

S.V.E.O.D's presentation to the open meeting
“A dialogue on changes, struggles and practices
in food delivery to resist to new forms of exploitation”,
in Turin (Italy), March 2022



“Base Union Assembly for Bike and Motorbike Workers”
(SVEOD)-2007

sveod.gr / info@sveod.gr

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0.1 | What is “Base Syndicalism”?

How does the Base Union Assembly for Bike and Motorcycle Workers function and what kind of syndicalism it promotes.

1.1 Principles of functioning.

The general assembly of SVEOD, through the regular or extraordinary weekly assemblies, is the highest decisional body of the union.

Decisions are taken in the assembly as a result of collective discussions that can be sometimes easy, other times more difficult. In the discussions we run out all the available time we have, and many times it takes entire weeks or even months to come to a decision. Our aim is to go through all the issues that we are involved in and to resolve them, because our collective experience has taught us that it is impossible to communicate to the society any kind of topic or analysis, if you don't understand it deeply yourself first, if you haven't already made it your own. Furthermore, there are certain matters that gain their place in the agenda of the union gradually, several years after their first appearance in the assembly. For every decision, our goal is to reach the highest possible level of agreement, and we don't proceed to implement our plans unless the percentage of consensus doesn't come close or even exceed the 90%.

In the permanent assembly of the union, decisions are taken through the process of synthesis and collective formulation. Political and syndicalist disagreements in the assembly are frequent, and stating well-argued analyses is a necessary precondition for conducting any kind of discussion. In this process everybody has the right to participate and as a union we believe this represents a fertile way to educate the new, as well as as the old members to the culture of base syndicalism.

The minoritarian opinions expressed in the assembly have the right to differentiate themselves and to develop alongside the majoritarian ones, as long as they don't oppose the statute of the assembly.

SVEOD doesn't have paid members, nobody gets paid for the work he or she offers to the union. The slogan “every member is also an union executive” is a basic principle of our strategy. We exercise horizontal and anti-hierarchical base syndicalism. We want every member to be equal not simply on the basis of the statute, but to be equally capable on a syndicalist level.

In order to avoid the emergence of camouflaged bureaucrats, “experts”, “charismatic leaders” or seats of power, the union holds elections every twelve months with a unified ballot, without factions of political organisations or parties. The Administrative Council is constantly renewed to avoid the emergence of every kind of administrative degeneration and to give the possibility to most possible members to carry out the decisions of the assembly, when and where there is the need to do it. On the basis of an internal obligation that we gave ourselves, the outgoing elected members cannot candidate themselves again for the new Council.

In this way (which is, through a twelve-months mandate) we aim at the renewal and the creation of new members that will assume the responsibility to execute the decisions of the assembly. For any member that ignores this internal obligation of the union and that presents for the second year in a row his nomination, the assembly will commit not only to stigmatise his or her behaviour, but to vote against him/her. Furthermore, even for the entire duration of their annual mandate, the members of the administrative council can be called by the assembly to be held accountable for their behaviour in every single moment. For the assembly, the election to the Administrative Council is considered honorific. The members

of the A.C. have exactly the same rights as every other member, but they also have extra responsibilities in relation to the other members. The cashier is accountable for the correct operation of the cash register. The secretary is responsible for the transcription of the summaries that result from the assemblies. The president is responsible for the communication with the institutions. All the members of the A.C. represent the union on an institutional level when it comes to having meetings with the bosses, the institutions that represent them and the public authorities. At the same time, for reasons of equality but also to share the workload between us, the A.C. authorizes also member of the assembly to represent the union in the relationships with the Ministry, with the Inspectorate of Labour and at every institutional level. The A.C. doesn't make decisions but is responsible for executing the decisions of the assemblies (for example, notifying a mobilisation or presenting a deposition to the ministry of employment concerning Unified Profession, Company Bike or Motorbike, Means of Personal Protection and Hazardous Occupation Insurance).

The members of the Administrative Council don't use their right for syndicalist permits in order to not distinguish themselves from the rest of the members and colleagues in the workplaces. In the 15 years of our union's existence our members have kept a series of internal obligations that concerns the culture of base syndicalism. One of these is to not candidate themselves to public local and national elections, and to not use the union as a means to achieve their own personal ambitions or aspirations.

SVEOD is not subsidised by the state. The finances of the union depend entirely on the contributions of our members. The contribution fee is 8 euro every month, reaching 96 euro per year and being comparatively the highest contribution fee for a union in Greece. In this way we are able to be economically independent.

1.2 Political and syndicalist principles

Both on a political and syndicalist level, we do not let our identity to be defined by any external factors. In the assembly we collectively compose and formulate our plans, we shape our strategy and we choose the place, the time, the length and the means of our actions.

The respect that we draw from the class and the social base to which we belong, is the reflection of the respect that we show towards the principles and values of direct democracy and autonomous class syndicalism.

We oppose every kind of delegation and hierarchy (both formal and informal). As a union we consider these as a form of serious degeneration on a social, political and syndicalist level and for this reason they constitute issues that keeps us constantly occupied, since our goal is to go beyond delegation and hierarchy, following the logic of "every member is also a union executive". Which is, the logic of participation.

At the same time we oppose racism, fascism and every kind of discrimination and division based of sex, gender, sexuality or age.

