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July 19th 2018

▲ **Comment: Crossing the border ***

The growing animosity around the world to the influx of foreign nationals is not confined to refugees and asylum seekers. It equally applies to many permit-holding immigrants and workers covered, for instance, by European Union (EU) free-movement rules. The problem for employers is that popular prejudices influence government policies, making it harder to arrange intra-company transfers, hire top talent from abroad, and attract daily cross-border commuters.

Most country immigration rules contain limits for immigrations and require a “local worker” test to establish that there is no suitable national to fill a non-seasonal post. This can in some countries be just a routine formality, but in others be stringently applied.

Permanent cross-border controls are not permitted in the Shengen area of the EU, although passport checks can be made with EU member states outside the area, such as the UK. There are around 1.8 million cross-border commuters in the EU – amounting to 1% of the total working population – but the highest proportions of such commuters are from Slovakia (5.7%), Estonia (3.5%), Hungary (2.4%), and Belgium (2.3%) to neighbouring states.

Switzerland is not an EU member, even if it applies most EU laws. But each weekday, over 100,000 workers cross the border between France and the city of Geneva.

These mainly highly skilled workers are the life blood of the Swiss economy, but that has not prevented widespread public and political opposition to their presence, including an attempted petition to enforce a referendum on the open border policy and a social atmosphere affecting cross-border workers described as “toxic” by some French nationals.

Many border restrictions established to prevent the influx of Syrian and North African refugees have also hit cross-border commuters. This was the case from 2015 until last November on the Oresund Bridge linking Sweden and Denmark – both EU member states. 6,000 Swedish commuters cross the bridge by car each weekday to work in Copenhagen, and checks imposed by Sweden added over an hour to commuting time. The EU eventually forced the Swedish authorities to resume free movement but on the 12th of May 2018, checks were re-imposed until the 11th of November 2018 by Sweden. Restrictions over the same period have also been imposed by Austria (land borders with Hungary and Slovenia), Denmark (land border with Germany), Germany (land border with Austria), and Norway (all internal borders with an initial focus on ferry connections). France has imposed widespread checks on borders and internally due to perceived terrorist threats.

Although border control checks do not, in themselves, prevent cross-border commuting, they do act as a disincentive. They are just another complication, along with other procedures and uncertainties about living in one country and working in another, that border workers have to face. In the next issue we shall be looking at other barriers faced by such workers and what employers can do to alleviate the many bureaucratic burdens.

AFRICA AND MIDDLE EAST

ζ **AFRICA:** The African Continental Free Trade Area Agreement (AfCFTA) has five new signatories – Namibia, South Africa, Sierra Leone, Lesotho, and Burundi – bringing the total free-trade area countries to 49. Founded in Kigali Rwanda in January this year, the agreement requires members to remove tariffs from 90% of transactions to allow free access to commodities, goods, and services across the continent.

ψ **BOTSWANA:** A Labour Law Review Committee has been established by the government to examine both the Employment Act and the Trade Unions and Employers Organisation Act. It will determine if current legislation meets the requirements of ILO Conventions. This follows strong criticism of the country's labour relations laws at June's ILO plenary meeting in Switzerland – particularly its failure to implement Convention No. 87 on the Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise.

β **SAUDI ARABIA:** According to the Directorate General of Passports (Jawazat), 811,000 expatriate workers have left the country over the past 18 months. This may have been due, in part, to the level of new

fees imposed on foreign nationals, but is also a result of both the falling demand for the work foreigners undertake and the process of Saudi-isation.

ψ **TUNISIA:** The government's Vocational Training and Employment Ministry is working with the Employment Agencies Association to draft a new law that will protect job seekers from fictitious contracts abroad. There are currently 23 accredited private placement agencies finding work abroad, but many more in the unregulated market. Illegal agencies will face heavy penalties once the new law goes into force.

