

collective bargaining

Issue 1/2016 January

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

Investing in people is key to economic growth

January 22, 2016

The European Commission released its annual Employment and Social Developments in Europe (ESDE) report for 2015. The ESDE report gives a review of the latest employment and social trends, reflecting on upcoming challenges and possible policy responses. According to the report, despite recent improvements, huge disparities still exist between EU Member States, in terms of economic growth, employment and other key social and labour market indicators. The report looks at ways of addressing the disparities, focusing on job creation, labour market efficiency, social protection modernisation and investment in people. According to the report the EU can make better use of its human resources through mobility. Although the number of mobile workers has increased over the past 20 years, their share in the total work force remains limited: only

4% of the EU's population aged 15 to 64 live in a Member State other than the one they were born in. Yet, the review states that mobile EU workers tend to have better employment prospects overall than the native population. In addition, EU worker mobility shows to have reduced unemployment in some member states and has helped address staff shortages in receiving countries. The ESDE 2015 review also finds that there is a significant share of non-EU workers in occupations below their qualification level. According to the report, fighting long-term unemployment is crucial when striving to improve labour market efficiency, as the long-term unemployed have about half the chance of finding employment compared to short-term unemployed.

English: <http://www.staffingindustry.com/eng/Research-Publications/Daily-News ...>

The report: <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main ...>

Oxfam Davos report: wealth of poorest falls

January 18, 2016

The Oxfam report *An Economy for the 1%*, shows that the global inequality crisis is reaching new extremes. The gap between the richest and the rest has widened dramatically in the past 12 months. The richest 1% now has more wealth than the rest of the world combined. Power and privilege are being used to skew the economic system to increase the gap between the richest and the rest. In the EU, nearly 9% of people in employment are at risk of poverty, and this rate has increased over the past decade. The report provides inside information on the development in several sectors, for instance the extractive industries, the financial sector and the garment industries. It shows also how women are disproportionately affected by inequality. Several observers have criticized the methodology used by Oxfam. However, according to an interesting blog, the main message stays upright.

English: <https://www.oxfam.org/sites ...>

<http://glineq.blogspot.co.uk/2015/01/repeat-after-me-weath-is-not-income ...>

Private messages at work can be read by employers

January 14, 2016

The European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) judged that a firm that read a worker's Yahoo Messenger chats sent while he was at work was within the company's rights. The worker, an engineer in Romania, claimed that his employer had breached his right to confidential correspondence when the firm accessed his messages and subsequently dismissed him in 2007. The Court dismissed the man's request, saying that it was not 'unreasonable that an employer would want to verify that employees were completing their professional tasks during working hours'. Judges stated he had breached the company's rules and that his employer had a right to check on his activities during working hours. It was reasoned that such policies must also protect workers against unfettered snooping. Countries that have ratified the European Convention on Human Rights have agreed to abide by the ECHR rulings that involve them.

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

The judgment : <http://hudoc.echr.coe.int/eng ...>

Campaigners welcome steps towards a Financial Transaction Tax

January 13, 2016

Trade union and civil society campaigners have welcomed the latest moves towards a Financial Transaction Tax (FTT). In December 2015, Finance Ministers from ten EU countries agreed on the scope of the tax, which if successfully implemented, would create money for the public sector and curtail the power of the financial industry. According to the (ETUC a Financial Transaction Tax is important for workers primarily to give public finances a much-needed boost for investment to tackle unemployment, generate growth, make Europe more competitive and deal with the refugee crisis. December's decision was the latest step in the negotiations, which have been ongoing since the financial crisis – and subsequent bank bail-outs.

English: <http://www.equaltimes.org/campaigners-welcome-steps-towards ...>

Social Progress Watch publishes country reports

January 13, 2016

The Social Progress Watch (SPW) initiative is a tool implemented by members and partners of the NGO SOLIDAR to monitor the commitment and progress made by national governments towards a more social and cohesive Europe. In the latest Newsletter, four country reports are presented (from Austria, Bulgaria, Italy and Romania). The editors state that the ongoing social crisis in Europe has confronted the European institutions and national governments with the effects of their policy responses to the economic crisis. These policies have so far focused on one-sided austerity measures and thereby eroded the social safeguards

offered by our respective welfare states and the European social model.

English: <http://us9.campaign-archive ...>

Austria

Pay deal in private social and care sector

December 15, 2016

Negotiators in the private social and care sector came to an agreement. Trade union vida and GPA-djp concluded with the employers a 1.35% pay increase for the 100,000 workers as from 1 February 2016. The collective agreement includes an improvement of the on-call bonus with 5.6%, a harmonisation of the inconvenience pay (for heavy, dirty or complicated work) and a change of the applied wage scale rhythm (a higher level is applied every 3 instead of every 5 years).

German: <http://www.oegb.at/cms ...>

Statistical review published

January 14, 2016

The official statistical office has published a wide-ranging overview of data combined with several detailed tables. Included is a population projection for the years 2015-2060. The section on the 2014 wage statistics signals that a total of 52.2 per cent of all employees were employed full-time throughout 2014. Annual per-capita gross pay varied significantly depending on social position. The average gross income achieved by male white collar workers was 63,411 euro. The corresponding figure for female white collar workers was 40,512 euro. Male officials received an average gross income of 58,976 euro and female officials 57,195 euro. Male civil servants under contract enjoyed gross earnings of 46,865 euro, their female counterparts 41,363 euro. Among blue collar workers, men drew an average gross wage of 33,764 euro, women 23,970 euro. In 2014, the per-capita gross pay of men employed full-time throughout the entire year was 48,579 euro, and for women 37,847 euro.

English: http://www.statistik.at/web_en/publications_services ...

Belgium

Unions and KBC bank conclude a deal on future restructuring

January 21, 2016

The bank and insurance company KBC has concluded an agreement with the socialist white collar union BBTK and the Christian white collar union LBC on a collective labour agreement and job security plan in 2016 and 2017. In a press statement the bank stated that the new collective labour agreement commits KBC to no dismissals due to restructuring or to organisational or economic reasons.

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

Social dialogue stimulates investment

January 15, 2016

Brewer InBev has announced an investment of 49.8 million euros in the Liege region's Jupille brewery. The initiative was supported by a grant of approximately 4 million euros from the Walloon authorities, and was set up thanks to social dialogue within the company. The ministry of economics stated that the collaboration of all involved, management, workers, and trade union representatives, helped establish a positive atmosphere leading to this investment and to the creation of new jobs in Liege.

English: <http://www.brusselstimes.com/business/4927/inbev-investment-walloon ...>

Workers call off strike at refinery after deal

January 15, 2016

Workers at Exxon Mobil's 300,000-barrels-per-day Antwerp refinery have cancelled a planned walk-out on 15 January after agreeing to a proposed deal from the company. The workers had originally planned to strike

in December 2015. .

