



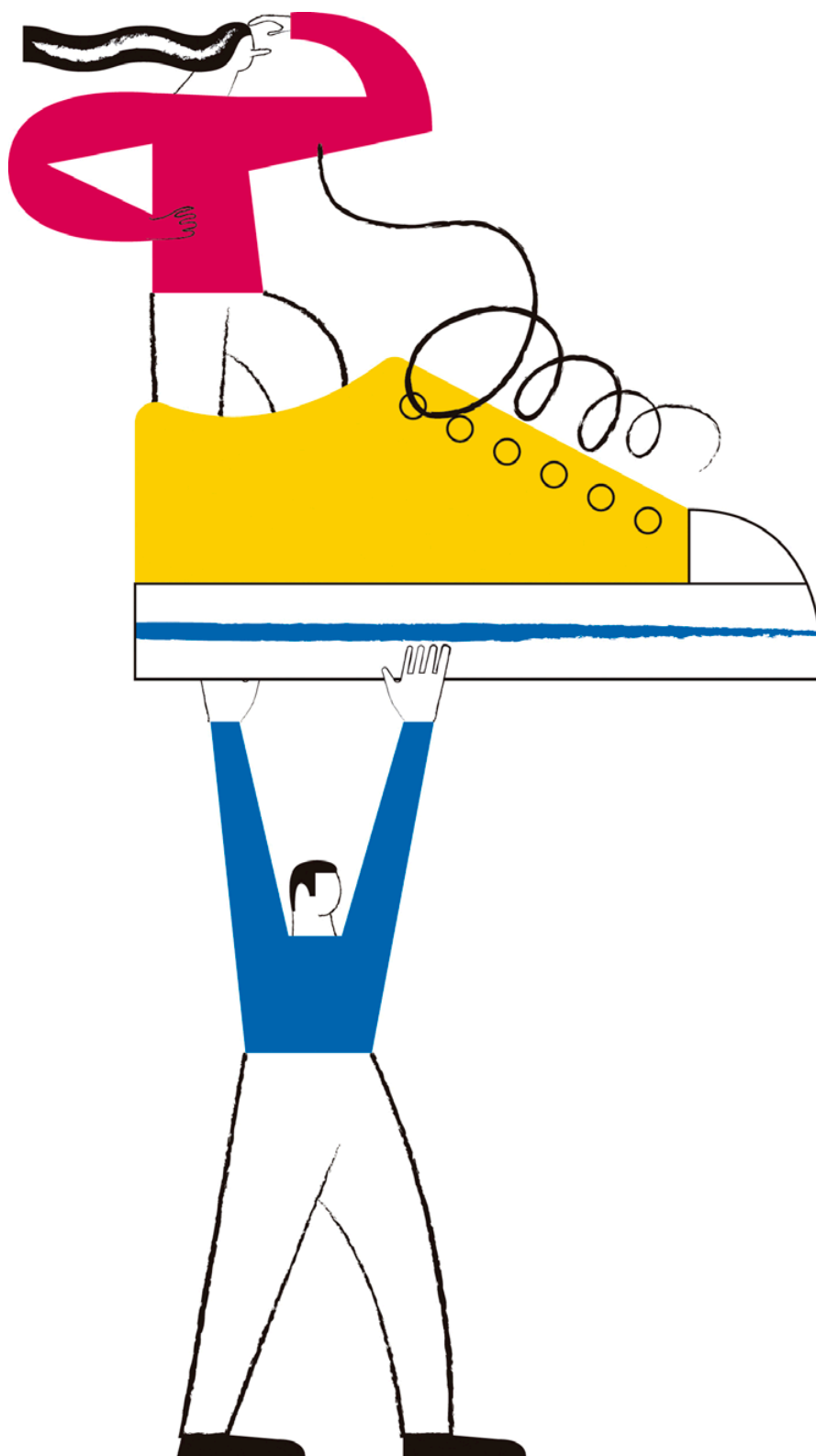
# **BUILDING TRADE UNION POWER IN SOUTH-EAST EUROPE**

**A GUIDE TO ORGANISING IN THE TEXTILE, GARMENT,  
LEATHER AND FOOTWEAR INDUSTRIES**



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# Foreword

Organising is key to building trade union power. Unions need to recruit new members, then activate and mobilise them to effectively defend the interests of workers.

A stronger union will be able to negotiate collective agreements, improve wages and working conditions, ensure a safe and healthy workplace and solve problems when they occur.

Helping unions to build their capacity to organise is therefore an important task for industriALL European Trade Union and IndustriALL Global Union. We do this through training and support in Europe and around the world, with particular focus on organising women, young and migrant workers with the aim of empowering our unions on the ground.

Our organisations have cooperated on the project 'Strengthening the capacity of trade unions in South-East Europe to improve wages and working conditions in the garment and footwear sectors', financially supported by the European Union.

There are 600,000 textile industry workers in eight countries of this region (Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Romania and Serbia), most of them women. Our research found that they work long hours for low wages, producing clothes and shoes for well-known global fashion brands. Union density is low and there are few collective agreements.

In such a context, building trade union power is urgent. It is the only way to ensure that every worker can freely join a union, get the protection of a collective agreement and secure a living wage.

This is what our organisations are committed to doing in South-East Europe and elsewhere. This manual is meant to support and facilitate the efforts of our unions to organise thousands of workers in the years to come and so build stronger unions.



**Luc Triangle**  
General Secretary  
industriALL European Trade Union



**Valter Sanches**  
General Secretary  
IndustriALL Global Union



# The Sector Around the World and in South-East Europe

## A Globalised Sector

As in other industrial sectors, globalisation has radically altered the face of the textile, clothing, leather and footwear (TCLF) industry and brought about major changes in where and how products are manufactured. Production has shifted from developed to developing countries, with a significant impact on employment. The sector employs approximately 75 million people globally, many of whom are women. The production system is based on having multiple suppliers in different countries, leading to cutthroat competition for orders that pushes down wages. Today most production takes place in countries where pay and working conditions are poor. Human rights and labour abuses are common throughout the supply chain.

The TCLF sector employs about 600,000 workers in South-East Europe. Although the sector has suffered drastic job cuts as a result of restructuring and privatisation, it remains an important source of production and manufacturing employment, and accounts for a sizeable share of exports in the countries concerned.

Between 70% and 80% of garment and footwear exports from South-East Europe are shipped to the European Union, mainly to Germany, Italy and Austria. Geographical proximity to the EU means shorter delivery times, lower transport costs and easier communication with trade partners.

## Working Conditions

The industry is characterised by bad working conditions. Long working hours—sometimes without a weekly rest day—poor wages, lack of regular employment contracts (or no contract at all) and hazardous conditions are regularly reported.

Wages are very low, falling far short of a real living wage. Overtime is often not adequately compensated.

In a number of countries, child, forced and bonded labour are rampant in the production chain. Many workers in the TCLF sector endure unsafe and even dangerous conditions. Exposure to toxic substances, high levels of noise and poor lighting and ventilation are common and often lead to injuries and factory fires. These problems become worse further down the supply chain, where there is less independent oversight and more pressure on prices and delivery times.

In addition to low prices, global brands demand tight production deadlines. They also make sudden changes to product design



### What is a living wage?

A living wage means earning enough from the same job to afford a decent standard of living for the worker and their family. This means at least enough to cover food, water, housing, education, healthcare, transportation, clothing, and other essential needs, including provision for unexpected events.

and volume, and place last-minute orders without accepting increased costs or adjustments to delivery dates. Workers bear the brunt of these irresponsible policies.

Fashion trends change rapidly: the industry operates at ever higher speeds and demands quick and cheap production from its suppliers in order to keep up with market trends. The pressure of new technology, both on the production and retail sides of the business, is felt first and foremost on the shop floor.

Women account for the bulk of employment in the sector, although the proportion of women is slightly lower in footwear. The vast majority of these women perform fast, repetitive tasks such as cutting, sewing and finishing of garments. Sewing can often account for over two thirds of the work in a factory.

Workers are hired with flexible or short-term contracts during peak seasons and simply laid-off when demand slackens.

Unionisation in the sector is usually low, making it difficult for workers to stand up to unsecure and substandard working conditions. Intimidation, harassment, pressure, threats from employers, as well as workers' lack of awareness of fundamental rights at work, make for low union density and collective-bargaining coverage. This is compounded, in many places, by changes to labour law making it easier to hire and fire workers.

Informal garment and textile workers, a huge workforce in many countries, are often invisible—especially those who work in their homes. They are paid by the piece, earn very little, do not get paid overtime and do not receive sick leave.

## **Power of Brands and Retailers**

Global production and trade in the TCLF sector are controlled by big multinational corporations. They operate through production networks or supply chains through which they place their orders and supply the specifications for their products. They typically provide detailed specifications to smaller suppliers who then manufacture a brand's products and deliver them up the supply chain.

Global brands rarely have their own large-scale production capacity. Instead, they rely on pitting smaller contractors against each other to keep prices down. This is a major cause of low wages in the sector.

The brands keep control of design, advertising and marketing in order to protect their image and identity in a very competitive market. The level of control is greater in cut-make-trim manufacturing, where brands also provide the fabrics and other raw materials to the suppliers.

The big global retailers set the terms for what is to be produced, how fast, and at what price. They keep tight control over every aspect of production whilst, in many cases, outsourcing responsibility for the workers who make the clothes.



