cz/documents...)

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Denmark

Purchasing power lags behind income

September 22, 2015

The report Indkomster 2013 (Earnings 2013) from Statistics Denmark reveals that only Luxembourgers take home higher post-tax incomes than the Danes do. Nevertheless, once national price levels enter the picture, both Swedes and Austrians, who can get more for their money despite their lower incomes, outpace the purchasing power. According to other data, the average citizen earned 206,800 kroner (27,700 euro) after taxes in 2014, significantly higher than the EU-28 average of 115,400 kroner (15,500 euro). The report also signals significant differences in the earning power of immigrants.

English: [http://www.thelocal.dk/20150922/danes-purchasing-power-doesnt-match ...](http://www.thelocal.dk/20150922/danes-purchasing-power-doesnt-match...)

The report (in Danish): [http://www.dst.dk/Site/Dst/Udgivelser/GetPubFile ...](http://www.dst.dk/Site/Dst/Udgivelser/GetPubFile...)

Legal battle over holiday rules probably avoided

September 1, 2015

The government will attempt to head off a legal battle with the EU by changing its national paid holiday laws. The EU Commission sent the government a letter in November 2014 stating that the country's holiday rules were in potential violation of the EU Working Time Directive, which states that all workers must be given an annual leave of at least four weeks per year. Under the Danish rules, an employee is entitled to take holiday during the first year on the job but it must be unpaid if the employee is entering the labour market for the first time or switching jobs without a surplus of built-up holiday days. This results in tens of thousands of employees taking unpaid holiday during each year.

English: <http://www.thelocal.dk/20150831/denmark-to-overhaul-its-paid-holiday-rules>

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Estonia

Unions call for one-year minimum wage agreement

September 16, 2015

The board of the Estonian Trade Union Confederation has agreed to the principle proposed by the State Arbitrator that the minimum wage could form 41% of the average gross wage. Based on a Finance Ministry's forecast, which the arbitrator had proposed, the monthly minimum wage in 2016 should be 452 euro. The arbitrator also proposed 460 euros as the minimum wage for 2017. The trade unions have rejected this and want to conclude just a one-year agreement and to start 2017 minimum wage negotiations in the near future.

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

Dockers picket port of Muuga

September 10, 2015

Dockers at Muuga port will be putting up picket lines demanding the recognition of their shop steward. Members of the Estonian Independent Seamen's Union (EMSA), representing 62% of the workers, elected a shop steward to represent them in negotiations with management. However, the Muuga port management has refused to recognise the steward. Workers have announced they will be picketing the company's Tallinn headquarters demanding their voice be heard.

English: [http://www.itfglobal.org/en/news-events/news/2015/september/estonian-dockers ...](http://www.itfglobal.org/en/news-events/news/2015/september/estonian-dockers...)

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Finland

Unions mobilise against attack on collective agreements

September 25, 2015

A demonstration organised by the three trade union confederations Akava, SAK and STTK brought 30,000 people out on to the streets of Helsinki. Altogether, some 300,000 people came out in protest against the government measures around the country. The government is planning to introduce legislation which would set an upper limit on extra pay for Sunday and overtime work. This level is lower than the one agreed on in collective agreements today. They will also shorten annual leave and eliminate two bank holidays. Employers' representatives have been defending the measures saying that it is always possible to get better terms of work in a personal work contract. In the meantime, the trade unions are

attracting significantly more new members since the government announced its plans for austerity measures.

English: [http://heikkijokinen.info/en/trade-union-news-from-finland/860-30-000-rally ...](http://heikkijokinen.info/en/trade-union-news-from-finland/860-30-000-rally...)

[http://heikkijokinen.info/en/trade-union-news-from-finland/861-new-members ...](http://heikkijokinen.info/en/trade-union-news-from-finland/861-new-members...)

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France

Hotel maids organise ‘fashion week for the poor’

September 30, 2015

As Paris switched into fashion high-gear a group of chambermaids working for the luxury Park Hyatt hotel staged a ‘fashion week for the poor’ to celebrate victory in a labour dispute. Dressed up with splashes of colour and sequins about 60 chambermaids and various other workers from Park Hyatt marched to another hotel, the W Paris Opera, where workers were still striking for better working conditions. The Hyatt workers obtained after a strike double pay for public holidays worked, and increased meal and travel allowances.

English: [http://www.themalaymailonline.com/world/article/striking-maids-at-luxury-paris-hotel ...](http://www.themalaymailonline.com/world/article/striking-maids-at-luxury-paris-hotel...)

2theloo fires toilet attendants for not speaking enough languages

September 29, 2015

Dutch firm 2theloo has fired all eleven toilet attendants who used to work in the public bathrooms in central Paris after being awarded management of five public toilets. Despite the contract specifically stating that the toilet attendants’ employment contracts would be kept on, 2theloo called the eleven ‘dames pipi’ and contracted two men instead. 2theloo has denied having any obligation towards the former employees and continued saying they have no need for toilet attendants, but rather employed luxury concierge services in their new ‘boutique toilets’, adding the ladies do not speak enough languages to qualify for any of the new positions. A Paris tribunal ruled that it would not allow an urgent hearing for six of the cleaners who have lodged complaints, but their cases will still be heard at a date that has yet to be fixed.

English: [http://www.capitalfm.co.ke/news/2015/09/paris-wee-wee-ladies-lose-right ...](http://www.capitalfm.co.ke/news/2015/09/paris-wee-wee-ladies-lose-right...)

[http://www.equaltimes.org/french-toilet-attendants-fight ...](http://www.equaltimes.org/french-toilet-attendants-fight...)

