

1. ITF Action Week – a global campaign

The ITF invites all our road transport and railway unions to organise a variety of activities during the Action Week on 7 – 13 October under the slogan: “Transport Workers Fighting Back – Organising Globally!”¹

Since it started as a “Fatigue Kills!” international day of action for road transport workers in 1997, our affiliates have used the Action Week and its international influence and visibility to highlight their local demands and bring issues to the attention of those in power.²

The Action Week provides an international platform to bring ITF unions together and to speak with a strong united voice. Mass mobilisation of rank and file members shows that they feel part of a global movement. Often, governments and employers cannot ignore that momentum. In fact some unions have successfully won new legislation, collective bargaining agreements and an increase in members through the Action Week campaigns.³



The Action Week campaign has become an integral part of union activities for many affiliates to link their local workplace issues with the international trade union movement. Some have used the Action Week to launch new national campaigns. Others have combined their efforts with other unions in their country or have built solidarity links with unions across borders during the Action Week. Here are some examples of where unions incorporated existing national campaigns into the Action Week activities in 2012:

- As part of the ETF campaign ‘Respect for Professional Drivers!’ a demonstration was held in Brussels on 9 October, bringing together nearly 1,000 European trade unionists and a convoy of trucks, to mark the start of a regional campaign targeting the European Institutions and national governments to adopt legal measures to improve the working conditions of drivers. This was followed by protest actions by the ETF and its affiliated organisations on 14 May 2013 against plans by the European Commission to liberalise the domestic road transport sector. The initiative prompted a statement by the Commission, in which they recognised that the process of liberalisation is too complex and that the top priority now has to be the enforcement of the existing rules, including the social and labour aspects. At the end of May, the European Parliament published a study revealing that liberalisation in road transport had failed to be accompanied by a parallel harmonisation in drivers’ employment and working conditions within the EU.
- In Great Britain, rail unions ASLEF, RMT and TSSA held a joint protest at Euston station in London in the framework of the national ‘Action for Rail’ campaign.
- In Canada, the CAW used the Action Week to highlight its national campaign ‘More Buses NOW!’.
- Strike action was organised by the Railwaymen’s Union of Malaya (RUM) at the headquarters of Malayan Railways to challenge the Malaysia Mining Corporation’s (MMC’s) proposed takeover of the company.

How can your union link the Action Week to highlight your existing campaigns?

¹ Please see ITF Circular No.068/E.068/Rt.007/Rw.005/2013 (3 April 2013)

² <http://www.itfglobal.org/files/extranet/-1/ENG/40186/Fighting%20Back%20-%20Quick%20facts.pdf>
<http://www.itfglobal.org/road-transport/fatiguekills-history.cfm>

³ <http://www.itfglobal.org/files/extranet/-1/ENG/40183/Fighting%20Back%20-%20Key%20achievements.pdf>

2. Dates

The ITF Action Week will be held on 7-13 October 2013. Individual unions will decide what members will do during the Action Week. You can have a week full of activities; alternatively you may wish to choose one day out of the Action Week for your activities. The actions will depend on local conditions, including custom and law. In any event, we encourage unions to involve rank and file members and set some target group(s) of unorganised workers.⁴

Some key dates during the Action Week:

World Day for Decent Work, 7 October 2013⁵

As in the past few years, 7 October is set as the ITUC's World Day for Decent Work (WDDW). Originally chosen by the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC), it has now been adopted as a common day by the entire Global Unions family to demonstrate the vital importance of global trade union solidarity in an increasingly globalised world economy. We are holding our action week in conjunction with the ITUC event as this has enhanced the activities of our affiliates in some countries. For more information, please visit: <http://www.wddw.org>



ETF Action Day against the 4th Railway Package, 9 October 2013⁶

At a recent meeting of the ETF Railway Section Steering Committee it was agreed to designate 9 October as the European railway workers' unions' action day against the 4th railway package under the slogan 'No fragmentation! No privatisation! For integration! For people's rail!' For more information, please visit: <http://www.itfglobal.org/etf/etf-3777.cfm>

3. United we stand!

In addition to highlighting local issues and demands, we can also show support through solidarity action during the Action Week to unions and their members who are facing repression.

For example, in 2011, unions took action on 10 October to show solidarity with Monica Okpe, an unfairly dismissed shop steward from DHL Supply Chain in Norway. She eventually won her reinstatement but the company did admit in the labour court hearings that the ITF's global protest was damaging their reputation.

What international union campaigns could we highlight during the Action Week?

Does your union organise workers employed by multinational transport companies? If so, activity to strengthen your position and to help other unions in other countries also organising in the same company would make a great Action Week activity.

⁴ <http://www.itfglobal.org/files/extranet/-1/ENG/40185/Fighting%20Back%20-%20Planning%20an%20Action%20Week.pdf>

⁵ <http://www.itfglobal.org/files/extranet/-1/ENG/40190/Fighting%20Back%20-%20WDDW.pdf>

⁶ <http://www.itfglobal.org/files/extranet/-1/ENG/40187/Fighting%20Back%20-%20Rail%20workers.pdf>

4. Materials

The Secretariat has produced a number of materials⁷ to assist your campaign activities, including:



Poster

The A2 poster⁸ can be used in different ways – for example, you may want to hang it in the union offices to notify workers of the Action Week or display it on noticeboards to advertise a forthcoming activity. It can also be used as a placard at a rally or demonstration. The poster is double-sided with a blank space on the back so you can include your union campaign slogan or demands in local languages.

