

# collective bargaining

Issue 6/2011 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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## contents

### **Austria**

Collective agreement at railway company

### **Belgium**

National demonstration keeps pressure on non-profit employers  
Two-year metalworking contracts set in place

### **Bulgaria**

Minimum wage to go up 1 September

### **Czech Republic**

Public transport unions protest against government reform plans

### **Denmark**

IT workers on strike

### **Estonia**

Engineers protest over interpretation of agreement

### **Finland**

Confederation demands substantial wage increases  
New government makes commitment on job security and productivity  
City council takes action to regulate contractors

### **France**

Mobilisation delivers for social and educational workers  
Energy workers take action over pay and conditions

### **Germany**

Unions call 'foul' on World Cup sponsor  
Energy agreement includes 3.2% pay increase  
Health workers get pay rise and job guarantees  
Hopeful developments in retail and wholesale bargaining

### **Greece**

Unions organise range of strikes and rallies  
ILO sends mission to Greece

### **Hungary**

Railway union postpones strike  
Teachers protest education reform

---

## **Ireland**

Ministers clash over impact of JLC reform  
Employers press in Brussels for more radical reform  
Encouraging first review of Croke Park deal

---

## **Italy**

Dockers plan renewed strike action  
Unitary agreement in craft metal industry

---

## **Lithuania**

Public transport campaign gets off the ground

---

## **Netherlands**

Unions divided over pension accord  
Public transport strikes in protest of privatisation  
Bargaining split in energy sector  
No progress on state collective agreement

---

## **Norway**

Introduction of minimum wage in the cleaning industry  
Getting citizens to act on social dumping

---

## **Portugal**

Confederation leader calls to resist labour law changes

---

## **Romania**

Government asked to work with ILO team

---

## **Slovakia**

Union continues protest against Labour Code changes

---

## **Spain**

Unions petition campaign success  
Mass protest against austerity and unemployment

---

## **Sweden**

High pay increases for municipal and regional management

---

## **Switzerland**

National action day for wage equality  
Transport workers win concessions

---

## **United Kingdom**

Widespread strike of public servants and teachers  
Pay freezes return to private sector  
Unions step up action on Southampton City Council

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## **Austria**

### **Collective agreement at railway company**

*June 22, 2011*

After tough negotiations in six bargaining rounds, the negotiating team of the VIDA services union has reached agreement with the board of the national railway company, ÖBB, for a collective agreement covering 1 July 2011 – 30 June 2012. It includes a basic pay rise of 2.4% for both white and blue collar workers, which equals the inflation rate of the last 12 months. As VIDA vice president Wilhelm Haberzettl explained, the detailed wage figures show a slight nominal improvement for the lower paid and a zero outcome for the better paid, the latter according to Haberzettl justified by the

recent dramatic economic situation of the company.

German: [http://www.vida.at/servlet/ContentServer?pagename=S03/Page/Index ...](http://www.vida.at/servlet/ContentServer?pagename=S03/Page/Index...)

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## Belgium

### **National demonstration keeps pressure on non-profit employers**

*June 22, 2011*

Over 16,000 workers joined the national demonstration on 9 June calling for new, long-term agreements in the non-profit sector, covering a range of health and social services. The unions are looking to negotiate deals at national, regional and community level and emphasise the need to improve employment conditions in order to make it a more attractive sector in which to work and so increase recruitment. Two ministers receiving a union delegation, Joëlle Milquet en Laurette Onkelinx, said to agree with a long-term agreement but pointed at the country's current political insecurity.

English: <http://www.epsu.org/cob/426>

Dutch: [http://www.bbtck.org/nieuws/Pages/socialprofitmanifestantenmassaalopstraat ...](http://www.bbtck.org/nieuws/Pages/socialprofitmanifestantenmassaalopstraat...)

French: [http://www.setca.org/News/Pages/nonmarchandesmanifestantsvenus ...](http://www.setca.org/News/Pages/nonmarchandesmanifestantsvenus...)

### **Two-year metalworking contracts set in place**

*June 20, 2011*

Three unions, MWB-FGTB/ABVV-Metaal, ACV-CSC Metea, and CGSLB/ACLVB, reached accord over two-year collective agreements covering 150,000 workers in metal manufacturing, including aeronautical, automotive, and metal construction, as well as in the iron and steel industry. The agreements did not come without discord, however. Contentious bargaining over early retirements, unemployment benefits, contract and temporary workers' rights, and layoff notices led to issuance of a strike notice that was to take effect on 24 June. But wage terms were reached in late May between the unions and employers' federation Agoria in metal manufacturing, and agreement came on 6 June between the unions and the iron and steel grouping GSU. The unions won extension of early retirement provisions and longer periods of notice before layoffs can take effect. The indexation of wages from cross-industry negotiations agreed early in 2011 with the government will take hold in metalworking. Wage rises of 0.3% higher than inflation will go into effect on 1 July 2011 and 1 July 2012. In addition, an economic "green" bonus of €250 will be awarded, intended for purchase of environmental friendly products or services. The contracts will run until 30 June 2013.

English: [http://www.icem.org/en/78-ICEM-InBrief/4512-Two-Year-Metalworking ...](http://www.icem.org/en/78-ICEM-InBrief/4512-Two-Year-Metalworking...)

