



EFBWW NEWSLETTER

News from the EFBWW

Building our way to the congress! Save the dates: 12-14 December 2023, Helsinki, Finland. Six months to go!

BUILD
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TOGETHER
TOGETHER FOR A SOCIAL AND GREEN EUROPE

14th EFBWW General Assembly
12-13-14 December 2023
Helsinki, Finland

EU agrees on better protection of construction workers against asbestos

Following triologue negotiations between the European Commission, Council, and Parliament on the revision of the Directive on asbestos at work, the occupational exposure limit for asbestos across the EU is to be set at 2,000 fibres/m³. This will significantly improve the protection of workers against cancer-causing asbestos fibres. In addition, the measurement methods to count asbestos fibres will change to more modern and accurate systems. The EFBWW general secretary, Tom Deleu: “The agreement achieved is

an important step to better protect construction workers from asbestos. It is time to invest in prevention measures, in training for construction workers and enforcement measures. This also means proper and frequent inspections and dissuasive sanctions. However, the new limit risks being implemented too late to protect those involved in building renovations part of the EU Green Deal. Therefore, we urge member states to move to the lower exposure limit more quickly than anticipated in the agreement. In the autumn, the next asbestos related battle on the screening and registration of asbestos in buildings will start. More [info](#)

Asbestos Still a Killer



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tions, decent pay, and a limit of subcontracting chains in construction.

Council Recommendation on strengthening social dialogue in the EU

On 12 June, the Council adopted, on a proposal from the European Commission, [the Recommendation on strengthening social dialogue in the EU](#). The Recommendation will support the Member States in implementing principle 8 of the European Pillar of Social Rights by providing guidance on reinforcing social dialogue and collective bargaining at the national level. This text is the first document adopted by all Member States (unanimously) on social dialogue and will become part of the EU acquis. Although it is not a legally binding text, Member States will have the obligation to apply the recommendations, e.g. Member States will have to report on their progress in the European Semester, and in the accession process of EU candidate countries the recommendation is part of the requirements to be fulfilled.

Trade unions united at European demo to limit subcontracting

On 7 June, the EFBWW European action took place in Brussels with 250 construction workers in front of the European Parliament asking the European institutions to limit subcontracting and to stop exploitation in subcontracting chains. Our message reached the European Parliament. Many MEPs joined our demo and took the floor supporting our demands. We want action from the European institutions to limit subcontracting, guarantee full equal treatment for all workers, to ban intermediaries in the context of posting, to promote direct jobs, to prevent that public money goes to the exploitation of workers. We have given a clear signal to the European Parliament and to the European Commission.

Next year, this topic must be one of the top priorities for the European elections. We expect the Commission to take an initiative. The EFBWW wants to thank all its affiliates, other European Federations, ETUC and BWI who supported our subcontracting campaign. We are proud to see the union movement united at national and European level!

EFBWW at the European Sustainable Energy Week

On 20-22 June the European Sustainable Energy Week (re-watch [here](#)) took place in Brussels, the biggest annual event dedicated to renewables and efficient energy use in Europe. The EFBWW contributed to the panel “The beating heart of buildings: people!” making the point that quality energy renovations of buildings need skilled workers, decent and healthy working condi-

EFBWW warns about risks of posting exemptions on construction sector

The EFBWW expressed concerns over potential risks of short-term posting exemptions on the construction sector at the 'Digital Solutions for Decent Mobile Work' meeting. Hosted by the member of the European Parliament (MEP) for the Socialists and democrats, Gabriele Bischoff, the event featured a presentation of a new study by Professor Manfred Weber on behalf of the Hans Böckler Foundation. The EFBWW underscored the risk of potential exploitation of mobile workers if exemptions are not carefully assessed, referencing the

study's focus on reform proposals and data exchange in social security systems. EFBWW's intervention emphasised the need for digital solutions that protect mobile workers and combat potential abuses, explaining that EFBWW will be starting a project on social identity cards in construction in the coming weeks. More [info](#)



Projects

EFBWW and Cembureau start joint project on cement

1 July is the official start of the EU funded project "Cement Skills 2030" which will run for two years. Cembu-

reau joins the project as a partner of the EFBWW and together both organisations will commission a study on the effects on employment and skills in the cement industry resulting from the greening of the economy and future new technolo-

gies. The outcome of the study should lead to joint policy recommendations and strengthen the future cooperation between EFBWW and Cembureau.

