



Dernières nouvelles

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August 16th 2018

▲ **COMMENT:** Use of investigative agencies*

For the last 30 years Italian courts have been struggling with a law that was introduced way back in 1970.

From the outset, the Worker's Statute contained a tranche of restrictions on the right of managers to manage. It prohibits the use of security guards to conduct supervisory duties (Article 2); prohibits the use of covert personnel (investigative agencies) to observe employees (Article 3); puts tight limits on the use of audio-visual equipment in the workplace (Article 4 – since relaxed); effectively forbids personal searches (Article 6); “the abuse of disciplinary powers” (Article 7) and investigations into employee opinions (Article 8).

The challenge for the courts has been to determine how much Articles 2 and 3 relate just to the assessment of employee performance, or whether they also prevent the investigation of potential criminal activity. The Supreme Court has hitherto generally accepted that it does not restrict investigation of illicit behaviour in or outside the workplace, but it is difficult to know where it draws the line. In a recent case (decision 15094/18), the Supreme Court has set aside an employer's use of an external agency to investigate an employee's fulfilment of their contractual obligations where the majority of the duties were carried out off the employer's premises.

This presents a whole new and tougher barrier for employers as, according to the trade body for investigative bodies 'Axerta', the great majority of corporate client investigations are for contractual infractions. These include false declarations of sickness - (27%), violation of non-compete agreements - (23%), violation of the obligation of loyalty - (18%), and incorrect use of parental leave - (16%). Only 9% of cases have involved misleading expense claims and 7% have involved “offences against company assets” – both of which the Supreme court would apparently find acceptable under Article 3 of the 1970 law.

Although bogus absenteeism (like bogus CVs) is a form of criminal fraud, it is seldom treated as such and it is doubtful whether the police or courts would get involved if invited to do so. Therefore, employers in Italy are now stuck, especially where employees' jobs are outside a fixed workplace. The only effective option would be for HR itself to directly investigate instances of suspected bogus absenteeism – possibly under the guess of their traditional welfare role.

AFRICA AND MIDDLE EAST

β AFRICA: Although 44 countries have signed the African Union's Continental Free Trade Agreement, only 30 have signed the protocol on the free movement of persons. Most countries are reluctant to make any further progress until a common system exists for right of entry and visa abolition. Standing out for much better overall controls are South Africa and many north African states that fear widespread immigration if all border controls are removed. As things stand, the most likely next move will be the setting up of a technical committee that will focus on the development of a pan-African registration scheme and common ID card.

ψ AZERBAIJAN: New amendments to Azerbaijan's immigration legislation have now entered into force. Under the new amendments, the provision restricting entry of foreigners will be removed. They are now allowed to enter and reside for more than 15 days, provided they register their place of residence.

ψ BAHRAIN: The government has issued a new law mandating a universal health insurance. This means that employers must prepare to provide health insurance to foreign employees. Starting from January 2019, health insurance coverage must be provided to enable the issuance and renewal of employment and residence permits.

β DJIBOUTI: The largest free-trade zone in Africa has just been opened following a US\$15bn, largely Chinese-sourced, investment in new port facilities. Interest in this, the only politically and economically stable country in the horn of Africa (its currency is pegged to the US dollar), is growing fast and new port developments

have created 12,000 jobs. This has helped to move the country up the World Bank "Doing Business" ranking from 154th in 2014 to 90th place this year. Although local sea lanes are considered vulnerable to piracy, China is building a new naval base in the country and 10,000 Chinese marines are scheduled to be stationed there.

Δ NIGERIA: Widespread drug abuse is sweeping the country following the widespread sale of cough syrup containing codeine. The National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control has asked pharmaceutical companies to recall all medicines containing the drug, which is the second most abused prescription drug in the country after tramadol. The two drugs account for 90% of all drug abuse cases, compared to 2% for heroin. They should therefore be top of the list for pre-employment medical screening.

