

collective bargaining

Issue 12/2015 December

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



AMSTERDAM INSTITUTE FOR ADVANCED LABOUR STUDIES
UNIVERSITEIT VAN AMSTERDAM



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European sources

Social dialogue in public sector reaches 'landmark' agreement

December 21, 2015

The European Social Dialogue Committee for Central Government Administrations adopted an agreement on information and consultation rights of civil servants and employees of central government administrations in Europe. The agreement has been negotiated throughout the year 2015 and sets out common minimum standards for the rights of workers and their trade union representatives to be informed and consulted. Workers will be better placed to deal with their employers when these seek changes in the work place. It gives workers a say when the employer proposes restructuring, or changes in working time. It also allows workers to propose health and safety or work/life balance improvements. Other topics are to be covered either by information or consultation. A 'non-regression clause' ensures that more favourable national legislation in this field will continue to apply.

English: <http://www.epsu.org/a/11913>

The press statement: <https://www.etuc.org/sites ...>

Temporary work pays substantially less

December 15, 2015

Eurofound published a report that presents a broad picture of temporary employment across the EU27 between 2001 and 2012 and maps the recent evolution of temporary employment, before and after the economic crisis (based on Eurostat data). The report calculates the wage gap between temporary and permanent employees and analyses the wage gap within companies. The report also identifies the main determinants of temporary employment in terms of personal, company and job characteristics and examines the most relevant labour market transitions for temporary employees. The study finds evidence of segmentation in a number of European labour markets, whereby temporary employees have poor pay and labour market prospects, while permanent employees enjoy high levels of job security and opportunities for career progression.

English: <http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/publications/report/2015/labour-market ...>

Labour mobility and the welfare state

December 10, 2015

Free movement of workers is one of the core values of the EU. In recent years, there is a heated debate in many Member States about the impact of the rising inflow of mobile citizens on their welfare system. Eurofound reports about a research project that aimed to examine the extent to which mobile citizens from the CEE-countries take up benefits and services in host countries. It provides a demographic and socioeconomic profile of EU10 mobile citizens and identifies initiatives aimed at integrating them in the host countries and providing them with access to benefits and services. The main finding of the report is that overall take-up of welfare benefits and services by EU10 citizens is lower than that of the native population of the host country, especially social housing and pensions. However, their take-up of certain specific benefits, mainly employment-related benefits (unemployment and in-work benefit), is higher.

English: <http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/publications/report/2015/labour-market-social-policies ...>

Eurofound publishes results of Sixth European Working Conditions Survey

December 1, 2015

The Eurofound's 6th European Working Conditions Survey findings were presented at a joint high-level event with the Luxembourg EU Presidency. The report presents a diverse picture of Europe at work over time across countries, occupations, gender and age groups. The survey confirms a differentiated picture on working time: working hours continue to decrease, numbers working 'part-time' have increased and the self-employed work longer hours than employees. While fewer workers are working 48 hours or more, the number of workers working part-time (both 21-34 hours and 20 hours or less per week) has increased over time. While the overall gender gap has decreased, it remains significant, with men on average working 39 hours and women 33 hours a week in their main paid job. Concerning paid training, the report points out that young employees are more likely to learn new skills at work than older workers. Workers over 50 years old report lower prospect for career advancement and less training opportunities.

English: <http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/surveys/2015/sixth-european-working ...>

Austria

Vienna lags behind regions in disposable income

December 14, 2015

For the first time since records began the westernmost state Vorarlberg has the highest disposable income per capita of €23,300. This is attributed to its strong manufacturing industry and the fact that many people from Vorarlberg travel to Switzerland to work. Households in Tyrol are also doing relatively well with a disposable income of €22,100, due to its strong service and tourism industry which has seen employment rise in the region. A growing population and high unemployment rate has seen average earnings in Vienna steadily decrease since 2011; the capital has the lowest level of disposable income after Carinthia.

English: http://www.statistik.at/web_en/press/106064.html

Unemployment analysed

December 1, 2015

According to statistics published by the employment service (AMS), the number of long-term unemployed persons in the country has nearly tripled in the last twelve months. At the end of November 2014, there were 16,447 people out of work for more than a year. Since then, the number has increased by 191 percent (up to 47,845 people). Overall employment statistics also indicate an increase, with a total of 430,107 people out of work by November 2015. Older workers are particularly affected, with an increase of 13.5 percent among those over 50 years of age. Youth unemployment decreased slightly; employers are switching to younger and less experienced people to save costs.

English: <http://www.thelocal.at/jobs/article/long-term-unemployment-soars>

Special on elderly workers (in German): http://www.ams.at/_docs/001_spezialthema_1015.pdf

Belgium

Deal on night work in e-commerce

December 24, 2015

The social partners reached an agreement for the development of a framework that regulates night work for webshops. The agreement between employers and trade unions provides a general global framework, wherein each company is still free to negotiate its own conditions and logistics around night work. The details of the requested adjustment, which arose in the spring of 2015, have now been concluded. The signed agreement defines the subjects which must be discussed as part of a company agreement or workplace rule to regulate night work. The agreement should give e-commerce a big boost.

English: <http://www.xpats.com/new-regulation-around-night-work-belgian-web-shops>

SNCB threatens to leave trade unions without finance

December 12, 2015

SNCB management are refusing to make a new financing agreement with the trade unions if the latter continues to threaten five-day strike action during January 2016. The current agreement runs until the end of 2015. The railway worker trade unions have benefitted from around 10 million euros per year under this agreement. If negotiations do not progress, the various trade union organisations could easily be confronted with financial problems in January. The totals allocated by the SNCB are used, in particular, to pay the wages of workers released for trade union purposes.

English: [http://brusselstimes.com/belgium/employment/4694/sncb-threatens-to-leave ...](http://brusselstimes.com/belgium/employment/4694/sncb-threatens-to-leave...)

Research on inequality, poverty and social exclusion

December 4, 2015

The 24th edition of the annual yearbook on poverty and social exclusion of the Antwerp University has a special focus on child poverty and low-income families. Almost one child in five under 18 in Belgium (18.8%) lives below the poverty line, against 15.9% ten years ago. This proportion rises to 36.4% among single-parent families and up to 53.8% for children whose parents are 'uneducated'. The risk of poverty among those aged 18-24 is approximately 18.8%, which shows an increase since 2008. The average monthly number of

beneficiaries of the equivalent living wage has risen by 3.9% between 2013 and 2014, and by 5.1% among people under 25 years old.

English: [http://brusselstimes.com/belgium/4643/in-belgium-almost-one-in-five-children ...](http://brusselstimes.com/belgium/4643/in-belgium-almost-one-in-five-children...)

Summary of the report (in Dutch): [https://www.uantwerpen.be/images/uantwerpen/container ...](https://www.uantwerpen.be/images/uantwerpen/container...)

Bulgaria

Increase of minimum wage

December 23, 2015

The government approved the increase of the minimum monthly wage to BGN 420 (215 euro), starting 1 January 2016. The minimum hourly working wage becomes BGN 2.5. The increase should motivate job seekers and ensure that people receiving the minimum wage and their families are able to better satisfy their needs. The increase is also expected to decrease the number of working poor.

English: [http://www.novinite.com/articles/172365/Bulgarian+Cabinet+Approves+Increase ...](http://www.novinite.com/articles/172365/Bulgarian+Cabinet+Approves+Increase...)