News from our affiliates

Italy



Trade unions reach new agreement for wood sector

The Italian trade unions FenealUil, Filca-Cisl and Fillea-Cgil signed with FederlegnoArredo, the minutes of the agreement for the renewal of the National Collective Labour Agreement for the wood, cork, furniture, forestry and forestry industries, which expired on 31 December 2022. The renewal leads to a pay increase of 102.20 euros at the basic level and 136.95 euros at the middle level from 1 July onwards. In addition, an equal one-off sum of 300 euros is paid in July 2023 and a further 300 euros in March 2024. In view of the current economic situation, caused by the out-of-control increase in the cost of basic goods and raw materials, which is severely affecting both workers' and families' incomes and companies' budgets, the parties agreed to deal only and exclusively with the strictly economic aspects of the contract. It was

therefore agreed, not to intervene on the regulatory part and to allocate all available resources to support workers and their families, avoiding indirect and organisational burdens.

Filca Cisl opens office in Lampedusa

The Filca Cisl office in Lampedusa was inaugurated on 12 June. It was an important decision to open an office on the island, both for local workers to provide them with protection and services, but also to extend a welcoming hand to all those people who land on this island on their way to Europe. This initiative once again confirms how Filca Cisl is a proximity union, where the person is always put 'at the centre', being close to the most fragile and those in need of support and solidarity. The migrant issue has always been among the top priorities of FILCA Cisl trade union action, and in some regions, migrant coordination

groups were set up to gather information about their needs. During the inauguration event, the EFBWW European project – ECMIN - was presented in detail, and the cards produced by the project were made available for easier consultation of the website <https://www.constructionworkers.eu/> by those who want information on working conditions, collective agreements, holidays, sickness in the construction sector in Europe.



Finland



New government aims to severely restrict workers' rights, warns Rakennusliitto

The program of Finland's new right-wing government is even tougher on employees and trade unions than expected. "The Government program raises severe concerns about the government's plan to cut many social benefits and weaken trade unions' ability to help their members", alerts Kimmo Palonen, president of the Finnish Construction Trade Union. Prime minister Orpo's government wants to cut the unemployment benefit by 20 % after 8 weeks and another 5 % after 8 months unemployment, cut housing benefits and other last-resort social benefits. The right to political strikes will be limited so that they can last one day maximum. Compensatory fines after unlawful strikes will be substantially raised. The government also wants to punish individual employees taking part in an unlawful strike with a 200 € fine. These examples are only some of the poisonous proposals in the Government program.

Spain



"historic" General Agreement for the Spanish construction sector

The Spanish trade unions - CCOO Habitat and UGT Fica - signed the VII General Construction Agreement. This agreement is the result of social dialogue and will benefit more than one million workers. The agreement includes a Pension Plan, which is an important milestone as it is the first to be signed in Spain for an entire sector. It also establishes a 10% wage increase for the

three years it is in force, with a review clause, and improvements in employability, occupational health and safety, equality and training in new technologies. In the words of the secretary general of UGT FICA, Mariano Hoya, this is "a historic agreement that puts the sector on the path to the 21st century". The general secretary of CCOO del Hábitat, Daniel Barragan, defines the new agreement as "a great step forward for the sector", "which guarantees purchasing power for more than 1,300,000 workers, creating the first major pension plan for the sector".



Belgium



Social partners sign CBA

The social partners in the construction industry have approved and signed the collective bargaining agreement for 2023-2024. In companies that have made sufficient profits by 2022, a purchasing power bonus of between 250 euros and 750 euros will be awarded to workers. There will also be an increase in the amount of eco-cheques (from 100 euros to 115 euros). In addition, the minimum supplementary pension will rise from 1.1% to 1.65% from 1 January 2025, for both blue-collar and white-collar workers. "Our activists are satisfied with this

agreement," says Patrick Vandenberghe, President of the CSCBIE, "it contains major improvements for construction workers. Brahim Hilami, the federal secretary of FGTCB-CG states that "despite the Belgian law forbidding free wage bargaining, we managed to achieve important results for construction workers. We will continue to fight against this law in order to restore full freedom for trade unions to negotiate wages in Belgium."