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## Bulgaria

### **Minimum wage to go up 1 September**

*June 23, 2011*

The minimum monthly wage is to increase by BGN 30 (€ 15.40), from BGN 240 to BGN 270 (€ 138.65), on 1 September. The news was reported by the president of the Confederation of Independent Syndicates (KNSB), Plamen Dimitrov, speaking after a meeting of the so-called Three-Way Council between trade unions, business and cabinet. Both KNSB and the other main union confederation, Podkrepa, continue to insist that the minimum wage should be increased on 1 July, as previously announced. Dimitrov further said that unions agreed on the amount of BGN 270 as an intermediary step, and would demand another upgrade, at least to BGN 290 (€ 148.90), after 1 January 2012.

English: [http://www.novinite.com/view\\_news.php?id=129564;](http://www.novinite.com/view_news.php?id=129564;)

[http://www.novinite.com/view\\_news.php?id=129491](http://www.novinite.com/view_news.php?id=129491)

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## Czech Republic

### **Public transport unions protest against government reform plans**

*June 16, 2011*

On 16 June, unions in the public transport organised a 24-hours' strike in the country's main cities,

as well as a march in Prague starting with a rally at Palacky Square. The actions were supported by the OS KOVO union confederation and aimed against the government's planned reforms of the pension, healthcare, welfare and tax systems, in particular against, what the unions call, "the pension robbery" and the plans to lift the retirement age to 70. Also, union leaders criticised corruption and the pilferage of finance from public budgets. Prague's metro went to a halt for the first time ever and trains did not operate across the country. The public bus transport was limited, to a mere 30% in Prague alone, whereas elsewhere the percentage varied.

English: [http://www.ceskenoviny.cz/news/zpravy/czech-unionists-meet-in-prague ...](http://www.ceskenoviny.cz/news/zpravy/czech-unionists-meet-in-prague...);  
message of EUCOBAN network of EMF / EFFAT / ETUF-TCL / EMCEF

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## Denmark

### **IT workers on strike**

*June 23, 2011*

In mid-June, 450 of the 2,900 IT workers of CSC Danmark, the country's second largest private supplier of IT solutions, went on strike; more than 300 workers picketed outside the Valby headquarters of the company. CSC's relations to the state go back decades and ministries and public services rely heavily upon its services; if the strike continues, citizen services may be disrupted. The IT specialists at strike are members of the Prosa trade union. In February 2011 CSC told them they would have to accept a 10% cut in pay. After their refusal, Prosa and CSC went into arbitration. This went on without results until early June when Prosa's members refused CSC's final offer, that implied guaranteeing current salaries for three more years, but cut the existing lay-off compensation package of 23 months of full salary by more than half. Other cuts included free lunches and stipends for training. The conflict now has been handed over to the Labour Court.

English: [http://www.cphpost.dk/business/business/119-business/51841-it-workers-at-war ...](http://www.cphpost.dk/business/business/119-business/51841-it-workers-at-war...)  
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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## Estonia

### **Engineers protest over interpretation of agreement**

*June 8, 2011*

Narva Power Plant workers have protested over the interpretation by the oil shale production company Eesti Energia Kaevandused of a collective agreement. In March 2011, 105 engineers were transferred from Narva Power Plants to the sister company Eesti Energia Kaevandused. Chairman Vladimir Aleksejev of the engineers' trade union said that the relocated workers must be included in a recently drawn up collective agreement. The deal, however, had been signed with Narva Power Plants, and Eesti Energia Kaevandused does not recognise it. Union leaders said the workers will lose a good part of their pay and social benefits (See also this Collective Bargaining Newsletter Year 4 April 2011).

English: <http://news.err.ee/Economy/eb2ec823-1cad-423d-b50b-05692dcec98b>

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## Finland

### **Confederation demands substantial wage increases**

*June 28, 2011*

The Central Organisation of Finnish Trade Unions SAK will demand substantial wage increases. It argues that the improved position of industries on world markets is due to a series of modest wage raises. Pressure for higher wage demands is growing, especially as a spurt in inflation has cut purchasing power. Inflation for this year is projected at 3.4%. "Finland's competitiveness has quickly recovered to pre-recession levels and now, according to forecasts, it is more or less headed toward a record high, better than it has been for 20 years," said Olli Koski, Chief Economist of SAK. He added, "Real earnings will decline this year because of increasing inflation, and this is rather exceptional. It will undoubtedly create pressures for wage negotiations."

English: [http://yle.fi/uutiset/news/2011/06/unions\\_better\\_competitiveness\\_should ...](http://yle.fi/uutiset/news/2011/06/unions_better_competitiveness_should...)

### **New government makes commitment on job security and productivity**

June 22, 2011

The JHL public sector union has welcomed some of the elements of the new government's programme. It is pleased about the commitment to offer a new job security agreement in the municipal sector when the current agreement expires in 2013. JHL president Tuire Santamäki-Vuori also welcomed the decision to end the productivity scheme in the state sector, which according to the union badly failed. Yet, she criticised the tightening financing of welfare services and the weak approach to the current legislative deficiencies concerning temporary employees, agency labour and the self-employed.

English: <http://www.epsu.org/cob/426>; [http://www.jhl.fi/portal/en/news ...](http://www.jhl.fi/portal/en/news...)

### **City council takes action to regulate contractors**

June 2, 2011

The municipality of Espoo, the second largest city in the country, is trying to clamp down on contractors and sub-contractors that fail to comply with tax and employment rules. This applies particularly to companies providing cleaning services in schools and day-care centres that will face fines if they are found to infringe legal and contractual requirements. The JHL union welcomes the initiative and hopes that other cities and municipalities will follow Espoo's lead.