Air France talks with pilots seem stranded

September 24, 2015

After last year's pilots' strike that cost it more than €330 million, Air France seems set for

another clash with staff over proposed changes to working hours. Trade unions representing pilots and cabin crew have rejected the plan, which they say is the equivalent to six weeks' extra work without pay. So far the management has ruled out massive layoffs even if negotiations with trade unions fail to reach agreement on its reform plan; observers expect that this will change dramatically.

English: <http://www.english.rfi.fr/visiting-france/20150924-air-france-rules-out...>

Railway workers win court case

September 17, 2015

The national rail operator SNCF has been found guilty of systematically discriminating against some 800 Moroccan railway workers, and ordered to pay out massive damages of around €150 million. The Moroccan workers were hired as private contract workers in the 1970s and denied the status of 'railway worker' which comes with several benefits in terms of job security, retirement and working hours. According to the ruling by an industrial court, which specializes in workplace conflicts, the SNCF was found guilty of 'discrimination in the execution of work contracts' and 'in the rights to retirement.'

English: <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/sep/21/french-rail-sncf-guilty-discriminating...>

Germany

East-West wage gap vanishes at collective bargaining level

September 24, 2015

The collective bargaining archive of the WSI documents with regular publications the development of wages and bargaining outcomes. Data on the integration of the former East German states in the collective bargaining system reveal that at the level of the negotiated wages the wage gap has almost disappeared, 25 years after the German unification. On average, the negotiated wages are still 3% lower, but in several sectors, the differences in wage level have disappeared. If the companies that not covered by bargaining results are included and the real wages are calculated, than the gap is substantially higher (17%).

German: http://www.boeckler.de/impuls_2015_14_1.pdf

Largest increase of earnings since 2008

September 22, 2015

According to the results of the quarterly survey of earnings, the index of nominal earnings rose 3.2% from the second quarter of 2014 to the second quarter of 2015. The Federal Statistical Office (Destatis) reports that this led to a 2.7% rise in the index of real earnings. This was the largest increase since this time series had first been compiled in 2008. The

strongest increases on a pre-inflation, or nominal basis, were in eastern Germany and in the unskilled, low-wage sector.

English: [http://www.rte.ie/news/business/2015 ...](http://www.rte.ie/news/business/2015...)

Report (in German): [https://www.destatis.de/DE/PresseService ...](https://www.destatis.de/DE/PresseService...)

Amazon again under strike

September 21, 2015

Employees of online retailer Amazon have gone on strike again. Trade union representatives said they were determined to continue their industrial action in several logistics hubs. The labour dispute at Amazon has been going on for more than two years. The company has offered a 2.5% pay increase. However, trade union Ver.di demands a collective agreement for Amazon's 10,000 employees, similar to the agreement for workers in the country's retail sector. Until today Amazon has refused to talk about a binding agreement with Ver.di.

English: [http://www.dw.com/en/amazon-workers-go-on-strike-in-germany ...](http://www.dw.com/en/amazon-workers-go-on-strike-in-germany...)

Lufthansa strike grounds 1,000+ flights in spite of court injunction

September 9, 2015

The 13th Lufthansa pilots' strike in the last 18 months has grounded over a 1,000 flights. The strike, which was called in a bitter dispute over pilots' retirement age reported at length in this newsletter, hit both short, medium and long haul flights. Lufthansa management sought and was granted a court injunction, arguing the strikes are hurting the entire German economy. However, when the court forbade the second day of strikes, the air carrier argued it was too late to reinstate the cancelled flights.

English: <http://www.bbc.com/news/business-34195320>

[https://au.news.yahoo.com/world/a/29470094/lufthansa-cancels-1-000-flights ...](https://au.news.yahoo.com/world/a/29470094/lufthansa-cancels-1-000-flights...)

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Greece

Bus drivers in dispute

September 23, 2015

The terminals stayed empty as bus drivers at the OASTH transport company walked off the job in protest at payment delays. Workers and the trade union claimed that a demand for overdue back pay has been ignored by the Finance Ministry.

English: [http://www.demotix.com/news/8627295/thessaloniki-bus-drivers-go-strike ...](http://www.demotix.com/news/8627295/thessaloniki-bus-drivers-go-strike...)

Employers cite uncertainty as reason for not hiring

September 8, 2015

Employers report not hiring any new employees due to the uncertainty surrounding the country's economy. In a survey by ManpowerGroup, 51% of employers reported they did not expect to hire any new employees this year. An additional 18% expected to be forced to let people go, whereas only 5% expected to hire new workers. The employers in the survey cited the country's uncertain economic performance as a reason for the hold on employment.

English: [http://www.ekathimerini.com/201329/article/ekathimerini/business/uncertainty ...](http://www.ekathimerini.com/201329/article/ekathimerini/business/uncertainty...)

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Hungary

Income trends 1st half of 2015

September 3, 2015

Unemployment has gone down in 2015. The unemployment rate landed at 6.9%, this is 1.2% lower than a year earlier. However, long term unemployment stayed at a high level (48.5% of all unemployed). Wages increased, both average gross and net earnings were higher by the same extent, 3.5% than in the first half of 2014. Net earnings were 3.7% higher at enterprises and 2.9% and 2.2% more than a year earlier in the public sector and at non-profit organisations.

English: [http://www.ksh.hu/docs/eng ...](http://www.ksh.hu/docs/eng...)

Health care workers block bridge in protest

September 2, 2015

Health care workers blocked the central Budapest Elizabeth bridge in a protest against low wages. The nurses have been demanding higher wages, as reported in last month's newsletter. The nurses blocked the bridge of 18 minutes, letting only buses pass, before continuing the protest on the side walk.

