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collective bargaining

Issue 11/2015 November

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 and minimum wages

November 30, 2015

In a Global Labour Column, Maarten van Klaveren (former editor of this Newsletter) discusses minimum wages and collective bargaining in Asia and Europe. He notes the polarity of debates on the establishment of a statutory minimum wage; on one hand around 'social justice' arguments for a minimum wage floor to reduce income inequality and poverty level wages, and on the other, the 'economic imperative' to ensure a minimum wage does not depress demand in certain labour markets. In the EU, the 2012 recommendations from the Directorate General for Economic and Financial Affairs foreshadowed an assault on collective bargaining, in order to achieve 'an overall reduction in the wage-setting power of trade unions'. This should be resisted not only for reasons of redistributive social justice but also to restore forms of wage-led economic growth that will enable the disastrous hold of austerity and financialisation to be broken.

English: [http://column.global-labour-university.org/2015/11/minimum-wages-collective ...](http://column.global-labour-university.org/2015/11/minimum-wages-collective-...)

Public sector figures prominently in overview of industrial action

November 18, 2015

Eurofound produced an overview of industrial actions in 2014. Overall, strike actions across the EU dropped in 2014 following a crisis-related peak in 2010. However, evidence delivered by correspondents suggests that the more highly unionised public sector has been a focus of industrial action recently. In general, strikes have been triggered by pay freezes and cuts, as well as by other unpopular effects of fiscal tightening such as lay-offs or changed working conditions. It remains to be seen what impact the recently observed return to pay restoration and collective bargaining will exert on public sector labour relations in the times ahead.

English: [http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/observatories/eurwork/articles ...](http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/observatories/eurwork/articles-...)

Social considerations in public procurement

November 17, 2015

In a recent judgment, the European Court of Justice has specified its position formulated in

the Rüffert-case on the application of minimum wages in public procurement procedures. In its judgment, the Court holds that Directive 2004/18 does not preclude legislation that requires tenderers and their subcontractors to undertake, by means of a written declaration enclosed with their tender, to pay staff called upon to perform the services a predetermined minimum wage. According to the Court, the obligation at issue constitutes a special condition in principle acceptable under the directive, since it relates to the performance of the contract and concerns social considerations.

English: [http://curia.europa.eu/jcms/upload ...](http://curia.europa.eu/jcms/upload...)

Report finds collective bargaining more decentralised and flexible

November 4, 2015

A report released by Eurofound evaluates changes in collective bargaining throughout Europe. The authors find a universal trend towards decentralisation and flexibilisation. Collective agreements are negotiated more often on the lower, company level and more often give companies options to deviate from the agreement. The authors note that this trend occurs in all European countries, but has been developing at a much faster pace in Greece, Portugal, Romania and Spain. Changes in the Nordic countries and North Western Europe have been slower and executed in a more coordinated way.

English: [http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/publications/report/2015/industrial-relations ...](http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/publications/report/2015/industrial-relations...)

Global Framework Agreement H&M to encourage unionisation of entire production chain

November 3, 2015

Trade unions and management at Swedish garment retailer H&M have closed a global framework agreement (GFA) on working conditions and health and safety. The agreement explicitly encourages the unionisation of shops and plants across the supply chain, securing H&M management's promise to safeguard workers' rights in contracts with third parties. The agreement pays special attention to health and safety in the garment industry and grants workers the right to refuse labour under unsafe conditions.

English: [http://www.industrialunion.org/industrial-global-union-and-hm-sign ...](http://www.industrialunion.org/industrial-global-union-and-hm-sign...)

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Austria

Updated country profile explains bargaining system

November 24, 2015

The updated country profile of Austria at the Eurofound website includes indicators, data and regulatory systems on the following aspects: actors and institutions, collective and individual employment relations, health and well-being, pay, working time, skills and training, and

equality and non-discrimination at work. In the section on collective bargaining, it is stated that the extremely high coverage rate is mainly because almost all agreements are concluded by subunits of the Economic Chamber (WKO), of which membership is obligatory.

English: [http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/observatories/eurwork/comparative-information ...](http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/observatories/eurwork/comparative-information...)

Metal branches reach agreement

November 5, 2015

After a period of intensive negotiations, the trade unions PRO-GE und GPA-djp reached an agreement with the employers in 6 branches of the metal sector on 5 November. The aim of the unions was to keep up a unified result for the whole sector (with in total 180.000 workers). The minimum wage and basic wages will increase by 1.5% and the new minimum wage will amount 1.750.03 euro, as of 1 November 2015. Total duration of the agreement is 12 months. With this result, the strategy of the employers' organisation FMMI to separate and diversify the negotiations once more failed (see earlier Newsletters on this item).

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

[http://www.gpa-djp.at/cms ...](http://www.gpa-djp.at/cms...)

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Belgium

Rumours about early retirement back at Proximus

November 27, 2015

Even before telecom operator Proximus and the trade unions have started the negotiations for a new collective agreement the news was spread that the company wants to reduce the workforce with 7% by using an early retirement scheme for elderly workers. Both partners have denied that there is such a proposal. However, at the same time it is clear that the trade unions are open to discuss such a scheme. A similar proposal that was discussed early 2015 failed and was never implemented.

English: [http://www.telecompaper.com/news/proximus-plans-early-retirement ...](http://www.telecompaper.com/news/proximus-plans-early-retirement...)

French: [http://www.lalibre.be/economie/actualite/departs-a-58-ans-chez ...](http://www.lalibre.be/economie/actualite/departs-a-58-ans-chez...)

Dutch: [http://www.standaard.be/cnt ...](http://www.standaard.be/cnt...)

Postal dispute ends with agreement

November 1, 2015

Postal operator bpost has announced that it has reached an agreement with the majority of its staff representatives over the company's new organisational model. In an official statement bpost said that this agreement was 'essential' for the future of the company, adding that it will give the postal operator the opportunity to achieve its ambitions in the e-commerce and parcel

delivery market. The new measures will come into effect on 1 January 2016.

English: <http://postandparcel.info/68987/news/bpost-reaches-agreement> ...

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Bulgaria

Trade unions organise 'day of discontent'

November 25, 2015

Workers at the National Museum of History took part in a nationwide protest organised by the Trade Union of Museum and Gallery employees, Culture Independent Trade Union Federation, the Confederation of Independent Trade Unions of Bulgaria (CITUB), the Museums and Galleries Trade Union, the National Culture Fund, and the Confederation of Labour Podkrepa. They protested against the damage created by the actual cultural climate. The cultural sector is dominated by a lack of resources and poor working conditions.

