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collective bargaining

Issue 6/2014 | 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
UNIVERSITEIT VAN AMSTERDAM



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European sources

Textile workers earn less in Eastern Europe than in China

June 18, 2014

An investigation by the Clean Clothes Campaign in ten eastern EU member states, including Romania, Bulgaria and Croatia, showed that working conditions are sometimes worse than in China and Indonesia, busting myths about the 'Made in Europe' label. In all the countries researched an immense gap between the legal minimum wage and the estimated minimum living wage was found. The report 'Stitched Up' reveals that companies such as H&M, Zara, Hugo Boss, Adidas and Benetton pay their workers in Eastern Europe and Turkey the minimum legal wage, which is under the poverty threshold as defined by the European committee of social rights.

English: <http://www.cleanclothes.org/livingwage/stitched-up>

Changes in wage-setting mechanisms

June 18, 2014

An Eiro report explores the impact of the crisis on wage-setting mechanisms (based on separate reports for the 28 EU Member States plus Norway) and examines the impact of the EU's new economic governance regime – specifically the requirements of the country-specific recommendations and Memoranda of Understanding. It looks at changes in wage bargaining levels, the extent of horizontal coordination across bargaining units, links between the different levels involved in wage setting, minimum wage-setting and indexation mechanisms, and the volume and duration of collective wage agreements. According to the report the extent and consequences of change in wage-setting have been greatest among the countries receiving financial assistance packages from the troika of European and international institutions.

English: <http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/eiro/studies ...>

<http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/eiro/studies/tn ...>

Equal rights of domestic workers must be strengthened

June 16, 2014

The European Network of Migrant Women [ENoMW] drew the attention of the EU institutions and all national and European stakeholders to the situation and treatment of domestic workers within the member states, as well as their contribution to European society on the occasion of International Day of Domestic Workers. All organisations endorsing this statement called for each and every EU member state to follow Italy and Germany in pushing through the ratification of the ILO Domestic Workers Convention without further delay, and extend rights and protections to all migrants employed in this sector regardless of status.

English: <http://www.idwfed.org/news ...>

Special Eurobarometer on undeclared labour

June 10, 2014

A Eurofound report examines the concept of undeclared work, the characteristics of those supplying goods and services on an undeclared basis, the types of work activities that are undeclared, and income levels from

undclared work, including the extent of the practice of offering cash in hand. The median annual earnings from any undeclared work carried out in the past year in the EU28 were €300, according to the survey.

English: <http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/ewco/surveymethods ...>

EIRO reports downward trend nominal wage growth compensated by low inflation

June 9, 2014

In its annual report on wage developments in Europe, the European Industrial Relations Observatory (EIRO) finds that nominal wage increases in collectively agreed wages were lower in 2013 than in 2012. However, due to the low inflation throughout Europe, real wages did increase at a higher rate. The lowest wage growth was reported in the public sector, which in many countries is still subject to a pay freeze.

English: <http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/eiro/studies ...>

Friedrich Ebert Stiftung says employers are undermining ILO

June 9, 2014

A new report by the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung documents efforts by employers to undermine the right to strike guaranteed in ILO conventions. According to the report, the employers' representatives have repeatedly challenged the interpretation that convention no. 87 does effectively guarantee that right.

English: <http://www.ituc-csi.org/new-legal-report-right-to-strike ...>
<http://library.fes.de/pdf-files/iez/10775.pdf>

Austria

Post workers conclude pay deal

June 28, 2014

After several bargaining rounds the management of the national postal service (Österreichische Post AG) and the postal and telecom trade union GPF concluded a collective agreement with an average a 2.2% wage increase with a guaranteed minimum of €40 a month (for the lowest wages this means an increase of 3.24%). The agreement starts 1 July 2014 and runs until 30 June 2015.

German: <http://www.gpf.at/news/post-gehaltsverhandlungen-2014-erfolgreich ...>

A tool for key economic and social data

June 13, 2014

Statistics Austria has produced the Austrian Economic Atlas, a straightforward and well organised tool for gaining an overview of the structure of the economy. The databank is providing a comprehensive package of key economic and social data information about the economy online (available in German only).

English: http://www.statistik.at/web_en/publications_services/austrian_economic_atlas ...

German: http://www.statistik.at/web_de/services/wirtschaftsatlas_oesterreich ...

Belgium

Rail workers strike

June 30, 2014

Railway workers trade union ACOD/CGSP has called for a 24 hour strike because the network is so understaffed that workers are unable to take days off. The union calculated that between 1 January 2011 and this spring 4,000 jobs have gone lost (over a total of 38,000), with negative consequences for the health and safety of the workforce and for the safety of the railway system. Talks with the management have not led to acceptable solutions yet. The trade union call the proposals tabled from the management side 'cosmetic'. The ACV-CSC railway union endorses the analysis, but is of the opinion that there is still space for further talks.

English: <http://af.reuters.com/article/worldNews...>

<http://www.channelnewsasia.com/news/business/international/severe-delays-expected...>

Agreement for air traffic controllers

June 28, 2014

After two weeks of negotiations and two-hour strikes that caused chaos at the country's airports the trade unions representing the air traffic controllers and the management of the air traffic control service Belgocontrol have reached an agreement on (amongst other things) conditions for retirement. The agreement offers an opportunity to remain in a non-operational job with Belgocontrol beyond 60; this will allow controllers to build up full pension rights. Those that wish to stay at home from the age of 55, while remaining available to work for Belgocontrol will still receive 75% to 85% of their salary.

English: http://deredactie.be/cm/vrtnieuws.english/Economy/140628_Belgocontrol

Massive job cuts at retail giant Delhaize

June 13, 2014

The management of Delhaize, one of the largest retail chains in the country, announced during an extraordinary meeting of the works council its intention to implement major changes to its organisation that could lead to the dismissal of 2,500 workers in the next 3 years as part of the company's strategy for 2015-2017. The company also announced the modification of the wages and working conditions that should become 'more in line with competitors'. The workers and the trade unions reacted furiously and in several supermarkets belonging to the chain spontaneous strikes have started.