English: <http://www.epsu.org/cob/425>; [http://www.jhl.fi/portal/en/news ...](http://www.jhl.fi/portal/en/news...)

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## France

### **Mobilisation delivers for social and educational workers**

June 22, 2011

A concerted mobilisation campaign by nine trade union organisations and four professional associations has led to a commitment from the government to an improved recognition of qualifications for social and educational workers. Demonstrations on 16 March, 7 April and most recently on 16 June have resulted in the government promising draft regulations recognising specific diplomas by autumn 2011. The unions are also demanding a meeting with government ministers to make progress on their other key demand: a movement up the pay scale and comparable salary improvements in the private sector.

English: <http://www.epsu.org/cob/426>

French: [http://www.cfdt.fr/rewrite/article/34456/communication/communiqu ...](http://www.cfdt.fr/rewrite/article/34456/communication/communiqu...)

### **Energy workers take action over pay and conditions**

June 22, 2011

In early June, the FNME-CGT energy union organised a day of strike action at the RTE electricity network company, part of the EDF group. The union wants to defend pay and conditions in the face of the company's preoccupation with profits and its minimalist view of itself as a public service provider. The management also argued that it had to respond to calls from the EU for austerity measures to improve competitiveness as part of the Euro-Plus Pact.

English: <http://www.epsu.org/cob/426>

French: <http://www.fnme-cgt.fr/pages/communiqu.php?id=178>

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## Germany

### **Unions call 'foul' on World Cup sponsor**

June 24, 2011

Two global union federations will show the red card to Women's World Cup sponsor Deutsche Post/DHL, in a campaign targeting its involvement in the tournament which is taking place in Germany from 26 June to 17 July. UNI global union and the ITF (International Transport Workers' Federation) accuse the German-based multinational's subsidiary, the logistics giant DHL, of committing fouls against its own team. UNI and the ITF say that Deutsche Post is using the Women's World Cup to present itself as a company that fights for human rights, equality and fairness. Yet, they allege, employees around the world report that DHL regularly violates these principles. Ingo Marowsky, ITF organising globally coordinator, said: "Once again we press the company to ensure

that all its 470,000 workers receive decent treatment, and that the reported abuses in some of its operating countries are eliminated immediately.”

English: [http://www.uniglobalunion.org/Apps/UNINews.nsf/vwLkpById ...](http://www.uniglobalunion.org/Apps/UNINews.nsf/vwLkpById...);  
[http://www.scoop.co.nz/stories/WO1106/S00609/unions-call-foul-on-world ...](http://www.scoop.co.nz/stories/WO1106/S00609/unions-call-foul-on-world...)

### **Energy agreement includes 3.2% pay increase**

*June 22, 2011*

The energy and services union ver.di has signed a new 19-month collective agreement in the energy sector (Tariffgemeinschaft Energie) that covers 30,000 employees, mainly those of the E.ON energy company. There will be a 3.2% increase on 1 June and then 1.7% on 1 June 2012. The increases also apply to apprentices. Ver.di board member Erhard Ott called the deal reasonable and in line with other agreements in the sector.

English: <http://www.epsu.org/cob/426>

German: [http://presse.verdi.de/pressemitteilungen/showNews?id ...](http://presse.verdi.de/pressemitteilungen/showNews?id...)

### **Health workers get pay rise and job guarantees**

*June 22, 2011*

On 8 June, the ver.di services union negotiators secured a €30 per month increase (average 1.1%) for workers at the KfH-GML health company. This was after challenging negotiations with the KfH management pushing for a pay freeze, lay-offs and restructuring. The deal includes special arrangements to support those who are asked to change jobs as part of the restructuring process. The company employs over 7,000 workers across Germany. The agreement, lasting till 1 March 2012, is still subject to membership ballot.

English: <http://www.epsu.org/cob/426>

German: [http://gesundheit-soziales.verdi.de/tarifpolitik/private\\_konzerne/kfh](http://gesundheit-soziales.verdi.de/tarifpolitik/private_konzerne/kfh)

### **Hopeful developments in retail and wholesale bargaining**

*June 16, 2011*

Until early June, the collective bargaining round launched in March 2011 in the retail trade was at a dead end. Early in the morning of Friday 10 June, however, a regional agreement was reached in Baden-Württemberg. It provides for a 5% wage increase over 24 months, divided in 3.0% as of 1 June 2011 and 2.0% as of 1 June 2012. Moreover, a €50 once-only payment is foreseen by April 2012. A number of anti-discriminatory arrangements has been included too, in particular favouring young workers. This agreement could be a pilot for the other regions in Germany; against this backdrop the ver.di services union, which already organised warning strikes, is not about to stop yet. For several years, the retail trade, employing nearly 3 million people, has not been negotiating sectoral collective agreements and negotiations are carried out in a rather independent manner locally. Meanwhile, the social partners in wholesale trade, where the economic situation is much better, are starting to store up agreements rapidly negotiated.

