

Kv-palvelut / MKos

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Industrial action to commence in the paper industry: Reductions are demanded to employment terms despite increased productivity

Trade Union Pro¹ issued an announcement on Monday 3.1.2018 about the commencement of industrial action. The reason for the paper industry's industrial action is the employers' unreasonable demands for reductions in an industry that has excellent productivity and profitability.

An overtime ban in the paper industry commences on Tuesday at 14:00, remaining effective until further notice. A one-week strike will commence on January 17 at 06:00, and end on January 24 at 06:00.

The overtime ban and strike will affect all paper industry experts doing clerical work, with approximately 3,000 white-collar employees in total participating in the overtime ban and strike. The overtime ban will cause job delays, and the strike, if implemented, will lead to significant disturbances in paper industry workplaces.

Pro's salary increase model would guarantee fair and equal treatment

Pro's key objective is a general salary increase for everyone to secure the development of salaries for the paper industry's clerical employees, experts, supervisory and managerial staff.

"This has been a time of tremendous growth in productivity and constantly improving profitability for the paper industry. Salaried paper industry employees should therefore be entitled to larger salary increases compared to employees in other industries. Despite this, we have set reasonable targets for the negotiations in line with the general targets," comments Trade Union Pro's paper industry contract field supervisor **Jari Uschanov**.

The salary increase model proposed by Pro comprises a general increase component that covers everyone, and a separate salary component to be negotiated locally. Local bargaining would enable the shop steward to ensure the equal treatment of employees. If agreement cannot be reached locally, everyone gets the same size general increase.

¹ **Pro – one of the largest trade unions in Finland.** Trade Union Pro is the largest private sector union for white collar employees with 115000 members and the largest union of the Finnish Confederation of Professionals STTK. Pro is a strong and responsible influencer in Finnish working life and labour markets. Its operations are based on its wide membership and steady economy. Pro members work in expert, specialist, clerical, supervisory and managerial positions as well as in other salaried employee positions in all private branches like industry, finance, information, service, economic, building and transportation sectors.

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Pro has also made a proposal for a mixed compensation model, i.e., an increase as a percentage share of salary, with a minimum amount set for the increase (in euros). The mixed compensation model would promote equal pay by raising the salaries of individuals whose salary development has lagged behind in relation to others.

“These objectives are very important for the paper industry because, unlike in many other industries, we do not have a uniform remuneration system that allocates salary increases equally to everyone,” Uschanov explains.

Employer demands significant reductions and more power to dictate

The salary solution for white-collar employees proposed by Finnish Forest Industries, which represents the employer, is inferior to the agreement concluded with the employees. Furthermore, the employer side wants to lower the general increase paid to everyone, as well as to completely eliminate several employee bonuses.

According to Uschanov, among the most blatant demands posed by Finnish Forest Industries are unequal treatment in remuneration, several reductions to various salary components, and confirming local bargaining with employer decisions.

“The reductions demanded to be made to the employment terms would lower the earnings of paper industry clerical employees and experts,” he states.

In public, many employer organisations have been waving the flag for using local bargaining more. According to Jari Uschanov, what Finnish Forest Industries wants is to make one-sided decisions on how to allocate salary increases.

“In our opinion, the parties should commit to promoting genuine local bargaining. In today’s world, one-sided decisions about employment terms should not be on anyone’s agenda,” Uschanov concludes.

For more information

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