

# A guide to Amicus International Work



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## Introduction

The forces influencing the working lives of Amicus members now extend far beyond the borders of the UK and Ireland. Developments and decisions taken are at an international level, often by multinational companies, and these have a serious impact on our members. Amicus can no longer effectively represent members' interests without being active on the international stage.

The Amicus approach has been aimed at driving for the creation and construction of what the ILO calls a 'Social Dimension to Globalisation'. For obvious reasons this at times means a division between European and globally focused activities, but they are always aimed at the same overall objectives.

It should be noted that the addition of the GPMU and UNIFI into Amicus, and the continuing process of integration between MSF and AEEU, has had a major, but positive, impact on the work and structure of the International Department. All the constituent unions are now fully represented in the Department, which has been swiftly restructured. The restructuring has enabled a fresh identification of work priorities, the avoidance of any duplication of activities, the ensuring of a co-ordinated and coherent approach, and operation in an efficient and effective manner.

The intention of this report is to give an overview of the previous and current activities carried out by the Amicus International Department, including the International work of UNIFI and the GPMU.

Derek Simpson  
General Secretary

May 2005



ETUC demonstration, March 2005

- been effectively working to improve co-operation and co-ordination between EWCs in all sectors;
- negotiated numerous new EWC agreements, which include; Flowserve, FKI brush, Textron, Linpac Automotive, CHC Scotia and Synstar, Barclays, Arjo-Wiggins, SCA, Mayr-Melnhof, Quebecor, etc;
- organised a number of EWC exchange programmes, with other European trade unions, which has enabled Amicus members to develop a greater understanding of European solidarity;
- ensured that Amicus national officers play an active role in many EWCs as experts;
- actively participated in the European industrial federations to ensure proper co-ordination of EWCs.

The establishment and promotion of EWCs are an important and integral part of the International Department's work and we must continue to raise the profile of EWCs throughout the membership. Furthermore we must ensure that Amicus EWC representatives are fully supported in all aspects of their EWC duties either via advice from officials and/or the opportunity to participate on education courses aimed at EWC representatives.

## Global Framework Agreements

Amicus members work in many companies that are global in nature with subsidiaries in virtually every continent of the world. Although many of the countries do officially respect ILO labour standards the reality is often different, and it is often multinational companies from the west that take advantage of the possibility to ignore basic rights. Global agreements with multinational companies offer a good way of binding them and their subsidiaries to respect labour standards, while at the same time helping to build solid and effective international solidarity by connecting workplaces.

## 1 Multinational companies

Amicus' efforts to bring multinational companies to account and to ensure that they respect trade union and workers' rights, while behaving in a socially responsible manner, is made up of its work in European Works Councils, the campaigns for Global Framework Agreements, and the campaign for Corporate Social Responsibility.

### European Works Councils

European Works Councils (EWCs) remain one of the most important mechanisms for international co-operation at the company level. Amicus has worked hard to ensure that we take advantage of the opportunities these forums provide for Amicus members to be informed and consulted about important developments in multinational companies.

Amicus has:

- encouraged over 250 Amicus members to become EWC representatives in over 200 EWCs;
- organised a number of EWC training courses, which has enabled Amicus members to become effective EWC representatives;

UK Quebecor members protesting



Amicus has:

- supported sister unions in Africa in their successful attempt to develop a regional works council in Barclays Bank Africa;
- supported Caribbean finance sector unions in negotiating a partnership agreement with Barclays Bank for the region;
- supported the work of HSBC unions around the world to prepare the ground for a global agreement;
- participated in and supported Global Union Federations in their attempt to negotiate global agreements;
- participated in negotiations on establishing global agreements with Rolls Royce, Quebecor and Amcor.

Global framework agreements are an excellent tool by which to guarantee that multinational companies operate in an ethical and proper manner. It is therefore important that Amicus continues its support of International Industrial Federations in their attempts to negotiate global agreements, and where possible attempts to identify UK multinational companies that should be approached for global agreements.

Simon Clark



*Collen Gwiyo, General Secretary  
Zimbabwe Banks and Allied Workers' Union*

## Labour Standards and Corporate Social Responsibility

The impact of globalisation and the ability of multinational companies (MNCs) to move capital, investment and production from country to country, without any or little restraint, enables MNCs to gain an unethical competitive advantage via social dumping. Furthermore, it gives them the opportunity to exploit some of the most poor, deprived and vulnerable sections of the world economy.

