

Post & Logistics Global Bulletin

Edition 2008

<http://www.uniglobalunion.org/postal>

Number 02

Europe: TNT, minimum wage and "ghost" union GNBZ in Germany

Earlier in March, UNI's German affiliate, Ver.di, has called for a proper investigation into the set up of the "ghost" union in TNT Germany, GNBZ. There are real doubts as to the validity of this union which TNT now claims to have a collective agreement with and which is being used in recent court cases as a reason to refuse to pay the minimum wage for postal services as determined by the German Government. The Public Prosecutors office is now investigating whether this union, which is neither a registered trade union nor society, has a proper legal basis.

More than 40 representatives of Post & Logistics trade unions from throughout Europe, took a message from their committee meeting being held in Luxembourg and delivered it to TNT management at the TNT Luxembourg depot. The committee was protesting the action by TNT to not pay the minimum wage set by the German Government for postal workers and TNT's efforts to subvert this minimum wage by setting up the "ghost" union and a bogus collective agreement.

UNI along with the ITF, Verdi and the Dutch unions FNV Bondgenoten and Abvakabo, met with TNT management on 26 March to discuss the unions' concerns about TNT not adhering to minimum social and labour standards throughout the world. The Union delegation also insisted that TNT not support any "bogus" unions and deal with real independent unions and to have further discussions with UNI and the ITF on developing a proper global social dialogue and meeting basic labour standards and workers rights while paying socially acceptable wages. TNT agreed to consider this request.

Two of UNI's Dutch affiliates, the FNV Bondgenoten and the ABVAKABO FNV along with Ver.di, demonstrated on the 18th April at the Dutch – German border at Gronau, North Rhine-Westphalia, to show that they oppose to the social dumping-strategy of TNT the Dutch post & logistics group. The unions have asked the German Federal Minister of Finance Peer Steinbrück (SPD), to ensure that the post minimum wage is observed by TNT and have said that it is his obligation to maintain this law.



Dutch unions plan rolling strikes

In the Netherlands, the Dutch unions representing TNT postal workers announced on 3 April that they would embark on a rolling programme of strike action in a bid to secure a fair wage deal. Workers represented by ABVAKABO FNV, a member of the Federatie Nederlandse Vakbeweging and sister union FNV Bondgenoten, turned out in droves to agree the strike action at a meeting on 16 April in Utrecht. The action began on 23 April in The Hague, with further action in Amsterdam on 25 April and others throughout May in specific areas, culminating in a national strike on 27 May. Talks in the last months between Abvakabo and TNT to negotiate on a new collective bargaining agreement broke down on 7 April when the union rejected the company's three per cent offer; the union is demanding an agreement that includes a 3.5 per cent wage rise. Anneke Stevens, Head of Abvakabo's Postal Sector commented: "We have been asking for 3.5 per cent from 1 April this year and TNT offers only 1.5 per cent on 1 April 2008 and 1.5 per cent on 1 January 2009, but only if we can agree on a collective bargaining agreement that does undermine workers' employment conditions." TNT is hoping to make substantial savings in the years up to 2015 and anticipates cutting 7000 jobs and taking a range of other measures including introducing a pay freeze and slashing pensions and overtime.

UNI Supports Slovak Affiliate

Rolf Büttner, President of UNI Post and Logistics, visited OZ Spoje, UNI's Slovak affiliate, in Bratislava, on 3 – 5 March 2008. Rolf, the President of OZ Spoje Pavel Kyman and the President of the postal committee of the Zofia Leholska union met the Slovak government who reassured the unions that it intended to use all the leeway allowed under the EU Postal Services Directive, and that it did not intend to open its postal market before 2013. Rolf Büttner called on the government to do everything in its power to help bring about a significant increase in the wages of postal workers following the introduction of the Euro. He said that the average wage earned by a Slovak postman of 450 euros a month was not enough to feed a family. At a meeting the head of Slovak Post, Libor Chras, said that competitors were only active in the large cities and paid dumping wages that were 30 to 40% lower than the already low wages by Slovak Post. UNI expressed their hope that the negotiations with the postal workers would be completed speedily as postal workers needed to get the kind of wage increase demanded by the OZ Spoje union.