Wages in regions and sectors

December 7, 2015

Figures of the National Statistical Institute (NSI) for the third quarter of 2015 reveal that, during this period, the average monthly wage was the highest in Sofia, where it stood at BGN 1193 (611 euro). Sofia is also the only region in which the average wage was above the average figure for the country, with the difference being 36.5%. Surprisingly, the second highest average wage was registered in Vratsa, one of the poorest regions of the country. The highest remunerations were earned in the information sector with a 13.3% increase compared to 2014 due to the competition for qualified IT cadres. In twelve sectors, which employ more than 1.7 million people or more than 77 % of all workers, wages were lower than the average country figure.

English: [http://www.novinite.com/articles/172131/Average+Wage+in+Bulgaria+Ranges+from ...](http://www.novinite.com/articles/172131/Average+Wage+in+Bulgaria+Ranges+from...)

Croatia

Trade unions stay away from meeting over wage increase

December 9, 2015

The leaders of seven trade unions announced that they would not attend the scheduled meeting with the government's representative on the agreement to increase the basic salary in public and state services. Unions stressed that they expected the 6% agreed increase to be included in the pay slips for December 2015. Otherwise, they would take legal action. They said they were certain that the conditions were met to honour the agreement to increase salaries in the public sector in the case of GDP growth.

English: [http://en.dalje.com/2015/12/govt-unions-not-ready-to-deal ...](http://en.dalje.com/2015/12/govt-unions-not-ready-to-deal...)

Cyprus

Workers on strike after ETYK bank backs out of collective agreement deal

December 17, 2015

Workers announced a 24-hour strike after collective negotiations at the Cooperative Central Bank ETYK collapsed. The workers are outraged, as the breakdown of the talks comes after an agreement between unions and management has effectively been reached, as reported in last month's newsletter. ETYK withdrew from the deal last minute, citing objections of the Finance minister as the reason.

English: <http://in-cyprus.com/justice-seeking-co-op-workers-right-to-strike/>

Greek and Turkish Cypriot public sector workers on strike

December 8, 2015

Trade unions in both the north and south of Cyprus are mobilising public sector workers. A strike at the

Electric Authority (EAC) of Cyprus was narrowly averted as workers' representatives met with president Anastasiades. The EAC is being privatised under pressure from external creditors. While the state aims to keep a majority share in the EAC, employees fear working conditions will deteriorate. Employees of the Cyprus Telecommunications Authority (CyTA) could go on strike after union representatives failed to find common ground with president Anastasiades. Electricity workers in Northern Cyprus, meanwhile, joined a major public sector strike. The strike on 8 December, organised by the Turkish Cypriot Unions Platform, included workers from the public sector, education, health care and electricity industry.

English: <http://in-cyprus.com/general-strike-in-north-nicosia/>
<http://in-cyprus.com/breakthrough-failure-could-prompt-cyta-strike/>

Czech Republic

Historic deal in public service

December 22, 2015

The government signed a collective agreement for state employees with representatives of trade unions. The agreement is the first of its kind and should improve working conditions for civil servants. The collective agreement between the government and the trade unions governs the rights and obligations of both parties. It concerns more than 69,000 state employees, including employees of the financial authorities, Social Security Administration, labour offices and other central government bodies. The agreement is effective from 1 January 2016 and valid until 31 December 2016.

English: [http://www.praguepost.com/czech-news/51280-state-employees-reach-historic ...](http://www.praguepost.com/czech-news/51280-state-employees-reach-historic-...)

Young mothers driven out of direct labour start businesses

December 2, 2015

A survey by the Sociological Institute of the Science Academy (AV) showed that young mothers are often forced to rely on self-employment. Mothers with small children found it difficult to find or retain jobs after returning from maternity leave. Despite legal obligations for employers to guarantee mothers' jobs, women often found that their jobs had disappeared or were dismissed shortly after returning. Researchers reported 30% of women who took two years of maternity leave and nearly all mothers who took longer breaks lost their jobs when they wanted to return to work. Self-employment among young mothers increased by 74% in the last years, while many indicated in the survey they would have preferred some form of direct labour.

English: [http://praguemonitor.com/2015/12/03/young-czech-mothers ...](http://praguemonitor.com/2015/12/03/young-czech-mothers-...)

Denmark

Lego workers receive extra month pay

December 18, 2015

All employees of the LEGO Group, LEGO Foundation and Kirkbi will receive an extra month's salary along with their regular wage in January 2016. The management stated that this payment should not be viewed as a bonus but as a special payment for the great results the LEGO concern has achieved over the past 10 years. The company's regular bonuses will be paid out as usual in March. More than 17,000 employees worldwide will receive the extraordinary present.

English: <http://cphpost.dk/news/business/lego-employees-xmas-gift-is-a-months-salary.html>

Foreign employees accountable for two thirds of value creation growth

December 18, 2015

New figures published by the Confederation of Danish Industry reveal that the country's value creation from 2010 to 2014 rose by DKK 34 billion of which foreign employees contributed DKK 24 billion. Currently, 145,000 foreigners measured by full-time employees are employed in Denmark. This is an increase of 45% since 2010 – and projections show that immigrants and descendants of immigrants will be responsible for more than 70% of the increase in the workforce by 2050. The country must ensure that it attracts more foreign workers with the right skills sets, according to the employers' confederation.

English: [http://di.dk/English/News/Pages/Foreignemployeesaccountablefortwothirds ...](http://di.dk/English/News/Pages/Foreignemployeesaccountablefortwothirds...)

Pension age goes up

December 15, 2015

The parliament decided on a bill that will see the legal age of retirement with social security go up to 67 in 2022 and to 68 in 2030. The earlier retirement reform in 2011 settled the principle of life expectancy adjustment of the retirement age, to be increased every 5 years. After the adoption, the law comes into force on 29 December 2015. For all citizens born after 31 December 1962 the pension age will be 68 years.

Danish: [http://www.ft.dk/RIpdf/samling/20151/lovforslag ...](http://www.ft.dk/RIpdf/samling/20151/lovforslag...)

Wage report reveals poor payment of arts and humanities

December 3, 2015

An analysis carried out by the think-tank Kraka for Finans shows that for certain groups of highly-educated workers, there is only a modest difference between their salary level and that of an unskilled worker. The analysis reveals that those with an arts education on average only make about 1,000 kroner, or 134 euro, more (before tax) per month than an unskilled worker. It also shows that a humanities graduate with a five-year university education often only earns 1,800 kroner (241 euro) a month more than someone who took an apprenticeship and vocational education in a trade.

English: [http://cphpost.dk/news/arts-and-humanities-grads-not-earning-much-more ...](http://cphpost.dk/news/arts-and-humanities-grads-not-earning-much-more...)

Report (in Danish): [http://www.kraka.org/sites ...](http://www.kraka.org/sites...)

Estonia

Ship crew members receive 5.3% pay increase

December 23, 2015

The listed shipper AS Tallink Grupp and its subsidiaries OU Hansaliin and OU Laevateenindus signed a collective agreement and pay deal with the Estonian Seamen's Independent Union (EMSA) for 2016 that will increase the payroll of ship crew members by 5.3% in 2016. The collective agreement, valid until the end of 2016, will better specify the planning of work time and free time and the organisation of the remuneration payment. Management and unions said that the parties reached a compromise suitable for both sides.

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

Teachers will earn more

December 10, 2015

The ministry of education and research has announced the plan to raise the pay of municipal, private and state school teachers in 2016 by at least 6.4% on average. Depending on the law amendments that are discussed in the parliament as well as state budget discussions teachers' monthly minimum salary is to go from 900 to 958 euro and the average pay will rise to at least 1,150 euro.