English: [http://www.reuters.com/article/exxon-mobil-refinery-strike ...](http://www.reuters.com/article/exxon-mobil-refinery-strike)

Rail unions call for strike against government

January 5, 2016

The French speaking rail unions have been on strike on 6 and 7 January in protest against the government's demands that the railway cut costs and workers' off days. The public transport union CSC Transcom and the railroad workers' union CGSP Cheminots confirmed that they would go ahead with the planned strikes while Dutch speaking unions decided to negotiate with the Belgian government. The government says it wants to step up 'productivity' among rail workers, by enforcing them to work one hour more each week, but unions say working conditions would deteriorate.

English: [http://aa.com.tr/en/world/belgian-rail-unions-call-for-strike ...](http://aa.com.tr/en/world/belgian-rail-unions-call-for-strike)

Bulgaria

Unemployment rate jumps

January 4, 2016

The unemployment rate increased to 9.9% in November 2015, up 0.4% from the previous month, according to the Bulgaria Labour Office. The number of unemployed rose to a total 324,060 registered, 11,145 more than in October. The rise in unemployment has been attributed to the end of the summer tourist season. The number of people who found a job in November amounted to 15,338, down by 2,372, compared to October. By sector, the highest number of vacancies in November was 3,068, which was registered in manufacturing, followed by trade with 1,684, and administrative service activities with 661.

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

Croatia

Trade unions consider forming of political party

January 18, 2016

During a round table of experts and analysts the Association of Croatian Trade Unions expressed its dissatisfaction with the activities of political stakeholders on the Croatian scene and announced a possibility of getting organised politically. Union spokespersons expressed their dissatisfaction with political parties both 'left and right'. They discussed the idea of unions establishing political parties that would promote a social state and would have an own independent leadership.

English: [http://en.dalje.com/2016/01/unions-might-form-own-political-parties ...](http://en.dalje.com/2016/01/unions-might-form-own-political-parties)

Cyprus

Strike of Port pilots averted after deal

January 18, 2016

A strike scheduled in Limassol's port on 18 January was suspended after an agreement, which leaves the chance for pilots to have a stake – indirectly – in the privatisation process of the port's operations and thus ensure the future of the current employees, was clinched with the transport ministry. The trade unions said the deal allowed for pilots to communicate with the potential investor and possibly strike a deal, a request that had so far been rejected by the state. However, the request that the trade unions be outright responsible for the operations in a bid to ensure the workers future rights was not approved.

English: [http://cyprus-mail.com/2016/01/18/port-pilots-clinch-deal ...](http://cyprus-mail.com/2016/01/18/port-pilots-clinch-deal)

Turkish Cypriot public sector workers on strike

January 12, 2016

The Turkish Cypriot public sector trade union Kamu-Sen has warned of legal and industrial action if 13th month salaries are not paid by January 25. Firing the warning in a written statement, trade union stated efforts to seek help from both the Republican Turkish Party CTP and National Unity Party UBP coalition 'hit a brick wall'. The union went on to complain that the coalition partners were left egg-faced over the water pipelines issue and that embarrassment was compounded by fraudulent activities concerning the Turkish Cypriot electricity board and the airport at Tymbou. The union said the 13th salary was a legal right of the public sector and that the coalition was in violation by not paying it.

English: <http://in-cyprus.com/turkish-cypriot-workers-threaten-strike-action/>

Restore lost rights in 2016

January 1, 2016

Trade unions have announced to spend 2016 battling to restore the lost rights of members and to continue the struggle for the improvement of working conditions. The SEK trade union wants to pursue in 2016 the implementation of a number of measures aiming at the improvement the conditions of employees. SEK representatives said the union would claim in 2016 better living standards and the 'gradual recovery of income and benefits lost in previous years'. AKEL affiliated PEO union, invited all employees, to 'battle united' to restore labour rights, for an end to austerity, and for a fair distribution of growth. The union criticised the government for the 'neoliberal restructuring of the economy', and the 'harsh austerity measures' agreed with the troika, which resulted in a major setback as regards the living standards of workers, and led to widened social inequalities. DEOK union, affiliated with socialist party EDEK, called on workers to claim the future they deserve 'dynamically and with decisiveness'. DEOK criticised the government for not delivering what it promised, thus, the social welfare state was replaced by food banks.

English: <http://cyprus-mail.com/2015/12/31/unions-vow-to-restore-lost-rights-in-2016/>

Czech Republic

Forecast: 3.2% wage increase

January 20, 2016

In a study published by the Czech-German Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ČNOPK) managers have indicated that they plan to raise wages by an average of 3.2% in 2016. The survey on wage levels involved companies of various sizes operating across a range of sectors and regions.

English: [http://praguemonitor.com/2016/01/20 ...](http://praguemonitor.com/2016/01/20...)

Jobless rate increases by the end of 2015

January 13, 2016

The jobless rate grew to 6.2% in December 2015, a 0.3% increase from November's 5.9% rate, according to the Czech Employment Office. At the end of December 2015, the number of unemployed grew to 453,118; this was despite the unemployment rate seeing an improving trend throughout the year of 2015. The Office states that this change is typical for the end of a year as it is the effect of gradually ending seasonal work. Compared to the same period last year, the jobless rate actually decreased from 7.5% in December 2014.

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

Denmark

Union publishes injury ranking and reports lack of inspection

January 25, 2016

The trade union journal Fagbladet 3F has for the first time produced a list of the companies where the most work-related injuries are sustained, and some of the country's most prominent companies have the dubious honour of being included. Hilton Foods Danmark had the highest rate of injuries, the wind turbine producer LM Wind Power came second, and the cleaning company Kongsvang Rengøringsservice had the third-highest rate of workplace injuries. The country's biggest slaughterhouse company Danish Crown was number nine on the list. According to the figures published, which are based on data collected for all reported workplace injuries between 2012 and 2014, there is a 5 percent chance of a Danish Crown employee

being injured at work in any given year. The trade union magazine reported that companies with a working environment certificate, including some of the companies in the top ten, are not regularly inspected by Arbejdstilsynet, even if a lot of accidents are registered there.

English: [http://cphpost.dk/news/business/trade-union-3f-publishes-denmarks-first ...](http://cphpost.dk/news/business/trade-union-3f-publishes-denmarks-first-...)
[http://cphpost.dk/news/business/danish-companies-with-high-accident-rates-avoiding ...](http://cphpost.dk/news/business/danish-companies-with-high-accident-rates-avoiding-...)

Unions attract more workers after Ryanair clash

January 18, 2016

Since October 2014, when the discount airline Ryanair announced its plans to open a hub in Copenhagen, membership of the employment union Flyvebranchens Personale Union (FPU) has increased by 31 percent, and other unions are also aware of growing support. The union argues that the Ryanair case has made the organisations more visible. It has become clearer what kind of organisation it is and what the union is fighting for. Those who are hesitant can better see the value of being a member of a trade union.

English: [http://cphpost.dk/news/business/last-years-ryanair-dispute-has-boosted ...](http://cphpost.dk/news/business/last-years-ryanair-dispute-has-boosted-...)

