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collective bargaining

Issue 1/2013 | January

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



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European sources

Protest against social dumping

January 24, 2013

On 23 January, several thousand European workers from the building, transport and agri-food industries expressed their outrage at the economic exploitation and social dumping affecting numerous foreign workers at the workplace. The protest was organised by ETUC affiliates in the construction (EFBWW), transport (ETF) and agricultural sectors (EFFAT). The participants urged the European policymakers to recognise the problems and take decisive action to tackle these. To ensure better monitoring of the European labour market, the trade unions are calling for a social Europol, a European social identity card, European liability for clients and principal contractors, clear definitions that distinguish between genuine self-employed people and employees, and stringent national controls with clear aims.

English: <http://www.efbww.org/default.asp?Index=861&Language=EN>

<http://www.europolitics.info/social/demonstration-in-brussels ...>

Gender gap examined

January 18, 2013

In the report Global Employment Trends for Women 2012 the ILO examines the conditions of women's engagement in the labour market, by estimating and analysing five key gaps, or gender differentials, between women and men which disadvantage women: in unemployment, in employment, in labour force participation, in vulnerability, and in sectoral and occupational segregation. Gender gaps in the economic indicators of unemployment and employment trended towards convergence in the period 2002 to 2007, but with reversals coinciding with the period of the crisis from 2008 to 2012 in many regions. The gap in labour force participation, examined over a longer period of the last two decades, shows convergence in the 1990s, but little to no convergence in the 2000s, with increasing gaps in some regions like South Asia and Central and Eastern Europe. Demographic and behavioural change appears to have added to the impact of the crisis, to reverse convergence in regions harder hit by the crisis, such as the advanced economies and Central and Eastern Europe. The final chapter discusses the need to expand social protection measures to reduce women's vulnerability, the need to invest in their skills and education, and policies to promote access to employment across the spectrum of sectors and occupations.

English: <http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public ...>

Eurostat documents low work intensity

January 17, 2013

In a data set Eurostat describes the non-monetary components of the social inclusion headline indicator 'people at risk of poverty or social exclusion' set out in the Europe 2020 Strategy: people living in households with very low work intensity and people severely materially deprived. Work intensity is the ratio between the number of months that household members of working age (person aged 18-59 years, with the exclusion of students in the age group between 18 and 24 years) worked during the income reference year and the total number of months that could theoretically have been worked by the same household members. The material deprivation rate is defined as the proportion of persons who cannot afford to pay for at least three out of the nine specified items, while those who are unable to afford four or more items are considered to be severely materially deprived. The proportion of people that were materially deprived was highest in Bulgaria (55.6 %), Romania (49.2 %) and Latvia (46.1 %), with more than half of the materially-deprived persons in each of these countries experiencing severe material deprivation. Similarly, in Hungary, Lithuania and Poland (which reported the next three highest material deprivation rates), more than half of those considered as materially deprived experienced severe material deprivation. Less than one in ten people in Luxembourg, the Netherlands, the Nordic and Switzerland were materially deprived.

English: http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/statistics_explained ...

Unemployment rises in Europe

January 8, 2013

Unemployment in the euro zone rose to a new high in November 2013, according to data released by Eurostat. 18.8 million people in the euro zone were unemployed in November, two million more than a year earlier. A separate report from Eurostat showed that retail sales fell 2.6 per cent in November from a year earlier, though they gained 0.1 per cent from October. The Federal Statistics Office in Berlin reported that German exports declined 3.4 per cent while imports slid 3.7 per cent in November from a month earlier. Giving his annual report on employment trends, the report *Employment and Social Developments in Europe 2013*, European Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion Laszlo Andor said that 2013 has been another very bad year for Europe in terms of unemployment and the deteriorating social

situation. A new divide is emerging between countries that seem trapped in a downward spiral of falling output, fast rising unemployment and eroding disposable incomes and those that have so far shown good or at least some resilience. Andor stated that 'appropriate labour market reforms and improvements in the design of welfare systems' could make countries more resilient to economic shocks'.

English: <http://www.nytimes.com/2013/01/09/business/global/daily-euro-zone-watch...>
<http://en.mercopress.com/2013/01/08/euro-zone-unemployment-up-for-19th-month...>
<http://www.guardian.co.uk/business/2013/jan/08/eurozone-unemployment-hits-new-high>
<http://ec.europa.eu/social/main...>

Trade unions must go for a 'wage safeguard clause'

January 2, 2013

ETUC economic advisor Ronald Janssen criticizes the fact that nowadays wages and collective bargaining systems are perceived by the European Institutions as 'rigidity'. This is perfectly clear from the 2013 country specific recommendations, where the European Commission singled out 16 Member States that were called upon to reform their wage indexation systems, weaken sector bargaining systems and decentralize bargaining to the company level, limit the increase in minimum wages and increase wage flexibility at the lower end of the pay scale. If such recommendations were to become part of an enforceable contract between the Commission and Member States, then social Europe will definitely be gone. According to Janssen the unions need to make sure that the regulation contains a 'wage safeguard clause' and that the legal basis of these regulations refers to those Treaty articles which protect wages and social dialogue when the Commission designs new economic regulations such as the contractual reform arrangements.