English: <http://www.focus-fen.net/news/2015/11/25/390500/employees-of-bulgarian-museums> ...

Police take to the street after retirement compensation is halved

November 8, 2015

Police officers took to the street after the government announced a set of surprise proposals, which would half their retirement compensation. The proposals, which would not apply to officers currently in service, would mean retirement compensations will be cut in half, and paid leave will be reduced from 30 to 20 days as of Wednesday 4 November. Police officers reacted with spontaneous demonstrations, which the prime minister has called illegal. After five consecutive days of protests, the interior ministry agreed to withdraw the proposals in order to discuss the cuts with trade union representatives.

English: http://www.novinite.com/view_news ...

http://www.novinite.com/view_news ...

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Croatia

Public sector might profit from growth rate

November 29, 2015

Workers in the public sector will have the right to receive an important increase of their wages as of 1 January 2016, based on an agreement signed in 2009. The government and the trade unions agreed on a six percent pay raise as soon as the official data of the Central

Bureau of Statistics show the average GDP growth of two or more percent in two consecutive quarters. The GDP growth in the second quarter of 2015 was 1.2 percent, and in the third 2.8 percent, the average of these two consecutive quarters is exactly 2 percent. If the final data which will be published in early December confirm that the rate of GDP growth in the third quarter was 2.8 percent, teachers, doctors, police officers, social workers, administration employees – 240,000 public, state and local employees – should receive a raise of six percent starting 1 January.

English: [http://www.total-croatia-news.com/business/1614-early-christmas-for-240-000 ...](http://www.total-croatia-news.com/business/1614-early-christmas-for-240-000...)

Cyprus

Bank workers offered early retirement

November 20, 2015

More than a month after the Hellenic Bank and trade union ETYK engaged in negotiations the bank, the country's third largest lender, announced that it is offering its workers a voluntary retirement scheme as part of its effort to restructure its business model. The union had threatened to escalate labour action against the bank. ETYK enforced work-to-rule action over several months at Hellenic. The union was angered by the bank's decision to appoint or promote staff to managerial positions without its approval, as well as plans to expand customer service hours into the afternoon and Saturdays. ETYK's demand that workers continued to receive below market rate loans were also a point of contention.

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

Doctors to choose between overtime pay and control over working time

November 6, 2015

The health ministry has said doctors, nurses and other hospital staff will be paid overtime if they agree to use time cards. In an attempt to bring down waiting lists, the ministry is seeking to boost efficiency and work hours. Hospital staff, who had demanded to be paid overtime, have now heard their request will be granted, if they agree to punch a time card when arriving to and leaving from work.

English: <http://in-cyprus.com/state-doctors-to-clock-on-for-work/>

Czech Republic

Long-term unemployment slightly down

November 5, 2015

In a report of the statistical office with finalised data for 2014 the long-term unemployment rate was evaluated. The recent growth of the economy brought beneficial effects on the development of the long-term unemployment rate. In 2014, the share of the unemployed for over one year in the total labour force attained 2.7%, i.e. by 0.3 p. p. less than in 2013. However, differences among regions have remained high.

English: <https://www.czso.cz/documents> ...

Gender pay gap one of the largest in EU

November 3, 2015

The gender pay gap in the Czech Republic is the third largest in the EU. Women earn on average 22% less than men do, which is substantially higher than the 16% EU average. Commissioner Jourova pointed towards discrimination, occupational segregation and family responsibilities as causes of the large gap. The pay gap is largest for highly educated women.

English: <http://praguemonitor.com/2015/11/03> ...

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Denmark

Average earnings 3rd quarter of 2015

November 27, 2015

The statistical office has published updated figures on the earnings and labour costs. These figures play an important role in collective bargaining, the debate on equal pay, various contractual adjustment, and general analysis of the standard of earnings on both a national and an international level. The average wage increase for all industries was 1.5%, with real estate, finance and other business services well beyond that level. The cultural sector had the poorest outcome, followed by trade and transport. The data also provide graphs with the average hourly earnings for age groups, men and women, and with the total labour costs.

English: <http://www.dst.dk/en/Statistik/emner/loen-og-arbejdsomkostninger>

Prominent companies announce job cuts

November 11, 2015

The shipping division of Maersk announced that it is cutting jobs and making other 'streamlining' efforts. The land staff of 23,000 will be reduced with 4,000 by the end of 2017. Maersk Line reduces the capacity of its route network and defer investments in new capacity while continuing to simplify its organisation. Beer giant Carlsberg has announced it is cutting 2,000 jobs – 700 more than it had announced previously. The company is in the midst of a

huge restructuring program, according to its third quarter report.

English: <http://cphpost.dk/news/business/maersk-cutting-jobs-and-lines.html>

<http://cphpost.dk/news/business/carlsberg-cutting-2000-jobs.html>

Estonia

New data on wage development

November 26, 2015

In the 3rd quarter of 2015, the average monthly gross wages and salaries were 1,045 euros. Compared to the 3rd quarter of 2014, the average monthly gross wages and salaries increased by 6.9%. Compared to the same quarter of the previous year, real wages increased for the seventeenth quarter in succession. However, compared to the 2nd quarter of 2015, the average monthly gross wages and salaries decreased by 3.4%.

English: <https://www.stat.ee/90649>

Unions want to negotiate with operator Transiidikeskus

November 24, 2015

The Estonian Seamen's Independent Union (EMSA) is to turn to a public conciliator because the Estonian transit operator Transiidikeskus refused to start collective agreement talks. The company was earlier in the news because it sacked a union man (see our October Newsletter). Trade union EMSA has formulated two important conditions: monthly salaries should rise as of 2016 by at least 200 euros and seven additional paid vacation days should be given to workers. Transiidikeskus answered via their lawyer that they already had an effective collective agreement and a new elected representative to deal with.

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

Finland

Central employers' organisation no longer in for pay deals

November 26, 2015

The Confederation of Finnish Industries, EK, changed the organisation's rules in order to prevent it from negotiating economy-wide pay agreements with unions. Such agreements have covered in the past some 93 percent of the workforce, mandating a central line for pay increases that set the parameters for sector-based agreements, usually valid for a period of two years. Observers point out that there have been twenty of these 'incomes policy'

agreements since the first in 1968, and rightly call EK's move a 'historic decision'.

