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CWU Rally demands an end to privatisation plans

Hundreds of postal workers and CWU UK members met at a big rally in London today before going to visit their MPs to tell them, "Say No to Privatisation". More than 30 speakers at the rally all sent a strong message to the UK Government that the privatisation of Royal Mail is a bad idea and must be stopped. CWU's General Secretary, Billy Hayes told the rally: "The government is saying they want a foreign company to run the post office, which is ridiculous.

We could be faced with a situation where the Royal Bank of Scotland is nationalised and Royal Mail is privatized."



Several Labour MPs spoke against the plans and the union said that more than 120 MPs have signed a motion opposing the privatisation. Many UK unions pledged their support for the campaign and demanded that the government take heed of voters' wishes and the need to keep public services in public hands especially at this time of financial crisis.



Head of UNI Post & Logistics, Neil Anderson, speaking to the workers said: "The companies being proposed as privatised partners did not have good track records of paying decent wages when they moved into other countries and all had refused to sign any agreements with UNI that they would respect workers' rights and trade union rights wherever they may operate in the world. UNI Global Union would help the CWU to fight to keep the Royal Mail public and to make decent modern service for all." He said: "The best way to modernise the Royal Mail would be to get a management that was willing to work with the union to make the current publicly owned service better and more efficient."

Furthermore, as part of the CWU campaign to stop privatization, you can sign the CWU e-petition here:

<http://petitions.number10.gov.uk/Royal-Mail-Sale/> . It has currently over 8000 signatures.

For more information on the campaign go to:

<http://www.cwu.org/it-s-time-to-deliver-a-positive-future-for-royal-mail.html>

Panama: Postal union says it needs more discus- sion on new laws

The President and Executive of the Panama Postal Workers Union, FETRACELAP, met with UNI Head of Post & Logistics Neil Anderson, UNI Americas Regional Secretary Rodolfo Benitez and UNI Americas Post & Logistics Director, Cenise Monteiro to discuss the issues facing this newly elected Executive of the union. In recent union elections a whole new team to run the union was put in place and they have been seeking UNI Americas help with the issues currently facing them in Panama.



The most pressing issue is a new Bill that has been brought into the Panama parliament that looks to change the postal regulations, to set up a new postal regulator and to make the market more open. Neil Anderson told the union that this is an issue for Post & Logistics unions globally and UNI Post & Logistics is working with affiliates to help them lobby their local parliaments and law makers to put proper regulation in place, with independent regulators to take into account social issues and to talk to unions and workers about how the

regulations will affect their jobs. The union President, Ismael Ruiz, said the Bill would precipitate the modernisation of Panama Postal services and the union feared this would mean job losses and staff reductions which the union members say will not help improve the quality of service that are needed to ensure Panama Post is a viable and competitive business.

UK: Royal Mail, modernisation and job cuts?

There has been speculation in the press lately, that Royal Mail could be cutting up to 16 000 jobs in its plan to reduce costs by 10%.

Accordingly, the cost reduction plan goes hand in hand with a plan to modernize Royal Mail's operations, at a time of sharp mail volume decline.

Reacting to the issue, Dave Ward, CWU's Deputy General Secretary, said: "Royal Mail is pushing for an arbitrary 10% cost saving for post offices across the country.

"This is not agreed by the CWU and could have a huge impact on both job losses and a reduction of full-time jobs to part-time jobs. We are not opposed to modernisation but these are random savings which have not been properly worked out. They have nothing to do with modernisation; they are panic measures that will hit the quality of service. This decision comes after profits in Royal Mail have soared, which brings into further question the necessity of these cost-cutting quotas."

Royal Mail has denied the figure of 16 000 jobs being lost though. However, the company will be meeting with union leaders next months to discuss modernization.

For more information, please visit: <http://www.cwu.org/news/archive/cwu-opposes-royal-mail-job-cuts.html>

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/business/2009/feb/06/post>

<http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/743b1c74-f4b9-11dd-8e76-0000779fd2ac.html>

US Postal Service asks for law on uni- versal service to be changed

On 28 January, US Postmaster General, John Potter, testified before the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Subcommittee which oversees the U.S. Postal Service. Amongst the issues raised in his testimony, Mr Potter asked Congress about the possibility of modifying the current 6-day delivery requirement.

Reacting to this issue, UNI affiliate, the NPMHU, said in a letter to its members:

"In a part of his testimony that has garnered a lot of media attention, Potter also asked Congress for the authority to modify the 6-day delivery requirement contained in existing statutes. You should be aware that this does not mean the permanent elimination of Saturday delivery nationwide. What Potter actually

said was, "It could become necessary to temporarily reduce mail delivery to only five days a week. We would do this by suspending delivery on the lightest volume days." This could mean Tuesday one week, or in one area of the country, or Wednesday during some other week, or during certain months of the year, etc. The NPMHU will oppose any reduction in delivery frequency that would negatively affect service, or cost the USPS a loss of business to our competitors.

The whole issue of cutting back delivery, while mentioned by the PMG, has unnecessarily detracted from the key issue before Congress – that is, adoption of H.R. 22 or a similar measure that will reduce some of the Postal Service's current financial obligations for retiree health insurance."