In order to rebalance the unequal distribution of power

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between capital and labour, it is necessary for multinational companies, governments and economic trade areas to adopt measures that give protection to defenceless and vulnerable workers. Part of that process is to address the question of corporate governance with a view to introducing procedures so that social and environmental issues are part of standard company auditing and reporting frameworks. It is for this reason that Amicus has been working to address these issues on an international stage.

Amicus has:

- campaigned for a definition and operation of CSR that includes a major role for trade unions;
- engaged with International/European industrial federations, TUC, and ETUC to promote the concept of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR);
- hosted events in co-operation with the CSR Foundation;
- lobbied European Institutions and participated in European level consultation procedures, to push for the introduction of CSR legislation that includes a major role for trade unions in defining and assessing social reporting;
- publicly criticised the European Commission for adopting a voluntary rather than the legislative approach to CSR;
- worked closely with Amicus sponsored MEPs to push the trade union CSR agenda in the European Parliament;
- supported the development of initiatives such as the UN Global Compact and the OECD guidelines on multinational enterprises;
- continued to insist that enforceable labour rights and reporting on their application form a fundamental part of any CSR initiatives.

In order to counteract the dominance of multinational companies it is essential that Amicus continues to promote the ethos of CSR and attempts to identify and lobby companies to introduce CSR policies at a corporate level. It is also vital that we take the opportunity to lobby directly, or through the International/European industrial federations, the UK government, the European institutions, the UN and the OECD, for the inclusion in all international agreements – especially in international trade agreements – a commitment to implement ILO core labour standards.

In particular this means the inclusion of the key ILO Conventions relating to the right to organise and bargain collectively. It is also important that Amicus continues the work in the International/European industrial federations and participates in any consultation procedures regarding the issues of labour standards and CSR.



*Hilary Benn, Minister, at Corporate Social Responsibility Conference*

Stefano Cagnoni

## 2 Africa Matters

“Africa Matters” is a partnership between Amicus and Action for Southern Africa (ACTSA) launched in 2004. The aim of the campaign is to raise awareness amongst the Amicus membership about aid, trade, debt, human rights and HIV/Aids in southern African nation states. It also aims to build practical solidarity between Amicus members and their counterparts in unions in different southern African countries.

Amicus has:

- initiated and organised high profile events to raise awareness of the current situation in Africa, such as that hosted by the Chancellor at No.11 as well as the Scottish Parliament and the National Assembly for Wales;
- co-ordinated activities through TUC and with sister UK trade unions;
- built links with trade unions in Zimbabwe, Swaziland and South Africa and facilitated their visit to the UK;
- raised awareness of African issues at Amicus section conferences and organised workplace visits by visiting southern African trade unionists so they could meet directly with Amicus members;
- produced a booklet giving details on the plight of African workers and practical information on how Amicus activists can become more involved in the campaigns on African issues.

It is important that Amicus continues to proactively raise awareness of the plight of many poorer and vulnerable countries in the global economy. The continued participation of Amicus in campaigns, such as “Africa



*Derek Simpson meeting Nelson Mandela*

Matters” and “Make Poverty History”, will certainly aim to achieve this. Amicus can also raise the profile of this issue via its political links with the UK government, especially during the UK’s Presidency of the EU and G7/8 during 2005. A major part of the campaign is to continue to build and develop links with African trade unions and to ensure that Amicus members and officials at all levels are fully incorporated into this process, either by providing material on the subject or arranging exchange programmes.



## 3 Offshoring

The trend for companies to outsource work to service providers around the world (offshoring), particularly in the service, IT and finance sectors, has been the subject of a major Amicus campaign. The campaign has concentrated on challenging the decisions of companies to offshore to countries like India, Malaysia and the Philippines and making sure that if work has been offshored it is done in a responsible manner.

Amicus has:

- initiated a high profile national campaign focusing on companies that unethically decide to offshore their work;
- lobbied and convened meetings with the DTI over the issue;
- engaged in a dialogue with the Indian High Commission;
- been successful in encouraging Amicus members to lobby their MPs and MEPs;
- successfully signed pioneering offshoring agreements with major finance sector employers, such as those for Barclays, HSBC, LloydsTSB, AXA and Prudential;
- proactively participated in International/European industrial federation debates on the subject, especially in UNI-Europa;
- been at the forefront in developing a common trade union response to offshoring;
- built links with trade unions in countries where offshored work is sent, especially trade unions in the Malaysian and Philippines finance sector.

