

INTERNATIONAL CONFEDERATION OF FREE TRADE UNIONS (ICFTU)

ICFTU OnLine...

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Mexico: Trade union wins battle to reopen tyre factory

Brussels, 21 January 2005 (ICFTU OnLine): The ICFTU welcomed today the hard-fought victory of the workers of Mexican trade union EUZKADI who after a three-year struggle have finally secured the reopening of the factory closed down in the state of Jalisco by German tyre multinational Continental AG.

"We are convinced that you will be capable of showing other workers in mexico and in the rest of the world that 'where there's a will, there's a way', " wrote Guy Ryder in a letter (<http://www.icftu.org/displaydocument.asp?Index=991221163&Language=ES>) of congratulations addressed to the EUSKADI union.

Backed by an international campaign to support their request, the 604 workers from the EUSKADI union - a member of the National Union of Workers (UNT), an ICFTU affiliated to - have won back their jobs by setting up a tyre manufacturing cooperative. Part financed by the Mexican subsidiary of Continental, the cooperative came into being on 17 January, under the auspices of Mexico's president Vicente Fox.

In 2001, whilst some 360 workers quietly accepted their redundancy pay, another 604 workers formed a picket line outside the plant and filed legal proceedings to assert their rights. The pressure exerted by Germany's Mining, Chemical and Energy Union (IGBCE), based on the principles of the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises(*), contributed greatly to signing of the agreement on 17 January. The ICFTU sees this campaign as a perfect example of how support from international trade union movement can be constructive in resolving local disputes when it is coupled with the determination of the workers concerned. Backed by IGBCE and NGO Germanwatch, delegations from EUZKADI to Europe in 2003 and 2004 where they met with the German National Contact Point (NCP, a mechanism set up by virtue of the OECD Guidelines) and workers at the parent company, Continental AG.

(*)The OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises are non-binding recommendations addressed by governments to multinational enterprises. Their purpose is to help multinational enterprises act in line with government policies and the expectation of society.

The ICFTU represents 145 million workers in 233 affiliated organisations in 154 countries and territories. ICFTU is also a partner in Global Unions: <http://www.global-unions.org>

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