The assembly doesn't release interviews to the mass media and we refer every interested person that wants information from us to our collective statements that are posted on the website of the union sveod.gr. In this way we avoid the conversion of the union and of its members in some media exhibitionists, we avoid the creation of "charismatic figures", "characters", "leaders" and "representatives". We propagandise our word and our action through our own means avoiding the distorting presence of every kind of intermediary. We turn our back to the paid journalism of the mental dullness and the fake news, and all of those who seek attention and publicity through the mass media, we leave them to the judgment of time and of the colleagues.

Our position regarding the mass media goes back many years now. And to be absolutely clear, we present intact the following text from 2007 that reflects the founding statements of the union and clarifies our positions until today.

1.3 Our assembly and the mass media.

As an assembly of workers, from the very first moment we distrusted the mass media and the journalists. We have been cautious if not negative towards newspapers, periodicals, radio stations and the TV. They have given us many opportunities to be represented, however as a collective, as assembly we always refused. And as an assembly we decided to make public the reasons we assume this position in order to not repeat the same thing over and over. Naturally, since nobody is forced to follow our anti-media logic, we hope that with our arguments we will be able to convince even those that disagree with us.

Why then, we say no to the media?

One of the reasons is that as an assembly we function in a direct democratic way. Which means that we all participate in the decisions that are taken during our weekly assemblies. We are not interested in representation but in participation. The media, as it is well known, always searches for the leader, the charismatic figure, the expert, the one. Exactly the opposite of what we want. Which is, the many that discuss, decide, write and make public their decisions. And this leads us to the second problem.

These collective decisions, how will people get to know them?

Through our own means. Through our newspaper, the flyers, the posters, the banners, the slogans, the word and the position of every colleague in the squares and in the workplaces. Nobody can express better than us what our own needs are. We don't need experts, we don't need connections with "people at the top", but colleagues that want to take life in their own hands and struggle. We don't think of ourselves as celebrities, neither we wait for the 15 minutes of publicity promised by Andy Warhol to the senile western world. In continuity with the unions of the past century, we are obliged to not repeat the mistakes of the past and to rephrase syndicalism without intermediaries, against the middle-ages of the working reality.

But do we have the know-how, do we have the infrastructures for something like this?

Yes, we do and we did demonstrate it with the campaigns, the motorbike demos, the sharing of our flyers and posters that we did up until now. We pursue participation. We aim at taking part in the social, political and cultural role that corresponds to each and every one that calls him/herself a member of a union of workers. And it would be a mistake to entrust this to all sorts of experts. What we want is for all colleagues to have a voice and an opinion in the collective formulation of our mobilizations. In this collective formulation, in the escalation of our demands and our struggles. We all live more or less the same things, we are all being boiled in the same pot. For this reason we all have a lot to say, a lot to write and a lot to share. This text that you are now holding in your hands (the newspaper of the union, "Sto Relandì"), like every action we do, is also your own, is open to your own text, your own article without the intermediation of every journalist that, no matter what we say, will always look at things from his/her own perspective or from the point of view of his boss.

And what is the journalist?

He/She is an employee. That works for a newspaper. That usually belongs to some corporation. Which serves specific interests. And since we don't believe in independent journalism and we have seen too many times the media turn people against the struggles of workers, we keep our distance or, as the people say, we watch our clothes to still have maybe half of them at the end of the day. Every time they mentioned us in the media we always observed the following fact: they never put photos that show how many we are. They never mention the texts that we write in the assembly. In the case of the cheerful assembly that voted on the statute of the union, they didn't mention even one paragraph of the statute and in the

best case they presented us as some kind of weirdos motorbike fanatics. And it is perfectly logical.

What should understand about our needs a person that looks at us as nothing more than a "hot topic"? A person that is capable of putting up around our neck a bell in order to sell us at a good price to his bosses?

For this reason we decide to mobilise through our own means. Without depending on neither good nor bad journalists. Neither progressive ones nor conservatives. Until now we managed to do it greatly, and as time will pass and the participation of the colleagues will increase, then also our infrastructures will become better organised. And our texts will reach even longer distances.

And for the impatient people that would like to see us in the front page, we suggest to them to be patient. Let's participate in the process, let's take initiative, let's put your own backs in building the union and put aside any kind of "divine intervention". In this reality we are living in, nobody will give you something without something else in return. Similarly, we also don't want to give away our rights. Because when you give someone the right to represent you, even if it's in a positive way, that doesn't mean that at the first spin of the wheel he/she will not find something to say against you. And at this point, maybe someone will ask.

And all of this will protect us from bad critics and the distortion by part of the media?

No. However, at least we will not have given our consent to logics that we know sooner or later will turn against us. And most importantly, the communication with the colleagues and the society will result from us and our activities. Because one thing is to stand on your feet and another thing is to stand on the back of others. At the end of the day, the journalists that want to speak about us, animated by their best intentions, will have to report our word intact as it is in our texts that are produced in the base assembly for bike and motorbike workers, that circulate publicly in any case. Why such obsession with interviews? Why such obsession with personal stories, with the portraits and not with the collective struggles? Let them report the text of our syndicalist body. But maybe, that doesn't sell well. The worker doesn't sell. The direct democracy in the unions doesn't sell. The procedures we follow don't sell. At least they don't sell as much as the tear-jerking stories about delivery boys do, these stupid "rock" approaches to motorbike drivers and other similar bullshits. Because it's bullshit we are talking about.

