

collective bargaining

Issue 2/2011 February

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

No bargaining progress in electricity sector

February 14, 2011

Employers and trade unions (GPA-DJP and PRO-GE) in the electricity sector (26,000 employees) are no closer to agreement after two rounds of collective bargaining. The unions argue that the employers' offer is below the trend set by the metal industry negotiations in November 2010 with an increase in inflation since then. They also argue that the electricity sector has not been hit so hard by the crisis. The unions reject the idea that pay rises should be linked more to results at company level and have criticized the employers for not doing enough to maintain the sectoral agreement.

English: <http://www.epsu.org/cob/404>

German: <http://www.gpa-djp.at/servlet/ContentServer ...>

Unions attack regional government over health sector pay

February 14, 2011

The GPA-DJP and VIDA trade unions have criticized the regional government of Salzburg for saying that it will not commit to honouring the private health and social care sector collective agreement (BAGS) in its procurement. The regional authority argues that it does not have to comply with a collective agreement if it was not involved in the negotiations. By contrast the unions argue that the authorities should agree to meet and discuss how to provide sustainable finance for health and social

services provision and avoid any measures that could lead to wage dumping (See also this Collective Bargaining Newsletter Year 3 December 2010 and Year 4 January 2011).

English: <http://www.epsu.org/cob/404>

German: [http://www.gpa-djp.at/servlet/ContentServer ...](http://www.gpa-djp.at/servlet/ContentServer...)
[http://www.vida.at/servlet/ContentServer?pagename=So3 ...](http://www.vida.at/servlet/ContentServer?pagename=So3...)

Belgium

Two confederations reject private sector agreement

February 28, 2011

The proposed 2011-2012 national framework agreement for the private sector has been rejected by the socialist (FGTB/ABVV) and liberal (CGSLB/ACLVB) trade union confederations. Their concerns included the social security cuts, the limited room to negotiate (0.3%) over pay at sectoral level and the lack of a minimum wage increase. There were also concerns about negotiating against a European background, with increasing pressure to increase retirement ages and to end pay indexation. Following consultation of its membership the ACV/CSC confederation decided reluctantly to support the agreement although it was far from satisfied with the content. The FGTB/ABVV confederation has announced a national action day on 4 March in protest of the outgoing cabinet's decision of 25 February to carry out elements of the rejected agreement (See also this Collective Bargaining Newsletter Year 3 December 2010 and Year 4 January 2011).

English: <http://www.epsu.org/cob/404>

Dutch: [http://www.abvv.be/web/guest/news-nl/-/article ...](http://www.abvv.be/web/guest/news-nl/-/article...)

[http://www.aclvb.be/publicaties/nieuws/nieuwsitem/detail/de ...](http://www.aclvb.be/publicaties/nieuws/nieuwsitem/detail/de...)

http://www.acv-online.be/Actualiteit/Nieuws/Detail/Luc_Cortebecck_over_ipa.asp

French: http://www.fgtb.be/web/guest/news-fr/-/article/129960/&p_1_id=10624

[http://www.cgslb.be/publications/actualite/nouveaux/detail/la-cgslb ...](http://www.cgslb.be/publications/actualite/nouveaux/detail/la-cgslb...)

http://www.csc-en-ligne.be/Actualite/Nouvelles/details/aip_approbation.asp

Bulgaria

Railway union plans strike

February 21, 2011

Employees of State Railway Company BDZ are likely to go on strike on 10 and 11 March, with the final date for the strike action yet to be decided. "It is not a matter if there will be a strike or not, but when," Petar Bunev, president of the KNSB railway union told a television station, "My personal opinion is that the strike must commence after the holidays, so that ordinary people are not affected." The union remains opposed against the conditions of a loan by the IMF and the European Union, stipulating that BDZ and the National Railway Infrastructure Company (NRIC) ultimately have to shed 30% of their staff or about 6,000 people, and asks that strategies should be developed for expansion of BDZ and NRIC instead. A number of meetings with government ministers did not lead to a solution (See also this *Collective Bargaining Newsletter* Year 3 December 2010 and Year 4 January 2011).

