

The ETUI-REHS research institute has launched a new website that brings together information on industrial relations systems, collective bargaining, worker representation and European works councils. It also covers corporate governance issues and the European social dialogue. Read more at > worker-participation (EN)

X Social partners sign agreement on harassment and violence at work

After 10 months of negotiations the European social partners have signed an agreement on tackling violence and harassment at work. The framework agreement requires employers to have a clear statement outlining that harassment and violence at the workplace are not tolerated and that specifies the procedure to be followed in case of problems. It also recognises that the responsibility for determining, reviewing and monitoring the appropriate measures rests with the employer, in consultation with workers and/or their representatives. The agreement also allows the social partners to deal with cases of violence by third parties where appropriate. The provisions of the agreement are due to be implemented by April 2010. Read more at > ETUC (EN) And at > ETUC (FR) And at > DG Employment (EN,FR,DE)

EPSU affiliates reject concession bargaining

Energy, water and waste trade unions discussed recent collective bargaining developments at EPSU's public utilities standing committee on 20 April. Several colleagues reported that the European companies are seeking concessions from the trade unions on longer working hours, reduction in the number of days leave etc. This is happening despite record profits for energy companies and in a context where billions are spent on takeover battles. The EPSU group evoked the charter on transnational solidarity in an integrated industry and pledged support to unions fighting such attempts. EPSU unions aim to achieve wage bargaining results that compensate for inflation and provide a fair share of productivity increases. Read more at > EPSU (EN) The transnational charter is available in 16 languages. Read more at > EPSU

New trade union source of information on collective bargaining

The Global Union Research Network (GURN) has set up new web pages on its site dedicated specifically to information and analysis on collective bargaining. The information is co-ordinated by the researchers at the ETUI-REHS research institute but includes data and links on collective bargaining around the world. Read more at > GURN (EN)

Commission consults over protection of workers against carcinogens and toxic substances

In 2004, the European Commission carried out the first-phase of a consultation of the European social partners on the protection of workers from exposure to carcinogens, mutagens and substances toxic for reproduction at work. This confirmed that action needed to be taken at Community level to introduce better and standardised methods across the EU, and to tackle situations involving workers' exposure. On 9 March this year, the Commission launched the second-phase of the consultation to obtain the opinion of the European social partners on the content of a possible Community proposal in this area and in particular. The consultation runs until the end of May. For further information and copies of the consultation document, the European Commission contacts are: Antonis Angelidis and François Ziegler (Antonis.Angelidis@ec.europa.eu, Francois.Ziegler@ec.europa.eu). The ETUC produced a response to the first phase of the consultation. Read more at > ETUC (EN) And at > ETUC (FR)

ETUC pulls apart European Central Bank policy on wages

The latest issue of the ETUC's collective bargaining bulletin exposes the holes in the European Central Bank's relentless emphasis on the need for moderation in wage policy. The ETUC points out that for all intents and purposes moderate wage increases have been the norm across Europe for nearly 10 years. Even with some indication of higher increases in some countries, the ETUC argues that there is little prospect of inflationary wage developments. The bulletin then goes on to point out that the ECB's focus on wages and the claimed threat of inflationary wage demands in countries like Germany fails to take account of the whole picture and the recent growth in business profits, particularly in Germany but also in Spain which the ECB also takes to task over the potential for higher negotiated pay increases. Read more at > ETUC (EN)

Labour market policy network set up

A number of institutes across Europe have come together to provide an alternative view of economic policy. The European Labour Network on Economic Policy (ELNEP) will focus in particular on issues related to the labour market, employment, wages and income distribution. Wherever appropriate it will take a European, rather than national, perspective. ELNEP will challenge what has become almost a mainstream view of the importance of the supply side and the centrality of markets to the detriment of social policy. The network includes the ETUI-RHES European trade union institute plus a number of national bodies. The network will have its own website at: www.elnep.org Read more at > ETUI-REHS (EN, FR, DE)