

**Van:** Info ETUI <info@etui.org>  
**Verzonden:** dinsdag 5 november 2013 12:02  
**Aan:** Veerle Solia  
**Onderwerp:** Collective bargaining October 2013

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## collective bargaining

Issue 10/2013 | October

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



AMSTERDAM INSTITUTE FOR ADVANCED LABOUR STUDIES  
UNIVERSITEIT VAN AMSTERDAM



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## European sources

### **Ryanair pilots call for negotiations**

*October 29, 2013*

The Ryanair Pilot Group, a group that claims to represent more than 50% of Ryanair pilots in Europe, has called on the company to enter into negotiations on industrial relations and professional matters. The group is asking for a basic contract that covers all pilots. RPG held its first conference in Brussels. Directly after, one of the its leaders, who attended the conference, was fired by Ryanair after appearing in a Channel 4 documentary that discussed aspects of the airline's operations.

English: [http://www.businessweek.com/news/2013-10-29/ryanair-pilot-group-calls-on-o-leary ...](http://www.businessweek.com/news/2013-10-29/ryanair-pilot-group-calls-on-o-leary...)  
<http://www.rte.ie/news/2013/1029/483268-ryanair-pilots/>

### **Inequality and gender**

*October 24, 2013*

A Eurofound report explores gender differences across several dimensions of working conditions, examining relevant country differences, analysing the different occupational groups of both men and women, and comparing the public and private sectors. Despite much legislative progress in gender equality over the past 40 years, discrimination by gender is still evident in the differences in access to the labour market and varied employment patterns and associated working conditions, reflective of persistent gender segregation. In relation to the current crisis, it is clear that pressures on jobs and pay are very much concentrated on the public sector, where many women are employed.

English: <http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/pubdocs/2013/49/en/1/EF1349EN.pdf>  
<http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/pubdocs/2013/491/en/1/EF13491EN.pdf>

### **Zero hours contracts on the rise**

*October 21, 2013*

The European federation of public service unions (EPSU) has gathered reports on the rise of zero hours contracts throughout Europe. EPSU reports that over a million UK workers and 7% of Spanish, Finish, Dutch and Swiss workers are on zero hours contracts. Zero hours contracts are labour contracts that do not include a clause on guaranteed working hours, making it possible for employers to end or pause the employment relationship by simply reducing the number of hours to zero.

English: <http://www.epsu.org/a/9824>

### **Hairdressers in open conflict with European commission**

*October 7, 2013*

The European Commission has refused to turn hairdressers' bipartite agreement on health and safety standards into law. Trade unions and the hairdresser sector reached an agreement on legal occupational health and safety standards, which is sent to the European commission to be declared binding. Mockingly referring to the agreement as a 'ban on high heels' the European Commission President refused and called the agreement a 'misfit as far as European hairdressers are concerned'. In a letter to the Financial Times, UNI Europa Hair and Beauty has reacted outraged at the slight, pointing out that the agreement refers to

non-slip shoes, not heels, and that the recommendations on avoiding risks of chemicals is a serious issue as hairdressers are the profession with the highest level of skin disease.

English: <http://www.etuc.org/a/11608>

<http://www.uniglobalunion.org/news/meeting-commissioner-andor-refit-23-october-2013-0>

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## Austria

### **Rewards for attendance questioned**

*October 31, 2013*

A study commissioned by the Chamber of Labour (AK) showed that going to work when sick can be branded a ticking time bomb. It resulted in damage created not only for the employee but also for the company. The main reasons why people went to work when sick were that there was a lack of cover when they were off sick, reward schemes for attendance, being motivated in their jobs and their relationships to colleagues. Respondents also said they feared the consequences such as losing their job when being off sick. AK sees the results as an argument to improve working conditions and as a plea for sufficient calculation of employees as well as a ban on rewards for attendance such as bonuses and vouchers for staff who work all year without taking time off sick.

English: [http://austriantimes.at/news/Business/2013-10-31/50027/New\\_study\\_shows\\_dangers ...](http://austriantimes.at/news/Business/2013-10-31/50027/New_study_shows_dangers_...)

German: [http://media.arbeiterkammer.at/ooe/presseunterlagen/2013/PKU\\_KrankZurArbeit ...](http://media.arbeiterkammer.at/ooe/presseunterlagen/2013/PKU_KrankZurArbeit_...)

### **First agreement for metal workers**

*October 31, 2013*

The negotiations in the metal sector resulted in a first agreement in the machinery and metalware branches (120,000 workers). After five rounds of negotiations the trade unions PRO-GE and GPA-djp concluded an agreement with the employers' organisation FMFI that does not link the wage increase with further flexibilisation of the working time (an employer demand). The lowest pay scales will increase as from 1 November 2013 with 3.2%, the higher with 2.5%. The new minimum wage in the agreement is €1,688.71. It was agreed to have separate talks about a new working time agreement, to be finalised before next summer.

English: <http://www.industriall-union.org/austrian-metalworkers-reach-285-per-cent-wage-increase>

German: [http://www.oegb.at/servlet/Content ...](http://www.oegb.at/servlet/Content_...)

[http://www.fmfi.at/presse-aktuelles/presseaussendungen ...](http://www.fmfi.at/presse-aktuelles/presseaussendungen_...)

### **Statistics on first half of 2013**

*October 3, 2013*

Statistics Austria published labour market data on the first half of 2013 that indicate that average wages and salaries per employee increased by 2.1% for trade enterprises and by 3.1% for employees of services enterprises, compared to the first half year 2012. Average hours worked per employee were constant in trade and decreased slightly by -0.8% for services enterprises. The number of persons employed decreased by 0.4% in trade and by 0.8% in services compared to the first half 2012.

English: [http://www.statistik.at/web\\_en/dynamic/press/073241](http://www.statistik.at/web_en/dynamic/press/073241)

German: [http://www.statistik.at/web\\_de/presse/073239](http://www.statistik.at/web_de/presse/073239)

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## Belgium

### **Dispute over roster**

*October 31, 2013*

The trade union ASTB is protesting against the new rail timetable, which comes into force on 15 December 2013, and which, ASTB says, will result in a reduction in break-times for train conductors. According to rail authority SNCB/NMBS, talks took place last week in a 'constructive and serene' atmosphere, though no resolution was reached. ASTB is the smallest rail union, with about 500 members. However, its actions in

the past have led to significant disruption.

English: <http://www.xpats.com/union-threatens-train-strike-november-5>

### **Ford-Genk trade unionists prosecuted**

*October 16, 2013*

A trade union delegation of Ford Genk might have to appear in court in Cologne for disturbing the public peace. The delegation protested with 250 workers in November 2012 in front of the central office of Ford Europe after the announcement of the closure in 2014 of the Genk plant. The German prosecutor has announced the start of a juridical investigation initiated by Ford-Cologne against 15 trade unionists and one German colleague.

English, for the original protest: <http://www.thelocal.de/national/20121107-46027.html>

German: [http://www.deredactie.be/cm/vrtnieuws.deutsch/nachrichten/131016\\_Ford ...](http://www.deredactie.be/cm/vrtnieuws.deutsch/nachrichten/131016_Ford...)

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## **Bulgaria**

### **Minimum wage to be raised in 2014**

*October 30, 2013*

The minister of labour and social policy announced the government aims to increase the minimum wage from the current level of BGN 310 (€158) to BGN 340 (€173) next year. The employers' organisations came with a statement against the increase of the minimum wages. The government is also considering increasing monthly child payments to families to the same level.