Estonia

Research on the gender pay gap published

January 26, 2016

During a final seminar the Norway Grants project 'Increased availability of gender pay gap statistics', implemented by Statistics Estonia in order to study the pay gap, was discussed. The conference focused on giving an overview of the project and its implementation and discussing the Diversity Charter and related topics. According to the data, Estonia has the biggest gender pay gap in the EU. The resulting publication, published in December 2015, examines changes in the gender pay gap over time based on different background variables (ethnicity, education, etc.), and the factors (gender segregation, the activity of women in business, the influence of family and children, parental benefits, paternal leave, parental leave) which impact on the pay gap.

English: <http://www.stat.ee/338437>

The report *Indicators of Gender Equality* (bilingual): <https://www.stat.ee/268959>

Extensive lay-offs in the Northeast

January 25, 2016

There has been much talk about mass redundancies at the northeast Estonia based shale oil producer Viru Keemia Grupp (VKG), but extensive lay-offs are planned by other companies of Ida-Viru County as well. According to data of the Ida-Viru division of the Estonian Trade Union Confederation (EAKL), at least 163 people more are about to lose their jobs in the first half of 2016. In February the municipal bus company Narva Bussiveod will cease operations, making 76 people redundant. Due to the completion of the Auvere power plant of the state-owned energy group Eesti Energia, the energy engineering company GE Alstom Estonia will reduce its workforce, letting go 19 workers in February and another 68 in May. According to the trade union, 223 of the company's 399 employees will be laid off in 2017, leaving it with a staff of just 176. The state-owned postal company Omniva also plans to reduce its Ida-Viru County workforce in the summer.

English: [http://news.err.ee ...](http://news.err.ee-...)

Finland

Unions critical about easing short time employment

January 27, 2016

Several trade union confederations have criticised the government plans to reduce protection against precarious employment. Trade unions are afraid this will lead to an even further weakening of the position of women and young people in the labour market. The unions see the danger that many jobs intended to be permanent will now be made fixed-term and it will be more difficult for young people to get permanent employment. The trade unions participated in a governmental working group, but there was no genuine tripartite engagement as the goal was set in advance in the Government Programme. The group has

formulated three main proposals.

English: <http://heikkijokinen.info/en/trade-union-news-from-finland ...>

Still high level of redundancies

January 11, 2016

The number of redundancies in the private sector has continued to remain at over 10,000 a year according to the trade union confederation SAK. In 2015 a total of 11,907 employees lost their jobs, according to SAK estimates. In 2014 the number was 12,447. The last time the figure was below 10,000 was in 2010, says SAK which have been keeping statistics since 2006. Major redundancies took place at Microsoft Mobile, which closed its unit in the city of Salo letting 2,300 people go. Other major redundancies took place at the IT services company Tieto with 435 people left without work. Sanoma Media slashed 241 jobs and Rovio Entertainment 198. The total number of redundancies in the information and communication sector rose to almost 3,800. This is one quarter more than in 2014. In industry redundancies rose by 15% to almost 3,700. In the retail sector there were fewer redundancies than in 2014. The figure fell from 2,228 to 871. The Act of Co-operation stipulates that in all undertakings with more than 20 employees, any planned redundancies are subject to mandatory consultation with personnel representatives. In 2015 almost 114,000 employees had to be consulted. In 2014 it was 109,000. The foremost mandatory consultation exercise still pending at the beginning of 2016 is at the University of Helsinki, where 8,000 jobs are to be negotiated.

English: <http://heikkijokinen.info/en/trade-union-news-from-finland/942-the-number ...>

France

Air France restructuring talks enter new phase – ground staff deal concluded

January 28, 2016

Air France dropped a so-called 'plan B' for restructuring plan and job losses that triggered clashes with staff in 2015 in favour of limited expansion. In new plans outlined to the airline's works council, the French unit of Air France-KLM targeted growth in its long-haul network from 2017. The measures are conditional on greater productivity efforts from pilots and cabin crew. Net investments would exceed 1 billion euros by 2020. The airline said it would post a 2015 operating profit for the first time since 2008. In parallel, three unions have accepted proposals for the ground staff that include important job security guarantees and flanking measures for the planned restructuring. The company and the unions agreed on a policy of no compulsory dismissals, at least until 30 June 2018.

English: <http://www.reuters.com/article/airfrance-unions ...>

English (ground staff deal): <http://atwonline.com/labor/air-france-ground-staff-sign-labor-deal>

French: <http://www.zonebourse.com/AIR-FRANCE-KLM-4604/actualite/Air-France-KLM ...>

Taxi, aviation and civil servant strikes

January 26, 2016

A wave of strikes in several sectors went over the country; taxi drivers blocked key roads and hundreds of flights have been cancelled as air traffic controllers joined civil servants, hospital workers and teachers for a day of strikes. The taxi drivers blocked the capital's ring road in a demonstration against upstart competitors such as Uber. Air traffic controllers organised a strike over pay and working conditions. The public service workers have been called to down tools to protest against labour reforms proposed last September affecting pay and career advancement. Kindergarten and primary school teachers went on strike for higher pay.

English: <http://news.yahoo.com/major-french-strike-affect-flights-taxis ...>

EDF workers strike against job cuts

January 21, 2016

A strike by workers of the utility company EDF over planned job cuts at the heavily indebted firm has cut the country's power output by at least 11.5 GW, a union official said. EDF is holding a works council meeting with trade union and worker representatives where it is expected to announce thousands of job cuts. The proposal is to cut 4000 jobs in a period of three years. The unions are acting against the planned cuts since November 2015 and do not accept that workers become the victims of the deregulation of the energy sector.

English: <http://af.reuters.com/article/commoditiesNews ...>

Germany

Assessment of the introduction of a statutory minimum wage

January 28, 2016

Two research institutes have evaluated the impact on the labour market of the statutory minimum wage introduction (from 1 January 2015). First, the Institute for Employment Research IAB presented a document with an assessment. According to the IAB-Arbeitsmarktspiegel, several important developments took place at the labour market since the introduction. While overall employment continued to show a positive trend, the number of exclusively marginal part-time employees dropped markedly at the turn of the year. This effect is strongest in industries and regions with a low average wage level. Persons changing into direct forms of employment can explain a little more than half of the decrease. The second evaluation comes from the Hans Boeckler Foundation (HBS). The authors conclude that million workers profited by the introduction; especially in the low-wages branches the workers' income has increased substantially. The introduction has had no negative consequences on the labour market; on the contrary, the Foundation concludes that the introduction of the €8.5 per hour minimum rate has actually been instrumental in kick starting employment.

English: [http://www.iab.de/en/publikationen/forschungsbericht ...](http://www.iab.de/en/publikationen/forschungsbericht...)

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

The IAB-report (in German): [http://doku.iab.de/forschungsbericht/2016 ...](http://doku.iab.de/forschungsbericht/2016...)

