

„Low wages – a barrier to the development of Poland”

1. The action „Low wages – a barrier to the development of Poland” was commenced by NSZZ „Solidarnosc” in January 2007.
2. Within the framework of the campaign our union prepared a manifesto which included the main theses of the action:
 - low wages in Poland contribute to the lack of economic development and emigration of Polish workers;
 - in order to save Polish labor market and curb labor migration of specialists it is necessary to reduce the gap between wages in Poland and developed countries of the EU;
 - we postulate a fair division of GDP increase and raises for all professional groups;
 - higher wages mean higher revenue from taxes and social contributions which should be allocated for the raises in health services, budgetary sphere and valorization of pensions;
 - Polish society deserves to have higher wages because: for many years already the increase of wages does not follow the increase of work output and economic development; Polish people work longer hours than workers in other countries, including member states of European Union.
 - we cannot condone the level of minimum wage in Poland at 936 PLN, as such remuneration is insufficient for life in decent living conditions;
 - wages in Poland should grow twice as fast, as it is the case in the entire EU.
2. For regional and branch structures several dozen thousand posters and manifestos were printed. They were delivered to different companies. Also representatives of public administration received manifestos and posters.
3. As part of the action special internet subpage was prepared (<http://www.solidarnosc.org.pl/kampania/index.htm>). This website enabled giving support to the campaign.
4. Also all-Poland research concerning reasons for migration was commissioned.
5. In addition a special report was commissioned by NSZZ „Solidarność” to experts from SPartner (Polish company established by Syndex). The report entitled „Low wages – a barrier to the development of Poland” consisted of 3 parts:
 - „Household demand: endangered element of economic growth?”
 - „Time for a raise!”
 - „Unfair division of fruits of economic growth”

Journalists as well as all structures of our trade union received also press information and presentations.

Except for the report we also established cooperation with researchers studying wages, migration and employment issues.

6. One of the elements of the campaign was a several days’ cooperation with one of the biggest tabloids in Poland. On its pages we have shown the facts from lives of people who agreed to tell their stories of how little they earn and how it does not allow them to live

a decent life. Experts from „Solidarnosc” – lawyers and economists – for a few hours a day answered the questions from tabloid’s readers.

7. In June 2007 NSZZ „Solidarnosc” started negotiations with the government. One of the postulates was the increase of minimum wage. A compromise was reached in August 2007. From January 2008 minimum wage increased to 1126 PLN gross (316.29 euro).

8. At the same time in many companies local organizations of NSZZ „Solidarnosc” started wage negotiations with employers. The majority of them ended in wages increases.

9. According to the statistics of the Main Statistical Office average real remuneration in 2007 in comparison to 2006 increased by 6.3 %. In January 2008 average gross monthly wages in company sector amounted to 2969.65 PLN (834.17 euro).