English: <http://www.uniglobalunion.org/news/social-chaos-delhaize-uni-stands-solidarity...>

Dutch: <http://deredactie.be/cm/vrtnieuws/economie...>

French: <http://www.lesoir.be/568809/article/economie/2014-06-11/delhaize-licencements...>

Bulgaria

Social partners discuss rules for annual leave take-up

June 18, 2014

Trade union, employer and government representatives have announced they intent to start talks on the rules governing the take-up of annual leave. Currently, schedules for the annual leave for the next year must be published by employers before the end of the current year and employees are not allowed to transfer more than 10 days of unused paid leave days to the next year. Employers would like a scheduling exemption for small and medium size enterprises, while trade unions have made it clear they would like employees to be able to take more than 10 days to the next year.

English: http://www.novinite.com/view_news.php?id=161403

Sofia emergency care doctors resign collectively as service's head is scapegoated

June 9, 2014

All doctors at Sofia's emergency care unit have resigned collectively to express their solidarity with the services' head, who was dismissed by the health minister for mismanagement. The health minister asked for the resignation of the emergency service's head and deputy after a 40 year old woman died while waiting over 40 minutes for an ambulance to arrive. The doctors, who are protesting outside the health ministry, say their heads are just scapegoats. They argue the real problem is that the service lacks financial, human and material resources to operate the care effectively.

English: <http://www.novinite.com/articles/161153/>

<http://www.novinite.com/articles/160932/>

Croatia

Closure of DuPont Pioneer plant

June 11, 2014

Fifty people lose their jobs in the eastern Croatian city of Osijek after the corn seeds factory DuPont Pioneer closes down. The company stated that the move is part of their global strategy. DuPont started with the production and processing of seed supplies 20 years ago. The plant is one of the most successful plants for seed corn and soybeans in the region.

English: <http://www.croatiantimes.com/news/Business ...>

Cyprus

Trade union criticises selling of London slot

June 14, 2014

Cyprus Airways plan to sell its remaining slot at Heathrow Airport has led to harsh criticism from the trade union side. The airline's pilots union PASYPI is dead set against selling the remaining Heathrow operation, warning that this could jeopardise the airline's long-term viability. A union spokesperson said it appeared there was little the pilots could do to stop the sale since 'some people have decided to close Cyprus Airways down'.

English: <http://cyprus-mail.com/2014/06/14/cy-london-will-still-be-served/>

Massive appeal against privatisation

June 13, 2014

A vast majority of employees of the semi-state power company (EAC) have resumed their struggle against the privatisation of the company by the government, with mass appeals to the Supreme Court requesting the repeal of the Council of Ministers' decision slating it for privatisation. Over 80% of EAC employees (1,736 out of some 2,500) filed individual appeals, on the grounds that the decision to privatise violates the constitution.

English: <http://cyprus-mail.com/2014/06/13/eac-staff-go-all-out-to-fight-sell-off/>

Czech Republic

Survey on 'work space' shows disagreement

June 23, 2014

The results of a recently conducted workplace survey, in which both employers and employees indicated their preferences and priorities regarding office environment and work space, reveal important controversies. For workers sufficient personal space to work in comes first in a list of 18 criteria, followed by natural daylight and the ability to see the outside. This is followed by windows that can be opened, less travel time from home and breakout space. Open plan offices are not popular among workers. Employers mention the costs of the space, service charges and operating costs first, followed by the ability to park.

English: <http://praguepost.com/realty/39692-employees-and-employers-disagree ...>

Demand of 5% pay increase in health care

June 12, 2014

The health and social care unions are pushing for a pay increase in 2015 of 5%, rejecting the 3.5% promised by the government. Union representatives pointed to the low wages earned by those who care for the elderly or disabled, warning of a worsening of quality. Union leader Dagmar Žitníková charged that long term the situation had only grown worse, saying that jobs in the social services were among the most poorly paid.

English: <http://www.radio.cz/en/section/news/health-care-unions-to-push-for-five-percent ...>

Denmark

Copenhagen airport ground personnel strike

June 26, 2014

A strike by SAS Ground Holding personnel grounded all of the airline's flights at Copenhagen Airport. The airline decided to fly stranded passengers without their luggage. The striking baggage workers went to a meeting to discuss ongoing negotiations with SAS management on working hours and salary. The strike was also the result of the decision to lay off 900 baggage handlers. After the talks the strike was called off.

English: <http://www.thelocal.dk/20140626/sas-flying-again-after-strike-called-off>

Eco-friendly investment creates jobs

June 25, 2014

A green investment fund created by the government will be able to lend money to companies that intend to invest in environment-friendly projects. Aside from the fund, a green innovation pool will also be created to strengthen small and medium-sized enterprises innovation. According to Dansk Metal, the trade union for those working in information technology, engineering and mechanics, the fund can create some 7,000 jobs.

English: <http://www.globalpost.com/dispatch/news/xinhua-news-agency/140625/denmark ...>

Danish Crown workers make a deal

June 12, 2014

The Food and Allied Workers' Trade Union NNF and the Confederation of Danish Industry developed a joint rescue plan for the facility in Rønne on the Danish island of Bornholm. The groups reached a five-year agreement that will keep the slaughterhouse open and save 190 jobs. The agreement calls for an employee investment company to contribute to financing investments in the slaughterhouse.

English: http://www.meatpoultry.com/articles/news_home/Global/2014/06/Employees ...

Estonia

Wage statistics for 2013 published

June 17, 2014

According to Statistics Estonia, the average monthly gross wages and salaries increased 7.0% in 2013, compared to 2012, and the average hourly gross wages and salaries increased 7.3%. In 2013, average monthly gross wages were 949 euro and the average hourly gross wages were 5.73 euros. Real wages, which take into account the influence of the change in the consumer price index, increased 4.1% in 2013.

English: <http://www.stat.ee/72389>

Minimum wage proposal called unrealistic

June 11, 2014

The governor of the central bank stated in front of Parliament that the idea proposed by banker Indrek Neivelt to raise the minimum wage to 1,000 euros by 2018 is unrealistic. Neivelt's reasoning was that 'If entrepreneurs have access to some cheap resources, they will waste it'. He also wondered how it can be possible that employees are paid 300 or 400 euros a month, several times less than in Scandinavia. His suggestion was to add about 150 euros to the minimum wage every year in order to end up at 1,000 in 2018.

