

From

IndustriAll European Trade Union Executive Committee 26.-27.11. in Finland

Emergency statement regarding the Finnish collective bargaining round

The Executive Committee of industriAll European Trade Union discussed the extremely tense collective bargaining round which is going on in Finland. Finnish employers, not only in industries which are first in row on collective bargaining calendar but widely, have taken very damaging position in this year's negotiations. This is a threat to cooperative and even consensus driven labour relations which has been the model not only in Finland but also in the other Nordic countries. With this attitude, the Finnish employers have shown, how important the European campaign 'Together at work' for improving collective bargaining and labour relations is.

Between 1969 – 2017 most of the collective bargaining rounds in Finland were done through national confederations of labour partners. We call this 'Era of income policy'. After the decision made by the employers' Confederation of Finnish Industries (EK), the collective negotiations are nowadays negotiated in the form of sectoral agreements between trade unions and employers' sectoral associations.

In this round, starting October 2019, the employers' demands have been crucially different than before. Employers are demanding not only lowering the labour costs and lengthening working hours, but what is even more alerting, they are seeking structural changes in the labour relation so the balance of power would permanently be to the advantage of employers. For instance, employers' demands include major restrictions of industrial actions and smashing the trade union membership fee deduction system from salaries, aiming to severely weaken unions' financial capacity.

As there are, beside the normal wage increase and labour condition dispute, vital demands of employers to weaken labour relation and power balance, the Executive Committee of industriAll Europe

- reaffirms that balanced labour relations and collective bargaining will be the advantage not only for workers but also for industries in Europe
- disapproves all the attempts of weakening functional national labour relations and traditions, and
- encourages the Finnish employers by negotiations, instead of holding on disruptive demands, to seek improving measures that are benefitting both workers and industries in Finland.

This emergency statement was unanimously agreed on 26.11.2019 by the Executive Committee of industriAll European Trade Union.