English: [http://www.sofiaecho.com/2011/02/21/1047649_bulgarian-state-rail ...](http://www.sofiaecho.com/2011/02/21/1047649_bulgarian-state-rail...)

<http://www.focus-fen.net/index.php?id=n242766>

Czech Republic

Health union demands talks with government

February 14, 2011

The TUHSSC health union has called on the government to re-open social dialogue in order to tackle the crisis facing the health service. Hospitals are facing problems in funding and plan to close thousands of beds while doctors have threatened mass resignations if nothing is done to improve the low levels of pay in the sector. The unions have asked for solving the complex remuneration system for workers in the healthcare with the target to raise their pay. They also campaign for a united pay-scale for all workers in public and private health care.

English: <http://www.epsu.org/a/7309>

Denmark

Two-year agreement in state sector

February 14, 2011

The OAO public sector union reports that a two-year agreement has been negotiated in the state sector with 3.15% for pay over the period. However, state sector pay developments are linked to private sector increases and relatively high increases (12.8%) in the previous three-year agreement mean that state sector increases were 1.48% ahead of the private sector. This implies an effective pay freeze in 2011 to allow catching up by the private sector. The 1.7% increase in 2012 corresponds to forecast inflation. The unions are pleased that they have resisted the Ministry of Finance's attempts to implement further decentralization of wages and to increase working time.

English: <http://www.epsu.org/cob/404>; <http://www.epsu.org/a/7321>

Strikes in protest of phasing out early retirement

February 3, 2011

On Thursday 3 February, bus drivers in the Greater Copenhagen area went on strike. The strike was in protest of the government plan to phase out the early retirement programme and a change in policy that will require drivers to pay for compulsory training. Most of the bus routes in the area were disrupted. Strikes also hit municipal public transport in the cities of Aarhus and Esbjerg. The same day at Copenhagen's Kastrup airport various categories of workers went on strike during three hours in protest of the government plans concerning early retirement.

English: <http://www.cphpost.dk/news/national/50900-major-bus-strikes-today.html>
<http://news.ph.msn.com/business/article.aspx?cp-documentid=4620041>

Estonia

Power plant workers prepare for strike

February 14, 2011

On behalf of the workers in the two power plants of the national power company Eesti Energia in the Northeastern town of Narva, the Narva Energia Union has set a 25% pay rise goal and says it will go on strike if the demand is not met by 1 April. According to the union, wages have not increased since 2008. The indignation of the union was triggered by a claim of Eesti Energia's chief of finances that despite good business results the company had no intention of raising wages. Thus far the other union, representing the workers of the neighboring Balti Power Plant, has withheld its support to the 25% demand.

English: <http://news.err.ee/economy/e346f7ed-4f0c-454c-995e-cd00b39ac8fa> via
http://www.labourstart.org/cgi-bin/show_news.pl?country=Estonia

Finland

Strike warning in security industry

February 23, 2011

Service Union United PAM has issued a strike warning for the entire security industry (7,000 employees). If a new collective agreement will not be reached, the union board says a three-day nationwide strike will be called to start two weeks from Thursday 24 February. According to the union the action will not, however, affect emergency services or any jobs where a strike would endanger any activities of key importance to society. The major disagreement in the negotiations concerns the reform of the industry's pay system. Earlier PAM declared an overtime ban for the security industry as well as a three-day strike, to start Wednesday 2 March, at the security company Securitas. According to PAM president Ann Selin Securitas complicated collective bargaining: "The company put pressure on employees and shop stewards who have participated in industrial action. Securitas has also sent its employees a message where it urges them to leave PAM and to search for an alternative to it."

English: [http://www.yle.fi/uutiset/news/2011/02/threat_of_security_guards_strike ...](http://www.yle.fi/uutiset/news/2011/02/threat_of_security_guards_strike...)

