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GLOBAL

Bulletin

UNI temp & agency workers is the Global Union for temporary employment.

We work to improve the conditions for temporary workers and agency staff worldwide.

UNI temp &
agency workers
global
union

Temp and agency workers have union rights too

UNI Global Union believes that the dialogue with temporary work agencies is key to ensuring basic workers rights. At the UNI Temporary and Agency Workers Global Meeting in Nyon on September 3-4 unions from around the world had a chance to discuss their concerns with employers' representatives from the industry.

Unions are concerned about the temporary agencies plans for growth, which would cut into the number of permanent employee positions worldwide, which are often best for workers. They are also concerned about the temporary agencies positioning themselves as a low-cost alternative for companies.

"Obviously most workers would prefer to have a permanent contract and a relationship directly with their employer than to be a long-term temporary worker," said Alke Boessiger, head of UNI's Temp and Agency Workers Department. "But workers who are employed through temp agencies by choice or by chance still need union representation and a strong voice to protect their rights."

In 2008 UNI signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the International Confederation of Private Employment Agencies (CIETT) that has set up a partnership to promote areas of common concern, including social dialogue on issues for temporary workers, protecting the rights of migrant workers and combating undeclared employment.

Download meeting documents and presentations at:

http://www.uniglobalunion.org/Apps/portal.nsf/pages/20090202_vl8aEn



TAW Global meeting participants in Nyon

Strong UNI voice in ILO workshop

Eighteen UNI delegates along with representatives from other GUFs, employers and governments took part in a workshop to promote ratification of ILO Convention 181 on private employment agencies. The workshop held on October 20 and 21 was called to raise awareness of the ILO Private Employment Agencies Convention No. 181, exchange views on its benefits, present good practice on its implementation and encourage further ratifications.

The workshop participants heard presentations from social partners and discussed six points:

- Private employment agencies' contribution to labour markets (and cooperation between public and private employment services - good practices);
- Private employment agencies - regulation, monitoring and controls;
- Agency workers' rights and working conditions;
- How to support further ratifications, case studies on the benefits of ratification (and challenges to ratifying C 181 - case examples and possible solutions);
- Points of consensus and suggestions for future ILO action.

The workers' group, lead by its spokesperson Margriet Kraamwinkel (FNV Bondgenoten), made a great contribution to the final document emphasizing the importance of ratification, implementation and monitoring of the Convention thus ensuring decent employment and working conditions for the private agency workers worldwide.

The main workshop document – points of consensus – has been adopted by all three parties and was approved at the ILO Governing Body on 9 November.

For the meeting documents, go to:
<http://tinyurl.com/ILOReport>

Launch of European Observatory on Cross Border Temporary Agency Work

On December 4, UNI europa and Eurociett have officially launched the European Observatory on Cross Border activities within Temporary Agency Work (TAW). It is seen as an innovative and concrete European tool, which will be steered by an expert group of members of Eurociett, UNI europa and researchers working in this field. It is designed to support the work of the European social partners to:

- Ensure a better understanding of the reality of cross border activities within the temporary agency work sector, through research and data collection;
- To gather and analyse good and bad practices with regards to cross-border activities;
- To prepare practical information tools for temporary work agencies and temporary agency workers wishing to work abroad.

The European Observatory's official agreement was signed by UNI europa's Regional Secretary Bernadette Ségol and Eurociett 's President Annemarie Muntz. On behalf of UNI europa, B. Ségol said: "The European Observatory has been launched as means by which to provide workers and agencies with guidance before choosing to work abroad and to support them during their cross border assignments."

The Observatory will help us in our fight against unfair practices, with the aim of preventing and denouncing them. I also would like to remind social partners taking part in the implementation of the TAW directive on a national level to take the transnational aspects of the sector into account.

For more information, read the press release:

http://www.uniglobalunion.org/Apps/portal.nsf/pages/sec_20081016_gblpEn



Bernadette Ségol (UNI europa) and Annemarie Muntz (Eurociett)

Developing Social Dialogue in the PEA sector in Bulgaria

A roundtable to establish a social dialogue in the private employment agencies sector in Bulgaria was held in Sofia on December 11. The meeting was organised by UNI europa and Eurociett in the framework of the project supported by the EC DG for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities. Representatives of two national union centres in Bulgaria, Podkrepa and CITUB, took part in the meeting as well as employers and the government officials.

The meeting aimed at increasing the representation and awareness of the social partners in the sector of private employment agencies.

Participants heard about the main provisions of the newly adopted Directive on temporary work (2008/104/EC) as well as case studies from other EU member states. Mr Totyo Mladenov, Minister of Labour and Social Policy of Bulgaria, talked about the state of play with regards to the adoption of a specific regulation for temporary agency work.

Similar roundtables have already been successfully organised by the two EU sectoral social partners in Poland (2006) and Hungary (2007), paving the way for the establishment of a national sectoral social dialogue in these two countries.

Finnish unions propose holiday bank for temp workers

Trade unions have presented the idea of a holiday bank for workers on a temporary employment contract. The bank would secure the worker's leave when changing jobs or when the employment contract expires. Leave accrued in one job would follow a worker into another. However, the Confederation of Finnish Industries has rejected the proposal of a holiday bank, stating that implementing the idea would be too expensive.

Individual trade unions, including UNI's affiliates, and STTK (the Finnish Confederation of Salaried Employees) have backed the idea and want the government to take up the issue in the next wage negotiations.

