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# collective bargaining

Issue 2/2016 February

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

### **Economic and social challenges according to the EC**

*February 29, 2016*

The European Commission published its annual analysis of the economic and social challenges in the EU Member States, the Country Reports. The reports are a policy coordination tool under the so-called European Semester to monitor policy reforms and to point early on to challenges that Member States should address. The reports include chapters on the structural issues facing each country and annexes full of statistical data. The issues vary by country. Some countries have serious problems in the judiciary and the public administration – such as human resource management, e-government, and public procurement – that are seen as obstacles to economic growth. All the separate reports can be downloaded.

English: <http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/making-it-happen/country-specific ...>

### **Social partners and the European Semester process**

*February 16, 2016*

A Eurofound report looks at EU- and national-level social partners' involvement between 2001 and 2014 in the European Semester Process, the EU's annual cycle of economic policy guidance and surveillance. The report assesses the role of the national social partners during key junctures of the Semester – the National Reform Programmes and adoption of the country-specific recommendations (CSR) – with a special focus on employment and social policy aspects. The issues addressed include the arena of wage-setting and collective bargaining – where the social partners expect their autonomy to be respected. Observers note that some CSRs go directly over the heads of national social dialogue in pushing for reform of collective agreements.

English: <https://www.eurofound.europa.eu/sites ...>

### **OECD Job quality report**

*February 15, 2016*

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OCDE) published a study on job quality. In the report, *How good is your job? Measuring and assessing job quality*, the OECD takes into account factors such as earnings, the working environment, and job security to assess the quality of employment in the various countries. The study focuses on the analysis of data related to these three criteria: the impact of income on employee's well-being, job stability, and quality of the work environment. Looking at job quality outcomes across socio-economic groups provides new insights into labour market inequalities by shedding further light on the nature and depth of the disadvantages faced by some population



groups. The worst of are youngsters and low-skilled workers.

English: <http://www.oecd.org/employment/labour-stats/Job-quality-OECD.pdf>

### **Joint rally against Chinese steel**

*February 15, 2016*

Thousands of steelworkers and the management of steel producers from across Europe demonstrated against the import of cheap Chinese steel. The protesters hope to convince the European Commission not to recognise China as a market economy. The demonstration coincided with a conference that was held by the European Commission at which the impact of a change to China's status was discussed. The unions stated that if Europe grants market economy status (MES) to a country like China, this will undercut standards at home and prices in its export markets with considerable damage done to the European labour market and continued harm to the global climate and environment.

English: <http://www.industriall-europe.eu/news/list3> ...

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

### **Dutch presidency promotes decent work**

*February 8, 2016*

A two-day conference *Promoting decent work on the European labour market*, organised by the Dutch presidency on 8 and 9 February 2016, was dedicated to better compliance and enforcement of labour and working conditions in case of free movement and posting of workers. The conference provided a platform for discussion for officials of labour inspectorates, policy makers and social partners from across the EU. In his opening speech the Dutch minister of labour declared that we can't afford in Europe to have some more equal than others. Income should be like an incontestable maths expression. Equal work 'equals' equal pay in the same place. Only then can we create a level playing field and prevent a race to the bottom on labour conditions. The organisers will produce a website with all presentations.

Opening speech(in English): <http://english.eu2016.nl/documents/publications/2016/02/08> ...

### **Report stresses importance of vocational training**

*February 1, 2016*

Participants at a conference organised by the Cologne Institute for Economic Research on 26 January discussed a study on the role of VET in educating young people in seven EU Member States. The study shows how vocational education and training (VET) provision can continue to be enhanced in order to boost the opportunities of young people in Europe as they enter the labour market. The participation of the social partners can be a strong driver for matching VET programmes with labour market requirements. In some countries, stronger involvement on the part of trade unions, in particular, could prove helpful.

English: [https://www.iwkoeln.de/en/research/events/beitrag/nrw-in-discussion ...](https://www.iwkoeln.de/en/research/events/beitrag/nrw-in-discussion...)

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## Austria

### **Minimum wage guaranteed through bargaining**

*February 21, 2016*

A representative of trade union GPA-dpj stated that the unions welcome every political backing of a minimum wage settled at 1,700 euro. However, a country that can guarantee a (almost industry-wide) coverage through collective bargaining doesn't need a statutory minimum wage. With a coverage rate of 97% the interests of workers in their sectors is guaranteed, without becoming a plaything of daily politics. The comparison with Germany falls because the German coverage rate is substantially lower.

German: [http://www.oegb.at/cms/S06/S06\\_0.a/1342563224476/home/land-mit-97-prozent ...](http://www.oegb.at/cms/S06/S06_0.a/1342563224476/home/land-mit-97-prozent...)

### **More vacancies in 2015**

*February 4, 2016*

According to Statistics Austria's Job Vacancy Survey enterprises reported for the whole year 2015 an annual average of 66,600 job vacancies (2014: 62,400). 57% of these vacancies also have been reported to the Public Employment Service. Compared to the previous year, vacancies increased by 6.7%. Most vacancies were reported in services and retail, technical jobs and manufacture. Almost 40% of the vacancies belonged to the category of unskilled jobs. Around 20% of the offered jobs were low-paid (below 1000 euro a month), with another 30% below a monthly wage of 1,700 euro (more details in the German text).

English: [http://www.statistik.at/web\\_en/press/106947.html](http://www.statistik.at/web_en/press/106947.html)

German: [http://www.statistik.at/web\\_de/presse/106946.html](http://www.statistik.at/web_de/presse/106946.html)

### **Union claims 72 million through social plans**

*February 3, 2016*

Trade union GPA-dpj declared it yielded for its members 88.7 million euro in 2015 through the use of the union's legal assistance activities. The most substantial part of this amount (more than 72 million euro) came from returns that can be attributed to the concluded social plans. The active legal assistance includes interventions at plant level, representation before the labour and social courts, but also legal aid in cases of enforcement proceeding, bankruptcy and compensation pay. The total of social plans increased in 2015; for the union this is a sign that serious economic problems still exist.

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

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## Belgium

### **Union front goes to court in pension dispute**

*February 22, 2016*

The joint trade union confederations have decided to go to court in a dispute on the pension law. ACLVB/CGSLB, ACV-CSC and ABVV/FGTB ask the constitutional court to reject the planned augmentation of the pension age (from 65 to 67). The unions also protest against the tightening of the early retirement schemes. The protests concern the pensions of employees in both the private and the public sector. The unions say that the government measures are unconstitutional. Firstly, because the measures create a decline in the social security rights (article 23 of the Constitution). Secondly, because the measures are discriminatory (articles 10 and 11 of the Constitution). Women are more severely affected by the measures.