<http://www.artto.kaapeli.fi/unions/T2011/005>

Basic new agreements in state and municipal sector

February 17, 2011

Negotiators in the municipal and state sectors have reached a common understanding on new collective agreements, aiming to maintain purchasing power. This was the main goal of JHL and the other trade unions involved. In the municipal sector the agreement covers some 430,000 and in the state sector 88,000 employees. In the municipal sector all employees will receive a 1.2% pay rise on 1 May 2011, whereas on the same day an average rise of 0.8% will be shared according to the conclusions reached in the local negotiations. In addition a bonus –€100 for many employee groups – will be paid in May. In the state sector wages will be raised retroactively from 1 February 2011 by 1.3%. On 1 May 2011 a locally negotiated component of on average 0.5% and a 0.2% equality component will be added. The agreement essentially improves the rights of employees in situations where tasks will be changed so as to become less demanding; their pay cannot be reduced during 24 months following the changes. The new state agreement expires on 29 February 2012. The decision bodies of the parties involved still have to approve the negotiation results (See also this Collective Bargaining Newsletter Year 4 January 2011).

English: <http://www.jhl.fi/portal/en/news/archive/?bid=840&y=2011>

Union supports call to abandon productivity scheme

February 14, 2011

The Pardia public service union is supporting the proposal from the National Audit Office (NAO) to end the state productivity scheme. Both the NAO and Pardia argue that the programme has become little more than a programme of cuts in staffing. Pardia in particular highlights the failure to do more to boost productivity through new forms of work organization and innovative practices initiated by public sector employees. Latest evidence suggests that productivity has declined while stress and burnout have increased.

English: <http://www.epsu.org/cob/404>
http://www.pardia.fi/in_english/?x126=1978689

France

Agreement in ports on early retirement

February 18, 2011

On 18 February, after four days of negotiations the CGT-affiliated union Syndicat General des Ouvriers Dockers du Havre reached an agreement with port employers on early retirement. Subsequently, the dockworkers called off their six-week campaign of rolling strikes. The union appears to have accepted two years of early retirement against the initial demand of four years, but got recognition of the arduous nature of dock work that entitles up to 6,000 port workers to take early retirement. The CGT said the agreement included additional measures to address the issue of arduous work but did not reveal details yet (See also this Collective Bargaining Newsletter Year 3 October 2010 and Year 4 January 2011).

English: [http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2011-02-10/french-port-workers ...](http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2011-02-10/french-port-workers...)
<http://www.joc.com/maritime/french-ports-cut-pension-deal-avert-strike>

Public sector pay trend below inflation

February 14, 2011

The FGFFO civil service trade union has produced a briefing on public sector pay showing that the basic annual increase has exceeded inflation in only one of the last 11 years. The loss in purchasing power over the period is around 8%. Inflation in 2011 is expected to reach 2% while pay has been frozen until 2013. The UGFF-CGT federation has carried out a similar exercise including calculations for a sample of salary grades indicating what the loss of purchasing power means for gross pay. This exercise shows that if pay had kept pace with inflation since 2000 then administrative workers would be between €153 and €230 per month better off.

English: <http://www.epsu.org/cob/404>
French: <http://www.fo-fonctionnaires.fr/> (2011-02-03 TRACT SALAIRES);

Germany

Train strike action may be repeated

February 22, 2011

After a two-hour stoppage on Tuesday 22 February between 6 to 8 am, the GDL train drivers' trade union has threatened further strike action to press for pay demands. Union president Claus Weselsky said Tuesday's strike, which delayed hundreds of thousands of passengers, was called after seven months of negotiations brought no results. GDL wants pay scales for drivers at six small rail firms brought into line with those at national operator Deutsche Bahn, as well as a higher wage offer from the state-owned national operator. In total wage demands cover 26,000 regional, long-haul and freight train drivers.