English: <http://www.powerinaunion.co.uk/trade-unions-are-stronger-than-they-might-think/>
<http://www.social-europe.eu/2013/12/trade-unions-are-stronger-than-they-might-think/>

Austria

Energy sector comes to a pay deal

January 18, 2013

The GPA-DJP trade union agreed a pay deal for the private energy sector that will provide increases on basic pay of between 2.9% and 3.2% with the higher increases for the lower paid. Apprentice will receive a 3.2% increase of their remuneration. Also agreed is to examine the coverage of the sector agreement in relation to companies in the sector covered by other agreements, subsidiaries of companies covered by the agreement, cooperation with employers who are not covered by the agreement and other employers not part of the energy industry. The agreement takes effect on 1 February 2013.

English: <http://www.epsu.org/a/9225>
German: <http://www.gpa-djp.at/servlet/ContentServer...>

Not enough workers to guarantee checks

January 8, 2013

According to the trade unions the public transport in several cities lacks enough staff to guarantee enough checks are being carried out on Austrian railway ÖBB S-Bahn trains. A trade union spokesperson said that if 'you don't do proper controls 2 to 3 weeks as is now the case then you are finding up to 30 per cent of the people are travelling without a ticket'.

English: http://austriantimes.at/news/General_News/2013-01-08...

Belgium

Turmoil continues at ArcelorMittal

January 30, 2013

Steelmaking giant ArcelorMittal announced that it would shut down six cold-processing facilities in the Liege region, eliminating 1,300 jobs and triggering a call for a general strike at sites still open by trade

unions. ArcelorMittal, already embroiled in controversy in France over the closure of two blast furnaces, blamed weak demand for cars and cutbacks in auto plants for fall in demand for steel. The company said it had proposed a flexible work model which was rejected by trades unions, but which would have enabled the facilities to adapt to demand. According to union officials the closures amount to a 'social cataclysm for the region'. They cited 70,000 redundancies in Europe by the company as proof of his argument. The numbers employed in the Belgian steel business — like coal or shipbuilding beforehand in other one-time powerhouse industries — have collapsed from some 34,000 in 1981 to fewer than 10,000 in 2013. The workers decide to go back to work but to continue with the protests.

English: <http://www.livemint.com/Companies ...>

<http://business-standard.com/india/news/belgian-police-mittal-workers-clash ...>

<http://www.euronews.com/2013/01/29/liege-steel-employees-vote-to-work-and-protest/>

Public service unions announce joint demonstration

January 18, 2013

The three main trade unions in the public sector have called a national demonstration of federal civil servants for Thursday 7 February 2013. The unions argue that civil service minister Bogaert is talking about abolishing the system of training and examinations that are the basis of the current system of career progression without being clear about what he wants in its place.

English: <http://www.epsu.org/r/164>

French: <http://csc-services-publics.csc-en-ligne.be/Nouvelles/Sectorielles ...>

<http://www.cgsp-ministeres.be/etat-federal/comite-b/204-communiqu ...>

Bulgaria

Strike at Sopot plant called off

January 28, 2013

An industrial dispute that seems to become a never ending story has turned into an effective strike of thousands of workers. Workers at the state-owned VMZ Sopot (see also the Newsletter July-August 2012) have been staging strikes since mid-December. They are outraged by the constant delays of their salaries and are rallying with demands for securing orders and better working conditions in the winter. Meanwhile, the only bidder that came forward to take over the plant has made known that it considers the current collective agreement a hurdle and only wishes to buy the plant on the condition that 2,000 of its 3,200 workers be laid off. The strike was called off by the trade unions after prime minister Borisov declared the workers will receive the entire amount of their overdue pay. He also told the workers that in case of needed layoffs, they will be redirected to other jobs and pledged a recovery of the plant.

English: http://www.novinite.com/view_news.php?id=146897

http://www.novinite.com/view_news.php?id=147314

Dismissals are cheap in Bulgaria, report says

January 7, 2013

A recent report by the Deloitte legal European network of law firms concludes that dismissal costs in Bulgaria are relatively low, in line with most other Central Eastern European member states. On the other hand, Bulgaria and other countries in the region do require much more extensive motivation from the side of the employer before allowing dismissals.

English: http://www.novinite.com/view_news.php?id=146649

Croatia

Increase of unemployment

January 8, 2013

The number of the jobless registered with the Croatian Employment Service (HZZ) reached 358,214 workers

by the end of 2012. The official statistics show an absolute increase of 42,775 unemployed and a relative change of 13.6%.

English: <http://dalje.com/en-croatia/number-of-jobless-exceeds-360000/454873>
http://www.hzz.hr/DocSlike/statistike/mjesecna_statistika_engleski/Mjesecna_statistika ...

Cyprus

Indefinite strike in construction

January 29, 2013

Construction workers decided to continue their strike indefinitely, while the union picket line (from SEK, PEO and DEOK) became embroiled in a fight when a contractor tried to recruit strike-breakers to continue works on a hotel renovation site. The strike-breakers worked under conditions that were far below the terms and conditions in the agreed collective agreements. Workers criticised their employers for taking advantage of cheap foreign workers, essentially taking the industry back ten years and destroying the trade union movement.