English: <http://www.focus-fen.net/?id=n317921>

### **No consultation on dismissals**

*October 15, 2013*

The plans to cut 10% of the workforce in the public sector have led to firm reactions on the trade union side. After the government revealed its plans to lay off up to 40,000 state servants starting in 2014 the Confederation of Labour Podkrepa and the Confederation of Independent Syndicates CIS criticized the fact that the unions had not been consulted. According to the unions there must be an optimisation of the administrative personnel, but this should be done carefully and planned accordingly. Union leaders informed that employees of the National Health Insurance Fund, NZOK, are already planning a strike.

English: [http://www.novinite.com/articles/154588/Bulgarian+Trade+Unions+Demand ...](http://www.novinite.com/articles/154588/Bulgarian+Trade+Unions+Demand...)

[http://www.novinite.com/articles/154561/Bulgarian+Trade+Unions+Warn+of+Strikes ...](http://www.novinite.com/articles/154561/Bulgarian+Trade+Unions+Warn+of+Strikes...)

### **Sofia airport management tears up list of pro-strike signatures**

*October 10, 2013*

The Federation of Transport Trade Unions in Bulgaria (FTTUB) has found itself in an increasingly hostile conflict with the management of Sofia airport. The management has been ignoring workers' internationally agreed labour rights on the freedom of association – as well as their rights to information, consultation, protection, and to conclude a collective bargaining agreement. Collective agreement negotiations that were initiated in July 2013 have yielded no results and all cleaning jobs at the airport have been outsourced unilaterally and without consultation during the same period. Trade unionists have started collective signatures for industrial action, but report that their lists were torn up by management representatives.

English: <http://www.itfglobal.org/press-area/index.cfm/pressdetail/9665>

### **Miners' strike over reduced wages**

*October 4, 2013*

Miners of the Republika and Obedinen mines of Otkrit Vagledobiv Mines EAD went on strike over reduced salary payments. The miners are on the work floor but refuse to perform their tasks. They say that the company has reduced their wages by 20% for not meeting work volumes. The company, which is experiencing financial difficulties, has promised to pay delayed wages for June within 10 days and the July

wages by the end of the month.

English: [http://www.novinite.com/view\\_news.php?id=154249](http://www.novinite.com/view_news.php?id=154249)

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## Croatia

### **Ship yard workers continue the protest**

*October 18, 2013*

Workers at the Croatian shipyard of Brodosplit in Adriatic port of Split went on strike. The 4,000-strong workforce is unhappy with the government plans for the privatisation of the country's shipyards and protests also the fact that wage payment has been delayed. Unions have backed the strike and workers have demanded talks with the company president. A few days after the strike workers blocked all entrances to the shipyard, expressing dissatisfaction with the fact that disciplinary proceedings had been launched against those who took part in the protests.

English: [http://dalje.com/en-economy/protesting-brodosplit-workers-block-all-entrances ...](http://dalje.com/en-economy/protesting-brodosplit-workers-block-all-entrances...)

[http://www.croatiantimes.com/news/Business/2013-10-16/34676/A\\_strike\\_launched ...](http://www.croatiantimes.com/news/Business/2013-10-16/34676/A_strike_launched...)

[http://www.turkishmaritime.com.tr/news\\_print.php?id=1434](http://www.turkishmaritime.com.tr/news_print.php?id=1434)

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## Cyprus

### **PEO and DEOK on strike, SEK continues talks**

*October 29, 2013*

Trade unions PEO and DEOK called on municipality workers to go on a four hour strike against cuts, whereas trade union SEK refrained from industrial action. PEO and DEOK are protesting against the 12% cut in state funding in 2014. SEK has said that in a difficult time where all need to make sacrifices, they continue to participate in talks to preserve jobs.

English: [http://cyprus-mail.com/2013/10/29/municipal-workers-nurses-and-pensioners-protest ...](http://cyprus-mail.com/2013/10/29/municipal-workers-nurses-and-pensioners-protest...)

<http://cyprus-mail.com/2013/10/25/some-municipal-workers-to-go-on-strike/>

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### **Quarrel on extension of opening hours**

*October 10, 2013*

The extension of the opening hours in the retail sector has led to a fierce dispute between consumer organisations, unions and representatives of retailers. A decree, which came into force in July 2013 on a pilot basis to be renewed – when it is due to expire – until the end of November, was heavily criticized. So far the response from consumers and big business has been positive, but, a televised discussion degenerated into a shouting match when representatives from large and small businesses were interviewed. The head of the Consumers Union and Quality of Life accused the responsible ministry of failing to research the issue and its ramifications properly. Changing the market 'to benefit monopolies and oligopolies' would eventually harm consumers who would be facing higher prices. Meanwhile, families were suffering and reports were coming in of people being employed for less than the obligatory minimum wage.

English: [http://cyprus-mail.com/2013/10/10/opening-hours-extension ...](http://cyprus-mail.com/2013/10/10/opening-hours-extension...)

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## Czech Republic

### **Comparison of wage in small and large firms**

*October 31, 2013*

The average wage earned by employees of the smallest companies corresponds to 68% of the average wage in businesses with more than 1,000 staff, an analysis made by Platy.cz has shown. The 15 positions in which wages in small companies are higher than in big companies include, for example, a building fitter, window dresser, confectioner and crane operator. In contrast, people in managerial posts earn relatively higher

wages in big companies. The reason is responsibility for a bigger budget and/or for more regions.

English: [http://praguemonitor.com/2013/10/31/average-wage-small-firms-reaches-68 ...](http://praguemonitor.com/2013/10/31/average-wage-small-firms-reaches-68...)  
<http://www.platy.cz/en>

### **New director Prague public transport announces wage freeze**

*October 24, 2013*

The new managing director of the publicly owned Prague public transport company DPP, who inherited a financially troubled company, has announced he intends to freeze the wages of the 10,500 staff. DPP employees earn an average of 31,000 CZK (€1,211) per month, which is just below the Prague average salary and above the national average. The Prague Trade Union of Transport (ZO OSD Motol) has reacted that wages are not the cause of the company's financial difficulties, but unfavourable contracts with suppliers are.

English: <http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/eiro/2013/10/articles/cz1310019i.htm>

### **Increased willingness to move for a job**

*October 11, 2013*

70% of respondents in a survey among 300 employees said they were willing to move for a job and nearly a third would even move to abroad, while 30% would not move under any circumstances. People aged below 30 would move in 75% of cases, while only 65% of older people would opt for a change. According to the researchers, women came out a bit more flexible as regards moving as 75% of women and 67% of men would leave their home. The authors conclude that women are beginning to gain an increasingly stronger position on the labour market, are more ambitious and also more willing to adjust to the employers' demands.

English: <http://praguemonitor.com/2013/10/11/poll-shows-70-czechs-are-willing-move-job>

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## **Denmark**

### **Union puts a price on unsafe work**

*October 21, 2013*

Public services trade union FOA has developed a tool to shed light on the costs that employers can suffer from not dealing with health and safety issues. The tool shows for a work place how many costs can be avoided by proper health and safety protocols. The issues addressed include hard physical work, stress, working alone, noise, violence and so on.