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

Hospital staff hope 85 lay-offs were announced by mistake

December 8, 2015

Staff of the Tartu University Hospital contacted the social ministry over an announcement that 85 workers would be laid off, saying this must be a mistake. One Tartu council member said the cuts are so unrealistic, they are sure it must be human error. The hospital is currently understaffed as it is, and is opening a new wing with 100 in-patient beds. In a response, the Social Minister said the cuts were decided at the higher government level and that hospitals would have to propose solutions to increase efficiency.

English: <http://news.postimees.ee/3428149/hospital-rebells-at-lay-off-demand-by-the-state>

Finland

Campaign for transparency in Lidl supply chains

December 20, 2015

The main grocery trade groups, NGO's, the Ministry of Employment and the Economy and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs signed a memorandum on 15 August 2015 setting out the lines on how to follow the UN principles concerning the grocery trade supply chain. The company Lidl joined the discussions initially but then pulled out and did not sign the memorandum. At the moment, Lidl is the only national grocery store chain that refuses to provide information on its subcontractors. Therefore, the industry watchdog Finnwatch has initiated a campaign to put pressure on Lidl to provide consumers with information on its supply chain.

English: [http://heikkijokinen.info/en/trade-union-news-from-finland/929-campaign ...](http://heikkijokinen.info/en/trade-union-news-from-finland/929-campaign...)

Social contract negotiations pending

December 8, 2015

Last month, the Confederation of Finnish Industries (EK) terminated the negotiations for a social contract after the Finnish Transport Workers' Union (AKT) announced its decision to walk out of the talks. The Confederation of Finnish Trade Unions (SAK) is now re-evaluating its objectives in the event that the negotiations for a social contract recommence. SAK reminded that its settlement proposal for the social contract negotiations has already expired. The settlement proposal would have all but waived wage hikes in 2017 and allowed export industries to determine wage hikes in 2018. SAK would have been prepared to transfer a number of social security contributions from the shoulders of employers to those of wage earners on the condition that the government withdrew its coercive revisions to the terms and conditions of employment. It had also proposed the adoption of a system to determine holiday pays that would have adjusted holiday pays to economic fluctuations. The government had said it would consider cancelling its controversial labour market legislation should the social partners reach an agreement that satisfies the government. Now it will go on with its original plans.

English: [http://www.helsinkitimes.fi/finland/finland-news/domestic/13649-sak-wage ...](http://www.helsinkitimes.fi/finland/finland-news/domestic/13649-sak-wage...)

Basic income tested

December 6, 2015

At the moment, a pilot project on basic income is conducted with a small fraction of the population. The project is undertaken by Kela, the Finnish Social Insurance Institution that runs basic unemployment, health, family, and many other benefit programs. If the trial is a success, the government could go all in, but that could be years off. Nonetheless, the country is on the verge of conducting the most methodologically rigorous and comprehensive test of basic income to date. So far, the initiative has already polled the population and found widespread support for the idea: 69 percent of Finns reported support for a basic income, with the median respondent calling for a minimum of €1,000 a month.

English: <http://www.vox.com/2015/12/8/9872554/finland-basic-income-experiment>

Unions concerned about impact of social and health care reform

December 2, 2015

The Government outlined its plans on the long-debated social welfare and health care reform. Currently, health care is the responsibility of joint municipal authorities and local authorities. There are some 190 of them. From the beginning of 2019 responsibility will rest with the 18 regions, of which 15 will organise health care and social services in their own areas separately or by themselves. Three regions will do this with the support of one of the other regions. The decision to divide the country into 18 autonomous health care regions will mean transferring more than 200,000 employees to new employers. The Union of Health and Social Care Professionals criticised the move and stated that the number of regions is too big to reach the goals of citizens' equal high-quality services, bridge the gap in health differences and have better cost effectiveness. Trade unions are also worried about the effects the new system will have on employees in social welfare and health care. The Unions demand that the impact of such changes on staff in these sectors must be assessed and clarified before any final decisions are reached.

English: [http://heikkijokinen.info/en/trade-union-news-from-finland/914-unions-concerned ...](http://heikkijokinen.info/en/trade-union-news-from-finland/914-unions-concerned...)

France

Labour code reform: central role for company-level agreements

December 21, 2015

The labour ministry has launched a reform of the labour law. The two main objectives are to revise the entire labour code and to give company-level agreements a central role. Proposed is a labour code with a new architecture resting on three tiers and focusing on collective bargaining at branch or company level. The first tier would guarantee fundamental principles such as the minimum wage and working hours (the famous 35 hours) – peremptory norms from which employers would not be able to depart. A committee has formulated the fundamental principles that will serve as the basis for the bill to be presented in January 2016. The second tier would be comprised of the areas open to negotiation, at branch or company level. And the third tier would cover the provisions applicable where there is no branch or company-level agreement between employers and unions, in other words, the supplementary provisions. Trade unions and employers agree that the labour code is overly complex, although not for the same reasons. The main disagreement lies on the balance between the peremptory norms that apply across the board to all workers and the supplementary provisions that would only apply in the absence of branch or company-level agreements.

English: [http://www.equaltimes.org/french-labour-code-reform ...](http://www.equaltimes.org/french-labour-code-reform...)

Wage development in separate sectors

December 17, 2015

The statistical office published new data (with tables and graphs for 2015). In the third quarter of 2015, the labour cost index - wages and salaries in the non-agricultural market sector excluding household services - rose at the same pace as in the second quarter of 2015 quarter-on-quarter (+0.1% in seasonally adjusted data), as year-on-year (+1.5%). Average working hours remained stable year-on-year. Wages decreased in manufacturing, energy and construction. An increase was registered in water supply and services.

English: [http://www.insee.fr/en/indicateurs ...](http://www.insee.fr/en/indicateurs...)

Paris train staff strike over security concerns

December 10, 2015

Transport workers in Paris went on a 24-hour strike, claiming the increased number of suspicious packages has prompted security concerns. The railway management admitted that reports of suspicious packages had multiplied by four since the November 13th attacks in Paris. People in Paris and indeed France remain on edge as the national state of emergency is set to begin its second month, introduced just days after the terror attacks saw 130 killed.

English: <http://www.thelocal.fr/20151210/paris-train-staff-on-strike-over-security-concerns>

Germany

Assessment of one year legal minimum wage

December 21, 2015

The Hans Böckler Foundation produced a preliminary assessment of the consequences of the introduction of the legal minimum wage (from 1 January 2015 onwards). Almost one year after the introduction of the legal minimum wage, there are no substantially negative effects signalled. Moreover, the direct employment registered in the social security system has increased, especially in the sectors that traditionally work with low-paid labour. For instance, in the hospitality sector the registered workforce increased with 6.5% (in one year). The statistics show a decrease of the so-called 'mini-jobs'. The authors suppose that this is due to a modification of these vulnerable contracts into normal labour contracts.

German: [http://www.boeckler.de/pdf ...](http://www.boeckler.de/pdf...)

Data on real earnings

December 21, 2015

The Federal Statistical Office (Destatis) reports that, according to the results of the quarterly survey of earnings, the index of real earnings rose by an average of just over 2.4% in the third quarter of 2015 year on year. The index of nominal earnings increased fewer than 2.6% in the same period. Employed persons benefitted almost from the entire increase as the consumer price index rose by just 0.1%. Both the earnings components of paid regularly and extra payments contributed to the growth in earnings. The large increase in nominal earnings continued for persons employed with below-average earnings, as was the case in the

first two quarters of 2015.

