

# collective bargaining

Issue 1/2010 January

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



AMSTERDAM INSTITUTE FOR ADVANCED LABOUR STUDIES  
UNIVERSITEIT VAN AMSTERDAM



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## Austria

### **Private health and social care workers get 1.5% increase**

*January 20, 2010*

The GPA-DJP and vida trade unions have negotiated a 1.5% pay increase for the 80,000 workers covered by the BAGS collective agreement for private health and social care workers. The unions emphasize that the negotiations, taking some months, were tough and the negotiation results only made possible through the active involvement of works councillors and other members; on the 14 January action day, for example, 7,500 of them demonstrated. By 1 February 2010, all wages will be increased by at least 1.5%, including a floor of Euro 24 implying a 1.86% increase for the lowest wage scales. Some occupations will be re-graded in higher scales.

German: <http://www.gpa-djp.at/servlet/ContentServer?pagename=GPA ...>

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## Belgium

### **Unions sue GM over closure Antwerp factory**

*January 27, 2010*

Belgian metalworkers' unions are suing General Motors (GM) European unit Opel for breaching a contract with the Belgian trade unions when the carmaker decided last week to close its Antwerp plant and produce a two small SUV models elsewhere, most likely in South Korea. In a common position on Opel Antwerp of the European Employee Forum (EEF), the European Metalworkers' Federation (EMF), the European unions and Works Councils within Opel/Vauxhall, it is argued that the relocation of the two models is the only reason for the intended closure of the Antwerp factory. The workers' representatives declare that in case of non-closure of Antwerp, GM would need Euro 500 million less in guarantee loans from the European governments; also, earlier the Flemish government offered Euro 300 million in guarantee loans, and has announced to maintain this offer. Union representatives from Germany, Spain and the UK came to the Belgian Opel plant as to show

their solidarity with the 2,600 workers there.

English: <http://www.emf-fem.org/Press/Press-releases/Common-position-on-Antwerp>  
<http://www.reuters.com/article/idUSWEB674920100126?type=marketsNews>  
<http://www.dw-world.de/dw/article/0,,5172030,00.html>  
<http://www.euronews.net/2010/01/26/union-leaders-travel-to-axed-opel-plant/>

### **Joint protests over working conditions in prisons**

*January 21, 2010*

The three public service trade unions organised a strike action across the prison service on 21-23 January and a national demonstration on 22 January. The protests are over working conditions in prisons with staff facing an average of five violent incidents a day. The unions say that the prison service needs to address urgently prison overcrowding, staffing levels and the inadequacy of security equipment.

English: <http://www.epsu.org/cob/335>  
Dutch: <http://www.acodonline.be/Artikels/Persbericht.aspx?nr=2190>  
French: [http://csc-services-publics.csc-en-ligne.be/Nouvelles/Sectorielles/autorite\\_federal/ ...](http://csc-services-publics.csc-en-ligne.be/Nouvelles/Sectorielles/autorite_federal/)

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## Cyprus

### **Unions ask for moderate pay increases**

*January 7, 2010*

Trade unions have announced that they are determined to demand pay increases in 2010, be it moderate. The Democratic Labour Federation of Cyprus (DEOK) said its general council had agreed to pursue salary increases of 1.5% in the public and semi-public sector, and that it would responsibly support improving workers' incomes. The larger Pancyprian Federation of Independent Trade Unions (PEO) also said it would "follow a responsibly restrained policy in seeking increases", pointing out that increases would mirror the average increase of productivity of the past three years. PEO said it was particularly concerned by the violations of collective agreements, the exploitation of foreign workers as cheap and unprotected labour, and the refusal of many employers to accept workers' rights to organise.

English:  
<http://www.cyprus-mail.com/cyprus/unions-want-pay-rises-despite-recession/20100107>  
via [http://www.labourstart.org/cgi-bin/show\\_news.pl?country=Cyprus](http://www.labourstart.org/cgi-bin/show_news.pl?country=Cyprus)

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## Denmark

### **Union criticizes call for pension reform**

*January 21, 2010*

The FOA public sector union says that pension reform in recent years has had an impact with 31% of its members taking early retirement in 2009, down from 41% in 2006. The union argues that this is one reason why further pension reform should not be on the agenda. FOA also points out that the issue has been raised again because of pressure on public finances and it says that it is outrageous that public finances should be used to bail out the finance sector with the consequence that demands are made to cut workers' pensions.

