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Sjorder's strike success

**Results
and demands
for
the future**

As of 1 January, ILS employees 2025 4%, as of 1 January 2026 will also receive 4% and, as of 1

January 2027

4.5% pay rise, on top of price compensation. With effect from 1 January 2028, colleagues working five shifts will receive an additional 5% allowance on top of the 30% schedule allowance. This additional allowance will be worked out for the other shifts.

Matrans colleagues will receive



Continued - successful sjorders strike

a 2% pay rise on top of price compensation as of 1 April 2025, 1% as of 1 January 2026 and again 1% on 1 January 2027. In addition, everyone will move up an extra step on the pay scale on 1 January 2026 and 1 January 2027, which means two extra pay rises of 3.5%. Because many are in the highest step, the pay scales will be expanded with two extra steps.

The most important thing cannot be expressed in monetary terms

The most important thing that has been achieved cannot be expressed in monetary terms: the sjorders have learned to organise themselves to take up the fight and have shown that they can form a significant force. They have shown that they can go through life (and to work) with their heads held high. As was said in the final vote: 'from young to old and of all colours'.

Responsible lashing, a single collective labour agreement on lashing, youth requirements

There are certainly requirements for the future. A study into 'responsible lashing' is to be conducted. This study will be completed in May next year, after which negotiations will take place on the agreements that can be derived from the findings.

can be translated into the collective labour agreement. The work has become more demanding: the teams need to be expanded.

ILS and Matrans are both owned by Vervat. In addition to ILS and Matrans, there are smaller lashing companies and there is also hiring. All these companies are connected in one way or another to ILS and Matrans. It is high time that all these companies were covered by a single collective labour agreement.

The young people showed their best side during the strike. If they weren't already union members, almost all of them joined. It's time for old and young alike to take young people's demands seriously:

- Equal pay for equal work, as soon as you have mastered the profession
- Abolition of youth wages and BBL wages
- No annual contracts, but permanent jobs
- A permanent job after the BBL programme!



After the strike

Trade union democracy must become the rule

On Wednesday 9 October, the sjorders stopped work for 48 hours. ILS and Matrans thought they could end the strike with minimal concessions, but the sjorders had other ideas. On Friday 11 October, three questions were put to them in a 'general sjorders meeting'. 'Is ILS's offer sufficient': no, the ILS workers voted unanimously. 'Is Matrans' offer sufficient': no, the Matrans colleagues voted unanimously. 'Do we continue the strike indefinitely': yes, the dockworkers voted unanimously.

That was trade union democracy – the kind of democracy in which the union is turned into a fighting organisation in the hands of its members. That is what is needed, not only in the port, but throughout the Netherlands. Something to make a tradition of.

On Friday, 18 October, a resounding agreement was reached. Once again, a general meeting of union representatives was convened. Once again, a vote was taken. Both the colleagues from ILS and those from Matrans voted by a majority that the agreements were sufficient and that the industrial action could be ended. Once again, it was the members who decided on the industrial action.

At the top of the FNV, total paralysis has set in as a result of scheming and squabbling. A judge has appointed Asscher and Heerts to make the FNV polder-proof: the opposite of a trade union as a fighting organisation. In the port, an example was set: let the members decide.

Perspective for Transcore colleagues

Transcore colleagues have the potential to organise themselves into a force as powerful as the sjorders. Without stacker

, no container ship can be loaded or unloaded.

Join the union, put your heads together, get organised! Don't keep worrying about temporary contracts, uncertain working hours and a pittance of a wage!

Hamburg Bremen in solidarity

The **Airbus Group's** staff newspaper Der Flugzeugbauer, trade union representatives and colleagues express their solidarity with the striking stevedores in the port of Rotterdam:

'We, the workers and their families at Airbus in Hamburg and Bremen, have heard about your courageous strike over the past few days. And we support your demands for a better collective labour agreement and a pay rise. Under the current capitalist conditions, workers and office staff get nothing for their hard work. The port capitalists are trying to challenge your strike in court and force a suspension of almost a week. From their ranks we hear: *'Because the port is at a standstill, society is also largely at a standstill.* This clearly shows that we are the ones who create value! It is crucial that colleagues themselves decide how, how long and to what extent they fight. Workers united in a strike can achieve a lot! Those who fight can win – those who do not fight have lost! We are on your side! Keep fighting courageously, together with your

union, and don't let yourselves be beaten. We have the utmost respect for your strike. Across borders: Long live international solidarity – workers of all countries, unite! Aircraft builders from Hamburg and Bremen.

Colleagues from the **HHLA** port company in **Hamburg** say through union representative Torben Schomers:

'We, the union members of the Port of Hamburg (HHLA), stand in complete solidarity with you in your fight for fair wages and decent working conditions. Your struggle is not just about a percentage increase – it is about respect for the heavy and dangerous work that stevedores do every day to keep global trade running safely.

We know that without stevedores there would be no container transport. Your work forms the backbone of every port operation and your demand for fair wages is entirely justified. Across Europe, dockers face the same challenges: increasing workloads, outsourcing and growing corporate profits – while those who do the real work are told to settle for less. Your courage to take action inspires us all.

