

The Union of Journalists in Finland and Akava Special Branches: A proposal for conciliation for AV translation companies accepted

Disagreement concerning self-employed professionals comparable to wage-earners was not settled in the negotiations. Both the unions require that the matter be promptly included in law preparations.

The administrative bodies of the Union of Journalists in Finland and Akava Special Branches approved the proposal for conciliation issued by the national conciliator on 14 February 2019. The strike scheduled for AV translation companies for 15 and 16 February will be cancelled.

“The collective agreement for AV translation agencies” will be changed to read “AV translation agencies’ collective agreement”. The new name is a modern expression of the collective agreement. It also describes the change in the companies’ operations and their expansion into translation service companies.

The period of the collective agreement is one year, starting on 1 February 2019 and ending on 31 January 2020. Personal wages, minimum wages and their sums in euros will be revised with a 1.0 per cent general increase as of 1 April 2019. The company-specific pay item will be 0.4 per cent as of 1 April. There will be negotiations about the use of the item, with the aim of agreeing on it locally. If the use of the item is not agreed locally, 0.2 per cent will be allocated as a general increase and the employer will decide on allocating 0.2 per cent.

Attention will be paid to the ability of translators in time-based and performance-based employment to cope at work. The employer is responsible for the occupational safety and occupational health of employees at all times.

For time-based employees, special attention will be paid to their ability to cope at work, work pace and the amount of work. According to an entry in the minutes concerning freelance translators in an employment relationship with performance pay, the parties recommend that to secure the ability to cope at work, the weekly work volume (average for one working week) can be no more than 250 subtitles of program translated for the first time and no more than 300 subtitles of program already translated earlier but adapted in Finnish.

The lawmaker must decide on the contract law for self-employed professionals

Especially problematic in the negotiations was disagreement on setting out fees for self-employed professionals comparable to wage-earners. The national conciliator did not issue a conciliation proposal for this, because she is of the opinion that it would require amending the legislation, which should be done by the lawmaker within the EU’s competition legislation.

“Legislation must be amended. We insist that the present and next Government promptly begin to prepare an amendment that would also allow agreeing on terms of employment for self-employed professionals,

i.e. persons in involuntary employment, who are dependent on their principals. This is also required by the recent opinion of the European Ministerial Committee”, says Petri Savolainen, Head of Advocacy from the Union of Journalists in Finland.

“The situation now is quite strange, because it seems that the terms of employment for people in the weakest position and having the smallest incomes cannot be agreed in a collective agreement”, Savolainen says.

“The matter will have to be dealt with by the next Government of Finland, due to EU’s Directive on Working Conditions alone,” says Helena Lamponen, Head of the Trusteeship Unit at Akava Special Branches.

“A negotiation result on the proposal for a directive on transparent and predictable working conditions was reached within the EU on 8 February 2019. Among other things, it will also extend the definition of an employee in the current Employment Contracts Act in Finland,” says Lamponen.

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