

Organising agreement in DHL



Saxony Governor Dr Georg Milbradt meets DHL unions from Germany, USA and Hong Kong

Unions from three continents agreed in Leipzig, Germany to work more closely together in organising employees at the global logistics giant DHL's super hubs in Leipzig, Wilmington, Ohio and Hong Kong. 40 participants heard a powerful call to DHL's parent company Deutsche Post World Net to sign a global agreement to ensure union rights in the 220 countries where it operates. UNI Postal's World President Rolf Büttner pledged support from ver.di in defending union rights. (john.pedersen@uniglobalunion.org)

Union spotlight on private equity

Global unions used the gathering of top business and government leaders in Davos to highlight the threat to workers posed by private equity raiders in a wide-ranging attack on "corporate greed". UNI's Philip Jennings accused some private equity companies of slashing jobs, health, pensions and working conditions to squeeze faster returns out of their acquisitions - and to fund the debt burden left by the buyout. (philip.jennings@uniglobalunion.org)

No to precarious work in Telefónica

UNI's Telefónica global union alliance told the company "no to precarious work" in a meeting with top management. Unions also reported problems with outsourced work - including workers having to pay fines imposed on outsourcing companies for poor quality work. Telefónica President Cesar Alierta was pressed to cut levels of precarious work and ensure outsourcing companies respect workers rights. Discussions also covered ways of ensuring the UNI-Telefónica global agreement is respected in all parts of the company. (neil.anderson@uniglobalunion.org)

Wal-Mart class action goes ahead

Wal-Mart has failed to block the largest class action case in US legal history. The US appeals court ruled that the world's largest private employer must face a class action covering up to 1.5 million women, alleging discrimination in pay and promotion. With over 57 wage and hour lawsuits, Wal-Mart clearly suffers from a systemic pattern of ignoring labour laws that has meant mistreatment and exploitation, says Paul Blank who heads the WakeUpWalMart campaign. (WakeUpWalMart.com)



UNI signed two global agreements just before Christmas - in the NAG banking group and in France Telecom (right)



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Council of Global Unions

A Council of Global Unions was formally launched in January to promote coordination between the Global Union Federations. The move follows last year's changes in the international trade union structure that brought together the ICFTU and WCL and other unaffiliated union centres to form the ITUC. UNI is backing the new council, which has set three priorities for the year - organising and union recognition, financialisation, influencing the global debate on globalisation. (philip.jennings@uniglobalunion.org)



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Hands off postal services

About 30,000 people have so far signed an online petition launched by a Belgian Member of the European Parliament, Alain Hutchinson. The petition opposes plans by the European Commission to remove protection from the remaining regulated mail market - so-called "small" mail. The de-regulation move - due to come into effect on January 1, 2009 if approved - is opposed by UNI-Europa Postal and affiliates. (The petition can be found at: SOSPoste.eu)

Support for unions on rise in USA

A recent survey shows support in the USA for trade unions at a 25-year high. 65% approve of unions and 57% of all prime age workers - 60 million people - say they would join a union given the chance. Meanwhile debate has begun in the US Congress to make recognition laws easier for workers and their unions and increase the penalties on union busting employers. US unions, Democrats and some Republicans are backing an Employee Free Choice Act. (sauber@nalc.org)

UNICOME launches with workshops in India

UNI-Asia Pacific has launched UNICOME, a union for commerce workers in India. The union is being supported by the two UNI development and organising centres (UNIdocs) in Bangalore and Hyderabad. With backing from LO/TCO two workshops have been held to empower young union activists. The aim is to put across a union message to recent school leavers who dominate jobs in the mega malls of Indian cities. (uni-asiapacific@uniglobalunion.org)

Communicators Forum for Singapore

UNI's biennial Communicators Forum is being held in Singapore 6-8 June this year. The aim is to involve union communicators and campaign workers and to build networks, particularly in the Asia Pacific region. Affiliates are also being asked to help update UNI's database of union journalists and webworkers. (uniglobalunion.org/forum2007)

Postal in EU meeting on de-regulation

UNI Postal Europa met the German European Union Presidency to discuss the future of European postal services. The EU has been gradually de-regulating the mail service in Europe and proposes total de-regulation by 1 January 2009. The German government is backing de-regulation but postal unions are still pressing for a secure and funded universal service and a postal market that benefits all citizens and enterprises. (john.pedersen@uniglobalunion.org)