English: <http://www.politics.hu/20150902/health-care-workers-block-elizabeth-bridge/>

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Iceland

Public service votes for strike action

September 29, 2015

The members of the trade union of public servants (SFR) and the Paramedics Society of

Iceland (SLFÍ) have voted to go on strike. SFR stated that about 64% of SFR workers and about 70% of SLFÍ workers took part in the vote. Of those, just over 85% of SFR workers and 91% of SLFÍ workers voted in favour of going on strike. The strikes will begin on 15 October if no collective bargaining agreement is reached with state negotiators.

English: <http://grapevine.is/news/2015/09/29/public-servants-union-vote-to-strike/>

Worries about migrants' exploitation

September 25, 2015

The trade union Framsýn has expressed grave concern that foreign worker exploitation has become widespread in north Iceland. The National broadcasting Service RÚV has reported that most of these cases of illegal treatment of workers concern the food service, construction and tourist industries, and pertains to at least dozens of foreign workers. After consultation of other unions Framsýn has contacted those companies accused of worker exploitation to give them a chance to improve conditions.

English: [http://grapevine.is/news/2015/09/25/union-concerned ...](http://grapevine.is/news/2015/09/25/union-concerned...)

Radiologists threaten too with resignation

September 17, 2015

Following a conflict between nurses and hospital management in which 251 nurses handed in their resignations (reported in the last newsletters) radiologists at the National University Hospital of Iceland (Landspítali) have threatened to resign unless working conditions improve. Whereas half of the nurses who handed in their notices have withdrawn their resignation following last month's pay deal, a third of the radiologists have now handed in theirs. Landspítali and the radiologists are in last minute talks to prevent a wave of resignations on 1 September.

English: [http://icelandmonitor.mbl.is/news/politics_and_society/2015/09/14 ...](http://icelandmonitor.mbl.is/news/politics_and_society/2015/09/14...)

[http://icelandmonitor.mbl.is/news/politics_and_society/2015/08/27 ...](http://icelandmonitor.mbl.is/news/politics_and_society/2015/08/27...)

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Ireland

Labour court deals with pay claim of Luas-drivers

September 29, 2015

Drivers at Luas, Dublin's light rail tram system, are to seek a pay rise of about 40 percent in a claim to go before a hearing of the Labour Court. Other staff at the company running the Luas will also look for substantial rises. The Luas drivers, who are represented by the trade union Siptu, are seeking pay parity with train drivers at Iarnród Éireann. Siptu warned it would ballot members for industrial action if a satisfactory outcome did not emerge from the Labour

Court process.

English: [http://www.irishtimes.com/news/ireland/irish-news/labour-court-to-hear ...](http://www.irishtimes.com/news/ireland/irish-news/labour-court-to-hear...)

ITUC's public service committee approves Lansdowne Road Agreement

September 16, 2015

The Public Services Committee (PSC) of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU) has approved the Lansdowne Road Agreement by an aggregate ballot after individual unions balloted their membership over the summer. The Lansdowne Road Agreement extends the main provisions of the Haddington Road Agreement until September 2018, and restores around €2,000 to the pay of most public servants in three phases between January 2016 and September 2017. The pay restoration will be achieved through a combination of adjustments to the public service pension levy and a partial reversal of the 2010 public service pay cuts. The agreement that delivers, after seven years of pay cuts, wage improvements across many sectors of the economy was controversial, with several trade unions in favour or against the deal.

English: [http://www.ictu.ie/press/2015/09/16/congress-public-services-committee ...](http://www.ictu.ie/press/2015/09/16/congress-public-services-committee...)

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...)

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Italy

Protest of cultural workers leads to mixed feelings

September 25, 2015

After a union meeting the trade unions CGIL, CISL and UIL initiated the shutdown of the Colosseum and Rome's other most important archaeological sites, including the Palatine Hill, Ostia Antica and the Baths of Diocletian, causing long queues and sparking an outcry. Following the action the government agreed in a meeting to add financing for an employment plan for the culture ministry to the 2016 budget law, featuring hiring of an estimated 1,300 workers in cultural heritage positions. The agreement is verbal, but is seen by the unions as a positive sign that goes along with another government commitment to pay cultural heritage

workers monthly, beginning in February 2016, for additional compensation accrued. Less positive is the government's intention to add monuments to the list of essential public services. This means it will become one of the sectors – along with healthcare and transport services – in which unions must adequately notify their activity in advance and based on precise rules, to avoid too many disruptions for citizens. According to the unions the action had taken place according to the rules and been communicated in advance.

English: <http://www.gazzettadelsud.it/news/english/159884/CGIL-says-1-300-culture-hires-...>

<http://www.italy24.ilsole24ore.com/art/arts-and-leisure/2015-09-18-...>

Data on wages and collective agreement coverage updated

September 25, 2015

The statistical office ISTAT published the index of wages according to collective labour agreements that measures the evolution of wages and salaries (per employee or per hour) determined by contractual provisions set by collective agreements. The indices are calculated with reference to the fixed employment structure of the base period (December 2010). At the end of August 2015, the coverage rate (share of national collective agreements in force for the wage setting) was 62.0% in terms of employees and 59.0% in terms of the total amount of wages. The office also issued a new quarterly release on the labour market.

