



## EFBWW fully supports the call of its Belgian affiliates for a 24-hour strike

The EFBWW expresses full solidarity with the Belgian workers, who are on strike today, fighting for better salaries and improved working conditions. The Belgian trade unions – CG FGTB and CSC BIE – decided to go on strike, after the dialogue with employers' organisations had collapsed.

Every two years, trade unions and employers in Belgium negotiate an interprofessional agreement. These negotiations determine the wage increase for the next two years and deal with the increase of the minimum wage, employment opportunities for young people, career ends, working time, mobility, etc. This time employers only want to grant a maximum salary increase of 0.4% gross above inflation.

EFBWW general secretary, Tom Deleu, supports the Belgian affiliates' view that this proposal is "shameful". "Trade unions need to be able to negotiate freely, so that workers can get their fair share of the productivity increase and the profits made. They deserve a substantial pay increase, especially when continuing their jobs in these difficult pandemic times".

For CSC BIE president, Patrick Vandenberghe, "this is a slap in the face of the workers. It is time to recognise the workers' value". "It's billions for shareholders and crumbs for workers. This has to end! In addition, better wages strengthen purchasing power, which is essential for a rapid and structural economic recovery."

For CG FGTB general secretary, Brahim Hilami, "a 0.4% pay rise is unacceptable. That is barely 6 euros gross per month for the lowest paid. And only 9 euros gross per month for workers in so-called essential jobs. The crisis we are going through has not affected all companies in the same way. Some companies - thanks in part to the flexibility of their workforce - have continued to make huge profits".

Trade unions want an indicative margin for wage increases, not a maximum ceiling; an increase in the minimum wage and in low wages; end of career agreements with early retirement schemes and the amendment of the law on the wage standard.

We stand firmly by our Belgian affiliates, CSC BIE and CG FGTB!