English: <http://www.epsu.org/a/9828>  
Danish: [http://www.foa.dk/Forbund/Presse ...](http://www.foa.dk/Forbund/Presse...)

### **Positive effects of new shopping hours disputed**

*October 1, 2013*

A year after the extension of opening hours it seems to be complicated to judge the economic impact. According to Statistics Denmark, sales of food and groceries have made only negligible gains. Meanwhile, smaller stores have succumbed to competitors who have the resources to staff those extended hours. This year alone, according to Retail Institute Scandinavia, 96 grocery stores have closed, quite a bump compared to 2009-12, when 69 stores closed on average per year. However, 57 new grocers opened during the same time period. The head of Retail Institute Scandinavia, said it was hard to determine how many shops closed as a result of the new hours and how many closed due to the continued expansion of established discount chains. An associate marketing professor at the Copenhagen Business School suggested smaller businesses would struggle with the added costs of staying open.

English: <http://cphpost.dk/business/new-shopping-hours-have-changed-consumer-habits>

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## **Estonia**

### **EIRO reviews effects of New Civil Service Act**

*October 16, 2013*

The European industrial relations observatory on-line (EIRO) has published a review of the new civil service act that came into force in April 2013. The act, which limited the definition of 'civil servants' to those workers directly employed in the central public administration, has first of all had the effect that all state and local government employees now fall under the Employment Contracts Act, effectively reducing the civil service by 25%. Those employees that are no longer considered civil servants have now gained the right to vote and negotiate their salaries, which civil servants do not. The 75% remaining in the civil service have lost most privileges they had compared to private sector workers, including wage increases for years of service, academic degrees and command of foreign languages. The civil servants also lost holiday benefits, the disability allowance and increase pension entitlements based on tenure. Civil servants retain their 35 days of holidays, compared to 28 days for private sector employees.

English: <http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/eiro/2013/08/articles/ee1308019i.htm>

### **Trade union for the financial sector**

*October 9, 2013*

Employees of financial sector set up the Union of Estonian Financial Sector's Employees (EFL) as an independent and voluntary trade union. EFL that was founded in cooperation with two of Sweden's largest trade unions of the financial sector, Finansförbundet and Akademikerförbundet, aims to protect and represent the rights and interests of employees in the financial sector in employment relationships.

English: [http://www.bbn.ee/article/2013/10/9/estonian-financial-sector-employees-set-up ...](http://www.bbn.ee/article/2013/10/9/estonian-financial-sector-employees-set-up...)

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## **Finland**

### **Air traffic controllers call strike off**

*October 30, 2013*

In a protest against plans to move their work from Tampere to Helsinki-Vantaa airport workers handling air traffic control threatened a strike from the end of October. The threat was intended to add a sense of urgency to current negotiations on terms and conditions in addition to protesting at the Tampere switch. However, the latest news is that an agreement has been reached and the industrial action has been cancelled.

English: [http://www.travelweekly.co.uk/Articles/2013/10/30 ...](http://www.travelweekly.co.uk/Articles/2013/10/30...)  
[http://yle.fi/uutiset/air\\_traffic\\_controllers\\_threaten\\_go-slow/6881289](http://yle.fi/uutiset/air_traffic_controllers_threaten_go-slow/6881289)

### **National wage agreement validated**

*October 30, 2013*

Trade unions, employers and the state have validated the national wage agreement that was reached a month before (see September newsletter). While the central wage agreement between unions' and employers' confederations was reached on 30 August, its validation remained dependent on the support of the member unions and employers who had until 25 October to negotiate 280 collective agreements. The first good news for the agreement was the support of technology industries, including metal, whose agreements are seen as leading for the country. By 25 October, enough unions and employers signed up to the agreement for it to be validated by the confederations. Several industries, including the food and construction workers, have dropped out of the agreement. No agreement has yet been reached in the aviation sector. The national wage agreement includes a €20 flat rate increase in the first year and a 0.4% increase in the second.

English: [http://jokinen.kaapeli.fi/index.php/en/trade-union-news-from-finland/229-union ...](http://jokinen.kaapeli.fi/index.php/en/trade-union-news-from-finland/229-union...)  
[http://www.helsinkitimes.fi/finland/finland-news/domestic/8172-labour-market-organisations ...](http://www.helsinkitimes.fi/finland/finland-news/domestic/8172-labour-market-organisations...)  
[http://yle.fi/uutiset/national\\_wage\\_agreement\\_is\\_born/6902308](http://yle.fi/uutiset/national_wage_agreement_is_born/6902308)

**Focus** on Finland's national wage agreements:

[http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/eiro/country/finland\\_4.htm](http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/eiro/country/finland_4.htm)

### **Union wants to defend Thai wild berry pickers**

*October 6, 2013*

Trade unions have picked up the plight of Thai immigrants picking wild berries in Finland. The workers are brought to Finland on tourist visa, where they pick wild berries without a contract and sell their gains to a single company. The current arrangement is possible, because contrary to cultivated berries, wild berries in the forests can be picked by any one and are not included in the rural industries collective agreement. Recently, a group of 50 berry pickers filed criminal charges against the company that brought them to Finland to work, but lost the case in court. Unions are calling on the government to close the loophole and find a way of bringing the Thai wild berry pickers under the collective agreement.

English: <http://www.jokinen.kaapeli.fi/index ...>

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## France

### **Goodyear unions open for talks**

*October 24, 2013*

Union leaders at a Goodyear tire plant in northern France have agreed to talks with a Texan executive who caused an uproar earlier this year by accusing the plant's workers of being lazy and its unions of being 'insane' in an open letter to the government in February. Industry Minister Arnaud Montebourg, who spoke with Taylor, said the executive was reconsidering his abandoned takeover bid for the plant. His latest offer, for part of the operation, would save 333 out of a total 1,200 jobs. The CGT trade union, which represents a majority of workers, is ready for talks and for pushing things forward, insofar as nobody is left behind.

English: <http://europe.autonews.com/article/20131024/ANE/310239946/french-union ...>

### **Cut of production costs at PSA**

*October 24, 2013*

The Paris-based company PSA/Peugeot-Citroen said in a statement that it has reached a deal with trade unions to reduce fixed costs at French factories, a key step as it looks for new partners to expand and shore up its finances. According to the statement trade unions representing more than 60% of workers signed an agreement to freeze salaries in 2014 and reduce overtime pay in exchange for investment guarantees and new models.

English: <http://europe.autonews.com/article/20131024/ANE/310249926/psa-reaches-deal ...>

### **Unions strike against pension reform**

*October 15, 2013*

The four largest trade unions, CGT, FSU, FO and Solidaires have called a strike against the pension reform bill that is being debated in the National Assembly. The four unions object to the new system because people must work longer to qualify for a full pension. Trade union CFDT has expressed its support for the reform.

English: <http://www.connexionfrance.com/national-strike-pensions ...>

### **Air traffic controllers strike against Single European Sky**

*October 10, 2013*

Air traffic controllers went on strike against the EU initiative for a centralised European airspace, which they fear will lead to job cuts and worsened working conditions. The strike forced 10 per cent of the domestic flights, as well as some flights to the Iberian peninsula to be cancelled.