φ SOUTH AFRICA: The cash-strapped major power utility Eskom has made a conditional pay offer after weeks of strikes that have closed power stations. The offer amounts to 7.5% on basic rates this year and 7% in 2019, plus a one-off bonus of R10,000 (US\$708). However, the NUM union that has secured the offer is refusing to comply with an associated demand from Eskom that they discipline the employees that were involved in strike action.

Ω SOUTH AFRICA: The Constitutional Court has ruled that labour brokers must hire temporary staff who earn below R205,433 (US\$15,363) per annum as permanent workers after 3 months' service with their client companies. It is estimated that there are around 2 million people in the country who are hired out by labour brokers. (*Assign*

Services Ltd v. National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa and others.)

β TURKEY: In Q3 2017, there were 5.6 million self-employed workers in Turkey, up from 5.1% in Q4 2016. The growth was mainly because of a 22.8% (up 123,000) surge in tertiary-educated independent contractors. This was largely because the government deprived many professionals of their employed status jobs following the attempted coup on the 15th of July 2016. At other educational levels there was a downward trend in self-employment over the same 9 months.

β ZAMBIA: Amidst growing corruption and an increasing economic dependence on Chinese investments, the government of this impoverished central African state is searching for alternative foreign investors in the Middle-East and Russia. Foreign Affairs Minister Joseph Malanji has recently been in discussions with the acting Kuwait Prime Minister over a deal that would see the export of Zambian engineers to the gulf state, even though they are essential to the economic development of Zambia. The government is also on the verge of licensing the Russian State Atomic Energy Corporation (ROSATOM) to establish nuclear facilities in this highly unregulated state, opening up the prospect of ballistics production in the midst of Africa. Meanwhile, the International Monetary Fund has sent a team to the country to collect its own economic data ahead of a meeting about the country's huge debt crisis.

THE AMERICAS

ψ ARGENTINA: After much hostility across the country, Uber has finally persuaded the province of Mendoza to accept its legality.

Back in 2016, a court in Buenos Aires ruled that the company had violated transportation and labour standards, but no law banning its operation was passed. It has therefore continued operating in the city. This breakthrough will encourage other platform-based businesses to target the country.

ψ BRAZIL: Companies now have 18 months to prepare for the introduction of the country's new Data Protection Law. Modelled on the EU's GDPR, the law allows companies to only gather and process personal data for defined and legitimate purposes. A new National Data Protection Authority is being established and legal infringements will attract penalties of up to RS50 million (US\$13m).

ψ CANADA: Employees in Ontario will soon be in a position to control the information disclosed to their employers when they undergo a police record check. According to the Police Record Checks Reform Act, which is coming into effect on the 1st of November 2018, individuals will have to give their written consent both before the check is initiated and before the police discloses any information to the requesting company.

ψ CHILE: A new teleworking Bill has just been presented to the national parliament. Working from home has not so far been considered a serious option in the country and the Bill is designed to both encourage it and ensure that it does not lead to "precarious" working relationships. It lays down how work-related costs, such as an internet connection, will be calculated and reimbursed and how accidents at home during working hours will be handled.

Δ USA: Although the issue of vicarious liability applies to many employee-related actions in the USA, there is no federal or

state regulation protecting the health and safety of employees when they are travelling or working abroad. This does not mean US employers routinely ignore the dangers of travel, but it requires a determined action by HR departments to monitor the travelling plans of employees. However, the UK has in place the Corporate Manslaughter Act that requires all due safety precautions should be taken to ensure the wellbeing of travelling employees. Australia also places a duty on an employer – recognised in several court actions – to have a duty of care for those going abroad on their behalf to work. What this means in practice is that all employers must keep a central schedule of employee international movements, check the FedEE travel warnings, and warn the employees concerned of anything that might affect their travel plans. Failure to do so could, at best, affect corporate reputation and, at worst, leave the company liable for the consequences of placing their employee in danger without due warning.