ψ **UAE:** In recent years, many short-term migrants have overstayed their permit expiry through lack of funds to return home, and therefore faced major fines. Now the UAE Cabinet has agreed to introduce a 3-month grace period to allow such workers to apply for a 1-year permit. This will also remove the "no entry" stamp on passports when overstaying workers eventually leave the country. Employers will benefit too, as there is now no need to pay a DH3,000 (US\$816) bank guarantee sum per worker when hiring overseas to replace a worker.

THE AMERICAS

Ω **BRAZIL:** Following last year's labour reforms, the payment of trade union dues is now voluntary and requires individual consent. However, this has not stopped twenty subsequent constitutional challenges by trade unions. Fortunately, the Supreme Court has now dismissed all challenges and has declared the labour reform law 13,467/2017 totally constitutional.

Ψ **CANADA:** Although the medical use of marijuana has been legal since 2001, it will not be until the 17th of October that its recreational use will be lawful throughout the country. Then it will be legal for anyone aged 18+ to possess up to one ounce of the substance for personal use. This will leave Canadian employers in a dilemma because workplace drug testing is also a contentious legal issue in itself.

ζ **MEXICO:** A new trade deal between Mexico and the EU has been hammered out and a full text will be available for signature by year end. The agreement includes references to the free flow of data between the parties and also the meeting by Mexico of agreed "labour standards". What these will mean will be made much clearer in the final text.

Ψ **USA:** The US trend of banning the requesting of salary history has now reached Hawaii. With effect from the 1st of January 2019, employers in Hawaii will be prohibited from inquiring about an applicant's salary history during the hiring process. Additionally, employers will be restricted from retaliating or discriminating against employees for, or restricting employees from, disclosing their own wages or discussing and inquiring about the wages of other employees.

Ψ **USA:** Employers in New York state are now prohibited from obliging employees to take their case to arbitration if they have a sexual harassment complaint, and also to apply a "gagging order" on the affected employee if a settlement is made. Moreover, with effect from the 9th of October 2018, employers must have a written sexual harassment policy and conduct annual workplace training to drive the message home to employees. The New York

Department of Labor is in the process of developing a model written policy and model training programme, both of which can be used by employers. Protection also exists in respect to any non-employees on company premises. However, one loophole in the mandatory arbitration restriction is that it only applies to any written contract an employer enters into on or after the 11th of July 2018. Therefore, existing restrictions would appear to legally hold.

Ψ **USA:** A new equal pay law has taken effect in New Jersey that prohibits employers from paying employees in a "protected class" lower than anyone not in a protected class who performs substantially similar work. Thus, unlike most other equal pay laws around the world, this law protects a wide variety of workers according to race, national origin, age, ancestry, sexual orientation, disability, military status and marital status, as well as gender. Comparisons must be made with employees in all a company's operations and a comparison cannot be used to reduce an employee's compensation. Differences are allowed, but only if based on a seniority or merit system and a measure of "job size". The statute of limitation has been increased to 6 years (with no reduction possible by agreement) and if a company is found to be noncompliant, then compensation must be set at treble the pay difference that has been experienced, treble the damages due and treble attorney fees claimed. This kind of law could have a profound impact if adopted by other jurisdictions around the world and make it obligatory for employers to utilise some form of bona fide job evaluation scheme.

Ψ **USA:** The new Equal Pay Act in Massachusetts does not go so far as in New Jersey (see above) because it only relates to

gender as a basis for pay equality, but it still underlines the importance of a factor-based job evaluation scheme to determine whether equal pay has been achieved. Up until now the assessment of pay equality in Massachusetts has been on skill, effort, responsibility, working conditions, and substantive content, but two jobs could be paid differently if they were clearly different in nature – an office job vs a driver, for instance. What has changed is that equivalent worth must now be determined on the basis of “job size” so that the office job may be of comparable worth as that for a driver after all. The job comparison also applies to those who live out of the state but enter the state to work. It is permissible still to pay differently if a merit-based system indicates a justification for why an individual is paid at a different level. Moreover, a mitigating factor will exist if the company has conducted a self-evaluation of jobs during the last 3 years.

