Beat: News

Union calls on members to back photo journalists campaign

NUJ press release

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USPA NEWS - The NUJ has expressed solidarity and support for the 456 photojournalists in the Netherlands who will take strike action on Friday 25 January.

The Dutch union Nederlands Vereniging van Journalisten (NVJ) has organised the action in response to the erosion of pay rates for photographers.

Trade unions globally are calling on their members not to supply photos to the media or photo-libraries in the Netherlands on Friday 25 or Saturday 26 January to express support for colleagues and to demonstrate a lack of news photos as a result of the action.

Freelance rates in the Netherlands have fallen from €80 a photo in 2014 to an average of €42 today and some rates have fallen as low as €15 or €20.

The NVJ's campaign has three demands - a 14 per cent increase in rates, respect for creators' rights and the equalisation of online and print tariffs.

The NVJ has said that some media companies offer between €15 to €20 for an online photo as opposed to €42 to €50 for print.

Photographers will assemble in front of the Dutch Press Agency (ANP) building in The Hague tomorrow and hand over a large billboard with the names of all the photojournalists taking part in the action.

The NVJ has chosen ANP as the assembly point because the company has proposed to reduce photography rates further this year.

The NVJ has asked journalists to express solidarity with photojournalists by highlighting the campaign, including the news in editorial columns or broadcasts and everyone can express support on social media using the hashtags #fotolozevrijdag #fotojournalistiekheefteenprijs

The Dutch union says photojournalists are no longer prepared to accept being told, "we can't pay more" or "we don't negotiate collectively but with the individuals".

René de Monchy, NVJ chair, said: "They will be sounding the alarm bells over the frighteningly low pay rates for their work. The rates

that media companies are paying offer no future perspective, they are not sufficient to maintain the profession. Photojournalism has a price, therefore tariffs are needed which offer a sustainable future. Photojournalist might work far away from their editors but they form an integral part of our profession. Only with quality and independence in pictures and words can we continue to make a difference. Support us because, simply put, we need each other to keep the core of our profession going."

Natasha Hirst, chair of the NUJ photographers council, said: "The action organised by our sister union sends the strongest possible message to all media companies at home and abroad - photographers simply can't survive on such low rates. The current situation is not acceptable or sustainable. We will do everything we can to help win fair rates for the job. Your fight is our fight. Solidarity!"

Michelle Stanistreet, NUJ general secretary, said: "We are encouraging all NUJ members not to provide photographs to media companies in the Netherlands on Friday or Saturday. This way we can show practical solidarity and NUJ members can have a positive impact on this important dispute. Any NUJ members who withhold their work should let us know. The NVJ's campaign has global ramifications and that's why it is essential that media workers stand alongside the photojournalists taking action."

Last week, the NUJ's national executive council met in London, offered resounding support for the dispute, and issued the following statement: "The National Executive of the National Union of Journalists in Britain and Ireland welcomes the move by photographer members of the Nederlandse Vereniging van Journalisten (NVJ) to campaign for better rates of pay. This council notes that freelance photographers in the Netherlands are planning to strike on 25 January to put pressure on publishers and other media to improve rates. This council resolves to send a message of support to colleagues in the Netherlands. This council undertakes to publicise this action among photographers and other freelance journalists in the UK and Ireland and encourage them, where possible, to not supply media outlets in the Netherlands on 25 January, or for publication on 26 January."

The NUJ´s branch in the Netherlands has also expressed strong support for the campaign.

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United Press Association, Inc.
3651 Lindell Road, Suite D168
Las Vegas, NV 89103, USA

(702) 943.0321 Local
(702) 943.0233 Facsimile
info@unitedpressassociation.org
info@gna24.com
www.gna24.com