English: <http://www.istat.it/en/archive/169101>

<http://www.istat.it/en/archive/168573>

Reform of pension legislation planned

September 21, 2015

The government is working on a change to pension laws that would let women retire three years early, at 62-63, while taking a 10% pension cut. The change would take effect in 2016. The government has promised to overhaul an unpopular 2011 pension law, framed by then labour minister Elsa Fornero, that raised the pension age to 66 for both men and women. The government is also looking at a plan to offer men early retirement. A special problem is the problem of the 'esodati' (exiled ones) - people who were left without pay or a pension after leaving jobs, as under the old rules, they were eligible to retire.

English: <http://www.ansa.it/english/news/politics/2015/09/24/poletti-promises-...>

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Latvia

Employers criticise solidarity tax

September 24, 2015

A new law that has been proposed introduces, as of 1 January 2016, a so-called solidarity tax. It will be imposed on high-income earners with a monthly salary above 4,000 euro, which currently is the maximum taxable income. Earnings that exceed this maximum taxable income will be taxed with the same rate as in the case of general social contributions (in total 34.09%, 23.59% of which will be paid by the employer and 10.5% by the employee). The employers' organisation considers turning to the Constitutional Court if the parliament approves the tax.

English: <http://www.baltic-course.com/eng/legislation/?doc=110925>

Debate on minimum wage continues

August 31, 2015

A heated debate on the minimum wage, reported in last month's newsletter, continues to occupy politicians and social partners alike. In a press conference, the Prime Minister announced that an agreement had been reached on increasing the minimum wage by 1 January 2016, but not on the size of the increase. Currently, the Welfare Ministry and Finance Ministry are rallying support for their own proposals of 367 and 370 euro respectively. The National Tripartite Cooperation Council met, but failed to reach an agreement on either of the proposals. The current minimum wage is 360 euro per month, with the average wage being 815 euro.

English: [http://www.lsm.lv/en/article/economics/economy/pm-minimum-monthly-wage ...](http://www.lsm.lv/en/article/economics/economy/pm-minimum-monthly-wage...)

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Liechtenstein

Quarterly with socio-economic statistics

September 4, 2015

The statistical office has published its quarterly with socio-economic data. The country's labour market is nowadays dominated by foreign labour coming in on a daily or weekly basis (52.8% of the workforce), mainly from Switzerland and Austria (together up to 96% of all commuters). The unemployment has further decreased in the first half of 2015 (to 2.1%).

German: <http://www.llv.li/files/as/p-aktuelle-2015-3.pdf>

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Lithuania

Proposed new labour code attacks workers' rights

September 11, 2015

Trade unions organised a rally on 10 September to protest against the new draft Labour Code,

which will be debated in Parliament this month. The proposed Labour Code, amongst others, would lower wages by no longer paying overtime, while simultaneously requiring employees to work mandatory overtime. The law raises the maximum weekly working hours to 60 hours per week and makes it easier as well as cheaper for employers to fire workers.

English: <http://www.industrial-europe.eu/news ...>

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Luxembourg

Wage indexation probably for early 2016

September 30, 2015

In the latest quarterly bulletin, the Central Bank says that inflation will pick up towards the end of 2015, leading to everyone probably receiving a 2.5 percent index-linked salary increase in early 2016. The salary index applies after prices rise by 2.5 percent and the last across-the-board rise was in October 2013. Since then inflation has slowed as oil prices have fallen sharply and price rises have been low and sometimes negative throughout the Eurozone.

English: <https://www.wort.lu/en/business/luxembourg-central-bank-salary-indexation ...>

French: http://www.bcl.lu/fr/media/communiqués/2015/09/Bulletin_2015_2/index.html

EQOS-energy signs social plan

September 26, 2015

Trade unions OGBL and LCGB and the workers representatives concluded a social plan with the management of EQOS-Energy. The company had announced the dismissal of a group of workers. During the talks it was possible to reduce the total of dismissals to 12 workers, as a result of a voluntary scheme to leave with a 15,000 euro compensation payment. Workers that lose their job receive time off to search another job.

French: <http://www.lequotidien.lu/economie/plan-social-chez-eqos-energie-foetz/>

German: <http://www.tageblatt.lu/nachrichten/luxemburg/story/Sozialplan-fuer-EQOS ...>

Arcelor Mittal to shut down Bettembourg operations, 65 workers affected

September 15, 2015

Steel manufacturer Arcelor Mittal will cease operations at its Bettembourg site mid-2016, affecting 65 jobs. The company said that despite major efforts the plant, which produces saw wire, could not be made profitable. Management said it intends to offer the 65 workers placements in other positions across the company and trade unions have announced to be keeping a close eye on the securing of decent work places for the affected workers.

English: [http://www.wort.lu/en/business/65-employees-affected-arcelormittal ...](http://www.wort.lu/en/business/65-employees-affected-arcelormittal...)

Malta

Bus drivers conclude compromise over new roster

September 25, 2015

The General Workers' Union (GWU) and Malta Public Transport (MPT) got in conflict over new bus routes and drivers' rosters, forcing MPT to postpone the introduction of the new routes. Trade unionists reported that the roster with different routes and working hours was announced unilaterally by management. GWU warned MPT that it would order its members not to work the new hours until talks had been concluded. The union said that the roster did not allow enough time for breaks, as the roster did not take into account the time it takes to unload and load passengers. During a day of strike GWU and Malta Public Transport reached an agreement through which bus drivers will be given 15-minute breaks, one of the main issues that prompted the union to order the bus strike.

English: [http://www.maltatoday.com.mt/news/national/57491/bus_strike_all_day ...](http://www.maltatoday.com.mt/news/national/57491/bus_strike_all_day...)