English: <https://www.destatis.de/EN/PressServices ...>

Strikes at Amazon warehouses up to Christmas

December 21, 2015

Workers at warehouses of U.S. online retailer Amazon.com were called out on a new strike by trade union Verdi as part of a long-running dispute over pay and working conditions. Verdi said in a statement that workers at six of the nine Amazon warehouses were joining the strike, which will run until 24 December at four of the company's centres. Verdi has organised frequent strikes at Amazon since May 2013 as it seeks to force the retailer to raise pay for warehouse workers in accordance with collective bargaining agreements in the mail order and retail industry. Amazon has repeatedly rejected the union demands, saying it regards warehouse staff as logistics workers.

English: <http://ca.reuters.com/article/businessNews ...>

Lufthansa signs pay deal with 33,000 workers

December 2, 2015

Deutsche Lufthansa AG reached an agreement with trade union Verdi on the wages and pensions of around 33,000 ground crew and personnel. Lufthansa agreed to increase the wages of its workers at Lufthansa-Systems, Lufthansa-Service GmbH, Lufthansa Technik and Lufthansa Cargo by 2.2% on 1 January 2016, as well as providing a one-off payment of 2,250 euro for all full-time employees. Trainees with the airline will receive a payment of 600 euro. The airline and union also announced an agreement that will ensure all employees will receive their employer-funded pension plans. The deal will see workers make a 1% equity contribution to their pensions between 2016 and 2018.

English: <http://www.marketwatch.com/story/lufthansa-signs-pay-deal-with-33000-workers ...>
<http://www.dw.com/en/lufthansa-unions-take-step-to-end-hostility ...>

Greece

Dock workers against privatisation

December 21, 2015

Dock workers started a 24-hour strike in protest against the privatisation of two of the country's key ports. The trade union of dockworkers stated that they will not allow the ports to be sold off, in response to the plans to privatize sites in the harbour cities of Piraeus and Thessaloniki. Merchant shipping is most affected by the industrial action, with cargo vessels and tankers in both of the major ports left without workers to load and unload the ships.

English: <http://en.europeonline-magazine.eu/1st-leadgreek-dockworkers-launch-strike ...>

Regional authorities staff on strike

December 10, 2015

Regional authorities' employees walked off the job, following a call from their union to take part in a 24-hour strike. The strike was being organised in protest at a government decision that was expected to see staff salaries be paid by regional authorities as of 2016, as opposed to these being part of the state budget.

English: <http://www.ekathimerini.com/204213/article/ekathimerini/news/regional ...>

School cleaning staff to strike

December 7, 2015

Cleaning staff at public schools went on strike at the beginning of December to complain that they have not been paid for up to five months. The Federation of Private Sector Employees (OIYE) issued a statement saying that the cleaners had not been paid since June and find themselves in a 'terrible situation'. The workers are also disputed the government's plans to cut their salaries by 10 percent. In addition, they want their positions made permanent and their work to be deemed unhealthy and hazardous.

English: <http://www.ekathimerini.com/204113/article/ekathimerini/news/school-cleaning ...>

Soccer players announce strike action

December 7, 2015

Soccer players announced that they will go on strike indefinitely. The announcement from the Greek Professional Soccer Players Association (PSAP) said that the country's federation and top two leagues failed to keep to their agreement of two years ago to compensate players who were let go by financially troubled teams.

English: <http://www.ekathimerini.com/204126/article/ekathimerini/sports/greek-soccer ...>

Second general strike takes place

December 7, 2015

The second general strike in a month mobilised some 15,000 protestors. The general strikes are organised to protest the austerity measures imposed in the crisis. In order to secure a bailout package, the government coalition has passed legislation that will increase the pension age, raise health care contributions and cut levels of pension payments.

English: <http://www.dw.com/en/thousands-go-on-strike-in-greece ...>
<http://chronicledaily.com/2015/12/07/thousands-demonstrate ...>

Hungary

Minimum wages increase

December 23, 2015

The government reached an agreement with three employer associations and two trade unions on the monthly minimum wages for skilled and unskilled workers. The monthly minimum wage for unskilled workers will rise in 2016 to gross 111,000 forints (353.6 euro) and skilled workers will get 129,000 forints (411 euro). The minimum wages will be confirmed in a government decree before the end of 2015. Calculating with projected inflation of 1.6% and a personal income tax rate of 15% in 2016, the minimum wage will rise in real terms by 5.6% for unskilled workers and by 5.7% for skilled workers in 2015. Trade union confederation MaSzSz, also a member of the broad forum of representatives from the private sector and the government responsible for wage talks, did not sign the agreement.

English: <http://hungarytoday.hu/news/minimum-gross-wage-hungary ...>

Data on earnings in 2015

December 18, 2015

Average gross earnings amounted to HUF 243,600 (772 euro) at the end of the 3rd quarter of 2015. In January-October 2015, average earnings increased by 4% compared to the same period of 2014. The salary increase of armed forces and the payment of an additional allowance for those working in the social field had an impact on the earnings growth in October. Average gross earnings were the highest in financial and insurance activities (HUF 490,000 or 1552 euro) and the lowest in human health and social work activities (HUF 145,900 or 462 euro).

English: <https://www.ksh.hu/docs/eng ...>

Teachers' union announces strikes in 2016

December 8, 2015

Pedagógusok Szakszervezete (PSZ), one of the country's two main teachers unions, has announced to hold street demonstrations and even strikes, if the government refuses to make concessions on serious issues concerning the state of the public education system. The trade union has stated that the way in which public education is funded does not ensure the smooth operation of public schools. At the union's congress the teachers' representatives voted to demand the government to address numerous problems affecting the financing and smooth operation of public schools which are being caused by KLIK (the government's national public education umbrella organization); to prepare an in-depth analysis of the state of public education in recent years for the benefit of a parliamentary debate. The trade union also decided to start the preparations for street demonstrations and strikes in 2016 should the deliberations be unsuccessful.

English: <http://budapestbeacon.com/public-policy/teachers-union-green-lights ...>

State television to lay off 129 workers

December 5, 2015

Public broadcasting station MTVA plans to lay off 129 employees in its advertising and technical departments by the end of January 2016. The announcement follows MTVA's move earlier this year to outsource the sale of advertising time. MTVA has been in financial difficulties for years, having already laid off 900 in 2011 and another 200 people in 2013.

English: <http://budapestbeacon.com/featured-articles/mtva-to-discharge-another ...>

Iceland

Aluminium smelter strike cancelled

December 2, 2015

The strike at Rio Tinto's aluminium smelter in Straumsvík planned for 2 December was cancelled. Still, no agreement has been reached between the negotiating parties. Employees of the smelter are very unhappy with the decision and are considering resigning. A statement from the negotiating committee claims there is no point in striking in light of repeated threats from management that the aluminium smelter would then be closed. According to the statement, employees had requested a pay raise comparable to what other workers in the labour market have received lately. The negotiating committee claims Rio Tinto's actual intentions are unclear, but the unions suspect the company's goal is either to reach some sort of negotiating position with Icelandic authorities or to avoid responsibility for its decisions regarding the future of the smelter.