The HBS-report (in German): [http://www.boeckler.de/pdf/p_wsi_report_28 ...](http://www.boeckler.de/pdf/p_wsi_report_28...)

Prison workers and the recognition of their right to unionise

January 17, 2016

Germany prisons are more and more a 'site of industrial labour'. Companies outsource labour and automobile producers subcontract assembly work to prisons. For all their work, prisoners earn below the legal minimum wage while their labour and human rights are not protected. Until 2014, prisoners were not organised. At present, the prisoners' trade union Gefangenengewerkschaft/Bundesweite Organisation (GG/BO) has around 800 members in more than 40 prisons. A global labour column describes how the union was formed and why a strike was called in Butzbach prison in December 2015 as well as the state's reaction to the strike.

English: [http://column.global-labour-university.org/2016/01/interview ...](http://column.global-labour-university.org/2016/01/interview...)

Labour market position of young workers

January 8, 2016

Trade union confederation DGB has analysed the labour market position of youngsters. The results are presented in a study that covers their income situation, the situation at the workplace and the working time. One key finding is the dominance of vulnerable or atypical contracts. Almost half of the youngsters in the under 25-years group are working in atypical labour relations. The section that is dedicated to wages and income reveals that 31% is earning less than 1500 euro gross per month, whilst the average gross income for all young workers under 30-years comes at 1,855 euro.

German: [http://docs.dpaq.de/10167-gutearbeit ...](http://docs.dpaq.de/10167-gutearbeit...)

Wage development in 2015

January 8, 2016

The researchers of the collective bargaining archive of the WSI, the socioeconomic research institute of the Hans Boeckler Foundation, published a first assessment of the wage development in 2015. The collectively agreed wages have increased in 2015 with a nominal 2.7%. The net pay, after deduction of inflation (0.3%), increased on average with 2.4% (for the whole economy). The highest increase was signalled in the investment and services branches, the lowest in retail. The trade unions belonging to the trade union confederation DGB concluded agreements for 12.5 million workers. The average duration in 2015 was 21.1 months (2014: 22.4 months). Another 6.8 million workers received pay improvements that were already settled in agreements dating from 2014 (or earlier).

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

Greece

Seamen strike against austerity measures

January 27, 2016

The Panhellenic Seamen's Federation (PNO) began on 20 January a 48-hour strike against austerity measures, as all vessels remained in ports; ferry traffic to Greek islands was suspended. PNO announced a possible prolongation of the stoppage and organised a second 48-hour port strike a week later. The sailors are protesting the government's plans to reform pension and social security systems, and the elimination of seamen insurance fund NAT. The union opposes to the idea of NAT being merged into a main pension fund. PNO already staged a four-day strike against the government 'anti-people policy' in November 2015.

English: [http://www.reuters.com/article/us-eurozone-greece ...](http://www.reuters.com/article/us-eurozone-greece...)
[http://sputniknews.com/europe/20160120 ...](http://sputniknews.com/europe/20160120...)

Strike against reform

January 15, 2016

The trade unions will stage a 24-hour nationwide strike against the government's planned reforms demanded by international lenders. The walkout against planned cuts in future benefits and increased social security contributions to make the pension system viable, will be a test for Prime Minister Tsipras's coalition which has a thin parliamentary majority. Parliament is expected to vote on the reform bill in early February, government officials have said. The strike is organised by the largest private sector trade union GSEE and its public sector counterpart ADEDY, which together represent about 2 million workers and pensioners.

English: [http://www.streetinsider.com/Reuters/Greek+labor+unions+to+strike ...](http://www.streetinsider.com/Reuters/Greek+labor+unions+to+strike...)

Hungary

Employment figures updated

January 6, 2016

According to the latest employment statistics published by the Central Statistical Office (KSH), unemployment fell one percentage point year-on-year between September-November 2014 and the corresponding period in 2015 thanks entirely to public work schemes. According to official sources, the number of citizens engaged in public employment schemes between December 2014 and October 2015 increased by a little over 39,000. The official number of unemployed during this period in 2015 was 284,000, 37,000 less than the previous year. Over the course of 2014 the number of people engaged in public employment schemes during any given quarter ranged from 160,000 to 178,000. In December 2014 this number increased to 190,905. This number increased by 39,177 to 230,082 in October 2015. The number of people employed abroad reached 112,700, or 2.6 percent of the active workforce. Presently 76.9 percent of working-age men and 63 percent of women are either employed or actively seeking employment.

English: [http://budapestbeacon.com/economics/public-work-schemes-lower ...](http://budapestbeacon.com/economics/public-work-schemes-lower...)

Nurses' activist person of the year

January 1, 2016

The largest independent media outlet, RTL Klub, has named nursery workers' representative Mária Sándor the 2015 person of the year. In February 2015, Sándor called attention to the plight of the drastically overworked and underpaid nurses and the deplorable state of the underfunded public health-care system, owing in large part to a chronic shortage of nurses and other health-care professionals. Following her public statement she was fired from her job at a hospital. Leading and speaking at a number of peaceful demonstrations over the course of 2015, Sándor called for a significant improvement to hospital working conditions, a 50 percent increase in nurses' salary, and for nurses to receive overtime pay to which they are legally entitled. Moreover, she said patients should be treated 'fairly and honourably'.

English: [http://budapestbeacon.com/featured-articles/rtl-klub-names-maria-sandor ...](http://budapestbeacon.com/featured-articles/rtl-klub-names-maria-sandor...)

Iceland

Majority of population backs up artist wage grant

January 27, 2016

More than half of the population supports the current system of state-paid grants for the arts in the form of a monthly wage to a wide-ranging group of selected artists. 53.2% of respondents to an opinion poll said that they favoured the system, under which selected artists are paid a taxable monthly 'wage' of almost ISK 340,000 (approx. €2,400) from taxpayers' money. Support for 'artist wages' is on the increase, with the proportion of the population in favour some 7 percentage points higher than in February 2013 and over 14% higher than in March 2010.

English: [http://icelandmonitor.mbl.is/news/culture_and_living/2016/01/27/majority_support ...](http://icelandmonitor.mbl.is/news/culture_and_living/2016/01/27/majority_support...)

Migrant workers exploited at guesthouse

January 15, 2016

Polish workers at a south Iceland guesthouse were subjected to exploitation that is tantamount to human trafficking, according to trade union officials. Two Polish women in their thirties came to Iceland in July 2014 and soon thereafter started working at the guesthouse. The mistreatment they received is now considered a gross violation of the collective bargaining agreement for workers in this industry, and the matter is with the police. The two women, who were unaware of their labour rights and not informed by their employer, were made to work 10 hours per day, seven days a week, for a salary far under the legal minimum wage for such work. The guesthouse owner urged them to not get a personal identification number, as required by law, telling them that to do so would result in their wages being taxed. The women reported the subject to the trade union and the officials filed immediately charges with the police.

