



## HIGHER-LEVEL COLLECTIVE AGREEMENTS EXTENSION AND ITS IMPACT ON LABOUR COSTS

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Since the beginning of 2014 new regulation has been applied in the area of collective bargaining. Higher-level collective agreements may now be extended to include all companies in the given sector employing 20 and more people. Although these agreements regulate the wide scope of work-related issues, their extension is very sensitive especially in the area of remuneration. The terms related to higher wages may now be legally applied also in those companies that have not planned any wage rises or only to a lesser degree than prescribed in the agreements. The legislation thus gives more space to increases in wage costs, which would otherwise not exist. The authors of the article provide a quantitative estimate of a possible maximum increase in total labour costs if all the valid higher-level collective agreements were extended. They also quantify a rise of costs resulting only from those agreements whose extension has already been (or very probably will be) ordered by law. (p. 2)

## FORECASTING REAL PRIVATE CONSUMPTION ON THE BASIS OF A WIDE RANGE OF INDICATORS

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Further to our previous contribution on the electronic indicators' potential to forecast nominal private consumption (Biatec No 6/2014 "Electronic indicators of consumer demand"), we now revisit this topic focussing on the short-term forecasting of real private consumption. Our intention is to build short-term forecasting and nowcasting models for real private consumption, i.e. consumption of households (consumers and small entrepreneurs) and non-profit organizations serving households (trade unions, charities, professional associations, consumer associations, political parties, religious organizations). The article briefly describes our approach to the short-term forecasting and nowcasting, which is based on the linear regression of monthly indicators. As data on real consumption are measured and published quarterly, while their explaining variables have monthly frequency, the possibilities of econometric modelling with mixed-frequency data are also discussed. (p. 8)

## ON THE AMENDMENT TO THE BOND ACT

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With its latest amendment, the Bond Act has already been changed 22 times since its passing, which obviously impacts on its integrity. This amendment reflects

the current needs of the capital market, supporting the so-called start-ups while creating an alternative to bank-loan financing. Among others it introduces the possibility of amending bond issue terms before the bond's maturity date, which considerably deviates from the philosophy of the former version of the act. The possibility to amend issue terms is directly related to the establishment of the meeting of bondholders and of the bondholders' joint representative. The amendment also cancels the obligation of Národná banka Slovenska to supervise bond issues. Investors and bondholders will thus have to take more responsible and active approach to their investment and particularly to their decisions on any change to bond issue terms. (p. 11)

## EU ENLARGEMENT – RECENT ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENTS AND CHALLENGES FOR EU MEMBERSHIP (PART II)

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Building upon the previous part (Orszaghova, 2014), this article reviews the macroeconomic situation in EU candidate and potential candidate countries in the aftermath of the economic crisis. Furthermore, it highlights challenges for sustainable convergence that remain ahead on the road to EU membership. While all countries are analysed as a group as much as possible, given the high heterogeneity among them, some country-specific characteristics are discussed whenever relevant. (p. 14)

## THE EFFECTS OF AND RISK MANAGEMENT RELATED TO THE CREDIT CRUNCH IN HUNGARY

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The Hungarian banking sector has been less affected by the 2008 credit crisis than the western banking systems. The response of the Hungarian government to the financial and economic crises (caused by the credit crisis), which differed from other governments' reactions, has also affected Hungarian banks. The main objective of this study is to demonstrate the impact of the regulatory reforms, implemented in the framework of the government's crisis management, on the Hungarian banking sector and its future potential, as well as on bank owners' motivation. Resulting from the government action, which has differed from the international practice, certain signs have already been visible in the economy. Based on them, we are making certain assumptions of banks' behaviour, which determines their future funding capacity, and deducing conclusions. (p. 22)