

To T-MOBILE USA and Other U.S. Subsidiaries of German Companies

AN OPEN LETTER ON WORKERS' RIGHTS

Globalization and the current crisis present particular challenges for the economy. Germany's social market policy faces these challenges with its commitment to stakeholder values including employees and its responsibility towards the community. The respect for the interests of different players has already proven to be beneficial in previous periods of change. Essential elements of this approach are respectful cooperation and a balance of the differing interests of employees and employers. Since employees are in a structurally weaker position compared to employers, the freedom of association and freedom of opinion as human rights are especially vital.

"EMPLOYEES OF U.S. SUBSIDIARIES OF GERMAN COMPANIES, ESPECIALLY T-MOBILE USA, SHOULD BE ABLE TO EXERCISE THEIR UNRESTRICTED RIGHT TO OPT FOR ORGANIZED REPRESENTATION IN THE COMPANY WITHOUT FEAR."

The signatories urge that the employees of U.S. subsidiaries of German companies, especially T-Mobile USA, should be able to exercise their unrestricted right to opt for organized representation in the company without fear. They must not be influenced, pressured, or intimidated by employers if they exercise their basic right for freedom of association. The human right of freedom of speech notably entails this right as well.

Even in the Federal Republic of Germany there are shortsighted employers and lawyers who believe they can get away with a lack of integrity and respect toward unions and work councils and who think they can forgo cooperation. Practical experiences and scientific studies show, however, that employer conduct based on this model will ultimately be harmful to the company.

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We encourage T-Mobile USA and the other U.S. subsidiaries of German companies to take these experiences to heart and to abandon all efforts at union avoidance. Likewise, we ask them to end all collaboration with U.S. consultants who advise employers how to fight employee representation.

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