

collective bargaining

Issue 12/2020 | December

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

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European sources

Employment and social developments

December 23, 2020

The European Commission has published the new edition of the Employment and Social Developments Quarterly Review, analysing the effects of the coronavirus pandemic on jobs and incomes. The review shows that the coronavirus crisis has caused an unprecedented loss in income from work.

Read on: [in English...](#)

Wage differences between migrants and nationals

December 14, 2020

The International Labour Organization (ILO) published a report on the migrant pay gap. This report analyses how migrant wages have evolved in different countries before the COVID-19 pandemic. It details the difficulties faced by migrants in receiving the same pay as nationals. It examines gender discrimination affecting women migrants and the difficulties migrants have in getting a job that corresponds to their level of education. It also includes first indications of the impact of the COVID-19 crisis on migrant workers.

Read on: [in English...](#) Read the report: [in English ...](#)

In-work poverty rises by 12%

December 10, 2020

In-work poverty increased over the last decade in most European countries, with around 12% of workers at risk of poverty, according to a report by the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC). The number of people considered to be 'working poor' has increased in the majority of member states over the last decade.

Read on: [in English...](#) Read on: [in English \(2\)...](#)

Employee monitoring and surveillance

December 9, 2020

New digital technologies have expanded the possibilities of employee monitoring and surveillance, both in and outside the workplace. In the context of the increasing digitalisation of work, there are many issues related to employee monitoring that warrant the attention of policymakers. Based on input from the Network of Eurofound Correspondents, this report explores the regulatory approaches to workplace monitoring in Europe, and the many challenges arising from the use of new digital technologies.

Read on: [in English...](#) Read the report: [in English...](#)

Austria

Social partners warn for shortage skilled workers

December 31, 2010

The Labour and Economic Chambers warn that the shortage of skilled workers is growing. Two thirds of the companies could already no longer fill their vacancies. At the same time, skilled workers are urgently needed to strengthen the economy after the crisis. In 2021 everything will be focused on professional orientation, training and further education among the social partners.

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Balance between work and childcare

December 14, 2020

Balancing work and childcare became more difficult during the second lockdown. According to a Sora study, the working hours of working parents are approaching pre-crisis levels. Although schools remained open, only around 30% of the children were in care. The fact that home office and childcare are difficult to combine and that not everyone has the opportunity to work at home has already got around in the crisis year. For this study 685 parents of children up to 14 years of age were surveyed during the second lockdown between November 19 and 27 and the data were compared with a survey from the spring.

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Belgium

Raise of unemployment benefits

December 27, 2020

The Government decided to increase the minimum unemployment allowance each year during its term of office. From the 1st of January, 2021, the allowance will go up by 1.125% each year, not counting automatic wage indexation and welfare-envelope payments. According to the Economic Affairs and Labour Ministry the increases will add up to 16% for the entire legislature, when indexation hypotheses and welfare-envelope payouts are factored in.

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Public transport strikes

December 16, 2020

Staff of the public transport company De Lijn went on strike but have not set an end date, the unions confirmed. The strike announcement came after the failure to reach an agreement with De Lijn management on the operation of the technical service. Additionally, the unions are calling for an increase in all wages in the technical service.

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Daily premium for temporarily unemployed workers

December 11, 2020

Workers who have been on temporary unemployment for longer than two months due to the coronavirus will get an additional premium of €10 per day. Around 400,000 workers have been temporarily unemployed for more than two months. Recent numbers from social secretariat SD Worx show that 14% (or one in seven) of private sector workers were temporarily unemployed for at least one day in November.

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Provisional results of the social elections

December 9, 2020

The Employment Ministry published provisional results from the elections for employee representatives on the Committees for Prevention and Protection at Work (CPPT, established for companies with at least 50

workers), and the Works Councils (WC, for companies with at least 100 workers), both of which determine trade union representation for the country.

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Bulgaria

Barriers for non-EU workers

December 28, 2020

The language barrier is one of the main problems for the recruitment of workers from outside the European Union (EU) in Bulgaria. There is no information on labour and social security rights in a language other than Bulgarian, according to a study by the Institute for Social and Trade Union Studies with the Confederation of Independent Trade Unions in Bulgaria (CITUB) on access to the labour market.

