

# Garment and Fashion Workers' Union

Redg no 3317/CNI

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Mr. Matthias Alipass,  
CEO, Inditex, Germany

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Dear Mr. Matthias Alipass,

## Sub: Violation of Right to Freedom of Association and interference in elections of works councils

At present, works council elections are being held in your company in Germany. We as Garment and Fashion Workers' Union in South India, organise workers for your suppliers and have a long standing relationship with works councils and trade unionists at Zara and in Germany in general.

From our brothers and sisters at Zara we have heard reports about severe obstruction of the works council elections. This has happened in several stores all over Germany. We have heard about the following violations:

1. The organisation of these elections costs money. Works councils had to bear the expenses themselves.
2. The employer interfering in elections and HR manager and store managers try to force workers who are with the management to stand as candidate.
3. The employer represented by HR managers and store managers try to influence the election decision of workers. The employer wants to be in the room during voting. This influences the free decision of the workers to vote whoever they want. The employer wants to count votes himself.
4. The employer prohibits works council members responsible for organising the elections to inform their co-workers properly.
5. Necessary trainings for works councils to conduct the elections are not approved by the employer.

All these violations may seem small but compiled, it is proof that Zara/Inditex tries to influence the free elections of works councils and ignores the workers' right to freedom of association. This is a clear violation of German labour law. We are not surprised that Zara/Inditex acts like this; from our own experience we know how little Zara/Inditex respects the right of its workers in the entire supply chain.

Inditex has frequently emphasised the importance of the right to freedom of association, e.g. in its Global Framework Agreement with IndustriAll or in its supplier code of conduct. But the behaviour of Zara/Inditex in Germany is proof that this is just lip service.

We urge you to respect the rights of your works councils and your of freedom of association. We are also sending of this protest letter to our brothers and sisters from ver.di and the national works council of Zara.

Yours sincerely,



Sujata Mody  
President  
Garment and Fashion Workers Union(GAFWU), India