



PEACE WATCH BOYCOTTS, INDUSTRIAL ACTIONS, DEMONSTRATIONS AND CAMPAIGNS BRIEFING NOTE

25 MARCH 2022

Boycotts and industrial actions towards Russian economic activities in Europe, demonstrations and media campaigns or political lobbying to strengthen the sanctions

INTRODUCTION

The ETUC is pleased to create a Peace watch focused on the actions undertaken by affiliates supporting the Ukrainian trade unions and people, be that supporting boycotts and industrial actions towards Russian economic activities in Europe, demonstrations and media campaigns or political lobbying to strengthen the sanctions.

This Peace Watch is meant to share information among affiliates on these actions with the aim of increasing the pressure towards the Russian government and to support even further the sanctions adopted at EU level. According to the ETUC Resolution on Ukraine adopted by the Executive Committee on 17 March The ETUC is constantly in touch with Ukrainian trade unions to ensure solidarity and support, and in coordination with its affiliates, as well as with the ITUC and PERC, is ready to support trade unions in their actions, including strikes, blockades and other forms of industrial action, to put pressure on those European companies that have chosen to remain in Russia or to continue having economic and trade activities with Russia.

The EU has already adopted four rounds of sanctions since the beginning of the Russian aggression, including on 685 Russians and Belarusians and on Russian finance and trade. Namely, the EU introduced sectoral measures targeting the Russian economy which pertain, inter alia, to the following: transactions with certain state-owned enterprises; provision of credit rating services; new investment in the Russian energy sector; export of equipment, technology and services for the energy industry; import of iron and steel; and export of luxury goods.

In addition, the EU decided to impose sanctions against key Russian individuals as well as key companies in the aviation, military and dual use, shipbuilding and machine building sectors.

We support the actions undertaken by affiliates and we encourage them to strengthen even more. They are important in showing solidarity to the Ukrainian people and they also send a political message of support to EU member states about the importance to strengthen the sanctions.

One note of caution, this briefing note captures a dynamic situation which is subject to ongoing change. We therefore kindly ask affiliates to provide us with further information on any further related measures that have been introduced in your country so that we can update this briefing note.



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Austria

ÖGB is engaged in substantial humanitarian aid to Ukrainian trade unions and has set up a donation account to support Ukrainian people.

Belgium

FGTB participated in two demonstration in support of the Ukrainian people and against the war: on March 15th (following the call of the ITUC and the ETUC) and on March 26th (following the call of the Belgian peace movement). The messages conveyed by FGTB were the following:

1. The workers are the first losers of the war:
 - a. In the first place, the Ukrainian workers (bombing of factories and public services threatening their prospects for a decent life and their own lives). FGTB therefore express its solidarity with Ukrainian workers and trade unions.
 - b. Also, the Russian workers. They will be the first to be affected in Russia by the sanctions that Vladimir Putin has attracted on his country. The low salaries and social benefits will be insufficient to face the increase in prices. Because of the lack of financial regulation at the global level, the Russian oligarchs will only be partly affected (since, for example, they hold their assets in tax havens, etc.)
 - c. EU workers will also be affected: increase in energy prices, supply and market access problems in the value chain.
2. No to the use of war to promote nationalism. No to the use of the war to promote the ultraliberal extension of the market and the social dumping.
3. No to war; welcome refugees; trade unions united for peace.

Czech Republic

The crisis of the war in Ukraine is also a frequent topic of ČMKOS when addressing the Czech government both through media or lobbying practices. ČMKOS supported the positions of the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) and the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) on the situation in Ukraine and the Day of Action for Peace organised by the European Trade Union Confederation on 15 March 2022 in Brussels. In the context of the integration of Ukrainian citizens into the labour market, ČMKOS considers the application of the principle of equal treatment of all job seekers on the labour market to be a non-negotiable condition.



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Denmark

Workers in the Esbjerg Harbor refused to load/unload Russian vessels. The statement from the workers has full support from the Managing Director of Esbjerg Harbor. It should be noted that no Russian vessels are currently in the harbor and none are expected in a foreseeable future.

<https://ekstrabladet.dk/nyheder/samfund/havnemedarbejdere-vender-ryggen-til-russiske-skibe/9157416>

A pub in Denmark has started a boycott of Carlsberg beer, since Carlsberg has to some extent continued its operation in Russia.

<https://www.berlingske.dk/business/et-af-danmarks-aeldste-vaertshuse-boykotter-carlsberg-de-skal-helt-ud-af>

Russian artists have been removed from planned performances on several occasions in Denmark.

Finland

Many trade unions cancelled an agreement with Teboil gas stations (which belong to the Russian company Lukoil) which provided advantageous conditions to affiliates.

SAK, STTK and Akava condemned the Russian war on Ukraine and expressed our support for the EU sanctions to Russia (see <https://www.sak.fi/en/whats-new/news/sak-akava-and-sttk-strongly-condemn-russian-attack-ukraine-and-support-sanctions-imposed-eu>). All three unions supported

a demonstration against the Russian invasion, organised by a wide range of political youth organisations and summoned their members to participate in it.

On March 15, an online action was organised by SAK, which call on members to display Ukrainian colours and used ETUC hashtags and slogans.

SAK is supporting Ukrainian citizens fleeing to Finland by providing information on workers' rights in Ukrainian language.

Lithuania

15 March was declared by the trade union confederation Solidarumas a Global Day of Solidarity with Ukraine, therefore joining ETUC commemoration organised in front of the buildings of the European Commission and European Council.



