

Brussels, 13 July 2022

Agency work social partners say “no” to strikebreaking in the UK

The UK government's plan to break strikes with agency workers hit a new roadblock last week, as staffing agencies set out their clear opposition to the proposals. Nonetheless, the plans have been endorsed by the UK members of parliament on 11 July 2022.

In a [letter](#) to Kwasi Kwarteng, UK Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, UK CEOs of the country's largest staffing services agencies pushed back on the government's proposal to roll back a decades-long prohibition of using temporary workers replace strikers.

The objections against this proposal are felt broadly, including agencies as well as trade unions. “The two international social partners (WEC and UNI Global) highlight the need for a constructive tripartite social dialogue at the appropriate level to tackle the issue,” said Bettina Schaller, President of the World Employment Confederation. The Memorandum of Understanding between the World Employment Confederation Corporate Members and UNI Global, signed in 2008, highlighted the importance of sectoral social dialogue at national and company level, which is essential to address current labour market challenges.

UNI Global Union and the World Employment Confederation Corporate Members have a long-standing agreement that sets guidelines for appropriate regulation of the industry including “prohibition of the replacement of striking workers with temporary agency employees without prejudice to national legislation or practices.”

“The UK government's attempt to make strike breaking easier will only pour oil onto the fire of discontent spreading across the country,” said Oliver Roethig, UNI Europa's Regional Secretary. “Staffing agencies are absolutely right to denounce this type of union busting as bad for business and bad for workers' rights. We call on them to continue to live up to their values and to continue to resist any change in the UK law to allow this egregious practice.”