English: <http://www.news.cyprus-property-buyers.com/2013/01/27/indefinite-strike ...>
<http://www.cyprus-mail.com/builders-strike/building-strike-continues/20130129>

Survival deal for Cyprus Airways

January 28, 2013

Cyprus Airways management and the trade unions are expected to reach an agreement to keep the airline flying but which leads to the layoff of 407 workers and a 10 per cent reduction in pay for the remaining employees. The proposal is under discussion between the Ministry of Finance and the trade unions.

English: <http://greece.greekreporter.com/2013/01/28/cyprus-airways-seeks-survival ...>

Czech Republic

Trade unions to campaign against government coalition in next elections

January 22, 2013

Trade union federation CMKOS has announced that it will be campaigning against the current centre-right government coalition in the upcoming general elections in 2014. Trade unions have continuously mobilised against reforms by the government and will focus their campaign on the minimum wage, social services and the harmonisation of the Labour Code and the new Civil Code. CMKOS also stated that deputy prime minister of the government Schwarzenberg who has supported the government's reforms proposed by his party was unacceptable as Czech presidential candidate.

English: <http://praguemonitor.com/2013/01/22/trade-unions-launch-campaign ...>

Denmark

Pension fund blacklists Walmart

January 11, 2013

Trade union HK Commerce that holds a seat on the PFA Pension board made the announcement that the fund will no longer invest in Walmart because of the company's appalling record on workers' rights. PFA Pension withdraws an investment of 50 million Danish kroner (\$8.79 million). The fund said it had pulled out of its Wal-Mart investment in the past, but then bought back in as it started to see improvements. Trade union UNI global has produced a blog that documents Walmart's strategy to undercut workers' rights.

English: <http://www.uniglobalunion.org/Blogs/walmart.nsf/>

Estonia

Healthcare workers do not sign 'good will' agreement

January 29, 2013

Five healthcare workers' organisations are not ready to sign the good will cooperation agreement aimed to guarantee sustainability of the healthcare system. The organisations claim that the nine-page agreement, initiated after the doctors and nurses' strike in October 2012 and convened by the social ministry, is vague and that the social minister doesn't want to take responsibility.

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

Energy workers demand 15% pay rise

January 28, 2013

The union representing workers at Eesti Energia's Narva Power Plants decided to demand a salary increase of 15% after talks on a collective agreement broke down. The Narva Energia Union said workers are demanding that the raise be made retroactive to January 1 and that their salaries increase a further 10% from 2014. The union has threatened to call a strike if its demands are not met but has not set a date for the action. Workers at another Eesti Energia subsidiary, the Eesti Energia Mining, reached an agreement to avert a strike. The miners will receive a salary increase of 7% after initially demanding 20%.

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

Union trains members on how to strike

January 14, 2013

The Estonian Central Union of Trade Unions (EAKL) started training its activists on how to organise a successful strike. The training course focused on the strikes that were organised last year, with people in charge of actual strikes giving advice and sharing their experience. Participants also discussed legal issues and the impact of strikes on the public and employees.

English: <http://balticbusinessnews.com/article/2013/1/14/trade-unions-train...>

Air deal averts strike

January 11, 2013

After three days of negotiations Estonian Air and its pilots union reached a collective-bargaining agreement, averting a strike. The Airline Pilots' Association signed the accord after it was approved by the company's board. The pilots' association cancelled the strike after signing the agreement, which expires in February 2014. The agreement leaves the wage conditions of pilots unchanged but introduces changes to work and resting time conditions.

English: <http://www.baltictimes.com/news/articles/32349/>
<http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2013-01-07/estonian-air-reaches-initial-deal...>

Finland

Increase of redundancies in 2012

January 24, 2013

According to statistics from the Central Organisation of Finnish Trade Unions SAK the number of redundancies grew by almost 50 per cent last year. The number of people who lost their jobs in 2012 was 15,800, whereas the same figure in 2011 was 10,600. Last year's figure is the second highest recorded since 2006, the year in which SAK began collecting this information. Major redundancies occurred in the technology sector, followed by considerable job losses among the forest industries. The mobile phone

company Nokia cut 3,700 jobs, Nokia Siemens Networks 624, the IT services and consulting company Tieto 545 and the national flag carrier airline Finnair 480. The bankruptcy of FNsteel left 450 people unemployed.

English: <http://www.artto.kaapeli.fi/unions/T2013/q05>

New information channel for municipal workers

January 15, 2013

The trade union JHL opened a special information exchange channel on their web pages for their members working in the municipal sector. It collects information on what kind of plans the municipalities have regarding the reorganising of their services. The idea is to involve union activists in gathering relevant and useful information, which can then be made available to other activists. Topic headings to be perused are such as outsourcing, privatisation, social enterprises, service vouchers and buying back municipal services.

English: <http://www.jhl.fi/portal/en/news/archive/?bid=2502&y=2013>

France

Peugeot must continue negotiations

January 29, 2013

Trade unions have been organising monthly strikes and disruptions at the Peugeot Aulnay plant, while management and unions continue to negotiate over the exact number of workers to be fired. Peugeot announced last year (see July newsletter) that the carmaker will be closing the plant, dismissing its 8000 workers. In the meantime the court in Paris has ruled that the negotiations with some of the main suppliers of the carmaker (workers belonging to the subsidiary Faurecia Intérieurs Industries) should continue and have to be finalised before any other measures can be taken (court text only available in French).