[http://www.maltatoday.com.mt/news/national/57065/new_bus_routes_postponed ...](http://www.maltatoday.com.mt/news/national/57065/new_bus_routes_postponed...)

Netherlands

Metal workers continue with series of strikes

September 24, 2015

After the negotiations stranded for the expiring collective agreements in the metal sectors (both the metal & technical branches with 285,000 workers and the metal electro branches with 140,000 workers) the FNV and CNV trade unions started to mobilise the membership. The trade unions began a series of regional strikes culminating in a national metal march, combined with a one-day strike on 25 September in Rotterdam. Workers at the truck manufacturer DAF announced a strike that will last for three days.

English: <http://www.eindhovennews.nl/news/31810-daf-goes-on-strike-once-again.html>

Dutch: [http://www.fnv.nl/sector-en-cao/alle-sectoren/metaal/nieuws ...](http://www.fnv.nl/sector-en-cao/alle-sectoren/metaal/nieuws...)

Police lead industrial action against pay deal that excluded biggest union

September 16, 2015

Police unions are leading the mounting industrial action against a rogue public sector pay deal, reported in last month's newsletter. In an unprecedented action, the justice minister

signed a collective agreement with several smaller trade unions, containing a €500 on-off bonus, a 2.28% rise over two years and a 2.2% rise from changes to the pension policy. The largest trade union, FNV, did not sign the agreement and has started large-scale industrial action to get it off the table. After several thousand police officers organised a demonstration as well as blockades, military unions announced they would join the actions, followed by teachers, customs officials and tax inspectors.

English: [http://www.dutchnews.nl/news/archives/2015/09/police-pledge-to-continue ...](http://www.dutchnews.nl/news/archives/2015/09/police-pledge-to-continue...)

Collective bargaining target for next year is 3% pay increase

September 14, 2015

Trade union FNV has formulated the demands for the upcoming 2016 collective bargaining campaign. The FNV focus for the coming year's pay talks will be a 3% pay rise. The union wants to expand negotiations to include freelancers and payroll staff. The union stated that, even though the economy is picking up, employers are investing less of their profits in staff and improving the quality of work.

English: <http://www.dutchnews.nl/news/archives/2015/09/76320/>

Basic income discussed

September 2, 2015

Equal times reports about a debate that is going on related to a possible pilot with a basic income. According to proponents of such a universal, or unconditional, basic income (UBI) it will solve most of society's current ills by reducing poverty, increasing nutritional health and mental wellbeing, redistributing jobs in the face of increasing automation and help to create a more inclusive, fairer society. However, not only political support is lacking, also the trade unions are critical about the introduction of UBI for two main reasons: the enormous costs and the support among working people for social security.

English: [http://www.equaltimes.org/dutch-divided-over-basic-income ...](http://www.equaltimes.org/dutch-divided-over-basic-income...)

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Norway

Job losses in oil industry continue

September 21, 2015

The steep decline in the price of oil has already cost thousands of jobs and triggered uncertainty among workers. More than 20,000 people already have lost their jobs in oil and oil supply companies. Early this month oil service firm Aker Solutions announced that as many as 500 employees will be losing their jobs, mostly in the subsea operations. This was followed by a message that between 500 and 800 employees of the oil service company MHWirth in Kristiansand may lose their jobs. MHWirth is owned by the investment company Akastor, in which industrial firm Aker has nearly a 35 percent stake. Because of the low

energy prices, also coalmines are confronted with financial problems.

English: <http://www.newsinenglish.no/2015/09/21/aker-firm-may-cut-another-800-jobs/>

<http://www.newsinenglish.no/2015/09/02/coping-with-a-necessary-crisis/>

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Poland

Leader of National Bank wants to get rid of junk contracts

September 29, 2015

The head of the National Bank of Poland (NBP), has said that the labour situation needs to 'be more civilised'. He took a strong stand against the use of temporary contracts designed for casual labour under which employment rights are limited, with employers not making health insurance or pension contributions.

English: [http://www.thenews.pl/1/12/Artykul/222948,Central-banker-Poland ...](http://www.thenews.pl/1/12/Artykul/222948,Central-banker-Poland...)

Nurses, midwives reach compromise over pay

September 23, 2015

Trade unions negotiators have signed an agreement with the health minister that includes a pay increase for health care workers calculated over 4 years. Earlier on thousands of nurses and midwives had joined a demonstration in Warsaw to demand faster wage rises. The Health Ministry first offered to raise the wages by PLN 1,200 (285 euro) over a four-year period. The nurses and midwives, organised in the National Trade Union of Nurses and Midwives (OZZPiP), demanded a raise of PLN 1,500 (357 euro) over three years. The average wage of a Polish nurse is currently PLN 3,277 (780 euro) per month. The compromise that was settled gives the workers a pay increase of PLN 1,600 (380 euro) over a four-year period.

English: [http://www.thenews.pl/1/12/Artykul/222175,Compromise-signed ...](http://www.thenews.pl/1/12/Artykul/222175,Compromise-signed...)

Minimum wage might go up in 2016

September 16, 2015

The ministry of labour has announced that from 1 January 2016 the monthly minimum wage for those employed full-time will be set at PLN 1,850 gross (445 euro). In mid-July, the Trilateral Commission (TC) made its resolution on the minimum wage for 2016. Trade unions did not participate in the committee's work, having boycotted it since 2013. Between 2002 and 2007, the minimum wage remained virtually on the same level. In 2007-15, it went up from PLN 1,148 to PLN 1,750.

English: [http://www.thenews.pl/1/12/Artykul/221310,Poland-to-see-minimum-wage-hike ...](http://www.thenews.pl/1/12/Artykul/221310,Poland-to-see-minimum-wage-hike...)