△ **USA:** A major mistake that employers can make in the USA is not to have a correct system in place for “I-9 compliance”. Last year the US Immigration and Customs Enforcement agency (ICE) penalties for I-9 violations substantially increased and so did worksite audits. Employers are required to verify the identity and employment eligibility of all workers they hire, and to correctly record that information using the Employment Eligibility Verification I-9 Form. Non-compliance can result not only in fines, but criminal sanctions for HR managers. The Department of Labor can also carry out spot checks to ensure that permits under the H-1B programme are complied with – especially required salary levels.

Ω **USA:** A District judge in California has refused a temporary injunction applied for by federal immigration authorities, seeking to

challenge some of California’s “sanctuary laws”. Of greatest relevance to employers was a sanctuary law that was partly struck down. This related to how employers handled interactions with federal immigration authorities. The California law that was upheld was an obligation on employers to inform their employees about official inspections of immigration records within 72 hours of receiving a notice of inspection.

Ψ **USA:** A quarter of all workers in the USA require either a licence or some form of certification in order to practice in their field – from lawyers to the operation of credit unions to hairdressers, beauticians and taxi-drivers. This can prove problematic when we consider the 630,000 or so people who are released from jail each year in the USA. Some of these face suspension of their licences, in spite of federal political pressures on states to improve their licencing procedures to accommodate past offenders. Now a federal Senator, Cory Booker, has drawn up a Bill to require states to standardise their licencing criteria and for the FBI to improve the quality of crime data used for this purpose.

Ω **USA:** Following the landmark Supreme Court case concerning mandatory arbitration and the prevention of class actions (Epic Systems Corp. v. Lewis), the second Circuit is now handling a closely related appeal. This concerns the legitimacy of an arbitrator’s classification of a class where those involved in an action had not all opted into it (Jock v. Sterling Jewelers).

Ω **USA:** The nomination of Brett Kavanaugh as the next judge to join the nine-member US Supreme Court could have some implications for employers if accepted by the House and Senate. He has a strong record in

lower courts of ruling in favour of employers, especially in disability discrimination claims. However, he has sided with employees in respect to a few tenuous Title VII applications.

ASIA PACIFIC

Ω **AUSTRALIA:** Although there is little evidence of any increase in the number of class actions against companies, especially from shareholders, there is a concern amongst many finance directors that the cost of insurance premiums to protect directors in such actions is rising sharply. A recent report from the Australian Law Reform Commission has also underlined the need for greater regulation of litigation funders and more transparency when cases are heard.

β **AUSTRALIA:** The Pregnancy and Employment Transitions survey has revealed that over the year to 2017, the proportion of women staying in the same job prior to giving birth has increased to 77%. Women staying in the same job on returning to work has also increased to 65%.

Δ **AUSTRALIA:** A multinational company – Aurecon – is in the process of replacing 1200 employment contracts with pictorial, rather than written, employment agreements in order to reduce potential ambiguity caused by complicated written contracts. However, both the Australian Council of Trade Unions and the Australian Industry Group have raised concerns – particularly about the discriminatory nature of certain images that could be potentially used.

Ψ **CHINA:** Now in Jiangsu province, female workers may take special leave – paid at no less than 80% of the minimum wage in the province – if they can provide medical

verification that they are subject to tocolytic therapy (the use of medications to prevent premature birth) during pregnancy.

φ **CHINA:** The latest minimum monthly wage table and minimum hourly wage table can be viewed [here](#).

β **CHINA:** New incentives to encourage companies to set up or relocate their headquarters to Dongguan – an industrial city in the Pearl River Delta in Guangdong province – have been recently announced. The Municipal government will give special grants ranging from RMB 2 million (US\$306,370) to RMB 100 million (US\$15.32 million) according to company size and the investment commitment made by a company. What's more, the government will provide support such as construction land, office space and a rich talent pool to boost the development of its so-called "Headquarters Economy".