Many Amicus members are consistently faced with the threat of companies wishing to offshore parts of their business. It is for this reason that Amicus must continue to pressurise the UK Government and EU institutions to ensure that companies planning to offshore, do so in a timely and appropriate manner, in full consultation with trade unions, and that they put in place social action programmes which offer options such as retraining and relocation opportunities for UK workers.

In addition it is fundamental that companies which relocate respect the ILO core labour standards, especially those relating to the right to organise and collectively bargain. In relation to offshoring, the building of bi-lateral links with trade unions in countries where many companies are offshoring to, including India, China, Malaysia and Philippines etc, is vital in order to ensure they are supported in their attempts to gain union recognition and collective bargaining.



## 4 Social Europe

Amicus, and the unions that came together to form Amicus, has a long history of supporting a pro-European agenda. The EU is the most lucrative economic market in the world and an important trading partner for the UK with over 60% of UK foreign trade accounted for by the EU. While Amicus recognises the importance of a truly integrated economic area, this cannot be created at the expense of the European Social Model, which aims to create a harmonised level playing field while guaranteeing basic social rights for all European workers.

Amicus has:

- followed and monitored all aspects of European employment legislation and participated in consultation procedures concerning amongst other things:
  - Revision of the Working Time Directive
  - Progress of the Temporary & Agency Workers' Directive
  - Review of the European Works Councils Directive
  - Progress on Corporate Social Responsibility Consultation
  - Progress of the Airbus-Boeing dispute
  - Progress of the Services Directive
- worked with MEPs in the Amicus Group to influence European employment legislation;
- liaised with and lobbied the European Commission to respect the concept of the European Social Model;
- actively participated in TUC and ETUC initiatives aimed at raising awareness and supporting the development of the European Social Model;
- worked extensively through the European Industry Federations to ensure that Amicus influences employment legislation through the social dialogue process;
- raised awareness of Social Europe and Social Dialogue through Amicus educational courses;
- raised the profile of Amicus policies at a European level, including equal opportunities, manufacturing issues, health and safety and offshoring, etc, through engagement with the European Institutions.

The European Social Model has delivered a number of important employment rights for Amicus members and working people generally, and its further development will remain one of the key methods by which to increase and improve employment rights in the near future. It is for this reason that we must continue to campaign and lobby to ensure that the European Social Model is not undermined.

In particular Amicus needs to continue the fight for the removal of the "opt-out" from the Working Time Directive, to ensure the implementation of the Temporary & Agency Workers' Directive, which will deliver equal rights for temporary and agency workers, and to ensure that the revision of European Works Councils Directive guarantees proper information and consultation rights for workers at a European level.



*European Parliament building*

empics

Currently Amicus is working hard to ensure that the proposed Services Directive is significantly amended so that it does not challenge the concept and spirit of Social Europe. Amicus is also pressurising the UK Government and the European institutions to fulfil the declarations and commitments of the Lisbon strategy which is "to become the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world, capable of sustaining economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion."

## 5 The Global Unions and European Industrial Federations

The International Department is responsible for co-ordinating the activities of Amicus within the International and European industrial federations. The purpose of these federations is to bring together trade unions with members in the same industrial sectors. They provide a key opportunity for Amicus to represent the interests of workers in sector-focused bodies that take decisions at a European and international level.

In addition the European Industry Federations are important

organisations that actively participate and influence European Union policy and legislation. Furthermore, they are often able to deal effectively with issues and topics that are directly associated with particular sectors through sector social dialogues. It is through these federations and their unique roles that Amicus has been able to proactively drive and deliver many Amicus policies.

Amicus' involvement in Union Network International (UNI) will increase greatly following the merger with GPMU and UNIFI, and Amicus is now by far the single largest UK, and second largest European, affiliate to this organisation. This will in no way diminish the work done in other federations, but it does highlight the growing span of Amicus' international work following the integration of UNIFI and the GPMU.

