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collective bargaining

Issue 6/2013 | June

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



AMSTERDAM INSTITUTE FOR ADVANCED LABOUR STUDIES
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contents

European sources

Strike over EU air traffic plan
Undeclared work in Europe

Austria

Contractor Alpine insolvent
Closure of 180 dayli shops
Negotiations on redundancy at Triumph

Belgium

Public sector unions organise strike
Randstad to lay off 165
Taxi drivers protest against new taximeter
Parliament adopts stricter regulation of successive one-day contracts

Bulgaria

Wave of unemployment this fall

Croatia

Labour legislation under revision

Cyprus

Teachers' protest
Trade union rejects early retirement scheme

Czech Republic

Disparity in real wage development
CMKOS wants higher wages for fire-fighters

Denmark

Restaurant owner doesn't want to sign with LO union
Business eager to recruit CEE workers
Chamber wants lower wages accepted by unemployed

Estonia

Shadow economy far beyond EU average
Public sector income increased in all regions

Finland

Public transport is an essential public service
JHL fights against zero-hour contracts
Talks over national agreement break down
Campaign against unpaid overtime

France

Agreement after Eiffel tower closed due to strike
Alcatel-Lucent restructures
Public transport strike
Public sector unions write angry letter about fourth year of pay freeze

Germany

Job cuts at Commerzbank
Raise for agency workers in laundry services
Strike action at Amazon continued

Greece

Protests and shock as national television and radio go off air
Health workers protest

Hungary

Teachers against education reform

Iceland

Wages statistics updated

Ireland

Laundry workers receive compensation
Unions still split on Haddington Road deal

Italy

Employers and trade unions reach agreement on representation in industry-level bargaining
Global framework agreement with ENEL
Public sector unions ask Parliament to re-instate collective bargaining
Protests against Indesit outsourcing plans
Public transport strike

Latvia

Social protection spending too low

Lithuania

Real earnings up in 2012

Luxembourg

Mediators called in in Cargolux dispute while workers march

Malta

Dispute on how to deal with precarious labour

Netherlands

New collective agreement in child care

Statistics on the use of temp jobs

Norway

Safety measures improved

Poland

8-hour day eliminated

Portugal

General strike

Nearly all teachers strike

Postal strike with a broad turnout

Romania

Public transport strike

Hidroelectrica slashes 300 jobs to escape insolvency process

Serbia

General strike in construction

Protest against privatisation

Slovakia

Medical workers forced to work

Slovenia

Transitional period for Croatian workers

Spain

HP workers start indefinite strike

Sweden

Stockholm bus drivers' strike disrupts municipal traffic

Male train drivers wear skirts to protest ban on shorts

Parental leave functions

Switzerland

Introduction of minimum pay historical success

Conflict ended

Quota for free movement

Turkey

Unions join the protest

United Kingdom

Teachers take the street

Fight for equal pay won

Agreements on pay and industrial relations at Hinkley Point construction site

Public sector rolling strikes

European sources

Strike over EU air traffic plan

June 12, 2013

A strike by air traffic controllers forced cancellations of more than 60% of flights around France and disrupted travel elsewhere in Europe, as workers protested a plan to simplify the continent's patchwork airspace. Over 2,000 flights were cancelled in France as more workers joined the second day of the strike, according to the civil aviation authority. Workers in 11 countries — including Austria, Britain, Italy and Portugal — held a series of brief walkouts, gatherings and minimum-work actions. The trade unions, all affiliates of the European Transport Workers' Federation, represent about 25,000 air traffic control workers. They are upset at an EU plan to consolidate the patchwork of air traffic control systems under one authority. The plan wants to open up more duties to private enterprise, allow bidding on services like weather forecasting and navigation. The trade unions fear the plan will threaten jobs and passenger safety, and claim the EU is yielding to industry pressure to cut costs.

English: <http://www.nytimes.com/2013/06/13/business/global/french-air-controller-strike ...>

<http://news.yahoo.com/strike-over-eu-plan-disrupts-european-flights-171648860.html>

Undeclared work in Europe

June 5, 2013

Eurofound presented a comprehensive package of research comparing approaches and measures on how EU Member States, Croatia and four EU candidate countries, have tackled undeclared work since the onset of the economic recession in 2008. By 2010, 27 out of the 30 countries in the European Economic Area (EEA) and Switzerland had implemented policy measures to help prevent businesses and people from engaging in undeclared work from the outset. 19 countries were using measures to enable the transfer of undeclared work into the declared realm, and 20 of these had adopted commitment measures to try to facilitate a greater commitment to 'tax morality'. In certain sectors (for instance the construction and transport sectors) alliances have been established between the government and the social partners.

English: <http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/areas/labourmarket/undeclared-work ...>

<http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/pubdocs/2013/243/en ...>

Austria

Contractor Alpine insolvent

June 19, 2013

The second-biggest construction company Alpine filed for bankruptcy after banks did not agree to inject new cash into the ailing company. The subsidiary of Spanish builder FCC has been grappling with an expansion into Eastern European and Asian markets, which has proven unprofitable. The company has accumulated debts of €2.56bn, which makes it the biggest bankruptcy in the post-war period. 15,000 jobs are endangered. The workforce includes 7,500 in Austria and 1,900 in Germany. Only part of the Austrian division will be maintained, which will preserve some 4,600 jobs.