φ **JAPAN:** Over the year to May 2018, average monthly pay rose by 2.1% to ¥275,443 (US\$2,495). This has produced a real (inflation-adjusted) earnings growth of 1.3%. Of the total, regular pay advanced 1.5% to ¥244,175 (US\$2,211), while non-regular pay, including overtime, was up 1.6% at ¥19,318 (US\$175). Furthermore, special pay – which includes bonuses – rose 14.6% to ¥11,950 (US\$108).

φ **LAOS:** The monthly gross minimum wage in the private sector has risen from 900,000 kip (US\$107) to 1.1 million kip (US\$131). The last increase in the minimum wage was in 2015.

φ **NEW ZEALAND:** Latest figures from Stats NZ indicate that those who wish for, but cannot find, full-time work are paid significantly less than those who choose to

work part-time. In June 2017, underemployed people earned, on average, \$20.15 (US\$13.66) an hour, compared with an average hourly rate of \$27.52 (US\$18.68) for those choosing to work purely part-time.

φ **NEW ZEALAND:** A number of strikes have recently affected public services such as nursing and teaching. They primarily concern pay disputes and come after protracted negotiations. There are no signs this may be spreading into the private sector, but employers may experience difficulties with unionised employees if they seek to change working hours or use capital investment to improve productivity as militant union attitudes are spreading.

Ω **SOUTH KOREA:** The High Court of Seoul has ruled in a landmark case that use of a company credit card for personal expenditure does not necessarily amount to a valid reason for employment termination – if the amounts for transactions are relatively small and over an extended period. In such a case, the matter should have been dealt with using disciplinary actions and not by dismissal.

β **TAIWAN:** A trial programme has been launched by the Ministry of Labor to assist well-educated, but non-working, women to re-enter the workforce. Participation rates have been found to fall in two age groups: 30–34 and 50–54. The programme consists of several employment workshops followed by a grant of NT\$20,000 (US\$670) to pay for professional refresher training. The Ministry is also organising seminars with senior enterprise executives and workshops with HR practitioners to address the potential of women returners.

φ **TAIWAN:** Over the year to May 2018, average monthly basic wages of all employees increased by 2.5% to NT\$40,874

(US\$1,343). Overtime pay and bonuses stood at NT\$47,958 (US\$1,576) – down 1.8%. Furthermore, average working hours of all employees increased by 6.4% – up 10.8 hours to 178.8 hours a month.

φ **UZBEKISTAN:** The minimum wage has just been increased by 7% from the current 172,240 soums (US\$22) to 184,300 soums (US\$23.5) per month. Some state welfare payments have also risen. Further changes to the minimum wage will take place every 6 months.

EUROPE

Ψ **AUSTRIA:** Parliament has approved the introduction of 12-hour workdays and 60-hour workweeks undertaken on a temporary basis. Previously, this required approval by the company's works council through a works agreement. Although individual consent is still required, operational necessity will often make refusal very difficult. This measure should be limited by the constraints of the EU Working Time Directive that imposes averaging periods on working hours. However, Austria has, in the past, allowed collective agreements to ignore such limits. The change will be introduced with effect from the 1st of September 2018.

Ψ **BELARUS:** An intergovernmental agreement on visa-free travel with China has been recently ratified. Under the agreement, citizens of the two countries may use their passports to visit the other country for a single visa-free trip of no more than 30 days, with up to 90 days without visas in a year.

φ **BELGIUM:** Two sections of the Workplace Pensions Act have been amended with effect from January 1st 2019. Employees will automatically join their company's pension

plan as soon as they meet the conditions set, thus bypassing the age requirement to reach 25. Additionally, vested pension plan rights will be acquired from day one of joining the plan as opposed to the current regime, which provides that individual will only acquire their entitlements 12 months after affiliation.