English: <http://carscoop.blogspot.com/2013/01/peugeot-workers-protest-layoffs ...>

<http://bigstory.ap.org/article/french-autoworkers-disrupt-peugeot-citroen-plant>

<http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/01/29/renault-peugeot-cutbacks ...>

French: <http://www.franceinfo.fr/sites/default/files/2013/01/29 ...>

German: <http://www.taz.de/1/archiv/digitaz/artikel ...>

Pressure on negotiations at Renault

January 24, 2013

France's second-biggest carmaker may shutter two factories in the country unless it reaches an agreement with unions on increasing productivity, holding back pay and cutting the workforce, a trade union leader said. The carmaker said earlier that it's willing to increase production in France by 15% once a labour deal is reached. Boulogne-Billancourt-based Renault began talks with unions in November as part of efforts to sustain profit while Europe's car market falls to almost a two-decade low.

English: <http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2013-01-22/renault-union-says-plants ...>

Tripartite agreement on employee board-level representation

January 14, 2013

Trade unions CFDT, CFTC and CFE-CGC and all employers' organisations have signed an agreement instating board-level representation in companies with more than 5,000 employees in France or more than 10,000 employees worldwide. Each company will have one employee representative, unless the management or supervisory board consists of more than twelve members, in which case two employee representatives will be the norm. The government, who requested the start of negotiations on the issue, welcomed the agreement and announced it will be transposing it into law. Trade unions CGT and FO have not signed the agreement.

English: http://www.seeurope-network.org/cgi-bin/netkey_module/boerse ...

Unions and employers agree on labour market reform

January 14, 2013

After troublesome negotiations (as reported in last month's newsletter), trade unions CFDT, CFTC and CFE-

CGC and all employers organisations have reached an agreement on labour reform. Last year, President Hollande demanded the social partners to negotiate an agreement on the reform if they wanted to have any say in its outcome. The deal includes a cap on compensation for layoffs, limiting the amount of time workers can dispute unfair layoffs to 24 months, allowing companies to cut wages and work time temporarily in a downturn, as well as broader rights to complementary healthcare insurance, more seats for worker representatives on company boards and an increase in welfare charges paid by employers on short-term contracts. Trade unions CGT and FO have not signed the agreement.

English: <http://uk.reuters.com/article/2013/01/11/uk-france-labour ...>

Protests against closure of 26 Virgin Megastores

January 9, 2013

Virgin Megastore has announced it is closing its 26 stores in France, where currently about 1000 people are employed. Trade unions organised protests outside the company's flagship megastore on the Champs Elysées. The chain has gone bust and all its shops look set to close.

English: <http://www.english.rfi.fr/culture/20130107-french-virgin-megastore ...>

<http://www.euronews.com/2013/01/09/virgin-france-workers-protest-at-closure-threat/>

Germany

Security workers strike at airports

January 25, 2013

The services-sector trade union Ver.di began work stoppages to back up its demand for a major pay raise for the security staff employed by contractors who are responsible for checking passengers and their carry-on luggage prior to flights. Ver.di is demanding a pay increase of 30%. According to the union, as much as 80% of the security personnel work for a wage of €8.23 per hour. The employers argue that they have already rejected a 9% raise for other airport workers and that complying with the demand would cost jobs.

English: <http://www.dw.de/security-personnel-strikes-at-german-airports/a-16549153>

<http://uk.reuters.com/article/2013/01/25/uk-germany-airportstrikes ...>

Warning strikes at Coca Cola

January 22, 2013

The Food Workers Union (NGG) is organising warning strikes at Coca Cola Germany ahead of a new round of collective agreement negotiations. Coca Cola has announced it wishes to restructure its operations and introduce more flexible hours. The company is offering a 2.5% wage increase over 24 months, compared to the 6% over 12 months demanded by NGG.

English: <http://cms.iuf.org/?q=node/2214>

Euro Marshall Plan launched

January 16, 2013

The trade union confederation DGB has presented a 260 billion Marshall Plan for Europe aimed at providing a decisive impetus for qualitative growth as well as new jobs with a future in all 27 European Union (EU) countries for a 10-year period from 2013 to 2022. The plan includes proposed investments and investment subsidies of €260 billion annually comprise direct investment and investment grants of €160 billion and ten-year low-interest loans of €100 billion to private investors. The DGB expects this combination of long-term, low-interest loans and investment grants to kick-start further additional private investment and thus promote wide-scale private modernisation measures. These in turn are projected to lead to further private investment and annual additional growth impetus totalling €400 billion.

English: <http://www.indepthnews.info/index.php/global-issues/1385-german-trade-union ...>

Pay increase needed after years of restraint

January 8, 2013

After metalworkers' union IG Metall fought for improvements in the treatment of temporary workers and more assistance for trainees in the last bargaining round, the union's main focus in the new round beginning in May 2013 will be on money. Also public service union Ver.di's recipe against the erosion of society is that wages have to go up, and by a significant amount. In the current collective bargaining round, Ver.di is calling for a 6.5% pay increase - the highest in years - for public sector employees. The economy got through the euro crisis in much better shape than almost all of its neighbours. Employment, at more than 41 million, is at the highest level ever recorded, and many companies have recently reported record profits. Nevertheless, most employees have less disposable income, when adjusted for inflation, than they did 10 years ago.