English: <http://www.teletrader.com/us/news/details ...>

<http://www.thehindubusinessline.com/news/international/major-austrian-builder-alpine ...>

Closure of 180 dayli shops

June 4, 2013

The drugstore chain *dayli*, the successor of the company Schlecker, will close around 180 of the 885 Austrian shops. 560 employees will lose their jobs and have to register at the labour market service. The owner Rudolf Haberleitner accused the trade unions of being responsible for a negative campaign in regards to the Sunday opening hours that led to turbulences and 'unplanned losses' of over 20 million Euros. The trade union GPA-djp asked Mr Haberleitner to take on responsibility for the employees and said the management's consultation of the works council came too late. The union is ready to ensure full support for all measures such as a redundancy plan and a work fund.

English: <http://www.austria.com/dayli-closes-180-shops/3590375>

German: <http://www.ots.at/presseaussendung ...>

Negotiations on redundancy at Triumph

June 1, 2013

As reported in our April newsletter the textile firm Triumph plans redundancies in Burgenland (Eastern Austria). Women are affected in particular. A redundancy plan is currently being established. The total number of dismissals is 160. A redundancy plan shall ensure that the redundancies are as bearable as possible for the affected employees. Those who have to leave can get training. Elfriede Pomper, the chairperson of the works council in Oberwart, said that nobody has been fired yet.

English: <http://austriantimes.at/news/Business/2013-05-30 ...>

Belgium

Public sector unions organise strike

June 24, 2013

Socialist and liberal trades unions have organised a day of action against public sector cuts. The workers are protesting against intended changes in civil servant contracts, from tenure contracts to regular contracts. The civil servants fear the change of contract status will bring a large number of layoffs and will make public sector employees more vulnerable to changes in the political colour of the municipal, regional and national governments. The action disrupted services in municipalities and regions throughout the country, including a number of prisons.

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

French: <http://www.slfp.eu/publications/press/les-syndicats-du-secteur-public ...>

Randstad to lay off 165

June 20, 2013

Randstad has announced it will be restructuring its activities in Belgium due to increased competition. The company intends to reduce its workforce by 165 people and has entered into formal discussions with workers' representatives on a social plan. The possible redundancies figure is almost identical to that which the recruitment firm warned of ahead of restructuring plans in its French operations in December 2012.

English: <http://www.recruiter.co.uk/news/2013/06/redundancies-expected-with-randstad ...>

Taxi drivers protest against new taximeter

June 19, 2013

Over 250 taxi drivers in Brussels blocked traffic in the capital region in protest against a new taximeter the regional government is obliging them to buy at the cost of 3,000. In exchange for a 150 additional taxi ranks, the regional minister has put in place the new taximeter, a code of conduct for drivers and fines for customers causing nuisance. Two organisations representing the taxi drivers, however, complain the new taxi ranks still have not been added and demand the right to drive taxis in bus lanes as well as a harder crack-down on illegal taxis.

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

Parliament adopts stricter regulation of successive one-day contracts

June 7, 2013

Parliament has adopted a new law regulating temporary agency work, which limits the use of successive one-day contracts. From now on, the use of successive one-day contracts will be limited and can only be used repeatedly by the same user company if it can prove an absolute need for such flexible contracts. In other words, a user company has to prove the need for labour flexibility in order to justify the use of such insecure one-day contracts. Employers will have to pay compensation to the agency workers if they fail to do so. Social partners had lengthy debates about the issue in 2012.

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

Bulgaria

Wave of unemployment this fall

June 4, 2013

The labour and social policy minister announced that the country could be confronted with a wave of unemployment in fall, as the EU funded programs for temporary employment is going to terminate. The partakers in the programs will not be re-employed, because the funds in the national strategy for encouragement of employment will not suffice. The peak of the EU funded Human Resources Development program fell on 2012. 80,000 young Bulgarians found a job at that time. As of June 2013 the labour contract of the persons involved will be terminated, and they will have to register at the employment agencies again.

English: <http://www.friedlnews.com/article/bulgaria-wave-of-unemployment-expected-this-fall>

Croatia

Labour legislation under revision

June 17, 2013

With the argument that it was necessary to comply with the EU legislation and the protection of workers the government has planned several changes of the labour legislation. According to the opposition the draft proposals include several inconsistencies that favour the employers. The new legislation will facilitate the dismissal of employees during the probation period. Working hours and daily rest are eased.

English: <http://www.balkaneu.com/labor-legislation-croatia/>

Cyprus

Teachers' protest

June 18, 2013

The global trade union PSI has written the Minister of Education and Culture of Cyprus to express serious concern at the decision taken to dismiss around 2,500 employees who provide education in the evening and night schools of the Ministry. The consequences of the decision to outsource the work are catastrophic for the teachers, who now have to propose their services as self-employed workers and will not get any unemployment benefits during the period they are unemployed.

English: <http://www.world-psi.org/en/cypriot-teachers-fight ...>

Trade union rejects early retirement scheme

June 6, 2013

The trade union of bank employees ETYK has rejected an early retirement scheme offered by the Cyprus Development Bank (CDB), which wants to cut personnel costs by 35%. ETYK said it was not prepared to accept any unilateral actions that violated collective agreements and that it 'had asked for an agreed, attractive voluntary exit scheme' that will lighten the bank's payroll.

English: <http://cyprus-mail.com/bank-union-angered-by-cdb-early-retirement-scheme/>

Czech Republic

Disparity in real wage development

June 6, 2013

According to a Hay survey, based on a sample of 507 companies, wages have increased in 2012 by 2.1% whilst inflation was calculated at 2.5%. But, in companies with more than 500 employees costs of the paid real wages grew by 4%. Bonuses were paid a lot, in particular on the basis of individual performances. The total number of employees in these larger companies decreased by 6%. Workers have to work more, and this, combined with a demotivating manager, non-functional processes, the impossibility to do new things and distrust in the company's future, will trigger the best ones to leave in search of a better job.