And to paraphrase an old saying, **"when they show to the journalist the working class, they just look at the lifestyle"**.

1.4 How the union functions

SVEOD's work is based upon the weekly assembly of Saturday, the monthly general assembly of the union (every first Sunday of the month) and the weekly opening of the union's offices.

Every Saturday starting from 18.00 the assembly is open to all the colleagues and we discuss matters of tactics and strategy for the development of the union. In the assembly, everyone has the right to intervene regardless of their degree of participation in the union. The weekly assemblies, with the variety of issues that are discussed, function in a preliminary way towards the monthly general assembly.

Our general assembly takes place on the first Sunday of every odd month. The deferred assemblies happen the first Sunday of every even month, and other extraordinary assemblies can occur whenever the assembly decides so.

In order to avoid being restrained by junk bureaucratic protocols and procedures, in the face of an urgent problem that need to be answered, the assembly acts by taking the initiative according with the principles and values of base syndicalism (for example, if there is the

need to intervene with an action in a workplace where a colleague is facing a problem).

Moreover, every Tuesday from 18.00 the union's offices are open to every colleague, either registered member or not, that is in search for counselling in relation to working issues like insurance, salary, means of personal protection, complaints to the Labour Inspectorate, injunctions or legal actions against the bosses and every other possible labour dispute.

For meetings and communications with other unions, worker's collectives, social, political collectives, or with the ministries and the public authorities, every single time we choose two or three delegates so that everyone have the opportunity to participate in the public class dialogue, to communicate and express the opinions and the word of the union. The delegates can either offer themselves voluntarily or be chosen by the assembly.

1.5 Means of addressing to society – Means and structures of struggle

A. Means of addressing to society

For the purpose of sharing and spreading our word and our analyses, for strengthening our presence and establishing contact, for building trust with the colleagues through the word that becomes action, the union distributes the newspaper "Sto Relandi". It is a periodical publication without price that is shared for free at the crossroads and in the workplaces, during our organised weekly sharings of the newspaper outside of courier companies or in the biggest areas concerning foodservices in the city. In the 15 years of the union we have published 45 different editions of the newspaper and we have shared hand to hand more than 100.000 copies.

The activity of sharing the newspaper, individually or collectively, keeps us with our feet on the ground. It gives us the opportunity to be in constant contact with reality. We learn first-hand what happens in the workplaces, who are the bosses that hold the record in terms of licentiousness, we meet colleagues on strike, we dialogue with them face to face, we inform them of their rights and we communicate the struggles that happens in our profession from one shop to the next, whether it's about platforms, franchises or chain stores.

The editorial committee discusses the materials of the newspaper in the context of the assembly and it is open to every member of the union.

The writing of the texts and articles is a right but also a duty of every member of the assembly to the extent that it doesn't promote nationalist, racist or sexist positions and opinions that reinforce the exploitation between human beings.

The expenses of the newspaper of the union are exclusively the responsibility of the assembly.

Also, in order to spread our voice and analyses even more, the union has created a website. At the address sveod.gr, updates and communications are uploaded, but also pamphlets, articles, texts, analyses, posters, and whatever other thing we choose to use as an assembly for spreading our word.

The union also has an e-mail address and a telephone number which can be found on our website. They represent very useful tools through which colleagues come in contact with the union either because they want to ask for some infos or because they want to report and discuss working issues. At the same time, the union meets colleagues on the streets and in the workplaces and gives them flyers and special editions of the newspaper like the "notes" for the colleagues of E-Food and Wolt.

B. Means and structures of struggle

I) Base collectives in the workplaces

We support base collectives in the workplaces and wherever possible we also support the creation of company unions with direct democratic features and horizontal, anti-hierarchical structures.

II) Motorcycle demos

Motorcycle demos constitute for us a multi-purpose tool. First of all, it's the meeting point for all of those that work with the moto. It's the moment in which we refuse to drive alone, and we demonstrate we can march together. It's the collective river that makes us visible. Our own way to communicate to society our demands. Crossing streets and squares in order to give and receive courage from colleagues. The final stage of a class, syndicalist action, a work stoppage or a strike and the point of contact with other parts of the working class. It's the street depiction of our demands, the call towards other colleagues to join and make the union stronger. The day in which the slogans are being reflected from the walls of the city and reach the ears of an entire society. The day of every motorcycle demo completes a cycle of struggle and at the same time it symbolises the beginning of the next cycle. It's a day in which we are impatient to see how the day will develop because during the years so many times it gave us moments of joy, pride, celebration and victory.

III) Actions in the workplaces

We carry out actions in shops and businesses against firings, to denounce bosses' terrorism, to protest against working accidents, to make public the multitude of abuses the bosses are responsible of. The majority of the colleagues who work in a shop support our actions. And this is the result of restless work and the coherent presence of the union on one side, and on the other is due to the difficulties of the job, to the common empathy and the hardships we face in our daily work. In our actions we always share texts in the neighbourhood and at the nearest crossroads, coming in contact with many workers of the area as they come across the shop in which we are doing our action. In this way, the news about an action we made in Pogràti will reach from Ghudì to Imittò, and from the centre of the city straight to Karèa, also thanks to the nature of the job, the riders will bring the news to their workplaces.

