

UNI COMMERCE STANDS IN SOLIDARITY WITH FNV (NETHERLANDS) and CALLS SUPERMARKET RETALIERS TO MEET WORKERS' FAIR DEMANDS

In the Netherlands, the sector level collective agreement for supermarket workers expired on 31 March 2020.

The negotiations for the new agreement -that will cover around 300,000 supermarket workers- were supposed to start in March, however due to the Covid-19 outbreak, the first meeting was postponed until September. So far, an agreement has not been reached.

While some food retailers have agreed to offer Covid 19 Bonus pay, not all have done so. The Covid bonus pay is set to stop at the end of 2020.

The supermarket employers' association has offered a collective agreement for 2 years, 1.5 % pay rise to be effective from January 2021 and second pay rise of 2.5 % for March 2022.

FNV, an affiliate of UNI Commerce, finds this offer totally unacceptable because it would freeze workers' wages in 2020; and reduce real wages given the fact that the inflation rate is approaching 2 % and workers will be paying higher social security (retirement) premiums in 2021 which will decrease workers' net wages.

As supermarket workers have been on the frontline during Covid-19 crisis to supply people with essential products and services; FNV demands a one-year collective agreement and 5 % pay rise to be retroactive from April 2020 when the previous agreement expired.

As the fair demands of the workers have not been met by the employers' association, FNV has initiated collective actions by submitting around 10,000 signatures collected from supermarket workers to the supermarket employers' association. More action including strikes will be taken in the coming days. Supermarket workers in Netherlands and all around the world are essential workers and they deserve essential rights including a fair and decent wage.

The burden of delayed negotiations can't be put on retail workers' shoulders who have been tirelessly working on the frontline to ensure access to basic needs. As if withdrawing Covid-19 bonuses is not enough, the supermarket employers in Netherlands are playing with fire by imposing zero percent pay rise for 2020 and pushing real wages down.

UNI Commerce, representing more than 4 million retail workers in more than 160 commerce unions around the world,

- stands in full solidarity with FNV and supermarket workers in Netherlands,
- strongly supports the actions taken and to be taken by FNV and the workers,
- urges Dutch supermarket employers' association to meet workers' fair demands including 5% pay rise.

UNI Commerce Global Steering Committee