Ω USA: Recently, California's top court ruled that workers must be paid for off-the-clock tasks. In *Troester v. Starbucks*, California's Supreme Court, a former shift supervisor sued Starbucks, claiming the company violated the California Labor Code because it failed to pay him for time he spent closing the store where he worked, which totalled about 12 hours and 50 minutes over a period of 17 months. At US\$8 per hour, that time amounted to about US\$102.67. The court said that under California law, employers must pay their workers for tasks they're regularly required to perform, even if they last a few seconds or minutes past a scheduled shift. However, the consequence of doing this on a worldwide basis could add several millions of dollars to company payrolls each year.

Ω USA: A class action has been filed at the US District Court in Portland by four previous employees of Nike. The plaintiffs accuse the company of violating the Federal Equal Pay Act, the Oregon Equal Pay Act, and the Oregon Equality Act. As compensation they do not seek damages, just rectification of a problem concerning sometimes substantial gender differences in pay. The company accepts that they have long-standing problems, but are finding it difficult to use new appointments to rectify the over-representation of men in senior positions and the gender differentials that have built up over time.

Ω USA: In a further class action lawsuit Koch Foods, has settled out of court for US\$3.75m. The case was pursued by a group of Hispanic workers with the assistance of the EEOC. It involved sexual harassment, discrimination by race and national origin, and retaliation against those making complaints about their treatment. As part of the settlement, the company has agreed to implement new anti-discrimination and anti-harassment policies, provide special training, introduce a 24-hour hotline for reporting complaints (in English and Spanish), and post anti-discrimination posters in their workplaces. The company employees 14,000 workers across three southern US states.

Ψ USA: Employers in New York City that have employees represented by a trade union and are part of a collective agreement must now accept a number of mandatory new clauses when the agreement comes up for renewal. The principal changes are the introduction of a right for employees to take two temporary schedule changes each year (or an allowance to take unpaid time off) in order to deal with personal matters, and also the protection from retaliation against

employees who exercise this right. There is a facility for an express waiver where employees are not union members or where there are existing clauses in the agreement providing similar, or better, rights under the city's Earned Safe and Sick Time Act.

Δ USA: Employers across the USA continue to struggle with the rights and obligations dilemma about whether - and how much - they can control the use of marijuana in the workplace. Although 31 US states permit its medical use, and its recreational use is permitted in ten states (plus DC) and decriminalised in 13 others, it remains a 'schedule one' substance and it is still technically unlawful to trade or consume it under federal law. But since 2014, the Rohrabacher–Blumenauer amendment has prevented federal authorities from fiscal interference with the application of state cannabis laws. The amendment must be reaffirmed each year and a DOJ memorandum on state freedoms in the matter was withdrawn earlier this year. So where does this leave employers? Many still include the drug on their list of banned substances, but labor shortages are encouraging many to drop marijuana from the drug tests required at the hiring stage. This is partly also because of successful prosecutions of employers in Massachusetts, Connecticut and Rhode Island for withdrawing job offers due to positive tests for cannabis. Maine has also led the way in making it unlawful for employers to dismiss a worker for cannabis use outside the workplace.

φ USA: An increasing number of US employers are supplementing their current group long-term disability plans with individual supplemental plans for senior executives. This will ensure that coverage

in case of mishap keeps the individual close to their former living standard.

Ω USA: Two Federal Appeals Court judges have set aside two cases relating to infringements of Louisiana's public intimidation law, which they consider to be unconstitutionally overbroad. Under the law, anyone threatening to make a complaint against a policeman or school bus driver may be arrested and could face a sentence of up to 5' years hard labor.

Δ USA: Voters in Missouri have rejected in a referendum a right-to-work law previously passed by their state legislature in 2017. As things stand, 27 US states and Guam have laws in place that give employees the right to opt out of paying union dues in workplaces where unions are recognised. Yet, most voters were opposing a change that would not affect them, as only around 8–10% of workplaces in the state are currently unionised.

