
Collective Bargaining News: 1st Quarter 2016

Wage negotiations

- **Norway:** On 3 April 2016 Fellesforbundet managed to negotiate an agreement with its employer counterpart and avoid a national strike. The overall wage increase will be 2.4 percent. The government also contributed with a couple of significant measures. [Read more](#)
- **Germany:** On 29 February 2016 IG Metall's National Executive Board took a decision on wage demands for the metal and electrical industries. The demand is 5.0% for 12 months for some 3.8 million workers. Negotiations started in mid-March 2016. [Read more](#)
- **The Netherlands:** A new collective agreement has been concluded by four Dutch unions for 140 000 workers in the big metal sector. The agreement, which is valid for 37 months, leads to 5.9% higher wages and a number of other improvements. [Read more](#)
- **Slovakia:** OZ KOVO has signed an agreement in mechanical engineering with a wage increase of 2.6% from 1 February 2016. Another agreement in the transport sector has been concluded. Negotiations are still going on in metallurgy and electrical engineering. [Read more](#)

European policies

- **The EU Commission** has proposed a targeted revision to the Posting of Workers Directive which it claims will promote more fairness in the European labour market. [Read more](#) However, the European Building Workers' Federation is discontent with the proposal which it does not expect will reduce social dumping in practice. [Read more](#)
- **The EU Commission** is carrying out a consultation on a European pillar of social rights applicable only to the euro area. The consultation remains open until 31 December 2016. [Read more](#)
- **EU Commission:** In countries with high trade union densities, unions may be more likely to succeed in pushing up negotiated wages if this is also associated with high employer densities (thematic sheet on the economic semester). [Read more](#)

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- **European Parliament:** Adequate working conditions, under which the Internal Market is constitutionally conditioned, will only emerge if and when trade unions retain the right to exert pressure both within national borders and transnationally (study report on EU social and labour rights). [Read more](#)
 - **The EU Commission** has launched a plan against corporate tax avoidance. Commissioner Pierre Moscovici maintains that this area has top priority. Legally-binding measures have been suggested to block the most common methods used by companies to avoid paying tax. [Read more](#)

National policies

- **UK:** The TUC (confederation) has published a report that sets out which workers' rights in the UK are underpinned by EU rules – and would therefore be at risk in case of a Brexit. [Read more](#)
- **Italy:** The largest confederation, CGIL, has proposed a new workers' statute introducing universal labour rights. It applies to all workers. The charter, which is comprehensive, has been put to the members for approval. [Read more](#)
- **Finland:** The social partners (confederations) have negotiated a plan to improve the country's competitiveness. It replaces a former plan that was met with massive protests from unions. Still, SAK has doubts and might not approve it. [Read more](#)

Articles

- **Institute for New Economic Thinking on** German wage moderation and the Eurozone crisis. It is high time to look more closely at the labour cost competitiveness myth. [Read more](#)

Economic and social data

- **Eurostat:** Euro area annual inflation was -0.2% in February 2016, down from 0.3% in January. Energy prices fell by 8.0% in twelve months. [Read more](#)
- **ETUI:** The annual Benchmarking Working Europe report was published in March with data on economics and the labour market. Moreover, it provides an evaluation of the extent to which the EU is prepared for the future. All four chapters of this report conclude on a negative note, and each puts forward suggestions for policy changes. [Read more](#)

- **ILO:** Global unemployment will rise in 2016 and 2017 and reach more than 200 million. Of the people who do have jobs, as many as 1.500 million (46%) are in vulnerable employment. 327 million are in extreme poverty despite being employed. [Read more](#)

Study reports

- **The Hans Böckler Foundation:** The experiences after one year with statutory minimum wages are good. Millions of workers have got pay rises and employment has seen a continuous growth. Mini jobs are disappearing. [Read more](#) See also European database on minimum wages. [Read more](#)
- **The Hans Böckler Foundation:** The German private sector remains near the bottom of the list of high-wage countries in the EU. [Read more](#)
- **Eurofound:** Temporary employment grew by 25% in EU27 between 2001 and 2012, compared with 7% for permanent employment. On average, temporary employees earn 19% less than permanent employees. [Read more](#) A special study has been undertaken on the representativeness in the temporary agency work sector. [Read more](#)
- **Oxfam** describes extreme inequalities in a recent report. The richest 1% of the world's population has now accumulated more wealth than the rest of the world put together. [Read more](#)
- **ETUI:** The EU Court rules against cases of clear abuse of fixed-term contracts but does not rule against the *use* of this form of contract. In this way, the Court indirectly supports the politics of labour dualisation, whereby member states can continue to use fixed-term contracts to increase the labour supply. [Read more](#)

Legal issues

- **The European Court of Human Rights (ECHR)** has ruled that a Romanian company's decision to monitor an employee's email account and dismiss him for sending personal emails during the working hours had not breached the employee's rights. [Read more](#)