English: <http://www.epsu.org/cob/335>  
Danish: <http://www.foa.dk/Forbund/Presse.aspx?newsid={BDBF803C-D8DB-4428 ...>

### **New bargaining round starts under difficult conditions**

*January 6, 2010*

On 6 January, unions and employers' organisations started hammering out new collective agreements for almost 600,000 private employees. According to the LO union confederation about 20% of them are non-unionised, against 15% in 1998. Companies are counting on reducing salaries or providing insignificant pay increases, and unions are not willing to give in. Employment consultancy firm Multidata contacted 105 companies facing negotiations and found that they were expecting to pay an average increase of 1.8%, whereas inflation is expected to be 2%. The government's economic advisory council earlier predicted that wage-earners would see an average

increase of 2.7%.

English: [http://www.cphpost.dk/news/national/88-national/47894-union- ...](http://www.cphpost.dk/news/national/88-national/47894-union-...)  
via [http://www.labourstart.org/cgi-bin/show\\_news.pl?country=Denmark](http://www.labourstart.org/cgi-bin/show_news.pl?country=Denmark)

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## Finland

### **Public sector negotiations begin**

*January 21, 2010*

Negotiations are underway in both the state and municipal sectors where the collective agreements expire at the end of January. In the municipal sector JHL, the main public sector union, wants the minimum pay rate in the collective agreement to be raised to Euro 1,500 per month and family leave to be improved. JHL also aims to develop the status of employees in atypical employment relations and improve the rights of safety representatives.

English: <http://www.epsu.org/cob/335>; <http://www.jhl.fi/uutinen/6237>

### **Shipbuilders on strike**

*January 21, 2010*

On Thursday 21 January, hundreds of ship builders dropped their tools to protest layoffs and outsourcing at STX Finland's shipyard in Turku. The strike came after STX Finland OY, part of the international STX Europe Group (16,000 employees), confirmed to shed 370 jobs at the Turku yard and outsource some operations. "The workers cannot understand the layoffs and company outsourcing policy," union spokesman Ari Rajamaki said, "Some operations have been given to an outside company at the same time as STX Finland is reducing its own staff." The announcement came only weeks after the yard completed the construction of the world's biggest cruise liner, the Oasis of the Seas. The Euro 1 billion ship had provided jobs at the yard for more than two and a half years.

English: <http://www.businessweek.com/ap/financialnews/D9DC5IEOo.htm>

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## France

### **Public service unions organise over 100 actions**

*January 21, 2010*

The CGT, FSU and Solidaires union organisations have co-ordinated over 100 demonstrations and other actions on 21 January as part of their campaign of opposition to government policies on the public services. Thousands of teachers, civil servants and health workers took part in demonstrations across the country. The latest message to come from the government includes plans for further job cuts across the public services with 34,000 jobs to go in central government alone and cuts also likely in local and regional government and the health service (See also this *Collective Bargaining Newsletter* Year 2 December 2009).

English: <http://www.epsu.org/cob/335>

<http://www.stuff.co.nz/world/europe/3252939/French-public-sector-workers-strike>

French: <http://www.equipement.cgt.fr/spip.php?article2705>

### **Dockers threaten more strikes**

*January 19, 2010*

Dockworker union leaders have set a mid-February deadline for the government to respond to their demands for more waterfront jobs, or face industrial action. The CGT union, representing the majority of dockers, said it will launch in that case an indefinite work-to-rule campaign. The dockers already staged nationwide strikes on 4 and 11 January. The dispute centers on the transfer of around 2,000 container crane operators and maintenance staff from port authority payrolls to private stevedores (See also this *Collective Bargaining Newsletter* Year 2 December 2009).

