

FIRST MEETING OF THE TRADE UNION REPRESENTATIVES OF US MILITARY BASES' LOCAL WORKERS IN EUROPE

Last 3rd of February the first meeting of the trade union representatives of US military bases' local workers was held in Madrid. The meeting was promoted by the Trade Union Section of CCOO (Comisiones Obreras) of the Naval Base of Rota and was supported and organized by the International Office of the Federation of services to the citizens of CCOO.

Through the institutional contacts with the international federations and the European trade unions, the trade union representatives from these collectives in the different countries where US military bases are established were invited to participate. Others trade unions with representation in the US military bases in Spanish territory were also invited. These trade unions are: UGT, USO and CSI-F.

Union representatives from Belgium, Portugal, United Kingdom and Spain attended to the meeting. The representatives from Greece and Italy expressed their interest and intention to participate in the meeting, although in the end they were not able to do so for several reasons.

Spain has signed a bilateral treaty with the USA which has several annexes in which labor relations among local workers and the USA administration is regulated. From the point of view of the contractual relationship there are two different situations, in the case of Spain, that are included in the annexes. The annex 6 of the Treaty includes the regulation through which the workers that are hired by the US administration abide by and the annex 8 regulates the Local Labor Force hired by the Spanish Ministry of Defense and provided to the US Administration.

The regionalization carried out by the United States of America in the last years along with the appearance of Community Directives, which regulate work relationships in the member states of the EU, have changed throughout time the legal framework in which the work relationships of these collectives of workers with the US administration are subscribed.

In summary, most of the differences we had in the past, based in the different circumstances in which the bilateral treaties were signed among the different countries and the US administration, are not justified anymore in the new legal framework. The collective of workers providing their service in the US military bases in Europe must be sheltered by the European labor legislation, as are the rest of their fellow citizens.

This first meeting has made possible the gathering of trade union representatives from the collectives of local workers in US military bases in different European countries, thus, allowing us to be aware and to compare the regulations put into place in the different countries. We understand that this mutual knowledge can help us explore new ways of negotiation and identify new goals that contribute to improving the labor conditions of the workers that we represent.

The goal of this meeting is to work to create a platform that would allow us to form an Inter-center Committee.

Council Directive 94/45/EC of 22 September 1994 on the establishment of a European Works Council or a procedure in Community-scale undertakings and Community-scale groups of undertakings for the purposes of informing and consulting employees could be useful as a reference legal framework for the creation of an inter-center committee, formed by the representatives of the workers in the different bases, that's recognized by the US administration as elected body when it comes to negotiating subjects having to do with the labor conditions of the workers.

One of the main goals of this inter-center committee would be that, in tune with the European legislation spirit, the US administration be acknowledged by the various national and international authorities as an employer and payer of all of the collectives that work for it.

On the other hand, we believe it is necessary to involve the members of the European parliament that represent us in each country, so that, once aware of our reality, they assume our demands and pass them on to the institutional sphere they consider more competent to solve them more efficiently.

That's why we ask the representatives of the workers in the US military bases in Europe, both the ones present in this meeting and those who were not able to attend the meeting but who share our beliefs, to get in contact with the members of the European parliament of their respective countries and inform them of our problematic.

We hope that this first Meeting will represent the beginning of a very fruitful trade union relationship and will be the seed for the creation of the Inter-center Committee of the US Military Bases in Europe. For this purpose we came to several conclusions to establish roadmap to achieve our goal. The proposals of this roadmap are as follows:

1º EXCHANGE OF LABOR DOCUMENTATION/REGULATION

2º REQUEST OF SUPPORT TO OUR NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL FEDERATIONS FOR THE CONSTITUTION OF A EUROPEAN INTERCENTER COMMITTEE

3º REQUEST OF ADVICE AND COUNSELLING TO THE LEGAL DEPARTMENT OF OUR FEDERATIONS FOR THE CREATION OF THE AFORMENTIONED COMMITTEE

4º CONTACT THE MEMBERS OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT OF OUR COUNTRIES THROUGH A LETTER IN WHICH THE CONCLUSIONS OF THIS MEETING ARE INCLUDED AND A REQUEST OF SUPPORT FOR OUR CLAIMS.

5º THE SENDING BY THE INTERNATIONAL FEDERATIONS OF THE CONCLUSIONS OF THE FIRST MEETING TO THE TRADE UNIONS, THE ONES THAT ATTENDED, AS WELL AS THE ONES THAT COULD NOT ATTEND TO THE MEETING, INVITING AND ENCOURAGING THE LATTER TO PARTICIPATE IN THE NEXT MEETING

6º ORGANIZE IN THE PERIOD OF 8 MONTHS (in autumn), IN BRUSSELS, A SECOND MEETING OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE US MILITARY BASES' WORKERS IN EUROPE,

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