English: <http://www.planetlabor.com/Articles/plonearticle.2011-06-10.6520815439/>

German: <http://einzelhandel.verdi.de/tarif/tarifrunde-2011>

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## **Greece**

### **Unions organise range of strikes and rallies**

*June 30, 2011*

In the course of June, the trade union movement has organised a wide range of strikes and rallies in protest against the government's new package of austerity measures and the selling of state assets. Spokespersons emphasised that the current austerity package that the EU and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) insist on, implies that the purchasing power of large parts of the population will decrease by 20 to 30% in 2010-2011, and that this decrease will frustrate any economic recovery. On 26 and 27 June, the power workers' union called a 48-hour revolving strike in protest at in particular the decision to privatise the company as part of the wide-ranging privatisation plans. This strike was followed by a 48-hour general strike on 28 and 29 June focusing on the proposed austerity measures called by both the ADEDY and GSEE union confederations. The industrial action

shut down government services, disrupted public transport and delayed flights across the country.

English: <http://www.epsu.org/cob/426>;

<http://www.euronews.net/2011/06/28/greek-unions-reject-austerity-with-general-strike/>;

<http://uk.reuters.com/article/2011/06/28/uk-greece-strikes-idUKTRE75R10E20110628>

Greek: <http://www.adedy.gr/adedy/site/home/ws.csp>

## **ILO sends mission to Greece**

*June 22, 2011*

At its recent conference the International Labour Organisation (ILO) acknowledged trade union accusations of attacks on public sector workers' pay and conditions as well as government action to undermine collective bargaining in both Greece and Romania. In the case of Greece the ILO is organising a high-level mission to the country to investigate the matters further. Details of the discussions are in the ILO report PR No.18 / Part 2 – Report of the Committee on the Application of Standards: Observations and information concerning particular countries, pages 68-72 (Greece).

English: <http://www.epsu.org/cob/426>;

[http://www.ilo.org/ilc/ILCSessions/100thSession/reports/provisional-records ...](http://www.ilo.org/ilc/ILCSessions/100thSession/reports/provisional-records...)

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## **Hungary**

### **Railway union postpones strike**

*June 28, 2011*

The Railway Workers Union (VSz) has postponed a two-hour strike scheduled for June 29 to a later date, the union's strike committee said on Tuesday 28 June. The union decided to put off the strike until the Budapest Municipal Labour Court makes a ruling in a case launched to define minimum services. Until a decision on the matter is taken, the strike cannot be legally held, the VSz said. The strike was urged for by train drivers and drivers employed by the Budapest Transport Company (BKV) and of coach company Volán in the southern Transdanubia region, in protest over the abolishment of existing early retirement arrangements.

English: Máté Komiljovics, union correspondent;

[http://www.bbj.hu/politics/railway-workers-union-postpones-wednesday-strike\\_58608](http://www.bbj.hu/politics/railway-workers-union-postpones-wednesday-strike_58608)

### **Teachers protest education reform**

*June 6, 2011*

On 5 June, several thousands of teachers staged a demonstration in Budapest in protest over the government's planned education reform. Members and supporters of five teachers' unions across the country gathered near Parliament and marched to the National Resources Ministry. Laszlo Mendrey, head of the Democratic Union of Teachers (PDSZ), said at the event that teachers want no more decisions on education without prior consultation: "Teachers can no longer tolerate that they are considered important but once every four years, ahead of the general elections." The protesters drew up a petition, demanding a 10% pay rise and a say in decisions on employers' rights, working hours of teachers, as well as salaries and benefits. Unless talks with the government yield a compromise, unions will hold a general strike in September at the beginning of the academic year, according to Mendrey.

English: Máté Komiljovics, union correspondent

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## **Ireland**

### **Ministers clash over impact of JLC reform**

*June 29, 2011*

Senior ministers from the Fine Gael and Labour parties have clashed over the impact of proposed changes to the joint labour committee (JLC) system, under which pay and conditions for low-paid are set through employment regulation orders (ERO's) proposed by JLC's. According to the bailout agreement with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the EU this system should be changed, but the method to do this and its impact has been a source of division between the coalition parties. Enterprise Minister Richard Bruton brought his proposals to cabinet on 28 June, insisting changes to rules governing overtime and Sunday pay would lead to a reduction in the welfare bill. Labour

ministers believe such reform could lead to pressure on the social welfare bill by pushing more families into the poverty line. Moreover, a coalition of unions and social justice groups has exerted pressure on Minister Bruton, calling on him to release the economic logic of his proposals. Following lengthy discussions, ministers failed to reach agreement on the proposals, which will be discussed again in July. The unions have made their position quite clear. Jack O'Connor, president of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU) confederation, said in a statement: "The Cabinet should not waste time working out ways to crucify the lowest-paid 20% of the workforce through further cutting their pay. Reducing basic wages and employment rights will make no contribution to job creation, as the Government's own independently commissioned Duffy-Walsh report has established" (See also this Collective Bargaining Newsletter Year 4 January, February, March and May 2011).

English: [http://www.irishexaminer.com/ireland/coalition-ministers-clash-over-wage ...](http://www.irishexaminer.com/ireland/coalition-ministers-clash-over-wage...);  
[http://www.independent.ie/national-news/bruton-pushes-ahead-with-plan-to-slash ...](http://www.independent.ie/national-news/bruton-pushes-ahead-with-plan-to-slash...);  
<http://www.irishtimes.com/newspaper/breaking/2011/0628/breaking7.html>

### **Employers press in Brussels for more radical reform**

*June 15, 2011*

In mid-June the Irish employers' association, IBEC, told the European Commission that the country's wage-setting mechanisms need to be abolished and that government proposals do not go far enough. IBEC Director Brendan McGinty said the country cannot afford what he termed 'legacy arrangements', adding that the UK abolished similar structures as far back as 1993. SIPTU union Divisional Organiser John King criticised IBEC's trip to Europe, stating: "IBEC should be engaging with the social partners and Irish government rather than travelling to Brussels to ask the European Commission to intervene in a process in which it has no competence. The Commission has no authority to dictate to a member state what its wage policy or wage setting mechanisms should be" (See also this Collective Bargaining Newsletter Year 4 January, February, March and May 2011).