SEIU wins IMF case against Wackenhut

The SEIU has won a case at the National Labor Relations Board against Wackenhut - the US subsidiary of security giant G4S. The Board upheld an earlier finding that Wackenhut illegally intimidated and interrogated two security officers guarding the International Monetary Fund in Washington who were trying to organise colleagues into the SEIU. Wackenhut fired Anderson Carter and Terry Purnell after a majority of workers at the site signed union cards. After a public uproar Wackenhut lost the IMF contract. (christy.hoffman@uniglobalunion.org)

Deutsche Telekom unions

UNI Telecom's global union alliance in Deutsche Telekom has agreed an action plan that includes better communication and an action week to ensure the company fulfills its obligations as a global employer. The company isn't observing union rights everywhere and workers face job losses and outsourcing. It was agreed to try and re-start stalled talks on a global agreement. (neil.anderson@uniglobalunion.org)

France: unions in Mugabe protest

UNI and affiliates have urged the French President not to invite Zimbabwe's President Mugabe to the Franco-Africa Summit being held in Cannes on 15/16 February. The French government is being urged to support the global community in condemning the Mugabe regime for oppressing its citizens and denying human rights. (neil.anderson@uniglobalunion.org)

Commerce moves on violent customers

UNI-Europa Commerce and EuroCommerce have signed a joint statement against violent and abusive behaviour by customers. This will now be followed up in social dialogue, to develop specific measures to cut the rising trend of incidents that endanger safe working and the shopping environment. (jan.furstenborg@uniglobalunion.org)

Carrefour recognise Tez-Koop-IS

Carrefour has finally recognised Turkish commerce union Tez-Koop-IS. This follows help from UNI Commerce, who also joined the first collective agreement negotiations in Istanbul. The union has completed collective agreements with several Turkish employers including Metro's hypermarket chain Real, also after intervention by UNI Commerce. (jan.furstenborg@uniglobalunion.org)

Study into media pluralism in EU

On 16 January the European Commission issued a paper on "media pluralism" in EU member states. There is growing concern in the European Parliament and elsewhere at increasing ownership concentration in the media and its implications for freedom of speech and information. The Commission has been low key on the issue and now proposes an independent study. (johannes.studinger@uniglobalunion.org)

Protests as Metro cuts ex-Wal-Mart jobs in Germany

Affiliate ver.di has protested at plans by German commerce multinational Metro to close 16 former Wal-Mart hypermarkets and the company's Wuppertal headquarters. This follows the sale of the chain to Metro when Wal-Mart pulled out of its unsuccessful German operation at the end of last year. It's beginning to look as though Metro is using the purchase to remove competition rather than expanding its Real supermarket network and raising customer service standards. (jan.furstenborg@uniglobalunion.org)

Union-busting seminar gets a picket

Union members picketed the Chamber of Commerce in Lexington, Kentucky, USA to protest at a seminar on "How to Keep Your Workplace Union-Free" that's going the rounds. Braving zero degree weather the protesters came from the CWA, Plumbers, Teamsters, Carpenters and Letter Carriers and won noisy support from passing motorists. (cwa-union.org)

First EWC for Italian Bank

Agreement for a European Works Council in UniCredit is a first for Italian banks and covers 145,000 workers in 25 countries. The agreement goes beyond the EU to also cover workers in Turkey, Russia and Switzerland. UNI Finance will take part as an expert and there is provision for common guidelines of corporate social responsibility. (oliver.roethig@uniglobalunion.org)

Fair deal urged for African telecom workers

UNI Telecom's Neil Anderson urged a fair deal for workers in the multinationals that increasingly dominate Africa. African unions played a key role in the launch of the France Telecom global union alliance and a global agreement with the company was signed last December. A UNI-Africa Telecom conference heard that customer care and call centre jobs are set to increase and they need unions. In Ghana the CWU has recruited 327 call centre workers at Exceed, a subsidiary of Ghana Telecom. (neil.anderson@uniglobalunion.org)

Korean ruling helps migrant workers

A recent ruling by the Korean High Court clears the way for migrant workers - regardless of their status - to join and form trade unions. This means undocumented workers with jobs can now be organised - a move welcomed by the Migrant Forum in Asia. The government is expected to take the case to the Supreme Court. (uni-asiapacific@uniglobalunion.org)