French: <http://www.fgtb.be/web/guest/press-releases-fr ...>

Dutch: <https://www.acv-online.be/Images/160222-Vakbonden-naar-grondwettelijk-hof ...>

### **Works council manual on financial reporting**

*February 12, 2016*

The social partners have contributed to the production of a works council manual on economic and financial reporting. The brochure, published by the Royal Institute of Auditors starts with a chapter that explains the role of the works council vis-à-vis the auditors. A works council has the right to receive economic and financial information in order to develop fundamental insight into the financial, social and economic situation of a company. The other chapters have the character of a guide with good practices for the social dialog in a company related to these issues.

French: <http://flipbook.ibr-ire.be/brochures/brochure-conseil-entreprise/index.html>

Dutch: <http://flipbook.ibr-ire.be/brochures/brochure-ondernemingsraad/index.html>

### **Dockers control wage compliance**

*February 5, 2016*

BTB, ACV Transcom and ACLVB have campaigned together with the Belgian ITF Inspectors on the vessel COSCO Fengei in the port of Antwerp to find out if the wages of the crew members were in line with the international standards. This was not the case, neither an ITF agreement was in place. For this reason all cargo handling on the vessel was stopped for several hours.

English: <https://www.facebook.com/ITFDockers/photos ...>

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## Bulgaria

### Household income and spending

*February 16, 2016*

The National Statistical Institute (NSI) revealed in a quarterly report on households' income and expenditure that the average income per member of a household increased by 2.9% on the year for the fourth quarter of 2015, reaching BGN 1,262 (645 euro). The average spending per household member edged down by 0.7% year-on-year, reaching BGN 1,162 (594 euro) for the October-December period of 2015.

English: <http://www.nsi.bg/sites/default ...>

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## Croatia

### Massive list of wage defaulters

*February 23, 2016*

Based on updated statistics, the Tax Administration made public that a total of 7,413 employers with 25,845 workers on their payrolls, failed to pay salaries to their employees. The statistics were derived from forms handed to the Administration for the January-December 2015 period. The update showed that 6,164 legal entities with 22,198 employees failed to pay salaries and 1,249 physical persons with 3,656 workers.

English: <http://en.dalje.com/2016/02/over-7400-employers-wage-defaulters/>

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## Cyprus

### Nurses in action

*February 21, 2016*

State nurses agreed to a union-backed calling for industrial action. Nurses want new positions and promotions to be unfrozen and better conditions for temporary workers, who are currently paid 10% less even after being in a position for 24 months. The nurses say they are seriously understaffed and have accused the state of creating new departments at hospital without being able to adequately staff them. The nurses have been waiting for solutions for two years now and a promised change coming out of a meeting with personnel managers some months ago has never materialised. After a meeting of the unions with the health minister, the union cancelled the strike and said that the dialogue will continue.

English: <http://in-cyprus.com/health-sector-woes-persist/>

<http://in-cyprus.com/state-nurses-call-off-mondays-strike/>

## **Limassol bus drivers suspend strike**

*February 8, 2016*

The trade union-members of Limassol public bus company EMEL decided to call off their planned 24-hour strike. The strike was suspended after promises of the labour ministry that immediate efforts would begin to resolve the failure to restore workers' original employment agreements. Workers are seeking the honouring of a 2014 agreement made with EMEL, in which they had accepted temporary cutbacks in their salaries and benefits, on condition these would be reinstated as of 2016, something which had yet to be implemented.

English: <http://in-cyprus.com/41820-2/>

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## **Czech Republic**

### **Public sector unions want 10% pay increase**

*February 26, 2016*

The public sector unions (including the education and cultural sectors) will demand a hike in public sector wages of more than 10 percent in 2017 to reflect strong economic growth. Wages have started to recover as the economy grew by estimated more than 4.5 percent in 2014, the labour market tightened and the public sector deficit dropped. The demand for 2017 will be significantly above what has been negotiated for 2016. The education ministry announced that it will back up such a demand for its part of the public sector and called the increase large but legitimate given the level of teachers' pay and the difficulty in finding qualified and motivated staff.

English: [http://www.dailymail.co.uk/wires/reuters/article-3442652/Czech-unions-demand ...](http://www.dailymail.co.uk/wires/reuters/article-3442652/Czech-unions-demand...)

[http://www.radio.cz/en/section/news/unions-call-for-10-percent-pay-rise ...](http://www.radio.cz/en/section/news/unions-call-for-10-percent-pay-rise...)

[http://www.radio.cz/en/section/news/education-minister-voices-support-for-10-percent ...](http://www.radio.cz/en/section/news/education-minister-voices-support-for-10-percent...)

### **Indexation of pensions improved**

*February 17, 2016*

The government approved a draft amendment that would enable it to raise pensions more if their indexation under the valid law were too low, but maximally by 1.7 percent a year. According to the current law, pensions are regularly raised as from January by one third of the previous growth of real wages and prices. These indicators were low in the period

preceding the 2016 increase.

English: [http://www.ceskenoviny.cz/news/zpravy/czech-government-changes-rules ...](http://www.ceskenoviny.cz/news/zpravy/czech-government-changes-rules...)

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## Denmark

### **Tripartite agreement for the labour market integration of refugees**

*February 26, 2016*

The government reached an agreement with the trade unions and employer representatives aimed to get refugees more quickly into the workforce. The aim of the 21-point plan is to ‘increase employment focus’ in local municipalities’ efforts to integrate refugees. The plan includes calls for better screening of refugees’ competencies, tying refugees’ housing opportunities to employment, and a ‘clear requirement that they need to work and provide for themselves and their families’.

English: <http://www.thelocal.dk/20160226/denmark-to-refugees-work-first-learn-danish-later>

### **Taxi drivers in Copenhagen demonstrate against Uber**

*February 14, 2016*

Taxi drivers in Copenhagen demonstrated against the ride-hailing company Uber. Around 300 taxi drivers blocked one of the city’s central squares, to protest against the controversial practices of the US company. Uber provides carpooling services, where a private person picks customers up in a private car and takes them to their destination for much less than what they would have to pay to a licensed taxi driver. The service is cheaper because Uber drivers do not pay taxes and insurance required for taxi drivers.

English: [http://cphpost.dk/news/taxi-drivers-in-copenhagen-demonstrated ...](http://cphpost.dk/news/taxi-drivers-in-copenhagen-demonstrated...)

### **Active labour market policy assessed**

*February 5, 2016*

Two policy viewpoints, published by the FEPS, assess the effect of a system of active labour market policy. Active labour market policies can affect the quality and the duration of the employment following a period of unemployment. According to the first paper there is evidence that education is a good investment for the individual and for society as a whole. That is also true, when it comes to unemployed. A group of experts looked into the system and came with a number of suggestions for improvement. They recommend, for instance, that unemployed obtain relevant skills instead of just a formal set of skills. The second paper reveals that even if the activation programs fail to reduce the economic inequality in some cases, they will reduce inequality in the sense that they include some of the weakest people of society in other ways.