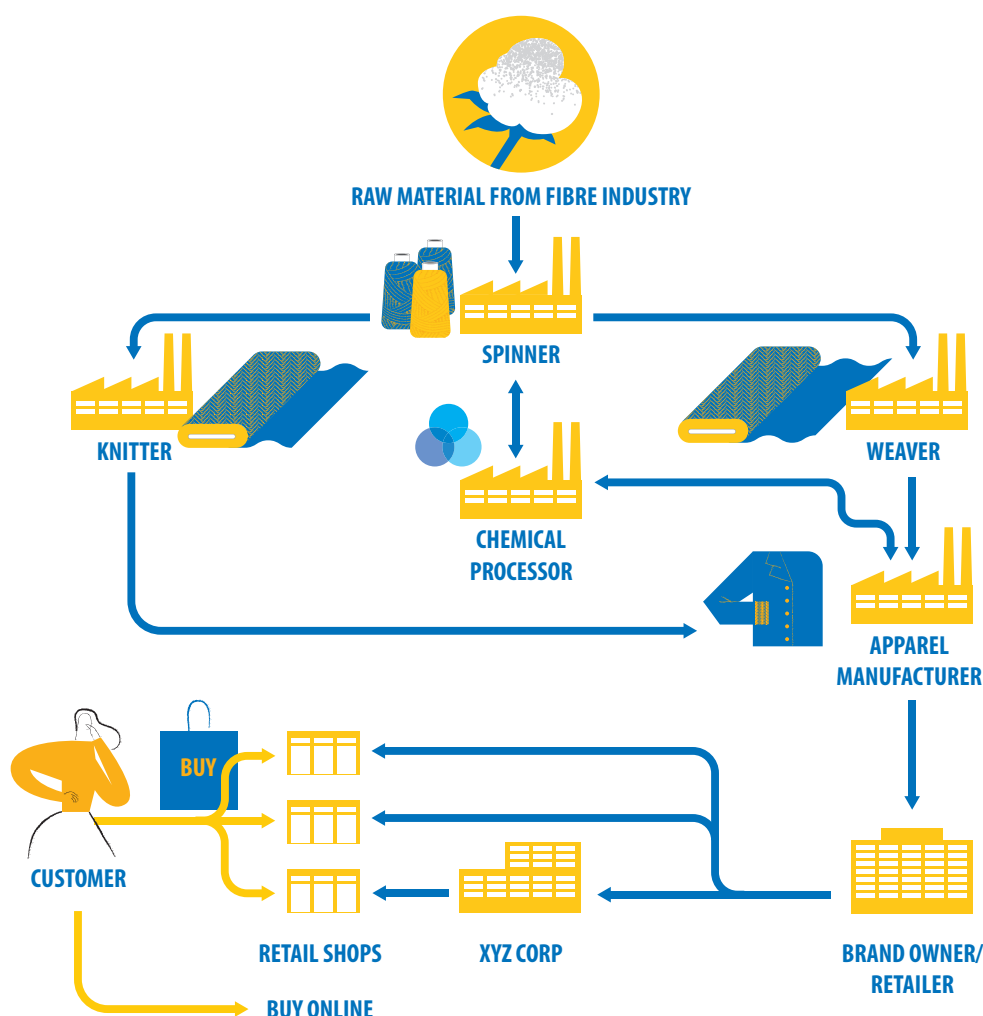
## What is a Global Supply Chain?

Fashion brands and retailers do not own factories and do not produce the clothes they sell. They outsource production to factories in countries with lower production costs and have their products made by a variety of manufacturers.

A supply chain is a complex network of interconnected suppliers. It consists of all the activities involved in getting a finished product to the shop: farming of raw materials, design, production and logistics and marketing. Textile and garment supply chains are increasingly intricate. In the past, a company would design an item of clothing, produce it in its own factory and sell it directly to a customer. Today, a single garment for a big brand may be manufactured by many suppliers who, in turn, also make clothes for other brands or companies. These suppliers might subcontract part of the work to their own suppliers, small workshops, homeworkers or self-employed garment makers.

This set-up creates a race to the bottom where manufacturers underbid each other for orders from retailers, who demand ever lower costs and tighter delivery times.

### How does a global supply chain work?



## The Sector in South-East Europe

The sector in South-East Europe is generally similar to other parts of the world; poor working conditions are the norm. As elsewhere, big foreign brands tend to subcontract production to smaller suppliers, although some run their own factories and a few local companies have their own brands, as well.

The predominant production model in garment manufacturing is cut-make-trim, i.e. cutting the fabric, making the garment and trimming it. As a rule, this final stage also involves quality checks before delivery to the customer. Retailers subcontract production to smaller suppliers, which again creates a race to the bottom. These subcontractors usually receive both the designs and raw materials from their clients and have to keep to strict intellectual property and quality requirements, as well as to tight deadlines. They are generally small or medium-sized businesses working in regions with a high concentration of other manufacturers.

In general, workers are paid the legal minimum wage or even less. Many work overtime hours that exceed the legal limit without being adequately paid, while others are only paid a minimum wage if they work extra hours and meet their production quota. Factories are often located in remote areas where workers do not have access to other employment opportunities.

Collective agreements, where they exist at all, are negotiated at the level of individual factories. Whilst there are some, but not many, plant-level agreements, there are almost none that cover the entire sector.

### Characteristics of the sector in South-East Europe



Labour-intensive, repetitive and high-speed work



Wages often delayed



Unpaid or not correctly paid overtime and social security contributions



Ageing workforce



Dangerous working environment



Annual leave often not fully granted



Weak enforcement of laws and inefficient labour inspection



Shortage of labour and few young workers

Even if some unions are well organised, they often lack counterparts on the employers' side with which to bargain. This absence of employer associations makes it difficult or impossible to negotiate agreements to cover the whole sector in a country. Such agreements would provide more protections for workers and stop the race to the bottom that has been described by setting minimum standards for the industry across the country. Multi-employer agreements, such as those negotiated in some sub-sectors in certain countries, rarely exist in the textile, clothing, leather and footwear sector in the region.

## Tools for Improving Working Conditions in the Sector

Tools and mechanisms have been developed at global level to promote building trade union power and help improve working conditions in the sector.

### Tsvetelina Milchalieva, President FOSIL-CITUB/KNSB, Bulgaria

"Talking to employers, the government and workers, we realised that there are so many problems in the sector in Bulgaria, that we need to bargain collectively. Many young people are going abroad, and this is saving up problems for the future when there won't be enough workers for the sector.

We started communicating the workers' problems, particularly around low wages, to the employers. They understood that we are the voice of the workers and so they started talking to us. We started with a common campaign at the enterprise level and government level, firstly against the grey economy.



Then we looked to the existing Global Framework Agreements as a model. We wanted to negotiate something that can be implemented here in Bulgaria for the whole branch. We succeeded in signing an agreement which sets a branch-level minimum wage which is 7% higher than the legal minimum wage. It's a first step and I think we can manage to do a lot more.

To get to this point, we have done lots of action in the companies. Now, we have launched a national petition against low-paid night work. The Bulgarian trade unions are also campaigning on a recent change to the law which means overtime is being calculated over a much longer period, meaning workers end up working more hours for no extra pay. This is something our members have really pushed for. Together with CL Podkrepa, CITUB is campaigning for changes in the law to stop this abusive practice. It is a big national campaign of the two trade union confederations CITUB and CL Podkrepa. We are aiming for 100,000 signatures to force the government to take action."

### **Global Framework Agreements – GFA**

In response to the rapid globalisation of companies and supply chains, global trade union federations have developed strategies for advancing workers' rights in multinational enterprises and their suppliers. One tool supporting these strategies are global framework agreements (GFAs).

GFAs are negotiated between global trade union federations (e.g. IndustriALL Global Union) and multinational companies. They set the best practice in the field of trade union rights, health, safety and environmental practices. They also define principles on quality of work across a company's global operations, regardless of whether those standards exist in an individual country. Trade union recognition is at the core of GFAs, and all agreements build on the language on freedom of association and collective bargaining found in the International Labour Organisation's (ILO) fundamental conventions.

In GFAs, companies are committed to respecting workers' rights around the world, both within their subsidiaries and along their global supply chains. Freedom of association and the right to bargain collectively are key rights in a sustainable supply chain.

GFAs also contain joint monitoring and dispute resolution mechanisms. As a central principle, any issue related to the implementation of a GFA and/or cases of non-compliance are to be resolved locally through dialogue between the parties. If the issue cannot be settled satisfactorily at local level, it should be raised with the monitoring bodies set up as part of the agreements or the signatory trade unions and IndustriALL Global Union.

Disclosure of supplier locations is critical for unions. With the pressure of IndustriALL Global Union and labour-friendly organisations, more and more brands now publish



### **What are the ILO's Fundamental Conventions?**

- Freedom of association – Right to unionise – ILO Convention n° 87
- Effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining – ILO Convention n° 98
- Elimination of all forms of forced or compulsory labour – ILO Conventions n° 29 and 105
- Effective abolition of child labour – ILO Conventions n° 138 and 182
- Elimination of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation – ILO Conventions n° 100 and 111

These fundamental conventions are binding upon every member country of the ILO. All South-East European countries are part of it.









detailed lists of their suppliers and factories, with the names and locations on their website, and update them regularly. National and local unions can use this information to contact workers in these factories and make sure that the labour standards incorporated in the GFAs are abided by.


Textile and leather are not only used in garments and footwear but also in other industrial sectors, for example, for car upholstery. Several companies producing such items in South-East European countries are suppliers to global automotive manufacturers that have signed a GFA with IndustriALL Global Union. The supplier provision in a GFA takes on special importance because it is in these supply chains where the most frequent abuses of workers' rights take place.


GFAs are used by unions in their organising efforts in supplier companies to build up union power (see box for the example of Turkey).