English: <http://www.rte.ie/news/2011/0615/jlc.html>

### **Encouraging first review of Croke Park deal**

*June 21, 2011*

The Public Services Committee (PSC) of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU) has described the first review of the Croke Park Implementation Body as positive and encouraging. The report confirms that public servants have delivered the required savings and reforms in the first year of the Croke Park agreement. The report also showed that public service payroll savings delivered under Croke Park in the year to March 2011 exceeded their targets. Although this was mainly due to reductions in staff numbers, the report also details how services have been maintained - and in some cases expanded - because of staff redeployment, workplace reforms and increased productivity. The report also highlights the significance of sustained industrial peace in achieving savings and contributing to the restoration of the country's international reputation. The Civil Public and Services Union (CPSU), mainly representing lower-paid civil servants, has said it wants the issue of reimbursing public service staff for pay cuts introduced over the last year or so to be examined in the autumn. The Croke Park agreement included the potential that public staff could get money back from generated savings. General Secretary of the CPSU, Blair Horan, said that while he never expected the issue of reimbursements for staff to be addressed in the first review of the deal, the issue had not gone away. However, Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform Brendan Howlin replied there was "no likelihood of anybody getting money back in the foreseeable future" (See also this Collective Bargaining Newsletter Year 3 July-August 2010 and Year 4 April 2011).

English: [http://www.impact.ie/iopen24/impact-welcomes-confirmation-savings-croke ...](http://www.impact.ie/iopen24/impact-welcomes-confirmation-savings-croke...);  
[http://www.impact.ie/iopen24/public-services-committee-ictu-describe-findings-croke ...](http://www.impact.ie/iopen24/public-services-committee-ictu-describe-findings-croke...);  
<http://www.irishtimes.com/newspaper/ireland/2011/0615/1224298938102.html>;  
<http://www.irishtimes.com/newspaper/ireland/2011/0616/1224299000484.html>

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## **Italy**

### **Dockers plan renewed strike action**

*June 9, 2011*

Dockers in the port of Trieste are pledging to renew strike action that was suspended at the end of May 2011. The dockers, represented by three unions, initially went on strike over a seven-day period in May in a bid to end social dumping by terminal operators, cutting workers' pay and employing

casual workers in substandard conditions. The workers want to see a pooling system established instead. According to current reports an earlier agreement between public and private aiming to establish a labour supply agency under the auspices of the port authority and managed by the operators, has failed. As a result, workers are set to take further strike action. They are being backed by the ITF and its European arm, the European Transport Workers' Federation (ETF) (See also this Collective Bargaining Newsletter Year 4 May 2011).

English: <http://www.itfglobal.org/news-online/index.cfm/newsdetail/6065>

### **Unitary agreement in craft metal industry**

*June 24, 2011*

There has been a new agreement derived from the unitary agreement agreed between unions and employers' federations on on 16 June. It is a merger of all previous agreements (CCN's) in the craft metal industry, facilities, dental labs and goldsmiths into one. Thus, it covers nearly 500,000 workers from 150,000 businesses. In addition to an average wage increase of €86, the agreement amends, among other things, the provisions on part-time work, fixed-term contracts, the integration contract and apprenticeship.

English: <http://www.planetlabor.com/Articles/plonearticle.2011-06-21.5400759191/>

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## **Lithuania**

### **Public transport campaign gets off the ground**

*June 26, 2011*

Public transport workers have launched a campaign to secure branch agreements for their services. The campaign is part of a wider global union programme to defend public services. The Lithuanian Transport Workers' Federation (LTWF), backed by the Forum of Transport Trade Unions in Lithuania, began a series of actions on 8 June, to continue daily until 22 June. They included pickets at the government buildings in Vilnius and rallies along the main business street, stopping at the ministries of transport and justice. Demands are that public transport employers reach agreements with unions that will increase minimum wages, index pay in line with inflation, and retain the existing pension age rather than raise it. Part of the action was participation, on 23 June, in the worldwide Action Day "Promote Public Transport", co-ordinated by the International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF).

English: <http://www.itfglobal.org/news-online/index.cfm/newsdetail/6089>

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## **Netherlands**

### **Unions divided over pension accord**

*June 30, 2011*

In early June and after long negotiations, the Minister of Social Affairs and Employment, employers' associations and union confederations presented a basic pension accord, that will see the pension age increased from 65 to 66 in 2020 and then to 67 in 2025 and also includes a new calculation basis for employers' and employees' contributions. FNV union confederation president Agnes Jongerius defended the accord and announced that it would be subject to a vote by the affiliates' membership. In the course of the month, the assumptions on which the accord is based came under heavy criticism from various sides, also from within the union movement. The board of large private sector union, FNV Bondgenoten, opposed the accord, and announced to organise its own vote. Its chairman, Henk van der Kolk, calls the accord in its current form "unclear, not sensible, and unfair," the latter notably for low-paid working in demanding occupations. Public services union FNV Abvakabo also shows major concerns about important elements in the accord. Both unions argue that it shifts too much risk onto employees in the event of bad investment returns and allows too much leeway for the pension funds to deal as they like. In early July, the FNV confederation and FNV Abvakabo will try an ultimate effort to close the FNV ranks.