For legal and unrestricted right to strike

It seems to be becoming increasingly popular among the ruling class to go to court when a strike starts to become effective. And among judges, it is becoming increasingly popular to ban strikes or restrict them because they are effective. Companies are quick to claim that an unsafe situation has arisen or that there is a threat of social disruption. Judges gratefully seize on these opportunistic arguments.

This is what threatened to happen on Saturday 11 October with the sjoorders strike.

The right to strike is one of the most important rights that workers have. Demonstrating, voting, organising in trade unions, freedom of expression: these are all important democratic rights that our grandparents and great-grandparents fought for. Without the right to strike, the labour movement remains toothless.

A strike hits the ruling class in two sensitive areas. Firstly, profits stop rolling in when workers down tools. Secondly, a strike reveals that the ruling class consists of good-for-nothings. If the ruling class were to down tools, society would simply carry on as normal – but if the workers did so, society would grind to a halt.

To prevent judges from restricting strikes, the labour movement must demand: unlimited, legal right to strike! _____

RST – Higher wages! Equality for young people!

On 1 October, FNV Havens held members' meetings to decide on the collective labour agreement demands. The mood was combative. Turnout was high. An extensive set of demands was adopted. Two things stood out: a worthwhile wage demand and demands for young people.

In a two-year collective labour agreement, a 3.5% increase is demanded on top of price compensation as of 1 January 2026.

and 4% as of 1 January 2027. In addition, they are demanding a 5% increase in the allowance for five-shift work and a 1% increase in other shift allowances. They also want the thirteenth month's salary to be based on the scheduled salary from now on.

For young people, it is demanded that BBL students be employed by RST and that youth wages be abolished. An example for many other port companies!

Principles of De Volle Lading

1. We are strongly committed to the interests of port workers and young people who are going to work in the port with our offensive demands.
2. We help organise the struggle for these interests through, among other things, the four-weekly publication of De Volle Lading.
3. We work democratically. Everyone can have their say. Friends who support the struggle of the dockworkers are welcome.
4. We strive for trade unions that are combative and democratic in defending the interests of workers.
5. We are independent, including financially. We only accept financial contributions if they are given without conditions.
6. We are open to ideas about a different society without exploitation and oppression of working people - that gives direction to our struggle.
7. We are working to strengthen international solidarity among dockworkers.

De Volle Lading is a publication by De Volle Ladinggroep – by colleagues for colleagues in the port. At De Volle Lading, you can learn how to fight injustice and its root cause: capitalism. Feel free to throw some money in the pot to support us. De Volle Lading operates without subsidies – because we want to remain independent.

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You get the right to strike by taking it

Companies would be less likely to go to court if they knew that workers would defy a court-imposed ban on strike action. Is that possible? Yes, it is! Two examples from the past:

Tugboat operators

During the independent strike by tugboat operators in 1979, management took the main strike leaders to court. The judge imposed a ban on striking. The next day, they staged a clever little play with the rest of their colleagues. They walked to the Willems quay, where the tugboats were moored at the time. 'Unfortunately', hundreds of colleagues were waiting there, making it impossible for them to reach their workplace. After that, the management decided not to take any further legal action.

Stewards

In the 1980s, the FNV trade union organised strikes against the dismantling of social achievements such as sick pay, unemployment benefits and disability benefits (now WIA). At the request of the port companies, the court banned these strikes in the port. At a large trade union meeting, the trade union leaders from the port were asked to gather separately. It was proposed to continue the strikes, formally as independent

strikes. If the court injunction were to be overturned on appeal, the strikers would still receive strike pay. The result: the strike brought the entire port to a standstill and, after some time, the strike pay was paid after all.

Compromise in the courtroom

On Saturday, 12 October, the opposite occurred. Del-talings, HbR (Port of Rotterdam Authority) and VRTO (Association of Rotterdam Terminal Organisations) went to court to demand that the strike by lashers be prohibited. However, the public gallery was almost empty.

After endless adjournments and telephone consultations, an agreement was reached between the union's lawyers and the VRTO. The stevedores would return to work on Monday morning until at least Friday morning. In the meantime, negotiations would take place. If the parties failed to reach an agreement, the strike could be resumed on Friday morning and the court hearing would also resume on Friday afternoon.

That is not the way forward. That is agreeing to a ban. The room should have been filled with sjoorders firmly convinced to continue the strike, court injunction or not. You don't let go of your opponent when you have him by the throat.

Learning from **Greek** sailors who defied strike bans

In Greece this summer, sailors on the ferry services went on strike. They were faced not with one court injunction, but with five. All of these strike bans were defied.



This was possible for two reasons:

Firstly, the sailors had organised themselves strongly in strike committees on each ship. Despite the ban, the ships decided to continue striking.

Of course, the government and the companies wanted to break the strike by force. This was defied with the help of a large solidarity movement, which mobilised large crowds of people in the ports. People who had also found each other in other actions - for example, against Israel's war against the Palestinians.

A representative of the sailors' union is touring Europe and will also visit Rotterdam. If you would like to know more about the Greek sailors' approach, come to the meeting:

Sunday 16 November 2025 Johannes de Vouplein 99, Rotterdam at 2 p.m.