English: <http://www.spiegel.de/international/germany/german-trade-unions-demanding ...>

Action against outsourcing at meat slaughterer Vion

January 7, 2013

The Food Workers Union (NGG) has started actions against outsourcing at Dutch-based transnational company Vion. The meat company has announced it will be outsourcing its slaughtering operations in Emsteck (Lower Saxony) to a Romanian company, which pays poor wages. The unions are protesting against the company's practices to outsource operations in order to pay foreign workers less than German employees. The unions demand a minimum hourly wage of €8.50 and equal pay for everyone.

English: <http://cms.iuf.org/?q=node/2189>

Greece

Riot police against metro workers

January 28, 2013

Despite a court order to return to work, Athens metro employees refused to go back to work and continued a strike that already lasted a full week. Trade union representatives stated the workers did not see the point of working if their salaries cannot pay the bills. Metro workers saw their salaries cut from €1300 to €700 per month. The metro workers went on strike together with doctors, who also protested against income cuts. On 25 January, riot police moved in and forced workers back to work under the threat of arrest. The ITUC has condemned what is called the latest of a series of measures taken by the Greek government that severely undermine the fundamental rights of workers in stark violation of international conventions.

English: <http://www.ituc-csi.org/ituc-condemns-latest-attack-on?lang=en>
<http://www.timescolonist.com/business/new-pay-cuts-trigger-transport-strikes-in-greece ...>
<http://mtstandard.com/business/greek-doctors-athens-metro-workers-on-strike ...>

Healthcare underfunded

January 26, 2013

Hospitals, health centres and the ambulance service will operate with skeleton staff on 31 January due to a 24-hour strike called by workers in the health service. It is also a protest against a government plan to pay doctors 20 per cent less than what they were owed by the social security funds. Unions said they want to draw attention to the underfunding and plight of the national healthcare system and the National Organization for Healthcare Provision (EOPYY).

English: <http://www.ekathimerini.com ...>
<http://www.ekathimerini.com/4dcgi ...>

Hungary

Pay deal for teachers disputed

January 24, 2013

A pay deal signed between the government and the strike committee of three teacher unions on the framework of future cooperation was disputed by PDSZ, the second largest teachers' union. PDSZ refused to sign the deal and has formed a new strike committee. PDSZ wants further talks with the government to address their demands for an across-the-board 20% wage hike and no dismissals and work-load increase as

a result of the introduction of a new career model for teachers.

English: <http://www.politics.hu/20130122/government-inks-pact-with-teachers-unions ...>

Pessimism over future

January 11, 2013

A Randstad Monitor reveals that 45% of employees expect their income to grow, down from 80% at the end of 2010, as 60% believe that their employer will not raise their salary. Some 78% of employees think that the economic situation will worsen. In the survey of 32 countries, only Greek employees were more pessimistic, with 94% predicting a gloomier future.

English: <http://www.realdeal.hu/20130111/survey-finds-only-greek-workers-more-pessimistic ...>

<http://www.randstad.com/press-room/research-reports>

Iceland

Wage agreement extended

January 22, 2013

An extension of the collective wage agreements from May 2011 was signed at the headquarters of the Confederation of Labour (ASÍ), guaranteeing wage earners on the labour market a 3.25% pay increase in salaries as of February 1. The agreements will be valid until the end of November 2013, cutting the validation period by two months. Preparations for the next collective bargaining have already begun.

English: http://www.icelandreview.com/icelandreview/daily_news/Extension ...

Ireland

Austerity and bank debt – day of action

January 25, 2013

The Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU) is organising a rally on 9 February, calling on the EU to do a deal on Irish bank debt. Workers, particularly public sector workers, have suffered a great deal due to the financial and economic crisis. Last year the EU promised to do a deal on bank debt. But nothing has been done. Ireland is currently holding the presidency of the EU and that's why trade unions and others are using the opportunity to put pressure on EU institutions and member states.

English: <http://www.world-psi.org/en/call-day-action-ireland-9-february-2013>

<http://www.world-psi.org/sites/default/files/attachment/news/generalleaflet.pdf>

<http://www.impact.ie/13/01/25/Three-minutes---33-seconds-Vs-Ireland-s-bank-debt ...>

Bad record in workforce disability and illness

January 25, 2013

According to unpublished data obtained by The Irish Times from the EU statistics agency Eurostat more Irish adults are outside the workforce owing to disability and illness than in any other of the euro area's 17 countries. Since the recession began there has been a marked increase in this category, but, the figures show that even during the boom the proportion of adults under 60 not in the labour force owing to disability and illness was well above the European average .

English: <http://www.irishtimes.com/newspaper/ireland/2013/0125/1224329252369.html>

Healthcare under pressure

January 25, 2013

The Irish Medical Organisation has warned the Government that unless it agrees to talks on recently introduced pay cuts of 30% for new hospital consultants it will have to seek redress "through alternative avenues". Meanwhile, Irish Nurses and Midwives Organisation (INMO) said staffing levels were at critical

and unsafe levels in hospitals due to repeated cuts. The ability of nurses to provide safe care to patients will be further hit this year with the net loss of another 2,500 posts. One politician claimed that graduate nurses asked to accept 20% less than the normal starting salary would be better off emigrating.