β EU: In 2017, 14.3% of young people (out of over 38 million people) aged 18–24 in the EU were neither in employment, nor in education or training (NEET). The largest share of youth NEET was in Italy (25.7%), followed by Cyprus (22.7%) and Greece (21.4%). Conversely, the lowest share was recorded in the Netherlands, (5.3%), Slovenia (8.0%), and Austria (8.1%).

β EU: Eurostat statisticians have come up with some interesting data about working from home. In 2017, the Netherlands (13.7%) had the highest percentage of employed persons aged 15–64 who usually work from home. Working from home is still rare for most many European countries. The lowest was Bulgaria (0.3%), followed by Romania (0.4%). As a whole, the proportion of women (5.3%) in the EU usually working from home was slightly higher than that for men (4.7%).

φ EU: Both the average hourly labour cost and average wage component of labour costs rose over the year to Q1 2018 in the EU business sector by 2.7%. The highest annual increases were in Romania (+12.7%), Latvia (+11.2%), and Hungary (+10.3%), while a decrease was recorded in Portugal (-1.5%). At an EU level, labour costs per hour in the industrial sector alone grew by 3.1%.

β EU: Over the year to May 2018, total youth unemployment (those aged under age 25) decreased by 519,000 across the European Union to 3.3 million. 15.1% of young workers across the EU remained unemployed. Malta

had the lowest rate (4.8%), followed by Germany (6.1%), Estonia (6.8% in April 2018) and the Netherlands (6.9%), while the highest rates were in Greece (43.2% in March 2018), Spain (33.8%) and Italy (31.9%).

φ EUROPE: The latest updated wage figures from European countries may be viewed [here](#).

β GERMANY: A quiet revolution is taking place in Germany where the birth rate has been falling for years – reaching less than 1.5 births per woman by 2015. However, there was a 7% increase in births in 2016 compared to a year earlier. The overall increase in birth rates seems to have continued in 2017 with the demand for parental allowance rising by 6%. In fact, part of this trend may be due to the increasing willingness of fathers to share early childcare. Parental allowance claims from fathers rose by a substantial 11% in 2017.

ψ GERMANY: The coalition partner Social Democratic Party (SPD) has proposed that new immigration legislation be put in place by the end of 2018. This would seek to bring into one law the legal requirements that are currently contained in numerous legal stipulations and to extend the law in important ways. For instance, the more immediate weight given to academic qualifications, the use of a points-based system for determining entry, and the removal of the need for recognised university graduates to secure a job before entering Germany to look for work.

β ICELAND: Statistics Iceland reports that according to 10-year averages (2007–2016), men in Iceland and Switzerland had the highest average life expectancy in Europe (80.5 years), followed by Liechtenstein (80.1

years), Sweden (79.9), Italy (79.8), and Spain and Norway (79.4 years). The shortest life expectancy for men was in Moldova (65.8), Ukraine (65.1), and Russia (62.3). As for women, Spain and France have the longest life expectancy levels in Europe (85.5 and 85.4 years, respectively). The lowest values are recorded in Ukraine (75.6), Russia (74.4), and Moldova (73.8 years).

Ψ IRISH REPUBLIC: After a detailed study by the University of Limerick and extensive consultation, the lower house of the Irish Parliament (Dáil Éireann) has debated and approved a Bill that will largely ban the practice of “zero hours” and give more protection to workers on low pay who have uncertain working hours. It will also become a new offence for an employer to hire anyone without giving them, from the outset, a comprehensive description of duties, terms and conditions. The Employment (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill now goes to the Senate (Seanad Éireann) for further debate. The main sticking point is an amendment introduced in the lower house that would make it a criminal offence to hire someone on a false self-employment contract.