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Extension of job retention scheme

December 23, 2020

The Government informed about the second extension of the job retention scheme until September 2021. The budget to finance the scheme will be provided from the Unemployment Fund. The wage support measure focuses on the transport and tourism sectors that were most affected by the restrictions on travel introduced to limit the spread of the coronavirus.

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Lowest unemployment rate in November

December 15, 2020

The unemployment rate in November was 6.7%, the lowest recorded since the end of the state of emergency on May 13, 2020, according to the Employment Agency. Compared to the previous month, the unemployment rate decreased by 0.2 percentage points, but rose by 0.9 percentage points compared to a year earlier.

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Croatia

Raise of self-employment grants

December 22, 2020

The Employment Service (HZZ) has adopted new terms, conditions, and methods for the use of funds set aside for the government's active employment policy measures. The upper limit for self-employment grants is raised to HRK 130,000 (€ 17,336). Applications for the use of funds from active employment schemes can be sent from 1 January to 30 November 2021, whereas applications for self-employment grants and grants for the expansion of business can be submitted until 31 October 2021.

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Higher wages due to tax reform

December 20, 2020

In 2021 the fifth round of tax reform will be implemented under which the two income tax rates will be reduced from 24% to 20% and from 36% to 30%. The amended Income Tax Act will result in higher wages and pensions. The lowering of tax rates could increase workers' wages up to 2,000 kuna (€ 267).

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Cyprus

Employees' wages fall

December 30, 2020

Employees earned less in 2018 than in 2010 according to data released by the Cyprus Statistical Service (CyStat). ICyStat says that according to the results of the Structure of Earnings Survey 2018, the total monthly earnings of full-time employees averaged €1,837 (males €1,977 and females €1,676).

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One in five companies expect permanent reductions in staff

December 3, 2020

One in five firms expect a permanent reduction in their staff levels because of the COVID-19 pandemic, with the figure rising to one in three businesses in the service sector (35%), according to the annual European Investment Bank Investment Survey (EIBIS).

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Government appeals to businesses not to sack workers

December 1, 2020

The Government appealed to businesses impacted by the coronavirus restrictions to refrain from sacking employees, as the Government will continue subsidising salaries throughout December. The Labour Ministry issued a statement specifying that businesses forced to suspend operations or that have experienced a decline in turnover of 80% or more during the month of November qualify for the same state assistance for December.

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Czechia

Call to continue job retention schemes

December 7, 2020

After years of steady growth that lifted incomes the economy has been hit hard by the COVID-19 crisis. The latest OECD Economic Survey of Czechia says that with job losses expected to rise, the government should be ready to provide further support until a recovery is fully under way and actively help those who have lost their jobs to find new ones. Job retention schemes can then be gradually phased out.

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Lowest unemployment rate

December 3, 2020

Data published by the Czech Statistical Office in the Statistical Yearbook 2020 show that last year, the Czech Republic had the lowest unemployment rate in the EU for the fourth year in a row. The unemployment rate reached only 2% whereas the EU average stood at 6.3%.

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Denmark

Wage compensation for hospitality sector

December 10, 2020

The Government agreed on a provision for wage compensation for businesses affected by the partial lockdown currently effective in 38 Danish municipalities. The compensation scheme pays for up to 75-90% of wages up to 30,000 kroner (€ 4,057) per month and enables restaurants to furlough table staff while keeping on kitchen staff, with businesses still permitted to operate takeaway services. The deal will save jobs in the sector, according to a representative from Horesta, the interest organisation for the hospitality sector.

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Estonia

Discussion on minimum wage

December 29, 2020

The Government discussed the European Commission's directive on adequate minimum wages and supported the principle that an adequate minimum wage must be guaranteed for every worker and that the directive must not infringe on the autonomy of social partners or the powers of states to set a minimum wage.

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Remote working increased

December 17, 2020

In the second quarter nearly one third of all people in employment worked remotely, Statistics Estonia reported. It is estimated that more than 200,000 people are currently working remotely. In the second quarter of the year (April, May and June) a record 198,700 people were working remotely, which fell to 135,000 in the third quarter (July, August, September) as a result of the temporary receding of the virus and easing of restrictions.

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Finland

Promotion of employment of ageing workers

December 18, 2020

The Government agreed on measures to promote employment among over 55-year-olds, deciding to gradually fade out the so-called unemployment path to retirement. The unemployment path to retirement refers to the additional days of unemployment allowance available to ageing job seekers who meet certain work-related conditions. The Government's objective is to improve employment with structural reforms.