**Brands in the textile sector which have a Global Framework Agreement with IndustriALL Global Union**

<div style="text-align: center; font-weight: bold; color: #c00000; font-size: 1.2em;">INDITEX</div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; margin-top: 20px;"> <div style="text-align: center;">   ZARA HOME </div> <div style="text-align: center;">     Massimo Dutti </div> </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; margin-top: 20px;"> <div style="text-align: center;">   Kiddys Class </div> <div style="text-align: center;">   UTERQÜE </div> </div>	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; margin-top: 20px;"> <div style="text-align: center;">   MONK.L  WEEKDAY </div> <div style="text-align: center;">   <i>&amp; other Stories</i>  COS </div> </div> <div style="text-align: center; margin-top: 40px;">  </div>
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### **Action-Collaboration-Transformation – ACT**

ACT is an initiative between global brands/retailers and IndustriALL Global Union. Its objective is to transform the global garment, textile and footwear industry and secure living wages for workers. It is the first global commitment by brands on living wages involving all relevant actors—unions, employers and governments.



## GFA as an organising tool in the Turkish textile sector

**Beks:** Beks employs 2,000 workers and is a major supplier of H&M and Tchibo. In 2017 management fired union members in response to an organising drive and used various intimidation tactics to block the union. Workers were sent on unpaid leave and contractors brought in to do the work. IndustriALL Global Union actively supported the workers and asked the brands to jointly take action and ensure that management stop its anti-union campaign. After several weeks of intense talks and brand pressure, a protocol towards resolving the conflict was signed. The protocol provides the opportunity for the dismissed workers to return to their jobs. Management finally recognised the union as legitimate representative for constructive dialogue. GFAs have been vital and instrumental in winning this battle.

**Akar Tekstil:** An organising campaign was launched in mid-2017. At that time, Akar Tekstil employed some 1500 workers and produced for H&M, Inditex and C&A. In the early stage of the campaign, the union identified some serious violations of workers' rights and pressure on the workers, and immediately informed the brands. The brands asked management to stop the violations and engage in direct and constructive dialogue with the union. A social dialogue committee was set up. In January 2018 a protocol was signed between Akar Tekstil and the union, with IndustriALL Global Union as observer. A collective agreement was concluded in March 2018. The GFAs with the international brands made significant and positive contributions to the solution.

**Bony Socks:** Bony Socks employs some 1200 workers and mainly produces for two GFA brands - H&M and Tchibo. In August 2017 the union recruited the majority of workers at Bony and applied to the Ministry for authorisation to conclude a collective agreement. During the organising campaign, there were no serious employer reactions (no dismissal due to unionisation, no pressure on the workers, etc.). The GFA brands successfully managed the case. But the employer then appealed against the authorisation and the legal process took over a year. In November 2018, the parties were able to start negotiations and concluded an agreement in January 2019.

Thanks to the GFAs and the unions 15,000 textile workers have been organised in the past 2 ½ years in Turkey and are covered by collective agreements.



Because of the company's anti-union campaign, the union was banned from talking to workers. The union then began addressing workers through the factory fence, but the company put up a screen. In response, the union used a crane to get above the screen and address workers through a loudspeaker.

Freedom of Association and the right to collective bargaining are at the centre of this initiative.

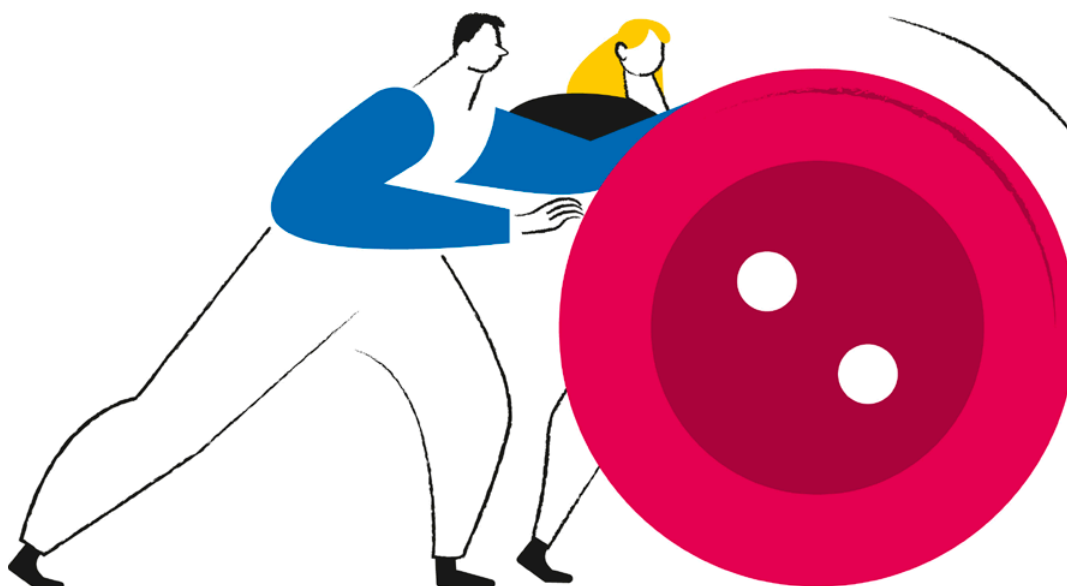
ACT commitments by global brands are:

- Enforceable industry-wide collective agreements
- Stability of orders
- Linking wages to purchasing practices
- Mechanisms to ensure that suppliers pay the negotiated wage

Collective bargaining at industry level is a key instrument in the ACT initiative. It means that workers within a country can negotiate their wages under the same conditions, regardless of the factory they work in, and the retailers and brands for which they produce. Linking wages to purchasing practices means that payment of the negotiated wage is supported and enabled by the terms of contracts with global brands and retailers. Purchasing practices impact on wages and working conditions. Not only pricing but also payment terms, planning and delivery times have to be taken into account.

Several brands that are part of ACT source from South-East Europe. Examples include Arcadia Group, Bestseller, C&A, New Look, Next, Pentland, PVH and Primark. As one of the parties in ACT, IndustriALL Global Union has developed cooperation with these brands and engages in good-faith dialogue. This is a sound basis for building constructive industrial relations.

Based on the ACT approach, and jointly with employers, unions in South-East Europe should work towards establishing or re-establishing industry-wide collective bargaining in the TCLF sector.



## Brands and retailers who are members of ACT



Arcadia

ASOS

BESTSELLER



COTTON:ON

Debenhams

ESPRIT

G-STAR RAW



INDITEX



N BROWN  
GROUP PLC  
*Where fashion fits!*

NEW LOOK

next plc



PRIMARK®



PHILLIPS-VAN HEUSEN CORPORATION



TESCO

zalando

There is big organising potential in the sector in South-East Europe and good prospects for growing unions and union power. Pressure to improve the wages and working conditions of workers in the sector has never been greater.

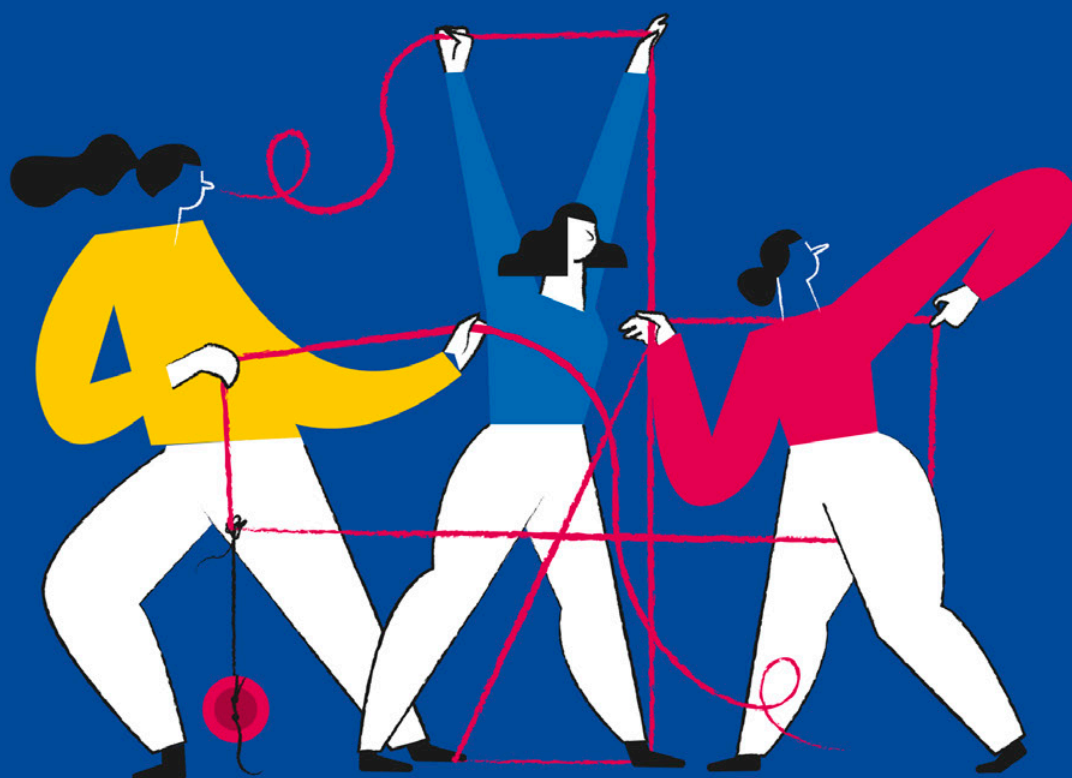
IndustriALL Global Union has signed GFAs with around 50 multinational corporations, of which six with big brands. These are Inditex (2007), Mizuno (2012), H&M (2015), Tchibo (2016), ASOS (2017) and Esprit (2018). Textile, clothing, leather and footwear companies that have signed a GFA may include several brands as in the case of the Spanish Inditex and Swedish H&M. Other GFAs are in the pipeline.

