Global agreement signed with Quebecor

After a long campaign UNI has signed a global agreement with the world’s number two printer Quebecor that respects and promotes labour rights. The Barcelona signing ensures these rights will apply in Quebecor operations and subsidiaries and in suppliers. “This could not have been achieved without the support and solidarity of union members in Quebecor plants around the world,” said Duncan Brown, who chairs UNI Graphical’s Quebecor union alliance. (adriana.rosenzvaig@uniglobalunion.org)

Action to defend Europe’s post

A day of action by postal workers across Europe is planned for June 6 as part of the growing campaign to save the universal postal service. A rally is also being organised in Berlin on May 30 of postal workers in uniforms from the 27 member states to deliver a message to the German EU presidency. Total liberalisation of Europe’s postal services - proposed by the European Commission for 2009 - will mean the end of universal and affordable postal services, Philippos Thomas, of the Greek postal union, told the Athens Conference that also changed the postal sector’s name to UNI Post and Logistics global union.

Fighting job losses at Deutsche Telekom

Two key shareholders in Deutsche Telekom are targeted in a campaign to head off massive job losses and cuts in working conditions. UNI Telecom’s world conference in Athens urged the German government to intervene and halt the management’s current plans. The other target is leading private equity group Blackstone, which has a 5% shareholding and a seat on the management board. Ver.di has already launched action against plans that would cut 32,000 jobs and outsource more than 50,000 staff on worse conditions.

UNI-Europa aims to end exploitation

Organising to end exploitation was urged at UNI-Europa’s second Regional Conference, held in Athens at the end of April. Delegates condemned attacks on unions by employers and governments and backed initiatives to build unions in central and Eastern Europe. They identified skills, labour rights and decent social benefits as crucial in ensuring security for workers in a changing economy. Conference re-elected Frank Bsirske as UNI-Europa President and Bernadette Ségol as Regional Secretary. (uni-europa@uniglobalunion.org)
INSIDE BULLETIN
Graphical mission to Kuwait
Checking up on G4S in Africa
Closer links with ITF?
Union concerns over ABN Amro
UNI meets Finance Minister over Greek bank pension row
Solidarity with Australian unions
Women spotlight pay gap in Europe
EC plans for labour law challenged
Heavyweight support for Wackenhuft campaign
UNI targets Indian finance workers and Malaysian shopworkers
Global alliance for Kimberly-Clark
Report exposes Wal-Mart
Call for action to tackle global discrimination
Postcard support for CWU South Africa
Campaign to stop further telecom privatisation in Greece
Union and shareholder pressure on Verizon
US spotlight on private equity
Taiwan telecom workers in May Day walkout
Private equity hurts pensions
New union in Taiwan
Europa next heads for Toulouse
Seville charter for freelances

Mission checks G4S record in Africa
A fact-finding mission has been probing Group 4 Securicor’s record as an employer in southern Africa. Academics, human rights lawyers and NGOs joined trade unionists and visited South Africa, Mozambique and Malawi. At a press conference G4S was denounced for violations of workers rights and unions have threatened to campaign against the company winning lucrative contracts for the 2010 World Cup in South Africa. G4S employs 82,000 workers in 18 African countries and a key aim is to raise union membership.

(Christy.hoffman@uniglobalunion.org)

Closer UNI-ITF links urged
At the UNI Postal world conference in Athens there were calls for closer working between UNI and the International Transport Workers Federation (ITF) to ensure continuing high union membership in the fast changing and converging post and logistics industry. “We have to turn ourselves back into an organising machine,” said the ITF’s Martin Mayer who told delegates that there is now a special reason for closer working between UNI and the ITF.

(John.pedersen@uniglobalunion.org)

Unions demand talks over ABN Amro future
European banking unions have called for immediate talks over the fast developing take-over of ABN Amro. An agreed merger with the UK-based Barclays Bank is thought to put at risk 23,000 jobs through outsourcing and job losses. But a hostile take-over has now been launched by a three-bank consortium headed by UK-based RBS with a scramble to buy US subsidiary LaSalle and reported plans to split up the Dutch bank first suggested by a hedge fund.