UNI calls on EU Commissioner McCreevy to respect the position of the European Parliament on the Postal Services Directive
UNI's Post & logistics World Committee President, Rolf Büttner and UNI's Head of Post & Logistics Department, Neil Anderson wrote to EU Commissioner for Internal Market & Services Mr Charlie McCreevy. They called upon him to "respect the position of the European Parliament which when developing the future postal services directive decided that there will have to be much greater focus to social issues than was the case in the original Commission draft". They also expressed their surprise that "EU Commissioners are now making statements that are clearly contrary to a decision of the European Parliament" as well as their concern about the Commissioner's "claim that social regulations are an impediment to competition and must be eliminated". The letter may be found at: http://www.uniglobalunion.org/unipostal.nsf/0/070408_EN_4C



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Deutsche Post to move 700 post outlets to other businesses with the loss of 3,000 jobs

Deutsche Post plans to hand over about 700 smaller post offices out of the 850 outlets that it operates itself to partner businesses. It has said that businesses such as supermarkets, bakeries and newsagents would take over the small agencies by 2011, with at least 3,000 jobs lost at Deutsche Post. Deutsche Post extended its network of well over 12,000 outlets last year with 600 Postpoints, and would add more of these shop-in-shop outlets, said Juergen Gerdts, board member for Mail, Parcel Germany and the post office network. At the same time, the conversion of Deutsche Post-run post offices into partner outlets enabled the company to reduce costs and extend opening hours, he emphasised. What he failed to tell the news media though was that this meant the people working in these outlets would most likely be out of the collective contract coverage and so the franchising company could pay them less for working longer hours!

UNI-Europa Post & Logistics starts to develop a strategic plan

More than 40 representatives of European unions met in Luxembourg at the UNI-Europa Post & Logistics Committee meeting on 17th - 18th March and started work on developing an action based strategic plan for the sector. The Committee decided to concentrate their efforts on 7 main issues:

- Organising the Multinationals and developing Global Framework Agreements
- UNI Relationship with the International Transport Federation
- UNI's Relationship with the Universal Postal Union
- Developing a new Postal Regulatory Policy
- Making UNI Post & Logistics operate as a Clearinghouse Function / Information Sharing
- Improving Organizational Effectiveness and Communicating within the Sector
- Increase Organising Initiatives in UNI Post & Logistics

Portuguese unions on strike 19-20 March

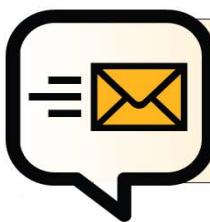
5 postal unions, representing more than 75% of the CTT Portugal Post's workers have refused and oppose the Company proposals to change the CTT Collective Agreement. The proposals by the company are extremely serious for the future of the CTT workers and are totally unacceptable to the unions. The company is also considering an unacceptable reduction of the number of workers. Other proposals from the company in respect of the collective include, amongst others, total deregulation of the daily and weekly working time, having multiple workplaces with up to 30 km between them, wage increases exclusively dependent on the evaluation of the management and without rules negotiated with the unions. But the most important question is that the Company wants to modify a currently existing clause that defines the period of the Collective Agreement but not maximum, that if the unions accepted the proposal they would be without a Collective Agreement in two years and the workers conditions would pass to be only governed by the General Law, thus losing everything the unions have negotiated into the collective during the last 34 years.



UNI Post & Logistics Head of Department, Neil Anderson, visited these unions and the other unions taking strike action, SINCOR, SITIC and SINQUADROS, on a recent visit to Lisbon. He heard the concerns of the unions about the actions of the CTT Company and how they were trying to wind back many of the conditions they had fought over the last 34 years to get into their collective contract with an offer of a 400Euro payment. This offer was totally rejected by the workers concerned who saw they had huge losses in conditions and rights if they were to accept this small payment. The unions told UNI that they are seeking conciliation to help resolve the bargaining impasse, but if they does not produce a positive result that they will be taking more direct action.