Most of these brands are part of ACT. ACT also has participating brands in South-East Europe.

A list of global framework agreements is available on IndustriALL Global Union's website: [www.industriall-union.org/global-framework-agreements](http://www.industriall-union.org/global-framework-agreements)



# Five-Step Guide to Building and Winning a Trade Union Campaign



## How to Use This Guide

**This five-step guide is designed to help you work through the steps needed to prepare, organise and win a successful organising campaign in the textile, clothing, leather and footwear sector. The steps are accompanied by extra resources, for example, how to research a company, a checklist for choosing the right issue and a short guide to conducting one-on-one conversations with workers. Using the icons, you can easily find the different elements to prepare in each step and then tick off each point when it is done. This will help you keep track of your progress.**

# 1

## Step 1 Pre-Campaign



### **Aims** what do we want to achieve?

- ☐ Obtain the commitment/decision of a union whether organising will be a core activity, and if so, what resources will be employed
- ☐ Establish initial background knowledge through corporate research
- ☐ Decide on the target sectors/companies for organising
- ☐ Develop a strategic action plan and the outlines of the field campaign
- ☐ Set up the organising team



### **Actions** what needs to be done to achieve the aims?

- ☐ Convince your union: a union needs to be convinced of the necessity of proactive organising. Successful organising needs support from the whole union
- ☐ Choose a target company: assess whether organising will be feasible in the target company you have chosen with the organising team, union leadership and activists/ members at the company
- ☐ Define a comprehensive campaign strategy: develop the main ideas and broad outline of your campaign
- ☐ Plan your field campaign: get into more detail and be aware of timeframes and resources needed. In order to assess where you are in your planning process, you will need to measure progress and identify missing elements
- ☐ Build your team: be clear about who will be responsible for what, whether people need training in order to be able to fulfil their role and understand if important skills/ functions are missing. In these cases, you need to think about how to obtain them

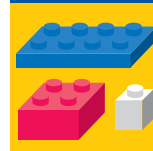


### **People** what people/roles are involved?

- ☐ Team of organisers
- ☐ Union leadership
- ☐ Union staff
- ☐ Union members/factory-level activists

## Resources what is needed to carry out the actions?

- ☐ Financial resources (salaries, travel costs etc.)
- ☐ Knowledge/training
- ☐ People
- ☐ Materials (leaflets, flyers, banners, etc.)



## Time what needs to be done first and how long does it take to complete the actions?

- ☐ Timeframe depends on the commitment of your union, your team and on the target
- ☐ Be realistic: Rome wasn't built in a day and a site is not organised in a week



## Risks and solutions what are the possible risks and what are the solutions to reduce their probability and impact?



Risk	Reduce impact by
Union leadership is not convinced of the need for proactive organising	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> use the "scary graph" below explain that trade unions are in covert or open crisis, losing membership and influence</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Traditional "social dialogue" is deteriorating</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Many workplaces remain unorganised</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Members are passive and/or afraid</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Collective-bargaining coverage is declining</li> </ul>
Lack of capacity	<input type="checkbox"/> Choose small targets and build up the team
Lack of resources	<input type="checkbox"/> Choose smaller target and decide with leadership on reallocation of resources
Lack of expertise	<input type="checkbox"/> Look for support in your union, industriAll Europe and IndustriALL Global Union, other unions in your country interested in your target and even researchers. Identify training needs and organise training

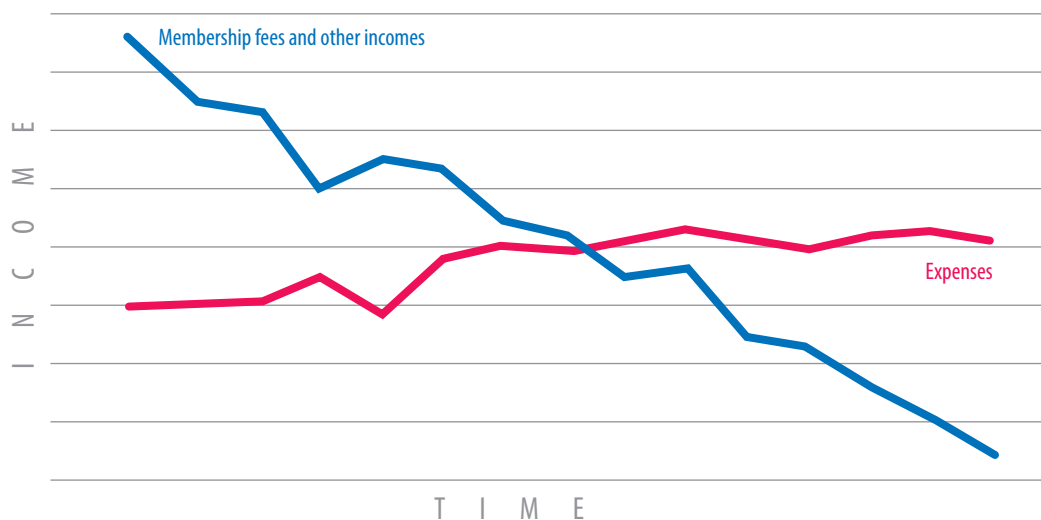
## Step 1: Pre-Campaign



### **Recommendations** some good advice to successfully complete this step

- ❑ The pre-campaign step requires very detailed and in-depth planning which might take more time than you imagine: unions are often more used to actively campaigning than researching and planning.
- ❑ The idea of traditional unionism (i.e. representing members) is deeply embedded in most of the active and even the more radical young trade unionists, but we have to learn (again) the 'old' lead-organiser wisdom: 'Never do for the workers what workers can do for themselves'.

### **The Scary Graph**



### **Savo Šmitran , Regional coordinator, TOKG Croatia**

"We are planning to create five regional organising teams because they are more present locally and able to apply their knowledge to target companies in their area. Each campaign needs financial resources, so we have decided to dedicate 15% of the union's monthly income to invest in the recruitment campaign.

"Organising is important because workers need assistance through their whole working lives, and we can do this by signing collective agreements at company level. We have a two-pronged strategy: for companies where we have members, we are getting the members to engage their colleagues in one-on-one conversations. Companies which aren't yet organised tend to be foreign owned and we can't get access to them. So, we are looking at how we can approach workers outside the company to recruit the first activists."







# 2

## Step 2 Preparation

In the preparation stage, we get closer to our targeted company. This stage involves a lot of information gathering.



### **Aims** what do we want to achieve?

- ☐ Obtain a detailed overview of the company (strategic research)
- ☐ Obtain detailed knowledge about the workforce, the problems workers face and any potential or existing activists (workplace mapping)



### **Actions** what needs to be done to achieve the aims?

- ☐ Strategic research—obtain the following information:
  - o General information on target employer
  - o Corporate structure
  - o Sector and products
  - o Workforce and unions
  - o Management
  - o Corporate Social Responsibility policies, Global Framework Agreements, philanthropic activities and ethical record, corporate image
  - o History
  - o Strategy/growth plan
  - o Financial situation
  - o Contracts and clients
  - o Health, safety and hygiene
  - o Environmental
  - o Regulatory/legal environment and previous compliance
  - o Business relationships of the target company
  - o Weak/vulnerable and strong sides of the target company

- ☐ Map the workplace—find out about:
  - o employment (how many workers are there, how they can be accessed, how many men/women, permanent/casual, native/migrants, etc.)
  - o sites and/or departments
  - o shifts
  - o potential activists/workers already in unions
- ☐ Draw your own map of the company
- ☐ Check progress

### **People** what people/roles are involved?

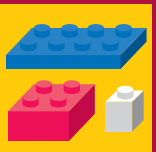
- ☐ For strategic research: researcher, union headquarters, Global Trade Union Federation, European Trade Union Federation, European Works Council
- ☐ For the mapping: (former) workers of the target company, local union(s)
- ☐ Legal advisor to your union (in case of emergency)
- ☐ Your sector officer, the EWC member or coordinator at HQ

### **Resources** what is needed to carry out the actions?

- ☐ Good internet, phone, camera, paper
- ☐ Research skills

### **Time** what needs to be done first and how long does it take to complete the actions?

- ☐ Both main activities can be done in parallel, time schedule depending on capacity (1-2 months)