(Oliver.roethig@uniglobalunion.org)

UNI meets Greek Finance Minister on pensions row
UNI has been invited to help in the search for a joint resolution to the dispute over bank pension schemes that brought the Greek government a reprimand from the International Labour Organisation. The ILO condemned the government for undermining collective bargaining by changing laws to permit unilateral action to close 13 bank supplementary pension funds set up by collective agreements. UNI General Secretary Philip Jennings pressed the Minister of Finance to implement the ILO’s call for early dialogue involving government, unions and employers.

(Philip.jennings@uniglobalunion.org)

Solidarity with Australian unions
UNI Telecom and UNI Postal world conferences in Athens gave their support to the campaign by Australian unions to defend worker and union rights under attack by the Howard government. Delegates at both gatherings called on postal and telecom employers in Australia to respect collective bargaining and the rights of employees to be represented by their union. The new laws - condemned by both conferences - seek to undermine collective bargaining and sideline unions with legally favoured individual contracts.

(UNI-asiapacific@uniglobalunion.org)
Women spotlight pay gap in Europe
Unequal pay - in spite of decades of equality laws - was highlighted at the UNI-Europa conference in Athens. Women delegates took to the stage with placards detailing how far women lag behind men in pay in their countries. “We say close the pay gap now,” said Ilona Shultz-Müller of UNI-Europa Women. Conference saluted the work of seven women grassroots trade union activists with new awards to recognise unsung heroines who are organising, motivating and representing their fellow workers. (monique.marti@uniglobalunion.org)

Commission proposals on labour law challenged
UNI-Europa has attacked the European Commission for failing to consult with unions prior to issuing proposals to “modernise” labour laws and for giving only a short period for public consultation. UNI-Europa challenged the premise that economic and employment growth can only be boosted by weakening employment protection laws and criticised the Commission for failing to tackle growing precarious employment. Social Europe requires collective determination of terms and conditions and the defence of vulnerable workers. (bernadette-ségol@uniglobalunion.org)

Heavyweight support for Wackenhut campaign
The three leading Democratic presidential candidates have called on Group 4 Securicor to clean up its act in the United States. Senators Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama and former Senator John Edwards are urging the UK-based security giant to tackle problems at its US subsidiary Wackenhut. The US government is the biggest customer of Wackenhut, which has attracted controversy over its refusal to allow workers to unionise with the SEIU and for security lapses at many sites that it guards. (christy.hoffman@uniglobalunion.org)

UNI targets Indian finance workers
UNI has launched an organising project aimed at finance sector employees in India. A key target will be the largely unorganised private sector banks in India that are a powerhouse for the strong growth of the Indian economy. The launch meeting was held at UNI head offices in Nyon. Backing the project are Finansförbundet and LO/TCO of Sweden. (carin.andersson@uniglobalunion.org)

Global alliance at Kimberly-Clark
A global trade union alliance covering workers in Kimberly-Clark has been launched. It’s the latest move by UNI Graphical to step up cooperation between unions in the big multinationals. Representatives of 11 unions from ten countries on four continents met in Chicago for the launch. (adriana.rosenzvaig@uniglobalunion.org)

Wal-Mart methods exposed
A new report (“Discounting Rights”) released by Human Rights Watch outlines the systematic denial of Wal-Mart workers’ right to organise. It confirms what Wal-Mart workers have been saying. They and the UFCW have faced a climate of fear, routine monitoring, spying and intimidation - and closures when organising drives have been successful. (jan.furstenborg@uniglobalunion.org)

Urgent need to tackle global discrimination at work
Tackling discrimination at work is more urgent, says a new report from the International Labour Organisation. In spite of major advances in fighting discrimination at work, there are still mounting inequalities in income and opportunities and persistent forms of discrimination. “The global picture of the struggle to overcome discrimination shows a mixture of major advances and failures,” says the report (“Equality at work: tackling the challenges”). (ilo.org)

