

UNI-Europa Graphical & Packaging Statement – Collective Bargaining Conference June 2022

Representatives of graphical, packaging and paper unions from across Europe met 8-9 June in Brussels to discuss the current collective bargaining situation in the context of the Ukraine war and the acute cost of living crisis.

The delegates exchanged information and received reports from external experts and they note with serious concern the gravity of the current situation, in particular they note that:

- Inflation is at an unprecedentedly high level across the continent and real wages for graphical, packaging and paper workers are falling at a faster rate than at any other time since the financial crisis of 2008;
- Many companies are recording record profits and exploiting the rise in inflation to increase prices and profits further at the expense of workers in the sectors, and thereby also contributing to the inflationary spiral;
- The war in Ukraine is set to further deepen the economic crisis by driving up energy prices and causing more shortages and price rises of key raw materials with a potential for major disruption to supply chains;

Against this background UNI-Europa Graphical and Packaging calls for:

- Companies and employers in the sector to immediately stop the drive towards excessive profits, halt the drive to force down wages, and to negotiate a minimum of inflation proof wage increases during collective bargaining;
- National governments and European authorities to take immediate measures to ease the cost of living crisis through state interventions to assist workers and their families;

UNI-Europa Graphical affiliates hereby re-affirm their solidarity with one another and pledge to give each other maximum support in their struggles to protect pay and conditions and prevent a massive erosion of their members' living standards.

In relation to the conflict in Ukraine UNI-Europa Graphical & Packaging asserts that:

- War is never in the interest of working people and this conflict is no exception, we resolutely condemn the invasion and stand in full solidarity with all the victims of the conflict.
- National governments and European authorities must do everything they possibly can to stop the fighting and re-start negotiations aimed at finding a peaceful solution;
- The international trade union and labour movement must maintain vigilance against those forces that have an interest in prolonging, deepening and expanding the conflict, in addition going forwards the same resolve must be shown to support other peoples struggling against occupation, ethnic cleansing and oppression – such as those who are victims of Turkish and Israeli aggression.