ASIA AND PACIFIC

Ω BANGLADESH: The High Court has taken the unprecedented step of demanding that several government departments determine within the next month how many Bangladeshi female workers have been sexually harassed in foreign countries, especially Saudi Arabia. They have also asked the government to explain why they have taken no action to compensate, rehabilitate and ensure security of Bangladeshi female workers who have returned home after such treatment. The court passed an interim order and will reconvene once the deadline has been reached.

Ψ CHINA: Sichuan province has now adopted a paid care leave system geared to employees who have to deal with aging parents. From the 1st of October 2018, only-child employees may have up to 15 days paid care leave per year. Whilst non-only child employees may have up to 7 days paid care leave per year.

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

Ψ JAPAN: Companies operating in National Strategic Special Zones have proposed to the Japanese government that they use a system involving digital payment of wages to electronic wallets on mobile smartphones. Companies are moving away from depositing salaries in banks anyway and are instead putting them onto payment cards. Changing the currency medium to cryptocurrency is just a logical extension of this trend, as it particularly helps foreign workers who cannot open a bank account until a resident in Japan for one year. Unfortunately, the Labour Standards Law of 1947 would need reform before such a system was introduced.

Ψ JAPAN: A new law marks a major turning point in Japan's labour practices. Parliament has just approved a Work Reform Bill that formally limits overtime to less than 100 hours a month and fewer than 720 hours a year. Large companies must comply with the new rule from April 2019 or face penalties. Smaller companies have an additional year to comply. The second pillar of the legislation is aimed at eliminating wage gaps between regular and part-time workers. Compensation packages must be brought into line (including holidays and training) by April 2020 for large companies and April 2021 for SMEs.

Δ JAPAN: A new monitoring system – co-developed by air-conditioning manufacturer Daikin and electronics giant NEC - which tracks the movement of the employee's eyelids with a camera attached to a computer - is now on trial. The system will lower the room's temperature automatically when it recognizes signs of employees falling asleep on the job. The company also wants to develop air conditioners that are capable of blowing cool air at specific workers in order to keep people more attentive.

Ω NEW ZEALAND: FIRST Union has warned courier companies that they are going to support litigation concerning bogus independent contractor status for drivers. This follows a 2-week-long series of programmes on Radio New Zealand exposing the situation of such drivers. The Checkpoint programme also included an interview with the former Chief Employment Judge Colgan who said he would encourage the issue to be tested before the employment court.

Ψ NEW ZEALAND: From the 1st of April 2019, survivors of domestic violence will be entitled to take an extra 10 days' paid leave. According to one national newspaper, New Zealand has the highest incidence of domestic violence in the world, with 105,000 calls to the police about family violence in 2016 – in a country with a population of only 4.7 million.

φ **NEW ZEALAND:** Stats NZ has reported that the rise in the national minimum wage in April 2018 helped increase private sector pay rates (including overtime) by an average of 2.1% over the year to June 2018. The impact of the minimum wage change was most noticeable in the retail trade, and accommodation and food services industries,

increasing 0.9% and 1.1%, respectively, for the June 2018 quarter.

Ψ INDIA: Lower paid employees in New Delhi should soon receive a revised minimum wage in spite of the Delhi government's wage order being slapped down by the High Court. The city's Labour Minister has announced that after a 2-month review, new rates amounting to Rs17,498 (US\$254) per month for skilled workers and Rs14,378 (US\$209) per month for unskilled workers will be paid.

β VIETNAM/EU: After 6 years of negotiation, a free-trade agreement (EVFTA) has been finalised between Vietnam and the EU. It is expected to be signed by the end of this year and ratified by April of next year.