English: <http://icelandreview.com/news/2015/12/02/aluminum-smelter-strike-canceled>

Ireland

Unions demand is up to 5% pay increase

December 21, 2015

The Private Sector Committee of trade union confederation Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU) has advised to private sector unions to seek pay rises of between 2.5% and 5% in 2016. In a briefing issued to all affiliates, the ICTU said that unions should be in a position to seek these pay adjustments, based on analysis conducted by the Nevin Institute and on 'prevailing conditions' in the sector. It also urged unions to give consideration to seeking the Living Wage, which is currently fixed at €11.50 per hour. Payment of the Living Wage is a key component of the Congress Charter for Fair Conditions at Work, on which the ICTU has been campaigning.

English: <http://www.ictu.ie/press/2015/12/21/unions-in-private-sector ...>

Irish Life workers defer strike action after company commitments

December 16, 2015

1,200 staff members at Irish Life postponed the one-day strike scheduled for 17 December. The trade union Unite made the announcement saying the decision follows overnight talks during which the union received commitments from Irish Life ahead of talks at the Labour Court. A dispute has been ongoing since the beginning of November 2015, over a new pay model. Unite have revised their strike dates to January 20 and February 17, unless the issues have been resolved.

English: <http://www.breakingnews.ie/ireland/1200-irish-life-workers-defer-strike-action ...>

Teachers trade union ballots in favour of industrial action

December 15, 2015

TUI members in Institutes of Technology have voted by a margin of 92% on a turnout of 56% to engage in a campaign of industrial action in order to tackle a number of crisis issues. The sector has been subject to severe funding and staffing cuts at a time of a huge increase in student numbers. The union representatives urge the Minister for Education and Skills to engage meaningfully with them on negotiating a number of issues. In the absence of meaningful negotiations, the union considers that strike action before the general

election is inevitable. The Institute of Technology sector is in crisis. Funding was cut by 35% (€190m) between 2008 and 2015. Over the same period, student numbers rose by a staggering (32%) 21,411 while lecturer numbers actually fell by 9.5% (535). This had a direct, detrimental effect on the quality of service to students and the working conditions of academics. As a result of the fall in lecturer numbers and the steep rise in student numbers, lecturer workload increased significantly. Findings of a survey carried out by TUI (April 2015) show that lecturers are experiencing high levels of work related stress as a result of cutbacks and rationalisation measures in the sector.

English: [http://www.tui.ie/news-events/third-level-members-vote-overwhelmingly ...](http://www.tui.ie/news-events/third-level-members-vote-overwhelmingly...)

Union members in Meadow Meats begin industrial action

December 1, 2015

SIPTU members in Meadow Meats - part of the Dawn Meats Group - commenced industrial action in response to the company's failure to honour a Labour Court recommendation that workers in the meat processing plant receive a pay increase. On 7th September the Labour Court issued a recommendation in relation to a dispute at the Meadow Meats plant concerning a pay claim by SIPTU members. According to the terms of the recommendation, the union members, who are currently being paid the minimum wage of €8.65 per hour, were to be awarded an hourly rate of €9.15 per hour retrospective to 1st January 2015. This is to be increased to €9.65 per hour from 1st January 2016 and to €10.00 per hour from 1st January 2017. The terms of the recommendation were accepted by those members in a secret ballot. However, the management of the company has not engaged in any discussions with them since the recommendation was issued. In response to this failure to honour the Labour Court recommendation the workers have undertaken industrial action, initially, in the form of a work to rule campaign.

English: [http://www.siptu.ie/media/pressreleases2015/featurednews/fullstory ...](http://www.siptu.ie/media/pressreleases2015/featurednews/fullstory...)

Teachers and government in Lansdowne Road Agreement stand off

December 1, 2015

Teachers' unions and Public Expenditure minister Howlin find themselves in a televised standoff over the Lansdowne Road Agreement. The government and most public sector trade unions reached a pay deal last month, as reported in the November newsletter. However, teaching unions ASTI and TUI as well as the Garda representative association and Association of Garda Sergeants and Inspectors have refused to sign on to the agreement, demanding further concessions. The government has said that it will not negotiate separate agreements with the four unions and warned that those who do not sign the Lansdowne Road Agreement will not receive the incremental pay rises other unions will. Teachers and Garda unions have vowed more industrial action.

English: [http://www.newstalk.com/Teachers-strike-Lansdowne-Road-Agreement ...](http://www.newstalk.com/Teachers-strike-Lansdowne-Road-Agreement...)
[http://www.irishtimes.com/news/ireland/irish-news/pay-rises-for-300-000-public-service ...](http://www.irishtimes.com/news/ireland/irish-news/pay-rises-for-300-000-public-service...)

Italy

Nation-wide general strike of health care professionals

December 16, 2015

Doctors across Italy went on 24-hour strike on 16 December 2015 despite the government amending its budget for 2016 to allow for new doctors to be hired. The doctors' unions say the government has reneged on its health budget plan for 2016, cutting more than €2 billion from a sum previously agreed on by regional and local administrations. They argue that the move would be detrimental to the quality of the health service. The government has presented an amendment bill, which will allow regional authorities to hire new medics on temporary contracts ahead of holding selection competitions for permanent hires from June 2016. Still, doctors have said this is only one of many issues the sector is facing and will persist with strike action in protest over the general condition of the health service.

English: <http://www.thelocal.it/20151215/italys-doctors-to-strike-against-budget-cuts>

Rome metro maintenance staff stop strike

December 10, 2015

Striking Rome metro maintenance workers returned to work on 10 December on the grounds that a meeting has been set to discuss the redundancy plans of their employer - Atac contractor CAF Italia. After the Rome prefecture accepted to discuss job protection measures for the CAF Italia workers, the trade union in the

sector FIOM has decided to cancel the strike.

English: [http://www.ansa.it/english/news/general_news/2015/12/10/rome-metro ...](http://www.ansa.it/english/news/general_news/2015/12/10/rome-metro...)

Ferrari workers receive generous bonus

December 9, 2015

Workers at Ferrari will get a €5,000 Christmas bonus. The bonus was announced by the management after shareholders approved the spin-off of the company's luxury sports car unit, which is expected to take place in January 2016. Some 2,850 people work for Ferrari, which is based in the northern town of Maranello. The bonus is a gift to thank them for their work in making the coveted cars as well as to celebrate a successful year. In the meantime the company has decided to transfer all of the shares held by it in Ferrari N.V. to FE Interim B.V, a newly-formed Dutch company, probably as part of a 'fiscal engineering' operation.

English: <http://www.thelocal.it/20151204/ferrari-workers-to-get-5000-bonus>

Migrant workers in supply chain of tomato production exploited

December 9, 2015

The Joint Ethical Trading Initiatives, NGO's that are actively seeking to improve the position of migrant workers have published a report, which addresses labour exploitation in the supply chain of processed tomato products from Italy. The results of the detailed research are shocking. Their report describes the widespread exploitation of migrant workers in the agriculture sector, particularly in the south, and gives recommendations to European retailers on how to conduct human rights due diligence in their supply chains. It also provides insight into some of the main initiatives that aim to improve the conditions for migrant workers in the agriculture sector.

English: http://s3-eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/www.ethicaltrade.org/files/resources/italian_tomato_production_report.pdf

Latvia

Health care workers get higher wages

December 22, 2015

Healthcare employees will receive a 7% wage increase in 2016, according to a bill on distribution of extra 10 million euro for healthcare workers' wages that the government approved. Nurses' wages will increase 9% to 10%, while salaries for higher-paid healthcare employees will increase less, as will wages for unskilled workers – their wages will increase regardless thanks to a higher minimum income from 2016. The amendments will come into force on 1 January 2016.

