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How often have we finished the
years of record profits that ECT is

actually struggling? At the end of 2023, ECT announced that over 100 temporary contracts were not being renewed and that agreed positions were being made redundant.



The management brazenly asked the ECT workers to ‘pull together’. Taking industrial action against this would have been the right response. Strong together for pay and jobs – for the workers’ interests. Instead, a compromise was reached that divided the hardship between larger groups.

Backlog in terms of employment conditions

In January 2025, ECT workers staged a slow-down campaign for a better collective agreement. ECT claimed the company was struggling and refused to meet the unions’ demands. The campaign failed to gain much momentum. That can happen: slow-down campaigns are often difficult to organise and require a strong organisational structure across all hubs and terminals. Ultimately, the pay gap between ECT workers and the rest of the port, in terms of wages and full-time allowances, widened.

Fewer deckhands, training courses suspended, no mentors

And now, once again, things are reportedly not going well at ECT. That is why higher rates have been agreed with the clients. In exchange, a guarantee of 36 shifts

per shift. That means seven to eight extra shifts per day, without taking on a single extra colleague. This is at the expense of all colleagues: fewer deckhands, the planned but not yet started training courses for bridge crane operators and shore-based radio operators have been cancelled, and there are no longer any mentors in the remote room. ‘We hope for your understanding,’ says the management.

What sort of rubbish is this? This is the scrapping of jobs, with the intention of never bringing them back. This is driving the entire workforce (apart from the managers themselves) even further into the ground. The management will soon be able to pocket another hefty bonus: higher rates, seven to eight extra shifts a day for free. Double the bonus.

Exploitation

ECT is notorious for the exploitation it inflicts on its equipment. But the exploitation of its staff is also being ramped up. The remote crane operator who spends too long in front of the screen

– and who will now also miss out on the mentor’s support and assistance.

The crane operator who juggles two tasks on the crane, ruining his neck and back in the process. The deckhands who



handle two, and sometimes
even

Continued – ECT wants to squeeze more out of the workforce

We have to keep track of three cranes. Things can't go on like this. Operators and deckhands who protest are told not to moan so much. Complaints are pouring in to the works council. Reaching retirement age in good health is only getting harder. The management says that the deckhands sometimes stand idle for long periods, which is intolerable to managers. But the only safe method is to have one deckhand at each crane. That way, the crane operators aren't disturbed or confused by communication between the deckhand and the other crane operator, and there is constant supervision of safe loading and unloading. We mustn't cut corners on safety.

**Together with colleagues,
not together with
management**

The approach of 'showing understanding' and 'pulling together' is a dead end. A colleague wrote that they had put forward many arguments against these new measures, 'but the decision has been made... just let it happen and, above all, do it SAFELY or NOT.' That is well-intentioned, but too non-committal. If you don't want to end up standing alone against the boss, we need to organise and build solidarity – for clear and widely

supported demands: militant trade union action is exactly what is needed right now. Get active as a trade union member to get everyone on board!

**Hire more staff
immediately!**

**A 35 per cent shift
allowance**

**A deckhand at
every crane**

**No further
increase in
workload**

**Let all the
promised
training courses
go ahead!**



APMT MVII

doubles its profits

APMT MVII's profits rose from eleven million in 2025 to 24 million in 2026. Everything that is achieved – from the smallest screw being tightened to the installation of gantry cranes – is the work of the workers. It is the workers – not the management, not the shareholders – who create all the value. The workers who build and run the terminals: dockers, fitters, software developers, construction workers, metalworkers (all the way to China).

Omega takes a break to attack their colleagues at Delta II

Discussions regarding Omega have been put on hold. Omega is the new terminal that ECT and MSC were due to build on the site of Delta II and ECT DDN. Negotiations on this matter have been taking place at the highest level since 2022. The Port of Rotterdam Authority had helpfully announced that it would invest two billion in new quays and sites.

Ruys, CEO of ECT, states in a letter to the unions that the main alternative scenario being investigated is: *“to what extent the current volume of HPDII (Delta II) can be handled within ECT.”* Some of the Delta II staff could then be redeployed to ECT, whilst those who cannot be redeployed will receive

dismissal with the agreed severance payment (three times the standard subdistrict court formula).

That severance payment is useful for people who are just about to retire, but they usually keep their jobs because the last-in-first-out system applies. For those with many years left until retirement, a severance payment is of little use. Before you know it, you'll be on income support and the money will run out quickly.

The suspension of Omega must not be used as an excuse to make Delta II colleagues redundant. A proactive response is needed here. As a class, workers have a vested interest in keeping their jobs: young people must also be able to find work.

Therefore: six-shift working and early retirement without any loss of benefits!



Trade Union Power

Taking action alongside other sectors against the government

At the end of June, public transport workers went on strike against the government. Workers at Schiphol Airport also walked out. A number of metalworking companies in Eindhoven (DAF, ASML, VDL) and Ergon Eindhoven (formerly the Social Workshop) did the same. These were powerful signals to the government.

