

Korean Tetra Pak Dispute Enters Next Phase on European Stage

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Tetra Pak International managers in Switzerland have accepted a proposal from the Economic Department of the Vaud Canton to hold another meeting with a delegation of Korea trade unionists, members of ICEM-affiliated Korean Chemical and Textile Workers' Federation (KCTF). The meeting, agreed to last week, means two trade unionists within the delegation have suspended their 34-day-old hunger strikes to hear the company again.

The director of the Vaud Canton Economic Department will preside over the meeting between the trade unionists and Tetra Pak South Korean managers, who will come to Switzerland specifically for the meeting. Labour groups backing the workers, including the ICEM, will not be permitted to attend the meeting.

The Korean unionists are camped in Lausanne's Parc de Milan, through arrangement with local authorities. ICEM Swiss affiliate UNIA, as well as another Global Union Federation, the International Union of Food and Agricultural Workers' Association (IUF), has generously assisted the Koreans in Switzerland since early September. The ICEM has intervened on several occasions in the eight-month dispute. In early October, the company refused to let the ICEM attend a meeting in Bern between the unionists and the Swiss National Contact Point (NCP) of the OECD.

The trade unionists had filed a formal brief seeking a full investigation on worker rights regarding Tetra Pak's plant closing under the OECD's Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises.

Tetra Pak closed a 20-year-old factory in Yoju on 9 March 2007, citing a lost export business, which accounted for 45% of all sales from the factory. The company, however, did not provide explicit financial information related to the closing.

Instead, they offered redundancy packages and some 70 union members accepted. But 22 others did not, and some of them are now in Switzerland where they protest Tetra-Pak's treatment and seek earnest negotiations to rectify that treatment. Prior to Switzerland, the Korean delegation arrived in Sweden on 22 August in efforts to get senior management's attention there. Tetra Pak, a Swedish founded and Swiss-based manufacturer of beverage packaging products such as juice and milk boxes, also is a global leader in the technology and design of packaging equipment.

The ICEM encourages trade unionists to send letters of support to the Korean colleagues, at [weareapart naver.com](#), and messages of protest to Tetra Pak, care of Jörgen Haglind, senior vice president of Communications, at [jorgen.haglind tetrapak.com](#). (Please copy all messages to [info icem.org](#)) And the ICEM reiterates its call to Tetra Pak to continue dialogue with all parties concerned in order that a mutually acceptable solution is achieved on this matter.

P.S.

* From the International Federation of Chemical, Energy, Mine General Workers Unions (ICEM):

<http://www.icem.org/en/78-ICEM-InBrief/2451-Korean-Tetra-Pak-Dispute-Enters-Next-Phase-on-European-Stage>