Portugal

Austerity affects elderly people most

September 10, 2015

The Global AgeWatch Index 2015 ranks Portugal as the third worst country in Western Europe in terms of social and economic well-being for people aged over 60, being topped only by Malta and Greece. Worldwide, Portugal ranks ‘moderately’ in the Index at 38th. The Index found that older people have been substantially affected by austerity measures imposed by the government over recent years. Despite having universal pension coverage, ‘the poverty rate in old age is still high at 7.8%’, the report argues. Since 2010, when pensions were cut by 3.5% to as much as 40 percent, pensioners lost around 628 million euros per year.

English: [http://theportugalnews.com/news/good-for-the-young-not-for-the-old ...](http://theportugalnews.com/news/good-for-the-young-not-for-the-old...)

[http://www.helpage.org/global-agewatch/population-ageing-data/country-ageing-data ...](http://www.helpage.org/global-agewatch/population-ageing-data/country-ageing-data...)

Romania

Labour code under revision

September 23, 2015

A bill amending the current labour law has reached the Chamber of Deputies, which will analyse it, after the Senate voted in favour of it. The amendment was introduced by the local unions, which gathered more than 130,000 signatures on the issue. According to the bill, employees that have been selected through competition will not have to go through a probation period anymore. Individual performance goals and evaluation criteria can be set only through collective bargaining. The proposal also removes the lack of performance from collective layoffs.

English: [http://www.romania-insider.com/romanias-labor-code-significant-changes ...](http://www.romania-insider.com/romanias-labor-code-significant-changes...)

Minimum wage to be raised by one third in three consecutive hikes

September 10, 2015

The Government revealed a proposal to raise the minimum wage in 2016 at the meeting of the Tripartite National Committee of Social Dialogue. The proposal, which has not been approved, involves three consecutive minimum wage increases during the year 2016. In total, the minimum wage would be raised from RON 1,050 (€236) to RON 1,400 (€316) on 1 January 2017.

English: [http://www.romania-insider.com/romanian-pm-govt-raise-minimum-wage ...](http://www.romania-insider.com/romanian-pm-govt-raise-minimum-wage...)

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Serbia

World bank interferes in wage and income policy

September 25, 2015

The World Bank does not agree with the government's intention to raise public sector salaries and pensions. The bank rejects a general salary increase, but if the government would focus on decisions to raise salaries for people who, objectively speaking, are underpaid, that would aid the process of implementing reforms in the public sector. The government has asked the Worldbank for assistance in the financial restructuring of utility company Srbijagas, and the bank requests in return that the government undertakes certain obligations before the engagement starts.

English: [http://inserbia.info/today/2015/09/wb-does-not-agree-with-serbian-govt-intention ...](http://inserbia.info/today/2015/09/wb-does-not-agree-with-serbian-govt-intention...)

No minimum wage raise after social partners fail to reach agreement

September 15, 2015

The Government said there would not be any minimum wage rise after social partners failed to reach an agreement. The Social and Economic Council, which may propose the minimum wage for the next year, met but did not reach an agreement. Under the Labour Code, the Government is free to set the minimum wage if the Council does not reach an agreement within 15 days from the commencement of bargaining. The minimum wage is currently and will remain at RSD 121 (1 euro) per hour.

English: [http://www.balkans.com/open-news ...](http://www.balkans.com/open-news...)

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Slovakia

Health workers' pay increases

September 21, 2015

The government is again raising the pay for medical staff just before the upcoming parliamentary elections. Hospitals are to receive an additional €86 million this year and the health sector should have an additional €55 million in 2016 for pay hikes. Medical workers and trade unions, however, do not see the proposals as solving larger issues and some are preparing to protest. Their main objections are that the pay hike does not cover medical staff in all kinds of facilities and that the remuneration scheme does not reflect a person's years of

experience.

English: <http://spectator.sme.sk/c/20060521/medical-workers-pay-to-increase.html>

Slovak minimum wage setting to inspire Czechs in joint tripartite meeting

September 8, 2015

The Czech Prime Minister said Czech minimum wages should be brought in line with Slovakia's minimum wage. The exchange of thoughts happened in the first ever joint tripartite meeting of the two countries. The object of inspiration is the minimum wage indexation system implemented in Slovakia. By law, whenever social partners failed to reach an agreement on a minimum wage hike, the minimum wage is raised by an amount based on the country's economic performance.

English: <http://www.radio.cz/en/section/business/pm-wants-to-narrow-gap...>

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Slovenia

Automotive workers dismissed

September 29, 2015

Revoz, the subsidiary of the French carmaker Renault, will lay off some 150 workers, mainly temporary workers, due to the lower than expected demand for the Renault Twingo and Smart Forfour models. The company hired more than 1,000 workers in the initial phase of the project. After launching two shifts and a half in December 2014, the company returned to two-shift production in late February when some 450 agency workers lost their jobs.

English: <http://www.sloveniatimes.com/revoz-slashing-150-jobs>

Employers roar in minimum wage row

September 14, 2015

Employers' organisations have announced their fierce opposition to a trade union proposal to redefine the minimum wage, reported in last month's newsletter. Under the proposal, which has gained the support of the Parliament's coalition parties, all bonuses would be excluded from the minimum wage. This would mean that bonuses such as premium pay rates for inconvenient working hours would have to be paid on top of the minimum wage, rather than contributing to it, which would imply a de fact pay hike. Employers are opposed to the plan and object to its being tabled as a motion to Parliament through a popular petition, thus evading the traditional road of social dialogue.