English: <http://www.irishtimes.com/newspaper/ireland/2013/0102 ...>

<http://www.independent.ie/national-news/loss-of-2500-nursing-jobs-unsafe-for-patients ...>

<http://www.irishtimes.com/newspaper/ireland/2013/0125/1224329253332.html>

Adoption of social clauses in public procurement expected

January 24, 2013

Contractors who get construction jobs from projects with the state as 'client' will have to employ a certain number of unemployed building workers under government proposals on 'social clauses' to be announced soon. With the inclusion of a social clause for public contracts the tenderer can make provisions in the procurement process, for instance to address youth unemployment and long-term unemployment. The EU procurement regime and legislation is tight and prescriptive but it gives scope for contracts to have terms and conditions about social clauses.

English: <http://www.irishtimes.com/newspaper/breaking/2013/0124/breaking3.html>

Agency workers still wait for back pay

January 1, 2013

Hundreds of agency staff are still waiting for back pay worth €2.5m; a year after a European Union ruling that they must be paid the same as Health Service Executive (HSE) workers. The Temporary Agency Work Act was introduced in 2013 and since July agency staff have been paid the same as directly employed workers doing the same job. The agency nurses and care assistants are owed eight months of back pay starting from December 2011 and have now been told that it will be early 2013 before they get it.

English: <http://www.independent.ie/national-news/agency-health-workers-owed-25m ...>

Italy

Domestic workers convention ratified

January 22, 2013

The Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189) seeks to improve the working and living conditions of tens of millions of domestic workers worldwide. Italy is the 4th ILO member State and the first EU member State to ratify this instrument. The country is among the three biggest employers of domestic workers within Europe with women accounting for 88% of the total number of workers. With the prompt ratification the country's strong commitment to ILO's principles and values, namely to the core concept of decent work is demonstrated according to an Italian official.

English: <http://www.ilo.org/global/standards/information-resources ...>

Strike at ILVA plant ended

January 20, 2013

The battle over the future of ILVA, owned by the Riva Group, has been one of the biggest challenges faced by the government of Prime Minister Mario Monti and a symbol of the struggle to preserve heavy manufacturing (see the November Newsletter). Union workers, who earlier stopped two of the plant's steel works and a blast furnace to put pressure on management to ensure the future of the site, said they ended their strike, after the government promised the salaries would continue to be paid. This was decided after an emergency meeting between government, unions and company management to save the ILVA factory from closure.

English: <http://www.brecorder.com/agriculture-a-allied/183/1145876/>

New regulations for fixed-term and project contracts

January 3, 2013

Changes in labour law have introduced more possibilities for employers to hire personnel on fixed-term and project contracts. The requirement for employers to provide a reason for hiring a fixed-term worker has been removed in favour of conditions that the contract cannot be renewed and that it cannot cover a period of more than one year. Project workers can now be hired as long as they work on a genuine project that is not part of the company's core businesses and do not do repetitive work. Provisions have been added to both clauses that allow conditions to be relaxed in national collective agreements.

English: <http://www.staffingindustry.com/eng/content/view/full/97414>

Latvia

Critical article on the country's profile

January 9, 2013

Latvia is often portrayed as the country where labour did not fight back, but simply emigrated politely and quietly. No general strikes, nor destruction of private property or violence, it is presented as a country where labour had the good sense to not make a fuss when faced with austerity. In a critical article it is shown how the country's economic disaster is heralded as a 'neo-liberal success story'.

English: http://www.baltic-course.com/eng/direct_speech/?doc=68375

Lithuania

Unions ask for law enforcement

January 7, 2013

Representatives of the National Association of Officers' Trade Unions (NPPSS) claim that if law enforcement was strengthened crime and black economy would decrease, therefore the ruling coalition should start implementing reforms with law enforcement. Otherwise, officers promise to start protests at the beginning of Lithuanian Presidency of the European Union. NPPSS says that they are planning meetings with politicians during which they will present their propositions how to resolve issues in law enforcement. They will submit reform-related draft projects.

English: <http://www.baltictimes.com/news/articles/32400/>

Luxembourg

Study finds women earn more than men

January 14, 2013

A recent study found that women in Luxembourg earn more than men. The authors, however, note that women's higher salaries are notably affected by the high wages of teachers and did not compare women and men in comparable jobs.

English: <http://www.wort.lu/en/view/women-in-luxembourg-earn-more-than-men ...>

Disagreement between unions leads to split representation

January 7, 2013

Recent disagreements between trade unions LCGB and OBGL have led the unions to seek separate talks with cabinet ministers to represent their workers. While LCGB made a statement that its separate action is a reaction to OBGL attempts to monopolise workers' representation, others have called on both unions to put aside personal feuds and put workers' interests first.

English: <http://www.wort.lu/en/view/lcgb-blames-obgl-for-union-discord ...>

Malta

Job declaration signed

January 22, 2013

Social partners and the heads of all three political parties signed a declaration of intent towards pursuing active labour market policies. The trade unions had agreed to meet among themselves prior to meetings to try and reach a common position. The so-called Jobs+ consensus would lead to the Malta Council for Economic and Social Development 'coming of age'. The Council adopts a more pro-active policy role, approaching the government with proposals rather than acting as a sounding board.

English: <http://www.timesofmalta.com/articles/view/20130122/local/social-partners ...>

Netherlands

Strike at petrochemical site

January 29, 2013

After the negotiations failed for a new collective agreement workers at the SABIC petrochemical plant in Geleen decided to go for a strike. SABIC has around 1,850 staff. Workers and management were at loggerheads over target pay increases and planned changes in work hours. The unions also oppose expected redundancies related to business reforms under SABIC's so-called 'social plan'.