Read on: [in English...](#)

Government relaxes timeframe for reaching 75% employment rate

December 12, 2020

The government said it has not abandoned its goal of reaching a 75% employment rate by the year 2023, which means adding 60,000 jobs to the labour force. Before the pandemic hit, experts considered the 75% goal as challenging in a period of sluggish economic growth. To raise the employment rate, the government has set its sights on getting 10,000 more people over age 55 into work.

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France

Continued use of partial unemployment scheme

December 11, 2020

Despite a gradual improvement expected in the economy next year, many companies will continue to use the government's partial unemployment scheme, set up in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, at a cost that could reach €10 billion.

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EDF workers strike

December 9, 2020

Around a quarter of workers at power group EDF went on strike over a planned reform of the company. Trade unions said the company was under-stating the turnout for the strike. The reform plan that provoked the strike involves splitting EDF between its nuclear and renewable energy activities. Unions fear that would pave the way for a dismantling and privatisation of the group.

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Social partners strike national agreement on occupational health

December 11, 2020

The trade union and employer organizations struck an interprofessional agreement on occupational health. The negotiators from all the employer associations issued a favourable opinion on the text, while CGT union rejected the deal. The agreement stipulates that efforts to ensure occupational health should focus on a preventive approach. The agreement also addresses the issue of funding and governance of prevention and occupational health instruments, as well as interconnection with local health services. The parties have until 8 January to validate the agreement, after consultation with their constituents.

Read on: [in French...](#) Read on: [in French \(2\)...](#) Read the agreement: [in French...](#)

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Germany

Union demands greater say in technological restructuring

December 25, 2020

Trade union IG Metall wants to have a greater say in the technological restructuring of industry in order to secure as many jobs as possible. In the collective bargaining negotiations that have just begun for around 3.8 million employees, the union is not only demanding 4% more money, but also so-called 'future-oriented collective agreements' and intelligent options for reducing working hours.

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Airline reaches deal with pilots

December 25, 2020

Airline Lufthansa and pilot union Vereinigung Cockpit (VC) have reached an agreement that secures jobs until end-March 2022 and could help reduce costs by as much as €450 million. The agreement includes an extension of shortened working hours in 2021 under the government's short-time work (Kurzarbeit) scheme as well as a reduction in working hours with corresponding salary cuts and the suspension of collective pay increases.

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Amazon workers strike for higher wages

December 21, 2020

Employees of the online retailer Amazon went on strike at several locations in a protest against precarious wages. Trade union Verdi had called for strikes at various locations as it sought to push Amazon into recognition of the collective agreements which are commonly established between trade unions and employer associations.

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Greece

General strike

December 11, 2020

In different cities workers went on strike to defend workers' wages and benefits. Their actions defied government restrictions introduced in response to the pandemic, which limit gatherings of more than three people. The Government has introduced bills into Parliament which require workers to accept a 10-hour workday while only getting paid for 8 hours, along with substantially lower wages and Sunday work.

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Unions call strike of media workers

December 10, 2020

Journalists, producers and technical staff decided to go on strike to protest against planned changes to the press laws. Unions representing the media workers informed that the planned changes are a great blow to the press workers as they "would pave the way for mass layoffs". It was underlined that the proposed law, which aims to reduce the requirement of 400 employees at television channels to 280, includes more flexible articles against journalists regarding their employment contracts.

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Hungary

Second round of job protection funding

December 28, 2020

Hungary will have another chance from 2021 to apply for funds from the European Union's SURE fund to help employees suffering the consequences of the coronavirus pandemic. The EC's instrument for temporary Support to mitigate Unemployment Risks in an Emergency (SURE) has been created to support countries hit by the coronavirus epidemic, by disbursing loans to support short-term work schemes and other measures.

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Supplement to protection plan

December 19, 2020

The government has supplemented the social economic protection action plan in the interest of workers and businesses. The government would subsidise two-thirds of payroll costs in December and January at businesses forced to close temporarily because of the epidemic. The local business tax would be halved for small- and medium-sized enterprises and sole proprietors from January 1. These businesses account for the most workplaces and are also the most vulnerable during the epidemic.