English: <http://praguemonitor.com/2013/06/26/hay-group-firms ...>

CMKOS wants higher wages for fire-fighters

June 6, 2013

The trade union confederation CMKOS called on the government to raise the low wages of fire-fighters. According to the union the fire-fighters work under demeaning pay conditions. Since 2010, the number of fire-fighters has decreased by 400 and their pay dropped by some 3500 crowns (€137) on average due to the government austerity measures. But, since the beginning of June, when floods erupted in the Czech Republic, some 22,800 professional and voluntary fire-fighters have been deployed to remove the floods consequences and they managed their work fully professionally in spite of the high physical and psychological strain.

English: <http://praguemonitor.com/2013/06/06/unions-want-higher-wages-firefighters>

Denmark

Restaurant owner doesn't want to sign with LO union

June 23, 2013

In an effort to circumvent the working conditions that are the result of the bargaining procedures and methods as defined in an agreement between labour confederation LO and employers' confederation Dansk Arbejdsgiverforening a restaurant owner has signed an agreement with the independent trade union Krifa. Krifa, which is not a member of LO, is instead one of a number of independent unions that typically offer lower dues to members. LO trade union 3F has decided to make use of the general agreement that allows unions to organise strikes against businesses that do not sign collective bargaining agreements. 3F argues that if they cannot negotiate an agreement guaranteeing decent pay, its members could be assigned jobs with 10 or 20% lower wages.

English: <http://cphpost.dk/business/union-accused-bullying-restaurant-owner>

Business eager to recruit CEE workers

June 18, 2013

A new study published by the research centre FAOS deals in particular with the labour strategy and practices that companies have developed in relation to the use of the Eastern European labour. It also looks into the proportion of companies and industries that make use of labour from the east. The researchers conclude that the CEE workers with lower salary demands who arrives in Denmark, possibly without any family commitments, hence willing to work and be flexible, will more than likely be perceived as attractive labour for many businesses. Only 6% of businesses responding to the study said they had been forced to use foreign workers primarily because they could not fulfil vacancies.

English: <http://faos.ku.dk/english/news/danish-companies-use-of-eastern-european ...>

Chamber wants lower wages accepted by unemployed

June 7, 2013

The Chamber of commerce urged unemployed Danes to lower their expectations and accept lower starting wages when looking for jobs. The plea that also argued with lower wages paid to East European workers led to strong reactions from the trade union side. Trade union confederation LO found the announcement worrisome, contending the move would lead to increased wage inequality. LO pointed out that employers have been part of negotiating collective wage agreements. Therefore, there can be no doubts that people should have wages based on the working conditions in the collective agreement when working in Denmark,

whether they are Danish or foreign.

English: <http://cphpost.dk/news/national/unemployed-should-accept-lower-wages ...>

Estonia

Shadow economy far beyond EU average

June 17, 2013

According to a survey in the Baltic States the shadow economy made up 19.2% of the Estonian economy. The survey looks at three components: unreported corporate income, unreported employees and unreported wages. It is estimated that unreported wage accounts for 52.3% of the shadow economy, while 28.5% is unreported corporate income and 19.2% is unreported workforce.

English: <http://balticbusinessnews.com/article/2013/6/17/survey-shadow-economy ...>

Public sector income increased in all regions

June 6, 2013

According to Statistics Estonia the average monthly gross income per employee in the local public sector in 2012 was €844. Compared to 2011, the average monthly gross income has increased in all parts of the country. In 2012, the average monthly gross income per employee in local government units was between €554–1,228. During recent years the difference between the local government units with the biggest and smallest gross income has decreased, in 2012 it was 55%.

English: <http://www.stat.ee/65386>

Finland

Public transport is an essential public service

June 24, 2013

Three out of four Finns (76%) say that public transport belongs to the public services. Only one out of ten think the opposite. This is one of the findings of a public transport barometer commissioned by the JHL trade union. The opinion was divided on the outsourcing of public transport. It was supported by 34% and opposed by 37%. The highest percentage of those in favour of privatisation was among traditional right-wing party supporters and greens, lowest among those supporting left-wing parties and the populist right-wing party.

English: http://www.jhl.fi/portal/en/jhl_info ...

JHL fights against zero-hour contracts

June 12, 2013

Trade union JHL has started a campaign against the use of zero-hour contracts. JHL issues a statement saying that the zero-hour contract shift risks that are to be borne by entrepreneurs onto mainly young employees. The union explained it is the increasingly widespread use of the contracts, even in the public sector, which motivated the campaign action.

English: http://www.jhl.fi/portal/en/jhl_info ...

Talks over national agreement break down

June 11, 2013

Talks between trade unions and employers over a new centralised national framework agreement have broken down after the social partners concluded their positions are too far removed from each other. The main contentious issue regards pay increases. The current centralised national framework agreement, covering roughly 94% of all employees, will expire in October. The failure of talks between social partners has led to expectations of large scale industrial action this autumn.

English: <http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/eiro/2013/04/articles/fi ...>

Focus on collective bargaining in Finland:

http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/eiro/country/finland_4.htm

Campaign against unpaid overtime

June 6, 2013

The trade union TEK has been campaigning very innovatively against unpaid overtime. The objective of the campaign was to create the members' awareness for the negotiations that will start in September beginning in the metal and technological industries. The message is that people should not work more than eight hours a day, which was the most traditional demand of the labour movement more than 100 years ago. Or if it is necessary to work more than eight hours, then they should be paid.