Ψ JERSEY (CHANNEL ISLANDS): From the 1st of September 2018, the existing Discrimination (Jersey) Law expands the definition of discrimination to include disability. As a result, areas such as recruitment, employment, the provision of goods and services, and even volunteering are likely to be affected. Infringement may result in fines of up to £10,000 (US\$13,206).

β NORWAY: During the first quarter of 2018, sickness absence (adjusted for seasonal and influenza variations) for employees aged 16–

69 stood at 6.4%. This was a decrease of 2% compared to the previous quarter.

β SWEDEN: According to Statistics Sweden, 64% of those obtaining degrees were women in 2017, and 35% of University course places in the traditional male domains of technology and manufacturing were filled by women. Yet 30% of teenage girls suffer from stress due to exam pressures, and stress increases with age. In fact, at age 23, a higher proportion of women than men consider they have poor health. Moreover, in spite of high academic success rates, women still have lower salaries and, eventually, lower pensions on average than men.

β SWEDEN: Things are nevertheless looking up for women in the labour market as their participation rate approaches that for men. Over the year to May 2018, the number of permanently employed women increased by 82,000, but only 40,000 for men. The unemployment rate was 7.2% amongst men, but only 5.6% amongst women. Men and women also equally benefited from an increased average working time of 3.5% over the year.

Ψ UKRAINE: Citizens of Ukraine may now stay in Serbia for up to 90 days within any 180-day period without requiring a visa. Previously, the period of visa-free stay for Ukrainian citizens in Serbia was 30 days within any 60-day period.

φ UKRAINE: Ukraine's state budget for 2018 has set a minimum living wage for welfare purposes at 1,777 hryvnias (US\$67) per month. In addition to this, additional allowances exist for children according to their age – 1,559 hryvnias (US\$59) for children under 6 years and 1,944 hryvnias (US\$74) for those aged 6–18 years.

β UNITED KINGDOM: The British government has launched a new “UKRI Science, Research and Academia” scheme in a move to encourage the growth of the country’s research sector. The scheme is being added to the existing Tier 5 (Temporary Worker – Government Authorised Exchange) visa route, which will allow non-EEA researchers, scientists, and academics to come to the UK to work for up to 2 years.

ψ UNITED KINGDOM: The departure of the UK from EU membership on the 30th of March 2019 will, according to the European Commission, mean that the UK will be treated as a third country for personal data transfer purposes. This is in spite of the incorporation of GDPR into UK law.

GLOBAL

φ OECD: The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development recently reported in its 2018 employment outlook that in OECD countries, on average, real wage growth – after factoring in inflation – stands at 1.2% since recovery from the great recession. Before the global financial crisis

took hold in 2008, the real average pay level was rising at 2.2%. Real pay growth is, in fact, not now keeping pace with productivity growth in many countries. This downward trend has been in spite of falling levels of unemployment. It is partly due to a decline in the earnings of part-time workers relative to full-time workers as the number of enforced part-time workers grows. The emergence of “superstar” tech firms that use a relatively high amount of technology and fewer than average workers is also partly to blame for weak pay growth. As the report points out, the overall share of national income going to workers, rather than investors, has declined on average in the OECD, led by the United States, Ireland, Korea and Japan.

News subject key

ζ Political context / background

β Business / Economics

Δ HR-related / practices

ψ Laws / Codes / Immigration

Ω Court cases / structures

φ Remuneration / Tax / Labour relations

Dates for your diary:

August 1st 2018: **Switzerland**’s revised Data Protection Act in force.

August 1st 2018: **Denmark**’s burqa ban.

September 1st 2018: **Austria**’s new working time rules take effect.

October 31st 2018: **UK** Brexit deadline to agree a deal and start ratification process.

November 1st 2018: Class-action lawful in **Germany**.

November 11th 2018: **EU** temporary border controls removed.

January 1st 2019: **Malaysia**’s new redundancy fund due to come into force.

January 1st 2020: **Washington State (USA)** Paid family leave law will take effect.