Ver.di strikes over postponed Deutsche Post collective contract bargaining

After collective bargaining talks broke down between Ver.di and Deutsche Post on Friday 28 March, Ver.di members have been taking rolling strike actions to try and get Deutsche Post to recognise their responsibilities and to return to the bargaining table with a decent offer on the stalled collective contract talks. The issues that are outstanding in the bargaining are extending the deal that is currently in place over restructuring and how the proposed job losses will be handled and on compensating people for the extended working hours that the company is seeking. The union says that should there be no solution of the conflict, a long-term strike threatens. Deutsche Post are demanding a negotiation that includes a longer working week and job losses, whereas Ver.di have been demanding at least a 7% wage increase over a period of twelve months. Andrea Kocsis, Deputy Ver.di Chairperson said; "This is the immediate answer of the workers to Deutsche Post's continual unacceptable demands. The workers are fuming." She said that, "Two billion Euros of profit, 20 per cent higher dividend, 90 per cent of share of the market and then to demand that the employees of the enterprise should work effectively between 2.5 and 3.5 hours per week longer is both immoral and inequitable."



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CWU UK works with European affiliates to face Post & Logistics future

More than 120 delegates from the CWU UK and more than 10 European countries met at a conference that had been organised by the CWU to consider the changes the union needed to propose with the review of the postal service currently being undertaken in the UK. Presentations from Spain, The Netherlands, Belgium, Slovakia, Germany, France and the UK regulator Postkom along with a presentation from Royal Mail, fuelled a very lively discussion on how the liberalisation that was now taking place in Europe would affect workers and their employment. New UNI Post & Logistics Head of Department, Neil Anderson, also made a presentation where he said UNI would work with affiliates globally to develop a solid programme to support a regulatory environment that recognised the need for a properly funded universal postal service, a quality service that was providing quality jobs and financial transparency in all of the companies operating in the Post & Logistics industry. The conference also discussed the need to organise the multinational companies now operating in the post & Logistics industry and to get them to pay decent wages and provide good safe working conditions for their workers. More information on CWU webpage: <http://www.cwu.org>



UK unions plan strike over attack on their pensions

In the UK, two of UNI Post & Logistics affiliates, the CWU and UNITES, have voted overwhelmingly for strike action over attacks top their pensions. Royal Mail postal group will stop its final salary pension for all employees today, and replace it with one based on career average earnings. It has said that it needs to make radical changes to the pension plan to solve the problem it has with a £3.4 billion deficit. However, the CWU warned that it would push for industrial action unless Royal Mail backs down from its overhaul of the pension plan.

Unions positive to merger between Posten and Post Danmark

UNI Post & Logistics Swedish affiliate, Seko, and Danish affiliate, 3F-DK, have advised that they are happy with the merger between Sweden's Posten AB and Denmark's Post Danmark. The text of their message to UNI may be found on http://www.uniglobalunion.org/unipostal.nsf/0/020408_EN_74

Vietnamese post union responds to market changes

Postal activists in Vietnam have been looking at global changes in the sector as their country moves closer to a market economy. UNI-Asia Pacific was on hand at the seminar, held in the main postal buildings in central Hanoi, to help in sharing experiences of successful strategies to defend postal workers in an era of corporatisation, privatisation and shrinking commitments to the universal postal service. Since the beginning of this year the Vietnamese postal business - with 40,000 workers - has a distinct organisation. But, partly as a result of union campaigning, the post and telecom businesses remain under the same umbrella. "Postal services are important because they provide communications for the whole community," said UNI-Asia Pacific's Alice Chang. UNI has been building relations with Vietnamese unions for more than ten years and the seminar followed immediately after the first ever UNI-Asia Pacific Regional Executive in Vietnam. The Post and Telcom Union is the first Vietnamese affiliate to UNI.