IV) Work Stoppage

Work stoppages represent another arrow in the quiver of the union. When circumstances require it, we proceed to execute work stoppages and we intervene in the shop or businesses where the colleague is demanding for his/her rights. Work stoppages that concern specific and circumstantial demands are organized quickly but never in a rush. Work stoppages that concern fixe demands, like under-declared or non-declared work and hazardous occupation insurance, are propagandised and organized with a lot of time in advance, like we do with our strikes. When as a union we choose to intervene with a work stoppage, for matters that concerns our job, we organized targeted communicative actions to inform all the workers of the area about our intentions. With this type of planning we are able to put in place, together with the workers of the area, a general suspension from work, and our work stoppage finally paralyzes the whole area for the entire duration of the work stoppage.

V) Strikes

The union doesn't take the decision to go on strike in order to do "revolutionary gymnastics" and "shooting a gun". The assembly prepares the strikes several months in advance with the aim of communicating the content of the demands to more possible sectors of society. With the multi-month propaganda that precedes every strike we go to every square and workplace with the purpose of informing and discussing with the colleagues. We aim to meet

and interact with the society and the movement, with working class groups and collectives.

The propaganda of the strikes includes a copy of our newspaper "Sto Relandì" edited for the specific strike, flyers, posters, banners, stickers, graffiti, and public events and actions, all of which containing the specific demands of every strike. In our strikes, together with the socialisation/communication of our demands concerning the problems we face in our job, we aim to connect ourselves with the larger issues that concern us as a class.

VI. Complaint at the Labour Inspectorate (S.EP.E)

It is a very frequent procedure, a fix tactic of the union for the resolution of labour disputes since our job is affected by the bosses' violation of the labour laws. Labour disputes concerning back pays, unpaid overtime, bonuses, expenses for maintenance and gas for the moto, constitute the menu of the bosses' abuses. Meetings at the SEPE concern the worker, the representatives of the union, the inspector and the boss or someone for him. Every worker that goes for a complaint to SEPE comes in contact with us and we find an arrangement, so that the best plan and result can be obtained from the situation. The experience of the union helps with the detailed registration of the complaint, with the management of the proceedings, and with the correct prosecution of the whole process.

A series of fixed demands, that comes from the victories of the union like the law n. 4611/2019 are always included in the context of what is being demanded through the struggle. Our logic is to listen to the needs of every worker, but always keeping in mind the interests of our profession and our class. In the majority of cases, the correct framing of the labour dispute by the union determines the result and gives to the worker the chance to win in the court, often with the weapon of a positive report from the inspector. Furthermore, the union regularly goes to SEPE asking the inspectors to execute targeted controls in specific shops and businesses to catch them in the act when they are involved in violations.

VII. Judiciary struggle

It consists of a very difficult, time-consuming and expensive process for every colleague, and also for the union that is constantly called to argue with the blind bourgeois justice system. This of course doesn't intimidate us, nor has it ever brought us to the point of resignation. We face as just another front of competition, another front of revendication and victory to put a stop to the offensive of the bosses. A front that gives us the opportunity to impose the application of the labour legislation, which has been achieved through the struggles of our class. We aim, just as with the whole range of issues that concern the union, at being methodical, careful and watchful at the data, insightful at the way we approach every separate case. Collaborating with the lawyers, we prepare our line of defence to use in the court. We listen with attention to the opinions of the lawyers, however the last word belongs to us, in relation to the problems we want to expose and our syndicalist aims. The lawsuits that different colleagues have won are many, and this fills us with courage and willingness to continue with the same strength, always taking into consideration the mistakes, the voids and weaknesses that arise.

VIII. Ministry of Labour

It is a very important chapter in the tactic and strategy of development of the union and by extension of the profession and the class. Since our foundation, we aim at improving the conditions of our profession and this also passes from the doors of the ministry. As a union we believe that the state has continuity. And for this we have come in contact repeatedly with the ministry of labour, regardless of the government in charge, with the purpose of communicating our demands and pressuring it to negotiate and regulate the labour matters. The multitude of the analytical and scientifically documented deposition that we have presented to the ministry that we don't wait or expect testimony from it, instead we demand an improved regulatory framework for labour rights in our profession, with the best possible working conditions. The meaning and the substance of the unified profession just

as the hazardous occupation insurance has been presented to the ministry meticulously with extensive and analytical depositions. The continuity, the coherence, the attention to our goals, and our persistence drove us to the approval of the law n. 4611/2019 where the following rights were won for all drivers of two-wheels vehicles, whether working in delivery, couriers or external workers:

- a) company vehicle, or refund for maintenance and repairmen expenses equal to 15% of the basic salary
- b) the refund for gas expenses
- c) the basic Means of Personal Protection (M.P.P)
- d) substantial acknowledgment of the unified profession, since the law refers to delivery riders, couriers and external workers that use a two-wheel vehicle, which is sum of workers of the job independently from the branch of the economy.
- e) the registration of the vehicle to the Ergani¹

IX. Negotiation with the bosses

When a colleague tells the union that they have a problem in the company in which he/she works, we choose to make contact with the boss. This approach takes place in order to get a complete picture of the situation but also as a way to show good intentions. In case there isn't any common ground for agreement, to the purpose of finding a solution to the conflict we proceed:

- a) to do an action in the shop in which the colleague works
- d) to present a complaint to SEPE
- c) to do an action in the shop in which the colleague works and to present a complaint to SEPE

1.6 “The ant’s work”

Since the foundation of SVEOD we posed 4 main demands concerning our profession.

