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Human and Trade Union Rights and Equality / Trade Union Rights:

Draft Resolution of Support for Global Campaign for Rights at Deutsche Telekom

Proposed by: AFT/United States and GEW/Germany
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WHEREAS in their home countries, many European multinational corporations have a long tradition of collective bargaining and social dialogue with their national unions, based on respect for fundamental worker rights. While not without conflict, these bargaining partnerships have fostered productive and prosperous companies, economically stable workforces, and stronger national democracies.

Yet, as was recently documented by Human Rights Watch, many of these multinationals do not bring best practices in labor relations from their home countries when they expand into the United States and other countries around the world. Instead, they adopt the worst practices of their host countries: disrespect for workers, union-busting tactics, fear and intimidation for workers who speak up, and firings and reprisals when they seek to join a union. Instead of taking a high road on worker rights and serving as positive examples, these multinational corporations adapt to the host country's low road model for worker rights.

This is exactly what German multinational corporation Deutsche Telekom did when it expanded operations into the United States. American workers faced anti-union behavior that would have been unprecedented in Germany, as part of an aggressive and comprehensive "union avoidance" strategy in pursuit of Deutsche Telekom efforts to achieve a "union-free environment.". Workers deserve better from a company with a proven record of respectful labor relations in Germany. For that reason, Communication Workers of America and its German counterpart ver.di joined together to create a transnational union that jointly represents the interests of German and U.S. workers.

This labor collaboration is now extending globally, since Deutsche Telekom employs an estimated 250,000 workers in 35 countries. In January 2011, representatives of Global Union Federations, the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) and national trade union centers from around the world came together and selected Deutsche Telekom as the focus for a new global organizing model. While not the first international campaign, this is the first time the global labor movement in its entirety has come together to work in concert and to demand that a global corporation uphold standards of respect for workers and decent work principles wherever it operates.

As part of a vital effort to rebuild union density worldwide, the ITUC and the Council of Global Unions, of which EI is a member, have agreed to rally their collective resources in support of a targeted global campaign model. This new initiative will focus the combined support, resources and commitment of the world's labor movement on this campaign to win rights for Deutsche Telekom workers around the world. This will serve as a pilot for the model and the first in a series of concerted global campaigns. In the future, additional research will support the application of the model in other sectors. The model will utilize unprecedented coordination and communications to link together the daily struggles of workers to build their unions and seek a collective voice on the job and elevate their collective demands for respect of fundamental rights and a path to decent work in every possible arena.

RESOLVED, that EI joins the global labor movement in endorsing this global campaign to help Deutsche Telekom workers win their basic labor rights, gain a voice on the job, and bargain for a better life for themselves and their families.



55 RESOLVED, that EI will post updates on the campaign on its website and provide tools to help
56 affiliates support the campaign through public procurement and workers' capital strategies, as well as
57 through direct engagement and consumer campaigns, where possible.

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59 RESOLVED, that EI and its affiliates will demonstrate public sector solidarity with this private sector
60 campaign as a means of promoting labor unity in a time of unprecedented threats.

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62 RESOLVED, that EI will call upon the ITUC to research potential public sector targets for future
63 concerted campaigns, including the identification of multinational corporations involved in the
64 privatization of public services.