UNI Americas Post & Logistics committee sets its priorities

The UNI Americas Post & Logistics Committee meeting in Panama, which was chaired by Lynn Bue from CUPW, Canada, and attended by the UNI World President of UNI Post & Logistics, Rolf Buttner, and new Head of Department Neil Anderson, discussed the need to develop an action oriented strategic plan and to set some priorities for UNI Americas. These are: Organising the multinationals and developing Global Framework Agreements, Increasing organising initiatives, Improving UNI's relationship with the International Transport Federation, Improving UNI's relationship with the Universal Postal Union, Postal regulatory policy, Developing a clearinghouse function and information sharing, Improving organizational effectiveness and communicating within the sector.

There was wide-ranging discussion on these issues and the committee set some goals and objectives under each heading so it could measure progress in the future.

Stepping up postal women!

The first women seminar for the Federation of National Postal Organizations (FNPO), one of the affiliates in the UNI Post & Logistics sector was held successfully in Barabazar Head Post Office in Kolkata, India on 2 – 4 April 2008 with 30 active women in the India Post, sponsored by Japan Post Group Union. The objectives of the seminar was for women activists to be aware of the changes and problems caused by globalization, to learn about UNI Global Union movement and to network among women in the Post as well as in other sectors to share their concerns and experiences. More information on:

<http://www.uni-apro.org/uniapron.nsf/db1cb10297249246c1256f6c005f9629/133f0d48f201a27ec1257433000fa51f?OpenDocument>



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India Post recognises two union federations

India Post has agreed to recognise more than one union federation and will now deal with the UNI affiliated FNPO and the NFPE union which is recognised with conditions. FNPO union is recognized without any conditions.

PEG opens doors in Hong Kong

The UNI backed project to organise DHL's Asia hub in Hong Kong is building up momentum following a meeting with top management that opened a continuing dialogue. PEG - the Post and Express Workers General Union - was launched with the help of ver.di Germany and the Hong Kong postal union to help organise 3,000 DHL workers in Hong Kong. Ver.di has already organised workers at DHL's new European hub in Leipzig and US unions are currently organising workers in the US hub at Wilmington, Ohio. DHL is owned by Deutsche Post World Net and operates in more than 200 countries. UNI Development also has a project in Latin America aimed at organising DHL workers - including delivery workers, who are very often not directly employed by the German-based logistics giant. The drive to organise DHL workers is important for the whole Hong Kong trade union movement says Elizabeth Tang, Chief Executive of the union centre HKCTU. "If this project succeeds, it will give us a new way of organising. We will be able to copy this method into other sectors."



UNI meets DHL management in Hong Kong

"Mail Moves America" campaign says less mail means less jobs

UNI's US affiliate, the NPMHU, report that in the United States in recent months, "Do Not Mail" legislation that is modelled on the "Do Not Call" law and regulations aimed at curtailing unwanted telephone solicitors has been introduced in several state legislatures. If such legislation were adopted, it could destroy America's paper-based communications network, and do serious damage to the U.S. Postal Service and to mail handlers and other postal employees. How devastating is this legislation? The mailing industry is estimated to be worth about \$800 billion a year to the American economy. Nine million jobs are tied to the industry. It provides work for mail handlers and other USPS employees, printers, envelope manufacturers, truck drivers, paper producers, and many other workers. "This legislation presents a challenge and an opportunity," said NPMHU National President Hegarty. "We have to educate state legislators and others about the importance of mail, and the disastrous effects of precipitously cutting it off." The NPMHU is a member of the Mail Moves America Coalition (MMA), an organization made up of unions, associations, mailers and others. To learn more about this issue, visit the MMA web site at www.mailmovesamerica.org.