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

Postal strike starts and expands

November 23, 2015

Postal workers have started with a strike over working conditions. Some 4,000 members of trade union PAU walked out. Workplace tension at the country's leading parcel and postal service provider Posti continues and instead of finding an accord, it seems the employer representatives and the employees are still farther apart. Negotiations have cleared a few smaller matters from the table, but many of the larger controversial issues are still unresolved. One of the thorniest issues is the terms of the so-called 'change security' employers offer their employees in case they are made redundant. The strike expanded as Posti announced plans to lock out some 200 workers. PAU has asked other unions that are part of the massive SAK trade union confederation to begin sympathy strikes and received positive answers from several unions.

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

http://yle.fi/uutiset/talks_overpostal_strike_starts_on_thursday/8465801

Trade union says labour reforms are hurting women

November 5, 2015

Trade union JHL has said the planned labour reforms, reported in last month's newsletter, are disproportionately affecting women. The plans, which are debated currently with the social partners, include an increase in fixed term contracts and restrictions on the right to public childcare. JHL said the reforms are pushing workers with care responsibilities, which are still predominantly women, out of the labour force.

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

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France

Bus drivers strike

November 20, 2015

In a dispute that started in October bus drivers are protesting against new policies set by state-owned operator RATP that adversely affect both public transport services and workers' rights. According to CGT-Transport, the unions consulted widely before deciding that the strike should go ahead, defying massive pressure from management. The action is over deteriorating working conditions due to a lack of staff (with a shortfall of 1,300 jobs), the

freezing of salaries and the scraping of social protection.

English: [http://www.itfglobal.org/en/news-events/news/2015/november/paris-bus-workers ...](http://www.itfglobal.org/en/news-events/news/2015/november/paris-bus-workers...)

Air France labour dispute spills over into annual social conference

November 13, 2015

Trade union CGT has announced it will boycott the tripartite annual social conference after Air France fired four employees believed to be responsible for the violence against the airline's management, reported in last month's newsletter. With the use of security cameras on the premises, Air France identified five employees who stormed its boardroom during a protest against a massive layoff, which would cost 2,900 jobs. While initially condemning the violence, trade unions CGT and FO have spoken out in support of the dismissed workers. In addition, CGT is now refusing to attend the annual social conference that is scheduled to discuss the reform of social security.

English: [http://www.telesurtv.net/english/news/France-Labor-Union-Slams-Dismissal ...](http://www.telesurtv.net/english/news/France-Labor-Union-Slams-Dismissal...)

[http://www.english.rfi.fr/economy/20151019-french-labour-negotiations-overshadowed ...](http://www.english.rfi.fr/economy/20151019-french-labour-negotiations-overshadowed...)

Labour law reform will start with the working hours section

November 5, 2015

The government announced that it will begin reforming the labour code early 2016 by tackling the way companies can adjust working hours. The redraft of the 3,800 pages of the labour code probably will take several years. A first step, the revision of the 125 pages on working hours, will be presented as soon as the first quarter of 2016. The government has pledged not to unstick statutes stating that the legal workweek is 35 hours, which will be part of a framework of rights that will remain enshrined in law and not modifiable by employers and unions.

English: [http://www.france24.com/en/20151104-france-tackle-work-hours ...](http://www.france24.com/en/20151104-france-tackle-work-hours...)

Collective agreements and displacement of production

November 4, 2015

The Court of appeal ruled in a case of displacement of production (from a site in Rungis to plants in the Paris neighbourhood) that workers could not refer to the regional metal sector collective agreement to refuse displacement. The agreement provided (in article 3) the right to be notified in advance of every change of the employment relationship at the workplace and, if not accepted by the worker, had to be seen as a breach by the employer of this relationship. According to the Court the articles of the collective agreement only mean that in case of non-acceptance by the worker, the employer is free to start a formal procedure for dismissal. Besides the Court notes that the employer gave enough time to the workers to adapt to the new situation.

French: [http://www.miroirsocial.com/actualite/12525/interpretation-d-une-convention ...](http://www.miroirsocial.com/actualite/12525/interpretation-d-une-convention...)

The Court interpretation (in French):

https://www.courdecassation.fr/IMG///Note_explicative_Mme_Depommier.pdf

Germany

Metalworkers have an agreement

November 26, 2015

Metalworkers in the state of North Rhine-Westphalia will receive a pay rise of 2.3 percent in 2016, despite tough conditions in the industry, union IG Metall said after the conclusion of a new collective agreement. The talks on the pay deal for 75,000 workers lasted 11 hours. The pay deal runs until the end of February 2017 and includes a one-off payment of 200 euro for November and December 2015. According to IG Metall, the employers have also agreed to discuss how to secure jobs in the industry.

English: [http://www.reuters.com/article/2015/11/26/germany-steel-pay ...](http://www.reuters.com/article/2015/11/26/germany-steel-pay...)

German: [http://www.igmetall-nrw.de/presse/aktuelles/archiv-detailseite/news ...](http://www.igmetall-nrw.de/presse/aktuelles/archiv-detailseite/news...)

Lufthansa crew staged full week strike – further action called off

November 26, 2015

It looks as a breakthrough has been reached in an ongoing dispute at Lufthansa. The cabin crew union UFO organised a weeklong strike, stranding 4,700 flights and over half a million passengers. The actions constituted a series of strike in a conflict that started over two years ago, as reported in various newsletters. In the run up to the strikes, Lufthansa took legal action and was originally granted an injunction by the Dusseldorf court, which was later overruled by the labour court in Darmstadt, which considers the strike legitimate. The latest news is that the cabin crew called off a strike originally planned for late November, a step toward ending the dispute that brought on the airline's longest-ever disruption. To avoid further protests, trade union UFO said it needs to reach a deal with Lufthansa by 2 December, the date of a so-called employment summit between the airline and unions including representatives of pilots and ground crew.

English: [http://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2015-11-25/lufthansa-cabin-crew-union ...](http://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2015-11-25/lufthansa-cabin-crew-union...)

[http://www.dw.com/en/new-court-ruling-in-favor-of-striking-lufthansa-cabin-crew-union ...](http://www.dw.com/en/new-court-ruling-in-favor-of-striking-lufthansa-cabin-crew-union...)

Amazon again in the picture

November 26, 2015

Trade union Ver.di is threatening Amazon with a wave of strikes in a pay-scale dispute. The company wants to dictate the working conditions. The union has announced that as long the

company refuse to talk about a decent collective agreement the actions will continue with flexible strikes. A video informs about the case.

English: [http://www.dw.com/en/german-union-threatens-strike-at-amazon ...](http://www.dw.com/en/german-union-threatens-strike-at-amazon-...)