English: <http://balticbusinessnews.com/article/2014/6/11/neivelt-s-1-000-euro-minimum ...>

Finland

Site agreement signed for future power plant

June 26, 2014

Trade unions and employers' federations have signed an agreement with the main clients, Fennovoima and Rusatom Overseas companies, regarding common rules for the future construction work on a nuclear power plant in Pyhäjoki. Objective of the site agreement is to settle the policies of cooperation and operating principles in advance, before actual construction work even begins. The purpose is also to guarantee that everything runs in accord with applicable legislation and existing collective agreements and practices.

English: <http://heikkijokinen.info/en/trade-union-news-from-finland/554-comprehensive-site ...>

Industrial action of postal workers

June 25, 2014

In a dispute over a proposed wage cut (of 500 euro for some parts of the workforce) drivers and terminal workers of the national postal carrier Itella have organised a walk-out. 300 members of the AKT transport workers' union took part in the industrial action that effectively guaranteed that no cargo belonging to Itella or its subcontractors was handled at Finnish ports. The employers called the strike illegal and excessive.

English: http://yle.fi/uutiset/itella_strike_slows_cargo_distribution ...

<http://www.helsinkitimes.fi/finland/finland-news/domestic/10995-legality-of-itella-strike ...>

Dock workers strike ended

June 12, 2014

Dock workers at the HaminaKotka harbour and everywhere else in Finland have returned to their jobs after a day-long strike brought the sea ports to a standstill. The Seamen's Union claimed that the North-Western Shipping Company was slashing its workers' pay and possibly even freight agreement prices. A written threat to a shop steward by a representative of a shipping company in response to the refusal of stevedores to unload a Russian vessel has been cited as the reason for the strike.

English: http://yle.fi/uutiset/shipyard_strike_ends__stevedores_play_catch-up ...

<http://www.helsinkitimes.fi/finland/finland-news/domestic/10867-stevedores-stage-strike ...>

France

Bigger-than-expected uptake of agreed early retirement

June 26, 2014

Up to 2,500 older workers will leave PSA Peugeot Citroen in 2014-15 under a deal struck with the trade unions in 2013. Peugeot, which employs some 70,000 people in France, has pledged to cut payroll costs to 12.5% of group revenue by 2016 from 15.1% in 2013. The departure terms for senior workers amount to a form of early retirement - funded by restructuring charges rather than payroll until the employees reach pensionable age. The number, higher than the 2,000 previously anticipated, reflects a bigger-than-expected uptake of the voluntary scheme. Under the deal with unions, the company is hiring cheaper young workers under temporary training contracts.

English: <http://www.theguardian.com/business ...>

Air traffic controllers cancel six day strike

June 25, 2014

The third biggest air traffic controller union, Unsa-ICNA had planned a six day strike from 24 June onwards. After talks between union leaders and the government the strike was cancelled. The air traffic controllers were protesting against expected cuts in the 2015-2019 budget that France is due to send to the European Commission for the Single European Sky Plan by 30 June. The strike was called off after the government recognised the 'importance of investment in the sector' said the trade union which launched the protest. Ryanair, which was forced to cancel around 200 flights, had slammed the strike and called on the EU Commission to remove the right to strike from Europe's air traffic controllers, who were 'once more attempting to blackmail ordinary consumers with strikes'.

English: <http://www.thelocal.fr/20140625/french-airport-strike-hits-dozens-of-flights>

<http://www.irishexaminer.com/ireland/french-right-to-fly-in-the-face-of-oleary ...>

Industrial action of arts workers

June 24, 2014

Strikes by performers, actors and technicians are threatening to shut down some of the leading arts events, including the renowned Avignon festival. Part-time and temporary workers are angry at plans to reduce their right to extra benefits and social security, aimed at cutting government debt. They say the proposals will hit the country's cultural exception, a fiercely-guarded principle that means anything considered to be of cultural value to French society should be protected by the state from market forces.

English: <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/jun/13/french-arts-workers-threat ...>

<http://www.thelocal.fr/20140624/frances-biggest-festivals-at-risk>

Rail strike against proposed reforms

June 15, 2014

Trade unions CGT and Sud called a national rail strike. The strike comes as Parliament discusses a draft bill proposing a merger of the two companies operating the railway system, the SNCF and RFF, and to allow competition on the tracks. Trade unions have argued the reform will not achieve its stated goal of dealing with the company's 40 billion euro debt and that any cost-cutting will be done at the expense of workers' rights and jobs.

English: <http://www.thelocal.fr/20140615/french-rail-strike-to-enter-fifth-day>

<http://www.english.rfi.fr/visiting-france/20140604-french-railway-workers-set-strike ...>

Germany

Spanish workers and unions unite

June 30, 2014

Spanish workers who emigrated and, once in the so-called 'German paradise', found themselves in jobs with abusive conditions or salaries clearly below those paid to local workers are getting organised. They created the Labour Action Group (GAS), a platform designed to serve as a connection between workers suffering abuses in the country and the local trade unions. The reaction of the trade union Ver.di, the second biggest in the country, has been very positive. The two organizations have together published leaflets in Spanish that call for, among other things, the same salary 'for the same work and the same qualifications'.

English: <http://elpais.com/elpais/2014/06/30/inenglish ...>

Reconsidering cooperatives

June 26, 2014

In a large article the pros and cons of cooperatives led by the trade unions are treated. The author was invited by several organisations, including trade union IG Metall to give an answer to such questions as: Why should trade unions and cooperatives partner together? Can the model work for large industrial firms? Are cooperatives as viable as conventional firms? He concludes that it is an important method to protect collective bargaining and that union cooperatives are the engine of a culture that one day can enable democratic institutions to rival the economic power of shareholder corporations and achieve a balanced and democratic economy and society.

