

The first IMF world conference for the Dutch electronics firm Philips was held from 6 to 9 February 2001. Some 60 participants from 18 countries in which the group is represented with production sites discussed both Philips' financial position and joint trade union strategies and activities.

The participants agreed on the following proposals and recommendations:

### 1. **Bodies for discussion and development of trade union activities and positions in Philips**

The participants agreed that world conferences with a great many delegates from as many countries as possible with Philips' production facilities must be spaced out at relatively long intervals. Accordingly, such events are only suited to discussing and advancing trade union activities and projects. A **Steering Committee** and a **Task Force** are two proposals for the future.

With regard to the **Steering Committee**, the following composition is suggested:

- . One representative from each of the following European regions:
  - . Netherlands
  - . Germany / Austria / Switzerland
  - . Belgium / France
  - . United Kingdom / Spain / Portugal / Italy
  - . Central / Eastern Europe
  
- . Chairman of the EWC Philips (if a trade union member)
- . 1 EMF representative (EMF Secretariat or EWC Coordinator)
- . 1 representative from the NAFTA region (USA / Canada / Mexico)
- . 1 representative from Mercosur (Brazil / Argentina)
- . 1 representative from East Asia (Japan / Taiwan ( South Korea)
- . 1 representative from South-East Asia (Malaysia / Indonesia / Thailand / India / Pakistan / Singapore / Australia / Philippines)
- . 1 representative from the IMF Secretariat

The delegates from the various regions should if possible be either company-based trade union representatives or full-time trade unionists who coordinate trade union activities nationwide in a Philips company.

The **Philips Task Force** should have the following composition:

- . 1 representative from the Netherlands (group headquarters)
- . Chairman of the EBR Philips (European Philips Forum = EPF) if a trade union member)
- . 1 EMF representative (EMF Secretariat or EWC Coordinator)
- . 1 representative from the Americas (North/South America)
- . 1 representative from Asia
- . 1 representative from the IMF Secretariat

The regional representatives for the two proposed bodies should be appointed in coordination with the IMF affiliates in the countries belonging to a given region. The existing IMF regional offices in some regions could be of assistance in this connection. When choosing representatives, English-language skills should be one criterion, so that the two bodies can function more effectively and more directly than by relying on interpreters/translators.

The participants feel that the work of the two bodies can be supported through networks ensuring that information from Philips production sites flows to the regional representatives prior to the meetings and that the results of the meetings of these bodies are transmitted to the relevant trade unions and company-based trade union structures.

## 2. Trade union information network for Philips

The conference participants discussed in depth the need for rapid transmission of information and efficient exchange of information. The participants unanimously felt that an information network for the Philips group covering full-time trade union officials and company-based trade union representatives should be set up immediately. This information network should – whenever necessary and possible – also include representatives of workforces that are not yet unionised insofar as they represent a policy that is independent of the management and serves workers' interests.

Accordingly, the following steps are proposed:

- . IMF affiliates which represent workers at Philips or which have Philips companies in their area of responsibility should appoint a **full-time trade unionist** who is responsible for Philips as well as **company-based trade union representatives** for the Philips companies they have unionised.
- . The IMF Secretariat should endeavour to ensure – in coordination with the Dutch trade unions – that the information network includes independent, genuine staff representatives from hitherto non-unionised companies or from companies whose competent trade unions are not IMF affiliates. This also applies to organisations which work together with Philips workforces and promote trade unionisation and the founding of genuine trade unions.
- . Once the appointments have been made, the IMF Secretariat will draw up a contact list for an information network that will facilitate exchange of information inside Philips in the future, if possible by e-mail and fax.

## 3. Trade union projects and activities at Philips

A host of proposals for trade union projects and activities within the Philips group were discussed and approved by the conference participants. Details as well as strategies and practical steps for implementation will be finalised and prepared by the **Steering Committee** and the **Philips Task Force**.

The following projects were approved:

### **Webpage for Philips**

The conference participants urged the IMF to design a separate page for Philips at its Web site. This page should contain up-to-date information on developments in the Philips group and on trade union positions and activities as well as hypertext links to the Web sites of IMF affiliates. The information network, which was also discussed, should be used to transmit topical information from the Philips group and above all from the individual companies.

### **World Works Council**

In the medium term, the establishment of a World Works Council to complement the existing European Works Council (European Philips Forum – EPF) was viewed as necessary. Philips gears its decision-making to the global level. The emerging trend whereby production plants are moved to low-wage countries requires a global organisation of trade unions and company employee representatives. Details, timeframes, and measures to ensure the requisite negotiating clout will be worked out in the Task Force and the Steering Committee.

### **Code of behaviour**

The project concerning the negotiation and conclusion of a code of behaviour, based on the acceptance of the core labour standards of the International Labour Organization (ILO), was also endorsed. Against the backdrop of the reports delivered at the conference on labour relations in Philips and the information contained therein on dealings with trade unions or employees wishing to organise into trade unions, the need for such a code was plain to see. The details and strategies for this project will also be discussed in greater depth by the Task Force and the Steering Committee and finalised. These two bodies are to draft concrete proposals for implementation.