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## Collective Bargaining News: 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter 2016

### Wage Negotiations

- **Denmark:** CO-industri has launched its collective bargaining campaign for 2017. Negotiations started on 4 January 2017. Training and better conditions for senior workers are key topics. [Read more](#)
- **Austria:** In the autumn of 2016, PRO-GE concluded collective agreements with six employers' associations in the metal industry applicable to 180,000 workers. Wages increased by 1.5%-2.0%. Additional improvements were achieved regarding job quality. [Read more](#)
- **Italy:** After more than one year of negotiations, strikes, demonstrations and refusal of overtime work, the three Italian metalworkers' federations have jointly signed a new, national, collective agreement. [Read more](#)

### European Policies

- **The European Economic and Social Committee (EESC)** has adopted, by a majority vote, an opinion on the revision of the Posting of Workers Directive. The EESC found that a limit of 6 months for posting would be closer to real business conditions than 24 months as was proposed by the Commission. [Read more](#)
- **The Council of Ministers:** Despite harsh criticism from trade unions, the EU has adopted a recommendation to the Member States on the establishment of national productivity boards. [Read more](#)
- **The ETUC** has negotiated a framework agreement on active ageing with its European counterparts. The agreement is a response to the demographic changes in working life. [Read more](#)

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## National Policies

- **France:** A positive element of the new French labour law is the right for employees to disconnect electronic devices from work to protect their private lives. Companies with more than 50 workers must start negotiations to define the rights of employees to ignore their smartphones. [Read more](#)
- **Finland** becomes the first country in Europe to pay unemployed citizens an unconditional monthly sum. The income (€560) will replace their existing social benefits and will be paid even if they find work. [Read more](#)
- **UK:** The Scottish Government has announced a £250,000 support package for trade unions in Scotland to help mitigate the negative impacts of new Trade Union Act passed by the UK Government. - This is unnecessary legislation that threatens the capacity of trade unions to deliver the constructive employment relations that underpin a fairer, more inclusive and more successful economy. [Read more](#)
- **UK:** The Government has appointed its first ever Director of Labour Market Enforcement. Sir David Metcalf's responsibilities include monitoring abuse of workers and controlling employment agencies. [Read more](#)

## Articles

- **Müller, Schulten, Zuckerstätter:** The economic justification for internal devaluation is based on three fundamental fallacies. [Read more](#)
- **World Economic Forum:** Rising income inequality and the polarisation of societies pose a risk to the global economy in 2017 and could result in the rolling back of globalisation unless urgent action is taken. [Read more](#)

## Economic and Social Data

- **Eurostat:** 1 out of 6 employees in the European Union is a low-wage earner. The proportion of low wage earners was highest in Latvia and lowest in Sweden in 2014. [Read more](#)

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- **Eurostat:** In 2015, around 119 million people, or 24% of the EU population, were at risk of poverty or social exclusion. [Read more](#)
  - **Eurostat:** The euro area unemployment rate was 9.8% in November 2016. This is the lowest rate recorded since July 2009. [Read more](#)
  - **Eurostat:** Euro area annual inflation was expected to be 1.1% in December 2016, up from 0.6% in November 2016. [Read more](#)

## **Study Reports**

- **ETUI:** Minimum wages are an effective tool for raising the lowest incomes in Central and Eastern Europe. [Read more](#)
- **ETUI:** The argument that increasing wages ahead of productivity would necessarily represent a threat to competitiveness, is flawed. In fact, history has shown that rising unit labour costs and rising relative wages have frequently accompanied increasing exports. There is no argument for low wages in eastern and central Europe. [Read more](#)
- **ILO:** The wage growth in 2015 was the lowest in four years. This could be a risk factor for a sustainable recovery. [Read more](#)
- **EU Commission:** Around three million jobs were created in the EU in 2016. However, unemployment remains a massive problem. Only one in eight unemployed people manage to find permanent full-time employment within three years. [Read more](#)
- **Eurofound:** Even though the EU States have – in line with the Working Time Directive – adopted legislation limiting working hours to 48 hours per week, those rights are not in place for all employees. The problem is greatest where the social partners have a weak role in defining working time standards. [Read more](#)
- **EP:** A study commissioned by the European Parliament provides an overview of the Posting of Workers Directive, the current situation and major patterns regarding posting of workers. [Read more](#)