Amicus is currently affiliated to the following International and European industrial federations:

Global Union Federations	European Industry Federations
<b>UNI</b> (Union Network International)	<b>UNI-Europa</b>
<b>IMF</b> (International Metalworkers Federation)	<b>EMF</b> (European Metalworkers Federation)
<b>IUF</b> (International Union of Food, Agricultural, Hotel, Restaurant, Catering, Tobacco and Allied Workers' Associations)	<b>EFFAT</b> (European Federation of Trade unions in the Food, Agriculture and Tourism sectors)
<b>ITF</b> (International Transport Workers Federation)	<b>ETF</b> (European Transport Workers Federation)
<b>ICEM</b> (International Federation of Energy, Chemical, Mine and General Workers' Unions)	<b>EMCEF</b> (European Mine, Chemical and Energy Workers Federation)
<b>PSI</b> (Public Services' International)	<b>EPSU</b> (European Federation of Public Service Unions)
<b>ITGLWF</b> (International Textile, Garment, and Leather Workers Federation)	-
<b>IFBWW</b> (International Federation of Building and Woodworkers)	<b>EFBWW</b> (European Federation of Building and Woodworkers)



ETUC demonstration, March 2005



ETUC demonstration, March 2005

Through these federations Amicus has:

- campaigned and lobbied for a more socially responsible approach to globalisation, which includes:
  - poverty reduction,
  - debt relief,
  - issues regarding human and trade union rights,
  - the introduction of ILO Labour standards into global institutions such as WTO, IMF and World Bank and also into regional trade agreements;
- pushed for the building of strong, free and independent trade unions to represent the interest of workers in all countries and societies;
- worked to ensure that global or international framework agreements are introduced into transnational companies;
- supported solidarity action of workers persecuted by governments and/or employers;
- built solidarity links with trade unions across the globe;
- supported and participated in strengthening the European Social Model;
- proactively participated in the co-ordination of pan-European collective bargaining;
- proactively participated in pan-European social dialogues;
- supported, campaigned for, and participated in sector social dialogues;
- pursued the introduction of pan-European life-long learning opportunities for all European workers;
- lobbied for increasing transnational trade union rights, including the fundamental right to take transnational industrial action;
- influenced European social and employment legislation.

The European and Global Union Federations offer an attractive opportunity to raise issues and campaigns that are important to Amicus members. It is essential that Amicus continues to use these federations and participates at all levels to ensure that we continue to deliver Amicus policies on an international stage.

## 6 Co-ordination of collective bargaining

Amicus has been actively trying to engage in a European wide co-ordination of collective bargaining in a number of its sectors. The strategy and approach to co-ordination has been pursued in conjunction with a number of European Industry Federations, such as the EMF and UNI-Europa. Amicus has fully supported such an approach as a concrete means of trying to prevent social dumping and a downward spiral of wages, terms and conditions developing.

Amicus has:

- pursued co-ordination of collective bargaining in the metalworking sector and attempted to overcome the difficulties that the lack of a national agreement has presented;
- developed an effective and intensified co-ordination of collective bargaining in the graphical sector within the context of UNI-Europa Graphical;
- participated in a project with the German, French and Italian unions to begin collective bargaining co-ordination in the European finance sector;
- monitored and taken part in the ETUC's Collective Bargaining Committee which provides a broader overview of economy wide bargaining trends at European level.

Collective bargaining is at the heart of trade union work and it is imperative that Amicus promotes the co-ordination of collective bargaining in the European and international arena.

Furthermore it is important that Amicus builds and develops bilateral company links to ensure that co-ordination of collective bargaining can take place at a micro as well as a macro level.

## 7 Relations with other unions

Much of the contact Amicus has with sister trade unions comes through our involvement in the Global Union and European Industrial Federations and also our presence on bodies such as European Works Councils. Developing good working relationships with trade unions from other countries that represent workers in the same industries and companies as Amicus, is vital if we are to develop co-ordinated transnational approaches to issues and developments that affect our members.