Guidelines and handouts

Use these guidelines to prepare your activities for the Action Week. The guidelines include a set of handouts. There are two types – a) handouts with practical information to assist planning the Action Week and b) handouts with more detailed information on specific themes relating to the campaign. The handouts are designed so that you can make copies of individual sheets for use in different forums, for example, for distribution to workers and members of the public; or as a tool to promote discussion on specific issues in union seminars and meetings. Links to the handouts are referenced throughout this guidelines document. In addition to the handouts already linked, the following are also included in the set of handouts:

- Stand together! Build union power!⁹
- Organising to build union power¹¹
- Strong Unions need Strong Women!¹³
- Young workers: Standing up for their rights!¹⁵
- Education – a tool to strengthen your campaign and empower your members¹⁶
- Fatigue¹⁰
- Container cargo safety¹²
- Taxi workers¹⁴

Materials have been sent to unions' national offices. If you would like additional copies, please contact Inland Transport (inlandtransport@itf.org.uk). Alternatively, they can be downloaded from the webpage¹⁷ for the Action Week: <http://www.itfglobal.org/campaigns/actionweek2013.cfm>

Affiliates are also encouraged to produce their publicity materials locally. Please share examples with the ITF Secretariat.

An ITF film that was produced in 2009 which promotes the Action Week Campaign is available at: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QMUCak8eavM>

⁷ <http://www.itfglobal.org/campaigns/actionweek2013.cfm/groupid/2>

⁸ <http://www.itfglobal.org/files/extranet/-1/ENG/40162/English.pdf>

⁹ <http://www.itfglobal.org/files/extranet/-1/ENG/40188/Fighting%20Back%20-%20Stand%20Together!%20Build%20Union%20Power!.pdf>

¹⁰ <http://www.itfglobal.org/files/extranet/-1/ENG/40182/Fighting%20Back%20-%20Fatigue.pdf>

¹¹ <http://www.itfglobal.org/files/extranet/-1/ENG/40184/Fighting%20Back%20-%20Organising.pdf>

¹² <http://www.itfglobal.org/files/extranet/-1/ENG/40180/Fighting%20Back%20-%20Container%20Cargo.pdf>

¹³ <http://www.itfglobal.org/files/extranet/-1/ENG/40191/Fighting%20Back%20-%20Women.pdf>

¹⁴ <http://www.itfglobal.org/files/extranet/-1/ENG/40189/Fighting%20Back%20-%20Taxi.pdf>

¹⁵ <http://www.itfglobal.org/files/extranet/-1/ENG/40192/Fighting%20Back%20-%20Young%20workers.pdf>

¹⁶ <http://www.itfglobal.org/files/extranet/-1/ENG/40181/Fighting%20Back%20-%20Education.pdf>

¹⁷ <http://www.itfglobal.org/files/extranet/-1/ENG/40193/Fighting%20Back%20-%20Internet.pdf>

5. Designating an ITF contact person

Please discuss and decide your union's contact person at the earliest possible date and inform us using the attached form.¹⁸

Campaign information will be sent to this person and they are requested to inform the Secretariat about your activities for the Action Week. We may also contact them during the Action Week to ask about the progress of your activities in order to put together a short story that we can publicise during the Action Week to inform and update unions worldwide about the actions being organised as they take place.



6. Feedback and follow-up

An assessment of the Action Week and its impact will be useful to the ITF Secretariat in making plans for the next phase of the campaign. Each union should therefore provide as much information as possible about their activities during the Action Week including achievements resulting from the campaign.

Please remember to forward any press clippings and/or a summary of your union's activities as well as photographs. One picture can tell a story of a thousand words!

We look forward to working with you to build a successful Action Week!

¹⁸ Please see Annex 1 to Circular No.068/E.068/Rt.007/Rw.005/2013 (3 April 2013)

- NOTES -

What is the ITF?

The International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF) is an international trade union federation of around 700 unions in some 150 countries. It is one of several Global Union Federations allied with the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC).

Founded in 1896, the ITF represents workers in ships, ports, railways, road transport, inland waterways, fisheries, civil aviation and tourism services.

The Road Transport Workers' Section's membership includes 220 unions worldwide, representing 1,341,567 members. The Railway Workers' Section's membership includes 145 unions worldwide, representing 1,123,664 members. Together the membership in these two Sections makes up almost 55% of the ITF's total membership.

The ITF's headquarters is located in London and it has offices in Brussels, Tokyo, New Delhi, Nairobi, Ouagadougou, Rio de Janeiro and Amman.

ITF links

Road Transport: <http://www.itfglobal.org/road-transport/index.cfm>

Railways: <http://www.itfglobal.org/railways/index.cfm>

Urban Transport: <http://www.itfglobal.org/urban-transport/index.cfm>

Action Week 2013: <http://www.itfglobal.org/campaigns/actionweek2013.cfm>

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