**Risks and solutions** what are the possible risks and what are the solutions to reduce their probability and impact?

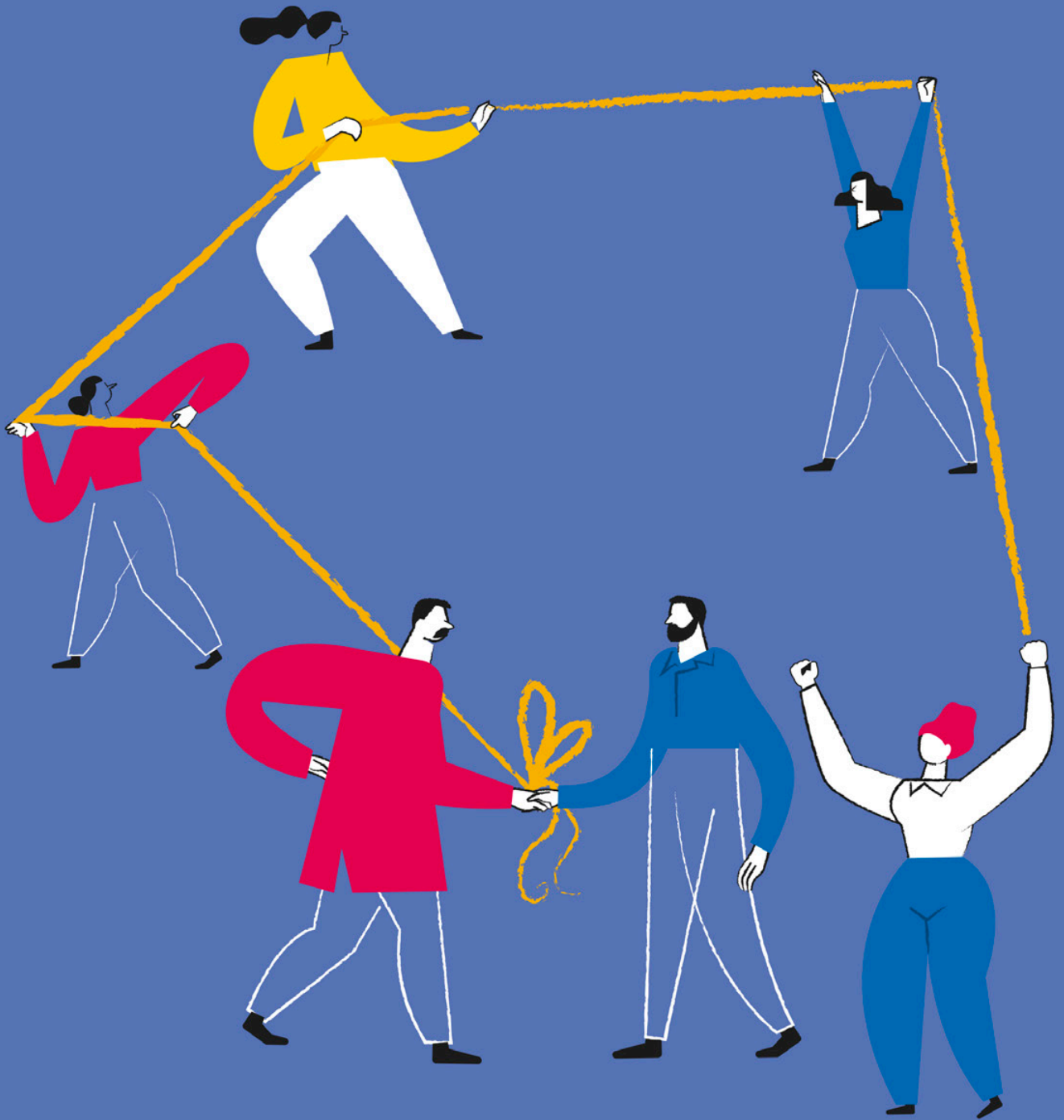
Risk	Reduce impact by
Collecting too much information making it difficult to decide which information is useful	<input type="checkbox"/> Systematic approach and staying focused on the information previously identified as important
Legal conflicts (accusations of corporate espionage)	<input type="checkbox"/> No public data storage, only protected cloud, support of the union's legal advisor
Violation of personal data protection	<input type="checkbox"/> No public data storage



**Recommendations** some good advice to successfully complete this step

- ☐ A lot of information on the target company is public. Transnational companies or listed companies are obliged to publish annual reports.
- ☐ Do not forget that you are not doing the research for the sake of it: concentrate on useful information.
- ☐ Cooperate with your union network, your sector officer is probably an expert on this company.
- ☐ Check the how-to guide on doing company research for more tips.





# How to Do Research into Companies in the Textile Sector

Research is a basic tool to design strategic organising campaigns. Knowledge is a weapon for building union power. Therefore, it is essential to have a good overview and detailed knowledge about the company you are planning to organise.

Before you start conducting research on a specific company, you will first need to identify what you are looking for. You start research differently if your target is a local company than if it is all the suppliers to one brand, or all the companies in a certain sector or region.

In the case of a local company, find out what they make, who they supply to and who their customers are. Local press, members of the local community and social media (where workers may be posting about their workplace) are good places to start. Depending on the country, company information may be available through company registration databases.

If you are targeting all suppliers to a brand, then start with the mother company. A good amount of information about the company, working conditions and their supply chain may be available online, for example, on *industriAll Europe* or *IndustriALL Global Union's* websites.

Remember to check the charts on pages 13 and 16 to see if the brand has a Global Framework Agreement with *IndustriALL Global Union* or if they are a member of ACT.

In both cases, data accuracy is paramount. It is important to cross-check data, using alternative sources of information.

## Sources of information:

- ✎ **Company website:** Websites often provide a lot of information (management, products, sites, numbers)

- ✍ **Brands' websites:** Brands often publish a list of their suppliers on their websites. Here are some examples:  
ASOS: [www.asosplc.com/corporate-responsibility/our-products/our-supply-chain](http://www.asosplc.com/corporate-responsibility/our-products/our-supply-chain)  
Benetton: [www.benettongroup.com/sustainability/sustainable-supply-chain/supplier-list-map](http://www.benettongroup.com/sustainability/sustainable-supply-chain/supplier-list-map)  
C&A: <http://sustainability.c-and-a.com/supplier-map>  
H&M: <https://sustainability.hm.com/en/sustainability/downloads-resources/resources/supplier-list.html>
- ✍ **Wikipedia:** Good source for finding website, good overview of the company's history
- ✍ **Annual report:** Info quality depends on size of company. If good, it provides info about profits, debts, subsidiaries, business model, business division. Remember, a company will usually file for the group in its home country. Many countries have online databases you can consult or require companies to make the reports available on their websites
- ✍ **Company register:** Information about management, shareholder, business purpose, history, affiliations. Remember to check if there is an online database of company registration in the group's home country
- ✍ **Company's customers' and business partners' websites:** these are useful to understand the business environment and dependencies of your target
- ✍ **Try Googling** (obvious, yes, but you'd be surprised!) Also try a Google News search in your language and in English to see what kind of press coverage the company is getting
- ✍ **Hoovers' database** of business records and data: [www.hoovers.com](http://www.hoovers.com)
- ✍ **Employer associations:** use websites and direct contact to find out more about the network of your target and learn whether the target sees itself as a social partner
- ✍ **Local press:** here you find information about disputes, current local investments, relationship of your target, the owners and directors to the local community, and smaller details you might otherwise miss
- ✍ **Social media channels:** as always, be careful with the accuracy of the content and double check carefully. However, this source is useful to find out more about the workforce and how management present themselves to the public

To learn more about your fundamental labour rights, the situation in the sector in other countries and the governmental and international organisations that may be relevant to your campaign, the following pages could be helpful:

## ✎ **International Labour Organisation (ILO)**

- 🌐 Homepage: [www.ilo.org](http://www.ilo.org)
- 🌐 International labour standards: <https://www.ilo.org/global/standards/lang--en/index.htm>

## ✎ **Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)**

- 🌐 Home page: [www.oecd.org](http://www.oecd.org)
- 🌐 Guidelines for multinational enterprises: <http://mneguidelines.oecd.org/guidelines/>
- 🌐 OECD Due Diligence Guidance for Responsible Supply Chains in the Garment and Footwear Sector: [www.oecd.org/governance/oecd-due-diligence-guidance-for-responsible-supply-chains-in-the-garment-and-footwear-sector-9789264290587-en.htm](http://www.oecd.org/governance/oecd-due-diligence-guidance-for-responsible-supply-chains-in-the-garment-and-footwear-sector-9789264290587-en.htm)

## ✎ **European Union**

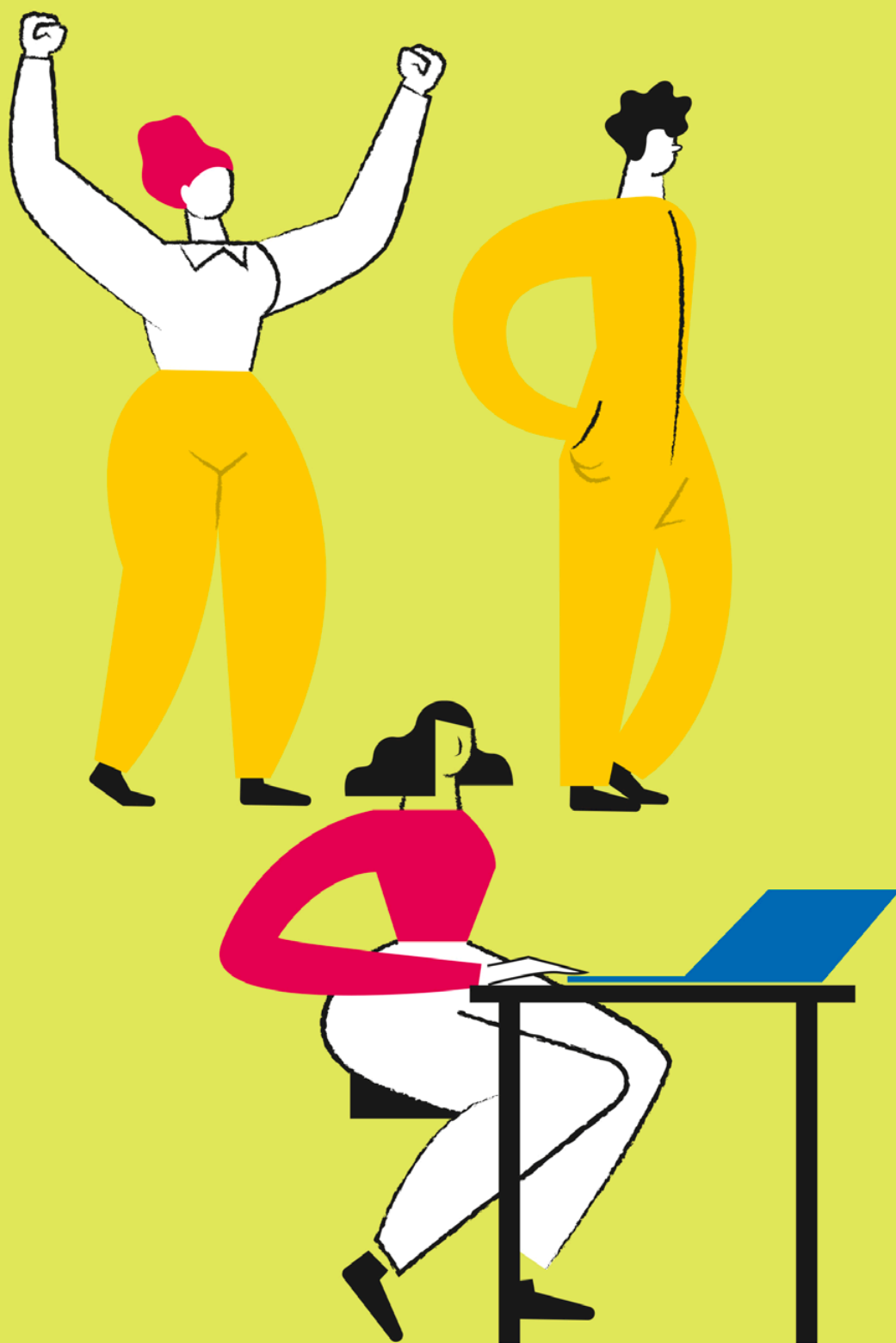
- 🌐 Homepage: [www.europa.eu/european-union](http://www.europa.eu/european-union)
- 🌐 Textile and clothing industries: [https://ec.europa.eu/growth/sectors/fashion/textiles-clothing\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/growth/sectors/fashion/textiles-clothing_en)
- 🌐 Footwear industry: [https://ec.europa.eu/growth/sectors/fashion/footwear/eu-industry\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/growth/sectors/fashion/footwear/eu-industry_en)

