

Geneva, 17 February 2015

Mr. Claus-Dietrich Lahrs
Chairman of the Managing Board and
Chief Executive Officer (CEO)
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IndustriALL Calls on Hugo Boss to Stop Violating Workers' Rights and Reinstate Dismissed Union Members at Izmir Site in Turkey

Dear Mr. Lahrs,

I once again write to you on behalf of IndustriALL Global Union, which represents more than fifty million workers throughout the supply chains, including textile and garment sectors, through some 700 unions in 143 countries worldwide.

IndustriALL Global Union is outraged to learn that violations of the workers' fundamental rights continue unabated at the plant of Hugo Boss in Izmir, Turkey. In my previous letters, I brought to your attention a series of violations such as acts of intimidation, threats, harassment and dismissals against workers, particularly at the time when they intend to exercise their legitimate right to freedom of association by joining a union on his/her free choice, as guaranteed by the Constitution of the country as well as main conventions of the International Labour Organization.

I already sent you the list of the workers who were dismissed by the local management of Hugo Boss. As you are well aware, the Turkish judiciary process, which includes local labor courts and the Court of Appeals, ruled that the twenty workers who were dismissed by Hugo Boss must be reinstated as their employment contracts were terminated because they had joined the union.

In addition, I have also been informed that the local management of Hugo Boss in Izmir has dismissed two more members of Teksif, the Turkish Union of Textile, Knitting and Clothing Industry Workers which is affiliated to IndustriALL Global Union, namely Abdullah Artuğ and Özge Atabey, on 13 February 2015. The union affiliation of the latter happened only on 4 February. It is well known that these two members have been active in union activities, which is the main reason for their dismissals. This again clearly shows the hostility of Hugo Boss against union members. We find this unacceptable.

In stark contrast to the facts on the ground, Hugo Boss claims, in its Code of Conduct and public documents, that the company and its suppliers comply with internationally recognized labor and social standards following the conventions of the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of the United Nations.

Therefore, let me strongly remind you that your company must abide by the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises, which explicitly recognize the right of all employees to be or become members of a trade union and to participate in collective negotiations. In addition, the inclusion of the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights recognizes that companies have a duty of due diligence to ensure that fundamental labor rights are respected, including ILO Convention 87 on Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organize and Convention 98 on the Right to Organize and Collective Bargaining. It is incumbent on you to ensure that your operations fully respect international obligations and core labor standards.

I urge you to use your influence over the local management in Izmir to immediately stop dismissals, stop interfering with the right of workers to join a union of their choice, and reinstate the dismissed workers, including the two union members mentioned in this letter.

I again invite you to enter into a meaningful dialogue with Teksif to establish constructive labor relations and decent working conditions at the plant in Izmir. You should know that IndustriALL Global Union and its affiliates worldwide will continue to support its affiliate until your company fully abides by national and international labor law.

I anticipate your quick response.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of the letters 'J', 'R', and 'L' in a stylized, cursive-like font.

Jyrki Raina
General Secretary

CC:
Berthold Huber, President, IndustriALL Global Union
Nazmi Irgat, General President, Teksif