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Iceland

High unemployment among foreign nationals

December 15, 2020

According to the National Register of Iceland, foreign nationals' share of the overall population increased by 1.5 percentage points compared to 2018. 12.4% of people living in Iceland in 2018 were foreign nationals, compared to 13.9% in 2020. However, the national broadcasting service, RÚV, reports that the unemployment rate is much higher for foreign nationals (24%) than it is for Icelandic citizens (12%). In addition, immigrants are also less likely to be hired than Icelanders.

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Plea for extension of unemployment benefit period

December 4, 2020

The Reykjanesbær City Council urged the government to temporarily extend the unemployment benefit period. The unemployment benefits were introduced in response to the coronavirus pandemic. Unemployment is around 22% in the municipality of Reykjanesbær due to the closure of businesses, particularly Keflavik Airport, because of the global pandemic.

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Ireland

Living wage to replace minimum wage

December 27, 2020

The Government will increase the minimum wages by 1% in 2021 to €10.20 per hour. However, low-paid workers are in line to see their wages raised by €2.20 an hour. The boost could come about because the Government has promised to look at bringing in a new 'living wage' of €12.30 to replace the minimum wage.

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Employee right to disconnect consulted

December 21, 2020

The Workplace Relations Commission has launched a consultation on a new code of practice which will give employees the right to disconnect outside normal working hours. The code will set out guidance for employees and employers with regard to the best practice and approaches to employee disengagement outside normal working hours.

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Proposals for a two-year agreement in public service

December 11, 2020

Public service trade unions have negotiated a new two-year agreement which will now be considered by each union's national executive and put out to ballot of all individual members. The national executive of the Fórsa trade union has already decided to recommend the agreement to its members. The two-year agreement will run from 1 January 2021 to 31 December 2022 and there will be a general pay increase of 1% or EUR 500, whichever is higher, in October of both years. In February 2022, an additional 1% will be available in sector bargaining funds.

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Italy

Public sector workers strike

December 9, 2020

A nationwide strike brought large portions of the public sector to a standstill. According to the trade unions, more than three million workers participated in the strike. The public sector union federations that called the strike cover public administration employees, civil servants, education and health care workers, though hospital employees remained on the job. The strike was called by unions to demand the renewal of the civil servants' collective contract, which expired late in 2018, and call for a large-scale recruitment drive and improved workplace safety.

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Emergency bonus payment

December 1, 2020

A new payment is available to workers in sectors hit hardest by the coronavirus restrictions. Under another new financial aid package funds are being made available for businesses and workers who have lost their incomes to the latest round of coronavirus restrictions. The package includes a €1,000 payment for workers in tourism, leisure and the arts, and €800 for people working in sports, as well as seasonal workers, and other temporary, freelance or precarious workers.

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Latvia

New support measures

December 22, 2020

The Government approved urgent amendments to the Law on Unemployment Insurance in the final reading. These amendments will extend the term during which unemployment assistance benefits are paid to people who fail to find a job after the end of the unemployment benefit period. The aforementioned term is thereby extended until 30 June 2021. The level of the benefit is €180 a month. This benefit can be received for a period of four months.

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Parliament 'freezes' government members' wages

December 21, 2020

The Government supported the proposal to freeze wages of Government members. With this decision the wages of ministers and parliamentary secretaries of ministries will not rise in 2021 and will remain on the level of 2020. This is required by the urgent amendments approved for the Law on Remuneration of Officials and Employees of State and Local Government Authorities.

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Increase of healthcare worker wages

December 3, 2020

The Government decided to increase the lowest wages of healthcare workers by 25%, as confirmed by the Healthcare Ministry. It is planned to allocate a budget for the increase of wages of healthcare workers in 2021 and onward. This will provide the option to increase the lowest wages of healthcare workers in inpatient and outpatient sectors, as well as family doctors and residents by 25%.

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Liechtenstein

Number of job seekers declines

December 1, 2020

The situation on the labour market in November 2020 continues with a further decline in job seekers. At the Labour Market Service Liechtenstein (AMS FL), 361 unemployed were registered at the end of November, 16 fewer than in the previous month. The unemployment rate fell from 1.9% in October 2020 to 1.8% in November. Compared to the same month last year, unemployment increased by 105 people. The unemployment rate rose by 0.5 percentage points compared to the same month last year.