English: <http://www.dw.de/french-air-controllers-strike-over-eu-aviation-initiative ...>

### **Ryanair fined for avoided social security payments and union bashing**

*October 3, 2013*

A French court found Ryanair guilty on charges of breaches of labour law and imposed a fine of €10 million on the company. Ryanair was accused of social dumping and as well hindering the activities of works councils and trade unions. From 2007 to 2010, the carrier employed its Marseilles based workers on Irish contracts and posted them in France, thus avoiding having to pay French social fees and labour charges. Ryanair announced its actions were in line with European legislation and that it will appeal to the European

Court of Justice.

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

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## Germany

### **Amazon dispute continues**

*October 30, 2013*

Trade unions have announced they are preparing a Christmas strike at Amazon. The strike is one in a row of walkouts that have been underway since April 2013 (see consecutive newsletters). A trade union spokesperson said that previous strikes had not affected customers, but that in the face of lack of results in the pay negotiations, this action will. Trade unions said they would hit Amazon where it hurts most, in order to force management to return to the bargaining table in good faith. The unions have organised several short strikes in an attempt to force Amazon to accept a collective agreement on employment conditions similar to deals for the mail order and retail sector, more generous than for the logistics sector. In addition to criticism over pay and working conditions for logistics workers, Amazon has come under fire for a low tax bill. Consumers' faith in the online retailer had fallen on the back of doubts whether it is 'fair and ethical'.

English: <http://www.theguardian.com/technology/2013/oct/29/amazon-staff-strike-germany>  
[http://articles.economictimes.indiatimes.com/2013-10-06/news ...](http://articles.economictimes.indiatimes.com/2013-10-06/news...)

### **The impact of temporary agency work**

*October 6, 2013*

In a paper published by the *Forschungsinstitut zur Zukunft der Arbeit* in the IZA Policy Paper Series the author, who works as a director at Randstad, surveys empirical studies on outcome variables such as job satisfaction, commitment, health, employability, social participation and effects on personal life for agency workers. The public debate about the unequal treatment of permanent and temporary agency workers has contributed to the opening of negotiations and the signing of agreements for a series of broadly applicable sectoral minimum wages. Additional sector-specific collective agreements provide for stepwise increases in the wages of agency workers to bring them close to those earned by permanent staff.

English: <http://ftp.iza.org/pp70.pdf>

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## Greece

### **Opening hour in retail disputed**

*October 30, 2013*

The national federation of private employees (Oiye) has called a 24-hour national strike in a row between the government and workers in the retail sector over a measure providing for stores to stay open on Sunday. Under law 4177, which was passed a few months ago, stores remain open on a number of Sundays every year. The strike is called to defend the day of rest as well as to urge the 'reinstatement of all the main workers' rights' which according to the union were scrapped with the implementation of the Memorandum signed by the government with its international creditors as part of an economic recovery plan.

English: [http://www.ansamed.info/ansamed/en/news/sections/economics/2013/10/30 ...](http://www.ansamed.info/ansamed/en/news/sections/economics/2013/10/30...)

### **24-hour strike against austerity**

*October 16, 2013*

The private sector trade union GSEE and the public sector union ADEDY will hold a 24-hour strike on 6 November to protest against austerity measures and public sector layoffs demanded by the country's international lenders. With this strike the unions want to warn the government and the troika (the three main lenders, the EU, the ECB and the IMF) that Greek families cannot take any more austerity and have reached their limits. The protest is against thousands of planned job transfers and layoffs. Together, both unions represent more than half Greece's work force.

English: [http://www.worldbulletin.net ...](http://www.worldbulletin.net...)

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## Hungary

### **Managers surveyed on minimum wages**

*October 9, 2013*

The National Association of Hungarian Trade Unions commissioned a survey among small and medium sized enterprises, to find out what minimum wage level the company managers expect and deem acceptable. The absolute majority of company managers (88%) deem that the amount of the minimum wage will grow, moreover, 60% of them reckon that it will grow over 100 thousand forints per month. This would mean a real wage growth among those earning the least, to an extent beyond the estimated next yearly inflation rate.

English: <http://www.policyagenda.hu/en/nyitolap/minimum-wage-what-company-managers ...>

### **Data on active population and earnings since 1960**

*October 7, 2013*

The statistical office has updated a long term series of data. The overview provides figures related to the economically active population and the development of monthly earnings of employees. According to additional administrative data of the National Labour Office (<http://www.munka.hu/>), the number of registered jobseekers was 492 thousand at the end of August 2013, 6.6% less than in July 2012.

English: [http://www.ksh.hu/stadat\\_long](http://www.ksh.hu/stadat_long)

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## Iceland

### **Lifelong learning participation 1 out of 3**

*October 3, 2013*

In 2012 71,900 people aged 16-74 took part in lifelong learning, either in school or other education with an instructor, in percentages 32.1% of the population (41.9% of unemployed and 30.9% of employed people). The share of the population aged 16-74 taking part in lifelong learning has increased since 2003. In 2003, 28.3% of the population took part in lifelong learning but the proportion was greatest in 2006 when it was 33.1%. The proportion of women taking part in lifelong learning is higher than among men.

English: <http://www.statice.is/Pages/444?NewsID=10146>

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## Ireland

### **Bus drivers divided over cost-cutting plans**

*October 30, 2013*

Dublin Bus has said it will begin to implement a €11m cost cutting plan without delay, after a ballot of drivers resulted in 55% voting in favour of the cost-reduction measures. However, the ballot has split the drivers' unions, with the National Bus and Rail Union passing the plan and SIPTU rejecting it. The long-running row about pay cuts led to a three-day strike in August.

English: <http://www.rte.ie/news/2013/1025/482657-dublin-bus-ballot/>  
<http://www.carlow-nationalist.ie/2013/10/30/dublin-bus-to-press-ahead-with-cuts ...>

### **Pay dispute at Wallis retail**

*October 16, 2013*

Workers at Wallis retail in Dublin balloted for industrial action in support of their colleagues in Limerick over what they say is a dispute over redundancy payments. Staff at Wallis in Blanchardstown also voted in favour of going on strike.

English: <http://www.irishexaminer.com/breakingnews/ireland/wallis-workers-stage-action ...>

### **Junior doctors strike over working hours**

*October 10, 2013*

Over 3,000 junior doctors went on strike over what they call “dangerously long working hours”. Because talks with the Health Service Executive (HSE) have not lead to any solution, the doctors are now taking industrial action. The HSE is attempting to implement European legislation that no doctor will work a single shift longer than 24 hours, but refuses to impose sanctions on hospitals that do make their staff work longer.

English: <http://www.rte.ie/news/2013/1010/479642-doctor-talks/>

### **Overhaul of Joint Labour Committees announced**

*October 9, 2013*

Following a Labour Court review of the Joint Labour Committee (JLC) system, the Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation has presented a reform of the infrastructure for labour conflict resolution. The number of JLCs will be halved, leaving seven committees of amended scope. The reform further includes a new website to replace the five current sites of the workplace related bodies, a single e-form for over 130 types of complaints and a publicly available database of decisions and determinations by the labour court. Meanwhile a SIPTU spokesperson said that Government moves to give effect to a promise in the joint Programme for Government to enact legalisation on collective bargaining would mark a ‘turning point for workers’. However, SIPTU expects massive resistance from the side of the ‘establishment’.