Campaign to stop further OTE privatisation
UNI Telecom added its support to the campaign by the Greek telecom union to prevent further privatisation of telecom operator OTE. OME-OTE is fighting plans to reduce the state’s 30% holding in the former telecom monopoly to bring in a strategic investor. “OTE is a company with political, economic and social importance,” union president Panayotis Koutras told the UNI Telecom conference. (neil.anderson@uniglobalunion.org)
Global companies must recognise unions
Unions will do business with multinationals, but companies will have to recognise unions, that was a clear message in Athens from Larry Cohen, the outgoing President of UNI Telecom from the CWA USA. In his review of the last four years since the Zagreb conference he spotlighted the recent signing of a global agreement with France Telecom and praised the work of French unions and the global alliance of France Telecom unions. Delegates elected Shoji Morishima of NWJ Japan as the new UNI Telecom President. (neil.anderson@uniglobalunion.org)

Union and shareholder pressure on Verizon
The CWA and IBEW in the United States spotlighted Verizon’s anti-worker attitude at the May 3 shareholder meeting in Pittsburgh. They won support from shareholders dissatisfied at the company’s performance and achieved a near-majority support for labour-backed proposals on executive pay and governance. Nearly 1,200 workers marched to the meeting, where inside union officers and members focused attention on three key shareholder resolutions. (neil.anderson@uniglobalunion.org)

Putting spotlight on private equity in the USA
A report by UNI affiliate the SEIU released on 24 April says workers, communities, and the nation as a whole should share in the economic opportunities being created by the booming private equity buyout industry. “Behind the buyout” warns that, largely unknown, the private equity industry is re-shaping the US economy. It quotes figures that show buyouts involving existing management are - on average - more likely to create new jobs while buyouts that install new managements generally lead to a jobs decline. (seiu.org)

May Day: making the difference
UNI and affiliates are making a global difference - that was part of UNI’s May Day message. We are challenging wage dumping and fighting for rules for private equity that defend union and worker rights, said UNI General Secretary Philip Jennings. A UNI plaque has been put on the Chicago memorial to the Haymarket Market martyrs - whose sacrifice made May 1 into workers’ day. (philip.jennings@uniglobalunion.org)

5,000 telecom workers in May Day walk out
5,000 CTWU workers in Taiwan joined a May Day walk out in protest at a breakdown in negotiations on the collective agreement. They demonstrated outside the Transport Ministry and called for the sacking of Chungwha Chief Executive Hochen. Job cuts and disputed work rotation in the profitable telecom company prompted the walk-out and, last September, led to the suicide of a CTWU member. (uni-asiapacific@uniglobalunion.org)

May Day lockout by Amcor
Multinational packaging company Amcor locked out more than 60 engineering, printing and manufacturing union members from its Albany site in New Zealand after they refused to accept company demands that would have put their health and safety at risk. (adriana.rosenzvaig@uniglobalunion.org)
Private equity hurts pensions
Private equity has struck again - and this time the victims are future pensioners at Airwave, the company that provides the digital radio network for UK emergency services. Within 50 minutes of acquiring Airwave from Telefónica’s O2 in a £2bn deal, Macquarie Bank announced that they are scrapping the existing pension scheme - which gives workers a guaranteed benefit.
(neil.anderson@uniglobalunion.org)

Finance and the flexicurity debate
Measures to improve the security of workers - including training and education, pensions and maternity leave - will allow greater flexibility, UNI Finance president Allan Bang told a Fisac seminar in Rome on Flexicurity. He emphasised the importance of social dialogue in an era of globalisation. Unions and employers in European banks are looking to conclude a joint declaration on the demographic challenge, based on research carried out last year.
(oliver.roethig@uniglobalunion.org)

Meeting needs of professionals
Professionals and managerial staff in Asia Pacific were urged by Regional Secretary Christopher Ng to make their voice heard to win decent work and rights at work. De-regulation and liberalisation of services in a globalising economy bring them new challenges, he told a joint UNI-Asia Pacific/NWJ forum for professionals held in Tokyo on 11-12 April. Christer Forslund, from UNI P&MS, urged unions to adopt strategies to meet the needs and interests of professional and managerial staff and to organise them.
(uni-asiapacific@uniglobalunion.org)