EUROPE

Ψ CYPRUS: The GDPR is now incorporated through Law 125(I) and came into effect on July 31st 2018. What is important is that the new Cyprus law provides for both administrative and criminal sanctions relating to different types of infringement. Administrative fines are provided for in accordance with the conditions and upper limits set out in article 83 of the GDPR (ie: fines up to 4% of global revenue, in some cases), whereas violations of certain articles of the Regulation amount to criminal offences. The latter are punishable with up to 5 years' imprisonment for responsible executives and/or fines of up to 50,000 euros. Cases involving administrative sanctions will be heard by the Administrative Court, whilst criminal cases will be heard by the District Courts.

Δ EU: The problems faced by foreign workers entering the EU is well illustrated by

recent figures from the EU agency Eurostat. 63% of non-EU migrants aged 20 to 64 were in employment in 2017, compared to 73% of people of working age who were native-born. The Czech Republic recorded the highest employment rate for non-EU migrants (79.4%), followed by Romania (76.3%), Portugal (74.5%), and Poland (73.0%).

Δ EU: According to the statistical office of the EU Eurostat, over the year to Q2 2018, gross domestic product (GDP) rose by 0.3% in the Eurozone. In the same period, GDP rose by 0.4% across the 28 EU member states.

Δ EU: Over the year to June 2018, total youth unemployment (those aged under age 25) decreased by 386,000 across the EU to 3.4 million. 15.2% of young workers across the EU remained unemployed. Malta had the lowest rate (5.5%) followed by Germany (6.2%) and the Netherlands (7.2%), while the highest rates were recorded in Greece (42.3% in April 2018), Spain (34.1%), and Italy (32.6%).

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

Ψ FRANCE: Further protection from sexual harassment will be provided from September 2018 when a new law comes into force imposing on-the-spot fines of €90 to €750 for harassment – including catcalling – in a public place. Those committing “upskirting” (taking photos up a woman's dress without her permission) will face fines of €15,000 and up to one year imprisonment.

Ω GERMANY: Back on the 5th of July 2018 we reported a decision of the Constitutional Court in respect to the hiring of fixed-term workers without “objective justification” where

the employee had ever been employed by the company. With the advantage of a fuller transcript of the case it can be seen that the court would allow such employment, but only where the role is substantially different from the one that was previously held or the contract is for a very short duration.

Ψ HUNGARY: The Hungarian parliament has just adopted a new law to incorporate the GDPR and extend its provisions. The Right to Informational Self-Determination and Freedom of Information Act (The Act) extends the application of data processing to everything that is in paper form, even if not part of a defined filing system. It applies to all companies with their offices only in Hungary, or where their principal EU office is in Hungary. The Act deviates from the GDPR by stating that where processing relies on it being “necessary for compliance with a legal obligation to which the controller is subject”, the legal obligation must relate to a statute or municipal decree written in a particular form. It may not be in respect to “contractual law”. Where a “purpose” is set for processing it must be revised every 3 years. However, a special clause is inserted into the Act that would appear to legitimise the specific processing of criminal data for employment purposes. When pursuing an infringement, an individual may use ordinary courts closest to their residence and the Act even gives privacy rights by those who have been deceased for less than 5 years.

φ **LUXEMBOURG:** Workers in the country will see their wages increase by 2.5% through a new round of indexation. In July, the annual inflation rate was reported to have risen by 1.5%, which triggered a biannual indexation. The automatic indexation of wages, salaries, and pensions entered into force on the 1st of August 2018.

φ **LUXEMBOURG:** Data from Luxembourg’s statistics bureau has revealed that in 2017, the average annual salary was €56,532 (US\$64,520) for a Belgian worker, €53,956 (US\$61,580) for a German worker and €46,756 (US\$53,363) for a French worker. French border workers receive about €10,000 (US\$11,413) less per year than their Belgian colleagues and almost €7,000 (US\$7,989) less than their German counterparts working in Luxembourg. This discrepancy is due to the fact that they were overrepresented in lower paid jobs.

