

# Stop the Verdi sell-out at Berlin transit operator BVG! Implement the already decided all-out strike!

Transport Workers Action Committee  
9 April 2025

Dear fellow transit workers,

The arbitration result at BVG is an outrageous sham. It hardly differs from the employers' last offer, which we rejected by an overwhelming majority. It is now important to immediately initiate the agreed all-out strike in order to enforce our justified demands.

Last week's strike ballot was not a manoeuvre as part of the negotiation poker game. It was a democratic vote in which the overwhelming majority of union members, 95.4 percent, voted in favour of an indefinite all-out strike to enforce the original demand of a €750 monthly pay rise. This democratic decision by the members is binding and must now be enforced.

But to do so, it is necessary to break through the bureaucratic dictatorship of the Verdi union, which is doing everything in its power to prevent a strike and force us to accept the employer's offer.

We, the Transport Workers Action Committee, are calling for the formation of a strike committee made up of rank-and-file workers who want to conduct a serious fight.

The arbitration result is not a compromise but corresponds almost entirely to the employer's demands. After consulting its members, Verdi had originally demanded €750 more for a 12-month contract. In contrast, the employer's side had offered an increase worth only half, €375 euros, and over 24 months. The arbitrator's decision now provides for an increase of €215 over one year (€430 over two years), which is only €27.50 more per month compared to the employer's offer! A family of five would not even be able to pay for BVG tickets for a local trip to Wannsee! The arbitrators would not even meet in the middle of the employer's offer and our demands, but simply

accepted what the employer proposed.

The situation is similar for bonuses. Verdi had demanded a €200 shift allowance; the employers had offered €130. The arbitrators recommended €130. The arbitrators also accepted the employer's proposal of €225 for the alternating shift bonus compared to Verdi's demand of €300. The same applies to the Christmas bonus, where Verdi had originally demanded a full month's salary, but the employer only wanted to increase it by €200. There was only a small change of €30 in the driving allowance compared to the employer's offer, but at €255 it remains far below our demand of €300.

In view of these appalling figures, which represent a further reduction in real wages, Verdi has no right to suppress the all-out strike we agreed. Verdi negotiator Jeremy Arndt's agreement to the arbitration result must not be accepted. His claim that nothing more can be achieved only makes it clear that he and his cronies in the negotiating committee are not prepared to fight for the original demand.

On the contrary! Arndt is deputy chairman of the BVG supervisory board and has close contacts with company management and the parties that control the Berlin Senate (state executive). He has struck agreements with politicians at the highest level and with the Verdi national leadership that an indefinite all-out strike should be prevented at all costs.

The fundamental question now is: who decides? A few highly paid Verdi bureaucrats who also collect royalties on the Supervisory Board and support the policies of the governing parties? Or the many thousands of us who work hard every day to prevent the collapse of the transport system, despite unbearable

working conditions and miserable wages?

Verdi has been forcing one bad contract after another down our throats for years and the losses in real wages are continuing in the face of rapid price increases. Now, it is time to draw a line in the sand. Our original demand is the lower limit to stop the loss of real wages and must be implemented.

Everyone is talking about a “new era,” and so are we!

When Arndt claims that the BVG cannot afford any more, he is only emphasising how much of a lackey he is to management, the Berlin Senate and the federal government. All government parties have just adopted the largest military-industrial armaments programme, to the tune of over a trillion euros. There is enough money, but the question is: for whom?

Under no circumstances are we prepared to continue accepting cuts in real wages and worsening working conditions in order to finance the government’s policies of rearmament and war.

In order to break through the straitjacket of the Verdi apparatus and enforce the all-out strike we agreed, it is necessary to understand the political dimensions of our wages struggle.

BVG management, the Berlin Senate and the federal government want to set an example. Every effort is being made to prevent us from organising an indefinite all-out strike and achieving our justified demands. They don’t want the coalition negotiations between the Christian Democrats (CDU/CSU) and Social Democrats (SPD) to form the next federal government to take place under the pressure of our strike.

A look at the contracts agreed in the public sector and at Deutsche Post makes clear what Verdi also has in mind for us. Verdi approved a miserable cut in real wages for the 170,000 postal workers. With a contract term of 24 months, the first three months of this year will see a pay freeze, followed by a 2 percent increase from April 2025 and a further 3 percent from April 2026. Although a clear majority of 54 percent voted against it, Verdi signed the agreement, nevertheless.

Arndt & Co. want to repeat exactly the same thing with us. They want to keep us voting on the same nasty agreement until the required 25 percent of eligible Verdi members vote in favour.

That is why it is necessary to break through Verdi’s control and enforce an indefinite strike now, after the successful ballot. In order to achieve this, the

establishment of the Transport Workers Action Committee is of the utmost importance. We wrote in the BVG staff council election campaign in November:

We are standing in these elections to build new structures of struggle that will enable us workers to intervene directly in workplace disputes.

Our aim is to develop the great strength and power we have as workers. We want to strengthen the self-confidence that we are the ones who keep the city and the country moving. We are not supplicants and beggars, we have rights! And we know that a joint struggle of all transport workers would paralyse the capital in a very short time and receive great support from the population.

The organisation of the Transport Workers Union is the first important step towards preparing an indefinite strike to enforce our demands.

- Stop the Verdi sell-out!

- Enforce the full strike that has already been decided!

- Get in touch with the Transport Workers’ Action Committee!

Come to the online meeting of the action committee on Thursday, 10 April at 19:00. We want to discuss together with colleagues from Deutsche Post and the public sector. Like us, they are confronted with Verdi’s strike sabotage. We will talk about how we can coordinate our resistance and prepare joint action.

*Send a WhatsApp message to +49 1748402566 to get in touch and follow us on Facebook, Instagram and TikTok.*



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