

The Work of Trade Unions in multinational Corporations

Report on the European Networking conference in Brussels

Oct 31st, 2012

Exactly a year after the first meeting, the works councils of the Coca-Cola bottling company CCE AG in Germany and of the Norwegian, Dutch and Belgian CCEs met in Brussels on October 4 and 5, 2012 with colleagues from Spain, Croatia and Italy and representatives of the German Food, Beverages and Catering Union (NGG) and of the European Federation of Food, Agriculture & its Tourism Trade Unions, to consult on the next stage of cooperation at the European level. As had been the case last year, this meeting too was supported by the Brussels office of the Rosa Luxemburg Foundation.



In Europe, the gap both between the poor and the rich and between the poorer and richer countries is continuing to grow, said Klaus Sühl, Director of the Rosa Luxemburg Foundation in Brussels, in his welcoming address. That, he added, also means a growing gap between the powerful and the powerless. For that reason, European answers to the most urgent social and political issues are long overdue. And if works council and trade union representatives from various European countries meet to organize closer cooperation, and to seek common solutions and coordinate solidarity-based actions, the Rosa Luxemburg Foundation will always be ready to help carry out such meetings.

At the suggestion of CCE AG Combined Works Council Chair Johan Botella, the works council and trade union representatives present agreed to update their declaration to establish a Europe-wide early warning system for Coca-Cola, which had been adopted last year, so as to make it more efficient and breathe more life into it. At the suggestion of EFFAT Chair Harald Wiedenhofer, a decision was made to form a coordination group.

Economic development on the one hand and planned major restructuring at Coca-Cola on the other require rapid reaction capabilities in order to ensure quicker and more comprehensive information on developments at the various plant sites. For only in that way can Europe-wide solidarity actions be organized in a timely and effective manner.

NGG Vice Chair Harald Güster explained that such Europe-wide solidarity of all Coca-Cola workers may be necessary in the very near future.

In the upcoming wage negotiations in Germany, NGG is preparing for especially tough negotiations which could result in a strike. For the union-organized colleagues are ready to fight, and firmly determined to strike for wage increases and for the defense of their rights, if necessary. In this situation, being able to rely on the support of colleagues at Coca-Cola in other European unions is all the more important, Güster said.

See also:

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