New union in Taiwan
A new telecom union launched in Taiwan on April 28 with the assistance of affiliate CTWU. A key aim for the APBT (Asia Pacific Broadband Telecom) Workers’ Union is to win a seat for labour on the Asia Pacific Telecom Group Board of Directors, said President Bruce Lee. To increase solidarity and cooperation on the island, CTWU is promoting a Taiwan IT Confederation of Labour.
(uni-asiapacific@uniglobalunion.org)

Card check victory at AT&T
A card check has won CWA recognition for 76 of the 91 workers at the AT&T Local Services customer service maintenance centre in New Jersey, USA. Fair wages and job security were key issues in the one-week card signing campaign. The CWA has a card check and neutrality agreement with AT&T.
(cwa-union.org)

Europa heads next for Toulouse
The next UNI-Europa Conference will be held in Toulouse, south west France in 2011. The venue was announced in the closing moments of the second Europa conference in Athens, with French delegates on stage for the announcement. The pink city - home to the Airbus - has a special resonance for UNI-Europa Secretary Bernadette Ségol who was born in nearby Cahors and went to university in Toulouse.
(bernadette.segol@uniglobalunion.org)

Triumvirate for UNI Gaming
UNI Gaming global union voted in a triumvirate to head the sector at their annual meeting held in Luxembourg - Enrique Cuevas (FS-CFDT France), Pieter Heinink (Vakbond ABC the Netherlands) and Daniel Amoroso (ALEARA Argentina). The meeting looked at health and safety issues and social dialogue with a presentation on research into stress of gaming workers in Argentina.
(alke.boessiger@uniglobalunion.org)

Seville charter for freelances
The Seville Charter - proposing a European declaration on self-employed work - is now available in English and Spanish. The Charter was adopted by adopted by a conference of freelances at the end of March and calls on the European Commission to launch a study on the impact of self-employed work in EU member states.
(gerd.rohde@uniglobalunion.org)
Organising drive in Malaysian supermarkets
Building union membership among shopworkers in Malaysia is the key target of a new, two-year organising project launched by UNI Development with Handels and HTF of Sweden. Supermarket chains - including Japanese and Western multinationals - employing 10,000 people will be the first priority in a unionising drive backed by UNI Commerce and UNI Liaison Council Malaysia that will also embrace migrant workers. (carin.andersson@uniglobalunion.org)

Compensation Fund workers protest in Zambia
Union members at the head offices of Zambia’s Workmen’s Compensation Fund Control Board held a day of protest over restructuring plans. They were incensed by remarks in the press from the company’s chief executive that most staff have few qualifications and will be laid off. They demanded information on the new organisational structure and a resumption of negotiations. (uni-africa@uniglobalunion.org)

Preparatory visit to Senegal
A UNI delegation recently met the UNI Liaison Council Senegal in advance of regional meetings due to be held in Dakar in July. The delegation included UNI-Africa President Napoleon Kpoh, Regional Secretary Fackson Shamenda and the Director of the francophone office in Abidjan Zakari Koudougou. (zakari.koudougou@uniglobalunion.org)

UNI-Africa P&MS meeting
UNI-Africa Professional and Managerial Staff has relaunched in French speaking countries. A meeting was held in Yaoundé, Cameroon that looked at the role of P&MS in the economic and social development of Africa.
46 people took part including nine women from 15 unions in ten countries. (uni-africa@uniglobalunion.org)

China report now available in Mandarin
Our UNI report on unions in China has now been translated into Mandarin Chinese. Copies available from:
uni-asiapacific@uniglobalunion.org
ATHENS ON CAMERA

Red cards: voting time at the UNI Postal World Conference in Athens

Larry Cohen USA hands over UNI Telecom presidential baton to Shoji Morishima Japan

Postman Philip Jennings delivers the mail to the UNI Postal conference

Signing a protest banner at the UNI Telecom World Conference in Athens to support OTE workers

Regional Secretary Bernadette Ségol and President Frank Bsirske
Left: UNI-Europa conference votes