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

[http://www.siptu.ie/media/pressreleases2013/featurednews/fullstory\\_17648\\_en.html](http://www.siptu.ie/media/pressreleases2013/featurednews/fullstory_17648_en.html)

**Focus** on Joint Labour Committees: <http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/eiro/country/ireland ...>

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## **Italy**

### **Bank workers' strike**

*October 30, 2013*

Bank employees are to hold a national strike Oct. 31, the first such action in 13 years, in a dispute with the country's banking association over employment contracts. The FABI union, which represents most of the country's 330,000 bank tellers and other employees, has agreed with other union groups to hold a strike in response to the Italian Banking Association's (ABI) decision to annul the sector employment contract nearly a year before it expires. In the September Newsletter the cancellation of the collective agreement in the banking sector was already signalled.

English: <http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/10/28/us-italy-banks-strike ...>

<http://www.4-traders.com/INTESA-SANPAOLO-SPA-68944/news/Italy-Bank-Workers-to-Strike ...>

### **Demonstration in Rome**

*October 19, 2013*

A demonstration in Rome brought together various groups including migrant rights advocates, campaigners for affordable housing and protesters against a new high-speed rail link in the Alps. Some of the protesters had camped out overnight on Piazza San Giovanni square following a trade union demonstration and transport strike. Organisers said that about 70,000 people had taken part, though police put the number at closer to 50,000.

English: <http://www.dw.de/austerity-protests-draw-tens-of-thousands-in-italy-portugal ...>

### **Budget cuts lead to rolling strikes**

*October 16, 2013*

The trade unions have announced rolling strikes in transportation, education and public service sectors in response to the 2014 draft budget approved by the coalition government, while Confindustria criticised proposed cuts to the cost of labour. The unions reacted negatively to planned government spending cuts and a continued freeze on public sector wages. Confindustria, the central business association, said the budget

went in the right direction but was insufficient to promote growth with inadequate proposals to cut the cost of labour. Prime minister Letta stated that details would be ‘up to parliament and the social partners’.

English: [http://www.labour-reporter.com/articleview/19197-italian-unions-to-strike ...](http://www.labour-reporter.com/articleview/19197-italian-unions-to-strike...)  
[http://www.ft.com/intl ...](http://www.ft.com/intl...)  
[http://in.reuters.com/article/2013/10/16/us-italy-budget ...](http://in.reuters.com/article/2013/10/16/us-italy-budget...)

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## Latvia

### **Personal tax income updated**

*October 3, 2013*

The government has approved amendments to the Law on Personal Income Tax, which stipulate reducing the personal income tax rate to 22% in 2016. The personal income tax rate will be reduced to 24% in 2014, 23% in 2015, and 22% in 2016. However, the Finance minister stated that a progressive personal income tax is a matter for the more distant future. The ministry updated the information on the Internet.

English: <http://www.vid.gov.lv/default.aspx?tabid=8&id=23&hl=2>

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## Liechtenstein

### **Growth of cross-border work**

*October 1, 2013*

Next to a 1.6% growth of employment the 2012 labour market statistics indicate an increase of commuters. In total 18,740 commuters came over to work, mainly from neighbouring countries: almost 52% from Switzerland, 44% from Austria, 3% from Germany.

German: [http://www.llv.li/amtstellen/llv-as-3\\_arbeit\\_und\\_erwerb ...](http://www.llv.li/amtstellen/llv-as-3_arbeit_und_erwerb...)  
[http://www.llv.li/pdf-llv-as-beschaefigungsstatistik\\_2012\\_def](http://www.llv.li/pdf-llv-as-beschaefigungsstatistik_2012_def)

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## Lithuania

### **Tour guides protest against unfair treatment**

*October 17, 2013*

The trade union of tour guides – ‘Solidarity’ – held a protest action outside the Royal Palace in the heart of Vilnius. The tour guides say they are discriminated because Lithuanian citizens who want to work as tour guides are required to have a university degree, complete a special course and pass an examination of the Lithuanian history and conducting tours, whilst none of this is mandatory for other EU citizens.

English: [http://www.lithuaniatribune.com/53997/lithuanian-tour-guides-protest ...](http://www.lithuaniatribune.com/53997/lithuanian-tour-guides-protest...)

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## Luxembourg

### **Conciliation still yields no deal at ArcelorMittal**

*October 18, 2013*

Negotiations between ArcelorMittal and trade unions LCGB and OGBL that went into conciliation this summer (see July/August newsletter) have still not yielded any results. The conciliation process was scheduled to be finalised by 21 November, at which point “failed” negotiations can be declared, opening the door for industrial action. In the third meeting, trade unions have allowed ArcelorMittal to bring in new proposals, but also warned that the deal could not be finalised before 21 November as foreseen. Unions have requested an extension of the terms of the current collective agreement in order to continue bargaining, which ArcelorMittal has denied until now.

English: <http://www.wort.lu/en/view/arcelormittal-and-unions-fail-to-strike-deal ...>

### **Cargolux deal denied**

*October 6, 2013*

Trade union OGBL has caused much discussion after releasing a Cargolux report. In it the union voices fears that a substantial chunk of the cargo company could be outsourced to China and thus warned of massive job cuts. 'There is no deal, nothing is signed yet', was the message from the Minister of Sustainability and 'there must be no job cuts and there shall be no outsourcing'. Four companies in total have expressed interest, including the Chinese investment company HNCA.

English: <http://www.wort.lu/en/view/cargolux-there-is-no-deal-nothing-is-signed-yet ...>

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## Malta

### **Controversy as trade unionists attain majority of industrial tribunal chairs**

*October 16, 2013*

Employers have protested against the appointment of six new chairs with trade union links to the industrial tribunal. After the labour party won the general elections the new government requested six of the eleven previous chairs to resign, a longstanding practice when governments change political colours. The strong links of the newly appointed chairs to the General Workers Unions, however, have left employers feeling disadvantaged.

English: <http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/eiro/2013/08/articles/mt1308019i.htm>

**Focus** on the Industrial Tribunal:

[http://www.industrialrelations.gov.mt/industryportal/industrial\\_relations ...](http://www.industrialrelations.gov.mt/industryportal/industrial_relations ...)

### **Harassment quarrel at HSBC**

*October 15, 2013*

The union of bank employees has been informed of 'what is expected to be a probable and biased outcome' in relation to disciplinary proceedings against senior management officials of HSBC. The union said that acts of harassment and intimidation have been ignored following the presentation of clear evidence and affidavits. The court had also made a ruling in this regard. The bank employees union stated that HSBC Malta has dragged its feet to conclude specific investigations and has created a situation whereby 'the victimized employees were left directly managed by the same manager who threatened them and against whom they were testifying'.

English: <http://www.independent.com.mt/articles/2013-10-15/news/mube-accuses-hsbc ...>

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## Netherlands

### **Agency accused of exploitation**

*October 30, 2013*

A newspaper reports that staffing agency Werk & Ik, which has been praised for its 'creative approach', is exploiting workers from Eastern Europe. The agency, with a turnover of €12m and with Schiphol airport, Swissair and Amsterdam's RAI exhibition centre among its clients, requires temporary workers to work long days, often for less than the official wages. The company, set up in 2009, does not give its workers pay slips and deducts €2.50 an hour from wages for a bed in a garage. This takes the price of a place to sleep up to €150 a week.

English: [http://www.dutchnews.nl/news/archives/2013/10/praised\\_staffing\\_agency\\_accuse ...](http://www.dutchnews.nl/news/archives/2013/10/praised_staffing_agency_accuse ...)