Dutch: *NRC-Handelsblad*, 25/26, 29 and 30 June 2011; *De Volkskrant*, 23 and 30 June;  
[http://www.fnvbondgenoten.nl/nieuws/bondgenoten\\_blogs/henksblog/henksblog/381238/](http://www.fnvbondgenoten.nl/nieuws/bondgenoten_blogs/henksblog/henksblog/381238/);  
<http://www.abvakabofnv.nl/Thema%27s/aow/?OverviewType=Nieuwsbericht&id=335606>

### **Public transport strikes in protest of privatisation**

June 29, 2011

In April, May and June, public service unions organised a number of strikes in public transport in the major cities, in protest against government plans to cut funding by € 120 million and the forced privatisation of the public transport system in Amsterdam, The Hague and Rotterdam. The unions argue the budget cuts combined with privatisation will lead to losses of as many as 3,000 jobs and a deterioration of bus, tram and metro services. After earlier 24-hour strikes in the three cities, strikes on 27 June took place only outside rush hours. An effort of the municipal authorities to have these strikes prevented by a court decision failed, as the judges in both Amsterdam and Rotterdam did not regard them disproportional.

Dutch: *NRC-Handelsblad*, 24 June 2011; *De Volkskrant*, 27 and 28 June 2011

### **Bargaining split in energy sector**

June 22, 2011

There are now two collective agreements in the Dutch energy sector – one for production and supply companies (PLB) and the other for network companies (NWB). There are similarities between these new agreements that both run for 24 months from 1 May 2011 to 1 May 2013: both apply a 1.5% overall pay increase in both 2011 and 2012, and both have contributions into a so-called benefit budget which workers can apply depending on their personal preference for particular benefits such as more leave. In the PLB agreement the benefit budget payments are 0.5% of salary in 2011 and 0.75% in 2012. The NWB payments are slightly less, with 0.5% in both years. Both agreements also raise the fee for personal development from €300 to €500. The PLB includes 1% of the payroll for employment measures while the NWB deal has 2% on this.

English: <http://www.epsu.org/cob/426>

Dutch: <http://www.abvakabofnv.nl/cao%27s/Alle-Cao%27s/plb/>;

<http://www.abvakabofnv.nl/cao%27s/Alle-Cao%27s/nwb/>;

<http://www.mijnvakbond.nl/CAO-Energie>

### **No progress on state collective agreement**

June 22, 2011

A demonstration at Schiphol airport on 21 June meant the start of a campaign by trade unions calling for a new collective agreement in the state sector. With the last agreement formally expiring 31 December 2010, negotiations over a new agreement have stalled since February. The action focuses on civil servants' purchasing power, a jobs guarantee and employment initiatives for young workers. Renewed negotiations between a government delegation and the four unions involved, on 22 June, led to the conclusion that the Cabinet sticks to its zero wage increase policy and refuses to free an extra budget for measures to accompany redundancies socially. The unions continue to demand such measures, as well as a 2% wage increase. They have indicated to prepare for further action after the holiday season.

English: <http://www.epsu.org/cob/426>

Dutch: <http://www.rijkscao.nl/>; [http://www.mijnvakbond.nl/Actie-Rijk-op-Schiphol ...](http://www.mijnvakbond.nl/Actie-Rijk-op-Schiphol...)

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## Norway

### **Introduction of minimum wage in the cleaning industry**

June 29, 2011

On 21 June, the Tariff Board decided to make parts of the collective agreement in business cleaning generally applicable. The central precondition for doing so is documented proof that foreign workers are subject to wage and working conditions inferior to the conditions established in relevant collective agreements, or inferior to what is the norm in a profession/occupation. A decision made by the Board lasts for as long as the relevant collective agreement is in force. When the new regulation is implemented, probably in autumn 2011, the hourly wage rate for cleaners will be NOK 148 to 157 (€ 19.00 - 21.80), depending on length of service. The decision constitutes a landmark, as it is the first agreement that has been made generally binding within the service sector and as it has a standard wage rate and not a minimum rate like previous agreements made generally applicable. The Tariff Board's decision is highly welcomed in the sector by both the dominant employer's association and the union. However, enforcement will likely be demanding as the cleaning industry is notorious for its problems with undeclared work and social dumping.

English: information of Line Eldring, FAFO, Oslo

### **Getting citizens to act on social dumping**

*June 22, 2011*

The Fagforbundet municipal union and other local authority unions in the LO confederation are working together to raise the issue of social dumping. In the light of recent scandals involving contracting and sub-contracting in refuse collection and care homes, the unions are urging their members and local residents to use the right of the citizen's initiative (requiring the support of 2% or 300 local citizens) to get municipalities to deal with any cases of social dumping. The unions want to see equal treatment of all workers and ensure that they are covered by the relevant collective agreement.

English: <http://www.epsu.org/cob/426>

Norwegian: [http://www.fagforbundet.no/forsida/?article\\_id=65004](http://www.fagforbundet.no/forsida/?article_id=65004)

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## **Portugal**

### **Confederation leader calls to resist labour law changes**

*June 27, 2011*

The leader of CGTP, the country's largest union confederation, is urging workers to continue protesting the planned labour law changes tied to the current bailout package of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the European Commission. The package conditions include cutting costs by lowering severance pay, introducing more flexible working hours to improve competitiveness, and keeping the minimum salary at €485 a month. On Monday 27 June, the Secretary General of CGTP, Manuel Carvalho da Silva, says his members must fight the measures, arguing "If we accept this remedy, in two years' time we'll be poorer and in recession" (See also this Collective Bargaining Newsletter Year 4 May 2011).