Amicus protests "No Cannes do" at the French embassy in London over any invitation to Zimbabwe President Robert Mugabe to a francophone summit



Lovemore Matambo, President of the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions meets European Parliament member Richard Howitt. The ZCTU has launched a new website: <http://www.theworker.co.zw>

uni
global union



UNI Postal World President Rolf Büttner opens UNI's development and organising centre - UNIdoc - in Hong Kong. With him are (left to right): Michael Siu, UNIdoc director; Eiichi Ito, UNI Tokyo; Christopher Ng, UNI-Asia Pacific Secretary; Thomas Cheuk, Hong Kong postal union; organiser Wong Yu Loi; Frieda Lam Chui Shan and Kam Fup, Hong Kong postal union

UNIdoc opens in Hong Kong

A UNI development and organising centre - UNIdoc - was opened in Hong Kong on 21 December. The office aims to strengthen the labour movement and support the growing number of UNI organising projects in this Special Administrative Region of China - including DHL, commerce, property service and Disneyland workers. About 40 trade unionists from Hong Kong and Macau were at the opening, including Lee Cheuk Yan, General Secretary of union centre HKCTU and UNI Postal President Rolf Büttner. The UNIdoc director is Michael Siu. (michaelsiu@uni-apro.org.sg)


global union

Continuing opposition to Wal-Mart in India

The political opposition to the entry of Wal-Mart into Indian commerce markets may now include the powerful Congress Party President Sonia Gandhi. She is reported in the media as cautioning the Indian government against allowing in Wal-Mart. She is also urging that Wal-Mart's proposed tie up with Indian conglomerate Bharti be examined. There are fears of a threat to many of the 50 million commerce workers in small, family run shops in India and to small farmers. (jan.furstenborg@uniglobalunion.org)

MEI at all-China directors' conference

For the second time Jim Wilson, Director of media and entertainment sector UNI MEI, attended the meeting of film directors from Hong Kong, Macau, Taiwan and Mainland China. This year the meeting was held in Taiwan and looked at the state of film production and joint productions. Film production in Mainland China is expanding rapidly while it is in decline in Hong Kong and Taiwan. A growing proportion of Hong Kong's film professionals are now living and working in Beijing and a growing number in China are freelance workers. (jim.wilson@uniglobalunion.org)

Protest at Zambian bank sale

Protests followed the privatisation and sale of the Zambia National Commercial Bank to RABO Bank of the Netherlands. RABO Bank already operates in Tanzania and has acquisition plans in Mozambique. UNI finance affiliate ZUFIAW joined thousands of Zambian demonstrators in a march through Lusaka to demand a halt to the sale, which they blamed on International Monetary Fund insistence. They fear for the future of rural and outer-urban branches. (uni-africa@uniglobalunion.org)

Learning centre opens in Quebecor UK

The Mayor of Corby (an Amicus member) has opened a new Learning Centre at the Quebecor plant in the English town. This follows the signing of a lifelong learning agreement by Amicus and Quebecor Managing Director, Andrew Parker. It's part of the Amicus Union Learning Fund project. (adriana.rosenzvaig@uniglobalunion.org)

Recognition in Cingular, Colorado

More than 350 workers at a new Cingular call centre in Pueblo, Colorado, have won CWA representation. Their number will grow to 500-600 workers by May, when a new class of trainees start work. A key part of the recognition campaign was to involve the community in this former steel town, which has a rich labour history. (cwa-union.org)

Ver.di challenges EBRD credit to Lidl company

German commerce union ver.di is urging the European Bank of Reconstruction and Development to include labour rights in clear criteria for financing projects. The union is challenging a planned credit for a Romanian project to the multinational Schwarz Group that owns anti-union hard discounter Lidl, as well as discount hypermarket chain Kaufland. Ver.di has lodged serious complaints about Kaufland's behaviour in Central and Eastern Europe. (verdi.de)

G4S Morocco workers win holiday bonus

The Muslim holiday of Eid al-Adha brought victory for G4S workers in Morocco. G4S workers voted for a 24-hour strike after the company refused to pay the normal Eid al-Adha bonus. Just 30 minutes before the strike deadline the company paid up. (christy.hoffman@uniglobalunion.org)