Ψ POLAND: Certain professions are now exempt from the annual quota system for migrant workers. As of the 1st of July, local employers wishing to recruit IT or healthcare professionals from abroad may obtain work permits for them without the need to satisfy the national labour market requirement.

Ψ RUSSIAN FEDERATION: Employers are no longer able to register their employees for migration purposes using the company’s address. A new immigration law that came into force on the 20th of July shifts the burden onto landlords from whom expats rent out their accommodation. Employers may only declare their employees with the migration department if they physically reside in a company property or in a mobile home.

Ψ SWEDEN: The new Swedish Act on the Protection of Trade Secrets has now entered into force. The Act is based on EU Directive 2016/943. Companies should take into consideration their new obligations under the Act, particularly in the context of information and consultation exercises involving employee representatives.

Ψ SWITZERLAND: Employers may not now advertise any job positions where the unemployment rate exceeds 8% (5% from

2020) until they have notified the position to the regional unemployment office (RAV). They will then have to wait 6 days from the day RAV confirms the notification to openly advertise the position. In the meantime, the RAV office will either come up with job candidates or notify the employer that none were available. The employer concerned must notify them whether a nominated candidate from their list is to be interviewed or was appointed, but it will not be necessary to explain why any action was taken. Notification is not necessary for internal appointments [and a full list of qualifying jobs](#) is available (in German). Failure to comply with these requirements will result in a fine of up to CHF40,000 (US\$40,000) and this will be imposed on the responsible individual authorising the infringement – not their company.

Ω UK: Employment contracts containing a clause stating that contractual terms may only be varied if put in writing must be strictly adhered to. The Supreme Court has confirmed the application of such clauses in *Rock Advertising Ltd v MBB Business Exchange Centre Ltd*. While many common law countries (including the USA) consider such clauses equally amenable to change to any other contractual term, this approach was rejected by the UK court. It follows that employment agreements that contain this requirement must catalogue in writing all changes that occur during the employment relationship, or an employer may potentially face litigation on the grounds of contractual breach.

Ω UK: The Court of Appeal has now extended a company's vicarious liability to the acts of independent contractors. In a recent case, the Court affirmed the High Court's finding that an employer was liable

for several sexual assault claims brought by the appellant company's employees. The assaults allegedly took place during pre-employment medical check-ups conducted by a freelance doctor. The company's argument that the doctor was a self-employed service provider was unanimously rejected by the Court, which confirmed that the "independent contractor defence" is no longer applicable.

Δ UK: The Parliamentary Women and Equalities Committee has recommended that the government introduce a new duty on employers to help prevent [sexual harassment in the workplace](#). The recommendation forms part of the Sexual Harassment in the Workplace report and is based on the results of a 6-month inquiry. According to the Committee, the introduction of a statutory code of practice outlining the steps employers must take to prevent sexual harassment has had very little impact on company practices.

β UK: The IMF is now predicting a GDP decline of 3.9% if the UK leaves the EU with a "Hard Brexit", but a "No Deal" Brexit would be far more tragic. The other EU country that would be the hardest hit would be Ireland, suffering a similar decline. 10% of UK companies are already making supply changes to avoid a worst-case scenario and some reports indicate that pharmaceutical companies are virtually at emergency action stations. The UK government too is already planning for the social unrest that would result from severe shortages and lost jobs, with plans to use the army in urban areas next Summer.

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:

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

October 2018: FedEE **USA** Briefings Program – California and West Coast

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

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

November 12th-14th 2018: FedEE Brexit Group and HR Counsel Meetings in London, **UK**.

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

CONGO: The Minister of Health declared an outbreak of Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) on August the 1st 2018, following confirmation of four cases of Ebola in the Mabalako health zone of the territory of Beni, North Kivu province, Eastern DRC.

ECUADOR: Visitors are advised against all but essential travel to all areas of Esmeraldas province outside the existing 20km exclusion zone along the border with Colombia due to a risk of kidnapping and a high risk of crime.