- 1) Company vehicle
- 2) Means of Personal Protection (MPP)
- 3) Hazardous occupation insurance
- 4) Unified Profession. A single profession for all the workers that uses a two-wheels vehicle for their job (couriers, delivery, external workers).

The first years, the first times we started going out to give the newspaper to colleagues and we had the first discussions with other workers, these four demands sounded utopic to the vast majority of the colleagues who were shrugging their shoulders or turning their back on us. Accustomed to defeat, they were exorcising syndicalism and trying to discourage us with their bitter smiles. They were convinced that struggles cannot bring results. And especially the demand for hazardous occupation insurance, constituted the compendium of our weakness, since in their opinion this demand belonged to the world of fantasies.

1 Employers are obligated to declare to the informative system Ergani all the datas that concerns the workers they employ: hiring, dismissal, working schedule, as well as the datas of the vehicle the workers use for their job, like registration number, licence plate, ecc. [n.d.t.]

However, the years passed and time flowed. Our continuous and coherent presence made the profession visible and made the colleagues stronger by means of detailed analyses and well-organised arguments. Our hard work and sacrifices transformed our collective view into a reality. We promised, "we will not change profession, we'll change the profession". And it is a promise that continues to symbolise our struggles. We left behind us the bosses' narrative of the "delivery boys" to regain our pride as workers and our dignity as working class. And right there where the class struggle was retreating or disappearing, we created embankments of disobedience and counterattack, we broke the complicit silence of the bosses and the subservients, we created outbreaks of struggle in the shops, measuring ourselves without cowardice against the firings, the bouncers, the para-state, "the men of the night" and we counted victories in terms of paid back wages and reinstatements. All of this had a direct correlation with the "ant's work". And we continue "from struggling on the streets, to the street of the struggle". All the analysis that is produced by the assembly of the union is completed by what we call "the ant's work". Blood of the same blood of the working class, our members cover the streets and the squares with their 8-hour shifts, they talk about the union, they encourage the colleagues to demand. With the newspaper, the spray-can, the paint and the poster in their hands, so that the class word of our job can remain permanently present in the public space and gain some further ground every single time. Our constant presence regardless of weather conditions and political conjunctures, the trust and respect of the colleagues became reality thanks to the "ant's work".

The acceptance of the word of the union by the sum of the colleagues brought our demands to the spotlight, and by now those that dare to disdain us or to turn their back on us can be characterised as purely picturesque.

With the law 4611/2019, articles 55 and 56, that was voted in May 2019, the union gathered the collective fruits of the colleagues that with constancy went on strike on our calls and that support our struggle.

Two of our fixed demands – company vehicle and MPP – were legislated, while the demand for "unified profession" became substantially a fact from the moment that the law includes everyone who drives a two-wheels vehicle, either working in delivery, courier and external workers. Supplementarily according to the law 4611/19, since December 2020 the bosses are obliged to present for every motorcycle that is used by their workers, for all the duration of their work, for the transport or delivery of products and objects, the form E13, in the informative system ERGANI, and after we sent a deposition to the Ministry of Labour in March 2021 we also wait for the full normalisation of the matters that concern the standards, the technical characteristics and the certification of validity of the annexed delivery box.

However, the most important thing of all for our profession and our class, since we drag up from the oblivion the issue for Hazardous Occupation Insurance, is that it is considered obvious for all the colleagues that the inscription of our profession between the hazardous occupations it's just a matter of time.

1.7 Goals and objectives

Our syndicalism is a class syndicalism, it pertains to the worker's movement and the working society. The political surplus value that is produced by the interaction between the union with the working class and the society is not intended neither for personal opportunism nor is supposed to serve party's interests. We want this political surplus to return back to the base, to serve, to educate and cultivate the base of the working class.

Since our foundation in 2007 until now, our purpose is to create a massive, combative union that demands and wins the small daily battles in the workplaces against the signs of time that would like to see the working class retreat and succumb. Our goal is the mass and demanding presence of our union everywhere a colleague needs our help (whether courier, delivery, external worker with a motorcycle or bike). As an assembly, we aim at the intensification of class conflict, the improvement of the social dialogue and we neither consent neither submit ourselves to the logic of "the social partners" and of the "social

peace" when it demolishes our personality and our working rights.

Furthermore, we aim at the socialisation of our word, at connecting ourselves with workers of other jobs and professions, at spreading the ideas, practices and actions of base syndicalism in the worker's movement. We aim at promoting base syndicalism and direct democracy in the unions so that the decisions will be taken by the worker's base and the general assembly will be as a matter of fact the highest decisional body of the unions. In these terms, our goal is to participate in the organisation of a large front of workers with anti-hierarchical, direct democratic characteristics that will not submit itself neither will be represented by the syndicalist bureaucracy of the parties, of the political organisations, of the Workers' Centers and the G.S.E.E. Our goal is victory and only victory, everywhere there will be the need for us to intervene. We believe that with the weapons of a continuous developed analysis, well-organised arguments, faith, rightness, massiveness, creativity, persistence, coherence and decisiveness we will continue to fight every obstacle we'll find in front of us.

