

## **Spring bargaining round in various industrial sectors in Austria**

March 2023

The spring collective bargaining round in Austrian industrial sector starts on March 8 with demands for pay increases for the approximately 60,000 employees in the electrical and electronics industry (EEI). Trade unions PRO-GE and GPA are expecting very intensive negotiations and tough battles in all sectors this year. The main reason for this is the skyrocketing price increases, which are making lives of workers massively more expensive. That is why decent wage and salary increases are at the top of the list of demands from the trade unions and the works councils' representatives in the sectors.

"Unlike other EU countries, the Austrian government has not yet managed to dampen the inflation. It is now up to the trade unions to ensure that the burden of inflation does not lead to massive income losses and that the costs of the crisis are not passed on entirely to the workers. On the contrary, we will strive for real wage growth in the electrical and electronics industry, especially since even employers' representatives are talking about a sensational year 2022 and just this week Statistics Austria revised GDP growth upwards to 5%," say the two chief negotiators for the EEI.

The average 12-months' inflation, which is relevant for collective bargaining, was 9.5% in February 2023. Industry experienced an economic boom in the past two years with high order backlogs and rising productivity. Despite rising energy prices, the forecasts for the manufacturing sector are still good. In addition, the workload and intensification of work have increased again due to the shortage of workers. "The electrical and electronics industry has made significant profits. There is therefore no reason for a wage and salary brake. Our focus is on sustainable increases, and the employees must also benefit from the success of the industry - in the form of better pay and easier working hours," emphasise the chief negotiators.

After the EEI, negotiations begin for the approximately 8,000 employees in the paper industry (March 20), for the textile industry (March 21, 7,500 employees) and for the almost 50,000 employees in the chemical industry (April 14). The last sector of the industrial spring round is traditionally the glass industry with around 7,000 employees and a start of negotiations in May.

**Edited by industriAll Europe.**