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

Liechtenstein

Unions consulted on working time

December 3, 2015

Trade union LANV was consulted by the government on proposals related to work on Sunday and public holidays. LANV is adhering to a weekly day of rest. According to the union the proposals are a further step in the flexibilisation and an attack on workers' rights. The proposed measures will have serious consequences for the balance between work and family life and increase the time pressure on the workforce.

German: [http://www.lanv.li/Portals/o/Content/Aktuelles ...](http://www.lanv.li/Portals/o/Content/Aktuelles...)

Lithuania

Teachers strike for better wages

December 10, 2015

Teachers from schools and kindergartens in various cities were on strike. Teachers demanded higher wages,

smaller classes and groups and a larger compensation fund for retired teachers. According to the ministry of education and science, the strike was planned at 67 educational establishments. However, the Education Employees' Trade Union estimated that at least 100 establishments were involved. The ministry said that wages of lowest-earning teachers will be increased by 7% in 2016, after a 10% increase in 2015. Young new teachers will see their wages rise by 5%, and wages for the remaining teachers will increase by 3%. The retirement fund will be increased by 1.5 million euro in 2016. The teachers' trade unions representatives said that the planned increases are not sufficient.

English: <http://www.baltic-course.com/eng/education ...>

Luxembourg

Dupont de Nemours informs unions and employees on jobs cuts

December 20, 2015

The Company Dupont de Nemours announced that it will cut between 30 and 40 jobs by the middle of 2016 as part of the group's worldwide restructuring programme. Meetings are planned in early January with the two administrations concerned in the shake-up. In early January, meetings with the two governments concerned will also take place, and talks are also planned between the unions and management. Unions and staff representatives were made aware of the announcement ahead of the public release of the news. Employees concerned will be informed in January or February.

English: <http://www.wort.lu/en/business/luxembourg-site-dupont-de-nemours-to-cut ...>

Malta

Workers walk out at Malta Freeport

December 17, 2015

Activity at parts of Malta Freeport has been halted after workers walked out in protest over scheduled annual pay rises that were less than expected. Many workers said the salary increases were lower than what was outlined in the collective agreement. A meeting between port management and Malta's General Workers' Union (GWU) is reportedly being held on 17th December.

English: <http://splash247.com/workers-walk-out-at-malta-freeport/>

Industrial action in the public sector for union recognition

December 6, 2015

Industrial and legal action by the Union Haddiema Maghqudin has been withdrawn following an agreement with Malta Public Transport. The company and the union held an urgent meeting to find a solution to the union recognition situation. It was agreed that the UHM would be given sole recognition immediately. A meeting followed for the two sides to agree on a plan of action on how to proceed for a collective agreement. The company explained it was finalising the verification process in a rigorous manner to ensure that the result was final for the sake of stability in the interest of workers and the public. The union had ordered drivers not to collect fares or handle ticketing machines. The union ordered the action claiming the company was delaying the union recognition verification process.

English: <http://www.timesofmalta.com/articles/view/20151206/local/bus-company-union ...>

Netherlands

Supermarket pay deal without largest union

December 28, 2015

After almost three years of talks, a deal on pay and working conditions for supermarket staff was reached. The agreement will give the sector's 260,000 workers, including many part-timers, a 5% rise over four years. The agreement is backdated from April 2013 and applicable till March 2017. Another part of the deal is to bring back the age for a full adult wage from 23 to 22 years of age. The extra allowances for evening and Saturday work will disappear. The agreement was concluded between the CNV trade union and the employers, without the involvement of the FNV trade union that pulled out of the talks because of the loss of the allowances for irregular working hours. The CNV union wants to ballot the deal for approval to as many

supermarket workers as possible, not just union members.

English: [http://www.dutchnews.nl/news/archives/2015/12/supermarket-pay-deal-reached ...](http://www.dutchnews.nl/news/archives/2015/12/supermarket-pay-deal-reached...)

Dockworkers vote massive yes to strike action

December 21, 2015

Dockworkers' union FNV Havens said its members in the container sector had voted 'massively yes' to take strike action in the New Year at the Port of Rotterdam. The union stated that its members 'almost unanimously' rejected a final offer from the employers. The workers are said to be hoping that the strike action will help achieve their demand for a guarantee of job security over the next nine years in the face of two new highly automated container terminals.

English: [http://shipandbunker.com/news/emea/492330-port-of-rotterdam-union-votes ...](http://shipandbunker.com/news/emea/492330-port-of-rotterdam-union-votes...)

Police unions reach agreement

December 17, 2015

Police unions and the justice ministry have reached agreement on a new police pay package involving a 6.5% wage rise over three years. The 6.5% rise will be spread over 2015, 2016 and 2017. In addition, police workers will get a one-off pay of €1,000. The deal follows months of industrial action and still has to be approved by members. The collective agreement also includes new arrangements on overtime and standby charges. Thousands of police officers were involved in the campaign in support of a better pay deal.

English: [http://www.dutchnews.nl/news/archives/2015/12/police-unions-agree ...](http://www.dutchnews.nl/news/archives/2015/12/police-unions-agree...)

Social plan concluded at PostNL

December 2, 2015

The management of the postal distributor PostNL and the trade union FNV, CNV and VHP² reached an agreement in principle for a social plan in October 2015. A ballot on the deal was submitted to the union members, with the 30th November as a deadline. A majority of trade union members voted in favour and thereafter, on 2 December 2015, the negotiation partners signed the definitive agreement. The social plan covers important aspects of the employment relationship of the employees and the provisions that apply in case of restructuring. The concluded agreement has a duration of 5 years and will go into effect on 1 January 2016 (thus, until 31 December 2020).

English: [http://www.postnl.nl/en/about-postnl/press-news/press-releases/2015/december ...](http://www.postnl.nl/en/about-postnl/press-news/press-releases/2015/december...)

The signed social plan (in Dutch): [http://www.fnv.nl/site/alle-sectoren/caos ...](http://www.fnv.nl/site/alle-sectoren/caos...)

Norway

Arrival of immigrants sparks new minimum wage dispute

December 3, 2015

The arrival of large numbers of immigrants has sparked a new debate on the minimum wage. Employers' associations have renewed their call for a national minimum wage to better integrate immigrants into the labour market, arguing it could reign in exploitation and make it more difficult for employers whose workplace are not covered by collective bargaining to undercut wages. Trade unions, on the other hand, fear a national minimum wage will negatively affect their bargaining position in the standard sector-wide wage setting processes. Labour research institute Fafo highlights an additional problem for unions in negotiating wages in diverse work places, pointing out that the labour movement is nearly universally Norwegian while immigrants constitute 15% of the workforce. As such, a large immigrant labour force on minimum wage jobs would represent an even larger organising challenge for the trade unions.

English: <http://www.newsinenglish.no/2015/12/03/unions-warn-of-labour-underclass/>

Prevention of forced labour and social dumping

December 2, 2015

Campaigners are celebrating a significant victory in the fight to end all forms of forced labour and trafficking after the country ratified the International Labour Organization's (ILO) Forced Labour Protocol, which strengthens and updates the 1930 Forced Labour Convention (Convention 29) by adding new measures to prevent, protect and compensate those affected. Trade union confederation LO stated that in many societies

the issues that Convention 29 was created to deal with are still unpleasantly current. The trade union's experience is that forced labour appears together with social dumping and violations of the Working Environment Act and criminal activities.