English: <http://grapevine.is/news/2016/01/15/foreign-workers-at-guesthouse-exploited/>

Ireland

Retailer Tesco plans pay cut

January 28, 2016

The supermarket giant Tesco wants to get rid of a contract agreed 20 years ago that it claims is 'inflexible'. Staff moving to a new contract would suffer a wage reduction of over €2 an hour from over €14. Almost 1,000 long-serving Tesco workers face a pay cut of over 16%, the loss of guaranteed overtime and a bonus. Tesco has asked workers to sign a new contract, negotiated in 2006, which would mean lower pay of €11.97 an hour, later working hours and rostering on Sundays. They would also lose a guaranteed bonus, which would now be based on performance. Trade union Mandate has announced that it will ballot for industrial action if the company forges ahead with the plans to slash the wages without agreement.

English: [http://www.independent.ie/business/irish/up-to-1000-tesco-staff-fight-massive-cuts ...](http://www.independent.ie/business/irish/up-to-1000-tesco-staff-fight-massive-cuts...)

Irish Life workers defer strike action after company commitments

January 16, 2016

Members of the Teachers' Union of Ireland are being backed by students in strike action over pay and security for young workers. Secondary school teachers will hold a day of strike action before the general election. Members of the TUI voted 89% in favour of industrial action over issues of pay and security of employment for young teachers. They say the stoppage will go ahead unless their demand for meaningful talks is met. The union says the poor pay and employment security for young teachers is forcing many of them into income poverty. The Union of Students stated that students can understand this position.

English: [http://www.newstalk.com/Teachers-being-backed-by-students-in-strike-action ...](http://www.newstalk.com/Teachers-being-backed-by-students-in-strike-action...)

Cork region unions join forces

January 15, 2016

Twenty unions in Cork City and county have joined forces in a first-of-its-kind initiative to better organise workers and the wider community. The initiative, called One Cork, involves a much deeper level of collaboration between the unions — at workplace and societal levels — to organise, campaign, educate, train, and communicate with workers, their families and the wider community. The work of One Cork will focus on a number of areas, including organising workers into trade unions on a collaborative basis and communicating workers' rights more effectively. The pilot will be replicated in Belfast before being extended.

English: <http://www.irisht Examiner.com/business/twenty-cork-unions-join-forces ...>

Luas rail tram workers strike

January 14, 2016

Luas staff will strike on 11 and 12 February, and a week later on 18 and 19 February - both Thursdays and Fridays. Trade union Siptu confirmed three of four groups of workers, who balloted overwhelmingly to take industrial action, said their preference was to strike for 48 hours at meetings this week. A majority of the 180 drivers, 37 revenue protection officers, and eight revenue protection supervisors backed the 48-hour option. The fourth and final group of staff - 16 control room officers - will work to rule. Drivers are seeking a pay rise. Siptu would not give a complete list of all its demands, but said drivers want a pay rise in the region of 30% over five years, with a similar increase being sought by other staff. Workers have also sought improvements in annual leave, bonuses, pensions and income continuance.

English: <http://www.herald.ie/news/commuter-chaos-looms ...>

Italy

Wages index for 2015 published

January 29, 2016

At the end of December 2015 the coverage rate (share of national collective agreements in force for the wage setting aspects) was 60.9% in terms of employees and 58.0% in terms of the total amount of wages. The index of hourly wages according to collective labour agreements was unchanged in December 2015 compared to the previous month while the per employee index increased by 0.1%. Compared with December 2014 both indices increased by 1.3%. The indices are calculated with reference to the fixed employment structure of the base period (December 2010). In 2015 the annual average of the hourly index increased by 1.1% compared to 2014, while the per employee index rose by 1.2%.

English: http://www.istat.it/en/files/2016/01/EN_contractual_wages_salaries ...

Job Act for freelancers approved

January 29, 2016

The Renzi cabinet approved a packet of measures to protect freelancers and self-employed workers. According to the government this so-called Jobs Act for the self-employed is designed to 'build a modern rights and welfare system capable of supporting freelancers' current work and of safeguarding their future'. The bill will also introduce new norms on so-called smart work, i.e. 'the flexible articulation of employee work in relation to the time and place in which it is carried out'. In a bid to prevent employers from abusing freelancers, the measure says written contracts can't be modified unilaterally or broken 'without proper advance notice'. As well, pregnancy, illness or accidents can't be used as reasons to terminate freelance contracts - instead, they must suspend without pay for a period not longer than 150 days.

English: <http://www.ansa.it/english/news/business/2016/01/29/factbox-the-jobs-act ...>

Steel workers block highway

January 26, 2016

A group of about 400 workers from troubled steel group ILVA staged a march that blocked a main highway interchange in Genoa. It was the second day of protests, following the occupation of the company's Cornigliano plant. The trade unions have accused the government of 'ripping up' a recent accord, and have asked a member of government to be present at a meeting to take place at the Ministry of Economic Development.

English: <http://www.ansa.it/english/news/politics/2016/01/26/ilva-protesters-cause ...>

Latvia

Steel workers seek meeting with government

January 24, 2016

Employees of Latvia's KVV Liepajas Metalurgs steel company have sent the Prime Minister, the Economics

Minister and the Finance Minister a letter calling for a meeting with the company's employees who want to discuss their pressing issues with government representatives. According to the letter, the KVV Liepajas Metalurgs employees are aware of the deep crisis that has hit the metallurgical industry in Europe and elsewhere in the world and that it became even worse in the second half of 2015.

English: http://www.baltic-course.com/eng/markets_and_companies ...

Unemployment rate rises

January 14, 2016

According to the State Employment Agency, the registered unemployment level has increased by 0.3% compared to the previous month to reach 8.7% of the economically active population of Latvia at the end of December 2015. In November 2015, the registered unemployment level was at 8.4%. At the beginning of December, 79,153 persons were registered as unemployed with the Employment Agency, whereas at the end of November there were 81,780 unemployed. In October and September, the registered unemployment level in the country was at 8.3%. Among the regions, the Riga Region had the lowest unemployment level at 5.4%, while Latgale province registered the highest with 18.5%.

English: <http://www.staffingindustry.com/eng/Research-Publications/Daily-News/Latvia ...>

Liechtenstein

Income comparison with Switzerland

January 20, 2016

The government commissioned research to the Liechtenstein-Institute that deals with income comparisons between Liechtenstein and Switzerland. Main question was the differences between the gross and the net income. The researchers took into account the purchase power of households, the consumption patterns and the costs of housing. After deductions of tax and social security payments and of the costs of living, transport and housing the conclusion is that around 60% of the income is disposable for other expenditure - in Switzerland this is 50%. Living in Liechtenstein is thus more attractive. Moreover, the gross wages are higher.

Study (in German): <http://www.liechtenstein-institut.li/Portals/o/contortionistUniverses ...>

Lithuania

Indexation of pension benefits discussed

January 25, 2016

Currently, a political debate is going about the necessary indexation of pensioners' income. The €8 increase in the average pension will not help pensioners, who receive among the lowest pensions in Europe. Suggestions have been done to index the pensions, which would make them increase together with growing average wages.