English: <http://www.sloveniatimes.com/employers-debate-minimum-wage-initiative>

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Spain

Hard to find a job for youngsters

September 22, 2015

In an OECD study, Skills Strategy Diagnostic Report for Spain 2015, it is concluded that the share of youths neither in employment, nor education or training (NEET) ranks near the top of the OECD, surpassed only in Mexico, Greece and Italy. The 278-page report identifies 12 'skills challenges' for Spain as it strives to recover from the protracted economic crisis. 'Youth NEET are at risk of becoming long-term unemployed and more difficult to integrate in the future.' As usual the OECD criticises the former centralisation of collective bargaining and sectoral provisions, because this makes 'layoffs the primary mechanism of adjustment' by firms. Remarkable is that the organisation puts a strong emphasis on vocational training and qualification without recognising the benefit of collectively agreed, industry-wide training provisions.

English: [http://elpais.com/elpais/2015/09/22/inenglish ...](http://elpais.com/elpais/2015/09/22/inenglish...)
http://skills.oecd.org/developskills/documents/Spain_Diagnostic_Report.pdf

Recovery masks lingering jobs crisis

September 20, 2015

Millions of citizens are scraping by on benefits, family handouts or working cash-in-hand as they wait for the apparent economic rebound to create the hundreds of thousands of jobs the government is promising. Observers see that jobs are being created — but the problem is that many of them only last a few days. The unemployment rate remains extremely high at more than 22%. One in every two eligible workers under the age of 25 is out of work. The conservative government passed in 2012 reforms making it easier for firms to hire and fire as part of his austerity reforms. Trade unions dispute the diagnosis that this will lead to decent job creation.

English: [http://www.thelocal.es/jobs/article/spains-economic-recovery-masks ...](http://www.thelocal.es/jobs/article/spains-economic-recovery-masks...)

Vodafone workers start petition to keep jobs

September 7, 2015

Trade unions have started a petition to save jobs at telecom provider Vodafone. The company announced on 1 September that it will start a major reorganisation that is likely to affect 1300 workers. The layoffs follow earlier redundancies in 2013, costing 620 employees their jobs.

English: [http://www.uniglobalunion.org/news/sign-petition-dont-let-1300-people-be-dismissed ...](http://www.uniglobalunion.org/news/sign-petition-dont-let-1300-people-be-dismissed...)

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Sweden

IMF looks at migrants as a top resource

September 29, 2015

In a preliminary version of its annual report, the Washington-based International Monetary Fund highlights the difficulties immigrants encounter in finding work in Sweden. It is said that those fleeing conflict and hardship by moving to the Scandinavian state could help secure the country's welfare model. The IMF further notes that, although overall employment is high, unemployment falls heavily on the low-skilled and the foreign-born. The organisation urges the social partners to consider ways 'to ensure that entry-level wages are not a hurdle for groups with high unemployment to gain work, for example by introducing special wage scales for those needing on-the-job training or by enhancing flexibility at the firm level.'

English: <http://www.thelocal.se/20150929/sweden-told-to-do-more-to-help-foreign-workers>

Swedish government campaigns for labour rights

September 19, 2015

According to the government's website, the prime minister, together with the Austrian chancellor and Germany's vice-chancellor, has put the finishing touches to a plan to push for an EU treaty amendment to strengthen the rights of wage-earners. The politicians — all social democrats from their respective countries — along with the Swedish Trade Union Confederation and its German and Austrian counterparts, have discussed 'work to ensure decent conditions in the European labour market.' They want to see more of a balance between freedom and rights, and believe that market economies, growth and the free movement of people, capital, and goods and services, must not be more important than robust social rights.

English: <http://www.thelocal.se/20150919/swedish-premier-in-push-for-union-rights>

An outlook for the collective bargaining in 2016

September 2, 2015

In 2016 some 70% of all collective agreements will have to be renegotiated for around 3 million workers. Not only the partners in collective bargaining are preparing their position. The central bank (Riksbank) published an article (Conditions for the 2016 wage bargaining round). According to the Riksbank's forecast, the rate of wage increases will rise in the next few years as the labour market strengthens and inflation rises, and real wages will increase slightly more slowly than productivity. A report of the National Institute of Economic Research also reveals that there are good opportunities for a gradual increase in wages for those who are established in the labour market.

English: [http://www.riksbank.se/Documents/Rapporter/PPR/2015 ...](http://www.riksbank.se/Documents/Rapporter/PPR/2015...)

<http://www.konj.se/download ...>

Switzerland

Gender and anti-migrant bias on the labour market

September 26, 2015

A conference at Bern University of Applied Sciences, bringing together academics and policy makers, addressed gender and anti-migrant bias on the labour market and how to combat it. Foreigners and second-generation migrants tend to have more problems finding work than Swiss do, men earn more than women do, and older workers are less desirable to employers. These are some of the ways in which discrimination is perceived. Participants also discussed the economic costs of discrimination.

English: https://www.wirtschaft.bfh.ch/de/ueber_uns/news ...

Conference website: <http://www.wirtschaft.bfh.ch/de/forschung ...>

Construction workers early retirement in danger

September 21, 2015

An early retirement scheme, introduced in 2003 and considered one of the country's signal social successes, is in danger because of a contributions shortfall. More than 13,000 construction workers have taken advantage of the scheme since the start by taking their pensions from the age of 60. The influx of baby boomers retiring means the plan needs extra funds to avoid going in the red. Trade unions have criticised that construction companies are not acting to deal with this development. Statistics show that more than 40% of the construction workers either fall ill or die prematurely by the time they reach 65 because of their job demands.