English: [http://www.reuters.com/article/2011/02/22/germany-strikes ...](http://www.reuters.com/article/2011/02/22/germany-strikes...)
<http://www.thelocal.de/national/20110221-33237.html>

New collective agreement at Volkswagen

February 18, 2011

After negotiating 13 hours, IG Metall negotiators achieved a new collective agreement in the night of 8 February for 100,000 workers of the six Western German production sites and the VW financial division. The main elements of the agreement are: from 1 February 2011 a lump sum of 1% of the annual wage has to be paid, but at least €500 (€200 for apprentices); as of 1 May 2011 wages will be increased by 3.2%; supplementary payment of performance-oriented remuneration for five months (January-May 2011) between €400-600; as of June 2011 regular payment of performance-oriented remuneration, averaging €100 per month. The agreement on wages will end after 16 months on 31 May 2012, two months after the end of the sectoral agreement of the metal and electrical industries.

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

Union aims at 7% wage increase in chemicals industry

February 14, 2011

On Friday 11 February the IGBCE union announced to seek for the workers in the chemical industry a 7% pay increase in the collective bargaining round beginning 16 February. This round covers 550,000 workers in 1,900 companies for a period of 12 months. Negotiations will be held on a regional basis, with the North-Rhine region to begin first, followed shortly after by other regions. Peter Hausmann, head of IGBCE's Collective Bargaining Department, said the figure of 7% had been agreed following production growth in the sector for 2010 of 11%, and companies realising an average 17.5% increase in revenues.

English: [http://www.icem.org/en/78-ICEM-InBrief/4249-IGBCE-Aims-for ...](http://www.icem.org/en/78-ICEM-InBrief/4249-IGBCE-Aims-for...)

3.4% pay rise in energy companies

February 14, 2011

After difficult negotiations along with warning strikes the ver.di union has reached pay increases of 3.4% for employees of the two energy companies RWE and Vattenfall. The Vattenfall agreement covers 20,000 workers and runs for 13 months from 1 January 2011. The RWE agreement is also for 13 months and runs from 1 November 2010 to 30 November 2011 (See also this *Collective Bargaining Newsletter* Year 3 December 2010 and Year 4 January 2011).

English: <http://www.epsu.org/cob/404>

German: [http://energie-bergbau.ver-und-entsorgung.verdi.de/tarifarbeit/private ...](http://energie-bergbau.ver-und-entsorgung.verdi.de/tarifarbeit/private...)
<http://presse.verdi.de/pressemitteilungen/showNews?id=ab24cf98-3469-11e0-7db0-001ec9b03e44>

Waste sector workers get 2% rise in 2011

February 14, 2011

After nine months of negotiations and strike action, the ver.di union has agreed a deal with the BDE employers' organization covering 20,000 workers in the private waste industry. There will be a pay

increase of 2% for 2011 with a €350 lump sum to cover the period from May to December 2010. Ver.di managed to resist pressure from the employers to create a two-tier pay structure that could have cut some salaries by 20% (See also this *Collective Bargaining Newsletter* Year 3 November 2010).

English: <http://www.epsu.org/cob/404>

German: <http://presse.verdi.de/pressemitteilungen/showNews?id ...>

Greece

First general strike of 2011

February 23, 2011

On Wednesday 23 February, much of the country came to a standstill during the first general strike of 2011, against the government's austerity drive. Private and public sector trade unions held protest rallies in Athens and Thessaloniki. It was estimated that some 30,000 people took part in the rally in Athens, which was mostly peaceful. However, in the end violent clashes between some protesters and the police broke out that took away much of the attention for the union demands (See also this *Collective Bargaining Newsletter* Year 3 September, October, November and December 2010; Year 4 January 2011).

English: http://www.ekathimerini.com/4dcgi/_w_articles ...

<http://www.nytimes.com/2011/02/24/world/europe/24greece ...>

Hungary

Trade unionists criticize plans for new constitution

February 28, 2011

Trade union leaders have sharply criticised a concept for a new constitution put forward by parliament's ad-hoc committee. Participants in a public hearing of the parliamentary committee said that the concept did not include stipulations concerning trade unions, guarantees for coordination between employers and employees, the security of employment and of wages or controls over working time. Tamas Szekely, head of the federation of trade unions for employees in the chemical and energy industries, said that the minimum wage should be defined in the constitution and that it should stipulate that social security contributions should not be spent on anything other than social services. Laszlo Varga, head of the cooperative forum of trade unions (SZEF), said the concept was neither clear nor straightforward. Peter Pataky, president of the national federation of trade unions (MSZOSZ), said a number of international documents referred to trade union rights and "if those documents are not ashamed of using the word trade union then the Hungarian constitution should not be either."