English: [http://www.washingtonpost.com/business/markets/portuguese-trade-union ...](http://www.washingtonpost.com/business/markets/portuguese-trade-union...)

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

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## **Romania**

### **Government asked to work with ILO team**

*June 22, 2011*

At its recent Conference the International Labour Organisation (ILO) acknowledged trade union accusations of attacks on public sector workers' pay and conditions as well as government action to undermine collective bargaining in both Greece and Romania. In the case of Romania, the government there has been asked to work with an ILO technical team to review the recent changes to the Labour Code and collective bargaining legislation to ensure they comply with ILO convention 98, on the Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining. Details of the discussions are in the ILO report PR No.18 / Part 2 – Report of the Committee on the Application of Standards: Observations and information concerning particular countries, pages 72-75 (Romania).

English: [http://www.ilo.org/ilc/ILCSessions/100thSession/reports/provisional-records ...](http://www.ilo.org/ilc/ILCSessions/100thSession/reports/provisional-records...) ;

<http://www.epsu.org/cob/426>

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## **Slovakia**

### **Union continues protest against Labour Code changes**

*June 27, 2011*

Several thousand trade union members gathered in Žilina on 25 June to protest against proposed changes to the Labour Code, an overhaul of the tax and levy system, rising prices and poverty. The rally, organised by the KOVO union, began with a march through the town. The head of KOVO, Emil Machyňa, stressed that the union movement regards the current Labour Code as appropriate and sees no need for changes. "If the Code is to be changed in order to benefit capital, to facilitate lay-offs and controls over people, then this is the wrong path to take," Machyňa said (See also this Collective Bargaining Newsletter Year 4 January and April 2011).

English: [http://spectator.sme.sk/articles/view/43140/10/kovo\\_trade\\_union\\_protests ...](http://spectator.sme.sk/articles/view/43140/10/kovo_trade_union_protests...)

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## Spain

### **Unions petition campaign success**

*June 25, 2011*

The UGT and CCOO union confederations are continuing their campaign against the public sector pay cuts and labour law reforms. The unions have successfully collected over a million signatures in support of a popular legal initiative to challenge the labour law reforms. They point out that the announced reforms including changes to the collective bargaining framework have neither calmed the financial markets nor done anything to prevent the increase in unemployment. The unions have also been pursuing legal action to get the public sector pay cuts reversed, but the latest stage of this process has not been successful with the Constitutional Tribunal ruling that the pay cuts are not unconstitutional. On 10 June, after negotiations between the CEOE employers' federation and UGT and CCOO failed and under openly pressure of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the Bank of Spain, the Council of Ministers approved a royal decree reforming the framework of collective bargaining. The text introduces mediation to solve conflicts, facilitates internal flexibility for businesses and prioritises company collective agreements over provincial collective agreements. The text still needs to be approved by Parliament to become an Act (See also this Collective Bargaining Newsletter Year 4 May 2011).

English: <http://www.epsu.org/cob/426>; [http://www.planetlabor.com/Articles/plone ...](http://www.planetlabor.com/Articles/plone...);  
<http://news.ph.msn.com/business/article.aspx?cp-documentid=4899878>

Spanish: <http://www.ugt.es/actualidad/2011/junio/b16062011.html>;  
[http://www.fspugt.es/UGT\\_rechaza\\_la\\_decisin\\_del\\_Constitucional\\_de\\_avalara\\_el\\_recorte ...](http://www.fspugt.es/UGT_rechaza_la_decisin_del_Constitucional_de_avalara_el_recorte...)

### **Mass protest against austerity and unemployment**

*June 20, 2011*

On Sunday 19 June, over 200,000 protesters — young and old, those with jobs and those without — marched in Madrid, Barcelona, Valencia, Seville and nearly 60 other cities to drive home their anger over high unemployment, bleak economic prospects, and austerity measures. After this weekend, the country's one-month-old protest movement was regarded as gathering momentum. The movement demanding democratic reforms had demonstrated its capacity to peacefully mobilise large numbers of people, and could no longer be ignored by political and economic leaders, commentators said.

English: [http://www.timesunion.com/business/article/Spanish-marchers-protest ...](http://www.timesunion.com/business/article/Spanish-marchers-protest...);  
[http://www.monstersandcritics.com/news/europe/news/article\\_1646500.php/Spanish ...](http://www.monstersandcritics.com/news/europe/news/article_1646500.php/Spanish...)

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## Sweden

### **High pay increases for municipal and regional management**

*June 22, 2011*

A report by the Kommunal municipal union looks at pay developments over a 10-year period and finds that managers in local authorities have seen their pay increase by 51% while directors of county (regional) authorities have received increases totalling 80%. In contrast, the average increase for workers has been 41%. If workers had had the same increase as local managers then they would now be SEK 1,400 (€ 153) a month better off, or even SEK 5,700 (€ 623) better off if they had had the county directors' increase. The union also found that the directors of private health companies earn on average 13 times their employees' level of salary.

English: <http://www.epsu.org/cob/426>

Swedish: [http://www.kommunal.se/Kommunal/Nyheter/2011/Juni/De-hogsta ...](http://www.kommunal.se/Kommunal/Nyheter/2011/Juni/De-hogsta...)