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

Doctors report mental stress due to long hours and work pressure

November 5, 2015

The Marburger Bund doctors union found that an overwhelming share of its member suffer from stress due to excessive working hours. A survey of its 4000 members showed 59% reported frequent mental stress, 69% having too little time to treat patients and 72% said their own health was negatively affected by the job. The doctors point to excessive working hour limits, shift work and under staffing as causes of the stress.

English: <http://www.epsu.org/a/11788>

German: [https://www.marburger-bund.de/artikel/allgemein-pressemitteilungen/2015/klinik ...](https://www.marburger-bund.de/artikel/allgemein-pressemitteilungen/2015/klinik-...)

Pay deal in social services and childcare

November 1, 2015

The VKA public sector employers' organisation and trade union Ver.di have reached a pay deal for workers in childcare and other social services. Childcare workers will receive pay hikes between €93 and €138 per month; workers in other social services will receive wage increases between €30 and €80. The pay deal was reached after a long process of negotiations, including arbitrated talks and strike action. Trade union Ver.di has called the deal a step towards improving pay in female dominated occupations.

English: <http://www.epsu.org/a/11799>

German: [http://www.verdi.de/themen/geld-tarif/soziale-berufe-aufwerten ...](http://www.verdi.de/themen/geld-tarif/soziale-berufe-aufwerten-...)

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Greece

New 24 hours strike announced

November 26, 2015

The biggest public and private sector trade unions, representing about 2.6 million workers, plan a 24-hour strike against pension reform on 3 December. The government has passed legislation raising the retirement age, increasing health care contributions and scrapping most early retirement benefits. It also plans to merge several pension funds into one and cut back

on supplementary pensions. The unions call it the final blow to social insurance.

English: [http://www.ekathimerini.com/203805/article/ekathimerini/news/greek-pensioners ...](http://www.ekathimerini.com/203805/article/ekathimerini/news/greek-pensioners...)

[http://www.dw.com/en/greece-braces-for-next-general-strike ...](http://www.dw.com/en/greece-braces-for-next-general-strike...)

General strike supported by Government

November 12, 2015

The first general strike since the instatement of the current left wing government in January brought over 35,000 people to the streets of Athens and Thessaloniki. Schools, museums and pharmacies closed down; public transport came to a standstill and hospitals operated on skeleton staff levels. Media outlets joined the general strike called by a number of public and private sectors. Journalists' unions announced there would be no news between Thursday 12 November 6am and Friday 6am, except to cover the general strike. The workers protested against austerity measures and reforms imposed on the country to qualify for a third bailout. The government against whose policies the general strike action backed the actions.

English: [http://www.ekathimerini.com/203350/article/ekathimerini/news/greece-gears-up ...](http://www.ekathimerini.com/203350/article/ekathimerini/news/greece-gears-up...)

[http://www.newser.com/article ...](http://www.newser.com/article...)

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

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Hungary

Higher minimum wage in order to reduce brain drain

November 27, 2015

The Democratic Coalition stated that the alarming high emigration rate could only be reduced by increasing minimum wages sustainably in the long term. The party has prepared a programme to annually increase the minimum wage at least until it reaches the living wage. The proposal is a reaction to recent statistics showing that the number of citizens leaving to work abroad has been on the rise in recent years. The Central Statistical Office's (KSH) Demographic Research Institute found that the young and highly educated are the primary groups leaving. The research found that single citizens are more likely to seek work abroad and that they are more likely to go to the UK, whereas skilled workers and the elderly more likely go to Germany.

English: [http://www.politics.hu/20151127/dk-calls-for-minimum-wage-increase ...](http://www.politics.hu/20151127/dk-calls-for-minimum-wage-increase...)

[http://budapestbeacon.com/public-policy/hungarys-brain-drain-young-and-highly-educated ...](http://budapestbeacon.com/public-policy/hungarys-brain-drain-young-and-highly-educated...)

Tesco workers are quitting jobs over holiday hours

November 3, 2015

Media report that staff at British retailer Tesco is quitting their jobs over new holiday working hours, which would prevent them from celebrating Christmas with their families. Hungary's relation with Tesco has been troubled, with the company paying low wages and recent legislation attempting to break its hold on the market, as reported in the January newsletter. Management's latest decision to expand opening hours around the holidays has inspired a flight among its predominantly female workforce.

English: <http://hungarianfreepress.com/2015/11/03/the-hungarian-tesco-rebellion/>

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Iceland

Aluminium smelters vote to go on strike

November 23, 2015

Workers at Rio Tinto Alcan aluminium smelter in Straumsvík voted in favour of strike action. The strike, which has been announced for 2 December, is expected to force a total shut down of operations. Negotiations to avert the strike are ongoing, but trade unionists report little confidence in a swift solution after having been intimidated by management. If no collective bargaining agreement is reached between the six involved trade unions and the management by December 2, the strike will begin. The main point of disagreement is Rio Tinto Alcan's intention to hire more contractors instead of employing workers directly.

English: <http://grapevine.is/news/2015/11/23/preparations-to-shut-down-aluminium-smelter>
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<http://grapevine.is/news/2015/11/06/aluminium-smelter-workers-vote-to-go-on-strike/>

General wage deal reached

November 1, 2015

After a series of strikes, reported in last month's newsletter, a wage deal was reached on 28 October that will cover large parts of the public and private sector. Workers organised large-scale industrial action over the last months, demanding pay hikes in order to maintain purchasing power. Wages went up twice as much as in neighbouring countries, but inflation increased three times as much, leaving Icelandic worse off than their Nordic peers. An alliance of public and private sector employers, as well as the SFR Union of Public Workers, the Union of Nurses' Aides and the Police Federation of Iceland signed an agreement effectively tying wages to the inflation rate. The agreement runs through 2018 and will both guarantee stability in term of purchasing power for workers, as well as avoiding a situation in which wages raise faster in some sectors than in others.

English: <http://icelandreview.com/news/2015/10/28/unions-strike-deal-state>

Ireland

Walkouts at Irish Life over new pay structure

November 26, 2015

Staff at financial services provides Irish Life, which specialises in pensions and life insurance, have walked off the job in an on-going pay dispute. Irish Life has said it will change its pay structure, essentially instating performance pay and ending its pay indexation policy. In protest, trade unions organised four two-hour walkouts. The unions object to the decoupling of wages from profits and inflation, which they fear will lead to significant losses of purchasing power in the long term. The unions demanded consultations, mediated by the labour court arbitration office. Irish Life accused the unions of not having fully informed members on the last wage offers, but indicated it would be willing to accept arbitration.

