

German public sector workers strike

Workers Struggles: Europe, Middle East & Africa

13 April 2018

Europe

German public sector and telecom workers strike

Around 60,000 German public sector workers began a 48-hour strike Tuesday in support of a 6 percent pay claim involving 2.3 million workers.

The strike by members of the Verdi trade union hit public transport in cities such as Dusseldorf, shutting down tram, bus and underground services. Hospital and child care services were also affected. In Nuremberg, 130 out of 140 kindergarten facilities were closed. Public administration offices were also hit.

Public sector support staff at Frankfurt, Munich, Cologne and Bremen airports also struck Tuesday. It led to Lufthansa cancelling half its flights.

In a separate dispute, around 60,000 Deutsche Telekom staff struck Tuesday. They are seeking a 5.5 percent pay increase. Pay talks with the employer were due Wednesday and Thursday of this week.

Further Air France strikes

Thousands of Air France employees, including pilots, cabin crew and ground staff, held a further 48-hour strike beginning Tuesday. The strike cancelled around a third of scheduled flights.

The workers are seeking a 6 percent pay rise, rejecting Air France's initial offer of a 1 percent rise, revised to 2 percent.

The 10 trade unions representing Air France workers plan further 48-hour strikes beginning April 17 and 23.

Protest by UK oil platform workers

About 30 oil platform workers in the Mariner oilfield, off the Shetland Islands in northern Scotland, are refusing to work overtime.

The field is operated by Norwegian oil exploration company Statoil. The workers involved are employed by Norwegian oil service company Aker Solutions and the Dutch oil service company Stork.

According to energy news web site Energy Voice, the workers also held a four-hour "sit-in" on Saturday morning and a further sit-in during the

evening—to protest working conditions and bonus payments. The companies have been restructured over the last three years, resulting in detrimental changes in shift patterns.

The Mariner field is a recent project expected to yield 250 million barrels of oil over the next 30 years.

Unions suspend Aberdeen bus workers' strike in Scotland

The Unite union has called off strike action by around 250 bus drivers working for First Bus in the Scottish city of Aberdeen. The action was due to take place on Wednesday.

The drivers had mounted a determined struggle against proposed contract changes, leading to some drivers working 12-hour shifts with 10 hours at the wheel, cuts in holiday pay and pension provision, and split shifts.

Unite has recommended a new offer by management. No details of the offer have been made public.

The drivers were due to be balloted Wednesday and Thursday with the result announced Thursday evening.

Strike at UK school over management bullying

Around 30 staff at St. Helen's Primary Academy in Barnsley, South Yorkshire, held a two-day strike Tuesday and Wednesday this week.

The members of the National Education Union were protesting bullying by management at the school, run by Academies Enterprise Trust. The two-day strike followed a strike held on March 22 over the same issue.

Refuse workers in UK city of Hull continue strike

Around 25 drivers working for FCC Environment, a waste management company in Hull, England, continued their strike this week. They began a two-week stoppage on March 29, with the strike due to end yesterday.

The Unison members are striking so the sick pay scheme, which currently applies only to management and staff with protected conditions, is extended to everyone. They also want a better pay rise than the 2.5 percent offered and improved conditions.

Wildcat strike by recycling workers in east London

Around 15 migrant workers employed by Orion recycling in east London took wildcat strike action last week against poor working conditions. They also want to be paid the current London Living Wage of £10.20 an hour, rather than the £7.50 they currently earn.

Management promised to provide protective clothing and breathing equipment.

Striking London library staff reject pay offer

Bromley Borough Council library service workers in London began an indefinite strike on March 28, rejecting a 2 percent pay offer.

They are employed by social enterprise company Greenwich Leisure Limited, which took over the library service from Bromley Council in November last year.

London Underground rail strike set to strike at Acton Town depot

London Underground rail drivers working from the Acton Town depot on the District Line are due to strike for 24 hours today. The dispute by Aslef union members is in opposition to the disciplining of a driver over a safety breach.

Strike by Finnish electricians

Around 2,500 Finnish electricians began a weeklong strike Monday hitting more than a dozen companies. The action by members of the Finnish Electrical Workers' Union is over pay and longer working hours.

The workers rejected an unsatisfactory offer put forward by the Finnish Deputy National Conciliator.

Finnish construction workers announce series of strikes

Hundreds of Finnish construction workers are to hold a series of strikes, with dates set for April 19-24, May 3-4 and May 7-8.

The workers are demanding a new collective bargaining agreement and oppose employers' attempts to impose speed-ups, remove Sunday allowances and widen the use of casual labour.

The strikes, by members of the Finnish Construction Trade Union, will hit seven designated construction companies including concrete suppliers.