English: <http://www.feps-europe.eu/assets ...>

<http://www.feps-europe.eu/assets ...>

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## Estonia

### **Former Estonian Air employees turn to court**

*February 19, 2016*

Former employees of the bankrupt national carrier Estonian Air turned to court in the matter of their representation on the bankruptcy committee. On 15 January 2016 the first general meeting of the creditors of Estonian Air took place, where creditors elected a bankruptcy committee. The association of pilots think that the composition of this committee makes for a massive overrepresentation of the interests of the government. They contest the result of the election, and turned to court to have it declared void.

English: <http://news.err.ee/v/economy ...>

### **Plan to legalise Uber**

*February 15, 2016*

A bill to legalise drive-sharing services such as Uber, Taxify, Hopp and Wisemile as a new category of service called ‘negotiated passenger transport’ will be discussed at the Parliament. According to the proposed bill, the carrying of passengers for money in a car with up to nine seats is neither public transport nor a taxi service. Estonia could become one of the first EU countries to legalise ride-sharing.

English: <http://news.err.ee/v/economy ...>

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## Finland

### **Social dialogue reopened**

*February 28, 2016*

Trade union and employer group representatives have again sat down at the table to try and negotiate an accord. The government decided to make the labour market more flexible in an effort to increase Finland’s competitiveness abroad, but talks to get the country’s strong unions and business lobbies on board failed four times in 2015. Now the groups are full of hope that an agreement will be approved of, maybe even before the end of February. One of the particular items discussed is the local bargaining model (see next item). The trade unions aim is to conclude a social contract that will extend the collective bargaining agreements.

English: [http://yle.fi/uutiset/negotiators\\_optimistic\\_about\\_revived\\_labour\\_accord\\_talks](http://yle.fi/uutiset/negotiators_optimistic_about_revived_labour_accord_talks) ...

## **Local bargaining rules under intense negotiation**

*February 25, 2016*

The outline for a local bargaining model is under intense negotiation between the social partners. Promoting local bargaining is one of the key points of the government program. It would mean more flexibility at the working place level to change the terms and conditions of employment and how to organise work at the company level. Many collective agreements allow for a degree of local bargaining. Both trade unions and employers do speak out in favour of more local bargaining, but they do not necessarily mean the same thing.

English: <http://heikkijokinen.info/en/trade-union-news-from-finland/975-rules-on-local> ...

## **Pressure on unemployed increases**

*February 23, 2016*

The country's unemployed are facing more pressure to find work, as unemployment offices punish increasing numbers of jobless people by cutting off their benefits. Unemployment benefits are contribution-based and administered by unemployment offices, whereas the long-term unemployed (those out of work for longer than 500 days) receive social benefits from their local municipality. A harsher sanctions regime might simply end up shifting claimants from one form of support to another. According to the NGO TVY, this leads to more people ending up on social benefits, outside the unemployment office system, and to permanent social exclusion.

English: [http://yle.fi/uutiset/sanctions\\_on\\_unemployed\\_up\\_four-fold\\_in\\_three\\_years](http://yle.fi/uutiset/sanctions_on_unemployed_up_four-fold_in_three_years) ...

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## **France**

### **Art workers protest for job security and better pay**

*February 23, 2016*

The Collectif des Modèles d'Art de Paris (Art Models Collective of Paris) and the cultural workers trade union Force Ouvrière's section for art models organised a protest in front of the Hotel de Ville in Paris. The aim is the recognition of the profession of art models. For these models, attaining professional status would offer the right to negotiate working conditions and a raise in their minimum wage from an average of €17.40 per hour to €21.78 per hour.

English: <http://hyperallergic.com/277487/pariss-art-models-protest> ...

### **Uber executives before the court**



*February 11, 2016*

Two of the top European executives for ride-booking company Uber are in court facing criminal charges of running an illegal taxi operation. They are also accused of commercial deception and violation of French privacy laws by illegally keeping passengers' personal information. The taxi industry has criticised Uber for not paying licensing fees and accused it of putting passengers at risk by working with untrained and unregistered drivers who are not properly insured. In recent months there have been protests by taxi drivers, who complain of unfair competition from services such as Uber.

English: <http://www.euronews.com/2016/02/11/top-european-uber-executives-on-trial> ...

### **Solidarity strike of Paris transport staff**

*February 3, 2016*

The Paris transport system workers were on strike on 3 February. The stoppage was to show solidarity with eight former Goodyear staff sentenced to prison. Only half of the usual services were running on the RER A and B train lines due to the strike that had been called by the CGT union. The strike was held in support of former employees at the Goodyear tyre plant in the northern city of Amiens. Eight workers were handed prison sentences in January 2016 for their role in the 'boss-napping' of two of the company executives during a labour dispute in 2014.

English: <http://www.thelocal.fr/20160204/paris-rer-strike-commuters-hit-by-strike> ...

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## **Germany**

### **Poverty report hints at inequality**

*February 23, 2016*

In a joint report of several NGO's it is revealed that, although the country is in a good economic shape, many people live in poverty. The average poverty rate is 15.4%. In nine of the federal states poverty decreased. But, the states with the largest population (Bavaria and Nord Rhine Westphalia) were confronted in 2014 with a poverty increase. Most at risk are singles with children, unemployed and pensioners. Observers call the inequality in wages one of the main causes: low wages are no longer connected to the general wage trend of the higher income group. Besides, capital income has become more important than wage labour.

English: <http://www.dw.com/en/massive-rich-poor-gap-in-german-society> ...

German: <http://www.zeit.de/wirtschaft/2016-02/armut-deutschland-2016-paritaetische> ...

The Poverty 2016 report (in German): <http://www.der-paritaetische.de/index> ...

### **Wage development and labour costs in 2015**

*February 12, 2016*

In a series of publication the wage trend is assessed. Wages in 2015 posted their strongest gains in over two decades, a trend that is already bolstering private consumption. Wages were up 2.5% from the previous year, in inflation-adjusted terms, the highest gain since records began in 2008 and a different set of the statistical office Destatis data showed it was also the highest increase since 1992, when wages in East Germany rose sharply following the country's unification. One publication by Destatis provides an overview of the development of collective agreed wages in the second half of 2015. Also included is a selection of the 'opening clauses'.

English: [http://www.marketwatch.com/story/germanys-workers-enjoy-record-wage-gains ...](http://www.marketwatch.com/story/germanys-workers-enjoy-record-wage-gains-...)