Starbucks picketed over print cuts

Starbucks, Ann Taylor and Blue Tulip were high street names picketed in major US cities by Teamster members protesting cuts in worker benefits and protection at printer Cenvo. The three are high profile clients of Cenvo - one of the largest commercial printers in the world. Under new management Cenvo has already cut jobs and closed plants with more feared. (adriana.rosenzvaig@uniglobalunion.org)

UNI Gaming for Macau

UNI Gaming is to meet in July in Macau - now the world's biggest gambling city. The visit by UNI-Asia Pacific Gaming with global participation will coincide with an Asian gaming exhibition in the city that is a Special Administrative Region of China. About half of Macau workers are in gaming and UNI is considering an organising project there with assistance from UNI's development office in Hong Kong. (alke.boessiger@uniglobalunion.org)



US casino operator Wynn is already established in Macau

Super casino for Manchester

The UK government has announced plans for the country's first super casino - in Manchester - with 16 smaller casinos around the country. Affiliate GMB has called for criteria to ensure that decent work and proper re-generation of local economies follow these decisions. The union also wants facilities to help problem gamblers. (alke.boessiger@uniglobalunion.org)

Broadband call to US government

UNI communications affiliate CWA is pressing the US government to draw up a national policy to stimulate the deployment of high speed broadband. The US is lagging behind other countries, which have clear national policies and goals to roll out broadband. The goal of US communications policy should be to connect each to all, says the CWA. (neil.anderson@uniglobalunion.org)

Presidential hopefuls woo US unions

Unions are likely to play a key role in the long process of selecting a Democrat candidate for the US Presidency in 2008. Senator Hilary Rodham Clinton recently met the board of the UFCW. She also addressed - along with leading contenders Senator Barack Obama and former Senator John Edwards and others - the board meeting of the SEIU. The SEIU is insisting contenders spend a day working alongside union members to understand better their lives and concerns - the "walk a day in my shoes" campaign inaugurated by SEIU president Andy Stern in Iowa. (ufcw.org and seiu.org)

ASEAN move on social dialogue and labour rights

Business and civil society leaders have agreed on the need for social dialogue to help regional integration in South East Asia. They also agreed on the need to build social dialogue into the charter for the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the inclusion of UN conventions on human and labour rights. At a meeting in Cebu, Philippines on 13 January they also agreed to ensure balanced and sustainable development and that help for vulnerable groups accompanies trade liberalisation. (uni-asiapacific@uniglobalunion.org)

WIPO moves on broadcasting treaty

Negotiations continue on a treaty to update protection for broadcasting organisations in the digital age. Two special sessions of the Standing Committee on Copyright and Related Rights are expected before a diplomat conference at the end of this year. Growing signal piracy is emerging in many parts of the world, including piracy of digitised pre-broadcast signals. (jim.wilson@uniglobalunion.org)

EWC exchanges in Vienna

The last workshop in this project brought together the employee representatives from Erste, KBC, IF and BNP-Paribas banks and other Austrian multinationals to exchange experiences on European Works Councils. A particular focus was on operations in Eastern and Central Europe. UNI-Europa Finance and GPA Austria sponsored the meeting. (oliver.roethig@uniglobalunion.org)

Young members with CTWU leadership

Youth camp in Taiwan

Taiwan telecom affiliate CTWU recently held a two-day Youth Camp against a background of privatisation at Chunghwa Telecom and a globalising economy. The telecom company is still one of few companies in Taiwan to be unionised. "Working in a company with a union, employees are not isolated if they face unfair treatment," said Youth Camp leader Yu-Bin Chiu. (uni-asiapacific@uniglobalunion.org)





Staff focus on multinationals

Organising and signing agreements with the world's biggest companies were key themes of the annual meeting of UNI staff held in Nyon, Switzerland. "We face amazingly powerfully companies that are increasing in size," UNI General Secretary Philip Jennings told the opening session. "There are more mergers and acquisitions than ever seen before and there are \$500bn of investment funds out there waiting to buy companies." (philip.jennings@uniglobalunion.org)

General Secretary Philip Jennings addresses the annual meeting of UNI staff in Nyon, Switzerland

First Vodafone newsletter

The first newsletter covering UNI Telecom's global union alliance in Vodafone is on the UNI website. It highlights the work of the Communication Workers of South Africa organising in subsidiary Vodacom. The union has recruited more than 1000 Vodacom workers. "Wherever Vodafone operates UNI global union is there!" says UNI Telecom's Neil Anderson. (uniglobalunion.org/vodafone)

Biggest global survey of on-line gamblers

Entertainment and excitement rather than getting rich are the main motivations for Internet gambling, according a first ever, comprehensive global study. Nearly 11,000 players from 96 countries were surveyed. More men (78%) than women play on-line poker while more women (54.8%) play the virtual casino, according to a survey by eCOGRA, the industry's self regulating body. 55% of respondents want effective self-regulation and majorities also back transparency, clear regulations and uniformity in codes of conduct.