1.8 Second-level and third-level unions and federations

The union doesn't participate in the E.K.A, in the G.S.E.E, in the PA.ME² or any other second-level or third-level federation since as a first-level union we are not willing to give up our right to negotiate in autonomy from third parties. At the same time, we are politically and philosophically opposed to the involvement of political parties in the syndicalist and class struggle. We think that this choice, this specific direction, the subordination of the class struggle to the interests and aspirations of the parties, contributed in a crucial way to make syndicalism despised by the workers, and they made it become synonymous with fraud and parasitism. This happens as a consequence of the vertical way of functioning of the organisation, of the values and principles that they refuse, of the dysfunction of the bureaucratic structures, that can be reassumed in the following way:

1. Vertical hierarchy
2. Concentration of power in the hands of a few
3. Exercise of the administration by an elite – usually limited without the necessary direct democratic scale
4. Lack of dialogue with the class and the colleagues
5. Lack of assemblies, except the usual annual assembly or when elections are declared (which means every three or four years)
6. Emergence of professional members, who are detached from the working reality, without any connection with the workers, dressed up with laurel's crowns that the party gave them together with generous rewards. Regardless of the starting point and the best intentions they may have had, from the fall of the dictatorship until today they end up serving the system they supposedly should fight.
7. The members adopt predetermined roles and the formalisation of the roles is strong.

At the opposite side of the centralization, Base Syndicalism is based upon the "permanent assembly" and lively, horizontal, anti-hierarchical processes, and is based on our view for a world where the exploitation between human beings will be a thing of the past.

1. The members aim at working collectively against the divisions, at respecting the particularities, at incorporating the diverse, at promoting education, the self-learning and to share knowledge against specialisation.

2 The E.K.A. (Center of Labour Unions of Athens) is a second-level union with a regional base. PA.ME is also a second level union tied to the Communist Party (K.K.E.). G.S.E.E is a general confederation of unions (third-level union), the only one of this kind in Greece. [n.d.t.]

2. Hierarchy is at the opposite extreme of horizontality since it supports and is supported by vertical structures and among others, is to be considered a degeneration since it promotes delegation and intellectual laziness.
3. The administration is collective, is based on the working base, decisions are taken by the assemblies.
4. Power is in the hands of assemblies, it is broad and decentralised.
5. Against fixed roles, what is being pursued is the biggest possible participation, and against formalisation stands the wealth that comes from the synthesis and the collective formulation.
6. Subjects themselves take the initiative: first-level organisations and base collectives of workers, through synthesis and collective formulation, mutual adjustment, self-control and self-critic.
7. Relations are horizontal, which means equal participation of the members to the synthesis, collective formulation and finally to the decision-making processes. Relations are determined by experience, coherence, responsibility of every member and not by seniority or other forms of hierarchy. This condition also includes the **responsibility** of everybody in the implementation of the decisions taken in the general assembly.
8. Disputes among members are solved through synthesis and collective formulation, mutual interaction and compromise, communication and self-criticism.
9. The horizontal exchange of information, knowledge, positions, proposals, arguments, experience and conceptions constitutes the content of communication.
10. Mutual respect and trust derive from the coherence, the participation and the assumption of responsibility of every member separately.

1.9 Base Syndicalism doesn't want sheep nor shepherds.

«I neither want to rule or to be ruled» – (Herodotus history)

Base syndicalism doesn't constitute in any case a form of degeneration. It originates from collective experience, it learns from the heritage of the struggles of the workers movement from the end of 19th century up until today.

Since our foundation in 2007, our proposals cultivate the soil of self-organisation, of horizontality and anti-hierarchy. The coordination that we pursue, we don't want it to be defined by superficiality, rush, sentimental approaches, party's interests, vertical structures, centralization and hierarchy.

It is 15 years now that the first-level union of the job (delivery workers, couriers, external workers) SVEOD is based on the framework of base syndicalism, the framework of movement's theory and action, in one of the greatest bets of our class for re-organization and counterattack. And for this reason we don't want, even with the best intentions, which is well-know how they usually open the path to hell, to consent to propositions, logics and plans that either on purpose or involuntarily, refers to traditional models regulated by bureaucratic and party's syndicalist conceptions that in the last decades drove the worker's movement from defence and retreat to defeat and social disdain.

As SVEOD, as fist-level union, through the process of the permanent assembly, we draw our short-term tactics and our long-term strategies. We want our political relationship to be with the many faces of the movement and not with a political organisation or party. We chose to invest in the dialogue and the interaction with the different social, class and workers' autonomies in the context of an exchange between equals, the synthesis and the collective formulation of ideas.

We, the working class, the working base to which we belong, we got tired of those that devalue our intelligence and betray our trust. We are disgusted by the syndicalists that get compensated with nominees and that make careers to the expenses of our colleagues. And we will state it simply: how is it possible to gather and rally, to convince, to inspire your working base when as a syndicalist you don't even try to save face anymore?