English: <http://www.rte.ie/news/2015/1126/749500-unite-members-irish-life/>

Unions dispute staff reduction at Irish Water

November 21, 2015

Workers at Irish Water have overwhelmingly voted in favour of industrial action over staff reductions. In ballots, workers represented by trade unions Siptu (91%) and by the TEEU (84%) voted in favour of action including work stoppages. The unions say the dispute centre on the threatened displacement of water service workers by private contractors. The trade unions that claim there has been a breach of the Service Level Agreement will be meeting with the management of Irish Water to set out the position of their members.

English: [http://www.thejournal.ie/irish-water-workers ...](http://www.thejournal.ie/irish-water-workers...)

Probable pay deal for non-teaching school staff

November 9, 2015

The labour court arbitrator in a long running conflict between the ministry of Education and trade unions has proposed a pay deal for non-teaching school staff that is likely to be accepted. In the proposal, secretaries and caretakers' minimum hourly wages would rise from €10.25 to €13 between 2016 and 2019 in four separate hikes. The proposal furthermore includes a clause guaranteeing that the higher wages will not lead to staff being allotted fewer hours. Between 7,500 and 8,000 non-teaching staff, who predominantly work part-time, are expected to be affected by the pay deal.

English: [http://www.irishtimes.com/news/education/up-to-8-000-non-teaching-school-staff ...](http://www.irishtimes.com/news/education/up-to-8-000-non-teaching-school-staff...)

Rail dispute moved into arbitration

November 6, 2015

Following a large-scale strike, reported in last month's newsletter, a conflict between trade unions and Irish Rail has been moved into arbitration. The agreement to hold mediated talks means a second strike, which was planned for 6 November, is narrowly averted. The rail workers are demanding a pay rise, which Irish Rail has offered in exchange for longer standard working hours and lower staffing levels. Unions refused the offer, arguing Irish Rail is trying to get employees to finance their own raise.

English: [http://www.irishtimes.com/news/consumer/irish-rail-claims-it-made-concrete ...](http://www.irishtimes.com/news/consumer/irish-rail-claims-it-made-concrete-...)
<http://www.rte.ie/news/2015/1103/739215-iarnrod-eireann/>

Italy

'Intergenerational' deal at Enel

November 27, 2015

It is reported that the trade unions and the management of the energy group Enel have concluded what is called an 'intergenerational' deal on early retirement. The plan is to give early retirement to 6,000 workers and hire 3,000 young people.

English: [http://www.ansa.it/english/news/business/2015/11/27/enel ...](http://www.ansa.it/english/news/business/2015/11/27/enel-...)
<http://www.thelocal.it/20151118/enel-to-hire-2000-staff-in-italy>

Wages, earnings and employment

November 24, 2015

The monthly overview of contractual hourly wages shows that, at the end of October 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. In October 2015 the hourly index and the index per employee increased by 0.1% from September 2015. Compared with October 2014 the hourly index and the per employee index increased by 1.2%. During the period January-October 2015, both indices rose by 1.1% compared to the same period in 2014. The update Economic Outlook for 2015 indicates that labour market conditions are expected to improve. Employment will increase by 0.6 percent in 2015, by 0.9 percent in 2016 and 0.7 percent in 2017. At the same time, the rate of unemployment will decrease at 12.1 percent in the 2015, and will further slowdown both in 2016 (11.5 percent) and 2017 (11.3 percent).

English: <http://www.istat.it/en/archive/174488>

Further actions as right to strike in cultural sector is limited

November 12, 2015

Stage workers at the renowned Scala opera house in Milan went on strike despite recent legislative changes that have reclassified the cultural sector as an essential service. In a context of austerity politics, workers at many museums, theatres and operas have increased industrial action over the last few years. After museums and archaeological sites closed in September, when workers called an unexpected strike and left hoards of tourists waiting for hours, a legislative bill was drafted to restrict the right to strike. On 5 November, the senate passed a bill, which reclassifies museums and other cultural institutions as essential services, on a par with schools and hospitals. Under the new law, workers will need to give 10 days notice and may have to accept minimum intervals between strikes. Simultaneously, the government released funds to pay workers in the sector overdue overtime pay of 2014 and 2015. Trade unions, however, responded their fight is not over and warned more actions were to be expected. In a separate fight, the stage workers at the Scala lead the way with a new strike less than a week after the new law was passed.

English: [http://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/culturenews/11992570/La-Scala-opera-house ...](http://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/culturenews/11992570/La-Scala-opera-house...)
[http://theartnewspaper.com/news ...](http://theartnewspaper.com/news...)

Latvia

Large strike in education

November 27, 2015

The Trade Union of Education and Science Employees announced that 24,546 education and science workers went on strike, 80% of the union members, plus a large number of education and science employees who are not members of the union. The union has put forward the following demands: allocation of 9 million euro for improving the remuneration system for all those employed in education, especially in preschools and small schools, and, second, sufficient funding for higher education and science.

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

Health care workers dispute continues

November 19, 2015

Following protests against major budget cuts in health care, reported in last month's newsletter, health care workers went on strike. Workers are angry that funds are reduced from an already low 3.1% of GDP to 3% next year. Fuelling the protests is the fact that the state budget as a whole is growing at the same time that health care funds are being reduced. Trade unions said the government is choosing guns over health care, as most of the money cut from different budget lines is going to the defence ministry. The union demands that the average healthcare worker's salary is raised 10% starting from 1 January 2016.

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

Liechtenstein

Public sector agreement renewed

November 23, 2015

Trade union LANV and the government have signed a collective agreement for the period 2016-2018. LANV, the only trade union organisation, acts as social partner and is active in the provision of several services for workers. The signed agreement settles minimum wages and is supposed to secure jobs and social peace.

German: [http://www.presseportal.ch/de ...](http://www.presseportal.ch/de...)

Bargaining demands for 2016

November 1, 2015

In the magazine for its members, the trade union LANV has published the demands for the upcoming negotiations in the private sector. Most agreements expire by the end of 2015. The union asks for a wage increase between 0.5 and 1.5%. Furthermore, wages should be paid in Swiss Francs. For workers beyond the age of 50 years the union wants to obtain on a 5th week of holidays.

German: [http://www.lanv.li/Portals/0/Content/Mitteilungsblatt ...](http://www.lanv.li/Portals/0/Content/Mitteilungsblatt...)