English: <http://www.industriall-union.org/finnish-union-campaigns ...>

France

Agreement after Eiffel tower closed due to strike

June 27, 2013

The 300 workers of Paris's renowned tourist attraction, the Eiffel tower, walked off the job in a dispute over pay and working conditions. Management and the trade unions are in negotiations over salary raises, company profit-sharing policy and other issues. The protest falls right in the middle of the tourist season. The latest news is that an agreement to end the strike had been reached with the workers' representatives.

English: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-23058103>
<http://edition.cnn.com/2013/06/27/travel/eiffel-tower-reopen ...>

Alcatel-Lucent restructures

June 20, 2013

Alcatel-Lucent, the network equipment maker that has struggled financially since its creation in 2006, is set to undergo another company-wide restructuring. The so-called 'Shift Plan' will mean more job cuts for the company, which currently employs about 72,000 people. The management has not yet specified how many job cuts the plan might entail, and said discussions will start with the trade unions.

English: <http://www.fiercewireless.com/story/alcatel-lucent-unveils-radical-restructuring ...>

Public transport strike

June 12, 2013

The trade union of CGT and FO in the public transport sector (subway and trains) in the region of Ile-de-France called a strike on 3 June with the objective to denounce the deterioration of the work conditions. According to the trade unions a new protocol for the functions of the subway and train drivers will harden the working conditions. It is considered by the unions as very complex and poorly paid. Less than ten day later, rail workers nationally followed the example of Ile-de-France and went on strike against government plans to split the SNCF in three divisions, which workers fear will be a prelude to the collapse of the public railway system.

English: <http://www.euronews.com/2013/06/12/french-air-traffic-control-strike ...>
<http://www.plenglish.com/index.php ...>

Public sector unions write angry letter about fourth year of pay freeze

June 7, 2013

Public sector trade unions CGT, FO, FSU, SOLIDAIRE, CFTC and CFE-CGC have written a joint statement protesting against the government's decision to freeze public sector pay at least until mid-2014. The unions call the fourth year of pay freeze for public sector employees unacceptable. The unions also announced they are considering further action.

English: <http://www.epsu.org/a/9587>

Germany

Job cuts at Commerzbank

June 20, 2013

Commerzbank has announced 5,200 jobs cuts, about 12% of its 45,000 full-time staff. Earlier on trade union ver.di said it estimated around 3,000 jobs cuts. At the end of 2012 and at the beginning of 2013, Commerzbank already decided on a reduction of 800 fulltime equivalents, primarily in the Non-Core Assets segment. A further reduction of 500 fulltime equivalents is planned abroad and in the German subsidiaries. The remaining job cuts of 3,900 fulltime equivalents have been approved by the Works Council of Commerzbank AG. Of these cuts around 1,800 full-time equivalents will be affected in the Private Clients Segment.

English: <http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/06/19/us-commerzbank-jobs ...>

<http://hereisthecity.com/2013/06/19/commerzbank-reaches-agreement-on-5200-job-cuts/>

Raise for agency workers in laundry services

June 20, 2013

Following agreements in the metal and electrical sectors, as reported in this newsletter, the minimum wage of agency workers in laundry services will be increased as well. The minimum wage for agency workers in the laundry services sector will increase to €8.25 in West Germany (currently €8.00) and €7.50 in East Germany (now €7.00). The agreement includes the ambition to reach equal minimum wages of €8.75 in both East and West Germany by 2016.

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

Strike action at Amazon continued

June 19, 2013

Over the past month, hundreds of workers at two of Amazon's eight distribution centre locations have gone on strike four times, demanding higher pay and other benefits, including paid vacation and extra overtime pay, standard provisions in collective agreements. Trade union ver.di said some 600 workers joined the strike action at the Internet retailer's facility in Bad Hersfeld in the central state of Hessen, with another 300 in action in the eastern city of Leipzig. Union officials said Amazon should expect further action until a deal was reached. The dispute reflects the company's aggressive pricing strategy, combined with no respect for the usual consultations with employee representatives on works councils and trade unions.

English: <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB ...>

<http://www.dw.de/german-workers-at-amazon-retailer-resume-strike-action ...>

Greece

Protests and shock as national television and radio go off air

June 13, 2013

A radical decision by the government to shut down public broadcasting overnight has destabilised the country more than any of the previous austerity measures could have. On 12 June, Conservative prime minister Samaras shut down the Hellenic Broadcasting Corp, ERT, insisting that all 2,600 employees must be fired in order to be able to build a sustainable public broadcasting corporation after the summer. In response to the sudden closure, massive protests have broken out and trade unions called a general strike. ERT staff has refused to close down and continued bringing the news online. Amidst large scale international condemnation of the closure, the two left wing coalition partners in Samaras' government denied having been consulted on the closure and brought motions in Parliament to undo the actions.

English: <http://www.independent.ie/world-news/general-strike-in-greece-in-tv-row ...>

<http://www.globalpost.com/dispatch/news/agencia-efe/130612/staff-greek-public-tv-defy...>

Health workers protest

June 7, 2013

Health workers have been protesting in front of the parliament building in Athens over cutbacks in spending, saying the cuts have caused the collapse of the health system. Protesters complained that wage and staff cuts have increased their work load and made their job impossible. They were joined by health sector workers from France, Belgium and Portugal, who were in Athens for a summit.

