

November 2022

Amazon Alliance Conference – Brussels 2–3 November 2022

The Amazon Alliance is an organisation that includes national and local trade unions around the globe. There were delegates to the Conference from 19 countries where Amazon operates.

The Alliance held a meeting in Brussels on 2–3 November 2022. For the first time the Alliance meeting included delegates from the European Transport Workers Federation and the Amazon Workers International and by Progressives International, which organises solidarity work in Amazon.

Below is a summary of the meeting and the participants are in this photo.



Country reports

Highlights

Italy – the first collective bargaining agreement had been signed by Amazon and the trade unions which will lead to negotiations with the company for the first time.

US – The Amazon Labor Union recognition victory in New York is being challenged by the employer. The ALU has lost 2 ballots since this victory. One next door to the original win, and one more in Albany NY. The retail,

distribution and warehouse union is planning to seek another ballot at Bessemer Alabama. The Teamsters, largest union in the US, said that they will target Amazon in 2023. A number of centres were to see strikes/action on Black Friday.

Germany – Amazon workers were to strike on from Black Friday to Cyber Monday.

India – Indian trade unionists were taking the first steps to organise and expected actions in many cities.

Brazil – for the first time there was a delegate from Brazil.

As well as the above there was news proposed Black Friday about action in Austria, Greece, Hungary, Poland and Turkey.

There was a presentation about how Governments are trying to **regulate Amazon activities**, but this was focussed on the EU, and with the UK being outside the EU and regulation would have to come from the EU Government.

There was a session on **surveillance, overwork and pay** which was useful. The UK still applies the EU directives on data, and these are called GDPR. Under GDPR any individual can make a “Subject Access Request”, asking for **any** details an employer might hold such as email, sick records, productivity and pick rates, CCTV footage etc. Amazon employees in Europe and the UK have made requests before, to be told that Amazon holds no personal information. Obviously wrong given that Amazon use information collected to investigate/discipline staff on a regular basis. Uniglobal are funding legal support and there are Amazon staff who received letters from the company which we will need to challenge.

(A separate email/text will go to members about this and Uniglobal lawyers will work with GMB to progress claims).

This session was followed by another on **Capital strategies**, where investors in Amazon make demands on the company to improve workers rights for example. While this was interesting it was focused on the USA where this is common practice.

Next was a presentation on the Amazon **European Works Council** which has rights to be consulted directly on a variety of issues. There is a UK delegate to the Works Council, but GMB is not aware of how they were elected, what they do and how they consult colleagues.

The last and most exciting discussion was a round **Make Amazon Pay**, the global campaign which organises the trikes and protests around Black Friday. There was a short film, available to watch on

<https://uniglobalunion.org/news/map22/>

Every country delegation reported on what they planned to do on Black Friday and Cyber Monday, in what has become the biggest trade union led campaign against a global employer.

That was the end of two very useful days of discussion. During the meeting I was able to give a report of the uprising on Amazon workers in the UK, starting with the canteen occupations, the walkouts and protests around the country, the sudden growth of GMB membership and activity, the pay claim and the continue pressure GMB is putting on the company.

Uniglobal, the European Transport Federation and Amazon Workers International all gave support to GMB, its workplace leaders and members for efforts to Make Amazon Pay...

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