English: <http://en.delfi.lt/lithuania/economy/indexed-pensions-may-not-help-lithuanian ...>

Luxembourg

Wage indexation expected in June 2016

January 22, 2016

The next salary indexation could take place in June, according to the latest estimates from the Banque centrale du Luxembourg (BCL). In its 2015/3 bulletin, published on 22 January, BCL states that, based on current inflation projections, the next indexation increases should only be triggered in June 2016 and September 2017. Headline inflation, which rebounded from its minimum -0.6 percent in December 2014 to 0.8 percent in November 2015, should remain at levels close to one percent until August 2016 before picking up, notes BCL. The annual average rate of change of the consumer price index, which had fallen to 0.6 percent in 2014, went back down again to 0.5 percent in 2015 before recovering to 1.1 percent in 2016. BCL explains that with the decline in headline inflation, the payment of the next indexation, scheduled for Q1 2016, would be postponed to Q2 2016. Concerning real wages, BCL notes that the recovery of the economic outlook should

contribute in strengthening the bargaining power of employees. Overall, nominal wages are expected to grow 1.3 percent in 2015 before increasing to 1.9 percent in 2016 and 3.0 percent in 2017.

English: [http://www.wort.lu/en/business/bcl-projections-luxembourg-s-next ...](http://www.wort.lu/en/business/bcl-projections-luxembourg-s-next...)

The BCL bulletin (in French): [http://www.bcl.lu/fr/publications/bulletins_bcl ...](http://www.bcl.lu/fr/publications/bulletins_bcl...)

Malta

Facilitator for talks on collective agreement at Air Malta

January 12, 2016

Air Malta's four trade unions will for the first time tomorrow hold a joint meeting with management that will be chaired by President Emeritus George Abela. The former president was asked by the government to co-chair a committee tasked with negotiating expired collective agreements as the airline braces itself for part-privatisation. His role on the committee is to facilitate negotiations between management and the unions while keeping the bigger picture in mind.

English: [http://www.timesofmalta.com/articles/view/20160112/local/four-air-malta-unions ...](http://www.timesofmalta.com/articles/view/20160112/local/four-air-malta-unions...)

Soldiers want overtime compensation

January 1, 2016

Army officers are up in arms against the 'inadequate' compensation received for extra hours of duty in November 2015 during the Valletta Migration Summit and CHOGM. Though soldiers are not entitled to overtime, in exceptional cases, when they are on duty around the clock, they are given compensation in the form of an allowance. In this case, it transpired from the November payslip that members of the armed forces had been given an additional €110 but only for the services rendered in connection with the Commonwealth summit. The Armed Forces Union, which is affiliated to the General Workers' Union, has requested a meeting with Prime Minister to agree on an 'adequate and rational' solution. While no date has been set yet for the meeting with the Prime Minister, the representative from the Union said that they would keep up the pressure, even though members of disciplined forces are not allowed to take industrial action.

English: [http://www.timesofmalta.com/articles/view/20160101/local/soldiers-left-fuming ...](http://www.timesofmalta.com/articles/view/20160101/local/soldiers-left-fuming...)

Netherlands

Art workers low paid

January 22, 2016

A study by the government's advisory group SER and the Council for Culture reveals that cutbacks in the cultural sector have had a serious impact on the employment and the earnings in the art world. Some 20 thousand permanent jobs disappeared and the sector is now dominated by low-paid freelancers. Half of people working in culture earn less than 30 thousand euros a year. On almost all fronts the cultural sector scores lower than the national averages. This conclusion applies to both workers and self-employed. Self-employment increased with 20.4%; this was not a free choice, but an economic necessity. However, self-employed are often not insured for occupational disability and their pension situation is worrying.

English: [http://www.nltimes.nl/2016/01/22 ...](http://www.nltimes.nl/2016/01/22...)

The report (in Dutch): [https://www.ser.nl/~media/files/internet/publicaties/overige ...](https://www.ser.nl/~media/files/internet/publicaties/overige...)

High poverty risks for elderly workers and third-country migrants

January 18, 2016

According to income figures (over the period 2011-2014) published by the national statistics office CBS people aged between 55 and 65 run the greatest risk of descending into poverty for a considerable length of time. If made redundant at a later age, people are unlikely to find a new job and end up living on benefits for a longer period. They are also more likely to be claiming invalidity benefit. The office also said that almost 31.8% of families with a breadwinner who has a non-western background have a low income, compared to 7.6% among the native population.

English: [http://www.dutchnews.nl/news/archives/2016/01 ...](http://www.dutchnews.nl/news/archives/2016/01...)

Graphs and figures (in Dutch): [http://www.cbs.nl/nl-NL/menu/themas/inkomen-bestedingen ...](http://www.cbs.nl/nl-NL/menu/themas/inkomen-bestedingen...)

Container workers on 24-hour strike

January 7, 2016

The container workers at Europe's largest port, Rotterdam, have gone on strike for 24 hours in an attempt to force management back to the negotiating table for talks on job security. A management spokeswoman said seven container ships already docked were likely to be affected along with three more expected to arrive during the strike. The trade union FNV said that 800 workers were involved in the strike. Unions want a deal with employers that will prevent enforced job cuts before 2020 despite machines increasingly taking over the work of harbour workers.

English: [http://thechronicleherald.ca/business/1331407-european-container-workers ...](http://thechronicleherald.ca/business/1331407-european-container-workers...)
[http://www.equaltimes.org/rotterdam-dockers-strike ...](http://www.equaltimes.org/rotterdam-dockers-strike...)

Norway

Fatal accident sparks debate on off-shore safety

January 28, 2016

The off-shore industry is an industry with high risk, but everything is done to keep oil workers quiet about safety concerns. That is the conclusion of trade union Industri Energi after another fatal accident. People look the other way when observing hazardous conditions, rather than reporting it. Oil workers take risks rather than refraining from carrying out dangerous operations. The oil workers on multi-purpose vessels in the North Sea are outside the law. If you treat workers as casual labourers, they will keep their mouths shut. Permanent employment is crucial for safety. To speak up about security concerns, requires a basic level of work security, of workers' rights. To know that your job does not disappear because you report irregularities.

English: [http://www.industrienergi.no/2016/01/offshore-worker-killed-on-a-ship ...](http://www.industrienergi.no/2016/01/offshore-worker-killed-on-a-ship...)

More job cuts in the oil sector

January 15, 2016

Oil services company Aker Solutions stated it would cut up to another 900 jobs, meaning it will have shed more than one in ten jobs since oil prices began sliding in 2014. The workforce reductions will be made through regular employee turnover, reassignments to other parts of the company and redundancies. The slowdown in the oil sector has already led to the loss of 30,000 jobs since January 2014 and the country's current 4.6-percent unemployment rate is the highest in a decade.