English: Máté Komiljovics, union correspondent

Ireland

Women hotel workers in battle against lower minimum wage

February 24, 2011

The hearing of the High Court injunction against the SIPTU union and members on strike at the O'Callaghan Davenport Hotel in Dublin over cuts in the minimum wage has been adjourned until March 1. Five SIPTU women members are in dispute with the company because it took them off the roster and told them they will lose their jobs if they do not accept lower rates of pay. When the national minimum wage (NMW) was lowered, Finance Minister Brian Lenihan gave assurances that the minimum wage for existing employees could not be reduced without their consent. However the workers concerned, all women from Eastern Europe, were brought into three meetings and told they must sign the new contracts. They refused, and were removed from the payroll. SIPTU emphasizes that although the dispute involves only five people it has implications for over 300,000 workers affected by the new NMW legislation (See also this *Collective Bargaining Newsletter* Year 4 January 2011).

English: <http://www.siptu.ie/PressRoom/NewsReleases/2011/Name,12136,en.html>

<http://cms.iuf.org/?q=node/764>

Contract cleaners ask for preservation of ERO

February 23, 2011

On 24 February contract cleaners organised in the SIPTU union would be handling in a petition signed by 2,000 of their colleagues and their supporters to the EROs Independent Review Committee, calling for the preservation of the Employment Regulation Order (ERO) which protects their pay and conditions of employment. They will be accompanied by the O'Callaghan Davenport Hotel strikers, who are not protected by an ERO. The forced reduction of their minimum wages would anyway not be possible if they were also covered by an ERO (See also this Collective Bargaining Newsletter Year 4 January 2011).

English: <http://www.siptu.ie/PressRoom/NewsReleases/2011/Name,12135,en.html>

Italy

Unions take different line over agreement with government

February 14, 2011

The FP-CISL, Uilpa and UIL FPL public service federations have signed an agreement with the government which they claim will protect workers' pay at levels agreed for 2010 and that will also give the unions a role in negotiating reforms at the workplace. The FP-CGIL public service federation has refused to sign the accord which it argues will undermine the system of collective bargaining in the public sector. This federation is planning strike action for 25 March.

English: <http://www.epsu.org/cob/404>

Italian: <http://www.fpcgil.it/flex/cm/pages/ServeBLOB.php/L/IT/IDPagina/16770>;
<http://www.fp.cisl.it/intesapubblicoimpiego/>

Netherlands

Mass demonstration against public sector cuts

February 19, 2011

On 18 February, over 10,000 workers of a large variety of public services across the country demonstrated in The Hague against spending and job cuts in the public sector. They in particular asked for more respect for public servants and their tasks. According to public services union Abvakabo FNV, one of the organizers of the mass meeting, 110,000 jobs in the public sector may be at stake due to the spending cuts the government has announced for the next four years. Eric de Macker, chairman of the co-organising union CNV Publieke Zaak, said the unions cannot go along with creating public poverty. The Minister of Social Affairs and Employment, Piet Hein Donner, did not seem impressed and stuck to his saying that "there is no money left in the state pockets anymore" (See also this Collective Bargaining Newsletter Year 4 January 2011).

Dutch: [http://www.abvakabofnv.nl/nieuws/nieuws/duizenden-mensen-eisen ...](http://www.abvakabofnv.nl/nieuws/nieuws/duizenden-mensen-eisen...)

De Volkskrant, 19 February 2011

Union prioritizes training and careering in hospitals

February 14, 2011

Public services union Abvakabo FNV has surveyed its members in the hospital sector to help formulate their main demands for the negotiations in this sector due to start on 18 February. The union will be taking account in particular of the needs of young workers who are often on short-term contracts with few hours and inadequate training. Also based on the survey outcomes, Abvakabo FNV will make training one of its main demands as part of a strategy to make hospital work a more attractive career. Seven in 10 respondents younger than 35 of age answered to judge training (very) important. The union will also be looking for a basic pay increase of 2%.

