



Berlin Manifesto

For humane work and trade union rights across value-added and supply chains

Handel



On 29/30 January, trade unionists as well as employee representatives from numerous countries discussed the state of workers across international value-added and supply chains.

Regardless of whether, as agricultural workers, we grow oranges or wine, or process them as part of production, or sell them to customers as shop assistants; regardless of whether, as seamstresses, we manufacture garments, as transport workers, we convey them across national or continental borders, or sell them as store employees. On the other side of the table are conglomerates and companies that repeatedly squeeze wages and degrade working conditions so that they can reap ever higher profits. In all this, we workers, we wage earners continue to be the ones who produce wealth day in, day out, who fall sick due to the miserable working and living conditions and who end up in old-age poverty at the end of our working lives.

Given all this, we have adopted the following common principles:

We will not allow ourselves to be played off against each other! Solidarity is a cornerstone of the international labour and trade union movement. We stand together and learn from each other – on a level playing field and with undivided mutual respect. We defend the rights of employees and their organisations on all levels and therefore reject any initiative that targets or dilutes trade union rights here or anywhere. We collectively resist governments, political forces, entrepreneurs or their associations fighting working people and their trade union representation from organising, or their attacking or replacing such organisation.

By the same token, we reject any policies that neutralize the workforce's ability to act. The patronising Eurocentric stance adopted against workers in Africa, Asia, America and other parts of this world must be brought to an end. We resist any and all attempts to pit workers here or anywhere, in the North or South, in the East or West, against each other. Our ties are stronger with one another than with those who seek to deprive us of our rights and livelihoods!

For these reasons, we band together

- for a humane wage that secures our livelihoods in advanced years;
- for good, healthy working conditions, for work that does not kill or render people sick;
- for collective bargaining regulations that are negotiated and decided by trade union members and organisations in their respective country, region or company;
- for the right of trade unions and their representatives to be afforded access to all companies and operations;
- for effective measures opposing sexual or racial abuse, any form of discrimination and exploitation in the workplace and beyond;
- for equal pay for equal work everywhere!

Adopted by the participants of the Berlin International Conference of 29 and 30 January 2020