Lithuania

Bulletin with average wages

November 24, 2015

Statistics Lithuania published figures over the third quarter of 2015. Average gross monthly earnings in the whole economy totalled 735.1 euro (in the public sector 755.3 euro; in the private sector 724.7 euro). Against the second quarter of 2015, average gross monthly earnings in the whole economy grew by 3% (in the public sector 2.1%; in the private sector 3.5%). Average net monthly earnings in the whole economy amounted to 569.0 euro, and grew against the second quarter of 2015 by 2.7% (in the public sector 583.6 euro - an increase by 1.9%; in the private sector 561.5 euro - an increase by 3.2%).

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

Luxembourg

Quality of life at workplace is deteriorating

November 18, 2015

Life in the workplace is deteriorating as people work longer unpaid hours and struggle to balance work and private lives, a survey suggests. Workers in the services sector worked the highest additional unpaid hours, working on average the equivalent of an additional day per week (8.6 hours). The overall rating for quality of life in the workplace given by workers who participated in the survey for the 2015 Quality of Work Index, published by worker federation 'Chambre des Salariés', fell slightly in 2015. The downward trend continues since the first index of 59 was published in 2013.

English: [http://www.wort.lu/en/business/quality-of-life-in-the-workplace-survey ...](http://www.wort.lu/en/business/quality-of-life-in-the-workplace-survey...)

German: [http://www.csl.lu/index ...](http://www.csl.lu/index...)

French: [http://www.csl.lu/index ...](http://www.csl.lu/index...)

Agreement at Cargolux

November 12, 2015

The management of Cargolux Airlines and the OBGL and LCGB trade unions concluded a principle agreement affecting 750 ground staff. The new collective agreement will affect 62% of all employees in Luxembourg. The current agreement ends on 30 November 2015. Another meeting will take place in order to continue discussions with the aim on finding agreement on conditions related to pilots. In September 2015, the partners agreed on a reduction of costs whilst avoiding cuts to staff salaries.

English: [http://www.chronicle.lu/categoriesbusinesstransportation ...](http://www.chronicle.lu/categoriesbusinesstransportation...)

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Malta

Bus dispute talks restart

November 29, 2015

The long disputed problems (see earlier Newsletters) are not coming to an end as talks over a new collective agreement, which the operator claims could have a major bearing on the level of operations, restarted from the scratch. During a meeting held in the presence of the Director of Employment, trade union UHM submitted a formal request to represent the employees after the General Workers' Union unexpectedly conceded defeat at the end of a lengthy recognition dispute.

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

Jobs secured at hospitals despite public private partnership

November 11, 2015

Negotiations surrounding private public partnerships at Karin Krech, St. Luke's and Gozo General hospitals have yielded workers' entitlements to remain government employees. Jobs and employment conditions have been guaranteed for the 30 years of the partnership. Employees will have the right to remain in government employ, as well as to transfer to the private sector at higher wages.

English: <http://uhm-ezine.rightbrain-nodes.com/english/feature ...>

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Netherlands

Port workers announce strike

November 24, 2015

Container workers at the Port of Rotterdam have voted to hold a series of 24-hour strikes in December and January in protest at possible job cuts. The workers demand guarantees of no layoffs for the coming nine years. Major container employers ECT, APMT and RWG have rejected that demand in contract talks that have been running since April 2015.

English: <http://uk.reuters.com/article/2015/11/24/rotterdam-port ...>

Ambulance workers reach agreement

November 23, 2015

The workers at Ambulancezorg Nederland (AZN) have voted in favour of an agreement that was reached after a series of strikes. Trade unions FNV, CNV and AZN negotiated the deal that was later on balloted positively. The agreement strengthens the purchase power of ambulance workers with 6.5%; elderly workers (plus 57 years) cannot be forced to work at night and direct labour will be engaged for regular work. The agreement goes into force retroactive to January 1st and will run until 2018.

English: <http://www.nltimes.nl/2015/11/04/ambulance-workers-get-7-5-pay-hike ...>

The text of the agreement (in Dutch): <http://www.fnv.nl/site/alle-sectoren ...>

FNV union wins case against bankruptcy

November 2, 2015

Trade union FNV achieved a legal victory against home care organisation Meavita, which went bankrupt in 2009. The organisation was declared bankrupt two years after a major

merger and years of financially risky behaviour, leaving employees without redundancy pay and their annual leave and pension reservations. The court has now judged that management and overseers are legally responsible for and culpable of the bankruptcy caused by their mismanagement. In weeks to come, workers will present claims of financial losses, asking to be compensated.

English: <http://www.epsu.org/a/11795>

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

Norway

Union wants to preserve oil jobs

November 24, 2015

In the midst of the oil industry's major downturn, one of the country's major labour organisations is lobbying the state hard to pump up more work to preserve jobs. Trade union Industri Energi, which represents thousands of oil sector workers, wants the state to help preserve and even create more oil sector jobs by offering tax incentives to increase oil activity, to improve labour regulations to better provide for laid-off workers, push for new job creation through rig maintenance and well-plugging, and move forward with an evaluation of opening up new offshore areas for oil exploration.

English: <http://www.newsinenglish.no/2015/11/24/oil-workers-union-lobbies-for-work/>

Locked out dockers garnish political support

November 6, 2015

City councils in several towns have formed alliances to support the fight of dockworkers who have been locked out since May 2014, as reported in several newsletters. The Norwegian Employers' Association (NHO) has launched several attempts to replace the unionised dockworkers by unorganised foreign workers, leading to a large-scale conflict in ports across the country. Several unions have raised funds to support the dockers' campaign financially and three political parties have started to form alliances to guarantee the implementation of the ILO convention 137 on dockers.

English: [https://vegardholm.wordpress.com/2015/11/04/tough-dockers-stand-their-ground ...](https://vegardholm.wordpress.com/2015/11/04/tough-dockers-stand-their-ground...)

Poland

LOT cabin crews strike over salaries

November 19, 2015

The trade Union of Cabin Crew and Aviation at the national airline LOT (which brings together more than 600 people) announced a two-hour warning strike. The unions justify the decision on the strike with the failure of talks. They are demanding salary raises and the restoration of the principles of remuneration from 2010. Since 2013, the union and workers have been in a constant dispute with the management of the airline. At LOT, on-board crew workers belong to the lowest paid employees within the company.

English: <http://lodzpost.com/polishnews/attention-passengers-polish-airline-lot-to-strike> ...

Statistical office publishes 2014 employment report

November 5, 2015

The statistical office has published the 2014 employment report that can be downloaded now. It provides the number of persons working in the economy, employment status, selected categories of working persons, foreigners, disabled persons, retired persons, elements of employment changes by recruitment sources and reasons for dismissals. Growth in paid employment and a slight decrease in unemployment were observed.

English: <http://stat.gov.pl/en/topics/labour-salaries/working-employed-wages-and-salaries> ...

