

BWI Resolutions

Adopted by BWI World Congress in Durban South Africa
on 01 December 2017



13. Resolution concerning the International Framework Agreements relating to workers' representatives

Submitted by:

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For the representatives of the workers, the international framework agreements (IFAs) are one of the first instruments for the promotion of social dialog at international level, allowing them to set the minimum social standards in all countries. For the groups that want to put them into effect, the IFAs constitute the proof of a commitment for social and environmental standards that must be respected, thus allowing to differentiate themselves positively from the competitors and gain a competitive advantage in the response to tender invitations.

The Congress of Lille, after the one in Bangkok, has highlighted the need to strengthen our trade union networks. In addition, the Congress of Lille has also highlighted the need for greater coordination between the international framework agreements and trade union networks. Then, four years later, the Bangkok Congress has declared itself to be in favor of an increase in the number of trade union networks, which has been defined as a target at the time of creation of such agreements.

The international framework agreement alone does not guarantee the respect for the rights of workers. While recalling the obligation to comply with a series of fundamental principles, particularly those defined by the International Labor Organization, once the agreement is signed, the control by the representatives of the workers is difficult to follow. The only assurance is a top-down control carried out by the world federations signatories to that agreement. Therefore, we must commit ourselves to improve the involvement of local trade unions and the workers concerned. Even on the side of the international tribunals, no one is able to ensure a real control and punish the non-implementation of international agreements.

In addition, the current functioning of the tracking of the agreements does not allow on its own a sufficient international trade union coordination. Although there is no doubt about the willingness of global organizations to develop trade union networks through the IFAs, there is a need for an instance that puts the workers together so that they can follow and directly control the implementation and respect of the international agreement.

Therefore, a world committee or an instance that allows the representation of the workers loyal to the group implementation must be established at international level on the basis of the commitment to the negotiation of an international framework agreement.

On the other hand, while some groups are tempted by the establishment of an International Framework Agreement, they refuse at the same time to meet the obligations to establish a



European Works Council (EWC). However, the EWC is a specific translation, at European level, by which a group promotes not only the issuing of minimum standards, but also the social dialog with the representatives of the workers. Therefore, in the process of setting up and negotiating an IFA the creation of an European Works Council - where applicable - should be integrated in the process. During the process the cooperation of the EFBWW and BWI with all concerned trade unions is crucial.

Resolution

- With the aim of developing the trade union networks, to promote social dialogue at global level and promote the rights of workers through multinational companies, we call on the Congress to request that any negotiation of an international framework agreement should be accompanied by several conditions:
- From the beginning of the negotiations of an international framework agreement, the BWI should get in touch with the trade union organizations present in the home country of the company headquarters.
- The BWI and the home country trade unions of the company will check to see if the group has set up a European Works Council.
- In its absence, and in the event that the company is subject to the obligation to set up a European Works Council, the establishment of an EWC should be strongly encouraged during discussions of the IFA.
- If there is already a EWC, the IFA negotiations should involve closely the home country trade unions and the EFBWW EWC coordinator for the company.
- A control instance for the international framework agreements should be included in the IFA as the reference group for implementation and follow-up. This reference group should include the home country trade union representatives, the BWI representatives and the company representatives. In case a world union committee is created, the control instance is part of this committee.
- Global Trade Union networks should be established wherever possible to bring together workers from the regions and countries of the company operations, to advance workers' rights and to help monitor implementation of the IFA.
- Creation of a World Union Committee could be a strong tool for promoting the social dialogue at all levels of the company, and this should be negotiated in the IFA where possible. This Committee should include the home country trade union representatives, the BWI representatives, EWC representatives and the company representatives. The WUC is the control instance for the international framework agreement.

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