English: <http://truth-out.org/news/item/24614-will-german-workers-declare-independence>

Agreement on more jobs at Charité hospital group

June 5, 2014

Lengthy talks over workload and resulting health issues between trade union Ver.di and the Berlin based Charité hospital group have yielded an agreement on jobs. The group will hire 80 additional workers and a joint committee will investigate particular units of the hospital group where the workload is considered excessive by employees.

English: <http://www.epsu.org/a/10541>

German: <http://gesundheit-soziales.verdi.de/ueber-uns/nachrichten ...>

Strike at Amazon warehouses extended again

June 3, 2014

Trade union Ver.di has called out strikes at more Amazon warehouses as the company continues to refuse to apply the correct collective agreement. In a long-running conflict that has seen dozens of strike actions, reported in this newsletter over the last years, Amazon pays its staff according to the collective agreement for logistics workers, whereas all other delivery services in the country correctly apply the collective agreement for retail and mail order workers. Last month, Amazon CEO Jeff Bezos was chosen as the world's worst boss in a poll by the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC), in which over 20,000 members selected him as the worst of nine CEOs that habitually abuse workers' rights.

English: <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/tech/tech-news/German-union-extends-strikes ...>

<http://www.ituc-csi.org/amazon-s-jeff-bezos-wins-ituc ...>

Greece

Dismissals and non-paid wages lead to protests

June 30, 2014

Workers are to take to the streets in another of hundreds of protests over austerity measures over the last four years, at the same time the government is moving to restore the pay of police, military and uniformed officers to obey a court order. The civil servant's trade union, ADEDY, has planned a series of protests in several cities to protest the public sector mobility scheme in which selected workers – predominantly the lower-paid and without political protection – are paid 75% of already-slashed salaries for eight months and then fired if another position can't be found for them. In Athens some 397 sacked cleaners have been protesting for several weeks. They initially won a court order to be rehired, but it was ignored by the government until it got a reversal from a higher court. In the meantime, public sector unions have called a 24-hour strike for July 9.

English: <http://greece.greekreporter.com/2014/06/30/greek-workers-protest-firings ...>

Media workers solidarity strike

June 11, 2014

Media employees went on strike to express solidarity for ERT state broadcaster workers one year after Greek State television was shut down by the government, on June 11 last year. The reporters associations from all over the country wanted to confirm once again that they want State television to re-open immediately.

English: <http://www.ansamed.info/ansamed/en/news/sections/politics ...>

Hungary

Teachers union questions legitimacy of national board

June 25, 2014

Trade union PDSZ stated after talks with the national board of teachers NPK that a survey should be conducted to assess the workload of teachers, and that the current teacher qualification system should be reconsidered. Both PDSZ and NPK support that teachers' salaries should be tied to the minimum wage, and that earlier pay hikes should be followed by similar measures. The union criticised that teachers were being 'forced' to join the national board, and said that it made the legitimacy of the latter body uncertain, and called for a survey to find what proportion of teachers would join on their own accord.

English: <http://www.politics.hu/20140625/teachers-union-urges-school-management ...>

1997 global agreement between Danone and unions put to the test

June 19, 2014

A 1997 agreement between Danone and global food, farm and hotel workers union IUF that regulates major employment changes anywhere in the world, is being put to the test as Danone announces its intention to close three plants in Germany, Hungary and Italy. In Hungary, the cuts are expected to lead to the layoff of 155 workers, while total job cuts in all three countries would amount to 325 jobs. According to the agreement, any reorganisations need to be put off for at least three months in order to 'enable union organisations to present alternative proposals to the management's plan'. IUF and its local affiliates have started opposing the closure of the three plants, referring to the 1997 agreement.

English: <http://www.iuf.org/w/?q=node/3464>

<http://www.bbj.hu/business/updated-danone-to-close-plants-in-hungary ...>

Iceland

Icelandair strike called off after government pressure

June 18, 2014

A strike of Icelandair mechanics was called off on 19 June after Parliament was recalled from summer recess in order to vote on a law banning the strike in the public interest. After state mediated negotiations between Icelandair and the Air Mechanics' Union broke down, organised a one-day strike that affected around 12,000 passengers. Ahead of the second strike day, 19 June, interior minister Hanna Birna Kristjánsdóttir recalled Parliament for an emergency session to ban the strike. The strike was cancelled in order to avoid the strike gag law being adopted, which would weaken the workers' position in the future. Unions report being very worried at this third government intervention to curb strikes, pointing at the banned pilots' strike in March and the forced postponement of the ferry workers' strike from March to September.

English: <http://icelandreview.com/news/2014/06/18/icelandair-mechanics-strike-canceled>

<http://grapevine.is/news/2014/06/19/air-mechanics-cancel-strike/>

Data on wage development published

June 13, 2014

Wages have increased 1.9% on average from the previous quarter according to the quarterly wage index in 1st quarter 2014. From the previous year the increase was 5.5% on average, 5.7% in the private sector and 4.9% in the public sector. The annual increase was 5.6% for the central government employees and 4.1% for the local government employees. An agreement between the Confederation of Icelandic Employers and member unions of the Icelandic Confederation of Labour, signed 21 December 2013, stipulated a general wage raise of 2.8% in January 2014.

English: <http://www.statice.is/Pages ...>

Ireland

Pay cuts lead to strike

June 25, 2014

The Labour Relations Commission (LRC) has invited IMPACT and South Dublin County Council to talks after 600 IMPACT members took strike action in a dispute over the unilateral imposition of pay cuts. The strike followed four weeks of more limited industrial action, which was provoked when council management cut the pay of 13 of its staff and revealed plans to do the same to another 150 workers. Workers concerned had been carrying out extra work with additional responsibilities – some of them for as long as 12 years.

English: <http://www.impact.ie/14/06/25/IMPACT-accepts-invitation-to-Labour-Relations ...>

M&S workers accept proposals

June 14, 2014

The Mandate trade union members in Marks & Spencer voted overwhelmingly in favour of a new set of proposals. The dispute between Marks & Spencer workers and their employer was over the company seeking

cost cutting measures. The agreement improves the situation for the union's members and is also considered an improvement on the Labour Court recommendation issued in March of 2014.