### **Metal workers conclude collective agreements**

*October 22, 2013*

In recent weeks several collective agreements in the metal sector were concluded. The Metal & Technical

branches reached an agreement for the period 1 May 2013 to 28 February 2015. The pay deal includes an average increase of the wages over a period of 22 months of 3.5%. Apprentices that have finalised their vocational training receive an extra increase of 3% from 1 January 2014 on, this in order to make the branches more attractive for young workers. Later on this month the Metalektro branches reached an agreement. Wages will be increased with 2.35% from 1 December 2013, with 1.5% from 1 August 2014 and 0.35% from 1 January 2015. Young workers receive an extra increase of 3% from 1 January 2015. The bargaining partners have agreed to campaign against unfair competition and cross-border social dumping.

English: [http://www.cnvvakmensen.nl/fileadmin/bestanden/caos/metaal-elektro ...](http://www.cnvvakmensen.nl/fileadmin/bestanden/caos/metaal-elektro...)

Dutch: <http://www.nrc.nl/carriere/2013/10/22/akkoord-over-cao-voor-grootmetaal/>

[http://www.flexnieuws.nl/2013/10/11/principeakkoord-cao-metaal-techniek-2013-2015 ...](http://www.flexnieuws.nl/2013/10/11/principeakkoord-cao-metaal-techniek-2013-2015...)

### **Grolsch brewery comes to a deal**

*October 16, 2013*

Workers at brewing group Grolsch went on strike in the midst of a pay dispute. Collective agreement negotiations stalled after the company made an offer of 2% wage increase dependent on the company meeting certain targets. Trade unions reacted that workers deserve an unconditional raise given an inflation of 2.7% and a 14% profit that parent company SABMiller made last year. Further outrage was caused by the company's demand to cut three days of holiday's allowance. The strikers reached an agreement that entails a 2.5% wage increase. The proposed reduction of days off has been withdrawn.

English: [http://www.dutchnews.nl/news/archives/2013/10/grolsch\\_workers\\_to\\_strike\\_over.php](http://www.dutchnews.nl/news/archives/2013/10/grolsch_workers_to_strike_over.php)

Dutch: <http://www.tubantia.nl/regio/enschede/akkoord-grolsch-acties-voorbij-1.4055480>

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## Norway

### **Women less penalised for part-time work**

*October 31, 2013*

A study published during the conference *Part-time in the Nordic region* comes with figures that look at both men and women in full-time or part-time work across all of the Nordic countries. Part-time work lasting for more than ten years has larger consequences for the pension pay-out. But none of the part-time working women across all of the countries were paid less than 94% of what a woman in full-time work in the same occupation would get from her pension.

English: [http://www.nordiclabourjournal.org/nyheter/article.2013-10-31 ...](http://www.nordiclabourjournal.org/nyheter/article.2013-10-31...)

### **Unionisation blocked in Couche-Tard**

*October 14, 2013*

The trade union of commercial and office employees – HK Norway – aims to defend the rights of unionised employees and wants to ensure that Couche-Tard will recognise the existing unions that have negotiated collective agreements in the past with Statoil. It has teamed up with Canadian colleagues after the take-over of several bits of the Statoil retail business. Earlier reports have shown that Couche-Tard uses coercive tactics to block wider unionisation efforts.

French: [http://affaires.lapresse.ca/economie/international/201310/03/01-4695873-norvege ...](http://affaires.lapresse.ca/economie/international/201310/03/01-4695873-norvege...)

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## Poland

### **Jobs cuts in order to restore profit**

*October 28, 2013*

The EU's biggest coal miner, Kompania Weglowa, plans to shed almost half of its 15 mines and cut more than 7,000 jobs by 2020 in a bid to restore profitability. Kompania Weglowa would like to reduce the employment level ultimately to about 50,000 from the more than 57,000 now and has planned to present the restructuring plan to its workers' representatives by 19 November. Trade unions at the company have already said they are prepared to strike over the threat of job losses.

English: [http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/10/28/poland-coal ...](http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/10/28/poland-coal...)

## **Shipyard where Solidarnosz was born stops paying wages**

*October 9, 2013*

The Gdansk shipyard, where that activism of trade union Solidarnosz once started, is at the brink of closure. Since May, the shipyard has only been able to pay wages in gradual instalments. Former president Lech Walesa was called in to mediate the bailout talks that could save the shipyard.

English: [http://www.thenews.pl/1/12/Artykul/149488,Walesa-sees-little-chance-of-saving ...](http://www.thenews.pl/1/12/Artykul/149488,Walesa-sees-little-chance-of-saving...)

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## **Portugal**

### **Underground stands still**

*October 31, 2013*

In protest at the right-of-centre government's draft state budget for 2014, which includes moves to farm out concessions to private investors, as well as reducing state subsidies for the sector, a series of actions is planned in the transport sector in the coming days. The Lisbon Metro closed in the run-up to a strike that the union representing its workers has scheduled on 31 October. Earlier on, Lisbon's metro system was shut down on 8 October for a strike for the fourth time this year. The workers were protesting against the austerity politics. Metro workers appear to be leading the way, as more public sector unions have announced protests for later this month.

English: [http://www.timesunion.com/news/world/article/Lisbon-subway-shuts-in-anti-austerity ...](http://www.timesunion.com/news/world/article/Lisbon-subway-shuts-in-anti-austerity...)  
[http://theportugalnews.com/news/lisbon-underground-to-close-from-1130pm-as-workers-strike ...](http://theportugalnews.com/news/lisbon-underground-to-close-from-1130pm-as-workers-strike...)  
[http://www.timesunion.com/news/world/article/Lisbon-subway-strike-heralds-new-wave ...](http://www.timesunion.com/news/world/article/Lisbon-subway-strike-heralds-new-wave...)

### **Postal workers strike**

*October 25, 2013*

Postal workers are on strike to protest against the upcoming sell up of 70% of the national mail service CTT - Correios de Portugal. Postal workers will be walking off the job for 24 hours, which will signal the start of another series of strikes against austerity. Centre of the strikes that will continue from 31 October to 9 November is the privatisation of many state companies that the government promised in exchange for the 2011 bail-out.

English: [http://www.timesunion.com/news/world/article/Portuguese-labor-groups-begin ...](http://www.timesunion.com/news/world/article/Portuguese-labor-groups-begin...)

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## **Romania**

### **Improvement of pensions announced**

*October 30, 2013*

All pensions in Romania will increase by 3.75% in 2014 next year, prime-minister Victor Ponta recently said. However, this increase will not apply to employees with high salaries, but to those professional categories with low wages, such as residents and teachers who are at the beginning of their career.

English: [http://www.romania-insider.com/romanian-pm-all-pensions-will-go-up-3-75-next-year ...](http://www.romania-insider.com/romanian-pm-all-pensions-will-go-up-3-75-next-year...)

### **Protest against gold mining continues**

*October 14, 2013*

Protests pro and against the Rosia Montana gold mining project continue to be held. This month, the Parliament will be debating a law allowing Canadian company Gabriel Resources, whose largest shareholder, hedge fund Paulson & Co, has a 16% stake, to start its gold mining activities. Proponents of the project argue it will bring jobs and income to the country, but opponents fear large scale environmental damage due to the

use of cyanide. Protests are growing as Mining Watch Romania revealed another Canadian company, Eldorado Gold, has recently received approval to start open-cut operations in a nearby goldmine at Certej. Miners who were in favour of the opening started an underground protest that was ended after a visit of the prime-minister.