Yesterday green syndicalists and today blue syndicalists, green-blue syndicalists and others³, drove syndicalism to disdain, contempt and moral corruption. The working base look and judge those syndicalists that use their multi-years presence in the union of the party or the political organisation to get promoted to administrative positions, to get placed in crucial positions of the state mechanism, to participate in administrative councils and committees, insurance associations, hospitals and other organisms. As working base we look and we judge their high salaries and the sponge-cake of the wealthy that got rich on our backs.

As SVEOD, as base assembly we let ourselves to be defined by the positions we elaborate, by the collective decisions that we take through synthesis and collective formulation of the opinions of our members. Our decisions are neither sold nor bought since we don't have paid members, we didn't leave any space for money to determine our opinions. Our view does not descend from parties, inside or outside the parliament, neither it comes from political organisations, but from the dialogue that since 15 years we have started and developed with our members, the colleagues, the movement and the working society.

As base syndicalists we consider as obvious our participation in the many aspects of the life of the union. In base syndicalism, each one of us dedicate to the union the time that best corresponds to each one of us, the time that we "find" during the day, or the free time that we may have. Base syndicalism proceeds thanks to the little that becomes more. Base syndicalism cannot happen spasmodically, it requires coherence, persistence and continuity since it constitutes a piece of our daily lives. According to the possibilities and needs of every member, it puts together the maximum and the minimum participation in the assemblies, in actions, in the discussions, in the analysis, in the choice of tactics and the drawing of the strategy, in the writing of the texts, in the visits to the workplaces to share the newspaper, the pamphlet, the text, participation in putting up posters, in the chat with the colleague, participation in the resolution of practical and theoretical problems. Each one of us that participates knows that base syndicalism is a collective occupation that only brings ethical retributions. And precisely because it is collective, it aims at blocking the road that leads to delegation, to hierarchy, and to the opportunism of all of those that try to promote their own personal interests in the name of the working class.

Base syndicalism, like every horizontal and anti-hierarchical process of the movement, is demanding. To take roots, to develop and to flower, it requires time for the broadening of the dialogue, the necessary ideological struggle that concerns the problems of the class and the working society. As SVEOD, we remain faithful to the principles and values, to the choice of self-organisation, of horizontality and anti-hierarchy while at the same time we evolve, with the interaction of the sum of the political, social, syndicalist, civil, cultural, economic and working environment. And even if we may upset many, because we differentiate ourselves from consolidated views that want syndicalism to be defined by the organisation or the party, we remain independently tied to our connection with the many faces of the movement. We continue to believe that the dialogue between equal and mutual interaction will lead our assembly to the future. Instead the limits that the political guidelines of the parties and organisations impose through predetermined and often inflexible decisions lead us to the past.

Base Syndicalism, the syndicalism that we serve, is not easy. However, it rests upon our own shoulders and it depends on our own hands. Against the current, with great effort and struggle we avoided dead ends and the degeneration of the party's bureaucratic syndicalism. We put an end to defeatism and brought an invisible profession to the spotlight. It is 15 years now that we proceed demanding, we proceed towards victorious struggles, we give content and hope to our profession and our class, and we develop the union upon 4 key points that already constitute common sense:

3 Green is the color of PASOK (Panhellenic Socialist Movement), historical party in charge for several years, mostly in the 80s and 90s. Blue is the color of New Democracy, also historical (right-wing) party in the greek political scenario and in charge at the moment. [n.d.t.]

- 1) Company vehicle
- 2) Means of Personal Protection (MPP)
- 3) Hazardous occupation insurance
- 4) Unified Profession. A single profession for all the workers that uses a two-wheels vehicle for their job (couriers, delivery, external workers).

0.2 | The struggles of the Union at both institutional and non-institutional level

Our union SVEOD has an institutional existence. As a first-level union, we have the capacity to represent colleagues during a meeting with labour inspectors or inside the courts, to call for legal strikes, and even to speak directly with the Ministry of Labour. Our institutional existence is a very useful tool for our struggles, however it's not what defines the activity of the union. Our union is characterized first and foremost by the actions we carry out with and between our colleagues, its fighting attitude and class struggle. An eventual subtraction of its institutional presence would not bring to its disintegration. On the contrary, it would make it even more dynamic.

Right before a strike or a meeting with the Ministry, the priority for us always remains in the work we do with our colleagues. The daily "ferment" between the base of the colleagues, communicating to them what our rights are, and promoting the idea that it's worth to fight for all of this. Sharing the newspaper of the union, intervening in shops and businesses in solidarity with colleagues who decided to raise their heads against their boss. Our aim is to raise the awareness that when we fight together, struggle after struggle we can count many victories in our workplaces.

For us, the strike is a very important tool for struggle. For this reason we are very careful in the way we use it. We place great importance in the way we prepare and propagandise every single strike. From the analysis and the content of the demands, till the length of the preparatory work that we think is necessary in order to rally and gather as much colleagues as possible. We don't have any desire, nor we do it in practice, to organize in a hurry moments of struggles that have the effect of a firework. As a flash in the darkness that lasts for a few seconds. Through our strikes, we aim at discussing with the colleagues about our opinions and perspective for the struggle as well as around our demands, in order to improve our profession and the working conditions of our class in general. We organize our strikes with a well-thought plan and strategy, with the purpose to make our struggles victorious. A strike that hasn't been propagandised enough, it risks to bring opposite results of those we hoped for, failing its purpose of gathering and rallying the colleagues. It could prove to the workers that in fact, through the strikes we can't really achieve anything. For us, the people that makes the wheels of the capitalist economy turning, it is of crucial importance to be careful in the way we use one of the most powerful tools we have to make it stop.