You should also look at:

- ✎ Your country's **Ministry of Labour** (or similar)
- ✎ **The National Statistical Office**

Finally, as well as speaking to other unions in the area or sector, the following resources from industriAll European Trade Union and IndustriALL Global Union could be useful:

- ✎ **Global Framework Agreements:** <http://www.industrialunion.org/global-framework-agreements>
- ✎ Information about the sector **globally:** <http://www.industrialunion.org/textile-leather-garment-shoes-and-textile-services>
- ✎ Information about the sector in **Europe:** <https://news.industrial-europe.eu/p/tclf>





# 3

## Step 3 Base Building



### **Aims** what do we want to achieve?

- ☐ Organise communication with workers
- ☐ Choose an issue, find out what the workers main concern/problem is in everyday working life and decide with your team what the central issue is and what you will use to formulate your demand
- ☐ Find and integrate activists, especially from more marginalised groups (women, young people, casual or precarious workers)
- ☐ Build alliances with civil society, other unions, politicians and media contacts
- ☐ Develop a strategy for dealing with the employer and be prepared for negotiations



### **Actions** what needs to be done to achieve the aims?

- ☐ Find out where workers gather regularly (bus stop, café, bar), where they live, where you can contact them
- ☐ Talk to the workers: one-on-one communication (see our guide to one-on-one conversations)
- ☐ Keeping records on one-on-one communication
- ☐ Identification of activists and formation of activist groups = organising committee
- ☐ Contact allies in civil society/ other unions, politicians, and media
- ☐ Cooperate with union negotiators for relations with employers
- ☐ Check progress

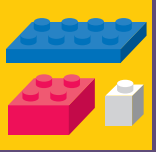


### **People** what people/roles are involved?

- ☐ Lead organiser
- ☐ Organisers
- ☐ Activists (local workers)
- ☐ Negotiators from your union

### Resources what is needed to carry out the actions?

- ☐ Time
- ☐ PC, paper, internet
- ☐ Possibility to meet workers frequently
- ☐ Networking (personally and through social media channels)



### Time what needs to be done first and how long does it take to complete the actions?

- ☐ After you find out where you can communicate with the workers directly, one-on-one communication is needed. Next, you find the activists and form groups. Identify training needs! Base-building is the longest part of the campaign. It might last up to 5 months.



### Risks and solutions what are the possible risks and what are the solutions to reduce their probability and impact?



Risk	Reduce impact by
Talking too much and not listening enough to workers	<input type="checkbox"/> Train for one-on-one communication
Difficulties finding workers outside the company	<input type="checkbox"/> Be creative! Workers are also parents, go shopping, commute. Knowing the local community and where workers might be outside work time helps a lot
Wrong issue	<input type="checkbox"/> Prepare carefully. Choose an issue which is: widely and deeply felt, winnable, worth the effort, results in real improvement, inspires members, gives workers a sense of their power, is easy to understand, sends a message to management, has a clear time frame that works for you, is non-divisive, builds leadership, sets the stage for the next campaign, wins community support and builds union solidarity



### **Recommendations** some good advice to successfully complete this step

- ☐ One-on-one communication is essential. Take time for training in 70% listening, 30% talking method
- ☐ Train: 'Strategic listening'
- ☐ Collect arguments on why trade unionism is the solution



### **Biljana and Biljana, workers at Golden Lady and members of IER Nezavisnost, Serbia**

It can be tough to organise in the textile sector, but that does not mean it is impossible. Two years ago, a group of just three workers in a Serbian textile plant got together and decided to form a union. They dedicated time and energy out of their busy lives to go through the process of researching and then registering their company union with the government.



But once they had the paperwork done, they got off to a flying start, recruiting 200 members in the first nine months. The first recruits were the most difficult. They weren't allowed to talk about the union on work time, and their breaks were too short to approach colleagues. So, they started out by meeting small groups of workers in a local café. The union's branch vice-president also came a few times to explain the union to the workers. They discussed, they got to know each other and earned the trust of their colleagues.

Workers in another of their company's plants saw an article about the new union and decided they wanted to get organised too. They thought that because word was spreading about the new union that it would be easier. However, it took some work: the workers are mainly young women and they usually don't know what a trade union is. By patiently meeting their fellow workers in small groups, they have now won over a hundred members and work together with their colleagues at the other plant. They communicate using messaging apps and don't take any decisions without consulting each other.

When they had gained sufficient strength, they approached the management with the help of their branch union. The threat of calling the labour inspectorate made the bosses sit up and take notice. Previously, the women's working time wasn't being calculated correctly resulting in them not getting paid right for their time-off. The union got this sorted and secured a notice board in the two plants to tell workers about the union.

They are still negotiating—their next demand is a union office on-site so they can reach more workers. But by using their strength in numbers, they have already won real gains for the workers they represent. Not bad for a union that's less than a year old.

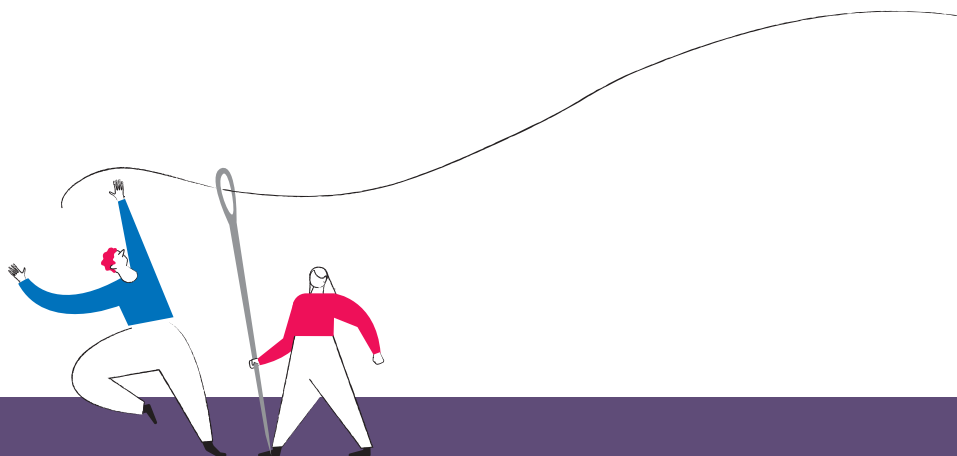


# How to Choose an Issue – Checklist

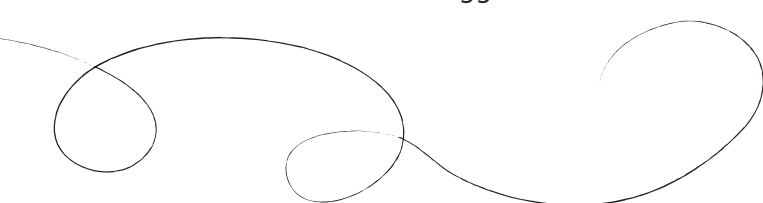
Not every problem is an “issue” in the sense of being the right topic for an organising campaign. Choosing the right issue is important. Read through what the requirements for a good issue are and then use the checklist to analyse how appropriate your issue is for organising. Do not discount the issue if it does not meet all the requirements. Instead, use the checklist to identify where your issue is weaker and think about what you can do and how you can frame it so it meets the requirement. Do not be afraid to try this exercise with several issues to find the right one.

Issues should:

- ☐ **appeal to many workers:** sometimes activists choose an issue which is very important for a particular group. However, this will make it more difficult for others to see why they should join the campaign (**widely felt**).
- ☐ **be important to workers:** something that they really care about (**deeply felt**).
- ☐ **be winnable:** we should have a chance of winning. It makes little sense to start a fight where we know we can't win.
- ☐ **be worth the effort:** an organising campaign takes time and energy and involves certain risks. People will join only when they think the issue is worth it. Try to imagine what the result would be: is it worth it?
  - o This means that it should **result in real improvement**
- ☐ **inspire members:** imagining a win on this issue should give members the energy, ideas and good mood to stick it through to the end – it should not be boring or petty.