English: <http://www.joc.com/node/416082>

via [http://www.labourstart.org/cgi-bin/show\\_news.pl?country=France](http://www.labourstart.org/cgi-bin/show_news.pl?country=France)

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## Germany

### **Strike in automotive industry for transition agreement**

*January 27, 2010*

Automotive Lightning (AL) has announced the relocation of production from Reutlingen to Brotterode (also in Germany) and Jihlava (Czech Republic), directly affecting 130 jobs. The IG Metall union, works council and employees have asked for a transfer and social collective agreement, including the creation of a transitional company (duration one year, for training and qualification and to facilitate finding new jobs), and compensation for the workers affected by redundancies. As negotiations remained without results, 95% of the workers involved voted to go on strike for such an agreement, starting 26 January. IG Metall has called for solidarity and for avoiding any strike-breaker works.

English: message of EUCOBAN network of EMF / EFFAT / ETUF-TCL / EMCEF

German: [http://www.tagblatt.de/Home/nachrichten/reutlingen\\_artikel,-Automotive ...](http://www.tagblatt.de/Home/nachrichten/reutlingen_artikel,-Automotive...)

### **Call for solidarity between civil servants and public employees**

*January 21, 2010*

The DGB union confederation and the ver.di services union have joined in responding to claims that civil servants are a privileged group of workers. They point out that civil servants in the Berlin region, for example, are effectively paid no more than they were in 2003 as a result of cuts to Christmas and holiday payments. Far from being privileged, according to the DGB and ver.di, civil servants such as teachers have to move to stay in work while the emergency services are on-call at all hours of the day. Civil servants also have no right to strike. The key issue for confederation and union is that in the lead up to pay negotiations for federal and local government workers, there needs to be solidarity between civil servants and public employees and they should not be played off against each other.

English: <http://www.epsu.org/cob/335>;

German: [http://www.verdi.de/nachrichten/newsArchive?channel=nachrichten&id ...](http://www.verdi.de/nachrichten/newsArchive?channel=nachrichten&id...)

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## Greece

### **Civil service union plans strike for 10 February**

*January 21, 2010s*

The ADEDY civil service federation has called a national strike on 10 February in protest at government plans to cut public spending and freeze pay for many public sector workers (See also this *Collective Bargaining Newsletter* Year 2 December 2009).

English: <http://www.epsu.org/cob/335>

<http://www.reuters.com/article/idUSLDE60B1FS20100112?type=marketsNews>

Greek: [http://www.adedy.gr/adedy/site/home/ws/primary+menu/deltia/2010/ ...](http://www.adedy.gr/adedy/site/home/ws/primary+menu/deltia/2010/...)

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## Hungary

### **Unions win transport strike**

*January 18, 2010*

Late on Sunday 17 January the unions and the management of the Budapest public transport company BKV reached agreement. Six days of strike resulted in success for the unions, who had basically all of their demands satisfied. The only concession they had to make was accepting a cap stipulated by BKV that the total 2010 pay bill, including in-kind benefits, cannot exceed HUF 59 billion (Euro 216 million) (See also this *Collective Bargaining Newsletter* Year 2 December 2009).

English: <http://bbjonline.hu/index.php?col=1001&cat=&id=51369>

via [http://www.labourstart.org/cgi-bin/show\\_news.pl?country=Hungary](http://www.labourstart.org/cgi-bin/show_news.pl?country=Hungary)

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## Ireland

### **Unions criticize plans for inability-to-pay provision**

January 27, 2010

The government has announced to introduce legislation permitting employers who can prove financial difficulty to opt out of the minimum wages set by Registered Employment Agreements (REAs) and Employment Regulation Orders (EROs). Unlike the National Minimum Wage Act of 2000, the REA and ERO systems --covering low-wage sectors like agriculture; hotel and catering trade; retail; security, and construction-- lack such an inability-to-pay provision. The ICTU union confederation and its largest affiliate, SIPTU, have criticized the plan. ICTU has accused the government of implementing an agenda to “drive down wages across all sectors”, while SIPTU president Jack O’Connor claimed the government was intent on “crucifying the lowest paid in the country.”

English: [http://irishexaminer.com/ireland/siptu-inability-to-pay-law-will-lead-to- ...](http://irishexaminer.com/ireland/siptu-inability-to-pay-law-will-lead-to-...);  
[http://www.independent.ie/national-news/government-to-allow-bosses-to-undercut- ...](http://www.independent.ie/national-news/government-to-allow-bosses-to-undercut-...)