English: <http://www.thejournal.ie/marks-and-spencer-dispute-ends-proposals ...>

Job and pay cuts at Bausch + Lomb

June 13, 2014

Trade union Siptu and management of pharmaceutical company Bausch + Lomb, the single largest employer in the South East, are in crisis talks as management announced its intention to lay off 200 employees and cut wages of the remaining staff by 20%. The company, which was taken over by a Canadian multinational in 2013, has argued it cannot keep up its Irish operations if payroll costs of its Waterford plant in Ireland continue to be 30% higher than its Rochester plant in New York. Siptu and management will meet for talks, but the union has already stressed that a 20% pay cut is unacceptable.

English: <http://www.irishexaminer.com/breakingnews/ireland/siptu-to-ballot-members ...>

Cabin crew union accepts labour court recommendations

June 12, 2014

Management and the cabin crew trade union IMPACT have accepted a Labour Court recommendation on the dispute over rosters. The recommendation provides for a further talks process overseen by the Labour Court, the recruitment of 20 additional cabin crew and restoration to cabin crew of staff travel privileges, which were withdrawn after a strike in May 2014.

English: <http://www.rte.ie/news ...>

Italy

FIAT/Maserati boss back for negotiations

June 30, 2014

Sergio Marchionne, chief executive officer of parent Fiat SpA made a surprise return to Italy from the U.S. to solve a labour dispute at the Grugliasco car factory near Turin. He met with the Grugliasco workers for more than an hour before announcing production changes at the Maserati plant. He bowed to the unions request and reversed a decision taken a week earlier, giving the green light for the transfer of 500 laid-off workers from Fiat's main plant at Mirafiori to Grugliasco. Wage talks are still stalled after eight months of negotiations. Trade unions are asking for an annual increase of 300 euro, while Fiat has countered with an offer of 250 euro.

English: <http://www.businessweek.com/news/2014-06-29/marchionne-seeks-italy-labor-peace ...>

Deal on job cuts after difficult negotiations

June 28, 2014

The bank UniCredit has reached a deal with unions to cut 2,400 jobs in the first stage of workforce reductions foreseen in the bank's 2013-18 restructuring plan. The country's biggest bank by assets announced in March 2014 that it aimed to cut around 8,500 jobs by 2018 - nearly 6 percent of its workforce - including more than 5,700 in Italy. UniCredit agreed, as part of the deal, to hire 800 young people and put 670 existing apprentices on permanent contracts, while talks on the remaining job cuts foreseen in the plan will continue.

English: <http://www.theguardian.com/business ...>

Alitalia to cut 2,200 jobs

June 9, 2014

Airline Alitalia is expected to lay off as many as 2,200 as a part of an alliance with Gulf carrier Etihad Airways. The heavily indebted company Alitalia has been negotiating with Etihad to save the company before it runs out of cash in August. As a part of the negotiations, Etihad has requested creditors to write off 30% of

Alitalia's debts, convert the rest into equity and to lay-off between 2,200 and 2,500 of its 19,000 workforce. Talks with all involved parties, including trade unions, are due to start soon.

English: <http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/business/09-Jun-2014/alitalia-ceo-says-job-cuts ...>
<http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/06/03/us-alitalia-etiad-employment ...>

Wage development assessed

June 6, 2014

In an updated profile some specificities of the collective bargaining structure for the entire economy are described. The article illustrates the developments in the collectively agreed wages by the examples of the chemical sector, retail and civil services. The author notes that there has been a jurisprudential procedure which has resulted in judges considering a salary to have met the requirements outlined in the Constitution when it has been established in a national collective agreement stipulated by the most representative employer and trade union organisations. The national collective agreement, therefore, represents de facto the norm to be referred to for all workers and enterprises in the various sectors.

English: <http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/eiro/studies ...>

Municipal workers' protest brings city life to a standstill

June 6, 2014

Rome's police officers, social workers, teachers and municipal civil servants, organised by Fp-Cgil, Cisl-FP, Uil-Fpl and CSA, organised a common protest on 6 June. The workers demanded to be treated with dignity as they protested against a new austerity package that is expected to reduce wages by €200 per month.

English: <http://www.gazzettadelsud.it/news/95190/Municipal-workers--protest-slows-Rome ...>

Latvia

Wage increases recorded

June 1, 2014

Data compiled by the Central Statistical Bureau show that in the 1st quarter of 2014 average monthly gross wages and salaries, compared to the 1st quarter of 2013, increased by 7.7% from 689 euro to 742 euro. The wages in the private sector increased slightly faster, 8.7% annually, whilst the public sector scored 6.1%. In the 1st quarter of 2014 average gross wages and salaries in the public sector comprised 770 euro, in the private sector 727 euro. The national minimum wage changed as of 1 January 2014 from 285 to 320 euro or by 12.5%, which affects changes in average wages and salaries.

English: <http://www.csb.gov.lv/en/notikumi/wages-fund-has-grown-much-faster ...>

Liechtenstein

Collective agreement IT declared legally binding

June 12, 2014

After a consultation period in which no objections were received, the Parliament has declared the collective agreement in the IT sector legally binding. The Parliament's decision means that all workers in the IT sector now have the right to the pay hike that what previously negotiated. Social partners requested the agreement to be declared legally binding in April.

German: <http://www.volksblatt.li/nachricht ...>

Lithuania

Mediation sought in refinery dispute

June 26, 2014

Representatives of the oilmen trade union, representing workers of the oil refining company Orlen Lietuva in Mazeikiai, Lithuania, have asked for government help in a continued standoff with the management. The mediation is being sought as workers are planning more strikes, if their social benefits and wages won't be guaranteed at the key petrol and diesel fuel supplier. Currently 1,410 people work in the refinery.

English: http://www.shanghaidaily.com/article/article_xinhua ...

Teachers strike for better pay and more investment in education

June 18, 2014

Teachers from all over the country organised a protest in Vilnius on 18 June, demanding better pay, working conditions and education. The teachers demanded a long term plan to raise investment in education to 6% of GDP by 2020 and to start raising wages from 2015 onwards. A thousand protesting teachers held slogans, saying "A Teacher Without Hope is a School Without a Future," "EU Aid to Students, Not Clerks," "Old Age Dignity for Teachers," "Profession – Teacher, Social Status – Beggar".