English: <http://www.euronews.com/2013/06/07/greek-health-workers-protest...>

Hungary

Teachers against education reform

June 3, 2013

Demonstrators from teachers' union PDSZ that were joined by student and parent organisations as well as the Liga unions association protested perceived shortfalls with the restructuring of the public education system. The unions fear that the government's restructuring of the public schools and higher education system, such as the establishment of a 'Teachers' Faculty' headed by the minister in charge of education, will limit the room for professional negotiation.

English: <http://www.politics.hu/20130603/demonstrators-protest...>

Iceland

Wages statistics updated

June 15, 2013

Statistics Iceland has updated its 'Wage, income and labour market' indexes. Figures are provided for the wages in the private and public sector, by occupational group and economic activity for the period 2005-2013. Real wages and changes in the monthly wages data start already from 1989. The real wage index in May 2013 was 0.1% higher than in the previous month. In the last twelve months the real wage index has increased by 2.1%.

English: <http://www.statice.is/Statistics/Wages,-income-and-labour-market/Wage-index>

<http://www.statice.is/Pages/444?NewsID=9494>

Ireland

Laundry workers receive compensation

June 26, 2013

Following a decade-long campaign by former residents of the Catholic-run Magdalene laundries, hundred former residents will receive payments of at least 34.5 million euros to compensate them for their years of unpaid labour and public shame, the government announced. Activists representing the so-called 'Maggies' had demanded justice and state compensation since 2002, when a previous government launched a compensation fund for people who had suffered abuse in Catholic-run orphanages and workhouses for children but declared former Magdalene residents ineligible - contending that the laundries were privately run institutions with negligible state involvement.

English: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-23064112>

[http://www.cbsnews.com/8301-202_162-5759116/ireland-to-pay-\\$45-million...](http://www.cbsnews.com/8301-202_162-5759116/ireland-to-pay-$45-million...)

Unions still split on Haddington Road deal

June 26, 2013

Trade union Unite has decided to recommend its 6,000 public service members to reject the Haddington Road Agreement on pay and conditions. The agreement is the follow-up of the earlier rejected Croke Park II deal and aims at reducing the State payroll bill. It brings the number of unions who have confirmed their continuing opposition to the proposals to four. After members voted overwhelmingly to reject the deal in a ballot Unite has to decide how best to proceed in the interests of members in light of the Government's legislation to impose pay cuts. Most other ballots have led to results that imply public service workers to be covered by its provisions. The Civil Public and Services Union, which represents lower paid civil servants, voted to accept the Haddington Road Agreement on public sector pay and conditions. Despite the CPSU executive recommending rejection of the HRA, members voted by 54.6% to 45.3% to accept the proposals.

English: <http://www.rte.ie/news/2013/0626/459004-haddington-road-agreement/>
[http://www.irishtimes.com/news/vast-bulk-of-public-service-staff-now-signed-up ...](http://www.irishtimes.com/news/vast-bulk-of-public-service-staff-now-signed-up...)
[http://www.rte.ie/news/2013/0624 ...](http://www.rte.ie/news/2013/0624...)
[http://www.rte.ie/news/2013/0531 ...](http://www.rte.ie/news/2013/0531...)

Italy

Employers and trade unions reach agreement on representation in industry-level bargaining

June 25, 2013

Employers' organisation Confindustria and the three major trade union confederations, Cgil, Cisl and Uil have reached an agreement on representation and representativeness for national industry-wide agreements. The parties agreed on a protocol which outlines the number of representatives of each union and employer organisation in collective negotiations as well as the procedure to validate the agreements. The protocol is hoped to improve relations between the social partners, as also between different unions, who have increasingly taken up practices of signing separate agreements with employers.

English: [http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/eiro/2013/06/articles/it ...](http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/eiro/2013/06/articles/it...)

Global framework agreement with ENEL

June 24, 2013

The global trade unions Public Services International and IndustriALL signed a Global Framework Agreement with the multinational enterprise Enel, which operates in more than 40 countries. The agreement is based on international principles of human and labour rights, and defines the guidelines for social dialogue as a way to deal with industrial relations.

English: [http://www.world-psi.org/en/psi-signs-global-framework-agreement-improve ...](http://www.world-psi.org/en/psi-signs-global-framework-agreement-improve...)
<http://www.industriall-union.org/industriall-and-psi-reach-global-agreement-with-enel>

Public sector unions ask Parliament to re-instate collective bargaining

June 18, 2013

Public sector trade unions Fp-Cgil, Cisl-Fp, Uil-Fpl and Uil-Pa have written to the parliamentary committee on employment, requesting a re-opening of collective bargaining in the public sector. The unions state that civil servants have seen their real wages deteriorate due to inflation since a pay freeze was put in place in 2011.

English: <http://www.epsu.org/a/9586>

Protests against Indesit outsourcing plans

June 12, 2013

Trade unions FIOM-CGIL, FIM-CISL and UILM have started organised protests at white goods producer Indesit. The unions are protesting against the company's plan to outsource its low cost appliance production to Poland and Turkey, costing 1425 jobs in Italy. Indesit said earlier talks were underway with unions to use welfare support schemes to avoid outright layoffs.

English: [http://www.industriall-union.org/italian-unions-protest-against-1425-layoffs ...](http://www.industriall-union.org/italian-unions-protest-against-1425-layoffs...)
[http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/06/04/indesit-plan ...](http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/06/04/indesit-plan...)

Public transport strike

June 3, 2013

A 24-hour national public transport strike caused major inconvenience for Rome commuters, although it had a more limited impact in other major cities. The strike called by the autonomous Fast Confsal union completely shuttered the Metro A line in Rome, while runs were reduced for the capital's buses, trains and trams.