- ☐ **give workers a sense of their power:** a purely legal issue, for example, is mostly resolved through legal action. The active people are lawyers and fulltime union officers. It will not involve collective action as the source of workers' power. So, while it is important to protect legal rights, legal issues are not the best organising issues.
  - ☐ **be easy to understand:** keep issues as simple and easy as possible. Twenty-five different demands don't mobilise. Choose a few important, clear demands.
  - ☐ **send a message to management:** the issue should clearly tell management that workers are ready to stand up for their rights.
  - ☐ **have a clear time frame that works for you:** not too short – you won't have the time to get people ready to act; not too long – people will get tired and disappointed before you reach the goal.
  - ☐ **be non-divisive:** the issues must not create privileges for certain groups or take away from some to give to others.
  - ☐ **build leadership:** one aim of your campaign is to make more people take on active roles in the union. So, your issue should give room for these people to do something and get involved.
  - ☐ **set the stage for the next campaign:** the organising campaign will not be the last campaign in the life of your union – in fact, unions will always think about the next campaign early. Does the issue build a platform so that the next campaign can be more ambitious?
  - ☐ **win community support:** a strong union needs a strong community and good ties with it. You must be able to explain to community representatives why they should support the campaign.
  - ☐ **build union solidarity:** choose an issue that other unions can understand. An ideal issue is one around which other unions have already mobilised, so they feel you joined a common struggle.
- 

### Issue (write it here)


Will the issue ...	yes	no	Why/Why not?
be widely felt			
be deeply felt			
be winnable			
be worth the effort			
result in real improvement			
inspire the members			
give workers a sense of their power			
be easy to understand			
send a message to management			
have a clear time frame that works for you			
be non-divisive			
build leadership			
set the stage for the next campaign			
win community support			
build union solidarity			




# One-on-One Communication with a Worker: A Seven-Step Guide

**Remember! The key is 70% listening and 30% talking!**


## 1. Introduction

- ☐ Introduce yourself and explain your union role briefly
- ☐ Explain your reason for the approach
- ☐ Develop rapport and build a working relationship
- ☐ Be friendly and have an open manner
-  'I'm here to introduce myself so that you know who I am and what my union role is'

## 2. Gather Basic Information about the Worker

- ☐ Show an interest in the worker by asking about their job and interests
- ☐ Use open questions and listen actively
-  'How are you finding the job?' or 'What has been happening?'

## 3. Find Issues of Concern

- ☐ Find out what the issues are for the worker
- ☐ Ask open questions to get the worker talking about their issues
-  'How are you finding things here at work?' or 'What do you think about the change of hours?'

## 4. Educate about Being in a Union

- ☐ Talk about some of the successes union members have had by acting collectively, such as winning issues or improving employment conditions
- ☐ Suggest how their issue could be solved with a collective action approach
- ☐ Listen actively and answer their questions

## 5. Get Agreement to Do Something

- ☐ Get them to do something 'union' or join up
- ☐ This action could include agreeing to attend a meeting, sign a petition, give out some union material or join the union
- ☐ Be prepared for objections and answer these in a way that moves the worker

### 6. Inoculate

☐ How do you think the boss will react?

☐ Why?

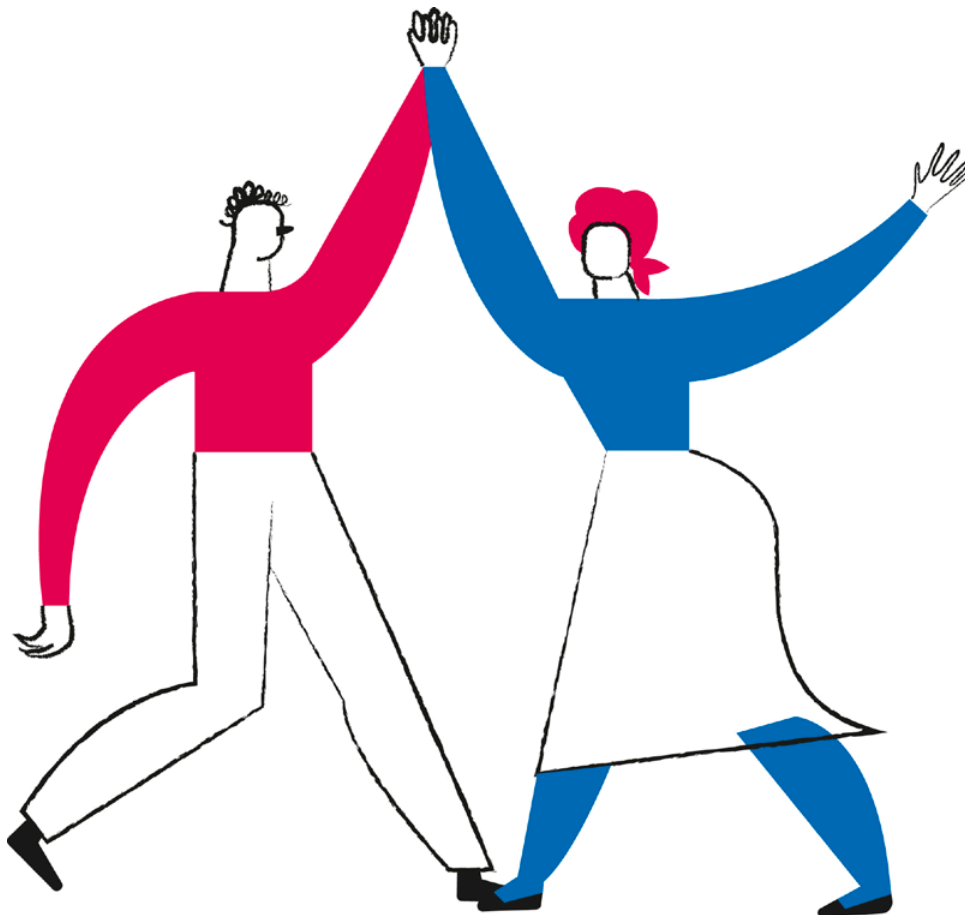
**💬** 'This could be a tough campaign, so we have to stick together to make it work'

### 7. Wrap up

☐ Conclude the approach in a friendly way that leaves an opening for further contact

☐ Have your closure statements ready.

**💬** 'Thanks for taking the time. Together we will be able to change the working conditions/pay for the better,' or 'It's great you've decided to join the Union. I'll see you next week.'



# 4

## Step 4

# Consolidation and launch

### By now, you have:

- ☐ Set up the campaign infrastructure
- ☐ Gathered information about the target company through planning and research
- ☐ Made contact and spoken to workers during the base-building stage

You are now ready to prepare workers for the public launch of the organising/issue campaign.

At this point in time, people should be interested and informed about the issues and have the feeling they need to do something. It is important now to secure their commitment to be involved and to discuss how the campaign will work.

The task of the organiser is to support people getting organised, not to do everything yourself!



### Aims what do we want to achieve?

- ☐ Prepare workers for the public launch of the organising/issue campaign
- ☐ Broaden your activist base
- ☐ Develop active trade unionists into organisers/campaigners



### Actions what needs to be done to achieve the aims?

- ☐ Develop the demand
- ☐ Inform and communicate with workers throughout the campaign
- ☐ Motivate workers to participate in the campaign
- ☐ Prepare the escalation or/and a concentrated action where you show your strength of numbers
- ☐ Launch the campaign: present the issues, present the demand, show the power of the union
- ☐ Run an organising committee meeting
- ☐ Check progress



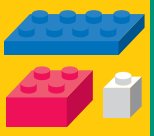
## People what people/roles are involved?

- ☐ Lead organiser
- ☐ Organisers
- ☐ Activists (local workers)



## Resources what is needed to carry out the actions?

- ☐ Campaign materials depending on the campaign (flyers, leaflets, badges, flags, banner, t-shirts, whistles, drums...)



## Time what needs to be done first and how long does it take to complete the actions?

- ☐ One day to one week



## Risks and solutions what are the possible risks and what are the solutions to reduce their probability and impact?



Risk	Reduce impact by
Motivation of workers to continue participating in the campaign declines	<input type="checkbox"/> Start with a small activity and produce easy wins <input type="checkbox"/> Communicate <input type="checkbox"/> Involve <input type="checkbox"/> Be democratic <input type="checkbox"/> Be a good motivator, communicator
Pressure from employer	<input type="checkbox"/> 'Inoculate' = train how to react to pressure <input type="checkbox"/> Build solidarity
Workers are afraid	<input type="checkbox"/> Turn fear into anger

## Recommendations some good advice to successfully complete this step

- ☐ This step of the campaign is the first open activity. You may plan to have it only at workplace level, or publicly. Be aware that you always need to think a step ahead and be prepared
- ☐ In this step you will need commitment and stamina from the workers, so take care of them! Be with them and show your willingness to work with them on their behalf. Show them that it is their action and it will be their victory. You are 'only' their supporter. They are the union!



# 5

## Step 5

# Escalation and victory

The main idea for an organising and/or issue campaign is that you need to escalate it as long as the employer refuses your demands. For the campaign to be successful, you need to build on an escalation strategy, which needs to be carefully planned. Few collective activities are purely spontaneous, so planning for success is a must.



### **Aims** what do we want to achieve?

- ☐ Win the campaign
- ☐ Sign an agreement with the employer
- ☐ Increase membership



### **Actions** what needs to be done to achieve the aims?

- ☐ Organise different collective actions on an escalating scale
- ☐ Strengthen the organisation, recruit members
- ☐ Fight back against repression
- ☐ Mobilise outside support
- ☐ Organise impact on business partners, shareholders, customers, etc.
- ☐ Settle, celebrate and thank your supporters!