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Lithuania

Average wage rises

December 18, 2020

In the third quarter the average wage increased the most across the three Baltic states. Lithuania's average wage, before tax (gross), was €1,454.80 which is 10.4% higher than last year in the third quarter. The increase derived mainly from the rise of the minimum wage and wages of state officials, politicians and judges.

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Luxembourg

Adoption of new secondment act

December 23, 2020

The Parliament adopted a new secondment act in order to transpose into national law the EU Directive of 28 June 2018 amending the EU Directive concerning the posting of workers in the framework of the provision of services. The Directive is intended to aid in the fight against employment fraud and social dumping.

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Disagreement on social security contributions

December 1st, 2020

The Confederation of Christian Trade Unions (LCGB) deplores the fact that since the end of October companies and self-employed workers may once again be forced to repay their arrears of social security contributions. The trade union criticised the position of the employers represented by the Union of Luxembourg Enterprises (UEL), which refuses to hold a tripartite meeting on the subject.

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Malta

Employment advice

December 28, 2020

As the pandemic dealt a heavy blow to the working conditions of many, the Department for Industrial and Employment Relations (DIER) kept busy with 43,459 calls received by employees and employers alike looking for advice to better understand their employment situation. With this, the department received 14,892 emails by people looking for information on their conditions of work as the pandemic was progressing.

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Agreement to save jobs

December 17, 2020

The General Workers' Union (GWU) has reached an agreement over a dispute regarding potential layoffs at NetEnt, with the deal set to save 40 jobs and secure improved severance offers for those being made redundant. The GWU said NetEnt had planned to make approximately 300 redundancies in Malta, following its acquisition by Evolution last month.

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Netherlands

Working situation of women improved

December 16, 2020

According to a report published by Statistics Netherlands (CBS) and the Social and Cultural Planning Office (SCP), the economic position of women has improved: women work more hours and are more financially independent in 2019 compared to 2018. The report also shows that between 2017 and 2019 more women started working in the Netherlands (73% versus 76%) and that the average working hours of women increased by over half an hour to 28.5 hours per week. Men work an average of almost 39 hours a week.

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Collective wage increases drop faster than in previous crises

December 7, 2020

The wages of employees covered by collective agreements are already increasing less rapidly due to the coronavirus crisis, while in the past wages always took some time to respond to economic developments. According to employers' organization AUVN, companies are now realizing much more quickly that there are tough times ahead. According to trade union FNV, employers are abusing the coronavirus crisis. In the collective agreements concluded last year, wages increased by an average of 2.8%. This year that's an average of 2.5% so far, and that average is expected to fall further in the coming months.

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Norway

Change of pensions and unemployment benefits

December 29, 2020

The Government will introduce a new pension scheme for everyone who works in a private company with a defined contribution pension. The scheme is called EPK (Own Pension Account) and means that all pension earnings are gathered in one account. Furthermore a delayed benefit for people who quit jobs will be introduced. If a worker is to blame for unemployment, he/she must currently wait 12 weeks before receiving unemployment benefits. From January 1st, this will be increased to 18 weeks. The same delay will apply if they already receive unemployment benefits and say no to a job offer without a good reason.

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Poland

Warning of unemployment rise if mines close too fast

December 16, 2020

A rapid closure of coal mines will lead to a jobless rate of up to 50% in some towns in the coal region of Silesia according to the chief executive of the country's biggest coal producer PGG. PGG will gradually close its mines by 2049, according to a deal signed by the government representatives and trade unions.

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Wages catching up

December 10, 2020

Wages are gradually getting closer to the EU's average gross pay, but it will still take 18 more years for Poland to reach the medium EU level, according to a report, "Salary Catch Up Index,". The firm Grant Thornton based its calculation on the assumption that the wage growth rate seen in the last three years will be maintained in all surveyed countries.

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Low unemployment

December 2, 2020

The forecast of the unemployment rate for 2021 is under 7%, according to a Government representative. The Polish labour market was faring well compared to other EU countries, largely due to the responsible stance shown by entrepreneurs during the pandemic, and the broad government support for domestic enterprises. The unemployment rate stood at 6.1% in October, remaining unchanged since June.

