

Thursday, 19 September 2024

To:

Tomasz Namysł, chairman of the management board/ CEO Bauer

Rafał Kordus, member of the management board / CFO Bauer

Małgorzata Walkowska-Geyderowicz, CEO AKPA

Adam Parysz, member of the management board AKPA

Subject: Bauer Media Group management should reconsider workers' demands raised by union representatives from Inicjatywa Pracownicza ("Workers' Initiative")

The International and the European Federation of Journalists (IFJ-EFJ) together with their German affiliate, the German Journalists Union (dju) in ver.di, express serious concerns over the failure of the last conciliatory stage with union representatives from Inicjatywa Pracownicza ("Workers' Initiative").

Regrettably, we have learned that the dispute has reached a worrying breaking point with the failure of the mediation phase on 16 September, leaving the union with no choice but to sign a protocol of divergence on 1 October and organise a referendum for a forthcoming strike. However, before the workers have no choice but to take strike action, the IFJ EFJ and dju call on the management of Bauer Media Group to engage in open consultation and discussion with the union representatives to settle the dispute over salaries and working conditions.

We firmly believe that workers' demands are fundamental to ensuring a healthy environment with decent working conditions, including:

- a 1,000 Polish zloty (€200) monthly wage increase for each employee,
- the creation of a Social Benefits Fund as required by Polish law,
- a salary grid as required by Polish law

The commitment to set up the legally required social funds is a first positive step. However, the cancellation of the preparatory meeting on this issue and the decision to delegate the ongoing dispute within the "People Plus" media company raises major concerns. Together with the union, the IFJ, the EFJ, and dju fear that such a move is an attempt to weaken the industrial dispute, dilute workers' demands and diminish the union's role as the legal representative of media workers. Knowing that some members of the project are part of the management, the decision also raises concerns about the extent to which the workers' demands will be addressed and the transparency of the decision-making. We therefore insist on the importance of the union being regularly consulted and updated throughout the process of setting up the social fund and ensuring compliance with Polish law.

We have been informed that the establishment of the salary grid, without which the internal remuneration systems of both companies are legally flawed, has so far been accepted. We are counting on management to work on this as a priority.

Regarding the demand for a wage increase, the workers are faced with salaries that are barely above the minimum wage, while inflation has risen sharply since 2020. The workers' demand for a monthly pay rise of 1,000 Polish zloty (€200) for each employee is realistic, given that their salaries have increased by only a few per cent for a decade, while the average salary at

Bauer Publishing has risen significantly in the meantime. The media workers have expressed a clear willingness to negotiate, including the flexibility to agree on a multi-year pay increase plan.

The IFJ, EFJ, and dju [fully endorse](#) the workers' demands and will support industrial action organised by Inicjatywa Pracownicza.

We remain at your full disposal for any further information or assistance during the negotiation process to facilitate open discussions and compromises that allow for decent living conditions and a healthy working environment.

Thank you for your attention.

Anthony Bellanger, General Secretary of the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ)

Renate Schroeder, Director of the European Federation of Journalists (EFJ)

Renate Gensch, Member of the National Board of German Journalists Union (dju in ver.di)