



EFFAT

EUROPEAN FEDERATION OF FOOD, AGRICULTURE AND TOURISM TRADE UNIONS

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To: EFFAT member organisations with members in Coca-Cola System

Unhappy Coke Workers Fight ‘Cold Redundancies’ in Germany

1000 demonstrators gathered at Berlin’s Brandenburg Gate on Saturday, May 9, and headed for the headquarters of CCEAG, Germany’s Coca-Cola Bottler. Coca-Cola workers were joined by fellow NGG trade unionists, as well as solidarity delegations from workers of other companies whose jobs are under threat. Together, they brought a clear message to management that it must behave more honorably and that the decision to close production sites in Kaiserslautern and Münster is both two-faced and unacceptable.

Coca-Cola plans to go ahead with the cuts despite the fact that they have an agreement with the NGG saying that nobody will be made redundant until the end of 2009. CCEAG says it will propose alternative workplaces but these can be up to 120 km further away from workers homes. Union’s lawyers said that this is “what we call ‘cold redundancies’, because the objective is to make people leave despite the current agreement” The social consequences of forcing workers, many of whom have been working for decades at Coca-Cola, into unemployment in these crisis-ridden regions would be severe: especially for workers over 40 who would find it practically impossible to get new jobs.

General works council chairman and member of the EFFAT Coca-Cola Coordination Group, Johan Botella, said – “We are here representing all the other locations that are threatened with closure as well. We are preparing for difficult negotiations next year in order to defend employment security, and we are sending a strong message to management – prepare for that fight, because we will stand united in solidarity!”

Protesters carried slogans such as “we`re fed up, we`ve had enough of this”. Similar feelings from Coke workers in other European countries may mean this will not be such a happy summer for Coke if it does not start to take its social responsibilities more seriously.