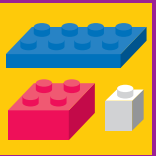


### **People** what people/roles are involved?

- ☐ Lead organiser
- ☐ Organisers
- ☐ Activists (local workers)
- ☐ Union officials
- ☐ Outside supporters
- ☐ Press/media

### **Resources** what is needed to carry out the actions?

- ☐ Stamina and motivation
- ☐ Press/PR experts
- ☐ Negotiators



### **Time** what needs to be done first and how long does it take to complete the actions?

- ☐ The time needed depends on the escalation plan and the resistance of the employer



### **Risks and solutions** what are the possible risks and what are the solutions to reduce their probability and impact?



Risk	Reduce impact by
Workers are afraid	<input type="checkbox"/> Turn fear into anger
Ignorance of employer	<input type="checkbox"/> Escalate campaign, use public awareness, use your network, use the GFA (if any), tell the employer, that a good collective agreement will bring social peace again
Retaliation by employer	<input type="checkbox"/> Make sure that you'll not be faced with a breach of the agreement, discrimination against leading activists or other forms of pressure soon afterwards. Inform your union immediately, inform industriAll Europe and/or IndustriALL Global Union

### Mariana, garment factory in Reșița, Romania



“Before we had the union, we had a group that represented us, but we weren’t always able to get in touch with them. So, there was something not quite right. And we decided to start the union: a group of women took the initiative and came together, and we talked to each other and set up this union.

The women want good working conditions, to have their working time respected, to earn enough to cope in their daily lives. And then of course we come along as the union, we put the

women’s requests on the table in front of the management and, then, the discussions begin. We compromise on some things, they also compromise on some and so on, until we reach a compromise to get everything going right.

We have been at it for two years now. There are still problems, and so we still have things to do. Sometimes we aren’t happy with a result, maybe management are also unhappy sometimes, but slowly we will reach a balance.

We have seen improvements in working time, regarding working hours, national holidays, or the lunch vouchers that have been increased, the bonuses that have been increased. The truth is, when it comes to money, discussions are always tougher. But, in the end, it works.

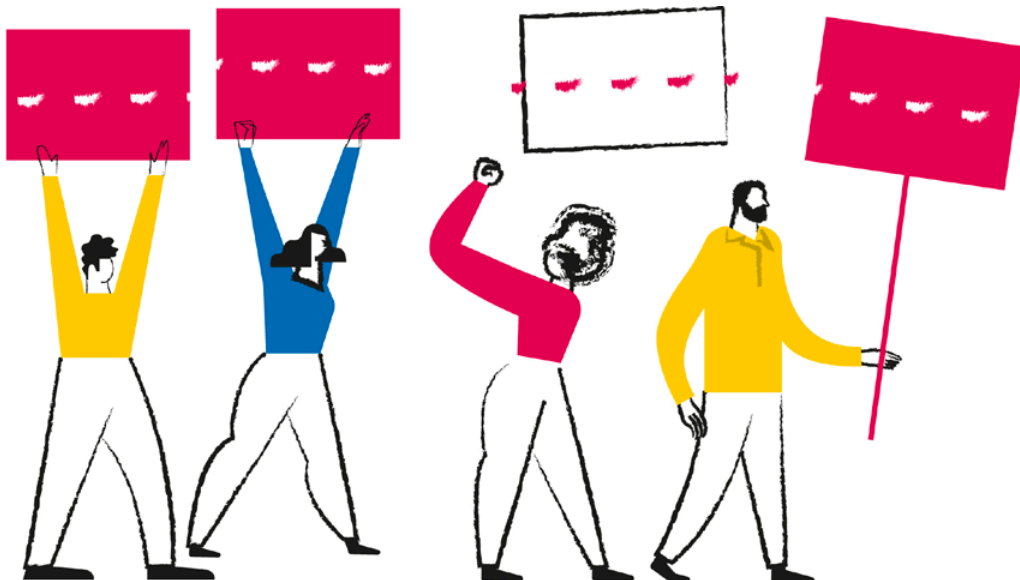
Now there is a dialogue and that’s important; the women know what they want and know that they have someone to represent their wishes.

Not all of them are very convinced that a union is needed, however. They have been used to demanding their rights on their own. But, in the end, it is very difficult for each of them to individually express their wishes. And there are also those who are probably reluctant because of the fear that used to exist; there was fear of management, but all of them have to understand and, this is also what I tell them, that this is a dialogue. In the end, there is no need for fear, there is a need for dialogue. Each of us need to understand each other, if we say nothing and we are only suspicious of the other side, it will never work out well. But, if we tell each other our opinions, we will eventually reach a consensus.”

### **Recommendations** some good advice to successfully complete this step



- ☐ Many people tend to think a campaign consists only of this stage. However, if you have not worked through the previous stages properly, it will not work. You need to have your information researched and analysed, your activist base built, the workers need to be aware and educated about the issues and ready to get active in order to have the strength and endurance required to win.
- ☐ Apart from all the stress and worry, it should be fun as well!
- ☐ Organising campaigns are usually about recognition of the union and achieving the first serious negotiations on the issues you have raised. In an issue campaign you want an issue to be resolved. In order to keep the door open for negotiation, you will want to add pressure step-by-step: after every step, you will give the employer the chance to settle peacefully. The nature of the compromise you will eventually need to arrive at will be determined by the readiness of your membership to fight for more, and your capacity to develop enough pressure on the employer. Also, many union members will join an escalating campaign more readily than if you started right away with your strongest weapon. People need to build confidence in themselves and in collective action - and this helps build from smaller to bigger actions.
- ☐ Employers often tend to claim any improvement in working conditions or wage increases as their own good will. Make sure that everybody knows the victory was won by the workers and their union!



# Contact Details of TCLF Affiliates in South-East Europe



## ALBANIA

### **Independent Trade Union for Textile and Light Industry - SPILT/ BSPSH**

21 Dhjetorilsh Ndermarrja Gjeologjike  
Tirana  
Tel.: +355 682 139 880  
E-mail: info@bspsh.org.al; spilt-al@hotmail.com

### **Trade Union of Workers of Light Industry, Handicrafts and Agro-Processing/KSSH**

Sheshi Garibaldi, 3 Ish Pallati Tekstilisti, Kombinat  
Tirana  
Tel.: +35 5 682034 411  
E-mail: kananihajdar@gmail.com; tekstil@kssh.org; kssh@kssh.org



## BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

### **Trade Union of Textile, Leather, Footwear and Rubber of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina - STKOG FBIH**

Obala Kulina Bana 1  
71000 Sarajevo  
Tel.: +387 3321 3669  
E-mail: stkogfbih@sssbi.com

### **Trade Union of Textile, Leather and Shoe Industry Workers of Republika Srpska - STKORS**

ul. Srpska 32  
78000 Banja Luka  
Tel.: +387 51 214 347  
E-mail: dankostkors@gmail.com; bskrbic@savezsindikatars.org; bskrbic6@gmail.com



### **BULGARIA**

#### **Federation FOSIL/KNSB**

1, Makedonia Square, Floor 9,  
1000 Sofia  
Tel.: +359 2 4010 433, +359 2 9877 016  
E-mail: fnsolp@abv.bg

#### **Federation of Light Industry/Podkrepa**

35 Dragan Tzankov Str.  
1125 Sofia  
Tel.: +359 2 870 3916  
E-mail: flp\_podkrepa@abv.bg; r.marinova\_podkrepa@abv.bg



### **CROATIA**

#### **Trade Union in Textile, Footwear, Leather, Rubber of Croatia – TOKG**

Trg kralja Petra Kresimira IV/2  
10000 Zagreb  
Tel.: +385 1465 5131  
E-mail: nenad.lecek@sindtokg.hr; ljubica.hosni@sindtokg.hr



### **MONTENEGRO**

#### **Trade Union of Chemical, Pharmaceutical and Textile Industry**

Novaka Miloseva 29/1  
81000 Podgorica  
Tel.: +382 20 231 038; +382 68 011 800  
E-mail: vidak.djuranovic@gmail.com; ivana.prnjat@gmail.com



### **NORTH MACEDONIA**

#### **Trade Union of Textile, Leather and Shoe Making Industry of Macedonia - STKC**

Bul 12-ta Makedonska udarna brigada 2a  
1000 Skopje  
Tel.: +389 23 16 36 48  
E-mail: stkc@on.net.mk





### ROMANIA

#### **Federatia Sindicatelor - UNICONF**

Boulevardul Iuliu Maniu, nr. 11, sector 6,  
Bucarest  
Tel.: +40 7 3429 7053  
E-mail: [uniconf@gmail.com](mailto:uniconf@gmail.com); [cjnastase@gmail.com](mailto:cjnastase@gmail.com)

#### **IndustriALL-BNS**

Piata Vasile Milea nr3, Cladirea Sindicatelor, Etaj 4, Camera 1  
Pitesti  
Tel.: +40 21 3147507  
E-mail: [industrialbns@gmail.com](mailto:industrialbns@gmail.com); [icaunion@gmail.com](mailto:icaunion@gmail.com)

#### **Federatia Lucătorilor din Industria Ușoară Confpeltex**

Blvd Eroilor nr 16  
3400 Cluj Napoca  
Tel.: +40 264 19 67 13  
E-mail: [confpeltex@gmail.com](mailto:confpeltex@gmail.com)



### SERBIA

#### **Trade Union of Industry, Energy and Mining Nezavisnost - IER Nezavisnost**

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