



Start of spring bargaining collective bargaining round in Austria

On Tuesday, March 22, 2022, the spring bargaining round in Austria started when the joint unions' negotiating team of PRO-GE (for blue-collar workers) and GPA (for white-collar workers) presented the demands for the upcoming negotiations in the electrical and electronics industry (EEI) in the first meeting with the employers.

The spring bargaining round in Austrian industry affects around 130,000 employees and, in addition to the EEI, also includes the textile industry (where the handover of demands also took place on March 22), the chemical industry, the paper industry and the glass industry. Negotiations in the chemical industry will start on March 28, followed by the paper industry on March 30. The conclusion is traditionally the glass industry, with negotiations starting in May.

Favourable economic situation/high inflation and demand for a 6 percent pay rise

Before the outbreak of the war in Ukraine, the Austrian economy has been in good shape and has overcome the effects of the fourth lockdown due to the pandemic. GDP had already returned to pre-crisis levels by the end of 2021 and only temporarily weakened somewhat at the beginning of 2022 due to the omicron wave. Although value added in industry is currently stagnating due to the expensive intermediate products, the order situation gives rise to optimism. Given the economic upswing of the past few months, the high workload of the employees due to a shortage of skilled labour and a strong rise in inflation our team put forward a demand for a 6 percent pay rise. An average inflation rate of 3.5 percent over the last 12 months as basis for negotiations was accepted by the employers.

It was important for us to emphasise that the economic success of the industry is mainly due to the employees who continued to perform their work under difficult conditions, not only caused by the pandemic, but also aggravated by a reduction of staff with resulting intensifying workload for our colleagues in the companies.

Our demands in detail:

Increases in pay:

- Increase in minimum wages/salaries with special consideration for low-income earners
- Increase in actual wages or salaries with special consideration for low-income earners
- Increase in the allowances and expense allowances specified in the collective agreement to the extent of the increase in minimum wages/salaries or to the extent of the actual wages/salaries
- Significant increase in apprentices' remunerations (1st year of apprenticeship- 1000 Euros)

1st year of apprenticeship: 1,000 euros with subsequent increases in the following apprenticeship years

Legal framework improvements to ease the work pressure:

- Time bonuses for particularly stressful work (e. g. night shift)
- Extra days off achieved due to more favourable crediting of previous service periods

- Easier access to the so-called “leisure option” (wage increase can be converted into extra time off) by
- Redesign of the anniversary bonus:

One monthly wage/salary after 15/20/25/30/35/40 years of service

Validity date: May 1, 2022, Duration of the agreement: 12 months

Demands from the employers' side

The employers put forward their demands, including:

- a freeze in travel allowances and allowances,
- reduction in daily rest periods,
- extension of the calculation period for the maximum permissible average weekly working time and additional “improvements” regarding working time flexibility (extension of the reference period in the bandwidth model).

Next negotiating round is scheduled for: April 4, 2022.

PRO-GE

Martina Schneller

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