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Portugal

Jobless number jumps

December 17, 2020

The number of people registered as unemployed was 30.2% higher in November than a year ago due to the impact of the coronavirus outbreak, but declined by 1.3% compared to the previous month, official data showed. According to the Institute for Employment and Vocational Training, the total of those officially without a job rose to 398,287, meaning nearly 100,000 jobs have been lost since November 2019.

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Plans to increase minimum wage

December 9, 2020

The Government plans an increase of €30 of the minimum wage, bringing the national minimum salary to €665, starting January 2021. The government said it's 'masterplan' is to increase the national minimum wage to €750 by the end of its legislature (2023). The pandemic may well affect this goal as employers are already saying they can't afford the pay increases next year.

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Romania

Wage freeze in public sector

December 30, 2020

The Government announced its first measures for 2021. The package is a combination of tight income measures aimed at reaching the 7%-of-GDP budget deficit target for 2021, on the one hand, and further support extended to companies and employees hit by the coronavirus crisis, on the other. The set of

measures essentially includes freezing the wages and other benefits in the public sector for the whole 2021 at the level of December 2020.

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Real wages grow by 5%

December 14, 2020

The average gross wage increased by 4.9% in real terms in October (+7.3% nominally) compared to the same month last year. In absolute terms the average net wage was RON 3,343 (€686), while the average gross wage was RON 5,452 (€1,118). The wages resumed their growth in the third quarter of the year when they advanced by just over 5% year-on-year after the crisis had compressed their annual growth to only 0.7% (real terms).

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First collective agreement in the finance sector

December 17, 2020

FinBan, the federation for financial services employers, and the FSAB, the federation of insurance and bank trade unions, signed the first collective agreement in the banking and finance sector. The sector trade union views the deal as a first step. It will apply to 26,000 employees at member financial services firms, from the leasing to loan companies. Under the agreement, which will be valid for two years, a minimum wage will be established at banks. the employer will cover half of the price of the course.

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Serbia

Payment of taxes on minimum wages deferred

December 29, 2020

It has been decided that business owners can defer payment of taxes on minimum wages (received from the state to help mitigate the consequences of the pandemic) over the next two years. The Government has adopted a decree that stipulates that this tax can be paid over a maximum of 24 monthly instalments, with no interest charged.

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Trade union threatens to strike

December 18, 2020

The trade union of Fiat Plastik, which operates under Fiat Chrysler Automobiles Serbia, announced that it will hold daily work stoppages and protests from January 12, when it is supposed to resume the production in 2021. Plastik's trade union representatives say that Fiat Chrysler's management asked them to accept that their Christmas and holiday bonus will be reduced by 50% in the collective agreement and to sign an unconstitutional clause on the three-year waiver of the right to strike.

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Slovakia

Labour market developments

December 16, 2020

Employment is expected to drop, and it won't recover before the second half of 2021. The unemployment rate is forecast to peak at just under 8% in 2021, before going down to something over 7%. As many as 70,000 jobs ceased to exist this year, but the Government's measures have helped to rescue 60,000 other

jobs. Nominal salaries have risen by 1% this year, with real salaries expected to rise by 4% and nominal salaries by 5% year-on-year in 2021.

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Unemployment rises

December 4, 2020

The unemployment rate rose to 7.2% in the third quarter of 2020 as a result of the COVID-related crisis, the Statistics Office announced. The number of jobless people in the third quarter was 21.9 % higher than in the third quarter of 2019. Meanwhile, the unemployment rate was up by 1.3 percentage points year-on-year. Rising for three consecutive quarters, it reached the level seen last in late 2017 and early 2018. Unemployment rose, after seasonal adjustments, by 5.9% quarter-on-quarter. Meanwhile, half of the unemployed people lost their job in the past six months. Last year, this group represented less than one third of all unemployed.

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Slovenia

Gross earnings increase

December 15, 2020

Average gross earnings for October 2020 amounted to €1,821.44. Compared to gross earnings for September 2020 they were higher in nominal terms by 1.2% and by 0.9% in real terms. Average net earnings for October 2020 amounted to €1,181.35, higher by 1.0% in nominal terms and by 0.7% in real terms compared to September 2020 net earnings.

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Spain

Tax rises for high incomes

December 29, 2020

The Government plans an increase of the income tax for the highest earners. Furthermore, the Government will be reducing tax relief on contributions to individual pension plans. This measure, which the Tax Agency estimates will boost revenues between 2021 and 2022, was included in the budget plan.