English: <http://www.thelocal.ch/20150921/construction-workers-early-retirement-in-peril>

Turkey

Mulberry supplier accused of bypassing labour law

September 24, 2015

Trade unions are confronted with a raft of intimidation methods at SF Leather that block workers from joining the union, and 14 sacked union supporters have not been reinstated. They accuse the company, a supplier to Mulberry, from trying to bypass the labour law, and bust the union with the Law of Commerce and Code of Obligations. Mulberry excuses its

inaction by saying that audits have been conducted at the supplier. However, no audit at SF Leather ever consulted the trade union concerned, nor were the findings and process of the audits made public.

English: [http://www.industrialunion.org/mulberry-eu1000-handbags ...](http://www.industrialunion.org/mulberry-eu1000-handbags...)

Workers ask commitment from European Bank for Reconstruction and Development

September 17, 2015

After being confronted with a series of unlawful violations, sacked for protesting, forced to work double shifts and spied on through social media the country's automotive workers and their trade unions have appealed to a major lender to their employers, the publicly-funded European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, to uphold its commitments. The EBRD is now at the centre of the dispute, with workers at three companies saying the actions of their bosses contradict the bank's promise to honour to labour rights. In a letter, the bank is asked to intervene against union busting and the lack of collective bargaining.

English: [http://theblacksea.eu/index.php ...](http://theblacksea.eu/index.php...)

Ebru fires union activists

September 7, 2015

Management of Ebru Textile in Sakarya has fired several trade union activists in last few months. Trade union Oz Iplik-IS has been trying to organise the plant, which produces textiles for inditex, mango and cortefield amongst others. Management has responded by firing activists. Union members are now calling on the international brands to suspend orders until collective bargaining rights are respected.

English: [http://www.industrial-europe.eu/news/list3 ...](http://www.industrial-europe.eu/news/list3...)

United Kingdom

More workers will receive living wage

September 29, 2015

Starbucks employees will benefit from a 6% pay rise under the National Living Wage - even if they are under 25. The company said all baristas, regardless of age, will earn £7.20 an hour, up from the current base of £6.77, while supervisors will earn £8.72, up from £8.20. Those working in London will also get a premium although the level of this is yet to be announced. Rival Costa reacted and announced a pay hike for its baristas in London. In recent weeks, several retailers have indicated that they will introduce the payment of the living wage. Equally, hundreds of hospital workers at the trust that runs Wolverhampton's New Cross Hospital and Cannock Chase Hospital will be paid the living wage after trust chiefs backed

the move.

English: [http://www.expressandstar.com/news/2015/09/29/health-workers ...](http://www.expressandstar.com/news/2015/09/29/health-workers...)

[http://www.mirror.co.uk/money/costa-coffee-follows-rival-starbucks ...](http://www.mirror.co.uk/money/costa-coffee-follows-rival-starbucks...)

[https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-living-wage-nlw ...](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-living-wage-nlw...)

Redcar steel plant closes

September 28, 2015

Workers have been left devastated after the announcement of the closure of an iron and steelmaking Redcar plant, with the loss of 1,700 jobs. The Thai-owned firm SSI said it had option but to close down. The trade unions are seeking an urgent meeting with the management in order to understand the details and to start the defence of workers' interests.

English: [http://home.bt.com/news/uk-news/ssi-steel-plant-to-be-mothballed ...](http://home.bt.com/news/uk-news/ssi-steel-plant-to-be-mothballed...)

Average wages increase at fast pace

September 16, 2015

Workers are finally receiving a long-awaited pay rise, with average wages increasing at the fastest pace for more than six years. Official figures show that average pay across the economy increased by 2.9%, when comparing May to July with the same period in 2014. The Office for National Statistics said that was the fastest wage growth since the three months to January 2009. With inflation running at 0.1% in July – it has since fallen to zero – analysts say the resulting rise in real living standards should help to underpin consumer demand. At the same time it is noted that the unemployment rate remains unchanged at 5.5%.

English: [http://www.theguardian.com/money/2015/sep/16/uk-wages-rising ...](http://www.theguardian.com/money/2015/sep/16/uk-wages-rising...)

[http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/lms/labour-market-statistics/september-2015 ...](http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/lms/labour-market-statistics/september-2015...)

Northern Ireland has lowest pay in UK

September 7, 2015

More working people in the province are paid less than £7 per hour than any other part of the UK. Figures showed the 2013 annual gross salary for workers here was £27,697 - almost £6,000 below the UK average. The Northern Ireland Committee of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU) said the research backed the campaign for a 'living wage' for workers. This would be the best solution to deal with problems of low productivity and high welfare costs.

English: [http://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/northern-ireland/living-wage-call ...](http://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/northern-ireland/living-wage-call...)

<http://www.nicva.org/resource/economic-analysis-living-wage-northern-ireland>

Strong increase in zero hours contracts

September 2, 2015

Data from the Office for National Statistics reveal that the number of workers on zero-hours contracts has risen to 744,000 (an increase with 19% in one year). The ONS also found that 40% of those on such contracts wanted to work more hours than they were offered, suggesting that seven years after the financial crash many employers are still operating below their capacity. Research has shown that workers on zero-hours contracts earn less per hour than staff in similar roles and are denied benefits such as sick pay.

English: [http://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2015/sep/02/number-of-workers ...](http://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2015/sep/02/number-of-workers...)

[http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/lmac/contracts-with-no-guaranteed-hours ...](http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/lmac/contracts-with-no-guaranteed-hours...)

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

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

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