English: [http://www.carbonated.tv/news/romanian-gold-miners-end-underground-protest ...](http://www.carbonated.tv/news/romanian-gold-miners-end-underground-protest...)  
[http://www.romania-insider.com/mining-watch-revision-of-environmental-documents ...](http://www.romania-insider.com/mining-watch-revision-of-environmental-documents...)

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## Serbia

### **Workers block railway and roads**

*October 28, 2013*

Over 1,000 workers of 'Fabrika automobila Priboj' (FAP), an automotive manufacturer, blocked the railway line connecting Belgrade to the south Adriatic port of Bar in Montenegro in protest against long-overdue payment of wages and salaries, failure to renew workers' healthcare cards and lack of work. The strike committee leader said 'workers will stay there until their demands are met or a senior government official speaks to them'. In the same week workers of the transport company Autosaobraćaj spent the night on buses they used to block the main road and railway line connecting Kragujevac and Kraljevo. They demand payments of nine overdue wages, implementation of social programs, calculation of years of service to include all previous work, resolving the issue of the company's status and establishing the responsibility for the collapse of the company.

English: [http://inserbia.info/news/2013/10/over-1000-workers-of-fap-block-belgrade ...](http://inserbia.info/news/2013/10/over-1000-workers-of-fap-block-belgrade...)  
[http://www.b92.net/eng/news/business ...](http://www.b92.net/eng/news/business...)

### **Production workers paid less**

*October 15, 2013*

The country has a serious problem with the low scale of its production. For instance, neighbouring countries Slovenia and Croatia have in average €40,000-60,000 a year per capita, while in Serbia it is €15,000. At the same time, the GDP of industry is 17%. When GDP of industry falls below 30% governments in other European countries tend to raise it as soon as possible, since everything below 30% is considered a serious problem in economy. Meanwhile, workers in production are less paid than the workers in the public administration. In production the average salary is €390, while in public administration the average is €508.

English: <http://inserbia.info/news/2013/10/serbia-one-employed-supports-four-unemployed/>

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## Slovakia

### **Minimum wage negotiations do not lead to deal**

*October 16, 2013*

Social partners, who have been negotiating the level of the 2014 minimum wage since the beginning of the year, seem unlikely to reach an agreement. Having missed the statutory deadline of 15 July, the members of the tripartite Economic and Social Council (HSR) submitted their individual proposals in August. The National Union of Employers (RUZ SR) does not want any increase, leaving the minimum wage at €337.70 per month. The Confederation of Trade Unions KOZ proposes to raise it to €364.70. Given the fact that the tripartite body did not agree on the final numbers the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family has put forward a 4.2% raise to €352. The ministry argues that it based the 4.2% increase on the fact that the 2012 consumer price growth index reached 103.6%, and was repeatedly higher than the year-on-year increase of average wages (102.4%), which means that in 2012 real wages dropped by 1.2%.

English: [http://spectator.sme.sk/articles/view/51548/10/minimum\\_wage\\_to\\_go\\_up ...](http://spectator.sme.sk/articles/view/51548/10/minimum_wage_to_go_up...)

### **Public sector wages will increase in 2014**

*October 14, 2013*

The government has announced that it will present a budget for 2014, in which due to higher tax incomes and growth measures the wages of 340,000 public sector workers can be unfrozen. Most civil servants can

expect a 2% wage increase, whereas extra money is said aside for teachers, whose wages will rise by 5%. The wages of constitutional representatives will remain frozen. The public sector employees will earn on average €16 more per month as of January 2014. The Finance Ministry has also agreed to hike teachers' wages.

English: [http://spectator.sme.sk/articles/view/51655/3/state\\_employees\\_to\\_get\\_16\\_more.html](http://spectator.sme.sk/articles/view/51655/3/state_employees_to_get_16_more.html)  
[http://spectator.sme.sk/articles/view/51640/3/2014\\_wages\\_unfrozen\\_taxes\\_change.html](http://spectator.sme.sk/articles/view/51640/3/2014_wages_unfrozen_taxes_change.html)

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## Slovenia

### **Social partners agree to step up action against undeclared work**

*October 4, 2013*

Trade unions and employers' organisations in the Economic and Social Council have agreed on a bill that aims to crack down on undeclared work. The bill contains a commitment to end undeclared work as well as the intention of increasing the work visits by the labour inspection.

English: <http://www.sta.si/en/vest.php?s=a&id=1933461>

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## Spain

### **Miners on strike after serious accident**

*October 29, 2013*

Miners at the Santa Lucia mine, near the town of Pola de Gordon, launched a 48-hour work stoppage as they recalled the horror of a methane gas leak that swiftly killed six coal workers in the troubled industry's deadliest accident in 18 years. Another five injured workers were taken to hospital and are in a stable condition. The trade union confederations CCOO and UGT urged the National Commission for Mining Safety to investigate urgently and to take measures to prevent further such disasters.

English: [http://www.rawstory.com/rs/2013/10/29/spanish-miners-go-on-strike-after-gas-leak ...](http://www.rawstory.com/rs/2013/10/29/spanish-miners-go-on-strike-after-gas-leak...)  
[http://www.thenews.com.pk/Todays-News-1-211174-Spain-miners-halt-work-after-methane ...](http://www.thenews.com.pk/Todays-News-1-211174-Spain-miners-halt-work-after-methane...)  
[http://elpais.com/elpais/2013/10/30/inenglish ...](http://elpais.com/elpais/2013/10/30/inenglish...)

### **Unions and private-equity firm clash over Panrico restructuring**

*October 4, 2013*

Trade unions walked out of a meeting and announced an indefinite strike after baker Panrico suspended the pay of its 4,000 employees and said it intended to fire 1,900. The bakery, owned by private-equity firm Oaktree Capital Management, is trying to avoid insolvency. Following the union action, Panrico agreed to resume payment of its staff and set up a new meeting with trade unions UGT and CCOO. Afterwards, the unions said they would consider calling of the strike if constructive bipartite talks are initiated over the restructuring of the firm.

English: [http://www.just-food.com/news/panrico-to-reinstate-pay-after-union-talks ...](http://www.just-food.com/news/panrico-to-reinstate-pay-after-union-talks...)

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## Sweden

### **Collective agreement with health cooperatives**

*October 27, 2013*

Trade union Kommunal and KFO, an employers' organisation representing health cooperatives, have signed a three year collective agreement. The agreement includes a wage increase of a minimum of 1700 SEK (€196) over the three years. Additionally, the sector wide minimum wage will now apply for workers of 18 years and older, compared to those of 19 and older in the previous agreement. The social partners committed themselves to improving parental leave provisions and keeping split shifts to a minimum.

English: <http://www.epsu.org/a/9817>

Swedish: <http://www.kommunal.se/Kommunal/Medlem/Avtalsrorelse/Avtalsnyheter/Nytt-avtal ...>

### **Too lax health and safety measures**

*October 23, 2013*

Two men employed by a subcontractor on a steel plant of SSAB to empty a cistern of tar as part of maintenance work carried out every six years tragically fell into the cistern of tar and were later found dead. According to the metal workers trade union IF Metall this is due to more lax health and safety measures, adding that SSAB's reliance on third-party labour has to be questioned. The management stated that there was no link between the two victims' employment status and the accident.