ETHIOPIA: You should exercise caution and take local advice if you are travelling to the Ethiopian Somali Regional State, including the cities of Jijiga and Dhegahbur as there were reports of severe civil unrest, protests and violence on the 4th of August 2018.

GEORGIA (CAUCASUS): Visitors are advised to have a valid travel insurance policy - as airlines at check-in or immigration authorities may ask to provide evidence of this upon arrival in the country.

GUINEA-BISSAU: Reconsider travel to this country due to high levels of crime and civil unrest.

INDIA: The international airport at Kerala's commercial capital Kochi will be closed until August the 18th due to heavy rains and floods in the south Indian state.

INDONESIA: Visitors are advised against all but essential travel to the Islands (Gili Trawangan, Gili Meno and Gili Air), off the north-west coast of Lombok. A 6.9 magnitude earthquake hit the region killing at least 142 people and injuring hundreds more on Sunday, August the 5th.

ITALY: There are severe traffic disruptions in the Genoa area due to the collapse of a motorway bridge. Drivers should add several hours to their schedules if passing through this area.

LIBYA: Do not travel to this country under any circumstances due to crime, terrorism, civil unrest, and other armed conflict.

MONTENEGRO: Please take special note that visitors must register with local police within 24 hours of their arrival in the country.

MOROCCO: Royal Air Maroc (RAM) has reached an agreement with the AMPL union, ending a month-long partial strike of its pilots.

NIGERIA: The Third Mainland Bridge in Lagos state will be closed from the 24th to 26th of August due to an investigative maintenance test.

PHILIPPINES: The local authorities in Palawan have recently warned the public of a heightened risk from kidnapping. Martial law is in place across the whole of Mindanao until the 31st of December 2018. There may be curfews and frequent checkpoints.

SOUTH AFRICA: SA Express airline will resume limited services next week.

SRI LANKA: Railway unions have threatened to launch fresh strike action, commencing on the 21st of August.

TUVALU: Visitors are warned that the cyclone season is normally between November and April, but cyclones can occur throughout the year.

UGANDA: Please exercise great caution, especially as a foreign visitor. There were reports of shootings and violent demonstrations in Arua on the 13th of August and similar incidents are possible at any time.

UK: Members of the Rail, Maritime and Transport union (RMT) will walk out on September the 2nd, 8th and 15th. This is in addition a strike on August the 18th and a 48-hour stoppage starting August the 31st due to the dispute over the role of guards.

VANUATU: The government of Vanuatu has declared a state of emergency for the island of Ambae. This is due to ongoing volcanic activity.

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>.

HR COUNSEL COURSE: We are now open to enrolments for the 15th of October intake to the Advanced Diploma Course in Multijurisdictional Employment Law – leading to the designation “HR Counsel ®”. The coverage of the course has been increased from seven to ten core jurisdictions by the addition of China, Italy and UAE and conversion of the course into a purely distance learning format (but still with a personal tutor) has helped add flexibility and significantly cut costs. For further details, please consult our [latest prospectus](#).

KNOWLEDGEBASE: The latest addition to our section on country employment laws is Malaysia. Reviews of Nigeria and Egypt are in preparation.

US WEST COAST EVENTS: FedEE is holding a number of briefings and seminars in the LA, Bay Area, Portland and Seattle this Autumn. If you have colleagues in this region who might be interesting in attending please contact Jane Gulliver on admin@fedee.com

LONDON AND DUBLIN EVENTS: We are planning to hold a half-day Seminar and Global HR briefing in Dublin and also a half-day HR “Any Questions” format event in London this Autumn. The latter will involve a panel of experts and have as its focus the HR implications of a “Deal” or “No Deal” Brexit (according to what appears likely by that time). It would appear that even “Brexit with a Deal” will still exclude the service sector. There will be no charge for members attending these events - provided they bring along an HR professional from a nonmember organization as their guest.

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