German: [https://www.destatis.de/DE/Publikationen/Thematisch/VerdiensteArbeitskosten ...](https://www.destatis.de/DE/Publikationen/Thematisch/VerdiensteArbeitskosten-...)

### **Workplace integration is key**

*February 11, 2016*

According to the head of the trade union confederation DGB the arrival of many displaced persons and new immigrants heralds an era of great challenges. Conditions and regulations are needed in order to make things work, along with investments in education, infrastructures and personnel. Therefore, a unique alliance promoting an international outlook, solidarity, democracy and rule of law has been formed. It is one of the largest civil society alliances ever seen in the country and is affiliated with organisations and umbrella groups in the fields of religion, sports, social welfare, nature conservationism and arts and culture. The DGB joined this alliance because integration and all its facets take place in the workplace, be it an office, a factory, a construction site or a supermarket.

English: <http://www.dw.com/en/opinion-integration-in-the-workplace-is-key>

German: [http://www.dgb.de/themen ...](http://www.dgb.de/themen-...)

### **IG Metall seeks 5% pay increase**

*February 2, 2016*

Trade union IG Metall said on 2 February it would seek wage increases of between 4.5 percent and 5 percent for the 3.8 million metals and electrics sector workers after the economy grew at its fastest rate for four years in 2015. After growth of 1.7 percent in 2015, the government trimmed its forecast for 2016 last month, saying the growth rate would remain flat this year amid emerging market risks that are dampening export demand. IG Metall stated that a wage increase would help bolster domestic spending, thereby supporting the economy, Europe's largest. A final decision on the union's demands is due on 29 February with negotiations kicking off in mid-March. The negotiations will take place in a buoyant labour market.

English: [http://www.reuters.com/article/germany-wages ...](http://www.reuters.com/article/germany-wages-...)

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## Greece

### **Dock workers fear job cuts**

*February 16, 2016*

Dock workers organised a two-day strike to protest against the sale of the country's two biggest ports, which Athens has promised to international lenders, disrupting operations at cargo terminals. The sale is strongly opposed by port workers who fear job cuts and higher export cost for Greek products. About 500 dock workers gathered outside the entrance of Piraeus port's sole cargo pier in Athens to protest against the plan.

English: [http://www.businessspectator.com.au/news/2016/2/16/european-crisis/greek-port ...](http://www.businessspectator.com.au/news/2016/2/16/european-crisis/greek-port...)

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## Hungary

### **Surprise strike in public transport**

*February 9, 2016*

Workers of Budapest Transport Company (BKV) have set up a strike committee and are preparing to strike after not receiving a pay rise for an extended period, and hearing news of the company's plans to carry out additional layoffs. Workers claim that the company is already short staffed, forcing remaining employees to work in a way that may be in violation of internal regulations. The strike committee is planning a 'surprise type of strike' to signal their dissatisfaction towards management, who have been informed on several occasions about poor working conditions, but have failed to act. According to trade union EKSZ, the strike could be nation-wide, and it is anticipated that the strike is likely to gain the support of public transport passengers rather than incite anger towards BKV employees.

English: [http://bbj.hu/budapest/report-budapest-public-transport-plans-surprise-strike ...](http://bbj.hu/budapest/report-budapest-public-transport-plans-surprise-strike...)

### **Healthcare workers promised increase not yet paid**

*February 6, 2016*

The country's public healthcare workers have not received the wage raises they were promised by the government back in December 2015. Members of the '1001 Doctors without gratitude money' Facebook group claim the government did not deliver on its promise to raise the minimum net monthly wage of physicians to HUF 270,000 (868 euro). The group wants to see a clean and predictable healthcare, and has a vested interest in seeing the entire system vetted and reorganised.

English: [http://budapestbeacon.com/public-policy/government-reneges-on-promise ...](http://budapestbeacon.com/public-policy/government-reneges-on-promise...)

### **Teachers formulate a catalogue with 25 demands**

*February 6, 2016*

Teachers Trade Union (PSZ) announced that teachers from all over the country would demonstrate in Budapest February 13 and may strike in March unless there is a rollback of educational reform introduced under the second and third Orbán governments. The strike committee has formulated 25 demands, ranging from improvement of the education system, restoration of the National Education and Public Education Policy councils to improved working hours, wages and working conditions.

English: [http://budapestbeacon.com/public-policy/hungarian-teachers-to-strike-in-march-if ...](http://budapestbeacon.com/public-policy/hungarian-teachers-to-strike-in-march-if-...)

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## Iceland

### **Welfare Watch cushioned crisis**

*February 8, 2016*

The Nordic Labour Journal writes about how the Welfare Watch came to be and the role it played during the economic crisis which hit Iceland harder than other countries in 2008. A group of 35 people were tasked to warn authorities if various social groups were falling outside of the welfare system, and to come up with ideas for what could be done to prevent it from happening. Welfare Watch managed to spread the message that during the crisis the weakest in society should be protected. In the assessment, a comparison between Iceland and Ireland was made. In Ireland, people in the bottom income bracket lost 26% of their income, while the corresponding group in Iceland only lost 9%. People in the highest income bracket in Ireland saw their income rise by 8%, while the richest in Iceland lost 38% of their income.

English: [http://www.nordiclabbourjournal.org/i-fokus/nordic-region ...](http://www.nordiclabbourjournal.org/i-fokus/nordic-region-...)

### **Ship workers consider strike**

*February 1, 2016*

Merchant ship workers have been without a contract since last summer, and a breakdown in negotiations may lead to a strike. Captains and engineers alike have been trying to work out a collective bargaining agreement with management, but thus far, the terms being offered by management have been unsatisfactory. Should a strike happen, this could have a dramatic effect on imports, on which the country depends for practically every aspect of life. If a strike commences, the most likely products to be effected would be fresh fruits and vegetables, leading to a food shortage in the country.

English: <http://grapevine.is/news/2016/02/01/merchant-ship-workers-may-strike/>

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## Ireland

## **Luas dispute hardens**

*February 26, 2016*

The company Luas drivers have engaged in a series of strikes (see the January Newsletter). The dispute at Luas centres on demands for improved terms and conditions. Luas workers are seeking increases of between 8 and 53% as well as improvements in employment conditions. The prospect of further strikes has increased following the collapse of planned conciliation talks between management and staff representatives. The Workplace Relations Commission said that it had decided that the planned talks would not go ahead as a row over toilet breaks by drivers, which the company considers to be unofficial industrial action, continues.

English: <http://www.irishtimes.com/news/ireland/irish-news/collapse-of-planned-luas-talks> ...