English: <http://www.gazzettadelsud.it/news/english/48892/National-public-transport-strike ...>

Latvia

Social protection spending too low

June 4, 2013

The World Bank published the study *Latvia: Who Is Unemployed, Inactive or Needy?* According to this study social protection is still comparatively low when compared to the other EU member states, and the system of benefits is not favourable enough for low-income residents. The average spending on social protection in 2009 was 13% of gross domestic product, while the EU's average figure was 21%.

English: <http://www.baltic-course.com/eng/analytics/?doc=75751>

<http://www.worldbank.org/en/news/feature/2013/05/17/latvia-who-is-unemployed ...>

Lithuania

Real earnings up in 2012

June 20, 2013

Average gross wages increased by 3.8% in 2012. The growth was faster in the private sector, 4.6% versus 3% for public sector wages, but in absolute figures public wages were considerably higher. Real earnings increased too, for the first time since the economic crisis. These added 0.5% across the economy and a faster 1.2% in the private sector.

English: <http://balticbusinessnews.com/article/2013/6/20/real-earnings-up-in-lithuania-in-2012>

http://www.stat.gov.lt/en/home/-/asset_publisher ...

Luxembourg

Mediators called in in Cargolux dispute while workers march

June 21, 2013

The trade unions OGBL and LCGB are to call in an external mediation body after no agreement was reached with the Cargolux management heads during negotiations on the collective agreement. Following the failure the unions said in a joint statement that they have called in the National Office for Conciliation, an independent mediation body, to help find a solution. The current collective agreement expires on September 1, after it was unilaterally rejected by Cargolux management in September 2012. Meanwhile, the unions organised a protest joined by thousands of people, to protest against Luxair anti-social policies.

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

<http://www.wort.lu/en/view/unions-call-in-mediators-over-cargolux-negotiations ...>

Malta

Dispute on how to deal with precarious labour

June 5, 2013

The Employers' Association has stated that it will not accept any definition of precarious employment which is not internationally recognised. The organisation does not want to be drawn into discussions about any labour market issue which is not measured or properly defined. Whilst condemning abuses at the workplace, whether they are committed by employers, unions or employees, the Association reiterated its position that a number of practices which are being labelled as being precarious by some unions are, in reality, illegal practices which can be stopped through better law enforcement, self-regulation efforts and ethical public procurement processes which allow tendering companies (in particular in the sectors of security, caring and cleaning) to be able to offer decent conditions of employment to their employees.

English: <http://www.independent.com.mt/articles/2013-06-05/news/employers-warn...>

Netherlands

New collective agreement in child care

June 14, 2013

Workers in child care services have voted in favour of a new collective agreement for the sector. The agreement includes a 1% wage increase in August and another 1% in February 2014. Workers will also receive two lump sum payments in March (€200) and September (€150) 2014. The end of the year bonus is replaced by a general 2% wage increase. The agreement will run until December 2014.

English: <http://www.epsu.org/a/9580>

Dutch: <http://www.abvakabofnv.nl/nieuws/nieuws/532458-leden-akkoord-caoko/>

Statistics on the use of temp jobs

June 5, 2013

The central office for statistics CBS published new figures on the use of temporary workers. In the 1st quarter of 2013, the amount of hours worked in stage A temp jobs was 3.2% down on the 4th quarter of 2012. Stage A is the category of workers engaged by temp agencies on a contract basis without regular terms of employment. In stage A, it is easier for both parties – temp job agencies and temp workers – to terminate the contract than in the subsequent stages B and C. The overall number of hours worked in temp jobs declined for the fourth consecutive quarter. The index (2010=100) for the number of hours worked in stage A reached 99.5 in the first quarter. The figures are adjusted for seasonal variation.

English: <http://www.cbs.nl/en-GB/menu/themas/dossiers/conjunctuur...>

Norway

Safety measures improved

June 24, 2013

All of Statoil's offshore personnel are to be put on the scales pre helicopter flight boarding to prioritise safety. Weight is important in terms of the helicopter's centre of gravity (termed 'weight and balance') and for calculating the fuel quantity. Unions SAFE and Industri Energi have expressed that putting new regulations in place is urgent.

English: <http://www.aftenbladet.no/energi/aenergy/Statoil-safety-improvements...>

Poland

8-hour day eliminated

June 15, 2013

The government's amendments to the Labour Code that eliminate the 8-hour working day are accomplished by increasing accounting periods for calculating the average amount of hours worked for the whole year and by also introducing flexible working hours.

English: <http://libcom.org/news/poland-does-away-8-hour-day-15062013>

Portugal

General strike

June 27, 2013

Public transport came to a virtual standstill as the two main unions mounted a one-day strike against austerity measures which have resulted in record unemployment and the worst economic slump since the 1970s. The fourth general strike in two years must pressure the government to boost growth and ease the relentless belt-tightening which led to the sharpest tax hikes in living memory.

English: <http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/06/27/portugal-strike ...>

<http://www.theportugalnews.com/news/more-sectors-join-27-june-general-strike ...>

<http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/05/31/portugal-strike ...>

<http://news.yahoo.com/portuguese-unions-set-stage-broad-anti-austerity-strike ...>

<http://theportugalnews.com/news/appeal-for-all-out-for-the-general-strike/28710>

Nearly all teachers strike

June 17, 2013

Coverage of a national teachers' strike on 17 June was nearly universal. The teachers protest against cuts in education, including layoffs and lower severance pay. The strike was planned for the first day of the national exams period, in order to maximise the pressure on the government.