English: <http://www.lithuaniatribune.com/69272/1000-teachers-stage-protest-in-vilnius ...>

Luxembourg

Negotiations with Luxair failed

June 20, 2014

Talks between airline Luxair and unions for a collective working agreement have failed, after the latter decided to walk out on the latest round of negotiations. The OGBL, LCGB and ngl-snep trade unions have complained that Luxair is unwilling to acknowledge its workers despite a 1.9 million euro benefit last year, for example by wanting to freeze wages. Unions say that this violates a previous agreement with Luxair, which stated that savings would be reviewed depending on the outcome of the 2013 year.

English: <http://www.wort.lu/en/business/national-conciliation-office-luxair-and-unions-at-odds ...>

Airport dispute ripe for mediation

June 11, 2014

The trade unions OGBL and LCGB have called on the help of the national mediation office after negotiations with lux-Airport for a new collective working agreement failed. According to the unions, management deliberately delayed talks and refused to implement a 1% wage increase per year, despite a 3.7 million euro profit in 2012 and rising visitor numbers for the past two years. The unions also object to demands for a more flexible calculation of working hours, as this would leave employees at the beck and call of lux-Airport.

English: <http://www.wort.lu/en/business/lux-airport-unions-calls-on-mediators ...>

Malta

Unions fighting to represent bus drivers

June 18, 2014

Trade union UHM has organised a two-hour strike in a dispute over becoming the sole recognised union representing the workers of the Malta Public Transport Services (MPTS). Currently, the workers are represented by the General Workers Union, but UHM claims over 400 of the 670 bus drivers are registered members and demands the right to represent them. Verifications of membership by UHM, GWU and the transport ministry have shown different counts, after which UHM has accused the ministry and GWU of delaying the verification process.

English: http://www.maltatoday.com.mt/news/national/40182/uhm_confident ...

<http://www.independent.com.mt/articles/2014-06-17/news/uhm-orders-two-hour ...>

Netherlands

Consequences of labour reform discussed

June 23, 2013

The planned labour reform that passed the upper house of the parliament with a large majority has to provide temporary and freelance workers with greater protection, ensure equal treatment and compulsory procedures in redundancy and tackle 'sham' employment arrangements more effectively. In a statement the Federatie Nederlandse Vakbeweging (FNV, or Dutch Trade Union Federation) described the law 'as an important step in ending the excesses and false structures in the labour market'.

English: <http://www.equaltimes.org/are-the-dutch-labour-reforms...>

Collective agreement dairy industry

June 20, 2013

Trade unions and employers in the dairy industry have reached a collective agreement that will run retroactively from 1 April 2014 to 31 March 2016. The 10,000 employees in the sector will receive a 2% pay hike from 1 April 2014 onward and a second 2% increase from 1 April 2015. The agreement contains clauses raising the Christmas bonus from 3% to 3.5% and an increase of employee pension contributions will be borne by employers instead.

Dutch: <http://www.fnbondgenoten.nl/mijnbranche/branches/voedingsindustrie/nieuws...>

KLM comes with plan to cut costs

June 16, 2013

KLM has announced an austerity plan to cut costs. The Dutch management of the Air France KLM group stated that it wants to come up in September 2014 with a next round of 'working more cleverly and flying more efficiently. That is needed to further reduce the debt burden, to make profits and to be able to invest in fleet and product'. There is still no agreement between KLM and cabin union VNC, though KLM is still holding on to no forced dismissals.

English: <http://www.nltimes.nl/2014/06/02/klm-cut-e1b-2017-report/>

Norway

Dock workers involved in several disputes

June 27, 2014

Dockers in Mosjøen are in dispute over claims that their employer, Mosjøen Industri Terminal (MIT), a subcontractor at Alcoa's facility, has failed to pay money owed to them for their work and that they have been illegally locked out since early May 2014. Another ongoing dispute in the port of Risavika is showing no sign of resolution. Workers there have been on strike for nine months over alleged attempts by employers to override International Labour Organisation regulations that protect the status of dockers and subsequently restrict who can unload and load cargo.

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

Country holds its breath as oil talks continue

June 21, 2014

After negotiations between platform workers and the oil companies already broke down, onshore workers broke off talks too. Both processes moved into public mediation, the last step before strike action can be taken. Two years after the longest walkout in the industry, the looming strike threat stirred widespread worries. However, wage deals were reached with onshore and supply base workers, with mediators hoping to reach a third agreement with the platform workers in the beginning of July.

English: <http://af.reuters.com/article/commoditiesNews...>

Poland

Annual report with socio-economic data

June 11, 2014

The central statistical office has published the annual figures for 2013 with sections on the labour market, the economy and the living conditions of the population among others. In an English/Polish information booklet this basic information on the socioeconomic situation of the country in 2013 and in preceding years is presented in comparison with selected data of EU countries.

English: <http://stat.gov.pl/en/topics/folders/folders/poland-in-figures ...>

Portugal

Strike announced at SATA Air Azores

June 6, 2014

The National Civil Aviation Workers Union (SINTAC) has announced an all-out strike that is scheduled to last from 18 to 28 June and disrupt all SATA flights to and between the nine Azores islands. The strike is called over alleged retaliatory action by SATA against 15 workers who have changed union affiliations

English: <http://portuguese-american-journal.com/travel-alert-sata-air-azores-on-strike ...>

Romania

Increase of minimum wage combined with higher energy bills

June 6, 2014

Per 1 July a series of increases including higher minimum wages, prices and fines will become effective. The national minimum wage will increase from RON 850 to RON 900 (€ 205), the second increase in 2014. The first took place in January when the salary went up to RON 850 from RON 800. Electricity bills will include the famous special property tax and the price for natural gas will also experience a hike, fuelled by the National Energy Authority's (ANRE) decision to increase gas imports during the summer. Roaming charges are going to drop and the tax exemption for reinvested profit will come into effect.