## **RSA staff set for 2% pay rise**

*February 5, 2016*

The country's biggest insurance group RSA has agreed a 2% pay increase for the majority of its staff in the Republic following an agreement with the trade union Unite. The pay rise will take effect in June 2016 and will apply to some 360 out of 410 staff employed by the company here. It is understood that the rise will not apply to senior executives. This will be the first increase in pay for staff since 2012 and reflects the fact that RSA expects to return to profitability in 2016 after three years of heavy losses following the emergence of financial issues in 2013 that rocked the business. This rise will not apply to RSA's operation in Northern Ireland nor will it apply to staff in 123.ie, its Dublin-based subsidiary.

English: <http://www.irishtimes.com/business/financial-services/majority-of-rsa-staff> ...

## **High support for 'Fair conditions at work'**

*February 4, 2016*

The Irish Congress of Trade Unions revealed it had found overwhelming support for its Charter for Fair Conditions at Work among political parties, with Labour, Sinn Féin, Fianna Fáil, the Social Democrats and Socialist deputies signing up, while there was little or no support in either Fine Gael or Renua. The Congress Charter for Fair Conditions at Work sets out five key principles to help make decent work a reality: a Living Wage, Fair Hours of Work, the Right to Union Representation, the Right to Respect in the workplace and Fair Public Procurement. Included is the statement: Collective Bargaining is a Human Right.

English: <http://www.ictu.ie/press/2016/02/04/huge-support-for-fair-conditions-at-work> ...

Visit the Charter pages: <http://www.ictu.ie/charter>

## **Agreement over emergency department talks**

*February 4, 2016*

The Health Service Executive has agreed to enter talks to discuss knock-on claims to extend benefits awarded to nurses in a deal to address emergency department overcrowding to other grades. The HSE and the Irish Nurses and Midwives Organisation negotiated the proposals at the Workplace Relations Commission to avert a nurses' strike over understaffing and overcrowding in hospital Emergency Departments. That deal provided for a €1,500 training bursary, two extra days leave in 2016 and 2017, as well as additional promotional posts. Industrial observers had forecast that other health unions whose members were also experiencing difficult conditions in EDs were likely to submit claims for similar benefits. The HSE has agreed to set up a parallel process of talks with the three excluded unions - and to discuss extending representation on the Emergency Department Task Force Implementation Group to include them.

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

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## Italy

### **Job losses in airline partnership**

*February 18, 2016*

A planned partnership between the airlines Meridiana and Qatar Airways could result in some 900 jobs losses. The Sardinia-based carrier has asked the trade unions to agree to the job cuts as part of the partnership deal with the Gulf airline. Workers at Meridiana, which flies to and from the island of Sardinia and other destinations in Italy and abroad, have been in a state-funded layoff programme for over a year.

English: [http://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-italy-airline-qatar ...](http://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-italy-airline-qatar...)

### **Youngsters poorly paid**

*February 17, 2016*

Young Italian workers are among the worst paid in Europe, according to the 2016 Global 50 Remuneration Planning Report. The report ranked the average salaries paid for full-time, entry-level jobs – those usually aimed at recent graduates or people who have recently finished specific training courses. Among the 15 European nations ranked, Italy came last – paying an average gross salary of €27,400 a year. The country's inability to pay its young workers competitive wages is one of the key factors driving the 'brain-drain'.

English: [http://www.thelocal.it/20160217/young-italian-workers-are-among-the-worst-paid ...](http://www.thelocal.it/20160217/young-italian-workers-are-among-the-worst-paid...)

### **Ryanair complains about tax fund**

*February 3, 2016*

Ryanair plans to close two of its bases in Italy and cut 600 jobs. The company said in a

statement that 16 flight routes would also be lost as a result of the ‘illogical decision of the Italian government to raise municipal taxes further’. From 1 January 2016, the government raises taxes by about 40% (from €6.50 to €9) for each departing passenger in order to subsidise a fund set up for pilots laid off as a result of the merger between Alitalia and Abu Dhabi’s Etihad.

English: <http://www.thelocal.it/jobs/article/ryanair-to-cut-600-jobs-in-italy> ...

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## Latvia

### Wages improved over the whole of 2015

*February 26, 2016*

Latest data compiled by the Central Statistical Bureau (CSB) show that in 2015 average monthly gross wages and salaries in the country reached 818 euro. Average gross wages and salaries rose by 6.8% or by 52 euro, retaining the increase rate recorded in 2014. The registered unemployment level increased by 0.4% in January 2016 to 9.1% of the economically active population compared to December 2015, according to the State Employment Agency (NVA). Registered unemployment was at 8.7% in December 2015, at 8.4% in November 2015, at 8.3% in October and September 2015, at 8.5% in August 2015 and at 8.6% for the preceding three months. At the beginning of January 2016, 81,780 people were registered with the State Employment Agency as unemployed compared to 85,452 registered jobless at the end of January. Among the regions, Riga had the lowest unemployment level in late January 2016 at 5.6%, while the eastern Latgale province had the highest rate at 19.1%.

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

<http://www.staffingindustry.com/eng/Editorial/Daily-News/Latvia-Jobless-rate-continues> ...

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## Liechtenstein

### Statistical Yearbook 2016 published

*February 12, 2016*

In the annual report of the statistical office one chapter is dedicated to labour, employment and wage developments (chapter 3). The figures, graphs and data (per 31.12.2014) reveal the importance of foreign workers and commuters (53.3% of the workforce), mainly from Switzerland and Austria. The unemployment figures are very low (in December 2014: 2.4%). The average gross wage figures for 2012 show an increase to 6,380 Swiss Francs (5,800 euro), with higher than average wages in the education sector and in financial services. The wage gap between men and women at aggregate level totalled 17%.

The complete report (in German): <http://www.llv.li/files/as/jahrbuch-2016.pdf>

## **Income inequality and taxation discussed**

*February 5, 2016*

The government had to respond to an interpellation of several members of parliament on the lack of transparency in the tax files in relation to income inequality. According to the government's formal answers, the tax registration and statistics are rather complete and in line with the applicable tax laws. The government adds that these data particularly can be used as building blocks for financial decisions. However, the data are neither suitable for social policy nor can be seen as a welfare indicator.

German: [http://www.volksblatt.li/nachricht ...](http://www.volksblatt.li/nachricht...)

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## **Lithuania**

### **Labour market not in progress**

*February 29, 2016*

Lithuania has made limited progress in addressing the recommendations issued by the European Commission for the country last fall. In the Commission's view, the country has made limited progress in reforming its pension and tax systems, in addressing the shortage of skilled labour and in improving the performance of its healthcare system. As regards social protection and labour market policy, the Commission said that the government was considering a number of reforms, which, however, had not yet been adopted hence progress in this area had been limited.