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Agreement at Santander

December 14, 2020

The management of the largest bank Santander reached an agreement in principle with trade unions as regards the conditions for the departure of 3,572 employees, the reassignment of 1,100 employees to other entities in the group, and the transfer of 400 employees to Santander Digital, the lender's customer service and online account management hub.

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Start of negotiations to end strike at port

December 7, 2020

Bilboestiba-CPE and the works council have agreed to a government proposal to start negotiations with a view to ending the strike at the port. The strike has affected the port since October and drastically reduced port cargo traffic, to the benefit of other local ports.

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Strike action at Repsol

December 1, 2020

Trade unions UGT FICA, CCOO de Industria and USO, announced strike action in response to the plan of energy company Repsol to close 16 office centres in Repsol Butano. The joint union committee announced strike action from December 9 to 12 and from December 21 to January 9, 2021, after the company refused to negotiate. The decision to close commercial offices with more than 100 customer-facing and administrative jobs.

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Sweden

New agreement for temporary staff

December 17, 2020

LO trade unions concluded a new agreement for staffing employees which secures important extra pension provisions for staffing employees and an increase of guarantee salaries by 5.02% from 1 May 2022. The agreement will run from 1 December 2020 to 30 April 2023.

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Switzerland

Unemployment increases

December 8, 2020

According to surveys by the State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO), 153 270 unemployed people were registered at the regional employment centers (RAV) at the end of November 2020, 4,152 more than in the previous month. The unemployment rate rose from 3.2% in October 2020 to 3.3% in the reporting month. Compared to the same month last year, unemployment increased by 46,940 people (+44.1%).

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Turkey

Ban on layoffs extended by two months

December 30, 2020

The Government has extended a ban on layoffs for two months from January 17, 2021. The ban was introduced earlier this year to limit the impact of the coronavirus pandemic on employment and the economy in general. The Government has also extended a short-term employment allowance benefit, a system that provides additional wages to employees whose hours are cut short.

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Project boosts women's employment

December 21, 2020

The project launched by the Government two years ago to boost women's employment has reached out to more than 42,000 people. The government launched the project in September 2018 for disadvantaged women, namely those who cannot work since they have to care for their children at home. It prioritized

women who relied on social benefits, those suffering from domestic violence and women with children below the age of 1 and up to the age of 15.

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United Kingdom

Failing to pay minimum wage

December 31, 2020

Almost 140 companies, including some of the biggest household names, are being named and shamed for failing to pay their workers the minimum wage. Investigated between 2016 and 2018, the 139 named companies failed to pay £6.7 million (€7.55 million) to over 95,000 workers in total, in a flagrant breach of employment law. The offending companies range in size from small businesses to large multinationals who employ thousands of people across the UK.

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Four-day week

December 30, 2020

According to a report working a four-day week on full pay is a perfectly way of tackling the UK's relative lack of productivity and improving health and wellbeing among employees. The report, by independent thinktank Autonomy, analysed profitability statistics from more than 50,000 firms and used hypothetical scenarios to gauge the impact of an imposition of a four-day week. It found that a four-day week was affordable for most firms of over 50 employees.

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Government extends Job Retention Scheme

December 17, 2020

Having extended its furlough scheme until 31 March, 2021, the Government decided on 17 December to push its end date further back, this time to 30 April 2021. Dubbed the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, the short-time working measure sees the government contribute 80% of the salary of employees for hours not worked.

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Government to consult unfair employment clauses

December 4, 2020

New proposed measures to allow workers' greater freedom to find new or additional work have been unveiled. In a major win for the lowest paid workers, the Government will consult on banning the use of exclusivity clauses in contracts, which prevent workers from taking on additional work with other employers. This would apply to a worker who's guaranteed weekly income is below the Lower Earnings Limit, currently £120 (€135) a week.

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For more information, please contact Paul de Beer or Oana Ciuca, De Burcht (Scientific Bureau for the Dutch Trade Union Movement) p.t.debeer@uva.nl or the Head of communications at the ETUI, Mehmet Koksai mkoksai@etui.org. For previous full issues of the *Collective bargaining newsletter* please visit <https://www.etui.org/Newsletters/Collective-bargaining-newsletter> or consult the archive with all articles in our database at www.cbnarchive.eu.

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