δ Travel Warnings

AUSTRIA/IRAN: Austrian Airlines will halt the service to Isfahan and Shiraz from September 2018.

BURUNDI: Visitors are advised against all travel to the country, due to the unpredictable security situation, potentially violent civil unrest, plus the threat of terrorism and violent crime.

CAMBODIA: A general election will be held on Sunday, the 29th of July 2018. You should avoid large gatherings, demonstrations and political meetings.

CAMEROON: Clashes between the army and Anglophone separatists claimed several lives in the town of Kumba in Cameroon's troubled Southwest Region province on the 9th of June, 2018.

EL SALVADOR: Reconsider travel to El Salvador due to the high level of crime.

EUROPE: Irish airline Ryanair has cancelled up to 600 flights due to a strike by cabin crew in Belgium, Portugal and Spain planned on Wednesday the 25th and Thursday the 26th of July.

HAITI: Visitors are advised not to travel to the country due to civil unrest and high crime levels.

INDIA/THAILAND: Air India has suspended its direct flight service from Bhubaneswar to Bangkok in Thailand until September the 30th.

IRELAND: Ryanair flights could be affected as pilots in Ireland have announced two more strikes to take place on the 20th of July and the 24th of July, following disagreement over promotions and seniority.

ITALY: Air traffic controllers' industrial action planned on the 21st of July has been canceled.

MEXICO: Please note that from the 16th of July 2018, British consular services in Mexico City will be operating from the British Embassy at Río Lerma 71, Col. Cuauhtémoc, 06500.

MOLDOVA: Stay vigilant in Transnistria due to the unresolved conflict between this breakaway region and the Moldovan government.

MYANMAR: FMI Air will suspend all operations from July the 20th.

PARKISTAN: The deadliest attacks in Pakistan's troubled election campaign killed at least 149 people, including a candidate on the 13th of July.

PORTUGAL: Strikes from midnight to 8:00 a.m launched by SATA Air Açores' Aircraft Maintenance Technicians (AMT) will last until the 30th of September.

SINGAPORE: Drunk and disorderly conduct is a serious crime in the country. Offenders will be fined or face imprisonment, and/or corporal punishment (caning).

SPAIN: Ibiza airport staff have threatened to go on strike from the 20th of July over a shift work dispute and unpaid bonuses.

SWITZERLAND: Air traffic controllers have suspended industrial action scheduled for the 23rd to 27th of July.

UK: Baggage handlers at Luton Airport have voted to go on strike from the 20th to 22nd of July over a pay dispute. Eurostar staff at London St Pancras are set to hold a 24-hour strike on the 28th of July. The industrial action may affect travel to Amsterdam, Brussels, Paris, other cities. Workers at Aberdeen International Airport have cancelled strikes planned for the 20th of July, and the 2nd, the 17th of August as a 3% pay offer has been accepted.

UZBEKISTAN: The international "Urgench" airport in Uzbekistan is now closed for technical reasons and high surface temperatures.

FedEE News

FEDEE WEBSITE: Our new look public pages and modified pages in our members' area have now gone live at <https://www.fedee.com>. The new entry portal for our members' area is: <https://members.fedee.com/wp-login.php>. A new section on Malaysia has now been completed and will go online next week.

HR COUNSEL COURSE: We are now open to enrolments for the 15th of October intake to the Advanced Diploma Course in Multijurisdictional Employment Law. Our coverage has been increased from seven to ten core jurisdictions and now the first five-module Foundation Course of the 30-module programme is completely free, provided at least one other five-module course is booked at the same time. For further details, please consult our [latest prospectus](#).

QUALIFICATION NAME APPROVED: The EU Trademarks Agency has approved our application for protection of our new qualification QP-HR Counsel (Qualified Professional HR Counsel). This means that we have intellectual ownership for the terms and job title 'HR Counsel'. We are now in the process of extending this to the USA and elsewhere, although it is effectively already recognized worldwide.

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