### **Public services unions work-to-rule against further cuts**

January 26, 2010

The IMPACT public services union formally begun industrial action on 25 January in protest at the government’s plans for further cuts in public employees’ pay. Initially the industrial action is to be a work-to-rule so IMPACT members refuse to co-operate with management demands that require anything beyond normal duties. Other public sector unions have joined this initiative. On 26 January, General Secretary of the Civil and Public Services Union (CPSU), Blair Horan, at a conference in Dublin said there was a clear mandate for more intensive action. From 27 January, according to Horan staff would hold more unannounced stoppages, which could affect entire regions. Meanwhile, Labour Relations Commission (LRC) Chief Executive Kieran Mulvey would start trying to find a basis to get management and unions talking (See also this *Collective Bargaining Newsletter* Year 2 December 2009).

English: <http://www.epsu.org/cob/335>  
<http://www.impact.ie/iopen24/impact-serves-notice-industrial-action-n-295.html>  
<http://www.rte.ie/news/2010/0126/partnership.html>  
<http://www.rte.ie/news/2010/0125/partnership.html>

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## Italy

### **Unions to strike over working conditions in justice department**

January 21, 2010

The FP-CGIL, UILPA, RDB and FLP union organisations are co-ordinating strike action over working conditions in the justice department on 5 February. They are protesting at the government’s failure to allocate proper funding to the justice system in the current budget. The unions argue that, as a result of government cuts, some courts are facing closure and employees are seeing their working conditions deteriorate, with a failure to recruit and train adequate numbers of staff.

English: <http://www.epsu.org/cob/335>  
Italian: <http://www.fpcgil.it/flex/cm/pages/ServeBLOB.php/L/IT/IDPagina/12710>

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## Malta

### **Union conditionally accepts wage freeze**

January 6, 2010

On 6 January, the General Workers Union (GWU) said it was prepared to accept a wage freeze at Air Malta given the dire financial situation of the national airline. Yet, the union stressed that the freeze should apply to all workers categories. The GWU noted that earlier talks concluded between management and the unions representing the cabin crews, pilots and engineers included financial benefits: “Therefore the GWU expects the same for its members.”

English: <http://www.businesstoday.com.mt/2010/01/06/t1.html>  
via [http://www.labourstart.org/cgi-bin/show\\_news.pl?country=Malta](http://www.labourstart.org/cgi-bin/show_news.pl?country=Malta)

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## Netherlands

## **Akzo Nobel and unions reach basic agreement**

January 27, 2010

After a day of relay strike action, Akzo Nobel Netherlands reached a basic agreement with the four unions involved, FNV Bondgenoten, CNV Vakmensen, VHP AkzoNobel, and De Unie. The unions say that the chemical firm gave in largely with their demands concerning maintaining the social plan in case of redundancies as well as the arrangements for older workers. Moreover, the agreement includes 1.25% wage increase for 15 months. Improvement of pensions will be subject to separate talks.

Dutch: [http://www.fd.nl/artikel/14082569/akzo-nobel-sluit-principe-akkoord- ...](http://www.fd.nl/artikel/14082569/akzo-nobel-sluit-principe-akkoord-...)

## **Unions refuse wage freeze in local government**

January 26, 2010

On 26 January, the three unions involved in collective bargaining for 200,000 public servants in municipal and provincial government, CNV Publieke Zaak, ABVAKABO en CMHF, have presented employers' delegations with an ultimatum. If the employers will not come back to the negotiating table with a reasonable offer, the unions ensure that they will organize nationwide relay actions. Employers' current offer is a zero wage increase for 2010-2011. The unions argue that notably the municipalities have considerable financial buffers; moreover, a wage freeze does not fit in the national Social Accord as of April 2009. The unions feel supported as in December municipal workers voted overwhelmingly against the two-year pay freeze (See also this *Collective Bargaining Newsletter* Year 2 December 2009).

