



Laga Newsflash

Fifteen new NWC-CBAs and 2019-2020 wage norm have been legislated

On 23 April 2019, the National Works Council (**NWC**) published fifteen new CBAs in execution of the Inter industrial Agreement 2019-2020.

Furthermore, the Government also legislated the wage norm for the 2019-2020 period at 1.1%, in accordance with the social partners' agreement.

Below is a concise overview of these new measures.

1) New NWC-CBA's

Subject	CBA	Explanatory note
Employer's contribution to public transport costs	No.19/9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase of contribution to Belgian railway network (SNCB/NMBS) subscription to 70% (on 1 July 2019) Abolition of 5 km minimum threshold for contributions to tram, metro, bus or water bus subscriptions (as from 1 July 2020)
Voluntary overtime	No. 129	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maximum number of voluntary overtime increased from 100 hours to 120 hours per year Does not affect the possibility to increase to 360 hours through a CBA that has been declared generally binding

In addition, it was decided to extend the specific systems of unemployment with company allowances (**UCA**) and time credit for older employees:

UCA-system	Age requirement	Career requirement
Heavy work, night work, construction industry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 59 years until 30 June 2021 • 60 years as from 1 July 2021 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 33 years, partially heavy work
Heavy work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 59 years until 30 June 2021 • 60 years as from 1 July 2021 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 35 years, partially heavy work
Long career	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 59 years until 30 June 2021 • 60 years as from 1 July 2021 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 40 years
Health problems (prolongation of the existing system)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 58 years 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 35 years
Companies in difficulty or during restructuring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 58 years until 30 December 2019 • 59 years until 30 December 2020 • 60 years as from 31 December 2020 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10 years in the industry within the past 15 years <i>or</i> • 20 years overall
Time credit for older employees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1/5 working time reduction: 55 years* • 1/2 working time reduction: 57 years* 	N/A

*for the specific systems

Furthermore, these CBAs also determine the conditions under which an employee entering the UCA system can submit an application with a view to ensure adapted availability in the labour market.

In some of the situations described above, a CBA at industrial or company level still needs to be concluded to enable employees to take up the UCA-system or the time credit for older employees at the above mentioned ages.

2) Wage norm legislated at 1.1%

In the meantime, the government legislated the maximum margin for salary cost evolution at 1.1% through a Royal decree, which has been published. As a result, wages can increase by a maximum 1.1% on top of the planned wage adjustments following indexation during 2019-2020.

It is now up to the industries to negotiate the concrete implementation of the wage norm. Only after the social partners within each industry have reached an agreement can this be implemented at company level.

3) Action points

Following the publication of the above mentioned CBAs and the Royal Decree, companies may have to take action:

- a) Increase their contribution to public transport subscriptions as from 1 July 2019, if it is currently not at 70%;
- b) Adapt their policy (work rules) on voluntary overtime, while paying close attention to compliance with the internal threshold;
- c) In the event of dismissals, proactively check whether certain employees (still) qualify for UCA;
- d) Follow up closely on wage norm negotiations within their industries.

The Employment, pensions and benefits team is readily available to assist upon request.

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