Irish Life insurance company employees set to strike

A strike by around 800 employees of the Irish Life insurance company was due to take place Thursday. Irish Life, which administers pension schemes, wants to close its employees' defined benefits pension scheme, replacing it with an inferior defined contribution scheme.

The strike involved members of the Unite union at its Dundalk call centre and regional offices. A rally was planned outside the company's headquarters in Dublin.

Unions call off strike by Norwegian industrial workers

Strikes by around 35,000 Norwegian industrial workers, including shipyard and chemical workers, have been called off by the unions following talks with employers.

The deal to be put to employees is for an average 2.8 percent pay rise—a minute 0.1 percent increase over the initial offer.

Polish steel workers ballot for strike

Around 900 workers, employed by Polish steel stockpiler and fabricator Huta Pokoj, are being balloted for possible strike action for a €71.50 a month pay rise. Around 350 workers held a picket line on April 6.

Huta Poloj have offered an increase of around €49, based on a lower overtime rate and cuts in allowances.

Workers' hunger strike in Georgia

Six workers at the Batumi seaport ended their hunger strike on April 6, following the resignation of the port's director general. They had called for his dismissal and were also protesting the dismissal of colleagues who had reached retirement age, a pay increase and payment of allowances.

Middle East

Protests by temporary Iraqi electricity workers

Electricity power workers began an indefinite sit-in at power stations across Iraq on April 2. It was part of an ongoing campaign to protest the proliferation of precarious work in the industry.

Many temporary workers are owed wage arrears.

Power workers organised demonstrations across the country on March 15 and 28. Around 3,000 temporary power workers formed the General Trade Union of Electricity Sector Employees of Iraq in April last year to fight the casualisation of the industry.

Africa

Angolan teachers strike

Primary and secondary school teachers throughout Angola began

national strike action Monday to demand the implementation of a new teachers' contract to improve salaries and teacher training.

The Sinprof trade union has limited the strike from April 9 to 27, despite the overwhelming support of teachers who backed industrial action with an 80 to 90 percent turnout. In Bengo Province, 95 percent respected the strike call.

Teachers struck over the same issues in April 2017.

Sudanese teachers threaten strike action

Eight hundred teachers in the White Nile State in Sudan are threatening strike action over wages unpaid for nine months.

Mass arrests have taken place at what are deemed illegal anti-government demonstrations, with many workers still incarcerated. Teachers Committee leader Yasin Abdelkarim was arrested and questioned for several hours by police.

South African bus drivers prepare for national strike

Bus drivers in South Africa are preparing for national strike action on April 18 to demand a one-year across-the-board wage deal of 12 percent, with an introductory minimum wage of R8,000.

The employers have offered a three-year wage deal of around 7.25 percent each year, with the minimum wage staying at its present level of R6,070.

Five transport unions and the SA Road Passenger Bargaining Council have been in negotiations over wages and conditions since January.

After government arbitration failed, a strike certificate was issued, to be activated on April 16 when the 30-day arbitration period ends.

South African workers to march against new punitive labour laws and increased water bills

Workers organised in 14 unions that constitute the South African Federation of Trade Unions planned to march on parliament in Cape Town on Thursday.

New legislation going through the National Assembly will scrap the minimum wage of R3,500, to be replaced by a basic hourly rate of R20 and impose secret ballots before strike action.

The demonstration was then planned to continue to the Civic Hall to oppose increased water charges.

Kenyan university staff defy back-to-work ruling

Striking university staff defied a ruling by Kenya's Labour Courts to return to work by April 9.

The court also instructed the Inter Public University Council Consultative Forum (IPUCCF)—the vice chancellors' organisation—to enter negotiations within 21 days with no victimisations.

The IPUCCF has threatened disciplinary action, including sacking

workers, if the judgement is ignored.

Two of the three striking unions, the Universities Staff Academic Union and Kenya University Staff Union, have demanded the vice chancellors post a counteroffer on the 2017-2021 collective bargaining agreement before a return to work.

On April 4, the strikers were attacked by police with tear gas grenades as they lobbied the Education and Finance Ministers offices in Nairobi.

Kenyan teachers' union prevents strike with university staff

Kenya's teachers are threatening to strike if the government does not abandon the Teacher Performance Appraisal and Development (TPAD) and the dispersal of teachers to rural localities.

Teachers fear TPAD (also proposed by university management in a condition for negotiations over a new Collective Bargaining Agreement) will be used to justify mass redundancies in education.

The Kenyan National Union of Teachers, opposed to mobilising its members in a joint offensive with the striking lecturers, is delaying the strike by 20 days.



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