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WAC

# Israël. Maan Has Established a “Truck Drivers’ Parliament” on its Way to Founding a New Union

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## Israël. Maan Has Established a “Truck Drivers’ Parliament” on its Way to Founding a New Union

An initiative for a start a new truck drivers’ Union was launched by the WAC - Maan association on Saturday 14 November 2009 at a conference in its offices in Tel Aviv. The goal of the conference was defined as the initiation of debate and voicing of ideas for the establishment of a new drivers’ union. Around forty drivers and WAC - Maan members attended the conference. The event was organized following last month’s campaign in which tens of WAC - Maan members went around the Ashdod and Haifa ports, and other freight centers, handing out pamphlets and listening to drivers speak of their deplorable working conditions.

[http://divergences.be/sites/divergences.be/local/cache-vignettes/L400xH84/logo\\_wac\\_W-9aa8b.jpg](http://divergences.be/sites/divergences.be/local/cache-vignettes/L400xH84/logo_wac_W-9aa8b.jpg)

At the start of the conference WAC - Maan’s Director, Assaf Adiv, presented a detailed analysis and overview of the current situation in the freight industry: the conditions of exploitation and disregard for safety measures which typify the branch; the collective agreement in the industry which left a large window for the exploitation of drivers through payment by delivery assignments rather than by hours worked; a view of the legal situation in the field; and a comparison of the situation in Europe and European practices regarding hours driven and payment methods. In addition, several suggestions for possible action were debated with the drivers who attended the conference.

The debate was lively and reflected great enthusiasm and anticipation for bringing about a change in the present situation. One of the drivers defined it thus: “drivers represent a crucial vein in Israel’s economy. We supply the ports with work but there the average worker receives a salary of 15,000-20,000 shekels whereas we live off a measly 6,000 or 7000 for endless hours.”

All the drivers voiced the pain and frustration of lacking an organization or body to either speak or operate in their names. There was universal agreement in the conference that the Union of Transport Companies does not represent the interests of the drivers but rather the interests of the companies. There was agreement on the assessment that the root of the problem was the arrangement which allowed drivers to be paid on the basis of deliveries rather than remunerated for the amount of hours worked.

Several suggestions were agreed upon at the end of the discussion:

The drivers’ forum that gathered on November 14 represents the nucleus of a Drivers’ Parliament, which will meet regularly to discuss and establish a course of action to protect drivers’ rights.

WAC - Maan, through advising with the members of the drivers’ forum will initiate contact with various institutions and the media in an effort to form a public and credible body, which will serve as the base and voice for truck drivers in their dealings with the wider public and the establishment.

WAC - Maan will provide its offices, members and legal department for the drivers’ use. It will aim to spread information as extensively as possible, so that any driver who is employed in dangerous conditions, has been dismissed unlawfully, or has been injured in an accident, may receive comprehensive legal assistance.

Membership of WAC – Maan: The drivers’ forum will strive to sign on as many truck drivers as possible to a WAC - Maan registration form. Signing the registration form will serve as a kind of declaration by the driver of his support for the initiative of a drivers’ organization within WAC - Maan’s framework. Signing the registration form will not commit the driver to any payment at the moment. WAC - Maan will however encourage drivers who so wish, to become full WAC - Maan members through a monthly membership fee paid directly by the driver through his bank account.

WAC - Maan and the drivers’ Parliament will look into the possibility of a regional conference either in the north or south, in order to make participation easier.

## **Israël. Maan Has Established a “Truck Drivers’ Parliament” on its Way to Founding a New Union**

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*Post-scriptum :*

*For more details on WAC Maan*

See [www.wac-maan.org.il](http://www.wac-maan.org.il)