Read more at:
<http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/eiro/2009/08/articles/fi0908019i.htm>

Germany: "XL stores for XS wages"

More and more large German companies have founded their own in-house temporary employment agencies in order to hire out staff to themselves and thereby avoid industry-agreed minimum wages.

About a year ago, Schlecker, European drugstore chain with 14,000 retail stores and 52,000 employees, started closing its small shops (Drogeriemarkt) in Bremen, Heidelberg and many other cities in Germany and replacing them with "Schlecker XL Markt". Employees were told either to leave or to get employment via "Meniar", an agency established and run by former Schlecker executives. Wages were negotiated with a small Christian trade union and are 30-50% lower than in the rest of the sector.

UNI's German affiliate ver.di and the two main temporary employers' federations condemn this practice. Mrs. Ariane Durian, leader of the Federation of Temporary Work Agencies (IGZ), thinks that what Schlecker is doing is no more than "organized wage dumping."

"These practices, unknown to our sector, are threatening temporary work's image" added Volker Enkerts, president of the Association of Temporary Employers (BZA). "We want, in cases of internal interim, the law to force businesses treating agency workers the same way as permanent workers."

Canada: Ontario temp agency workers get more protection

In November some new legislation was passed guaranteeing Ontario temp agency workers more protection under provincial legislation.

With the new legislation in force, most temporary employees have the right to notice of termination and severance pay.

Temp agencies will no longer be allowed to stop a company from hiring a temp worker or giving a reference. Agencies will only be able to charge a company a fee for hiring a worker for the first six months of a worker's assignment with the company.

Some 640,000 Ontarians work in temporary jobs. There are about 1,000 temporary agencies operating, according to the provincial labour ministry.

Gordon Brown says agency workers deserve fair conditions too

The British Prime Minister addressing the 141st Trades Union Congress delegates on September 15 in Liverpool spoke on a range of employment issues and mentioned the Agency Workers Directive could be implemented early.

He told Congress: "I believe that the fight for fairness must include agency workers, and so I pledge to you today that when parliament returns our new legislative programme will include equal treatment for agency workers and that in the coming months the law will be on the statute book."

To read the speech, click here:

<http://www.tuc.org.uk/congress/tuc-16982-f0.cfm>

Fair deal for agency workers?

The announcement, that agency workers will be entitled to the same rights as permanent workers after a 12-week qualifying period, came as part of Queen's speech. John Hannett, Usdaw (Union of Shop, Distributive and Allied Workers) Gen. Secretary, said:

"I am delighted that the Government has listened to our concerns and made this commitment to equal rights for agency workers. This will mean that they will be entitled to the same pay, holidays, overtime, breaks, rest periods, night work and duration of working time as permanent workers after 12 weeks. We would like to see these new rights implemented as quickly as possible. Usdaw has long campaigned to the Government for equal rights for agency workers."

Nevertheless, the UK government has indicated that it would delay the implementation of the directive until October 2011 despite, early reassurances made to unions that implementation would come as early as 2010 and the unions are extremely disappointed with these developments.

UNI echoes the stance made by UK unions demanding the UK government reconsiders their decision especially given the Conservative Party and UK employers associations clear intention to empty the directive of its spirit of equal treatment.

UNI's affiliates reactions at:

http://www.uniglobalunion.org/Apps/portal.nsf/pages/sec_20081016_gblpEn

Italian unions and employers agree on a CA in the temp work sector

Trade unions Nidil CGIL, Alai Cisl and Uil CPO have signed a sectoral collective agreement with employers' organisations Assolavoro and Alleanza Lavoro. Read more (in Italian) at: www.uil.it/cpo/AccordoCDO.pdf

Temp workers hurt most by the crisis, ILO study shows

This paper has been prepared by the International Labour Office. It was presented for discussions at the Tripartite Workshop to Promote Ratification of the Private Employment Agencies Convention, 1997 (No. 181) which took place last week in Geneva. The paper is available in English, French and Spanish and can be downloaded at: <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/dialogue/sector/techmeet/wpeac09/wpeac-ip.pdf>

Temporary/permanent workers wage gap

A paper by Leandro Elia reveals wage differences of permanent and temporary workers. The aim of the study is to shed some light on the effect of the policy that enhances the use of short-term contracts upon wages. Results indicate that the policy has widened the wage differential. This effect is stronger for skilled workers than for unskilled workers. These findings suggest the existence of a possible brand-new form of wage inequality.

Read more at;

<http://www.flexworkresearch.org/publication/3786>

A leaflet for the EU agency workers

The European Commission has published a leaflet "Protecting the rights of temporary agency workers in the European Union". This leaflet explains the implications of the new EU Directive on temporary agency work, which was adopted in November 2008. Aimed at social partners and temporary agency workers, the publication details the rights of agency workers in the EU on topics such as equal treatment, restrictions on temporary work and access to collective facilities.

You can download it at:

<http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=738&langId=en>

Forthcoming UNI TAWs Events:

22.02.2010

TAW European Social Dialogue, Brussels

27.04.2010

TAW European Observatory meeting, tbc;

19.05.2010

TAW European Social Dialogue, Brussels

04.10.2010

TAW European Social Dialogue, Brussels

30.11.2010 (tbc)

TAW European Social Dialogue, Brussels

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