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Portugal

Largest socio-economic inequality gap among developed countries

November 26, 2015

With a population of nearly 10 million, Portugal remains Western Europe's poorest country with the largest socio-economic inequality gap among 20 developed countries. A report ranked the inequality gap in Portugal using several socio-economic indicators, ranging from distribution of income, access to health services and gender inequality. Minimum wages averaged 479.52 euro from 1999 until 2015.

English: <http://portuguese-american-journal.com/report-portugal-holds-largest-inequality-gap> ...

Dockers organise 10-day strike

November 6, 2015

Dockworkers in Lisbon, Setubal and Figueira da Foz have called a 10-day strike protesting against the sale of the ports to a Turkish company, Yildirim. The sale implies the end of the current collective agreement and dockers fear they will be worse off under the new owner. The strikes are accompanied by an indefinite towage strike in the port of Barcelona, Spain.

The strikes are not expected to hit the two biggest ports, Sines and Leixoes.

English: <http://worldmaritimenews.com/archives/175862/spanish-portuguese-ports-hit> ...

One in five employees on minimum wage jobs

October 29, 2015

Since the start of the crisis, the share of workers earning no more than the minimum wage has risen steadily from 4% in 2001 to 20% in 2014. Up to a quarter of all employees in hotel and catering industry as well as in manufacturing earn the €500 minimum wage. The rising share of minimum wage workers is a reflection of bad economic times as well as crumbling collective bargaining in the country.

English: <http://www.theportugalnews.com/news/minimum-wage-gains-popularity-with-bosses> ...

Romania

Central bank official: workers paid the cost of the crisis

November 25, 2015

The Deputy Governor of the central bank said that the cost of the economic crisis was mainly paid by employees. This situation was favoured by the labour code, which was completely against the interests of employees in that period. In theory, 60-65% of the net national income should be distributed to those who work and 30-35% to those who own the capital. In developed countries, the capital owners get 40% and employees receive 60%. In Romania, the situation is reversed. In 2014, over 60% of the net national income went to those who owned the capital and below 40% got to those who worked, the official said.

English: <http://www.romania-insider.com/romanian-central-bank-official-employees-paid> ...

Picket lines formed at Société Générale

November 13, 2015

Trade union IMPACT has picketed the headquarters of BRD Groupe Société Générale bank in Bucharest. The actions are a reaction to failed negotiations over a new collective agreement. The union is demanding a 100 Lei wage increase for all employees with at least three years of tenure, the reintroduction of the early retirement programme and a 700 Lei grant for workers to purchase outfits in accordance with the bank's clothing requirements.

English: <http://www.uniglobalunion.org/news/picketing-headquarters-societe-generale> ...

Serbia

Pay rises in public sector

November 12, 2015

Wages in the public sector will increase from 1 January 2016. Wages of workers in elementary and high schools go up by 4%, health care workers will receive a 3% hike and university professors, military and police will get 2% higher wages. The wage increase, which has been a key union demand, were approved only after extensive talks with the IMF, which has used its power as the country's major lender to keep wages down.

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

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Slovakia

Nurses fight for better working conditions

November 25, 2015

Nurses dissatisfied with how the Health Ministry has dealt with complaints about pay and working conditions started to hand in their resignations. The nurses and other medical workers have five basic demands: a proper level of funding for health care facilities and a bill not only applicable to hospital staff but also to personnel in doctor's offices, spas and social service facilities. They also insist that maternity leave and time spent unemployed be counted towards the period of their specialised experience, as well as on hiring extra nurses and midwives to hospitals, and on factoring the number of years one has worked in the sector into the calculation of the pay-rise.

English: [http://spectator.sme.sk/c/20064750/over-200-nurses-resign ...](http://spectator.sme.sk/c/20064750/over-200-nurses-resign...)

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Slovenia

Employers quit after changes of minimum wage

November 27, 2015

Three employers' associations withdrew from the 2015-2016 social pact talks after parliament passed changes paving the way for weekend and nighttime bonuses to workers on the minimum wage. Only one employers' association remains a partner in the pact, which was reached in February.

English: [https://english.sta.si/2204349/employers-withdraw-from-social-pact ...](https://english.sta.si/2204349/employers-withdraw-from-social-pact...)

Agreement on public sector pay

November 10, 2015

The government and a majority of the public sector unions have signed a public sector pay deal, which constitutes the first public sector raise since the crisis. The deal, signed by 28 of the 40 public sector unions, contains a 3.47% increase of wages in 2016 with an agreement to continue negotiations for the 2017-2019 period. The government originally offered a 2.8% increase, but accepted a higher increase after negotiations. The deal also leads to an increase in annual leave pay and a relaxation of the promotions freeze.

English: [http://www.sloveniatimes.com/govt-and-unions-sign-public-sector-pay-deal ...](http://www.sloveniatimes.com/govt-and-unions-sign-public-sector-pay-deal)

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Spain

Occupational accidents on the rise

November 16, 2015

Trade union CCOO reports that workplace accidents have been on the rise since the beginning of the crisis. Minor, major and fatal accidents took place more often in 2015 than 2014. Especially minor accidents, of which 218,019 took place in the first six months of 2015 and the 239 fatal accidents constituted an increase of 13,577 and 16 cases respectively. Workers and trade unionists report the hike in accidents is due to a combination of higher work stress and pressure, as well as a weaker negotiation position of workers and their representatives. Accidents often took place at the end of long shifts, when regular safety checks of equipment had not been carried out and because workers carried out unsafe tasks.

English: [http://www.equaltimes.org/spain-precarious-employment-fuels ...](http://www.equaltimes.org/spain-precarious-employment-fuels)

Statistics on collective bargaining published

November 10, 2015

A Collective Bargaining Survey reveals that the number of collective agreements registered has increased to 1.971 (37.6% higher than last year). The collective bargaining coverage increased to 5.58 million workers, 29% more than in October 2014. Therefore, collective agreements apply to 795,637 undertakings, an increase of 28.9%. From the total of registered applicable collective agreements 72.8% are company level agreements, applying to 6.1% of the total number of workers. The other 27.2% corresponds to higher bargaining levels and cover 93.9% of employees (5.2 million). In 2015, there have been 1269 deviations of the applicability of pre-existing agreements, most of them after agreement between the company management and the employees' representatives. Until October 2015, the average wages increase has been 0.75%. The average working time amounts to 1,758.3 hours per year per worker.

