Concerning: A DISTRESS CALL from one employee on behalf of 260 co-workers

Dear,

My name is Ronald Allaer and I work as a Captain on a tugboat in the Port of Antwerp on the Scheldt. In a wonderful company with a more than 100 year history. Employees learned the trade from father to son. At the moment the company URS Belgium, daughter enterprise of Kotug Smit Towage, employs approximately 250 employees in our 3 main ports: Antwerp, Ghent and Zeebrughes. In all these years the company had a correct management with respect for Belgian legislation and the need of its staff. The company assumed its social responsability by offering a side entrance to job seekers through a system of Individual Vocational training assisted in this endeavour by the VDAB (the Flemish Service for Employment brokerage).

Over the last 10 years our jobs in the port of Antwerp are being seriously threatened, by a non-recognised tug operator Antwerp Towage. This company is a paper construction hiring other companies without any respect for Belgian social and tax legislation. You can compare it to letter box company constructions in the road transport sector. An empty box company who circumvents all legislation via fake constructions thus competing below price. This goes against the principle of laboris loci that is being promoted by the European Union.

We feel abandoned by the Belgian government and the Antwerp Port Authorities. How can such a beautiful and lucratif company, where all employees pay their taxes and follow the rules, continue to exist?

Therefore this DISTRESS CALL: we demand your support in our fight for fair competition, in order to safeguard 260 employees’ jobs. Please ACT NOW and adopt anti-dumping clauses before 260 families will have to live on support.

Looking forward to a positive way out.

Kind regards,

Ronald Allaer