Sweden



Malarna signs CBA agreement

After several days of strike and difficult negotiations, the painters and the painting companies have signed a collective agreement for the painting profession. The agreement includes increased pension provisions, increased gender equality through the intro-

duction of pregnancy pay and record-high salary increases of 7.4% over 2 years. The salary increases follow the levels set by the branch, which means 4.1% in the first year and 3.3% in the second year. For a painter with an average hourly wage, this means SEK 2,480 (212.13 euros) more per month during the 2-year agreement period. Apprentice wages in the various educational stages are increased proportionally. One of the most difficult points of discussion related to qualification requirements, as employers wanted each individual company to decide who are painters. More [info](#)

In this section the EFBWW gives the possibility to its affiliates to share their stories.

If you have news or contributions, do not hesitate to contact pcravina@efbww.eu.

Miscellaneous



New guide for companies to protect workers from heat

Summer is here! However, this is not a happy time for everyone. Heat is a major risk for construction and forestry workers who need to be aware of skin diseases, heat related illnesses, and an increase in the number of accidents! The European Agency for Safety and Health at Work (EU-OSHA) has a new guide for employers to take responsibility for their workers with practical ways to lower, manage and train on this

occupational risk and gives concrete actions to be taken if a worker shows signs of suffering from heat. Now it is up to companies to protect their workers! The EFBWW urges the European Commission to take action: we need EU-

Regulations on the Workers Protection Directive! More [info](#)

ELA reports on first week of action on the construction campaign

The European Labour Authority (ELA) held a meeting on the outcomes of the first week of action of the campaign dedicated to the construction sector. During the first action week, which took place on 24 - 30 April 2023, 10 cross-border inspections were executed. 15 Member States were involved: Austria,

Belgium, Czechia, Estonia, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Lithuania, Malta, the Netherlands, Poland, Spain, Slovakia and Slovenia. In total, 25 construction sites and more than 130 companies were checked. Over 1040 workers were affected and 156 possible infringements were detected. The most common presumed infringements were underpayment of wages, unlawfully obtained social benefits, breaches of working time regulations, non-genuine posted workers, bogus self-employment, bogus/fraudulent work agencies or letter-box companies, illegal employment of third country nationals, cross-border undeclared work, breaches of health and safety rules, and lack of posting declarations. In the preparations for this action, ELA released a new leaflet on Posted Workers in the Construction Sector: "Know your rights and obligations", which was disseminated to companies and workers during the inspections. More [info](#)



Time to have a break and enjoy the good Summer vibes!

The EFBWW Secretariat wishes you relaxing and refreshing holidays together with your loved ones.

Enjoy your holidays!

EFBWW Meeting schedule 2023

7 September 2023	Mid-term Conference Resilientwood	Zagreb, Croatia
2 October 2023 (full day)	Social Dialogue Wood/Furniture - Joint woodworking and furniture session	Brussels, Belgium
3 October 2023 (full day)	OSH Coordination group/Open expert meeting	Brussels, Belgium (EESC)
11 October 2023 (full day)	Social Dialogue Construction - WG VET/YOUTH	Online
17-18 October 2023	EFBWW - ETUI seminar woodworking & furniture	Belgium
19 October 2023	Resilientwood Workshop I	Sweden (tbc)
9 November 2023 (full day)	Executive Committee	Brussels, Belgium (EESC)
Week	Resilientwood Workshop 2	Italy (tbc)
14-15 November 2023	DESOCO2 EFBWW-FIEC event on Ukraine	Warsaw, Poland
12-14 December 2023	EFBWW General Assembly	Helsinki, Finland
16 January 2024	Resilientwood Workshop 3	France (tbc)
16 April 2024	Resilientwood Workshop 4	Belgium (tbc)

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