

n°2 - MAY - 2009

UNI Commerce

Bulletin

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Sector News

IKEA employs anti-union tactics

In the branches of its San Diego (USA) section, the world's largest furniture retailer, Swedish IKEA has been caught using anti-union tactics as employees were warned against joining a union.

The HR department called employees to a meeting during which warnings were issued against joining a union.



Pat O'Neil, UFCW, USA - Executive Vice-President and Director of Organising

Commenting on the matter, UFCW Executive Vice-President and Director of Organising, Pat O'Neil (inserted) stated "we at UFCW look forward to working through UNI Global Union and our Swedish colleagues as the IKEA global agreement is secured, and we are committed to positive engagement with the company into the future".

Any such activities violate IKEA's own Code of Conduct "IWAY". As the company code once again has failed to protect the rights of workers, the demand that IKEA signs a global agreement with UNI Commerce Global Union is becoming more and more urgent and substantiated.

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That the "IWAY" needs to be supplemented or even replaced is underlined by the fact that last year UFCW successfully organised fellow Swedish company H&M in Manhattan, New York where in excesses of 90% of employees chose to join the union when given the choice.

The experiences from Manhattan and from IKEA's operations in Sweden and elsewhere demonstrate that the company has no need to employ anti-union activities as it stands to benefit from an organised workforce.

Swedish affiliate HK Handels on behalf of UNI is currently negotiating a global agreement with IKEA and with the recent development it seems that IKEA will have difficulties not to conclude a deal soonest.

UNI Commerce is setting up a global union alliance within the company which will enable unions globally representing IKEA workers to speak with one voice and to support the negotiation of the global agreement and assist its implementation.

Read more at Swedish LO's homepage:
<http://www.lotcobistand.org/ikea-varnar-anstallda-facket>

Ireland TESCO provokes industrial action

As Tesco Plc. in April announced a record breaking 10% in net profits reaching £3.1bn after taxes, its Irish division started violating the National Wage Agreement and workers contracts forcing Irish affiliate MANDATE to industrial action.

In less than four days, MANDATE received 10.648 signatures on a petition supporting the workers of the shop in Douglas, Cork Ireland and a strike was announced to begin on 30 April.

In an attempt to persuade workers not to join the strike staff was threatened with lock-outs and were encouraged to call in sick as a way to avoid company's wrath.

However, Tesco's efforts were of little consequence and soon thereafter Tesco accepted third-party arbitration which at the time of writing arbitration is on-going.

Read more at MANDATE's website:

<http://www.mandate.ie/news/default.aspx?mode=all&nType=2>

Swiss MANOR fires employee for activism

Swiss retailer Manor followed the trends from Ireland when it decided to fire a loyal employee from its shop in Geneva, Switzerland.

The employee was fired only after she had been cited in a local news paper which ran an article on working conditions in general in Switzerland in which Manor was not even mentioned.

Despite this Manor management claimed that the discontinuation of the employee was due to disloyal behaviour and had nothing to do with the fact that the employee was an activist for the Swiss union UNIA.

The actions by local management are a clear violation of Manor's own Code of Conduct and therefore UNI Commerce has asked central management to mediate in the conflict. Reaction has been slow and only after prolonged struggle has the case now been

deferred to the labour courts where it is awaiting a final sentencing.

Read more at the UNI Commerce website:

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

UNI Commerce CENCOSUD Alliance

On 28th and 29th May, 120 colleagues working in CENCOSUD from Argentina, Chile, Brazil and Peru met in Uspallata, Mendoza, Argentina to launch the regional UNI Commerce CENCOSUD Alliance.

The Alliance will provide support for the ongoing negotiations with CENCOSUD for a global agreement and develop the capacity of



the participating unions to build stronger unions by organising more workers and bargain collectively in order to improve conditions and workers' right in all of CENCOSUDS' workplaces.

CENCOSUD is one of Latin America's largest public retailers of Chilean origin employing about 120.000 people and with a presence in Shanghai.

Organisational News

UNI Commerce Global Conference

Preparations for the UNI Global Commerce Conference in Dublin 30 September – 2 October are firmly under way. Detailed information will be made available via the meetings database as documents are made ready for perusal.

Also, the August edition of this bulletin will make further practical information available.

The deadline for conference registration is 26 June.



Dublin - Coat-of-arms

UNI Africa

As UNI Global Union is undergoing a makeover, the timing of the UNI Africa regional conference followed by the UNI Africa Commerce conference the timing was perfect.

The regional conference took place in Hammamet, Tunisia on 11- 13th May and thus presented itself as an opportunity to bring the region up to speed with all of the organisational changes which are being implemented.

The regional conference elected Mr Bones Skulu as regional President and acting regional secretary Zakari Koudougou was confirmed as regional secretary.



Thus a strong team will head the UNI Africa region the next four years and consolidate UNI's efforts to the next conference in 2013.

A circular with conclusions from the regional conference will be issued at a later point.

UNI Africa Commerce

On 14th May UNI Africa Commerce had its regional sectoral conference which established a solid foundation for the future work of our regional sector.

This was the first conference since UNI Africa Commerce was established in 2003 and thus marked a turning point in UNI Global Union's work in the region as the conference expressed UNI commerce global union's commitment to the region.

40 delegates representing all parts of the continent attended the conference which was convened to bring the sector in line with the developments of the organisation and therefore important decisions had to be made in terms of adopting an action plan and sector rules.