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## Switzerland

### **National action day for wage equality**

*June 14, 2011*

On 14 June, thousands of workers around the country participated in a day of action and a national strike, demanding equal rights for women workers as well as a legal minimum wage. Various trade

unions, like VPÖD-SSP and UNIA, played a leading role among the more than 45 organisations that held the event. The complaint was repeated that in Switzerland women earn on average 19.8% less than men while performing the same job, despite the gender equality article in the Constitution. The actions featured breakfasts, numerous workplace events and protests at public sites in major cities, culminating in collective whistle blowing and the release of thousands of purple balloons around the country at 14:06. Later in the day, Geneva's famous water jet fountain was coloured purple as part of the action (See also this Collective Bargaining Newsletter Year 4 April and May 2011).

English: <http://www.imfmetal.org/index.cfm?c=26776&l=2>;  
<http://mrzine.monthlyreview.org/2011/labotz140611.html>

### **Transport workers win concessions**

*June 2, 2011*

Bus and tram workers in Zürich have taken industrial action to try to secure a collective agreement and protect paid breaks. The workers, members of the VPÖD/SSP public service union, took the action in order to get a canton-wide (regional) collective agreement that would provide better protection for workers in the face of future liberalisation of the sector. Following a commitment from the employers to negotiate an agreement and improve industrial relations, the union has suspended the action but a strike committee will closely monitor progress with the negotiations.

English: <http://www.epsu.org/cob/425>

German: [http://www.vpod.ch/aktuell/nachrichten/ansicht/article/kampfaktion-wirkt ...](http://www.vpod.ch/aktuell/nachrichten/ansicht/article/kampfaktion-wirkt...)

French: <http://www.ssp-vpod.ch/actualites/nouvelles.html>

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## **United Kingdom**

### **Widespread strike of public servants and teachers**

*June 30, 2011*

For Thursday 30 June PCS, the largest civil service union, called for strike action in protest at government changes to pensions and cuts in jobs. A members' ballot gave a 61% majority in favour of strike action with just under 84% backing other forms of industrial action. The strike coincided with strike action already called by two teaching unions and the university and college lecturers' union, while the POA prison union organised workplace protest meetings and started a ballot for industrial action. In total 750,000 workers may have been involved. The unions took action over the government's refusal to negotiate the main changes it is proposing to make to the civil service pension scheme. Civil servants will be required to work longer to get a full pension and contributions will be increased. Similar changes are being proposed to other public sector schemes. Government ministers who had predicted "minimum disruption" conceded that more than 11,000 state schools – over half the total – were affected, along with airports, benefits offices, driving tests and galleries and museums. The PCS union concludes that the strike was one of the best supported ever. While Labour Party leader Ed Miliband has repeatedly denounced the public sector action, it has the full support of the country's union confederation. TUC General Secretary Brendan Barber, addressing a meeting in Exeter, said: "As the cuts begin to scythe through, our public services more and more jobs are under threat, and as the pay freeze bites - while inflation roars ahead - real wage cuts are making it ever harder to make ends meet. On top of that now they are coming for your pensions." A TUC report has calculated, based on official data, that pay freezes and pension cuts would imply for low-paid public sector staff a fall in their living standards of 8.5% by 2012-13 (See also this Collective Bargaining Newsletter Year 4 April and May 2011).

English: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/society/2011/jun/30/public-sector-pensions-policy>;  
<http://www.tuc.org.uk/economy/tuc-19724-f0.cfm> ;  
<http://www.tuc.org.uk/economy/tuc-19721-f0.cfm>;  
[http://www.pcs.org.uk/en/news\\_and\\_events/news\\_centre/index.cfm/id/93 ...](http://www.pcs.org.uk/en/news_and_events/news_centre/index.cfm/id/93...)

### **Pay freezes return to private sector**

*June 29, 2011*

Pay freezes have made an unwelcome return to the private sector, contributing to subdued settlements across the board, according to the Labour Research Department (LRD). LRD Payline, which monitors agreements across all UK sectors, showed the median basic pay rise in the three months from March to May 2011 to be 2.7% - a fall from the 3% level reached earlier in 2011. This partly reflects the fact that one in five new deals in the latest period implied pay freezes. Widespread

pay freezes in the public sector are beginning to make their mark on pay trends, accounting for four out of 10 public sector pay deals monitored since the pay round began last August. Yet, freezes are also returning to the private sector, where until very recently they seemed to have faded out. LRD Payline also found that the spread of settlements continued to widen in the three months from March to May. At the higher end, a quarter of settlements were worth 3.9% or more but at the lower end a quarter were worth 1.5% or less. The overall median increase of 2.7% comes as inflation hits 5.2% on the RPI measure or 4.5% on the CPI measure.

English: press release Labour Research Department (LRD)

### **Unions step up action on Southampton City Council**

*June 28, 2011*

The Unison and Unite unions have decided to step up their action concerning the Southampton City Council, in response to the Council's decision to sack 4,300 employees across a range of services and re-employ them on new contracts with an average 5% lower pay. Recent talks with the Council have failed to produce any progress and so the unions are now involving more workers in the industrial action. As a first step, on 28 June 300 library workers, refuse collectors, street cleaning workers and bridge toll collectors and garbage workers started a seven-day strike.

English: [http://www.unison.org.uk/news/news\\_view.asp?did=6957](http://www.unison.org.uk/news/news_view.asp?did=6957)

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