English: <http://www.epsu.org/cob/404>

Dutch: <http://www.abvakabofnv.nl/nieuws/nieuws/inzet-nieuwe-cao-ziekenhuizen>

Plea for employer commitment to quality production and jobs

February 10, 2011

From 10 to 25 February, members of the FNV Bondgenoten union working in the metalelektro or

large metal industry (140,000 employees) were able to vote on the unions' collective bargaining proposals. Bargaining itself is to start on 29 March. Central issues in the proposals are improving purchasing power, maintaining good pension schemes and early retirement, investment in professional skills and equal pay and working conditions for temporary workers. In emphasizing the last two issues, the union asks for a larger commitment of employers to attaining sustainable employability, innovation, high value-added production, and quality jobs. The wage demand is 2%, as decided by the FNV Bondgenoten board in December 2010. Yet Jos Brocken, the union's main negotiator in the sector, adds: "Yet, we will demand 3% if the employers would not go along with our proposals on pensions, training and employment."

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

Union wants equal pay for temps at Tata Steel

February 10, 2011

The FNV Bondgenoten union has formulated its demands for collective bargaining at Tata Steel (formerly Corus), covering 9,500 workers and scheduled to start 2 March. The current agreement expires by 31 March 2011. As the steel market and Tata Steel are recovering, the union sees room to ask for a 2% wage hike and an increase of the year-end bonus from 2% to 3%. A major demand is that temporary workers will be paid equally to permanent workers and that Tata Steel records with third parties that a collective agreement applies. First negotiator of Bondgenoten, Aad 't Veld, said: "Everyone working at the Tata site in IJmuiden is entitled to a good package of pay and benefits." He also stressed the need to bring down work pressure in many departments and teams, for example by offering young incoming workers permanent contracts.

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

Poland

Polish Post to lay off 5,000 workers

February 23, 2011

Poczta Polska (PP), the Polish post service, is to lay off 5,000 workers by the end of October, reports the Polish press agency PAP. In response to the announcement, the Solidarity trade union plans to picket government offices in Poznań on 2 March and in Warsaw on 16 March. "We hope that there will be real negotiations with the government, which is the owner of our firm," said Bogumił Nowicki, president of the National Communications Secretariat of Solidarity. The redundancies result from PP's plans to liquidate 3,000 post offices which are to be replaced with sales points located in gas stations and convenience stores. The changes are intended to make PP competitive before 2013, when the market will be opened to other postal firms from the European Union.

English: [http://www.wbj.pl/article-53389-polish-post-to-lay-off-5000 ...](http://www.wbj.pl/article-53389-polish-post-to-lay-off-5000-...) via http://www.labourstart.org/cgi-bin/show_news.pl?country=Poland

Romania

Unions protest when Labour Code is to be promulgated

February 22, 2011

The five trade union confederations have threatened with a general strike when the President will receive the Labour Code and the Social Dialogue Code for promulgation and they have announced to launch rallies across the country starting February 28. According to their action plan, all federations affiliated to the five confederations will start protesting when the Chamber of Deputies is to discuss the draft law modifying the Labour Code. Union leaders announced that they set talks with deputies in the committee, protests and visits at the main party headquarters including the ruling party and the opposition, rallies across the country and a warning strike the day of the vote in the Chamber of Deputies.

English: [http://english.hotnews.ro/stiri-top_news-8323753-unions-protest ...](http://english.hotnews.ro/stiri-top_news-8323753-unions-protest-...)

