



Association of Electrical Contractors (Ireland)
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Re: TEEU Notice of Strike Action for Monday the 6th of July 2009.

The Association of Electrical Contractors of Ireland (AECI) having received a copy of the TEEU's letter to its members, calling for a National Strike on the 6th of July 2009 are at a loss to understand where the author got their information. AECI are one of the Employer Bodies who have been involved in negotiating wage rates for the Electrical Contracting Industry from the inception of the Electrical REA and indeed were very active in brokering the original REA, which has served the industry well over the years. In view of the current climate it is clear that it has served its purpose and needs the root and branch review that AECI have been pushing for since 2007.

It is difficult to understand how the TEEU came to their interpretation of the decision made by the Labour Court on February last. The decision of the Labour Court was to refuse the application to vary the Agreement, as is clear from paragraph 1.2 of the Court's Judgment, a copy of which is attached below.

1.2 Conclusion

In the circumstances in which the application to vary the agreement does not have support from the employer bodies which are party to the Agreement the Court does not consider it appropriate to make an order varying the Agreement. Accordingly the application is refused.

The Labour Court instructed the parties to the REA to review the terms of the current REA as per the quotation below.

Review of the REA

It is noted that in the course of the hearing all parties to the REA expressed a willingness to review its terms in light of changed circumstances. The Court recommends that such a review should be undertaken as a matter of urgency. Should any issues arise in the course of the review upon which agreement cannot be reached they should be referred to the Court for investigation and recommendation.

AECI formed a committee to review the REA as instructed and have produced a draft document for consideration, which made recommendations for changes to bring the REA up to date and simplify the method of setting pay rates in the Electrical Contracting Industry.

Several aspects of the REA needs to be brought in line with changes in work practices in other industries and with changes in technology, which is most relevant in an industry that provides services and data wiring etc for these new innovations in communications. This industry is tied to an analogue system that is not workable in its present format and is open to different interpretations depending the way the information is gathered. Despite what TEEU say regarding the qualification of Electricians, it is important that a proper formal training is given and that in order to carry out electrical works in a safe manner a standard must be attained, this can only be assessed through an examination system and by passing those examinations one is deemed to be proficient in their chosen trade and having reached this level of competence deserve to be compensated accordingly. Likewise areas such as travel time, country money, tools and many other aspects of the agreement must be brought up to modern norms.

One aspect of the TEEU letter has troubled the AECI in particular is the statement that "spare time working" would be deemed to be a just cause for dismissal going forward, this has been part of the REA (Rule 14) from its inception.

While AECI support the fact that a person is entitled to a fair days pay for a fair days work, we must also be realistic and accept that the amount of work available has contracted at an unbelievable rate. Those electricians who are in employment at present must count themselves lucky and be prepared take some of the pain that their employers have to take in order to stay in business and be in a position to pay their wages at the end of each week.

Workers at all levels and across all Industries in Ireland have volunteered or agreed to take pay cuts in the last year and IRONICALLY we have the TEEU calling a strike because a pay increase REJECTED by the Labour Court is not being implemented !!!!!!!

Further meetings are planned for the coming week and AECI will keep members informed as information comes to light.

Chris Lundy,
AECI Executive Secretary