

Changing direction?

Employment forecast

General Counsel



October 2015 to April 2016 – long range forecast

Key developments summarised	Impact on employers
United Kingdom	
Modern Slavery: large businesses to report steps taken to ensure operations and supply chains are slavery free.	Employers need to put in place appropriate checks and reporting structures, particularly with regard to supply chains. See our guidance.
In April 2016, minimum wage for workers aged 25+ will increase by 15%, to reflect new living wage premium .	Many employers are concerned about how they will absorb such a large increase in wage costs.
New strike laws including higher thresholds for strike ballots.	Unions will need a clear mandate before balloting for a strike. Dialogue will remain as important as ever to reduce alternative forms of protest.
Larger private sector employers (250+ staff) will need to report on gender pay gaps . New legislation expected by March 2016 but won't take effect immediately.	Employers should review pay practices so they can identify and explain pay gaps. Non-compliance risks fines and reputational damage.
European Union	
News expected from EU on progress of Directive on women on boards , possible changes to the EU Working Time Directive and information and consultation Directives and a potential new family-friendly Directive.	Long-range issues but could lead to more onerous obligations for employers.
Belgium	
Changes made to the procedure for social elections to be held in May 2016. Changes are aimed at simplifying and modernising the election process.	Early preparation for elections is necessary. The administrative process needs to begin in December 2015, with relevant business units and employee numbers identified before then. Beware special protection of candidates between January and May 2016.
Finland	
Existing employment legislation set to be amended unless labour market organisations can agree reform. Areas affected include overtime pay, Sunday work, national holidays, annual leave and sick pay.	Employers should watch for developments in coming months. Any legislation likely to take effect late 2016/early 2017 when existing collective agreements expire.
France	
New law introduced to modernise and strengthen relationships with staff representatives. Changes made to the operation of works councils and health and safety council.	New law introduces greater flexibility. Many aspects of the new law will mean significant changes for employers.
Germany	
Employers' record-keeping obligations in respect of the minimum wage relaxed in relation to 'mini-jobs' and family members.	Limited impact as administrative burdens in respect of other workers remain.
Italy	
Civil Code amended to give employers greater scope to unilaterally change employees' duties.	Changes will be welcomed but limits remain on changes that can be made and procedural safeguards must be observed.
Netherlands	
From 1 January 2016 employees have more extensive rights to request (but not demand) flexible work arrangements.	Managers need to be aware of new rights and procedure to be followed. Policies and handbooks should be reviewed.
Poland	
From 2 January 2016 mothers to be able to share maternity leave entitlement with child's father or certain other family members. Fathers also receive two weeks' paternity leave. Other changes to Labour Code effective 22 February 2016 include new rules on fixed term contracts, notice and garden leave.	The family leave changes are particularly significant. Employers need to take care to understand the new rights
Sweden	
On 1 December 2015, new central collective bargaining agreements take effect on use of non-compete clauses and rights to employee patentable inventions.	The agreement on non-compete clauses covers any business with trade secrets. The general rule remains that non-compete clauses can only be used in limited circumstances. The agreement on patentable inventions gives employees a mandatory right to compensation.

For further information, please contact



Anthony Rees

+44 292 047 7522
anthonyrees@eversheds.com



Constanze Moorhouse

+44 122 344 3803
constanzemoorhouse@eversheds.com

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