English: <http://www.platts.com/RSSFeedDetailedNews/RSSFeed/Petrochemicals/8098170>

Workers harassed by supermarket giant

January 22, 2013

Dozens of temporary agency workers went on strike, protesting against low wages and unequal working conditions. The Polish workers demonstrated against the supermarket chain Albert Heijn and the staffing company which hired them, Tempo Team. The trade union confederation FNV said that 30 agency workers were involved in the demonstrations. According to the union the foreign workers were poorly paid, hounded and harassed.

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

Norway

Unions against Ryanair on domestic flights

January 9, 2012

In a joint trade union movement statement it is said that Ryanair should not be allowed to start up domestic routes in Norway as long as wages and working conditions are so bad. The unions see Ryanair as an anti-union company that refuses their employees to organise and get in collective agreements. Authorities should not let such a company to enter the domestic market.

English: <http://www.tnp.no/norway/economy/3475-trade-unions-say-no-to-ryanair ...>

Poland

LOT to lay off one third of its labour force

January 7, 2013

National air carrier LOT has announced it is cutting its labour force by 33% in an attempt to break even in 2014. The airline has been posting financial losses for many years and hopes to avert the trend by cuts in personnel numbers and a more effective use of its aircrafts. In the face of the bad results, LOT's supervisory board has fired its CEO.

Portugal

Massive teachers' protest against cuts

January 27, 2013

Teachers marched in downtown Lisbon to protest proposed spending cuts they say will slash €1 billion from the education budget. Trade unions have indications that the government plans to privatise many public schools and cut around 50,000 sector jobs. The plans revealed in a recent document from the International Monetary Fund would 'mean the end of a free and inclusive public school system'.

English: http://www.ei-ie.org/en/news/news_details/2434

<http://www.nzherald.co.nz/world/news/article.cfm ...>

Redundancy pay from one month to 12 days per year worked

January 10, 2013

The cabinet has adopted a bill reducing the statutory redundancy pay from one month to twelve days per year of service. Years worked until October 2013 will continue to be counted for 1 month of redundancy pay, those from November 2013 until the coming into force of the bill will be reduced to 20 days and all years after the coming into force will be reduced to 12 days redundancy pay.

English: <http://www.theportugalnews.com/news/redundancy-pay-to-be-slashed-to-12-days ...>

Romania

Spontaneous strike over unpaid wages at Railways operator

January 16, 2013

Workers at railways operator Compania Nationala de Cai Ferate (CFR) started a spontaneous strike to demand payment of delayed wages. The strike lasted for about two hours and halted approximately 90 trains, causing major delays.

English: <http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2013-01-16/romania-railway-workers-start ...>

Slovakia

Moderate wage growth in November 2012

January 11, 2013

Compared with November 2011, the average nominal monthly wage increased in most surveyed sectors as stated in a Raiffeisen report. The strongest increase was in sale and repair of motor vehicles by 6.2%, in wholesale by 4.2% and in accommodation by 3.8%. It decreased only in information and communication by 3.1%, in construction by 1.8%, in selected market services by 1.4% and in retail trade by 0.2%.

English: <http://www.friedlnews.com/article/slovakia-wages-growing-moderately>

Support for new public procurement rules

January 9, 2013

The Economic and Social Council has expressed its support for a draft amendment to the law on public procurement prepared by Interior Minister Robert Kaliňák. Representatives of both employees and employers had several comments on the proposed measures and agreed that before the law is discussed in parliament the tripartite body will meet.

English: http://spectator.sme.sk/articles/view/48692/10/social_partners_support...

Slovenia

Massive public sector strike

January 24, 2013

About 100,000 public employees have gone on strike over cuts. The government is simultaneously in serious trouble over a corruption scandal that could strip the ruling coalition of its majority in parliament. The protests have caused regular disruption as the strike closed almost all schools, kindergartens and universities in the country of two million people. Hospitals were offering limited care with reduced staff. The strikes come in response to a plan to lay off workers and cut wages by about 5% this year. Meanwhile, about 14,000 employees in the metals and electronics industries also went on strike, demanding wage increases of up to 7.5%. Many get by on the monthly minimum wage of 784 euros.

English: <http://www.dw.de/slovenian-public-unions-begin-general-strike/a-16545216>

Police and teachers back on strike

January 22, 2013

Police officers, school and kindergarten teachers are back on strike against public sector cuts. The unions state that the government has failed to honour the promises it made last May to end the strike then (see the May newsletter). Police officers went back on strike on 11 January to accompany on-going negotiations, whereas teachers have announced they will join the new public sector strike on 23 January.

English: <http://www.sta.si/en/vest.php?s=a&id=1841296>

<http://www.sta.si/en/vest.php?s=a&id=1845185>

Spain

Cleaners' strike at airport

January 29, 2013

A strike to protest proposed layoffs continues at the Madrid airport. Cleaners are protesting plans by their cleaning company to lay off 54 out of 270 workers at the airport. The strike was joined by the cleaners from Terminal 4. Worker representatives and the management of Eulen, the company that holds the concession to clean Terminal 4, had held 14 hours of talks to find a solution to the impasse but eventually failed to reach an agreement.

