

Press Release

European trade unions hail successful organising action at Amcor in Poland

(9 November 2017)

Following months of organising campaign, workers succeeded in setting up trade unions at previously unorganised Amcor plants in Poland with the support of COZZ (Central European Organising Center) and transnational trade union solidarity. A delegation of UNI Europa Graphical & Packaging and industriAll Europe trade unions met the new union members in Łódź to hail their achievement, express their support and exchange experiences. Whereas trade union rights have come under unprecedented attack in many European countries as a result of the crisis and austerity policies, this successful unionising action demonstrates trade unions' commitment to (re)gain collective power to deliver better working conditions for all workers.

On 6-7 November, 40 trade union members and officers from Poland, Germany, Spain and France gathered in Łódź to discuss and provide further support to the actions aimed at recruiting and organising workers of Amcor plants in Poland. While previous attempts failed, Amcor workers ended up being successful this time in setting up trade unions at two plants: Amcor Tobacco Packaging and Amcor Flexibles Reflex in Łódź, where membership continues to grow steadily.

Success of this new campaign owes to a combination of high-level commitment from both Polish workers on site, COZZ expert organisers as well as transnational support provided by worker representatives at Amcor European Works Council and trade unions from all over Europe and beyond. International trade union solidarity played a role: the European Works Council and European trade union federations were kept regularly posted on organising progress; on the day the setting up of the first trade union was officially announced to Amcor management, about 40 trade unions from all over the world sent solidarity messages to the new Polish union and acknowledged its establishment vis-à-vis Amcor management; steps were then taken to ensure the integration of the new Polish trade unions in the European trade union structures and the European Works Council. What has been achieved at Amcor plants in Poland also illustrates the trade unions' commitment to stand united across borders, and to join forces in recruiting and organising workers.

The meeting in Łódź constituted a new opportunity for UNI Europa Graphical & Packaging and industriAll Europe affiliated organisations to demonstrate their solidarity and support the organising actions as well as the establishment of social dialogue in Amcor sites. Being affiliated to KRZZP Związek Zawodowy Poligrafów (Polish Trade Union Federation for Graphical Workers), the new unions enjoy full recognition for collective bargaining purposes. The setting up of new unions is paving the way to the negotiation of a collective agreement for the very first time. Prospects for an improvement of Polish workers' working conditions are thus positive as discussions are about to start. European trade unions are confident that the setting up of new trade union structures will lead to increased social dialogue which will equally benefit workers and the company.

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IndustriAll European Trade Union represents the voice of 7 million working men and women across supply chains in manufacturing, mining and energy sectors across Europe. We aim to protect and advance the rights of the workers. Our federation has 177 trade union affiliates in 38 European countries. Our objective is to be a powerful player in the European political arena vis-à-vis European companies, European industries, employers' associations and European institutions.

UNI Europa Graphical and Packaging represents over 350 000 members of the Publishing, Printing and Packaging Industry in Europe, through over 40 affiliated graphical national trade unions. UNI Europa Graphical and Packaging is a sector of UNI Europa which is the European services workers union. UNI Europa represents 7 million service workers through 272 national trade unions in 50 countries.