The action plan describes a framework within which the sector will conduct its business and also sets out specific targets to be reached in the period 2009 – 2013 and thus ensures that the work meets the objectives and visions of UNI Global Union and UNI Africa.

The overall objective of the action plan is to empower commerce unions and commerce workers in Africa envisaging independent, democratic and strongly organised unions all over the continent.

The action plan includes 5 areas of focus which in random order are: multinational companies, employment patterns, communication and networking, corporate social re-

sponsibility and capability building. These areas of focus will guide the work of the sector and will form the basis of projects which will be run in the period covered by the action plan. As UNI Africa Commerce is in a process of building itself, extra attention will be given to capacity building and organising in multinational companies. The full version of the action plan will be made available on the sector webpage.

The conference also decided on sector rules setting out the overall purpose of UNI Africa Commerce and how in general it will conduct its business until the next conference in 2013.

The adoption of sector rules was made necessary as the current President of UNI Africa Commerce Mr. Bones Skulu had been elected President of UNI Africa and therefore a new sector President was needed.

After adopting the sector rules the conference unanimously elected Mr. Jonathan Peles (TUICO – Tanzania) as the new sector President.

The full version of the sector rules will be made available on the sector website.



*Jonathan Peles, TUICO, Tanzania
UNI Africa Commerce President*

UNI Europa Commerce

The UNI Europa Commerce steering committee met on 5-6 March in the Brussels office which was presided over by regional sector president Jorgen Hoppe.

The steering committee adopted an action plan for 2009—2010 and discussed reports given by the members on the effects of the economic crisis on their respective countries.



*Jorgen Hoppe, HANDELS, Denmark
UNI Europa Commerce President*

Following that the steering committee discussed the theme of opening hours with a special focus on the question of "Open on Sundays". German affiliate Ver.di is leading a group of union fighting for keeping Sunday as a day off.

The steering committee also discussed how to develop the social dialogue and how UNI commerce is represented in a number of initiatives and organisations which work with CSR related topics.

The steering committee also expressed its grave concern that decision makers handling the global economic crisis were not paying attention enough to the importance of the retail and wholesale sectors

and therefore encourage decision makers to support the purchasing power of the workers in the real economy.

The steering committee also welcomed Paddy Lilliy (USDAW) as new vice-president following John Hannett's (USDAW) decision to step down.

The full minutes from the meeting can be found in the Meetings database (see later how to access this).

Miscellaneous

New editions to the Commerce website

A) Meetings Database

In the February issue of the sector bulletin it was mentioned that with the new website we would also get a new on-line meetings database where affiliates can get information about upcoming meetings.

Accessing this database will provide you with not only the date of the meeting and the venue but will also be where you can find all the documentation pertinent to the meeting and where you can locate the minutes and other concluding documents.

On top of that by accessing the on-line meetings database you will get an easy overview of other sectoral activities.

How to access the meetings database:

- 1) **Open** the commerce website:
http://www.uniglobalunion.org/Apps/portal.nsf/pages/sec_20081016_qbguEn
- 2) **Find** the meetings list on the menu on the left side on the screen.
- 3) **Log in** using the new UNI-

login in the grey bar on top of the screen.

If you don't have a log-in then please contact our webmaster on e-mail:

webmaster@uniglobalunion.org

4) **Choose** the meeting you are interested in.

B) Unions Talk

Unions spend a lot of resources on communicating with their members and since most of our affiliates have websites it has become possible to talk to even more people.

Under the « unions talk » menu we wish to create a list with links to affiliates' websites giving easy access to the news and/or membership magazines produced by the unions.

If you want your union to be represented on this list then send a link to policy officer Jakob Thiemann at:
jakob.thiemann@uniglobalunion.org

Try it already now by [clicking here](#)

Workers Out

This year the World Outgames will take place in Copenhagen, Denmark 25 July - 2 August.

The event will include a wide variety of cultural and sport activities, as well as a human rights conference.

The International Conference on LGBT Human Rights during the World Outgames in Copenhagen 2009 includes the Workers Out programme which offers an space for unionists as well as opportunities to share and to learn relevant experiences and good practices in the field of work.

Read more here:

http://www.uniglobalunion.org/Apps/portal.nsf/pages/thm_20090123_khn4En

Forthcoming UNI Commerce Events

5/6 May 2009:
UNI Commerce Global Steering Committee, Nyon

14/15 May 2009:
UNI Africa Regional Commerce Conference, Hammamet

25/26 June 2009:
TESCO Alliance Meeting, Izmir

1 July 2009:
CICE Carrefour, Paris

23/24 July 2009:
UNI Apro Regional Commerce Conference, Jakarta

10 September 2009:
CICE Carrefour, Paris

15 September 2009:
EU-SD Commerce Meeting, Brussels

29 September 2009:
UNI Commerce Global Steering Committee, Dublin

30 September to 2 October 2009:
UNI Commerce Global Conference, Dublin

7/8 October 2009:
CICE Carrefour, Warsaw

14 to 16 October 2009:
UNI Americas Regional Commerce Conference, Santiago

28 to 30 October 2009:
EWC Conference & UNI Europa Commerce Steering Committee, (venue to be defined)

12 November 2009:
UNI Commerce Global Steering Committee, Nyon

15 December 2009:
EU-SD Commerce Plenary Meeting, Brussels

UNI global union

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