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# Collective Bargaining News: 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter 2017

## Wage Negotiations

- **Belgium:** The metal unions have reached a new agreement in the metal construction sector. The workers will get 1.1% in addition to the automatic indexation. There will also be qualitative improvements in terms of training, pensions etc. [Read more](#)
- **The Netherlands:** A new agreement for metal and engineering was concluded in May 2017. Wages will increase by 4.16% over 25 months. The agreement contains a wide range of qualitative arrangements in addition to wages. [Read more](#)

## European Union policies

- **The European Commission** launched its long-awaited Pillar of Social Rights on 26 April 2017. Basically, the Pillar aims at strengthening the social dimension of the EU. However, it contains few concrete proposals. [Read more](#) The Pillar includes:
  - An interpretative communication on the Working Time Directive. [Read more](#)
  - A consultation of Social Partners on the Written Statement Directive. [Read more](#)
  - A public consultation on access to social security. [Read more](#)
  - A package of measures to promote work-life balance. [Read more](#)

## National policies

- **Sweden** introduces new legislation to improve conditions for posted workers. [Read more](#)
- **Ireland** aims at banning zero-hour contracts in most circumstances. [Read more.](#)

## Articles

- **Thorsten Müller (ETUI) and Thorsten Schulten (HBS):** The Pillar could contribute to a strengthening of minimum wages in Europe. [Read more](#)

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- **Amandine Crespy (ULB, Brussels):** The Pillar looks like a broad policy process which blurs responsibilities by conflating regional, national and EU competences. There is a high chance that it will result in opaque politics. [Read more](#)
  - **Montserrat Mir Roca (ETUC):** Work-life balance affects the lives of millions of Europeans, and has a direct bearing on economic growth and popular support for the EU. [Read more](#)
  - **Ronald Janssen (TUAC):** Weak wages produce a weak recovery. [Read more](#)

## **Economic and social data**

- **Eurostat:** In 2016, average hourly labour costs were estimated to be €25.40 in the EU with the lowest hourly labour costs recorded in Bulgaria (€4.40) and the highest in Denmark (€42.00). [Read more](#)
- **Eurostat:** The unemployment level fell in 80% of the EU regions in 2016. However, there are big differences between the regions, in particular as far as youth unemployment is concerned. [Read more](#)
- **Eurofound (yearbook):** Despite the economic recovery since 2013, a number of countries are struggling to regain their pre-crisis employment levels. [Read more](#)

## **Study reports**

- **ETUI:** Wages in all CEE economies started to grow dynamically from the mid-1990s up until the crisis in 2008. Wage convergence in this period was spectacular. In the wake of the crisis, however, wage convergence either experienced a sudden halt or slowed down substantially. [Read more](#)
- **ETUI:** Reduced employment protection has brought neither labour market benefits nor economic benefits. [Read more](#)
- **ETUI:** A new book analyses the development of trade unions in eleven countries (Austria, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland, Spain, Sweden and the UK) since the early 2000s. [Read more](#)