English: <http://www.balkans.com/open-news ...>

Row over external employees' representatives Romanian Radio Broadcasting Corporation

June 6, 2014

Employees and the Board of Directors of the Romanian Radio Broadcasting Corporation (SRR) have clashed over a ban on external employees' representatives in the SRR's Administration Council. Currently, employees are allowed to elect two representatives to the council without restrictions. Following the example of the country's public TV broadcaster, however, SRR management decided to ban candidates from outside the institution from running for the two positions of employee's representative. Trade unions have demanded the ban be lifted, arguing the employees' choice must be unrestricted and that the external representatives have been the most effective one, precisely because of their relative independence from management.

English: <http://www.ifj.org/nc/news-single-view/backpid/129/article/rights-of-staff ...>

Serbia

Unions refute supposed agreement on proposed labour law reform

[Paginanummer]

June 6, 2014

Representatives from the Autonomous Trade Unions of Serbia (SSSS) have said that they never agreed to any of the changes in the draft labour law, refuting rumours to the contrary. SSSS said it cannot support the law, which would weaken trade union rights and working conditions of their members. The union objects to the proposal for the severance pay to only cover the years of employment at the most recent employer and the payments of two rather than three average salaries upon retirement. Furthermore, the law would make an end to the extended application of collective agreements, which currently still exists and is supported by unions and employers alike.

English: <http://www.tanjug.rs/news/132219/unions--proposed-labour-law-amendments...>

Slovakia

Second pillar for pensions gets started

June 16, 2014

After nine and a half years since the robust pension reform and the launch of the so-called second, private pension pillar, the rules for paying pensions from this pillar have finally been set. The first pensions from the scheme will be paid in January 2015.

English: http://spectator.sme.sk/articles/view/54316/3/rules_for_payment_of_private...

Focus on the pension scheme in Slovakia: <http://www.pensionfundsonline.co.uk/content...>

Slovenia

Closure of plant – workers rehired for finishing orders

June 13, 2014

Nearly 1,100 workers of clothing maker Aha Mura will become officially jobless. All hope is not lost, as 400 will be able to return to their sawing machines at least until the end of July to finish the existing orders. Meanwhile, the government is preparing a set of measures to help the workers. The trade union confederation ZSSS has expressed its disappointment with the government and other key players for allowing Aha Mura to go into bankruptcy.

English: <http://www.sta.si/en/vest...>

<http://www.balkans.com/open-news...>

Spain

Annual wage structure report 2012 online

June 25, 2014

The official statistical office came with wage figures for 2012. Gross average annual earnings per worker decrease a 0.8% as compared with 2011 to 22,726.44 euro in 2012 (25,682.05 euro for men, and 19,537.33 euro for women). The economic activity with the highest average annual wage was Supply of electrical energy, gas, steam and air-conditioning, with 52,324.67 euro per worker per year on average. This figure was 130.2% higher than the national average. The lowest average annual wages were for Accommodation and Administrative and support services activities, with 13,867.02 and 16,130.55 euro, respectively. These figures were 39.0% and 29.0% below the average.

English: http://www.ine.es/en/prensa/np852_en.pdf

Serious decrease of earnings

June 18, 2014

Data released in the Quarterly Survey of Labour Costs indicate that average incomes fell during the first three months of 2014. The figures show that the average gross monthly income, including remuneration in

cash and in kind, fell by 0.2% to €1,805.76 in the first three months of 2014, while the average basic salary remained steady at €1,632.94. The working hours increased by 1.6% as compared to the same period in 2013, but this was due to the Easter holidays that took place in the 2nd quarter in 2014.

English: <http://www.thelocal.es/20140618/report-spaniards-working-longer-and-earning-less>

Coca cola ordered to reinstate workers

June 15, 2014

Madrid's national court has ordered Coca-Cola to rehire 821 workers it had laid off and to pay them their outstanding salaries. According to the court the US drinks giant had undermined workers right to strike and not adequately informed or negotiated with staff. A spokesperson of the food workers trade union of CC.OO stated that the company had violated fundamental workers' rights. The next step should be what the trade unions have been offering: 'to sit down and negotiate in good faith to find an alternative to keep jobs and achieve a sustainable future for both the company and the workers'.

English: <http://www.euronews.com/2014/06/13/spanish-court-rules-coca-cola-must-reinstate ...>

Sweden

Train strike ends at Southern Sweden

June 27, 2014

Employees of Veolia, operating trains in Southern Sweden, went on indefinite strike, effectively halting transport in the region and stranding over 75,000 passengers. The workers called the strike after they were fired only to be re-hired under worse working conditions. The drivers and ticket collectors, who were employed as salaries workers on full time contract, found themselves in contracts defining them as waged and on-call labourers. Workers reported that they were expected to be reachable 24/7 for the company and that not picking up a phone call resulted in being blacklisted. The dispute ended in a trade union victory. The transport union SEKO will be able to limit the use of contractual, part-time employment – which will help it to prevent a spiral downwards in workers' terms and conditions.

English: <http://www.itfglobal.org/news-online/index.cfm/newsdetail/10621>

Threat of job losses at SAS

June 18, 2014

After the airline SAS reported over one billion kronor in losses for the second quarter of 2014 the management stated that at least 300 employees will be dismissed. The measures are expected to have an impact of one billion kronor in the financial year of 2014/2015. Employees in administration, sales, and support will be most affected by the job losses. As part of cost cutting measures in 2012, the company had reduced wages. This won't be the case this time and SAS won't be utilising staffing agencies to any greater extent, which has been the general trend among the airline's competitors.

English: <http://www.goteborgdaily.se/sas-300-employees-must-go>

Switzerland

Parliament votes to ratify domestic workers convention

June 19, 2014

On 12 June Parliament voted in favour of ratifying the ILO convention on domestic workers (C189). Trade unions, including Swiss unions SIT and UNIA and the International Domestic Workers' Federation IDWF have welcomed the decision and called it a big step towards improving the working conditions of domestic workers in the country.

English: <http://www.iuf.org/w/?q=node/3475>

Collective agreement in private elderly care

June 6, 2014

The trade union UNIA and the Living At Home Association have negotiated a collective agreement in private care for the elderly in the German-speaking region. The agreement, which covers over 6000 employees, offers higher wages in a fast growing sector. The agreement, which furthermore regulates working and rest times, sick pay, training and the establishment of a joint committee to supervise and verify the implementation of the collective agreement, was welcomed by employers and trade unions alike as a means to ensure decent working conditions and combat exploitation by a number of employers whose bad practices continue to make national news. The parties have requested the State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO) to declare the collective agreement to be generally binding for the whole German-speaking region.