English: [http://www.thelocal.no/20160115/norways-oil-firm-aker-solutions-to-slash ...](http://www.thelocal.no/20160115/norways-oil-firm-aker-solutions-to-slash...)

Poland

Annual wage and employment figures for 2015

January 26, 2016

In its report of the socio-economic situation in 2015 the Central statistical office GUS indicates that the employment situation has slightly improved compared to the year 2014. According to estimates, the number of persons employed in the national economy at the end of 2015 was by approx. 2% higher than a year before. Paid employment in the enterprise sector gradually strengthened in subsequent months and, as a result, in the whole year a growth by 1.3% was recorded (compared to the increase by 0.6% a year before). According to the labour demand survey, in the three quarters of 2015 more new jobs were created than in the corresponding period of 2014; at the same time, fewer jobs were reduced. Average monthly nominal gross wages and salaries in the enterprise sector grew at a stable pace (3.5%), slightly slower than in 2014.

English (report and tables): [http://stat.gov.pl/en/topics/other-studies/informations-on-socio ...](http://stat.gov.pl/en/topics/other-studies/informations-on-socio...)

Unions criticise media law

January 19, 2016

In January 2016, President Andrzej Duda signed one of the most contentious media laws in the EU-history.

The government flouted several fundamental EU rights and signed legislation to allow the government to appoint the senior management of public broadcasters. It also introduced a number of controversial amendments to the country's constitutional court. Despite international uproar, the media law came into force the following day. The EU has decided to take action against Poland under the so-called 'Rule of Law' framework. The European Federation of Journalists (EFJ) welcomes this move as an important step in protecting media freedom in Poland. Following the adoption of the bill, broadcaster ARTE said it no longer had the certainty that freedom of expression, editorial independence and pluralism of public television were guaranteed. ARTE decided to suspend its contractual relations with the public television station TVP.

English: <http://www.equaltimes.org/if-we-let-media-freedom-fall ...>

Portugal

Austerity measures must be removed

January 29, 2016

The public sector workers went on strike on 29 January with the demand that the new government cuts working hours to 35 per week. The previous centre-right government, ousted by the left in November, imposed the 40-hour week in the public sector in 2013 as part of its austerity drive under an international bailout which finished in 2014. The government has already approved the new working hours, which will be introduced in July, but the largest trade union confederation CGTP wants the change sooner. The CGTP said on its website that the National Federation of Public Sector Unions had called the strike meeting with government representatives, and will continue with actions unless their demand is met. Strikes and protests against steep tax hikes and deep wage cuts flared during the centre right's 2011-2015 terms.

English: <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/wires ...>

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/wires/reuters ...>

Three-year dock workers dispute ends

January 15, 2016

The main dockworkers' trade union and the operator of the Port of Lisbon have reached an agreement to end a long-running dispute over pay and conditions. The agreement paves the way for a new collective agreement for dock workers at the port that is to be signed by 29 February. Since 14 November the union has submitted a series of strike threats that went through to at least 31 January. During this period dock workers never actually took strike action but loading and unloading at Lisbon was delayed by several days prompting two shipping companies to cancel stops at the port.

English: <http://www.theportugalnews.com/news/lisbon-dock-workers-port-operators ...>

Romania

Strike at Bucharest Otopeni Airport

January 21, 2016

Employees of GlobeGround Romania, the company that provides aircraft ground handling services and aircraft towing at Bucharest's Henri Coanda Airport (Otopeni Airport), went on a warning strike for two hours on 22 January. The company's employees decided to go on strike because they are dissatisfied with their salaries, the working hours, the size of the staff, and the activity's planning and their working conditions. The leader of the Free Trade Union of Aeronautic Handling warned that the size of the staff and the activity's standardisation in relation to the volume and working conditions are the most pressing problems, given that between 100 and 150 employees have resigned in the last two years, but the workload remained the same, or even increased. The working hours also represent a problem for the workers, as they no longer can conciliate working and family life.

English: <http://www.romania-insider.com/warning-strike-at-bucharest-otopeni-airport ...>

Serbia

Employers pay lower taxes in 2016

January 12, 2016

A new set of financial laws, aimed at strengthening the efficiency of the implementation of fiscal consolidation entered into on 1 January 2016. The law is meant to fight the grey economy and ensuring financial discipline and economic recovery of the country. Among other things, the first day of 2016 marked the start of the implementation of the Law on Amendments and Supplements to the Law on Personal Income Tax, which is focused on eliminating the grey zone in employment and converting it into legal flows by providing incentives for legal employment and tax reliefs when new workers are hired. The employer who hires a new worker has the right to claim a refund on income tax paid for the new employee, provided that the employee is registered with the Central Registry of Compulsory Social Insurance.

English: <http://www.b92.net/eng/news/business ...>

Slovakia

Teachers strike for better pay

January 25, 2016

Hundreds of schools were shut in the last week of January as over 11,000 teachers went on strike for higher salaries and larger school budgets. The government has agreed a 4 percent pay raise for teachers in 2016 following a 5 percent raise for the past three years. But the protesters, who made up about 12 percent of all teachers in the country, say it is too little. Many teachers work two jobs to make ends meet. Schools lack money to buy proper teaching aids. The unions have announced that the strike will continue until the requests are met. The education ministry sent a calculation to the media that the average teacher makes €997 per month.

English: <http://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-slovakia-education-strike ...>
<http://spectator.sme.sk/c/20077765/strike-will-close-schools.html>

Slovenia

Delo redundancies lead to journalists protest

January 1, 2016

Journalist organisations have urged the management of newspaper publisher Delo for explanations after thirty jobs have been slated for slashing under the new owner. FMR, a financial firm, acquired publisher Delo from brewery Pivovarna Laško in June 2015 in a deal worth 7.3 million euro. It promised at that time to act as a long-term Delo owner and support its strategic, technological and staffing development.

English: <http://english.sta.si/2215464/protest-as-thirty-jobs-slashed-at-delo>

Spain

Employment figures for 2015 released

January 28, 2016

According to the workforce sample study Active Population Survey (EPA), the number of jobless fell by a record 678,200 to 4,779,500 in 2015. Such figures have not been seen since late 2010. Overall data show that 2015 was generally a good year for the job market, although the unemployment rate is still 20.9%. Broken down by sectors, the majority of hirings in the last quarter were in agriculture (70,200) and services (54,900), while jobs were lost in industry (55,500) and construction (24,100). The trade union confederation CC.OO. reacted on the published data and described the situation as dramatic while the country still has almost five million unemployed.

English: <http://elpais.com/elpais/2016/01/28/inenglish ...>

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

The report (in Spanish): <http://www.ine.es/en/daco ...>

Sweden

Increase of employment documented

January 28, 2016

In December 2015, 4 821 000 persons aged 15–74 were employed, not seasonally adjusted. This is an increase of 58 000 compared to December 2014. The number of permanently employed persons increased by 79 000 and amounted to 3 602 000. The number of unemployed persons amounted to 345 000 and the unemployment rate was 6.7 percent. Smoothed and seasonally adjusted data shows an increase in employment and a decrease in unemployment, which amounted to 7.1 percent. Over a twelve month period labour costs have increased by 3.5 percent for wage-earners and 3.3 percent for salaried employees.