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

### **Wage data for 2015**

*February 24, 2016*

Average gross monthly earnings, excluding sole proprietorships, rose by 5.9% in the fourth quarter of 2015 compared with a year earlier to reach 756.9 euro. Real wages increased by 2.1% over the quarter and by 6% over the year. Men's gross wages exceeded women's wages by 125.2 euro in the fourth quarter of 2015. In October through December, women's average gross wages, excluding sole proprietorships, accounted for 84.7 percent of men's average gross wages. As regards average net wages, women earned 85.7 percent of the amount earned by men.

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

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## Luxembourg

### **Wage indexation again postponed**

*February 18, 2016*

The next indexation of wages and pensions (see the January Newsletter) could be pushed back to 2017, after the statistical office STATEC reviewed its forecasts for 2016. According to its latest forecasts, inflation is expected to reach 0.2 percent in 2016, because of the ‘collapse of oil prices’ and 1.6 percent in 2017. Statec made a high and a low scenario for the future oil price and inflation. According to the high scenario, the next indexation would fall in the fourth quarter of 2016 while a further decline in oil prices would postpone indexation in the second quarter of 2017.

English: [http://www.wort.lu/en/business/inflation-luxembourg-s-next-index-wage-rise ...](http://www.wort.lu/en/business/inflation-luxembourg-s-next-index-wage-rise...)

### **Schifflange plant closed permanently**

*February 11, 2016*

ArcelorMittal has closed the steel production site in Schifflange. In 2011, a temporary closure of the site was announced that affected around 700 workers. A tripartite agreement, which enabled early retirement and reclassifications of workers within other sites, guaranteed the workers interests at that time. There were only 15 workers left on the site. The company has now commissioned a feasibility study for the conversion of the area, with new developments as housing, shops and offices.

English: [http://www.wort.lu/en/business/arcelormittal-steel-group-considers ...](http://www.wort.lu/en/business/arcelormittal-steel-group-considers...)

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## Malta

### **Collective agreement for hotel workers**

*February 27, 2016*

Employees of Corinthia St George’s Bay Hotel, Marina Hotel and Corinthia Palace Hotel will see an improvement in pay, allowances and other benefits following the signing of a collective agreement between the Corinthia Group and the General Workers Union. The agreement is valid for three years and is retroactive from January 2015.

English: [http://www.independent.com.mt/articles ...](http://www.independent.com.mt/articles...)

### **Industrial Tribunal Law called ‘unconstitutional’**

*February 12, 2016*

The government confirmed that it had asked the Attorney General to draft amendments to an Industrial Tribunal law after a court found it to be in breach of the constitution. The constitutional court upheld a judgment presented in 2015 by a judge who had ruled that the law which establishes Industrial Tribunal was unconstitutional. It was established that the law establishing the Industrial Tribunal did not guarantee independence and impartiality.

English: [http://www.independent.com.mt/articles/2016-02-12/local-news/Industrial ...](http://www.independent.com.mt/articles/2016-02-12/local-news/Industrial...)

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## Netherlands

### **Youngsters and over 45 in need of welfare benefits**

*February 4, 2016*

The number of active welfare benefits keeps growing. In 2015 around 450 thousand people received welfare benefits, 16 thousand more than in 2014. The increase can almost completely be attributed to over-45-year-olds and under-27-year-olds. By far the largest group of new welfare recipients consisted of people over the age of 45 last year. A massive 11 thousand people in this age group started receiving welfare benefits. According to Statistics Netherlands, people in this age group face many difficulties on the labour market and often have trouble to get off of welfare and back to work. The second largest group of newcomers to welfare last year were young people up until the age of 27, increasing with 4 thousand.

English: [http://www.nltimes.nl/2016/02/29/young-people-over-45s-increasingly-need ...](http://www.nltimes.nl/2016/02/29/young-people-over-45s-increasingly-need...)

### **Serious job transfers at Unilever**

*February 10, 2016*

Consumer goods group Unilever is cutting 240 jobs (200 staff members and 40 agency workers) by shifting abroad some operations, particularly IT, finance and accounts to Mexico, Bangalore, Manila and Katowice. Both the FNC and CNV trade unions have expressed their doubts about what they call 'the massive sale of jobs to low-cost countries'. The unions foresee serious logistical problems. Unilever has worldwide a workforce of some 175,000 people.

English: [http://www.dutchnews.nl/news/archives/2016/02/unilever-to-cut-200-jobs ...](http://www.dutchnews.nl/news/archives/2016/02/unilever-to-cut-200-jobs...)

### **Shell announces massive job cuts**

*February 4, 2016*

Along with the company's fourth quarter figures the oil and gas giant Shell presented plans to cut some 10 thousand jobs. The management announced the start of a new chapter in Shell, rejuvenating the company, and improving shareholder returns. The company is cutting investment by cancelling or postponing projects and slashing costs; around 2,800 jobs are going as a direct result of the Shell/BG merger.

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

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## Norway

### **Social and labour guidelines**

*February 8, 2016*

The world's largest sovereign wealth fund, Norges Bank Investment Management, has announced a new initiative in which it details the human rights expectations of the companies within its investment portfolio. The move is an important addition to the investment criteria of NBIM, which manages the €791bn Norwegian Government Pension Fund. NBIM invests in over 8000 companies comprising 2% of global work markets. The policy expects companies to adopt practices based on internationally-recognised human rights standards such as the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises and the UN Global Compact. The move is welcomed by UNI Global Union and marks the culmination of a three-year engagement by UNI, Norwegian trade unions and NGOs who contributed to a strategic review of investment policies at NBIM. This pressure culminated with a call for a stronger focus on workers' rights in fund investment activity.

English: <http://www.uniglobalunion.org/news/norway-wealth-managers-raise-importance ...>

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## Poland

### **Call for action against Smurfit Kappa's attack on unions**

*February 9, 2016*

UNI Global Union is calling on its 20 million members to send messages of solidarity to Smurfit Kappa Poland unions being discriminated by management. Smurfit Kappa Poland management has unilaterally ended wage negotiations and announced a pay increase to begin in April 2016 while bringing in a series of anti-union measures. Supervisors have been given special 'training' by a firm of lawyers and new rules have been announced for all 5 of Smurfit Kappa's plants. Talking except on official breaks is banned and the supervisors have been asked to issue warnings; trade union representatives are not permitted to report back to their member and after shift union meetings on company premises are banned.

English: <http://www.uniglobalunion.org/news/uni-calls-action-against-smurfit-kappas ...>

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## Portugal

## **Quicker end to austerity measures**

*February 28, 2016*

A 24-hour strike, intended to press the government to reverse austerity measures more swiftly than it plans, is likely to cause disruption at schools, hospitals, courts and other public services. The Socialist Party minority government, which is backed by the Communist Party and Left Bloc, has pledged to restore workplace entitlements that were sacrificed at EU behest as the price of the €78 billion (£60bn) bailout of private banks in 2011. The government has already approved a return to public-service workers' 35-hour working week, down from the current 40 hours, from July. The Common Front, which is close to the militant CGTP federation, says that change must come sooner.