English: http://www.ei-ie.org/en/news/news_details/2590

Postal strike with a broad turnout

June 8, 2013

A postal strike in protest against the privatisation of the post office and to defend a quality public service was broadly backed up by the workforce. Out of 780 postal workers, 85.12% joined the strike, according to the SNCT union. Over 87% of the night shift workers in Lisbon, Coimbra and Porto had been on strike. The postal company is terminating a process of reorganising its network by closing 124 post offices and opening 78 postal points.

English: <http://theportugalnews.com/news/postal-strike-with-over-85-turnout/28609>

Romania

Public transport strike

June 7, 2013

A few weeks after public transport drivers in the city of Constanta suddenly stopped work, a similar strike started in the central city of Brasov. The drivers of the local Public Transport Company RAT Brasov started a protest, unhappy about their salaries, which have not been raised for several years. The average salary at the public transport company is some €260. The county's prefect went to talk to the protesters' union and with the management to find a solution. The salaries topic had been a discussion subject between the company's management and the employees for several months.

English: <http://www.romania-insider.com/new-strike-at-local-public-transport-in-romania ...>

Hidroelectrica slashes 300 jobs to escape insolvency process

June 6, 2013

State-owned electricity producer Hidroelectrica has announced its shareholders have agreed with a large scale restructuring plan which will allow the company to exit the insolvency process it is currently in. As a

part of the plan, subsidiaries will be merged and 300 jobs will be cut to realise a 6 million cut in salary costs. Notwithstanding the restructuring process, Hidroelectrica will remain indebted and has agreed to a schedule of payment in instalments.

English: <http://www.romania-insider.com/hidroelectrica-largest-energy-producer...>

Serbia

General strike in construction

June 26, 2013

All 26 road construction companies went on a general strike on company grounds, which will continue until they receive an official response to their demands from the government. The trade union claims the state owes road construction companies around 78.6 million euro.

English: <http://inserbia.info/news/2013/06/all-construction-companies-in-serbia-go-on-strike/>

Protest against privatisation

June 6, 2013

Workers in the state-run pharmaceutical company Galenika rallied against possible privatisation of the company in front of the government. They called on the government to adopt a strategy to make keeping Galenika and having it recovered in a majority state ownership. Workers asked for guarantees that the rights arising from collective agreements be honoured and the drafting of a quality social program. The trade unions Nezavisnost Galenika and the Independent Trade Union in the company have submitted their demands to the government. They demanded to be received by officials who should decide the fate of the company, over what they call non-transparency and vague reasons for an extension of the bid deadline.

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

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

Slovakia

Medical workers forced to work

June 3, 2013

Changes in the Criminal Code and in the law on health-care providers might, among other things, impose stricter penalties on medical workers who refuse to come to work during a state of emergency. While the Health Ministry defended the change by referring to patient protection and the need to have special legislation for extraordinary situations, doctors' representatives branded the move an attempt to criminalise their profession and said they were considering steps to prevent the new rules from coming into force. Trade unions representing health-care workers are considering several steps in order to prevent the amendments from coming into force.

English: http://spectator.sme.sk/articles/view/50234/2/medical_workers_may_be_forced...

Slovenia

Transitional period for Croatian workers

June 6, 2013

The government has prepared a bill that puts in place a two-year transition period prolonging the current labour market restrictions for Croatian workers after this country joins the European Union in July 2013. The bill will be adopted because of 'the tough economic situation in the Eurozone country and the high level of unemployment'.

Spain

HP workers start indefinite strike

June 9, 2013

Around 2,000 HP employees from offices in cities like Madrid, Barcelona, Zaragoza and Oviedo have been called for an indefinite strike. After a new plan to cut salaries up to 10% and increase weekly working hours to 60, ended in internal conflicts and layoffs, trade unions from HP Consultant and Applications and HP Outsourcing organised the strike. The plan includes the distribution of 230 working hours unevenly, meaning that employees might have to work on Sundays without salary.

English: <http://www.neurope.eu/article/spanish-hp-workers-strike-indefinitely>

Sweden

Stockholm bus drivers' strike disrupts municipal traffic

June 19, 2013

Over 900 bus drivers have responded to a strike call by municipal unions Kommunal after turning down a mediator's bid. Kommunal and the municipality are in a row over pay, working conditions and break times of drivers in the capital. Another 1400 drivers are expected to go on strike from 29 June onwards. The strike has become a major issue of debate after a conservative students union condemned the strike and organised free buses to "compensate for the irresponsible behaviour".

English: <http://www.demotix.com/news/2171659/hundreds-thousands-affected-bus-driver ...>

Male train drivers wear skirts to protest ban on shorts

June 9, 2013

Male train drivers on Arriva trains have started to wear skirts in a dispute over uniforms. As the train cabins get very hot in summer, male drivers requested their employer last autumn to allow them to wear shorts. Arriva management forbade the wearing of shorts, which would look too informal. In protest, the train drivers are now wearing skirts, as women drivers are allowed to. Scared of discrimination charges, Arriva management has yielded that men too may wear skirts, but continue to ban shorts.

English: <http://www.thelocal.se/48384/20130608/>

Parental leave functions

June 7, 2013

Numerous sociological studies have shown that Swedish fathers are more involved in raising their children and domestic chores than fathers in other countries. They frequently drop off and pick up their children at school and accompany them to after-school activities. But, when it comes to what is considered the symbol of gender equality, the 16-month parental leave that can be taken by either mothers or fathers, women still take the majority of it, claiming 75%.