English: <http://www.equaltimes.org/norway-ratification-boosts ...>

Poland

Reverse planned of increased pension age

December 10, 2015

The government has launched the work on a bill submitted to reverse retirement reforms carried out in 2012 by the former Civic Platform (PO) government. The former government had argued that raising the retirement age was inescapable as the country is facing a demographic crisis, with the number of pensioners set to rise in proportion to people of working age. The draft bill brings the retirement age back to 65 years of age for men and 60 for women, down from the 67 for both sexes at present. However, the pensions may be up to 30% lower; with differences stretching from 10% to a maximum of 30% for women.

English: <http://www.thenews.pl/1/12/Artykul ...>

Amazon workers demand social dialogue

December 3, 2015

Workers at Amazon have picketed the country headquarters demanding management engage in social dialogue. Amazon, which has been in an extended dispute with German trade unions over the recognition of collective agreements, now refused to recognise the Polish trade unions. The workers demand respect for labour law, the start of wage negotiations, better on-site meals and a stop to the continuous raising of production targets. Unionists are calling on management to recognise its workers are not robots.

English: <http://www.uniglobalunion.org/news/polish-workers-amazon-we-are-not-robots>

Portugal

Minimum wage increases

December 22, 2015

After bargaining between the trade unions and business representatives ended in failure the government announced it would decree a minimum wage increase. The minimum wage was frozen at 485 euro until late 2014, before the centre-right coalition raised it to its current level of 505 euro. The decision is now to lift the monthly minimum wage to 530 euro on 1 January 2016. The government is willing to discuss ways to help companies absorb the increase.

English: <http://www.dw.com/en/portugal-set-to-increase-minimum-wage ...>

Six-day metro strike shelved

December 8, 2015

Employees of the Lisbon Metro system called off a six day partial strike due to begin on 9 December, following discussions with the transport company's management. During a meeting of the trade union STTM, the majority of the employees voted against strike action following leader assurances that an understanding had been reached with the management. The two sides have agreed to meet for negotiations in the middle of January. According to the representative of Fectrans union, calling off the strike is a sign that unions are willing to negotiate and find the best solutions for a public company to deliver a public service of quality.

English: <http://theportugalnews.com/news/six-day-metro-strike-shelved ...>

Romania

Christmas bonus most popular seasonal benefit

December 4, 2015

A survey among employers and employees shows that the end of year benefit that most workers will receive this year is the Christmas bonus. The next most popular benefits were a 13th month payment and gift vouchers. The survey was executed by HR company General Human Resources, which also reported employers are increasingly offering employees bonuses and other perks to retain staff.

English: [http://www.romania-insider.com/what-benefits-do-romanian-employees-expect ...](http://www.romania-insider.com/what-benefits-do-romanian-employees-expect...)

Unions intensify demands to fix Social Dialogue and labour rights

December 1, 2015

The trade unions have sought European and global reinforcements in their struggle to restore labour rights. The unions have been in a long struggle to restore their right to national and sector level collective bargaining. Collective bargaining was the practice in the country, until Law 62 on Social Dialogue was passed by executive order in 2011. The law abolished national level collective bargaining and severely impeded the practice of sector level collective agreements. In May this year, trade unions introduced amendments to the 2011 law that will strengthen collective bargaining.

English: [http://www.industrialunion.org/romanian-unions-demand-restoration ...](http://www.industrialunion.org/romanian-unions-demand-restoration...)

Focus on the amendments to Law 62 on Social Dialogue:

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

Serbia

Unemployment rate falls slightly – wages decrease

December 25, 2015

New data on unemployment and wages reveal that the country is still in a vulnerable economic situation. The average gross salaries and wages paid in the period January-November 2015, compared to the average gross salaries and wages paid in the period January-November 2014, decreased by 0.8% in nominal terms and by 2.2% decreased in real terms. The average net salaries and wages paid in the period January-November 2015, compared to the average net salaries and wages paid in the period January-November 2014, decreased by 0.5% in nominal terms and by 1.9% decreased in real terms. The unemployment rate was at 16.7% at the end of the third quarter of 2014, a 1.4% decrease in comparison with the same period last year. The director of the National Employment Service (NES) has stated that the aim is to reduce the unemployment rate to below 15%.

English: [http://webzrs.stat.gov.rs/WebSite/repository/documents ...](http://webzrs.stat.gov.rs/WebSite/repository/documents...)

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

Slovakia

Trade union KOVO to join talks over U.S. Steel lay-offs

December 22, 2015

Trade union KOVO is trying to join forces with US labour unions to negotiate conditions of the expected lay-offs at the U.S. Steel plant in Košice. U.S. Steel announced it would lay off 15% of its work force, equalling 1500 jobs. U.S. Steel bought the Košice plant 15 years ago, committing to uphold staffing levels for the first ten years. KOVO representatives said the union feels responsible for saving jobs as well as upholding working conditions and said it would enter talks over the lay-offs. A first result is a deal on a shortened the working week to only four days. For the fifth day, employees will receive 60 percent of their wage.

English: <http://spectator.sme.sk/c/20068369/u-s-steel-shortens-working-week.html>

<http://spectator.sme.sk/c/20065981/trade-unions-seek-agreement-in-u-s-steel-kosice.html>

Slovenia

Call for reform of health system and dismissal of minister

December 10, 2015

Representatives of health organisations, associations and trade unions called on Prime Minister to dismiss Health Minister. They argue that the minister is not addressing the key challenges in healthcare, and call for a comprehensive health reform.

English: <https://english.sta.si/2209056/health-organisations-call-for-dismissal-of-minister>

Police officers on strike over inadequate equipment

December 3, 2015

Police officers are on strike over the implementation of an agreement signed in July 2013, as reported in our newsletter. The agreement included commitments to replace old materials and equipment, like cars, to guarantee police officers can do their jobs safely. On 10 December, police officers will retire old cars by themselves, refusing to drive cars with too many years or kilometres on them. Despite union statements to the contrary, the strike over equipment is interpreted as an escalation of simultaneous strike action over wages, which started on 18 November. Police officers are demanding a 35% wage increase in the new collective agreement, which is currently being negotiated.

English: [http://www.rtvsl.si/news-in-english/policemen-have-had-enough ...](http://www.rtvsl.si/news-in-english/policemen-have-had-enough-...)
<http://www.sloveniatimes.com/police-to-strike-on-18-november>

Spain

Unions reject minimum wage offer of outgoing government

December 28, 2015

The trade union confederations UGT and CC.OO have rejected the offer of the outgoing government to raise the minimum wage barely one percent in 2016. The outgoing administration notified in writing the two major trade unions of its proposal to increase the minimum monthly wage (SMI), which would stand at 655.08 euro in 2016 (currently at the level of 648.60 euro). This raise is much lower than the claims of both trade unions confederations, which asked a rise in the minimum wage of 11 percent in 2016 (up to 720 euro) and a similar percentage in 2017 (up to 800 euro). Both unions explained that with these increases the minimum wage would approach 60 percent of the net average wage, as recommended by the European Social Charter.

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

Rail workers call off strike during Christmas holidays

December 17, 2015

A planned 23-hour strike was called off at the last minute. The strike was due to take place on 18 December, but has now been called off after the unions came to an agreement with the national rail operator, Renfe. Some unions had called to strike to demand improvements in the collective bargaining agreements of Renfe and Adif, the company managing the railway infrastructure.

English: [http://www.thelocal.es/20151217/travel-chaos-spains-railway-workers-to-stage ...](http://www.thelocal.es/20151217/travel-chaos-spains-railway-workers-to-stage-...)