English: <http://www.morningstaronline.co.uk/a-fad7-Portugal-Strikers-will-press-for-swifter> ...

## **TAP workers take financial participation**

*February 21, 2016*

A spokesperson of a platform of eight TAP unions said that the airline's workers are going to buy 5% of the capital that was reserved for them at the company's privatisation. Through the platform of unions, the airline workers could make history by being the only ones that influenced the privatisation specifications, which will happen again when the sale of the capital is launched for the workers.

English: <http://www.theportugallnews.com/news/tap-unions-expect-workers-to-buy> ...

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## **Romania**

### **Precarious work in the garment industry**

*February 9, 2016*

The Italian-owned knitwear factory, Maglierie Cristian Impex, is one of the largest clothing factories in Romania, with about 1,000 staff. But some workers mutter they have not been paid while others say they received wages only once every two or three months last year. Workers, who are overwhelmingly women, are often hired on the legal minimum wage of less than 200 euro a month net and may earn even less, say workers and campaigners such as the Fair Wear Foundation and Clean Clothes Campaign. The Labour Inspectorate said inspections between 2013 and 2015 found the Zendoo Style factory in Calarasi did not respect the law on salary payments, working hours, overtime and rest time for workers. The company, which employed about 80 people, was fined for failing to rectify these issues. A report by the Clean Clothes Campaign, a group that lobbies to improve conditions for workers in the sector, found poverty-level wages, dangerous working conditions and forced overtime were 'endemic throughout the garment industry'.

English: <http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/international/business/made ...>

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## Serbia

### LFS figures for 4<sup>th</sup> quarter of 2015

*February 29, 2016*

The unemployment rate, presenting the share of the unemployed in total active population (employed and unemployed) in the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter of 2015 amounted to 17.9%, i.e. 17.4% regarding the male population and 18.4% regarding the female. The employment rate presents the percentage of the employed in total population aged 15 and over and in the 4th quarter 2015, it amounted to 42.4%. Additionally, employment rate of males was 50.0%, while of females, it was 35.2%.

English: <http://webrzs.stat.gov.rs/WebSite/public/PublicationView ...>

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## Slovakia

### Gender wage gap more than a quarter

*February 27, 2016*

The average salary in the first half of 2015, according to a fresh survey by the internet portal Platy.sk, was 929 euro a month, with Bratislava topping the list of best paid jobs. In the region of Bratislava, the average salary comes to 1,280 euro, while the lowest average salary can be found in the Presov region, at 808 euro. The survey pointed to the existing pay gap between men and women, with men making an average of 27% more than their female counterparts. The top paid jobs are in management and higher qualified jobs, while the services industry laments the lowest paid jobs, with the hotel, tourism and catering sectors coming out worst.

English: <http://www.thedaily.sk/men-make-27-more-than-women-national-average-salary ...>

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## Slovenia

### Wages in 2015

*February 15, 2016*

Average monthly gross earnings for December 2015 were lower compared to November due to lower extra payments (13th month payments and Christmas bonuses); they amounted to

1,594.93 euro and net to 1,035.58 euro. Average monthly earnings for 2015 in comparison with earnings for 2014 increased in both nominal and real terms. For 2015, average monthly net earnings in the public sector amounted to 1,161.88 euro and in the private sector to 935.78 euro. In comparison with 2014, average monthly net earnings for 2015 were higher in the public sector by 0.8% and in the private sector by 0.3%.

English: [http://www.stat.si/StatWeb/en/show ...](http://www.stat.si/StatWeb/en/show...)

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## Spain

### **Subway strike during Mobile World Congress**

*February 28, 2016*

A strike of the subway workers called by the local transportation authority took place during the annual Mobile World Congress (MWC) in Barcelona. The Major of Barcelona (Ada Colau) said that she had worked until 'the last moment' with the unions to reach 'a reasonable offer' that would avoid the stoppage.

English: [http://elpais.com/elpais/2016/02/22/inenglish ...](http://elpais.com/elpais/2016/02/22/inenglish...)

### **To strike is not a crime**

*February 19, 2016*

Nearly 6 years after the Airbus general strike of 2010, the 'Airbus 8' workers and trade union members of CCOO and UGT were finally acquitted on 17 February 2016. Eight trade unionists were charged and persecuted up to a surrealistic eight years and three months in prison for participating in strike actions on 29th September 2010. Getafe's criminal court recognised the lack of evidence against the trade unionists' charges. None of the 'Airbus 8' will be sentenced for the picket action. Nevertheless, Article 315.3 of the Penal Code still needs to be repealed, as backed by social partners and progressive political voices.

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

### **Taxis block central Madrid in car-sharing protest**

*February 18, 2016*

More than a thousand taxi drivers blocked a central Madrid boulevard, beeping horns and setting off firecrackers, to protest plans to open the country to greater competition from ride-hailing and car-sharing services. Uber and other companies such as Cabify face demonstrations from taxi drivers worldwide for operating services which match private vehicle owners with customers. Uber cannot currently operate in Spain while authorities decide their legal status, though other collaborative economy services, such as accommodation company Airbnb, are operating.

English: [http://www.reuters.com/article/us-spain-uber-protests ...](http://www.reuters.com/article/us-spain-uber-protests)

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## Sweden

### **The Swedish agreement model's big test**

*February 8, 2016*

In 2016 the Swedish wage setting model is being put to its biggest test for several decades. Agreements must be made for some three million employees, but the members of the Confederation of Trade Unions (LO) are split and different demands from different unions and trades risk breaking a nearly 20 year old tradition where the industry has set the norm for wage increases. The wage setting agreement of 1998, introduced a compromise where trade unions promised to respect the wages in the competitive industry and employers backed down from their attempts to wreck central agreements. The industry agreement meant the consensus reached between the parties in the export industry became a standard for other wages. The model has been successful if you consider real-term wage increases and the absence of industrial action. But it is coming under increased criticism. There is growing support for measures aimed at increasing lower wages, especially within female-dominated trade unions like Kommunal (the Municipal Workers' Union) and Handels (the Commercial Employee's Union). And there is certainly agreement within LO that the pay gap between women and men should be halved by 2028.

English: [http://www.nordiclbourjournal.org/nyheter/news-2016/article ...](http://www.nordiclbourjournal.org/nyheter/news-2016/article)

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## Switzerland

### **Open letter for equal pay**

*February 15, 2016*

The trade union confederation SGB/USS has written an open letter to the government with an extensive comment on the draft act that aims to settle the equal treatment of men and women. The union criticises the voluntary character of the proposed measures. Companies will have to check their wage system on discriminating aspects, but there are no sanctions in case of breaches. According to the union there should be an obligatory wage analysis in all companies monitored by an independent body. Furthermore, the union says that a law without dissuasive penalties is a legal monstrosity.