English: <http://www.thelocal.se/48312/20130607/>

Switzerland

Introduction of minimum pay historical success

June 21, 2013

For the very first time the trade union Unia has succeeded to reach a deal on the introduction of minimum wages in the machinery, electrical equipment and metal industries. In the collective agreement minimum wages are agreed that will protect workers against social dumping. It is estimated that 10 to 20% of the

workers will directly profit from the protection of this long-cherished demand. Other improvements include more paternal leave rights and a longer period for mandatory consultation in case of collective dismissal.

French: http://unia.ch/news_aktion_fr ...

German: http://unia.ch/news_aktionen ...

Conflict ended

June 13, 2013

The mediation of Chambre des Relations Collectives de Travail (Chamber of collective labour relations) put an end to a conflict at Hotel Capitole in Geneva as parties signed an agreement. The conflict started in April, when workers went on strike to protest against lay-offs during the temporary closure of the hotel for renovation. As the employer, Capitole Management SA, was in advanced talks with French transnational hotel operator Accor, for a management contract at the re-opening, workers were also asking to be employed in one of the other 11 hotels that Accor operates in Geneva and to be re-hired at the re-opening. Both trade union Unia and workers stated that they are satisfied with the result of the agreement.

English: <http://cms.iuf.org/?q=node/2542>

Quota for free movement

June 1, 2013

Quotas on the number of EU citizens that want to work in the country have come into effect for one year. Switzerland, which is not an EU member, says immigration has reached unacceptable levels. The number of foreigners stands at almost 25% of the population, many of them recent arrivals from EU countries where unemployment is at record levels. The country has made a series of deals with the EU on the free movement of people in return for access to European markets. The European Commission has warned that the quotas could jeopardise relations.

English: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe ...>

Turkey

Unions join the protest

June 17, 2013

After the beginning of a two-day general strike called by KESK, the 250,000-member public sector trade union confederation, the trade unions started to mobilise their members to support those who are protesting what they decry as an increasingly authoritarian and repressive regime. KESK was preparing for an upcoming strike in opposition to restrictive changes to labour legislation announced by the government, but they moved it ahead and broadened the theme to support the protests sweeping across Turkey in support of human rights, democracy and the preservation of Gezi Park in Istanbul's Taksim Square. By 17 June, all five major trade unions and professional organisations, DISK, KESK, TMMOB, TTB and TDB, have joined a general strike calling for an end to the violence.

English: <http://www.industrial-union.org/general-strike-in-turkey ...>

<http://theindependent.ca/2013/06/07/marching-to-taksim-square/>

United Kingdom

Teachers take the street

June 27, 2013

More than 2,700 schools in the north-west are facing disruption as teachers take part in a one-day strike. The action is in protest at the introduction of more performance-related pay, changes to teachers' pensions with higher contributions, and later retirement and increased workload. The National Union of Teachers (NUT) and the NASUWT say the strike is affecting 2,765 schools in 22 council areas. The two unions warned of more regional strikes and a national one-day walkout in the autumn. They said that teachers are not prepared to accept government attacks on their pay, pensions and conditions and are asking the government

to enter meaningful talks about the dispute.

English: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/education-23063740>

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/education/2013/jun/27/teachers-strike-one-day-walkout>

Fight for equal pay won

June 26, 2013

A group of female classroom assistants and nursery workers have won an important stage in their fight for equal pay as they received the backing of the UK Supreme Court to take their claim back to an employment tribunal. The decision in their favour could have far-reaching implications. The 251 employees of Dumfries and Galloway Council had argued that they were entitled to pay that was equal to the money received by men working at a similar level. They wanted equality with men in positions such as leisure attendants, groundsmen and road workers. The male employees have been earning 30% bonuses to which the women have not been entitled. UNISON, the trade union representing the women was delighted that the Supreme Court ruled in favour of its women members.

English: <http://news.sky.com/story/1108285/dumfries-female-workers-win-at-supreme-court>

Agreements on pay and industrial relations at Hinkley Point construction site

June 5, 2013

Trade unions GMB, UCATT, and Unite have closed two agreements with EDF Energy and its principal contractors, who will be building a nuclear power station at Hinkley Point. The Hinkley Point construction site will be the largest in the country, employing over 5000 workers. One agreement outlines how industrial relations will be handled and workers' rights protected for all workers on the site. The second agreement governs the pay structure at the site, which at a £13 craft rate will be well above the sector wide minimum. The agreement also includes a clause about making traineeships and apprenticeships a priority.

English: <http://www.gmb.org.uk/newsroom/gmb-hinkley-point-agreement>

Public sector rolling strikes

June 3, 2013

Around 135,000 workers from the two largest government departments are holding joint rolling strikes over imposed cuts. Jobcentre and benefit office staff from the Department for Work and Pensions will join tax workers from HM Revenue and Customs in a series of regional walkouts. The strikes form part of trade union PCS's three-month civil service-wide campaign against imposed cuts to pay, pensions, jobs and working conditions, which has involved weeks of industrial action among the union's 250,000 public sector members since a national walkout on budget day on 20 March 2013. The union says the two departments are at the heart of the political debate about public spending and the workers involved provide invaluable public services – with HMRC collecting and administering the taxes that fund all other public services and the welfare state that are currently being undermined by the Tory-led government.

English: <http://union-news.co.uk/2013/06/135000-government-workers-take-strike-action ...>

<http://union-news.co.uk/2013/06/pcs-strike-campaign-rolls-into-court/>

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