Third community centre for tsunami-hit Aceh

The Trade Union Care Centre Foundation (backed by UNI-Asia Pacific and SASK Finland) plans to build a third community centre in tsunami-hit West Aceh. Centres are already up and running in Calang and Cot Suruy (where computer training for Indonesian trainers was recently provided). The Meulaboh district was among the areas worst hit by the 2004 tsunami. The aim is to use the new Community Centre as an educational and training focus for children and adults in six villages. (uni-asiapacific@uniglobalunion.org)

Panama workers continue vigil

In Panama workers are keeping up a vigil that began in September to protest their loss of seniority and bargaining rights when they were transferred to another G4S subsidiary. In October, G4S fired 40 of the protestors, claiming an illegal strike despite the fact that the workers were working their regular shifts.

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Inauguration ceremony at Cot Suruy centre

Helping in Aceh

In the library at Cot Suruy



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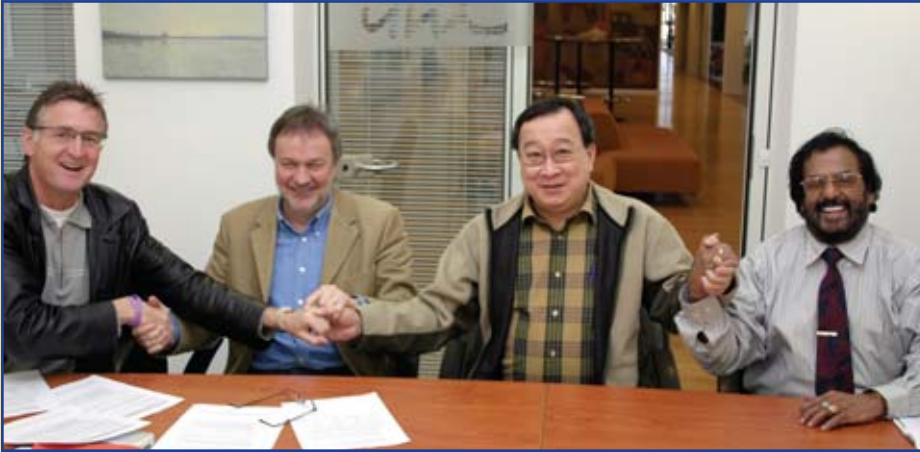
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Global unions for global industries

New backing for IT organisation in India



UNI General Secretary Philip Jennings; SETCa President Erwin De Deyn; UNI-Asia Pacific Secretary Christopher Ng and ITPF Chairman Swaminathan MK

A five-year project to help develop trade union activities in IT enabled services in India was launched in Nyon with the backing of SETCa, Belgium.

The aim is to promote health and safety and job and work security in India's fast growing IT sector.

The beneficiary will be the IT Professional Forum movement - launched six years ago with backing from UNI and unions in Sweden and Belgium.

(gerd.rohde@uniglobalunion.org)

\$6m boost for union development

UNI's trade union development work is now running at a record \$6 million to empower workers and their unions around the world.

Raul Requena, Head of UNI's Development and Regions Department, reported on the \$6 million budget that will cover more than 100 projects over the next two years.

"Our aim is to help change the direction of globalisation - with clear objectives and quality results that give workers more power and skills to organise for better working conditions." (raul.requena@uniglobalunion.org)

Collective bargaining course in Vietnam

Collective bargaining was the focus of a course held in Hanoi on 19-22 December for trade unionists in Vietnam.

In a centrally planned economy union reps are not involved in pay negotiations but the 31 workers attending were keen to learn about collective bargaining as their Communist country follows its cautious road to a free economy.

They looked at how to draw up and negotiate a claim and compared Malaysian and Vietnamese collective agreements. (Visit: uniglobalunion.org/drd)



Raul Requena, who heads UNI's Development and Regions department



Busy empowerment workshop in Nepal



UNI Development