English: <http://www.industriall-union.org/fatal-accident-at-swedish-steel-plant>

### **Temporary employment and illness**

*October 4, 2013*

In the thesis *Temporary employment and illness* it is debated whether temporary employment compared to permanent employment entails an elevated risk of illness or not, as the empirical studies have not shown a unified picture. Since a significant part of the workforce is currently working under temporary employment contracts, it is important for public health research to pay close attention to what the implications might be.

English: <http://www.dissertations.se/about/Anna-Karin+Waenerlund/>  
<http://www.dissertations.se/dissertation/7909327a8f/>

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## Switzerland

### **Petition for higher minimum wage forces government vote**

*October 7, 2013*

Over 120,000 people have signed a petition for a monthly minimum wage of CHF 2,500 (€2000). At its passing of the threshold of 100,000 signatures, the petition became subject to a popular vote. The minimum wage petition is an initiative of the same platform that lobbied for a vote on capping executive pay at the maximum of twelve times the lowest paid salary member, which will be voted on 24 November.

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

**Focus** on running Swiss people's initiatives, an article by Hans Baumann:

<http://www.clr-news.org/CLR-News/CLR%20News%203-2013.pdf>

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## Turkey

### **Global solidarity for sacked workers**

*October 30, 2013*

Workers from across the globe are keeping up the pressure in support of striking Turkish Airlines (THY) workers who were unfairly sacked by phone, email or text. Aviation workers have been in dispute with THY over their right to strike and the dismissal of 305 workers who took industrial action in May 2012. The latest wave of action, which ran from 7-20 October, aimed to raise awareness of the workers' situation among THY passengers. THY workers have been striking for nearly 170 days. The action is organised by THY workers' union Hava-Is. The company refuses to reinstate the 305 and to accept any bargaining proposals put forward by Hava-Is.

English: <http://www.itfglobal.org/news-online/index.cfm/newsdetail/9727>  
<http://cms.iuf.org/?q=node/2875>

### **First strike at Leroy Merlin won**

*October 22, 2013*

Workers at the French owned home improvement store Leroy Merlin had gone on strike for 16 days after employers left the bargaining table. Trade union Sosyal-Is had been negotiating with management over wage

increases and benefits for transportation and food. The workers demanded a hike in wages as well as more benefits, amounting to a 15% increase in pay. Leroy Merlin made an offer of a 4.5% increase in exchange for worse working conditions. The strike resulted in the acceptance of all trade union demands by Leroy Merlin, and a collective agreement for three years was concluded.

English: [http://www.uniglobalunion.org/news/uni-commerce-congratulates-workers ...](http://www.uniglobalunion.org/news/uni-commerce-congratulates-workers...)

### **DHL recognises trade union partner**

*October 4, 2013*

After two and a half years of struggle, TUMTIS union has been recognised as the union of choice to represent DHL Turkey Supply Chain staff in collective agreement negotiations. DHL initially resisted the union's efforts, but finally agreed to its recognition. Over 1,600 will now be represented.

English: <http://www.uniglobalunion.org/news/uni-itf-landmark-win-workers-dhl-does-right-thing>

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## **United Kingdom**

### **INEOS plant under threat**

*October 25, 2013*

The management of the INEOS refinery and petrochemicals facility in Grangemouth gave workers a 'sign or be sacked' ultimatum to slash jobs, pay and pensions with a deadline by 21 October 6pm. Unite the Union urged workers not to give in to the 'menacing' tactics to sign away their rights since this would create a two tier workforce and strip away collective rights. At the end of the deadline given by INEOS over 65% rejected the company's cynical attempt to intimidate the workforce. After the reopening of talks it was believed that the union would not let the plant close and was willing to accept a new survival plan. Therefore, Unite and its members at Grangemouth were devastated by the announcement of the closure of the petrochemical plant. A day later the news came that the owners will reverse the decision to close the petrochemical site.

English: [http://www.unitetheunion.org/news/grangemouth-petrochemical-plant-closure ...](http://www.unitetheunion.org/news/grangemouth-petrochemical-plant-closure...)

[http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/grangemouth-unite-union-to-make ...](http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/grangemouth-unite-union-to-make...)

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-24647843>

<http://www.industrialunion.org/scottish-workers-continue-to-fight-against-ineos-for-their-future>

### **Strike at privatised Royal Mail**

*October 16, 2013*

Workers at newly privatised Royal Mail postal service balloted to strike for 24 hours on November 4 if they cannot reach agreement with the firm on pay and working conditions. The management of Royal Mail, which listed on the London stock market in a high profile float, had expected a vote in favour of strike action and criticised the prospect of a disruption to services in the run-up to Christmas, its busiest time. Trade union CWU sent ballot papers to over 115,000 Royal Mail staff; 78% voted to strike, on a turnout of 63%.

English: <http://www.cwu.org/news/archive/postal-workers-vote-4-1-for-strike-action.html>

[http://uk.reuters.com/article/2013/10/16/uk-royalmail-strike ...](http://uk.reuters.com/article/2013/10/16/uk-royalmail-strike...)

### **Hull city council to fire and re-hire its entire workforce**

*October 8, 2013*

The Hull city council intends to fire its entire workforce of 6,700 employees in order to re-employ them under worse working conditions and lower pay. Trade unions are preparing large scale actions against the municipality.

English: [http://www.unitetheunion.org/news/unite-to-oppose-plans-by-hull-council-to-sack ...](http://www.unitetheunion.org/news/unite-to-oppose-plans-by-hull-council-to-sack...)

### **Cleaners on strike for living wage**

*October 5, 2013*

Cleaners and supervisors of OCS in Kensington and Knightsbridge have gone on strike demanding higher wages. The cleaners are currently earning £7.18 per hour and demand being paid a living wage of £8.55.

Further disputes between employees and management concern the lack of sick pay. Trade union GMB declared that OCS is participating in a repulsive rate to the bottom in the cleaning sector.

English: <http://www.uniglobalunion.org/news/uni-solidarity-gmb-strikers>

### **Tougher enforcement minimum wage to include public shaming**

*October 2, 2013*

As of 1 October, new rules come into force that aim to strengthen the enforcement of the minimum wage. The new system includes a public naming and shaming scheme, which makes it possible for Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HRMC) to publish information about non-compliant employers. In 2012 and 2013, the HRMC fined 736 employers who had not paid the minimum wage and recovered £3.9 million in wages for over 26,500 workers. From 1 October, the minimum wage is £5.03 per hour for people between 18 and 20, and £6.31 for employees of 21 and older.

English: [http://www.staffingindustry.com/eng/Research-Publications/Daily-News/UK-National ...](http://www.staffingindustry.com/eng/Research-Publications/Daily-News/UK-National...)  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/national-minimum-wage-to-rise-from-1-october-2013>

### **Bakers reverse zero-hour contracts decision**

*October 2, 2013*

After a second series of one-week rolling strikes, agency workers at Hovis bakery in Wigan reversed a decision on the use of zero-hour contracts. Previously this year, the bakery cut 30 permanent positions, to hire agency staff with lower pay and fewer hours in return. After the industrial action, Hovis bakery agreed to a restrictive policy on the use of agency labour and gave 24 agency workers a permanent contract. Additionally, any agency worker at the bakery will now receive equal pay after 12 weeks of full time work.

English: <http://cms.iuf.org/?q=node/2823>

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