There was also a week of action at the end of June, featuring rallies and demonstrations against the government's plans.

Strikes have been announced for September in (once again) public transport, the metalworking industry, the ports, the healthcare sector, education and refuse collection services. Joining forces with other sectors creates strength – the strength of the working class.

Active, broad-based, proactive

In FNV Magazine, the new FNV president Hans Spekman says: 'The union could do with being a bit more activist, broader and more proactive'. Well said, but now it's time to act.

Active trade union members can

seize on Spekman's words to take the struggle further.

Active: rallies and demonstrations in the centres of major cities, across the bridges in Rotterdam. Being active also means going on strike across many sectors simultaneously – in short, truly unleashing the fighting power of the trade union movement.

Broad-based: not only against the cuts to benefits (6 billion euros), but also against the cuts to healthcare (10 billion euros) and against the increase in the defence budget (19 billion euros). A trade union must stand up for all aspects of workers' lives.

On the offensive: not just stopping the dismantling, but fighting for progress: bring down the retirement age, raise the minimum wage, abolish personal contributions and excesses in healthcare – and build affordable homes!

Principles of De Volle Lading

1. We champion the interests of dockworkers and the young people who will be working in the docks through our proactive demands.
2. We help organise the struggle for these causes, amongst other things, through the fortnightly publication of *De Volle Lading*.
3. We operate democratically. Everyone can have their say. Friends who support the dockworkers' struggle are welcome.
4. We campaign for trade unions that fight for workers' interests in a militant and democratic manner.
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 free from the exploitation and oppression of working people – this guides our struggle.
7. We are working to strengthen international solidarity amongst dockworkers.

Support De Volle Lading

Use this QR code to make a donation. Thank you in advance!



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De Volle Lading is published by the De Volle Lading Group – by colleagues for colleagues in the port. At De Volle Lading, you can learn to fight against injustice and against the root cause of injustice: capitalism. And please feel free to put some money into the pot to support us. De Volle Lading operates without subsidies – because we want to remain independent.

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Greek seafarers went on strike as one, despite a court ban

For the first time in the history of the Greek port city of Rafina, a seafarers' strike rally took place on 23 June, organised by the seafarers' union PENEN. It was decided to hold a 24-hour strike on 4 July. The strike call explains why: *"The reason for the seafarers' determined struggle is the unsafe and hazardous anchorage in Rafina, where various ships are forced to drop anchor every day because there are not enough berths for all the scheduled vessels.*

Furthermore, the overwork, exhaustion, stress, minimal rest periods and the separation of seafarers from their families have become unbearable."

On 4 July, a strike rally was held in front of the 'Super Ferry', organised by PENEN. All crews of all ships moored in the port during the strike took part. For the first time, the captains of the regular services – who themselves experience the unsafe and dangerous conditions of mooring and

at anchor, were given the opportunity to speak at a public meeting.

There was a strong sense of unity. And that was sorely needed, because the shipping companies and the government had done everything in their power to prevent the strike. On the day before the strike, the government brought summary proceedings and a judge consequently banned the strike. But the government did not succeed in silencing the seafarers or in putting an end to their justified struggle. All attempts to undermine the struggle have failed.

The seafarers' union PENEN has once again demonstrated that it has the strength and organisational capacity to take on major battles alongside its members and to win them. That is also the way to defy strike bans in the Netherlands. The coordinating group of the International Dockworkers' Conference from Rotterdam and Hamburg expressed its solidarity with the seafarers fighting in Greece.

For a full and unrestricted right to strike!

Who's afraid of *De Volle Lading*?

Handing out *De Volle Lading* to the outgoing shift at ECT Delta has been done for years at the barriers. That is the only safe place and also an easy spot for colleagues to pick up a copy of *De Volle Lading*.

In June, two security guards were sent to deal with the leafleters. They were no longer allowed to stand by the barriers. They weren't too keen on that. Most of their colleagues enjoy reading *De Volle Lading*, and the leafleters like to stand in a safe spot. The security guards got in touch with some manager or other, who was pulling the strings behind the scenes. 'If you stay there, we'll call the police,' was the message passed on on the manager's orders. 'Go on then, do that,' was the response.

Once *De Volle Lading* had been handed out, the distributors got into their car. The security staff were surprised that the distributors didn't want to wait for the police. Well... and then they wanted a copy of *De Volle Lading* too, but they could forget it: it's intended for colleagues only.

De Volle Lading stands 100 per cent with the dockworkers. *De Volle Lading* can do this because it is editorially and financially independent. The ECT management is currently launching a major attack on the working conditions of ECT workers. Is the management perhaps afraid of the unsparing criticism that is being voiced through *De Volle Lading*? Freedom of speech, but not for workers who expose abuses?

Support De Volle Lading!
Send us information, support us financially!
No barriers to workers' solidarity!