Spain

Paperworkers start up national strike action

February 23, 2011

On 23 February paperworkers across the country, belonging to the two major trade union confederations, began strike action in frustration to futile year-long bargaining that has left them without a pay increase in 2010. They have announced to repeat their 24-hour action on 3 March. The bargaining between the FIA-UGT and FSC-CCOO unions and the employers' grouping, Aspapel, regards the 2010-2012 national sectoral agreement and covers 17,500 workers at some 120 mills and plants. The dispute is not just over salaries, but also over adverse salary structures that employers are trying to impose that will prove detrimental to workers in the long term and over Aspapel's aggressive methods to liberalise work rules.

English: [http://www.icem.org/en/19-Pulp-Paper/4264-Pledge-Support ...](http://www.icem.org/en/19-Pulp-Paper/4264-Pledge-Support...)

Main union confederations sign social pact

February 14, 2011

On January 26, the CCOO and UGT union confederations have signed a social pact with the government and the two main employers' organisations that provides a broad framework of bargaining issues including pensions, energy and innovation policy, as well as collective bargaining reform. According to the document signed the new system will help "rationalize and better articulate collective agreements" and encourage negotiations at company level. The agreement will determine the structure of negotiations in each individual sector and remove some existing bargaining levels. The signatories commit to develop tools for consultation, interpretation and conflict resolution as well as to encourage out-of-court solutions. Unions and employers now have until March 19th to come up with the reform of the interconfederal framework of collective bargaining. The UGT believes that bringing in questions of industrial policy and investment introduces an important element in the debate about pensions. The CCOO thinks that the pact is missing any consideration of fiscal policy and says it will continue to challenge the employment law reforms. The ELA confederation in the Basque region organized a general strike on 28 January and remains opposed to the pact and in particular the various pension reform proposals (See also this Collective Bargaining Newsletter Year 3 December 2010 and Year 4 January 2011).

English: <http://www.epsu.org/cob/404>; message of EUCOBAN network of EMF / EFFAT / ETUF-TCL / EMCEF ; Planet Labor, January 31, 2011, No. 110070

Spanish: [http://www.fspugt.es/El_Acuerdo_social_y_la_reforma ...](http://www.fspugt.es/El_Acuerdo_social_y_la_reforma...)
http://www.ela-sindikatua.org/home-es/view?set_language=es

Unions welcome equality committees

February 14, 2011

The FSC-CCOO public sector federation has welcomed the setting up of committees throughout the state administration and public agencies to tackle the issue of equality between men and women. The union says that it is important that union representatives have access to the relevant data and analyses in order that they can take a full part in negotiating equality action plans. The FSP-UGT is also pleased about the initiative and believes it has the potential to make a real difference, particularly in relation to the more equal sharing of family responsibilities.

English: <http://www.epsu.org/cob/404>

Spanish: <http://www.fsc.ccoo.es/webfsc/menu.do?Actualidad:Mujer>
[http://www.fspugt.es/_La_igualdad_entre_mujeres_y_hombres ...](http://www.fspugt.es/_La_igualdad_entre_mujeres_y_hombres...)

Sweden

Union announces industrial action in banking sector

February 22, 2011

On 22 February, the country's main trade union for employees in the banking sector announced industrial action over wages and employment conditions of its 30,000 members. From March 5 the union will block all overtime and additional hours in banks represented by the employer's organization. It will also stage a blockade against all forms of recruitment as well as a prohibition of foreign working missions. "The move is designed so that third parties will not be affected", Ulrika Boëthius, negotiation manager and first vice chairperson at the Financial Sector Union of Sweden, said, "Our goal is to get a new contract with reasonable conditions for our members". The Banking Institutions' Employer Organisation (BAO) reacted the same day it was open to reopen discussions.

English: [http://www.swedishwire.com/business/8708-swedish-banks-goes ...](http://www.swedishwire.com/business/8708-swedish-banks-goes...)