Dutch: [http://www.cnvpubliekezaak.nl/Ultimatum\\_voor\\_werkgevers\\_gemeenten\\_en\\_ ...](http://www.cnvpubliekezaak.nl/Ultimatum_voor_werkgevers_gemeenten_en_...)  
<http://www.abvakabofnv.nl/nieuws/nieuws/ambtenaren-gaan-actie-voeren>

## **New collective agreement for ambulance workers**

January 21, 2010

After lengthy negotiations the FNV Abvakabo and CNV Publieke Zaak trade unions have signed a new collective agreement for the ambulance sector that replaces the four previous agreements in the sector. The two-year agreement will take effect on 1 January 2011 and will involve a three-stage increase in the year-end bonus from 5% to 8.33% of annual salary. There will also be two 1% increases to basic pay.

English: <http://www.epsu.org/cob/335>

Dutch: <http://www.abvakabofnv.nl/nieuws/nieuws/een-cao-voor-ambulancesector>  
[http://www.cnvpubliekezaak.nl/CAO\\_Ambulancezorg\\_ondertekend?referrer=272](http://www.cnvpubliekezaak.nl/CAO_Ambulancezorg_ondertekend?referrer=272)

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## **Norway**

### **Final consultation over municipal agreement**

January 21, 2010

Unions and employers in the municipal sector have drafted a new four-year agreement on employment and working conditions. The agreement includes a number of changes and new elements covering equality, tackling discrimination, climate change and measures to reduce sickness absence. There is a brief period for final feedback up to 1 February.

English: <http://www.epsu.org/cob/335>

Norwegian: [http://www.fagforbundet.no/forsida/tariff/?article\\_id=46086](http://www.fagforbundet.no/forsida/tariff/?article_id=46086)

### **Union saves jobs from the New Concept Office's threat**

January 14, 2010

Its New Concept Office proved not to be the "golden egg" for the Norwegian Post; instead, the Post planned to cut 300 jobs annually between 2010 and 2012. Under these conditions, the Postkom union reached an agreement to save jobs and maintain good working conditions. No redundant worker should be sent to unemployment, and alternative employment should be found within the group or externally. The process and the agreement's implementation will be followed; in case of deviations from planned change, Postkom has the right to go back to negotiations.

English: [http://www.uniglobalunion.org/Apps/iportal.nsf/pages/sec\\_20081016\\_gbkmEn](http://www.uniglobalunion.org/Apps/iportal.nsf/pages/sec_20081016_gbkmEn)

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## Poland

### **Polish leaflets in Stockholm store**

*January 6, 2010*

The Solidarność union stepped up its fight for a collective agreement with Solid Security in Warsaw, by leafletting on the issues affecting Polish security workers at IKEA's worldwide flagship store in Stockholm. IKEA is Solid's leading client in the Warsaw market. With help from the Swedish Transport Workers Union and other affiliates of the UNI Global Union, Solidarność also ran an advertisement in a leading Swedish daily newspaper, the *Svenska Dagbladet*, highlighting the key issues in this ongoing dispute: failure to pay into the Social Fund, which provides healthcare and leave benefits to the children of security workers, and discrimination against workers for union activity. "This action was a great example of international union solidarity," said Alice Dale, head of UNI Property Services.

English: [http://www.uniglobalunion.org/Apps/iportal.nsf/pages/sec\\_20081016\\_gbg7En](http://www.uniglobalunion.org/Apps/iportal.nsf/pages/sec_20081016_gbg7En)

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## Portugal

### **Public service unions organise demonstration**

*January 21, 2010*

Public service trade unions in the Frente Comum have called a national demonstration on 5 February in defence of the pay and conditions of public sector employees. The unions are opposed to a range of government measures that they say will end up making public sector workers pay for the crisis.

English: <http://www.epsu.org/cob/335>; Portuguese:  
[http://www.stal.pt/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=455&Itemid=1](http://www.stal.pt/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=455&Itemid=1)

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## Slovenia

### **Good negotiation results in metal and electro industry**

*January 14, 2010*

On 14 January SKEI, the metal and electro-industry union, achieved a number of positive negotiation results using workers' willingness to strike and a strike announcement for 13 January. In the electro-industry, by 1 January 2010 basic wages were increased between 7% for the lowest wage scale and 1.5% for the highest scale. In the metal industry, by 1 January basic wage increases were agreed of 5% for all categories, as well as a minimum wage of Euro 724.51. In basic metals, iron and steel, the basic wage increase by 1 January was 3.2%, and the new minimum wage Euro 748.20.