English: <http://www.uniglobalunion.org/news/new-collective-agreement-secures...>

Turkey

Minimum wage increases per 1 July

June 30, 2014

On July 1 2014, the minimum wage for a single worker without children will be net 891 Liras monthly, which is approximately 306 euro. The country's minimum wage is updated twice annually. In the first half of 2014, it was net 846 liras. Overall the minimum wage has been raised by 5.3%. But access to a minimum wage is an enormous problem as millions are deprived of even 891 liras monthly because they do not have jobs. The population over 15 is roughly 57 million but only 25.5 million of them have a job that brings income.

English: <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/minimum-wage-of-14-a-day-highly-inadequate...>

Glass workers strike 'disrupts health and national security'

June 27, 2014

Glass workers at Sisecam went on strike after wage negotiations broke down. Soon after the government decided to postpone the strike at some of the factories connected to Şişecam for 60 days ... as it 'is considered disruptive of public health and national security'. Around 6,000 workers from plants in six provinces halted production demanding decent wages and working conditions. Sisecam has offered an 11.79% increase in wages, which falls far behind the union demand for a 23.12% increase. The plants affected by the strike include Trakaya Cam factories in Thrace and Mersin provinces, Trakaya Yenisehir Cam factory in Bursa province and 3 Pasabahce factories in Kırklareli, Eskisehir and Mersin, as well as a fibreglass plant Cam Elyaf in Kocaeli.

English: <http://www.industriall-union.org/turkish-glass-workers-striking-for-better-pay>
<http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/turkish-cabinet-postpones-glass-factory-workers-strike...>

Right of association topic of industrial action

June 12, 2014

Advertising producer M&T Reklam began union busting after trade union Birlesik Metal-Is, an IndustriALL Global Union affiliate, conducted a successful organising campaign at both plants belonging to the group. The campaign was in total compliance with national legislation which resulted in certificate of competence issued by the Ministry of Labour in favour of Birlesik Metal-Is confirming the union represents majority of workers for bargaining a collective agreement. However, instead of negotiations in good faith, workers exercising their fundamental rights to freedom of association faced extreme hostility from the company, which has turned against its own workers after they dared to organise a union.

English: <http://www.industriall-union.org/birlesik-metal-is-fights-against-union-busting...>

United Kingdom

Local government workers vote for action

June 30, 2014

Local government workers will join up to two million council workers and teaching staff in taking strike action on Thursday 10 July against the government public sector austerity pay policies after voting overwhelmingly against the ‘insulting’ 1% pay offer. Unite’s members in England, Wales and Northern Ireland voted by 68% to take strike action and by 79% to take industrial action short of a strike after enduring four years of cuts in real terms. After a yes vote of the membership trade union UNISON delivered a strong call to action to activists to make sure the local government and school support staff strike is successful. Trade union GMB’s ballot saw a 73% vote in favour of going on strike.

English: <http://www.uniteunion.org/news/local-government-workers-to-strike-over-poverty...>
<http://www.unison.org.uk/at-work/local-government/key-issues/local-government-pay/home/>

Nestlé workers receive living wage

June 30, 2014

Food giant Nestlé has become the first leading manufacturer to commit to paying the living wage. The firm already pays at least the living wage to its 8,000 staff but the move will benefit contract employees and agency workers. About 800 contractors working with Nestlé will implement it by December 2017. The announcement was described by campaigners as a significant milestone in the drive to persuade employers to pay the living wage, which is currently set at £8.80 an hour in London and £7.65 elsewhere, compared to the national minimum wage of £6.31.

English: <http://www.theguardian.com/business/2014/jun/30/nestle-agrees-living-wage-staff>

NHS workers protest, make up for strike ballot over wage freeze

June 18, 2014

After organising an NHS protest day on 7 June, unions have announced they are preparing to ballot their members over strike action later this year. The workers are angry over the pay freeze that was imposed on the health service, blocking even the smallest inflation correction of wages. Unions warn the NHS is under attack from wage freezes, cut backs and privatisations and declared its willingness to fight for decent wages, working conditions and high quality services.

English: <http://www.unison.org.uk/news/future-of-nhs-top-issue-for-the-general-election...>
<http://www.unison.org.uk/news/nhs-members-protest-against-continuing-pay-freeze>

Glass workers on strike demand serious pay offer

June 17, 2014

Over hundred employees of Tyneside Safety Glass went on a seven day strike starting from 16 June. The workers at two sites of the company that makes laminated glass for bus windows and windscreens voted in favour of industrial action after rejecting what they called a “paltry and insulting” pay offer. Management had offers a three year deal including a 3% rise in the first year and 2% in the second and third years, but attached other changes affecting wage in such a way that the deal was effectively self-funding. The workers, who witnessed the company’s highest paid director receiving a 14% pay rise in 2013 and saw £750,000 from the company’s account being shifted to the owner’s trust fund, have reacted outraged and demand a serious offer. The seven day strike that started on 16 June is complemented by a continuous overtime ban.

English: <http://www.industrialunion.org/glass-workers-strike-over-paltry-pay-offer>

Rail workers at Heathrow Express against pay cuts

June 13, 2014

Trade union RMT confirmed a fourth wave of industrial action across Heathrow Express after the company sabotaged ACAS talks and resorted to issuing blanket threats to sack hundreds of staff if they don’t call off their fight over a package of multi-million pound cuts which amount to an all-out assault on pay, jobs and safety. According to the union two days of talks at ACAS were effectively sabotaged by the company who refused to consider any proposals put forward by RMT negotiators, walked away before the talks had concluded and treated the entire negotiating process with nothing but contempt.

English: <http://www.rmt.org.uk/news/rmt-declares-new-wave-of-heathrow-express-action/>

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You may find further information on the ETUI at www.etui.org, and on the AIAS at www.uva-aias.net.

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