Newsletter Synergo-vhp December 2023

Below is an overview of what is going on at Synergo and the companies where we are active as a trade association.

As Synergo, we play an active role in negotiations about collective labor agreements, Social Plans and Pensions, we monitor employment conditions in the Works Council and provide legal support for members who are in danger of being in trouble due to reorganizations.

**That's why we call on you**: share this newsletter with your colleagues, invite them to team meetings, so they realize that it is important to become a member. Together we stand stronger.

Future Pensions Act (WTP)

The transition to the new pension system has started with negotiations on the new pension contract. Once the design has been made, the discussion about entering (dividing the pension capital) will follow. In July we asked you about your preferences through team sessions, which we [incorporated into commitment letters](https://www.synergo-vhp.nl/nieuws-events/nieuws/ledenraadpleging-nieuwe-pensioencontracten%20). You received the concepts earlier and after some adjustments based on feedback we have finalized them. This is how our negotiators start the process. We will keep you informed on the progress of the negotiations and we will consult you again on important decision points that have not yet been foreseen.

Individual contracts.

In recent years, a number of companies have introduced individual contracts for pay scales that previously fell within the collective labor agreement. For members who have questions about their contract, or a dispute with the company, do not hesitate to contact our legal advisor at VHP2: info@synergo-vhp.nl or 040-211 6222.

Various points:

- We are forced to adjust the contribution for 2024 due to increased inflation, but especially the increased level of effort for the often increasingly difficult collective labor agreements and in the negotiations towards the Pension Transition. For active members the contribution increases from 170 to 180 Euro, and for retired members from 53 to 60 Euro.

- We are looking to strengthen our board, there has recently been a vacancy for the role of Treasurer. We have outsourced the operational tasks, such as bookings and contribution collection, to the financial administration of VHP2. The role is therefore mainly focused on policy matters (including budget, long-term vision). Are you interested, or would you like more insight into the role? Respond to info@synergo-vhp.nl

- Our membership council monitors the board's policy, and especially its implementation. The [members on our website](https://www.synergo-vhp.nl/over-ons/onze-mensen/ledenraad).

- Strengthening the LR is also welcome, also to fill staff turnover. Due to changes, a vacancy had arisen on behalf of DSM, we are pleased that Luc Tijhuis is willing to join. But there are more vacancies, are you interested, do you want to know what it entails and how much time is involved? You can choose to join us a few times without obligation. Do not hesitate and contact the LR chairman, Esther-e.venrooij-van@sitech.nl .

- PDN Pension Fund manages pensions not only for (former) employees of DSM, but also for affiliated companies such as Sitech and Covestro. The Members' Council has urged the board to also include the members and those involved in the collective labor agreement and works council at these affiliated companies in the communication and decision-making. When it comes to PDN pension negotiations, we always request participation and input from all members who accrue or receive a pension with PDN.

- Our association is doing well compared to many other unions. Recently there has been a growth in registrations due to turmoil at companies and active encouragement by our local representatives. Thank you to all who have worked for our association and our members.

- We are also growing in the number of companies where we are active; since the sale of Stratasys' Additive Manufacturing activities earlier this year, the number has reached 15. This is quite a challenge for an association that relies on volunteers. In addition to the negotiators we hire via VHP2, we also employ our own negotiators. For those who are also interested in this, let us know via info@synergo-vhp.nl and we will give you an insight into how interesting this role is.

- Good news for cross-border workers working from home. See news item website.

- Informal care and work, this is sometimes under tension, in collective labor agreement negotiations we constantly put pressure on the employer to facilitate this. The SER recently submitted [a request for advice](https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/documenten/brieven/2023/10/27/adviesaanvraag-ser-over-werk-en-mantelzorg) to provide guidance on this at national level.

- Important for the self-employed in our membership base: our umbrella organization VCP has been allocated a seat in the SER to strengthen the input of independent entrepreneurs. The VCP will set up a network of independent professionals with the aim of exchanging knowledge, experience and policy developments in order to enable our representative to fulfill his role as best as possible. So are you interested in joining the network? Please provide your name and contact details to s.pierik@vcp.nl . As a board, we are of course curious to know what you think about this, let us know at info@synergo-vhp.nl .