German: [http://www.sgb.ch/fileadmin ...](http://www.sgb.ch/fileadmin)

French: [http://www.uss.ch/fileadmin ...](http://www.uss.ch/fileadmin)

## **Industry shifts to other countries**

*February 12, 2016*

Researchers at Lausanne's Federal Institute of Technology (EPFL) have produced empirical evidence to back up the claim that the country is going through a phase of deindustrialisation as manufacturers seek to escape the effects of the strong franc by moving production abroad. The academic study concluded that the rapid and widespread rise in the number of deals leaves little doubt that many of them are correlated with the removal of the exchange-rate floor. This in turn could have a damaging effect on unemployment.

English: [http://actu.epfl.ch/news/offshoring-looms-after-the-removal ...](http://actu.epfl.ch/news/offshoring-looms-after-the-removal-...)

The report: [http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3 ...](http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3-...)

## **Geneva against wage dumping**

*February 8, 2016*

Trade union Unia has successfully put pressure on the City of Geneva to take action against wage dumping and to go beyond the requirements of federal law. Situated on the border, Geneva is particularly vulnerable to wage dumping, and the pressure is aggravated by the city's high rate of unemployment. The new regulation introduces strict subcontracting rules. The main enterprise will be responsible for the wage and social insurance payments of all subcontractors. The latter will themselves not be allowed to subcontract and there will be tough penalties for fraudsters. A social fund is established to pay the wages of aggrieved workers should those wages no longer be guaranteed by the principal company.

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

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## **Turkey**

### **Hugo Boss tackles labour violations claims**

*February 23, 2016*

Fashion brand Hugo Boss says it has implemented a number of changes in its factory in Izmir and is working to resolve remaining issues after an audit by the Fair Labor Association (FLA) identified numerous violations of labour standards. FLA described in its assessment report numerous violations of labour law, the FLA code of conduct and the company's own code of conduct. FLA found violations related to the freedom of association, collective bargaining and working conditions, but also to safety and health and working time.

English: [http://www.just-style.com/news/hugo-boss-tackles-labour-violation ...](http://www.just-style.com/news/hugo-boss-tackles-labour-violation-...)

FLA code of conduct: <http://www.fairlabor.org/our-work/code-of-conduct>



## **Child labour should be tackled**

*February 9, 2016*

According to the latest figures, half a million children are working in different sectors, despite the fact that child labour is banned under Turkish law. Sweatshops in Istanbul's textile manufacturing hub are notoriously known for this abuse. A trade union leader demanded the government to tackle child labour. Companies involved should be revealed, but the whole sector should not be defamed.

English: [http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe ...](http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe)

## **Capacity building and organising**

*February 6, 2016*

Trade union TARIM ORMAN-IS gathered 107 union representatives and shop stewards in Antalya, to learn and share experiences on how to organise new members to fight for better working conditions – especially for rural forest workers and migrants who work in precarious employment. On the second day, the participants organised a protest on the shore of the Mediterranean sea and a press statement calling for an end to the on-going refugee tragedy. The trade union protested against the current negotiations between the government and the EU to stop the flow of refugees arriving from Turkey.

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

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## **United Kingdom**

### **Teachers' unions call latest pay offer 'an insult'**

*February 26, 2016*

Teaching unions have jointly rejected a pay offer from Northern Ireland's Department of Education (DE), describing it as an 'insult'. The Northern Ireland Teachers Council (NITC), which represents the five teaching unions, said teachers were offered a 1% pay rise in 2016/17. They called the offer 'derisory' and claim it is a pay cut in real terms. A meeting between union representatives and DE officials broke up without agreement.

English: [http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-northern-ireland ...](http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-northern-ireland)

### **TUC report outlines the workers' rights at risk from Brexit**

*February 25, 2016*

The trade union confederation TUC published a report that sets out which workers' rights in the UK are underpinned by EU rules – and would therefore be at risk if the UK votes to leave the EU. The report *UK Employment Rights and the EU* provides a comprehensive assessment

of the employment rights that derive from the UK's membership of the European Union. And it considers the threat to these rights in the case of the UK voting to leave the EU. These rights, which include paid annual leave, time off for antenatal appointments and fair treatment for part-time workers, are used every day by millions of workers. But if the UK votes to leave the EU, no-one can say what will happen to these rights.

English: <https://www.tuc.org.uk/sites/default ...>

### **Earnings have not recovered from the recession**

*February 23, 2016*

Trade union GMB published data and tables that reveal that the real value of earnings has not recovered from recession since 2008. Overall in 2007 average earnings for all employees were £30,015. In 2015 average earnings have increased by 12.2% to £33,689. During this period inflation has been 25.6%. This still leaves average earnings for all employees 13.4% below 2007 level. The worst hit group has been workers in the caring, leisure and other service occupations group of jobs, which is still 15.4% below its value in 2007. Overall in 2007 earnings for this group were £16,455. In 2015 earnings increased by 10.2% to £18,130.

English: <http://www.gmb.org.uk/newsroom/pay-down-since-2007>

### **Union wins £5.6m compensation pay to 71 blacklist victims**

*February 15, 2016*

Seventy-one construction workers have received blacklisting compensation pay-outs averaging nearly £80,000 each. The £5.6m full and final settlement pay-out is the first tranche of compensation to members of construction trade union UCATT from major contractors caught up in the blacklisting scandal (see earlier Newsletters). Some individual payments among the bricklayers and carpenters were as high as £200,000 to compensate workers for years when they were denied employment. The UCATT members were all claimants in the High Court group litigation, and negotiations for a further 89 workers who were victims of blacklisting are still on going. Other cases involving around 340 blacklisted workers are pending with the backing of the trade unions Unite and GMB. If any of the pending cases are not settled, they will go to trial in May.

English: <http://www.bwint.org/default ...>

### **Rules on disclosure of gender pay gap delayed**

*February 12, 2016*

Female employees will have to wait another two years to find out if they are paid less than their male counterparts as the government unveiled plans for a league table ranking large firms by gender pay gap from 2018. The government had promised to introduce the rules on pay transparency for companies with more than 250 employees in 2016; planned was a disclosure how much in salaries and bonuses is paid to the male and female staff. The league table of around 8,000 firms will be published from 2018, giving firms some time to address the inequality before their data will appear on the list. It is illegal to pay different amounts to men

and women doing the same jobs under the Equal Pay Act. But estimates from the Office for National Statistics suggest the pay gap currently stands at 19.2% for full- and part-time workers.

English: <http://www.theguardian.com/society/2016/feb/12/gender-pay-gap-reporting> ...

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