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Solidarumas expressed its solidarity with the Ukrainian workers who have lost their jobs because of the war of Russia on their country and are joining the army to defend their country. Solidarumas is making an appeal to its members and all Lithuanian employees asking them to donate one hour's salary to the Ukrainian people.



Poland

The activities of the National Commission of NSZZ Solidarność and its regional division are focused mainly on humanitarian aid.

Boycott actions undertaken by the trade union are a part of actions taken spontaneously by the majority of Polish society in this respect. These are mainly actions in social media, e.g. OZ the action "stop 460-469 and 481" (these are barcode numbers specific to Russia and Belarus). The action was so large that in the first week of March the leading retail chains in Poland decided to withdraw Russian products from their offer.

Due to the hostilities and earlier political decisions, the volume of transported goods was inevitably reduced. There is a strong response in the transport and logistics industry. Trade unionists demand that the transport of Russian and Belarusian goods through Polish territory be blocked, e.g. Transport Section demanded blockage of Belarusian and Russian trucks or lorries on the Polish border.

The National Commission of NSZZ Solidarność called on its members represented in European Works Councils to take action to stop the business operations of their companies in Russia whenever possible. Urgent consultations with the relevant EWC co-ordinators appointed by the European trade federations (ETUFs) we therefore called on.

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The National Commission of NSZZ Solidarność calls on the exclusion of the Russian FNPR from international trade union structures because of its support of the Russian aggression.

Actions, such as rallies and demonstrations, have been organised in regions across the country. Examples were provided of the regions of Pomorze Zachodnie, Ziemia Łódzka, Ziemia Przemyska, and Srodkowo-Wschodni. The whole structure of the trade union, from the national to the local level, is involved in expressing solidarity with the Ukrainian people. All the more so, since many companies employed Ukrainian workers before the outbreak of war. The forms are varied: radio interviews (example 5), displaying Ukrainian flags (example 1), rallies in support (example 4), appeals to managements of companies to stop cooperation with Russian and Belarusian companies e.g. OZ in Zentis Siedlce - rallies, positions (example 1), appeals not to send to Russia goods produced in a given company (position attached), employees walk around with yellow and blue ribbons (example: employees of the NSZZ "Solidarność" headquarters), exclusion of Russian participants from a race organized by the region (example 2), a motto calling for peace on the region's website (example 3).



Portugal

UGT-Portugal and its trade unions have shown their solidarity with the Ukrainian people, by responding, to the appeal by the ETUC, ITUC and PERC, and with a symbolic amount to the Red Cross for work in Ukraine.

On 21 March, the National Secretariat of UGT, which brings together the leaders of all affiliated trade unions, paid tribute to the martyred people of Ukraine, victim of an unacceptable aggression by Russia. The Ambassador of Ukraine in Portugal, Inna Ohnivets, joined this action.



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Spain

UGT and CCOO called on workers in in all workcenters to gather on March 9th at 12:00 to express solidarity for Ukrainian people.

Switzerland

The Swiss Trade Union Confederation SGB/USS and its affiliates are engaged in substantial humanitarian aid to Ukrainian trade unions and have set up a donation account to support Ukrainian people. Also the SGB-funds for international support of Trade Unions and Humanitarian have donated substantially to different projects and to the ITUC/ETUC fund for Ukraine. The SGB organised several demonstrations against the unjustified Russian aggression war against the Ukrainian people. The SGB and its affiliates together with other organisations will organize the 2nd of April a rally for peace in Ukraine and condemnation of the Russian aggression towards the Ukrainians in Bern.

The Netherlands

The FNV condemns the Russian military attack in Ukraine and calls for an immediate cessation of hostilities. The Confederation has declared its solidarity with the Ukrainian people and the Ukrainian workers and trade unions. Together with the international trade union movement, the FNV speaks out against the war and supports our colleagues from the independent trade union KTR, as well as everyone else in Russia and the region who publicly speaks out against the military intervention. It is the duty of unions in the region to work together to facilitate a peaceful resolution of the conflict and ensure a common future for all, without violence or war. This is in everyone's interest: the Ukrainians, who face the ravages of war first and foremost, but also the Russian citizens, who must suffer the social consequences of disastrous political choices by their leaders and economic sanctions. The international community and the European Union must use all political and diplomatic means to de-escalate the conflict. It is their duty to initiate a peace process with respect for democracy, human rights and international conventions. The FNV will participate in any initiative that calls for peace. The Confederation also call on the Dutch government to work out, together with the other countries of the European Union, a humanitarian policy to receive refugees.

For more information, see the FNV press release on Ukraine: <https://www.fnv.nl/nieuwsbericht/algemeen-nieuws/2022/03/fnv-biedt-financiele-en-humanitaire-hulp-aan-oukrai>"

UK

TUC reported that workers organised by the public services union UNISON refused to unload a Russian gas container in Kent, in Southeast England, on Thursday March 3 (see: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-kent-60619112>).



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UNITE workers refused to unload a Russian oil shipment in Cheshire, in Northwest England, on Friday March 4 (see: <https://www.theguardian.com/business/2022/mar/04/dockers-on-merseyside-refuse-to-unload-russian-oil-stanlow-kent-netherlands-ukraine>).

The TUC organised a solidarity meeting for the General Secretaries and International Officers of our affiliate unions on Tuesday March 15. Union leaders heard from trade unionists in the region and we reiterated their call on the UK government for a diplomatic solution to the conflict and a humanitarian policy to refugees.