Spanish: <http://prensa.empleo.gob.es/WebPrensa/noticias/laboral/detalle/2701>

Unions campaign for an increased minimum wage

November 2, 2015

The main trade union confederations, CC.OO and UGT have initiated a campaign to lobby for the update of the inter-professional minimum wage progressively to 800 euro after the general elections in December 2016. They argue that such an increase will reduce the structural differences with the EU and will be a step forward to achieve their objective of fixing the minimum wage at 60% of the average wages.

Spanish: [http://www.ugt.es/Publicaciones ...](http://www.ugt.es/Publicaciones...)

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Sweden

Protection against unhealthy workplaces

November 24, 2015

Employers are to become better at preventing people going off sick because of unhealthy workloads or bullying at work. That is what new regulations from the Swedish Work Environment Authority aim to achieve. They contain clearer rules for how employers should work with organisational and social work environment issues. The regulations clarify the employers' obligations to do what is necessary to prevent employees from becoming ill because of how working time is organised. The regulations list shift work, night work, split working periods, a lot of overtime and long work shifts as examples of possibly unhealthy working time patterns, but also far-reaching possibilities to work when and where you want, combined with expectations of being constantly contactable.

English: [http://www.nordiclbourjournal.org/nyheter/news ...](http://www.nordiclbourjournal.org/nyheter/news...)

Spotify exports parental leave

November 20, 2015

The music streaming service Spotify has said it will offer all staff up to six months' parental leave on full pay, to ensure international workers do not miss a similar benefit already enjoyed in Sweden. While staff in the international company's Stockholm office currently benefit from the 480 days of paid leave that all employees legally are entitled to, those hired in other major cities including London, Sydney, Paris and New York have not been given the same deal. It is standard practice for Swedish employers to offer staff 80 percent of their salaries during their time away from the office (although this is capped for those earning more than 37,083 kronor).

English: <http://www.thelocal.se/20151120/spotify-rolls-out-swedish-leave-benefits->

worldwide

Switzerland

Top 300 earners have almost the equivalent of the rest of the wage earners

November 27, 2015

The 300 wealthiest families and individuals in the country have a net worth of 595 billion francs (\$581 million), six billion francs more than in 2014, according to a report by Swiss business magazine *Bilanz*. The chief economist of the Swiss Trade Union Confederation calculated that the top 300 collectively earned almost as much (95 percent) as all the average wage earners in Switzerland put to together.

English: <http://www.thelocal.ch/20151127/wealth-of-300-richest-swiss-rise>

German: [http://www.20min.ch/finance/news/story ...](http://www.20min.ch/finance/news/story...)

Employers implement longer working hours for sake of exports

November 1, 2015

In response to the stronger Swiss franc, making products more expensive in the export market, employers have started increasing work hours. While no overt protests have been organised, employee representatives have expressed concern at the developments. Employers increase standard working hours without increasing salaries to make their products cheaper, effectively constitutes a pay cut in hourly wages.

English: [http://uk.reuters.com/article/2015/11/01/swiss-working-hours-increase ...](http://uk.reuters.com/article/2015/11/01/swiss-working-hours-increase...)

Turkey

Minimum wage proposal leads to heated debate

November 16, 2015

In the successive election campaigns the government party AKP was forced to take the road of the opposition party CHP that had suggested to increase the minimum wage. It included the minimum wage pledge in its Nov. 1 election manifesto and told minimum wage earners that it would be at least 1,300 liras. However, the Minimum Wage Commission determines the minimum wage. Both employer and employee organisations are represented there. They sit down and talk. However, given the reaction from the employers the outlook is not very promising. The head of the Ankara Chamber of Industry stated with a radical proclamation that the minimum wage should be abolished.

English: [http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/akps-1300-lira-minimum-wage-pledge-challenges ...](http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/akps-1300-lira-minimum-wage-pledge-challenges...)

Strike in copper-zink mine

November 3, 2015

Workers at the Canadian-owned Çayeli mine, the largest copper and zink mine in the country went on strike over a pay dispute on 30 October. Trade unions and management have been negotiating a new 3-year collective agreement without success. To reinforce their wage demands, workers have now called a strike. Trade unions said the mine has been profitable and its outlooks for the next three years were good, justifying a substantial wage hike for its workers. During the strike, the mine will operate only on levels required to guarantee environment and safety.

English: [http://www.theglobeandmail.com/report-on-business/industry-news/energy-and ...](http://www.theglobeandmail.com/report-on-business/industry-news/energy-and...)

<http://www.dailysabah.com/nation/2015/10/31/strike-begins-at-turkeys-largest-copper-mine>

United Kingdom

Wages still far from 2008 level

November 20, 2015

Trade union GMB published a comparison between average earnings data for April 2015 and equivalent figures for April 2008 for the UK and 12 regions. The union used official data from the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE). The average pay of £26,137 in April 2008 has increased by £1,470 to £27, 607 in April 2015. That is an increase of 5.6 % while the inflation rate between April 2008 and April 2015 is 20.6%.

English: <http://www.gmb.org.uk/newsroom/average-earnings-still-down-on-2008>

DLR strike paralyzes London traffic in rush hour

November 4, 2015

Workers of the Docklands Light Railway (DLR) have called a 48-hour strike, paralysing rush hour traffic in the capital. Staff walked out to protest against the use of agency labour as well as extensive bullying and intimidation during the unsuccessful talks with management.

English: [http://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/616774/DLR-strike-tube ...](http://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/616774/DLR-strike-tube...)

Trade unions rally against TU Bill

November 4, 2015

Over 2000 people attended a protest in Westminster's central hall to voice their disapproval of the draft Trade Union Bill, which was reported in last month's newsletter. The trade union bill, which is currently in its third and final reading in the House of Commons, would significantly restrict trade union action, including the right to strike. Trade unions are pulling together in a joint effort to fight the bill. Rallies are being organised and further protests have been announced.

English: [http://www.pcs.org.uk/en/news_and_events ...](http://www.pcs.org.uk/en/news_and_events...)

[http://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/uk/workers-join-protest-against-trade-union-bill ...](http://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/uk/workers-join-protest-against-trade-union-bill...)

Collective agreement in engineering construction industry

November 3, 2015

Employers and trade unions GMB and Unite have concluded a National Agreement for the Engineering Construction Industry (NAECI). The deal, which will cover power stations and oil, gas and petro-chemical projects, includes a 6% pay hike and will run from 2016 through 2018.

English: <https://usilive.org/constructions-workers-agree-6-pay-rise/>

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For more information, please contact the editor Jan Cremers, Amsterdam Institute for Advanced Labour Studies (AIAS) cbn-aiaas@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.

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

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