English: [http://www.scb.se/en_/Finding-statistics/Statistics-by-subject-area/Labour-market ...](http://www.scb.se/en_/Finding-statistics/Statistics-by-subject-area/Labour-market...)

Switzerland

Campaign for basic income has started

January 17, 2016

The country's constitution foresees in the organisation of referenda and the trade unions have used this instrument several times. In the coming months, there will be a campaign for a basic income. The referendum (in June 2016) is about a basic income paid by the state at such a level that 'a decent life and participation in society' can be guaranteed. So far, no amount is fixed, but activists refer to a monthly income of 2500 Swiss Francs (approximately 2300 euro). Recently, the upper house of the Swiss parliament, called for the citizens to vote against an unconditional basic income (UBI) in the national referendum.

English: [http://www.basicincome.org/news/2015/12/switzerland-the-interview ...](http://www.basicincome.org/news/2015/12/switzerland-the-interview...)

German: [http://www.sueddeutsche.de/wirtschaft/volksabstimmung-im-juni ...](http://www.sueddeutsche.de/wirtschaft/volksabstimmung-im-juni...)

GE-dismissals an 'earthquake'

January 13, 2016

Trade union representatives have reacted angrily to cuts unveiled by the US company General Electric, calling them an 'earthquake' in the country's workplace. General Electric has announced plans to shed 1,300 jobs in Switzerland as part of an overall plan to cut 6,500 positions across Europe after acquiring the energy business of French company Alstom. The trade union fears that the rapid dismantling of the Alstom operations — the cuts amount to almost a quarter of its workforce — so quickly after GE's takeover is a symptom of the arrival of 'the American style of management'.

English: <http://www.thelocal.ch/20160113/ge-announces-plans-to-slash-1300-swiss-jobs>

Plea for protection of older workers

January 5, 2016

The trade union Unia warns that urgent measures are needed to tackle rising unemployment, in particular among ageing workers. According to Unia, the Swiss National Bank's (SNB) decision in January 2015 to remove the CHF1.20 per euro peg has led to a steady increase in unemployment— against the trend in the rest of Europe. The exchange rate now stands at CHF1.08 per euro. The union expects the jobless rate to rise from 3.4% in November 2015 to 3.6% in 2016. To help tackle unemployment, Unia said employers should be forced to publish vacant positions in regional job agencies. Ageing workers should also be better protected to ensure they do not lose their jobs, either through collective wage agreements or by a system of early retirement. It also called on the federal authorities to improve accompanying measures to prevent wage dumping and unfair competition.

English: [http://www.swissinfo.ch/eng/business/jobless-concerns_union-calls-for-protection ...](http://www.swissinfo.ch/eng/business/jobless-concerns_union-calls-for-protection...)

Turkey

Fatal attack on trade unionists

January 21, 2016

Sanitation worker Mehmet Kaplan, member of DİSK/Genel-İş Union in Cizre Municipality (Şırnak), was

shot dead on 17 January in front of his house while another worker was seriously injured and a further three arrested in separate incidents. The international union federation PSI was informed of the arrest and detention of three members of DISK/Genel-İş for their trade union activities. PSI strongly condemns the murder and persecution of the members of its affiliated union and has written to the Turkish Prime Minister. PSI reminded the government that repression and detention of workers for their trade union activities is a breach of the country's obligations under ILO Convention No. 87 and other human rights instruments. PSI further calls on the authorities to guarantee the effective protection of workers and trade unionists' lives.

English: <http://www.world-psi.org/en/trade-unionists-killed-and-arrested-turkey>

Union busting at International Flavors & Fragrances

January 5, 2016

International Flavors & Fragrances (IFF), a leading supplier of specialty ingredients to the global processed food industry, has responded to the organisation of a union at its factory in Gebze with mass dismissals. The trade union Tekgida-Is organised workers at the Gebze factory and the Labour Ministry recognized the union as the bargaining unit on June 18, 2015. Workers formed a union in response to poor working conditions and there have been allegations of serious health and safety concerns. IFF challenged this decision at the local labour court and dismissed 30 workers between July and September for exercising their right to join a union. Following the dismissal of a prominent union supporter, Tekgida-Is organised a protest action in front of the factory gate and issued a press statement on September 7 calling on IFF to respect union rights and stop pressuring workers to resign from their union. In response to this attack on fundamental labour rights, workers are organising protests at the factory gate.

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

United Kingdom

Tube maintenance workers vote for strike

January 28, 2016

Maintenance workers on London Underground have voted in favour of strike action in the dispute over plans for a Night Tube service. Unions suspended plans for a series of strikes by drivers, station staff and other employees earlier on. But the Rail, Maritime and Transport (RMT) went ahead with a ballot of its members employed by Tube Lines, part of London Underground. They backed walkouts by 352 votes to 82.

English: [http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-london ...](http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-london...)

Trade union bill will be costly for unions

January 21, 2016

The government has published an impact assessment on the Trade Union Bill, which reveals that unions will be hit with huge financial costs. According to the TUC the government seems determined to tie unions up in as much red tape as possible. The impact assessment lays bare the huge costs unions will face as a result of the Trade Union Bill. Unions believe the government has underestimated the true financial impact this Bill could have for unions. However, even by its own estimates unions and their members are set to be hit with a stonking upfront bill of over £11million, followed by £26million more over the next five years. UK trade unions are already the most heavily regulated in Western Europe. Therefore, they consider that this Bill will make it harder for workers to stand up for decent services and safety at work, or defend their jobs and pay.

English: [https://www.tuc.org.uk/union-issues/trade-union-bill ...](https://www.tuc.org.uk/union-issues/trade-union-bill...)

Unprecedented protest of Scottish teachers

January 12, 2016

Teachers in West Dunbartonshire went on strike on 12 January – in action that is unprecedented in recent times in Scotland. Members of the EIS, Scotland's largest teaching union, took the one-day action amid growing concerns about local cost-cutting plans to reduce the numbers of depute head-teachers and pastoral staff. Principal teacher posts would also go, as different subjects are brought together into broader 'faculties'. EIS officials will meet with the council's ruling Labour group in an attempt to prevent further action.

English: <https://www.tes.com/news/school-news/breaking-news/teachers-walk-out ...>

Junior doctors on strike

January 12, 2016

Junior doctors went on strike on 12 January for the first time since 1975. The Junior Doctors' Strike walked out on that date, with medics picketing outside hospitals. They are not complaining about their long hours or their modest pay cheques. They were demonstrating against Tory plans to force more of them to work at the weekends and simultaneously cut their bonus for working unsociable shifts, effectively slashing their pay.

English: <http://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/junior-doctors-strike ...>

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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