



First Turkish knitting factory with a CBA

In December 2013, Turkish trade union Teksif concluded a Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) with a Turkish supplier of FWF member brand Mayerline. The agreement is a victory: it took over a year of FWF's involvement and is the first CBA in history in a Turkish knitting factory.

The CBA includes several wage increases over the next three years, social benefits in the form of food supplies and even a childcare bonus and paternity leave. It is effective from August 2013. The CBA will cover over 300 unionised workers initially, and the union is convinced other workers will sign up soon.

This unique CBA took many years of negotiations between Teksif and the factory, going back as far as 1999. Involvement of unions in Turkish garment factories is a sensitive matter. Because of Teksif's involvement, some unionised workers got dismissed and discriminated against.

Extra machines

In October 2012 a [complaint](#) was filed through FWF's independent complaints hotline regarding the unfair dismissal of 37 unionised workers. They were fired from the knitting department after starting a protest against a new system. The new system would entail that workers would be responsible for extra machines, which would increase the work load.

FWF's Turkey coordinator, together with the FWF complaints handler in Turkey, visited the group of dismissed workers. At that time they had already been protesting outside the factory for 80 days. FWF also met with the factory manager and owners.

Intimidation

The first meeting between the factory and Teksif then took place, followed by more meetings in that same week. It resulted in an agreement: the workers who had been unfairly dismissed were given the opportunity to be reinstated. 19 workers accepted the offer and received one month's pay as compensation. The other workers received financial compensation for their dismissal.

In December 2013 FWF received another complaint from workers of this factory about discrimination and intimidation of a unionized worker. FWF asked Mayerline to convince the factory to solve the issue and conclude the CBA, which was achieved shortly afterwards.

Real difference

This case shows the value of trade union membership, but it also stresses the important role brands, together with Fair Wear Foundation, can play in CBA negotiations. The Fair Wear Foundation Code of Labour Practices was essential in reaching the agreement.

After the first complaint, a big (non FWF-member) brand withdrew its business from the factory. Other buyers stayed, but did not act against the violation.

FWF's contact at Teksif has expressed his appreciation for the way FWF dealt



with the complaints by checking it with the brand, the supplier, by visiting the workers and meeting with the factory owner.

The Teksif representative was also very positive about the way FWF's member brand Mayerline communicated about the case. 'Mayerline is only a small buyer, compared to others, but still they were able to make a difference, together with FWF and us', he stated. 'The FWF Code of Labour Practices is not just another code. It is about making a real difference on the factory floor.'