For the full text of the letter which includes NPMHU's comments on other issues that Mr Potter raised at the Senate Committee, please go to:

<http://www.npmhu.org/Pubs/UPDATE/2009/up090201.asp>

Switzerland: Union to fight proposed Post Office closures and cuts in wages

UNI's Swiss affiliate, Syndicat de la Communication, has started a "No compromise" battle against the proposed closure of 500 post offices and a move to drop the salaries of counter staff. The union says this is unacceptable as these

people are projecting the best image of the Post Office.

At a meeting of the Union in Bern, more than 200 post office workers decided to fight the proposed measures to dismantle the network and to lower the salaries of counter staff. The Post Office had announced it had "reviewed nearly 500 post offices whose attendance is modest," which in their language means closing the offices and maybe eventually a replacement by a minimum service.

The meeting unanimously supported the union's proposal to conduct an intensive campaign against this initiative. The workers were bitter and angry that SwissPost is proposing to "dumb down" the salaries of all its staff in the front line post offices (branches). Unacceptable was the cry from the meeting! Workers deserve more respect, as these people are, by their high quality work, the brand image of SwissPost!!

PIQUE Workshop on liberalisation and privatisation of public services

On 17 February the draft policy recommendations of the research project on the privatization of public services and the impact on quality, employment and productivity (Pique project financed by the European Commission) were presented in the European Parliament. Employers, Employees organizations and the European Commission were invited to dis-

cuss the results of the study with the researchers, as well as to share their experiences on privatization and liberalization. UNI Post & Logistics took part in the meeting to discuss issues pertaining to employment and liberalization and the privatization of postal services.

The recommendations of this research fundamentally support the arguments of European Trade Unions concerning privatization and liberalization.

The following information was shared with participants: liberalization of the market and privatization of former public monopolies do not automatically lead to more competition but rather to mergers, diversification and cost-cutting. There is also no link between privatization and better service provision; but privatization rather leads to outsourcing and concentration. This underlines the need for the European Union to consider introducing universal public-service obligations in order to guarantee them in the same quality everywhere.

Regarding the quality of employment, the researchers found out, that privatization does not create an extension of workforce, nor better jobs. The increase in atypical and precarious employment and the emergence of two-tier labour relations systems can be observed.

In summary there is a need for good and safe working conditions to guarantee a common level of playing field before market liberalization, as well as stronger monitoring and better regulation of privatizations by stakeholders, and

changes to compete on quality and not on wages.

UNI Post & Logistics is looking into this research project and is in contact with the project leaders. The final Conference of the PIQUE Project will take place in Vienna on 24 April.

The research and the policy papers, as well as information about the Conference are available at: www.pique.at

DHL must consult say global delivery unions

Representatives of workers in the global delivery sector passed a resolution on 26 February demanding that DHL/Deutsche Post World Network (DPWN) engage in meaningful dialogue with workers' unions.



The resolution was passed by members participating in the joint UNI/ITF Global Delivery Meeting held in London, UK, 25-27 February. It called upon DHL/DPWN to meet with a delegation of UNI and ITF representatives to establish global dialogue. The aim of this would be to ensure that issues affecting workers on an international scale can be raised and resolved. UNI and the ITF have both

contacted DPWN in writing urging the company to engage in consultations, to no avail.

Neil Anderson, UNI Head of Post & Logistics, said: "We are seriously concerned that issues of importance to workers must be discussed with members of the UNI/ITF global delivery network."

The meeting also passed a resolution backing workers in South Africa, represented by the ITF-affiliated union the South Africa Transport and Allied Workers' Union. They are currently embroiled in a collective bargaining dispute in the global delivery sector and are planning to take strike action on 15 March.

UPU: latest statistics database available

The latest statistics from the UPU database are now available. The UPU's statistical database provides a dynamic overview of postal development in each country. It contains data from over 200 countries or territories and includes approximately 100 indicators of postal development, grouped in 12 chapters. The data is collected annually by the International Bureau from all UPU member postal administrations.

Please find more information about the database here:

<http://www.upu.int/statistics/en/index.shtml>

Please send your union news articles to:
postal@uniglobalunion.org

Next meetings:

26-27 March 2009
UPU Consultative Committee, Bern Switzerland

16 April 2009
European Postal Social Dialogue Working Groups: CSR / Training

29-30 April 2009
UNI europa Post & Logistics Committee Meeting, Luxembourg

8-9 May 2009
UNI africa Post & Logistics Liberalisation Workshop, Hammamet, Tunisia

14-15 May 2009
UNI africa Post & Logistics Conference, Hammamet, Tunisia

18 May 2009
UNI americas Post & Logistics Committee Meeting, Mexico City, Mexico

19-20 May 2009
UNI americas Post & Logistics Conference, Mexico City, Mexico

21 May 2009
UNI Post & Logistics World Committee Meeting, Mexico City, Mexico

21-22 May 2009
UNI Post & Logistics World Meeting, Mexico City, Mexico

27-29 May 2009
Rutgers Post Conference, Bordeaux, France

12 June 2009
European Postal Social Dialogue Plenary, Brussels, Belgium

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