

On 1 and 8 February last, we met with the employer to discuss a new collective labour agreement. From the member meetings we held, it became clear that you had two things at the top of your wish list:

1. Retain the Social Plan, without changes
2. A substantial percentage increase of the fixed salary.

Of course, we also discussed a few other things with the employer, but on the above points we can tell you the following.

Social Plan

The employer proposes a few textual changes to the social plan, but does not want to change anything else and thinks it is fine if it remains part of the CLA. We will have to see what changes are proposed, but we can probably manage with this part of the negotiations.

Salary increase

The unions and the employer still disagree on the desirability and possibility of increasing salaries. The unions have proposed to include the Automatic Price Compensation (APC) in the CLA. The APC is a system for annually adjusting wages in line with price developments in the previous year. So: if the prices for everything an average household needs increase by x% in one year, wages will be increased by the same percentage in the following January. Of course, other wage increases may be agreed, but with the APC, the preservation of purchasing power is in any case largely guaranteed. And that is valuable.

Virtually all collective agreements for terminals - such as APMT Maasvlakte II - include this Automatic Price Compensation. Thanks to this system, wages were increased by 3.28% in January 2022. Over the last 7 years (including this latest increase), wages rose by an average of almost 1.5% per year.

Unions have proposed to Maersk that salaries be increased by a substantial percentage in addition to the application of the APC.

The employer did want to increase wages, but mainly focused on improving the One Maersk Bonus Plan (OMBP). He did not feel much inclination to introduce the APC. His arguments: the APC is applied in only a few collective labour agreements in the Netherlands and it is unpredictable what wage increases this system will lead to each year.

We could hardly take the employer's counter-arguments seriously. The salary system used by Maersk (which means, among other things, that employees do not all receive the same salary increase) is really hardly found in the Netherlands and it is totally unpredictable which bonuses the OMBP will result in each year. If both these things are not an issue, neither can the introduction of the APC be.

However, in order to think along with the employer, the unions have proposed a 3-year collective labour agreement, with in the first year 50% APC plus a high percentage of wage increase, in the second year a higher percentage of APC plus a lower percentage of wage increase and in the third year only the full APC and an improvement of the OMBP. That seems to us a better use of the money that Maersk would like to spend on improving the OMBP this year and next year (two fat years for Maersk).

Further conversations at the end of this month

We stressed once again that, given also the mega profit Maersk Line made in 2020 and 2021 and the profit forecast for 2022 and 2023, it should be possible to honour the wishes of our members. The employer is thinking about it and we will talk further on 24 February. You will hear from us.

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