Canadian union innovative in trying to keep permanent workers

In a bid to fill jobs with permanent workers rather than have contract workers do the job, The Canadian Union of Postal Workers took out several newspaper ads in Alberta and plans to send the stack of resumes to Canada Post in Ottawa. At issue is an ongoing battle over filling vacant routes -- especially in outlying suburbs and rural areas -- with contract workers instead of hiring employees full-time. CUPW said they have been pressuring Canada Post for months to be more aggressive in attempts to hire employees instead of signing contracts. Union local president Robert Scobel said that as a union they have no desire to hire people but want to keep pressure on Canada Post to hire. The union took out ads in Calgary, Edmonton and Red Deer and a total of 276 resumes were sent in, including 173 from Calgary.

Special Postmark launched at UNI America's Women's Conference



Unions attending the UNI Americas Women's Conference, also taking place at the same venue, celebrated the launching of a new postmark or postal seal that will be used in all Post Offices in Panama during the next few months, to cancel stamps. This special "postmark" promotes the UNI Women's Committee's vision of eliminating violence against women. The Committee expressed its appreciation to Panama Post for highlighting this important issue in such a way.

Canada: Report on the 2008 CUPW congress

UNI's General Secretary Philip Jennings addressed the Canadian Union of Postal Workers (CUPW) Congress and told the members about UNI Post and Logistics "Stepping up to Step out" programme for the sector. For a report on the Congress go to:
http://www.uniglobalunion.org/unipostal.nsf/0/240408_EN_66



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Korea: KPWU elects Lee Hang-gu as President

The UNI Post & Logistics affiliate in Korea, the KPWU have advised that Brother Lee Hang-gu has been elected as the new President of the Korean Postal Workers' Union. Brother Lee got overwhelming support of 246 in favour among 299 delegates at the extraordinary national convention held on 21 April, Monday. Prior to his election Brother Lee held the President of Seoul Regional Office, KPWU and will serve remaining Presidency term of retiring President Lee Won-hee until April 2009. Also Brother Lee Jong-soo has elected at the Chief of Negotiation Bureau and Vice President and current General Secretary, Brother Kim Jae-soo and Brother Kang Yoo-jeon, Chief of Planning Bureau will continue their own positions.

Canada Post Strategic Review; No privatisation but will it be transparent?

UNI's Canadian affiliates advise that they are pleased that the recently announced strategic review of Canada Post will not look at privatization but are concerned that the review has not ruled out deregulation. They are also concerned that the advisory panel will be relying on information from Canada Post. Previous reviewers of the post office have complained about the inadequacy of the information provided by Canada Post. They ask how transparent will the review be and why isn't the advisory panel holding hearings to increase public input? The Canadian Government has said that the guiding principles for the review are:

- Canada Post will not be privatized and will remain a Crown corporation;
- Canada Post must maintain a universal, effective and economically viable postal service;
- Canada Post will continue to act as an instrument of public policy through the provision of postal services to Canadians;
- Canada Post will continue to operate in a commercial environment and is expected to attain a realistic rate of return on equity.

For more information on the review see; <http://www.cpcstrategicreview.gc.ca>

UNI Post & Logistics Communications Questionnaire

A vital part of UNI Post & Logistics work is making sure that the right information and communications are going to the right people in your union and that union members in the sector are well informed about the issues they are facing and are able to help their colleagues globally to understand the challenges and changes. In order to do this we have prepared a small questionnaire that we would ask you to complete and e-mail, fax or post back to us as soon as possible

This questionnaire can be found on the UNI Post & Logistics web page at; http://www.uniglobalunion.org/unipostal.nsf/0/120308_EN_08

Forthcoming Events

20-24 May 2008	-UNI Apro East Asian Postal Forum, Tokyo
28-31 May 2008	-Rutgers 16 th Conference on Postal Delivery Economics, Algarve, Portugal
5 June 2008	-UNI-Europa Post & Logistics Social Dialogue Plenary, Brussels
22-23 July 2008	-UNI Post & Logistics World Committee, Nyon-
23 July-12 August 2008	-24 th UPU Congress, Geneva
2-3 Oct 2008	-UNI-Europa Post & Logistics Committee, Luxembourg
Oct 2008	-UNI Apro Post & Logistics Committee, Bangkok, Thailand