Switzerland

Domestic workers protected by first sectoral contract

February 11, 2011

After three years of debate fuelled by the Unia union jointly with other affiliates of the Swiss Federation of Trade Unions (SGB/USS), on 1 January 2011 the first-ever country-wide standard work contract (Normalarbeitsvertrag or NAV) came into force, laying down minimum wages and working conditions for domestic workers. The NAV is a legal minimum wage provision for sectors without collectively agreed provisions. The compulsory minimum wages are: CHF 18.20 (€ 14.17) per hour for untrained workers; CHF 20.00 (€15.57) for untrained workers with four years of professional experience or for workers with two years' training; CHF 22.00 (€17.13) for workers with three years' training. For these minimum hourly wages to apply a domestic worker must work on average at least five hours a week for the same employer. Earlier experience in the canton of Geneva, since 2004 having its own domestic workers' NAV, has been positive, also concerning implementation. Besides protection, this NAV enabled domestics to defend their rights effectively, notably through going to the labour court.

English: [http://www.social-europe.eu/2011/02/domestic-workers-in-switzerland ...](http://www.social-europe.eu/2011/02/domestic-workers-in-switzerland...)

United Kingdom

Strike of contract workers at Tata Steel

February 28, 2011

On 14 and 15 February low-wage contract workers employed by OCS Group mounted a two-day strike at Tata Steel in Port Talbot (2,900 employed), in protest to the cleaning and catering multinational's miserly pay offer. Some 70 members of UK union Community, most taking their first industrial action, blocked two entrances to Tata's Corus Strip Products mill because a living wage has not been paid them since June 2010. Community calls on OCS to make a pay offer that exceeds the national minimum wage. OCS responded to the strike by bussing in managers and others to perform mill-site services, while unionised steelworkers at Tata were supporting the strike actions by not cooperating with scab cleaners.

English: [http://www.icem.org/en/78-ICEM-InBrief/4273-Contract-Workers ...](http://www.icem.org/en/78-ICEM-InBrief/4273-Contract-Workers...)

Increasing amount of people work unpaid overtime

February 22, 2011

A record 5.26 million people worked unpaid overtime last year - the highest since records began in 1992, a TUC analysis of official figures reveals to mark Work Your Proper Hour Day (WYPHD). This analysis found that in 2010 over one in five workers (21%) regularly worked unpaid overtime, an increase of 0.7%points since 2009 and the highest proportion since 1997. The 5.26 million people clocked up an average seven hours 12 minutes unpaid overtime a week, worth UKP 5,485 (€ 6,456) per person and a record UKP 28.9 (€ 34.0) billion to the economy. Public sector workers are the most likely to do unpaid overtime, with over one in four (26.3%) regularly putting in more than seven hours of unpaid overtime a week, compared to around one in six workers in the private sector (18.9%).

English: <http://www.tuc.org.uk/workplace/tuc-19200-fo.cfm>

Equal pay victory for municipal workers

February 14, 2011

Around 900 women working for Bury council in the North West of England are set to benefit from a ruling from the Employment Appeal Tribunal on equal pay in a case initiated by the UNISON union. The jobs mainly carried out by women (such as carers, cooks, cleaners, support workers) were compared to jobs of equal value predominantly carried out by men (including refuse collectors, gardeners and drivers). The basic rates for the jobs were similar but bonuses and attendance allowances were only available for "male" jobs which could mean 35%-50% higher salaries.

English: <http://www.epsu.org/cob/404>

Most union reps pessimistic on pay and job prospects

February 7, 2011

The squeeze on workers' spending power could prove fatal to government hopes of a private-sector recovery in the economy, according to a survey of union representatives. The recent Labour Research Department (LRD) survey shows that workplace reps and union officials are generally pessimistic about the prospects for the economy and for their own collective bargaining. Even in the private sector only 28% feel pay is likely to rise at or above the rate of price increases for most workers. These concerns are spelt out by reps' predictions of staffing levels where their members work, with 59% anticipating that levels will be reduced in 2011. That view is not confined to the public sector, where 80% are expecting job cuts, but is also held by four in 10 private sector reps. Only 16% in the private sector think the workforce will increase. It is not surprising, therefore, that reps are tending to make job security an even higher priority than pay. Well over half (57%) say it is top priority compared with 39% citing pay. Job security is prioritized by 80% in the public sector and 33% in the private sector.

English: press release Labour Research Department (LRD)

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