



## **The global agreement with El Corte Inglés, a pioneering agreement**

**CCOO Industria and UGT FICA have just signed the first global multisectorial agreement with a Spanish multinational enterprises, El Corte Inglés.**

**It ensures union participation in the implementation of international labor standards in its supply chain. The agreement signals that collaboration is crucial and an important step is taken, consolidating the path towards a more sustainable industry.**

Globalization and the growth of production or value chains are two inevitable phenomena. One of the instruments that allow progress to be made is trade union involvement in corporate social responsibility. Trade unionism has been a latecomer to this process and has not always taken the right initiatives. Some have already materialized in concrete commitments.

Undoubtedly, it is possible to fight against the consequences that this manifestation has on labor relations. It is necessary to globalize the rights of those who work in supply chains; to defend decent and dignified work in the world and to include value chains in their entirety.

Companies are beginning to assume that corporate social responsibility is socially enforceable because of the impact their activities have on society. They must share their practice and control with the "impacted" groups. These include the people who work in the supply chains of multinationals, the unions that organize and represent them, and trade unionism in the parent company.

CCOO's extensive experience in corporate social responsibility meant that we did not need an agreement to intervene. We have always understood that the commitments made by companies, even if they are unilateral, are enforceable by the unions. This was also assumed by El Corte Inglés, since the beginning of our joint activities.

In 2012, we began to monitor the problems that appeared in the production chain of this department store company. It extended the work that began six years earlier on shared corporate social responsibility, when El Corte Inglés formed the stakeholder group.

Joint work was also undertaken to approach the factories and workshops working for the Spanish company in Morocco. Some time later, several suppliers were visited in other countries: Portugal, Turkey, Bulgaria, India, etc. We collaborated in the search for solutions to the problems that were detected.

The road travelled has now allowed us to sign an agreement based on the shared conviction that collaboration between the parties is crucial to improve the situation of those who manufacture for El Corte Inglés and to create labor relations that work. This demonstrates that we have already overcome a first stage, in which broad business sectors understood that their corporate social responsibility emanated from their decision alone.

This is the first agreement of its kind to be signed in Spain. It is global and includes 27 industrial sectors: textiles, clothing, footwear, consumer goods, electronics and food, among others. It establishes a system for protecting and strengthening the rights of the people who work in the factories and workshops of its 4,380 suppliers, who manufacture products for El Corte Inglés in 67 countries around the world.

The signing of this agreement guarantees and reinforces the application of all conventions, international labor standards and regulations of the International Labor Organization (ILO). As a starting point, the rights to freedom of association, collective bargaining and strike; minimum wage and working time; the right to health and safety at work; non-discrimination and the prohibition of child and forced labor and the eradication of any form of abuse, harassment or intimidation, which are included in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights; the UN Declaration on the Rights of the Child and the Principles of the United Nations Global Compact for Business and Human Rights, are taken as a starting point.

Specifically, with the application of the OECD guidelines for multinational enterprises; and in its Due Diligence Directive. Integrating the rights to apply the principles and guidelines of the ILO Tripartite Declaration of Principles, with respect to multinational companies, and the monitoring of activities between companies and unions through this body. As well as the labor principles subscribed to by El Corte Inglés, at a global level, regardless of the regulations in force in each particular country.

**Objective: Protect workers rights**

This agreement ensures monitoring throughout El Corte Inglés' global supply chain. It provides mechanisms and standards to ensure effective compliance with international standards and empower trade union organizations in the countries where it operates. The aim is to protect the rights of people working in its global supply chain.

El Corte Inglés is committed to providing Spanish trade unions with an updated list of its entire supply chain on an annual basis. Joint fact-finding visits will also be scheduled; local unions will be allowed access to workplaces, factories or workshops and common strategies will be agreed for each country, including training. If problems arise that cannot be solved by agreement, a joint mediation and arbitration mechanism will be used.

CCOO de Industria's relationship with El Corte Inglés is strengthened by this global agreement. It is an important step towards securing labor relations throughout its supply chain, with the aim of promoting a properly functioning dialogue in factories and workshops. This consolidates the path towards a more sustainable industry in Spain.

This agreement, added to the open negotiations with other Spanish brands in the sector and the union work extensively developed with Inditex and Mango, shows a new reality. It forces us to accept the responsibility that trade union organizations have at the head of multinational companies. It also confirms that the joint work of trade union federations, global and local, is fundamental, and that defending labor rights in the most distant supplier of "our" companies, allows us to defend our own.

The experience of CCOO Industry points, at the same time, to a new co-responsibility in the definition, implementation and monitoring of commitments to full respect for fundamental labor rights throughout the world. It includes countries whose legislation, and above all practice, does not provide this guarantee.

**Víctor Garrido Sotomayor**  
**International Trade Union Action CCOO Industria**  
**Global Coordinator for IndustriALL Global Union of the Global Framework Agreement with Inditex**  
**and coordinator of the International Agreements with Mango and El Corte Inglés.**