

HeidelbergCement Global Union Network Statement

13-14 October 2021

We, trade union leaders, part of IndustriALL Global Union, Building and Wood Workers' International and European Federation of Building and Woodworkers, representing employees throughout HeidelbergCement's operations, have agreed on the following statement demanding genuine progress in reinforcing the quality of social dialogue in the HeidelbergCement Group at European and global levels.

HeidelbergCement operates in energy-intensive industries undergoing a transition due to the move from fossil fuels to renewable energy and the implementation of new industrial technologies. The latter are capable of providing similar energy with considerably less, or totally eliminated, carbon emission. This process is accompanied by the development and application of new technologies.

In 2020, HeidelbergCement announced its strategy 'Beyond 2020' with medium-term financial and sustainability targets until 2025. However, we, the workers of HeidelbergCement, have not been informed, let alone consulted, about the details of this strategy other than through public communication events though our interests are directly affected.

We have witnessed a series of closures or sales of plants, like the sales of the 51 per cent stake in Hilal Cement company in Kuwait, sale of Lehigh Hanson's business activities in the U.S. West region, and of the ready-mixed concrete businesses in the Spanish regions of Catalonia, Madrid, Asturias and Balearic Islands. We are worried that other closures and divestments will follow and we want to make sure workers' rights and entitlements at divested or closed plants are fully respected and protected. We also expect HeidelbergCement to support its workforce in reskilling, upskilling and training to provide jobs opportunities and develop reasonable models of distribution of working hours among its work force.

A number of trade unions both in Europe and outside reported of unnecessary significant difficulties faced in their collective bargaining process with HeidelbergCement, some are even obliged to work under expired agreements such as members of International Brotherhood of Teamsters Local Union 174 in Seattle, Washington, USA. We support our colleagues faced with this injustice and recall that collective bargaining agreements stipulate binding minimum working conditions and wages and contribute to harmony and peace at HeidelbergCement operations worldwide. Avoiding fair and honest negotiations will ruin social peace and eventually bring HeidelbergCement both reputational and economic losses.

As we have seen in the past, top-down strategies announced by companies do not by themselves bring the immediate desired effect. Despite HeidelbergCement's "zero harm" programme, we see that workers continue dying at work. In 2020, nine workers lost their lives

working for HeidelbergCement, and in 2021 three more workers were killed at work. Their deaths are unacceptable and were preventable.

The ILO Centenary Declaration for the Future of Work (2019) declares that “safe and healthy working conditions are fundamental to decent work.” IndustriALL, BWI and EFBWW call on HeidelbergCement to start respecting and recognizing health and safety as fundamental workers’ rights. We believe that the “zero harm” target can only be reached through a proper social dialogue, workers’ participation and joint monitoring throughout HeidelbergCement’s operations.

Colleagues in Africa and Asia report an excessive use of non-standard employment, undermining work and pay conditions. Workers, and in particular union members, employed by subcontractors, like at the CIMTOGO cement plant (HeidelbergCement Group) in Togo, faced many violations of workers’ rights, including bad health and safety conditions.

Those workers have been particularly affected by the ongoing pandemic, which has had devastating effects on all HeidelbergCement workers with job losses, increased workloads and psychological pressure.

We demand from HeidelbergCement full respect and implementation of the **Universal Declaration of Human Rights**, the **fundamental ILO Conventions**, the **OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises**, and the **United Nations Guiding Principles for Business and Human Rights**.

In June, the German parliament adopted the "**Supply Chain Due Diligence Act**", another reason for HeidelbergCement to fulfil its duty to prevent human rights violations and environmental degradation in its operations and supply chains.

It is the time for the HeidelbergCement Group to become a socially responsible company at a global level and engage in an institutionalized dialogue with IndustriALL Global Union, BWI, and EFBWW, in close cooperation with the EWC. We insist that HeidelbergCement immediately:

- Eliminate the abuse of subcontracted and third-party workers and exercise due diligence in selection, management and compliance of contractors, including for subcontracted business partners. Provide access to remedy in cases where its business partners were involved in violations of labour rights, even when the business relationship has been terminated.
- Restart collective bargaining in good faith at national and local level where it is not the case.
- Engage in negotiations about a Global Framework Agreement
- Launch a **joint mechanism ensuring that workers’ rights are respected** and working conditions are improved,

- Improve **workers' participation** and provide **respect of trade union rights and the right to representation and organizing**, with a particular focus on workers' participation in health and safety to prevent accidents and work-related ill health,
- As a matter of urgency, we call on HeidelbergCement to address the problems of health and safety with all seriousness and adhere to the Joint Declaration on Health and Safety proposed by Building and Wood Workers' International and supported by IndustriALL Global Union and European Federation of Building and Woodworkers.
- Include a social dimension in its policies on the reduction of CO2 emissions, climate change protection and digitalisation affecting their employees and subcontracted workers.
- Launch consultation and discussion with unions on **Just Transition** before applying any transformations and organize up-skilling and retraining for those who are to lose their jobs, on new technologies introduced in the workplace, including safety impacts, clarifying overall effects on employment levels, and training/retraining provision for workers
- **Improve social responsibility** towards all workers at HeidelbergCement, both directly and indirectly employed.

We urge HeidelbergCement corporate management to get in touch with the European and global union federations for an urgent meeting with a view to discuss the points in the spirit of good practices and a fruitful social dialogue.