

## **UNI Europa Graphical recommendations and demands in the face of CoVid19 crisis.**

Workers in the Graphical & Packaging sector are out of the media spotlight, which these days focuses on health professionals and workers whose efforts guarantee the supply of essential goods to the population. However, the Graphical sector plays a fundamental role in sustaining supply chains through the production of packaging and labelling as well as producing fundamental goods such as paper for domestic use or masks that have become goods in very high demand and essential to prevent the spread of the disease. It is essential to protect the health of these workers so that they can continue to perform this essential work safely.

Meanwhile, sectors such as printing, which is essential for the dissemination of culture and to ensure reliability of news, so important these days, have been strongly affected by the health crisis and their workers are demanding measures to protect the industrial fabric, livelihoods and wages.

UNI Europa Graphical is working hard to coordinate the efforts of trade unions to protect the health, livelihoods and wages of workers in our sectors across Europe. The exchange of information, the dissemination of good practices and the strengthening of collective bargaining are key elements in curbing the spread of the disease and preventing it from leading to a social and employment crisis.

In this aim, UNI Europa Graphical has prepared this first package of recommendations and demands based on the efforts that national trade union organisations are making to defend workers in our sectors.

### Measures at company level.

- 1.) Reinforcement of collective bargaining. Companies must intensify information, consultation and participation in order to protect workers' health, employment and wages. This includes hygiene measures such as disinfection of workplaces, use of personal protective equipment adapted to the situation, social distancing measures and production methods among others.
- 2.) Sectors whose production is essential to guarantee supply chains and supply to the population must assess their production and prioritise what is really essential to help overcome the pandemic, avoiding putting workers at risk in activities whose value in this context is secondary and adapting shifts in those essential production to prevent the spread of the disease among workers. Workers' health must take precedence over company profits. Agreements on this regard should include arrangements for an adequate level of shop stewards / unions represented in every shift, in order to ensure workers' health and rights.

- 3.) Wherever possible, companies should set up forms of teleworking negotiated with the workers' representatives, guaranteeing the right to disconnection, training and adequate means.
- 4.) To help curb the spread of the virus, all those workers who cannot telework and whose activity is not essential to ensure the production of essential goods, as well as those workers who for one reason or another are within the population at risk, should remain at home. Trade unions shall negotiate agreements on paid sick leave, paid childcare leave and paid leave in case of self-isolation for all grades and forms of employment within the company. In addition, the trade unions shall ensure that the measures introduced are also properly implemented.
- 5.) Multinational companies must show their social responsibility and apply the highest standards of health protection and safeguard employment and wages throughout Europe. Supranational information and consultation bodies must play a leading role in ensuring that the health and livelihood of all workers enjoy the highest standards of protection regardless of where they come from. Good national practice should be taken as the basis for implementing worker protection measures throughout the company.
- 6.) Both workers who continue to work on company premises and therefore face contagion, and those who have been forced to telework or stay at home, will suffer in the medium term as a result of stress and uncertainty. Health protection measures and psycho-social risks arising from the pandemic need to be strengthened.

#### Policy measures.

- 1.) Governments such as the Spanish, Italian, French, German or Finnish have announced unprecedented measures to protect jobs and wages and to sustain the productive fabric. UNI Europa Graphical calls on trade unions and employers' organisations in the sector to demand national measures to ensure the least possible impact on employment resulting from the CoVid19 crisis.
- 2.) Sectors such as printing and publishing, which are mostly small businesses, lack the means to withstand a continued scenario of falling demand. These sectors, which play a fundamental role in the dissemination of culture and reliable news, must be given special consideration. UNI Europa Graphical calls for a specific European plan to help the sector to avoid the loss of talent and the destruction of the productive fabric, and calls on national unions and employers' organisations to join this demand with their respective governments.
- 3.) UNI Europa Graphical calls for responsible consumption. Isolation measures are useless if we put workers at risk by forcing the production of non-essential goods to be distributed directly to consumers' homes, as has been seen in recent days. We, the workers in the Graphical & Packaging sectors, are in solidarity with the demands in this sense of the workers in the commerce sector, postal services and riders among others.
- 4.) UNI Europa Graphical calls on the whole society to be very aware of the exceptional nature of the measures to prevent the spread of the disease and warns of the risk that, in a context of the rise of the extreme right in Europe, these measures could be used to reinforce authoritarianism and weaken democracy in the long term, should they not be reverted to the previous situation immediately after the end of the pandemic.

## Communication and dissemination.

The pandemic is a global problem and as such we must address it. The virus knows no borders, nor does the trade union movement. It is imperative to strengthen international communication channels to disseminate good practices, to put international solidarity to work in resolving conflicts and to put colleagues in countries where the impact of the virus has not yet been felt so strongly on the alert.

It is essential that national unions as well as UNI Europa Graphical are fully involved and integrated in the communication channels for collective bargaining on elements related to health protection, employment stability or wages in the context of the CoVid crisis.

UNI Europa Graphical has strengthened its communication channels in order to make available to all affiliated organisations updated information on the impact of CoVid19 on our sectors, generate alerts and disseminate good practices. Your collaboration is essential. Share your collective bargaining agreements, advocacy actions and conflicts to promote international solidarity and help colleagues in other countries in the same situation. Follow us on Twitter @UNIGP to learn about the stories, struggles and victories of workers in the sector.