English: <http://elpais.com/elpais/2013/01/29/inenglish...>

Bankers join the strikes

January 21, 2013

Employees at Bankia, Banco de Valencia and NovaGalicia Banco, three banks that were recently bailed out, have announced they are organising strikes against the large scale layoffs in the sector. For the year 2013 alone, some 20,000 redundancies are expected, amounting to about 10% of the total personnel. The bankers, who have until now kept silent in the face of their unpopularity, have now started to join the strikes and protests in the public sector.

English: <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/report-on-business/international-business...>

Sweden

Forced labour for migrant workers

January 29, 2013

Forestry companies have lured workers from Cameroon with false promises of pay and working conditions. The migrant workers had been promised a monthly salary of €2,150, plus €700 in per diems. Upon arrival the deal changed and it was no longer a monthly salary but instead paid at a piece rate of €0.02. To get close to the monthly pay that they had been promised, they then had to work day and night and plant about 3500 new trees a day in 2011.

English: <http://www.ituc-csi.org/sweden-forced-labour-for?lang=en>

Switzerland

Unia hopes out-of-court settlement on Domino's pizzas leads to agreement

January 21, 2013

Trade union Unia has won compensation for 15 workers at Domino's pizzas, who worked in home delivery. Whilst a national collective agreement applied, the workers received lower wages, no overtime pay, worked excessive hours, suffered safety violations and were charged for uniform and transport upkeep. The case was settled out-of-court and compensation will be paid to the workers. Unio has expressed hopes of reaching a national agreement on upholding working conditions with Domino's.

English: <http://cms.iuf.org/?q=node/2209>

Turkey

Warning over union-busting complicity

January 26, 2013

Global union federations the ITF (International Transport Workers' Federation) and Uni Global Union have warned the trade union confederation Hak-İş that it is in danger of being used by DHL Turkey as a pawn in a company attempt to prevent workers in the company having a union voice. The two global unions issued the warning following a serious discussion of the grave concerns of the international trade union movement expressed at the meeting of the Council of Global Unions following reports of company attempts to forcibly recruit members into Taşıma-İş, a new union set up by Hak-İş.

English: <http://www.itfglobal.org/press-area/index.cfm/pressdetail/8413>

Turkish Airlines to meet with trade unions in collective negotiation

January 11, 2013

On the 16th of January, the first meeting between Turkish Airlines and trade union Hava-İş for collective negotiation will take place in Istanbul. In 2013, the conflict between Turkish Airlines and trade unions over working conditions and the right to strike escalated when the company fired 305 activists who participated in strikes, as reported in the June, August and January newsletters. Hava-İş has made known that it welcomes constructive negotiations on the condition that the 305 employees that were fired will be reinstated.

English: <http://www.itfglobal.org/news-online/index.cfm ...>

Petrol-İş recognised and in collective negotiations at Standard Profil

January 10, 2013

After four years of organising, trade union Petrol-İş received its certificate of recognition from the ministry of labour and has started collective negotiations with Standard Profil. In order to receive recognition, the union had to prove that it organised more than half of the workforce at the company. Standard Profil, a supplier of automotive sealing systems for many car companies, has constantly resisted unionisation of its factories, firing 37 union activists over the past years.

English: <http://www.industrialunion.org/union-recognized-at-standard-profil-in-turkey ...>

United Kingdom

Nurses balloted over strike

January 30, 2013

Nurses are to be consulted over a ballot for strike action in support of administrative workers involved in a bitter dispute at the Mid Yorkshire Hospitals NHS Trust. Unison is to consult all 3,000 of its members amid an on-going strike by administrative workers over pay cuts at the trust, which runs hospitals in Wakefield, Pontefract and Dewsbury. The trust has sent notices of dismissal to 162 affected staff and told them they face being out of job unless they sign new contracts on reduced pay, holidays, and all other aspects of work.

English: <http://www.yorkshireeveningpost.co.uk/news/latest-news/top-stories ...>

Call for blacklist inquiry

January 23, 2013

A call for a full inquiry into allegations of 'shameful and insidious' blacklisting of workers on projects such as Crossrail and the Olympics was rejected by the government. Labour's Michael Meacher said blacklisting was the 'worst human rights breach in the UK since the war'. The move follows disclosures about a database of 3,000 names used to vet workers in the construction sector for more than 15 years. The list included details ranging from employment history to trade union activity and other personal information.

English: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-21155535>

<http://www.constructionenquirer.com/2013/01/23/government-rejects-call ...>

Beyond the Bottom Line: the living wage can boost

January 20, 2013

A joint report from the Resolution Foundation and IPPR, *Beyond the Bottom Line*, presents the first full economic analysis of the living wage in the UK, including: modelling its potential impact on labour demand and considering the potential costs of living wages for employers; analysing which workers and families benefit most from the living wage; and quantifying the fiscal savings to government of wider living wage coverage. The TUC welcomed the report and stated that the more companies who can be persuaded to pay the living wage the better. The trade union said that the report makes a compelling argument for both securing stronger wage growth and retaining important in-work benefits for low and middle-income earners as the best means of boosting living standards.

English: <http://www.resolutionfoundation.org/publications/?category=16>

<http://www.tuc.org.uk/economy/tuc-21833-fo.cfm>

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