English: message of EUCOBAN network of EMF / EFFAT / ETUF-TCL / EMCEF

### **Government announces minimum wage increase**

*January 14, 2010*

On 14 January, the government discussed the drafting of a minimum wage act and negotiations to sign a social agreement for 2010. It decided to agree upon an increase of the statutory minimum wage, as demanded for quite some time by the unions. On 31 January the ministers will finalise the texts of the Minimum Wage Act, including the exact wage increase, and adopt positions on different proposals of the social partners regarding the development of the labour market which may lead to a social agreement, as well as a basis for future statutory changes pertaining to areas covered by the agreement.

English: [http://www.vlada.si/en/news/press\\_releases/press\\_release/article/5/7269/ ...](http://www.vlada.si/en/news/press_releases/press_release/article/5/7269/)

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## Spain

### **Metal unions reached 2.4% pay increase over 2009**

*January 20, 2010*

By strikes from 28 October 2009 on, the metal unions affiliated to CCOO and UGT succeeded to break through the wage freeze position of the central employers' organisations. A CCOO evaluation of collective bargaining concerning the 67 territorial metal agreements agreed learns that the average wage increase is set at 2.4%, allowing purchasing power to rise as inflation in 2009 was 0.8%. Yet, agreements have focused on pay increases and lack improvements in other fields.

Spanish: message of EUCOBAN network of EMF / EFFAT / ETUF-TCL / EMCEF

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## Sweden

### **Sharply different views on collective bargaining round**

*January 27, 2010*

January has marked the start of the new collective bargaining round, with about 80% of all sectoral and other multi-company agreements, covering 3.3 million employees, subject to renewal. Sharply different views on the likely outcomes prevail. LO, the blue-collar union confederation, is calling for wage increases of SEK 620 (Euro 59.50) per month for full-time employees. In contrast, the Confederation of Swedish Enterprise is resisting any change in the centralised wage rates, with any improvements confined to company level. The employers' association also seeks greater flexibilisation, including a greater use of annualised hour arrangements.

English: [http://www.expatica.com/nl/employment/employment\\_information/HR- ...](http://www.expatica.com/nl/employment/employment_information/HR-...)

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## United Kingdom

### **HP and Fujitsu staff on strike**

*January 27, 2010*

On Wednesday 27 January, Fujitsu staff took their grievances to London's Parliament Square in an effort to drum up support for their battle with the company over redundancies, pay and pensions. The demonstration of members of Unite was a response to the company plan to lay off 870 employees. Three days earlier, on 25 January, hundreds of staff at both HP and Fujitsu took part in two separate strikes, affecting major government and private sector IT contracts. Union members at HP staff, working mainly at the Department of Work and Pensions, stayed away from work today in a protest over pay freezes and job cuts. Other contracts hit include the Ministry of Defence and General Motors. Around 1,000 members of the Public and Commercial Services (PCS) union voted for the strike. In December 2009, the PCS cancelled a strike by the same staff, as HP hours before had agreed to return to negotiations.

English: [http://news.zdnet.co.uk/itmanagement/0,1000000308,40008741,00.htm?s\\_ ...](http://news.zdnet.co.uk/itmanagement/0,1000000308,40008741,00.htm?s_...)  
<http://www.networkworld.com/news/2010/012510-hp-and-fujitsu-staff-stop.html>

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### **Unions angered at local government pay freeze**

*January 21, 2010*

The three unions organising municipal employees, UNISON, Unite and GMB, have reacted angrily to the proposal by local government employers to freeze the pay of their 1.6 million employees. The unions had submitted a claim for a 2.5% increase, with a minimum increase of UKP 500 (Euro 577) and are particularly annoyed by the employers' failure even to negotiate before announcing their plans for a pay freeze. UNISON Head of Local Government, Heather Wakefield, said: "Our members are already covering posts left vacant by wide-spread redundancies. 75% of the workforce are women so this is an outright attack on women's pay."

English: <http://www.epsu.org/cob/335>  
[http://www.unison.org.uk/asppresspack/pressrelease\\_view.asp?id=1701](http://www.unison.org.uk/asppresspack/pressrelease_view.asp?id=1701)

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