

INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNION CONFEDERATION

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World Trade Union Body to Press Deutsche Telekom/T-Mobile on Employee Rights

Brussels, 4 February 2011 (ITUC OnLine): The international trade union movement is launching a global campaign to convince German telecommunications giant Deutsche Telekom to end anti-union discrimination and allow workers to join their union at its US subsidiary T-Mobile USA following a decision by the ITUC General Council in Brussels today. The move comes after repeated refusals by the German parent company to stop the anti-union campaign being waged by T-Mobile USA.

“We expect better from Deutsche Telekom,” said ITUC general secretary Sharan Burrow. “With operations in some 50 countries, it has established union relations with much of its workforce. However, in the USA in particular, the company massively violates its responsibility to be neutral towards trade unions, and tries to keep unions out of its workplaces. We’re simply asking Deutsche Telekom to respect fundamental rights for all those who work for it around the world, in line with international legal standards.”

T-Mobile’s drive to stop its employees joining their unions has included engaging specialist union-busters in the US, and detailed evidence of its anti-union campaign were revealed last September in a special report published by Human Rights Watch <URL: <http://www.hrw.org/node/92719>>. The report 130-page report “...details ways in which some European multinational firms have carried out aggressive campaigns to keep workers in the United States from organizing and bargaining, violating international standards and, often, US labor laws” according to the international human rights NGO.

Michael Sommer, president of the German national trade union centre DGB, and of the ITUC, said “Deutsche Telekom has been asked repeatedly at the highest level to bring T-Mobile USA into line with German values, but it has yet to do so. It should apply the same global industrial relations standards in every country which it does respect at home in Germany. Therefore we will be putting the spotlight on this unacceptable aspect of the company’s operations in the US.”

According to Philip Jennings, general secretary of UNI Global Union, which represents workers in telecoms unions around the world, “Deutsche Telekom could improve its international reputation dramatically by simply ensuring that the fundamental human rights of its employees everywhere are respected. We will keep reminding the company of this until such time as it acts responsibly throughout all its operations. Deutsche Telekom should sign up to a global agreement which guarantees organising and collective bargaining rights to all its employees in every country.”

The ITUC represents 176 million workers in 301 affiliated national organisations from 151 countries and territories. Website: <http://www.ituc-csi.org> and <http://www.youtube.com/ITUCCSI>

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