- You recently (October 16) received a newsletter with instructions on how to download the contribution statement via the website.

Development at the companies:

- SABIC has decided to move its head office from Sittard to Amsterdam, despite negative advice from the Works Council. This concerns approximately 140 employees. The Works Council has decided to submit this decision to the Enterprise Chamber. We wish our representatives in the Works Council and the collective labor agreement negotiators wisdom and success in this exciting process.

- The DSM-Firmenich collective labor agreement agreed in September, runs until October 1, 2024 and the social plan until April 1, 2026. Separate: flexible travel allowance depending on sustainable transport choice. Currently intensive consultations about pensions.

- Sitech has sold its industrial service activities to Ebert HERA. This concerns approximately 800 employees. This also has consequences for the employees, including a more businesslike relationship with customers. The Works Council and the unions closely monitor this process and offer counterplay to safeguard the interests of employees and employment conditions. With some effort, a collective labor agreement was concluded in September until December 31, 2024, the final texts have yet to be determined.

- Envalior (ex-DSM Materials): the transitional collective labor agreement of DSM in order to achieve an 'own' collective labor agreement for the first time, compensating for the option scheme was a difficult passage that was taken. Result ultimately with positive advice to be voted on by the members, wage offer of 7.5% + €1000 nominal. Latest news: has been accepted by all unions. Now to the final lyrics.

- Avient (ex Dyneema): An agreement was reached in October, an increase of 6.5% and a nominal amount of 1200 Euro.

- Arlanxeo: term of collective labor agreement has expired, final offer rejected by the unions, wage offer far below par, Social plan with limited term until 1-7-2024. Arlanxeo has unilaterally decided to implement the wage increase of the last final offer (3% and 150 structural) in December 2023. Arlanxeo is in worrying trouble.

- Anqore: Collective labor agreement concluded with term 1-7-23 to 1-10-24 (15 months). 8.25% wage increase as of July 1, '23 + improvements regarding, among other things, travel allowance, work-from-home allowance. NB: FNV and CNV did not co-sign.

- Covestro: collective labor agreement concluded in July, 7% + 1200 p/y, + 2.5% growth in scale.

- Stamicarbon: Current collective labor agreement runs until January 1, 2024 and was achieved with difficulty, with an ultimately satisfactory result including an 8% salary increase as of January 1, 2023. Negotiations for collective labor agreement 2024 have started. Stamicarbon business is going well and inflation is minimal, which makes the salary discussion unusual. We are committed to restoring the profit-sharing scheme and a good social plan.

- OCI: Collective labor agreement negotiations will start again, there will soon be a members meeting to determine the principles.

- Borealis: collective labor agreement concluded, term 1 year; 9.5% + 1000 one-off, and travel expenses reimbursement. Separate: premature increase of 8% in anticipation of further negotiations.

- Fibrant: Collective labor agreement concluded with term 1-4-23 to 1-7-24 (15 months). 8.25% wage increase as of April 1, '23 + improvements regarding, among other things, travel allowance, work-from-home allowance

- Stratasys: the company is in dire straits, we keep an eye on the interests of our members.

- Centrient: Synergo has rejected an earlier collective labor agreement offer from the employer, which was accepted by FNV. Synergo was unfortunately excluded from the collective labor agreement negotiations. Several attempts to re-engage with Centrient have proven fruitless. An example of how things can go with a company with a different policy on employee participation.

Recruitment of new members

The more members we have, the better we can make our voices heard. We can offer stronger counterplay to employers in terms of employment conditions and reorganizations and thus achieve results for you. New members are exempt from contributions for the first six months. That's why we ask everyone: use this to persuade colleagues. A union is very important, especially in the current uncertain times. In addition to the collective labor agreement and works council, our legal assistance is also important in the event of conflict or threatened dismissal. [Check our website](https://www.synergo-vhp.nl/over-ons/meedoen) (also in English) for online registration. A €25 gift voucher will be made available to members who recruit a new member. Good luck, we're counting on you!

Do you have questions, suggestions? Respond to info@synergo-vhp.nl