Spanish: <http://www.ugtferroviarios.es/archivos/2015/125.15-grupo-renfe.pdf>

Researchers call for more flexible work hours to reconcile work and family

December 2, 2015

A report by the Institute for Family Policies (IFP) shows that Spain has the most rigid and longest working hour practices in the EU. It was found that 80% of the citizens believe their work-life balance is negatively impacted by long work hours and lack of possibilities to work from home. Work schedules and school or kinder garden schedules are notoriously out of sync, making it especially hard for parents to combine work and care tasks. The researchers condemn the spirit of presenteeism, which leads workers to stay in the office for extremely long hours regardless of productivity, in order to be perceived as hard working.

English: [http://www.thelocal.es/20151202/spain-has-most-inflexible-working-conditions ...](http://www.thelocal.es/20151202/spain-has-most-inflexible-working-conditions-...)

Sweden

Electrolux announces job cuts

December 9, 2015

White goods giant Electrolux said it would be cutting jobs at the firm's headquarters in Stockholm, following a failed deal with US company General Electric (GE). Consultations have been initiated with the trade unions. The redundancies are set to be made within the small appliances division of the company, but Electrolux refused to disclose potential figures when pressed by the media.

English: <http://www.thelocal.se/20151209/job-cuts-expected-at-stockholm-electrolux-hq>

Cambodian workers assisted by Swedish union

December 2, 2015

The Cambodian forestry workers who were allegedly exploited by their Swedish employer will get assistance from the Swedish wood forestry workers' union GS. The union will cover all the court costs in Sweden. The workers are now back in Cambodia where 11 of them have been tricked into signing documents stating that they owe debts to the former employer of a total of 300 000 SEK (32 373 euro), due to housing costs while staying in Sweden. The union is fighting the claim and insist that the employer instead has to pay for all unpaid wages they owe to the workers.

English: [http://www.bwint.org/default ...](http://www.bwint.org/default...)

Switzerland

The Geneva canton signs labour peace agreement with government workers

December 18, 2015

The canton of Geneva has bought a period of peace for several months with government workers who have gone on strike for seven days over planned budget cuts since the beginning of November. The cantonal government signed an agreement on December with unions representing government employees. It guarantees no strikes until March 21st while negotiations continue between the two sides. In its deal with the unions, the government agreed to suspend planned measures that included an increase in the work week to 42 from 40 hours, more part-time work, an easier system for instituting layoffs and non-replacement of workers who retire or move to other jobs. However, the cantonal government reaffirmed its intent to cut spending over the next three years by 192 million francs, including grants to public institutions such as the Geneva University Hospital (HUG), the Geneva Transport Authority (TPG) and Geneva's utility SIG.

English: <http://www.thelocal.ch/20151218/geneva-buys-labour-peace-without-a-budget>

Turkey

Trade unions set the bar higher amid debates on minimum wage hike

December 8, 2015

Workers get ready for a minimum-wage rise. Trade unions are insisting that the government should increase 'the promised' amount. A demonstration of around 100 activists in central Istanbul heard calls from the Confederation of Progressive Trade Unions of Turkey (DİSK) for a monthly amount of 1,900 Turkish liras, or around 594 euro. Almost all major parties promised a minimum wage hike ahead of the elections in November 2015, ranging from TL 1,300 to TL 2,000. During an interview, the Finance Minister said government plans to increase the minimum wage would go ahead 'as promised'. According to the latest data from the Central Bank, around 12 percent of the workforce is on minimum wage.

English: [http://www.dailysabah.com/economy/2015/12/08/amid-debates-on-minimum ...](http://www.dailysabah.com/economy/2015/12/08/amid-debates-on-minimum...)

Ismaco garment workers win recognition, collective agreement

December 3, 2015

Workers at the Ismaco plant have won a hard fought collective agreement. The workers, organised by garment union Deretiks, started fighting for labour rights at the Ismaco plant, a supplier to top Italian brand Ermenegildo Zegna in 2012. After a long battle, the union was finally recognised early 2015 and received ministerial authorisation to start collective negotiations in June. The negotiations have now paid off and the

plant's first collective agreement was signed on 27 November.

English: <http://www.industriall-union.org/turkey-long-standing-campaign-crowned ...>

United Kingdom

Feature on wages in Northern Ireland

December 23, 2015

A detailed article looks at the average wage in Northern Ireland as the national living wage in the UK will rise to £7.20 an hour for workers in April 2016 and tries to find if the wages in the North really are that low. While the average weekly salaries have increased by 5.4% compared to 2014, it seems monthly expenditures are still causing people financial struggles. Over half of the respondents in a survey said their monthly salary is not enough for them to suitably live on.

English: <http://insideireland.ie/2015/12/23/features-average-wages-in-northern-ireland ...>

Economy is paying too little for work and too much for sitting on wealth

December 18, 2015

Figures published in December 2015 by the Office for National Statistics on UK household wealth paint a worrying picture of growing wealth inequality, according to the TUC. In cash terms for 2012-14 the top 10% owned £5.0 trillion of household wealth, which is 44.8% of total UK household wealth (£11.1 trillion). This is up from 43.6% in 2010-12. The bottom half of the wealth distribution has seen its share decline. The least wealthy 50% had only 8.7% of total UK household wealth in 2012-14, which is down from 9.6% in 2010-12. The TUC says that the growing share of wealth for those at the top reflects an economy that is too dependent on growth in the value of property and financial investments.

English: <https://www.tuc.org.uk/economic-issues/britain-needs-pay-rise ...>

Days lost to strike action fell by 74 % in 2015, official figures reveal

December 16, 2015

Commenting on figures published in December by the Office for National Statistics, which show that the number of days lost through strike action fell by 74 % between October 2014 and October 2015, the TUC stated that the figures highlight once again the flimsiness of the government's case for pushing through its Trade Union Bill. Days lost to strike action are just a tiny fraction of what they were in the 1980s. And they account for a miniscule 0.0035% of all working days between October 2014 and October 2015.

English: <https://www.tuc.org.uk/industrial-issues/days-lost-strike-action-fell-74 ...>

Local government members to be consulted on pay offer

December 15, 2015

Employers in the local sector offer a two-year deal of 1% each year, with more for lower paid staff to match national living wage. Union members will be consulted in 2016 on the employers' pay offer, in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. Following negotiations with the unions, the Local Government Employers made their final offer concerning a pay deal that would cover the two years from April 2016. For the lowest paid (those on spinal points 6-17) this would mean a pay rise of between 6.6% and 1.01% the first year, and between 3.4% and 1.3% the second. Those on spinal points 18-49 would receive 1% in year one and the same again the following year. The increases at the bottom end of the pay scale are designed to meet the employers' legal obligations to comply with the Chancellor's 'national living wage' (that will be £7.20 an hour from April 2016 and £9 an hour by the end of the Parliament). The employers refused the unions' demand that other workforce terms and conditions such as annual leave and sick pay be protected. However, they agreed to a joint review of term-time working for school support staff if their pay offer were to be accepted.

English: <https://www.unison.org.uk/news/article/2015/12/local-government-members ...>

Teaching assistants resist term-only contracts

December 1, 2015

Teaching assistants in schools in Durham county in North East England have spoken out against plans that would put them on term-only contracts. The county council want to cut costs by replacing current year-round contracts by term-only contracts, which would imply teaching assistants are not paid during holiday

periods.

English: <http://www.world-psi.org/en/unison-condemns-cuts-pay-teaching-assistants>

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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.

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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