Amicus has:

- successfully co-operated with IG Metall of Germany, during the General Motors and Ford disputes;
- participated in a number of exchange work and educational programmes with CCMB from Belgium, SIF and Svenska Metal from Sweden and IG Metall and Verdi from Germany;
- worked in co-operation with CC.OO of Spain in response to the takeover of Abbey National by Santander Central Hispano;
- worked closely with unions around the world, especially the GCIU in the US & Canada and unions in Latin America, to challenge the activities of Quebecor in relation to union busting;
- worked with IG BCE in response to the paper company Schoeller Felix's refusal to honour their pension scheme, which affected a number of Amicus members;
- worked with and supported the Zimbabwe Banking and Allied Workers Union in their plight to raise awareness of the persecution experienced by trade unions, their officials and members in Zimbabwe;
- reinforced links with the Australian Manufacturing Workers Union;
- established links with Cuban trade unionists;

- improved and worked on direct relations with trade unions in Southern Africa;
- improved and worked on direct relations with trade unions in India.

Amicus believes that building international solidarity and bi-lateral links with other international trade unions, is the only way to counteract the aggressive behaviour of many multinational companies. It is for this reason that Amicus hopes to continue to build these links, and where possible facilitate exchange programmes between our members and other European and International organisations, to ensure that all levels of Amicus recognise the importance of international unity and co-operation.

## 8 Central and Eastern Europe

The interests of Amicus members and other trade unionists in Europe are inherently bound up with the expansion of the European Union to central and eastern Europe. Lower wages, weaker social legislation and less well-developed trade unions constitute a serious pressure on the wages and conditions of workers in western Europe. Many of the companies in which Amicus members work have plants and interests in central and eastern Europe. In order to try and rise to the challenge that enlargement has presented Amicus has:

- lobbied the European Parliament and Commission to ensure that labour standards and social rights are correctly extended to central and eastern Europe;
- lobbied for financial resources to be made available to support education programmes for trade unions in CEE countries;
- participated in education and training programmes for trade unions in central and eastern Europe;
- supported the extension and inclusion of CEE countries in EWCs.

The expansion of the European Union will continue in the foreseeable future and it is necessary for Amicus to continue its support of the new Member States and Candidate Countries. The quicker that enlargement countries can implement and transpose European social and employment legislation, the greater the protection workers in those countries will receive and the less likely social dumping is to occur.



## 9 International campaigns

Amicus has always been concerned with furthering the cause of workers' rights around the world and has been involved in campaigns and solidarity actions in relation to many countries. The following are examples of Amicus' work in this area.

### China

Many multinationals are currently investing heavily in China. Because of its sheer size and rate of economic and industrial growth, China has a huge impact on UK companies and workers. Chinese workers are cheaper to employ than elsewhere and companies based there can undercut every other part of the world. As long as workers' rights remain weak in China this will continue to be the case. Amicus has been at the forefront of developing a coherent approach to China within the Global Union Federations, such as UNI and the IMF.

### Cuba Solidarity

Amicus has been a strong supporter of the Cuba Solidarity campaign, which is the British campaign for the defence of Cuba and its people's right to self-determination and national sovereignty. Amicus actively participated in the visit of Cuban sister unions to the UK during 2004 and will look to deepen and develop relations in the coming year.

### Justice for Colombia

Amicus officials were part of a TUC delegation to assess the current situation for trade unionists in Colombia at the end of 2004. Amicus has also been a supporter of the scheme to fund sabbaticals for Colombian trade unionists to come to the UK to, at least temporarily, escape the dangers that they face on a daily basis. Amicus has also been raising the problems of Colombia in meetings held with Foreign Office Ministers and officials.

### Campaigning Affiliations

Amicus is also a prominent affiliate of, and works closely with, the Nicaragua Solidarity campaign and Amnesty International, as well as Action for Southern Africa and War on Want.

### Department of International Development & the Foreign and Commonwealth Office

Amicus has been working closely with the Department for International Development and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office to progress international development issues of importance to Amicus and its members.

Amicus has proactively supported trade unions in various continents of the world in an attempt to build bi-lateral links and improve international solidarity. It is important that we consolidate our already well established links by continuing to support our sister unions around the globe. We will continue to use our Government contacts to press the case against human rights abuses.

Furthermore, it is important that we build links with trade union representatives from China, including ACFTU, to gain a better understanding of the political situation and where possible look to facilitate an exchange programme between Amicus and Chinese trade unionists, who are employed by the same multinational companies.



Cuban trade unionists meet with Amicus representatives





## 10 The Amicus International Department

The International Department is based at the Amicus Head Office in King Street, Covent Garden. The names of the team and their individual areas of responsibility are given below, however the nature of the work and the need to cover all possibilities means that these responsibilities are constantly changing.

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### **Jonathan Hayward**

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