The new law Chatzidàki that was passed in July of 2021, through a series of anti-labour articles, tries to put more obstacles and difficulties in the way of the unions' functioning. A series of articles and provisions represents a direct attack at the possibilities of negotiation by part of the workers, since the bosses will be able to take more decisions by themselves without having to find first some common ground and agreement with the workers. It also poses

further requirements for declaring a strike just as for its defence, and it facilitates judiciary repression of strikes, since it provides more reasons for a strike to be recognized as illegal by the courts. Syndicalist organization and struggle in the workplaces is the direct target of these articles. Unions are supposed to collaborate and to obey to the said legislation. As a union, we took the decision to not consent with our actions to this new legislation. This disobedience that we aim to demonstrate, most likely will lead to sanctions against our union and our institutional possibilities will probably narrow down. We have the duty however to make everything in our power to make sure this law will remain nothing more than a piece of paper⁴.

Besides, several times our union decided to move outside of the law, calling for strikes and gatherings that were not legally authorized. In 2006, one year before the foundation of the union, when it was just a worker's collective with the name "Caballeros", it managed to build struggles and to bring in the spotlight the demands and the things that matter for the job and the working class. In March 2006 it organized a motorbike demo in the context of a strike in which more than 600 colleagues participated, that drove through the streets of Athens demanding Hazardous Occupation Insurance, recognition of the Unified Profession and dignity for our profession.

In 2008, actively involved in the events following the killing of 16-year old Alèxandros Grigoròpulos by the police, the union participated in the occupation of the building of GSEE (General Confederation of Workers of Greece), the major syndicalist organism of workers outside of the public sector in the country. An ineffective organism, completely detested in the hearts of the workers. The occupation of the its building gave back meaning to the participation of workers in the social struggles.

During the lock down period and while social gatherings were prohibited, the union realized a series of gatherings and strikes, breaking in practice the prohibition, chanting the slogan "The pandemic of anti-labour measures we'll be cured by class struggles". While the ban for circulating in the roads were still active, we took to the streets with a banned motorbike demo of 250 motorcycles during the strike of 1st of May 2020, demanding for 8-hours per 5-days work, full salary and insurance rights.

The institutional presence of the union is just another weapon in the arsenal of workers that aims at defending our reasons. As it is the case also for base syndicalism, we use it to strengthen our struggles. It is just one of the many tools of struggle, which will not solve all our problems neither will it be used in the same way forever. Many times in fact the state and the bosses choose to ignore our institutional existence. What many times forced them to implement the labour legislation was our own struggles, because the law alone never implement itself.

0.3 | The greek reality

3.1 The platforms as something new in the greek reality

⁴ Last summer the greek neoliberal government passed a deeply anti-worker law. In essence, the law liberates working hours (abolishes the fixed 8 hours working day). Also, this law aims to ban strikes, strike self-protection and file the members of the unions in order to weaken them. It also legislates unpaid overtime, it dissolves the Labour Inspection Department, it turns a blind eye to the dismissals of trade unionists and it abolishes Sunday as a day off.

Digital platforms for delivery started to appear in the country in 2018, without making too much noise in the beginning. While just right after the first months, they develop exponentially inside the greek reality. The first to appear is e-food (owned by Delivery Hero), that dominates in the field of food delivery with more than 4.000 workers. It was pretty soon followed by Wolt, Rocket, Box and Skrutz in the wider field of distribution of products. The platforms represent something new in the greek market. They started just a few years before the pandemic of Covid-19 and the lock-downs that followed, which is more or less between 2017 and 2018.

During the first year, they followed a "scouting" and experimental type of approach. The reason for this attitude was that in the greek market, distribution through a motorbike was already a dominant occupation that covered the needs of the tertiary sector of the economy since 4 decades now. This job is mostly done by locals with their own vehicles and for whom this is their permanent profession, but there are also occasional workers. We are talking mainly about workers with a long experience in the job, that work with employment relationship, under-declared employment, or also without any kind of fix salary or insurance and that get paid by the hour or by delivery.

The imposition of quarantines due to Covid-19 created a privileged condition for the development of the modern types of companies like the platforms. Distribution companies, as well as existing businesses with their own drivers or chains in the field of foodservice, didn't have the necessary infrastructures to cover the needs of the demand. Nowadays people order everything through their phone at home. The colleagues in the courier sector work night and day to transport products that are being ordered digitally. The colleague drivers that deliver food are also working all day and especially during the night hours they have an immense workload.

At the same time, a new workforce was being created. Workers from other professions, barbers, workers of small industries, workers of restoration sector like waitresses, barmen, lost their jobs. Getting fired or just without work to do, had to search for other jobs or for different ways to supplement their income. The platforms were there, ready to hire them all! Almost everyone in Greece has a small moto or a bike, so they can be absorbed by this profession. The platforms, with the basic legal rights that they offer look like a working paradise and also they don't need to search for professionals and experienced drivers that could for sure do a better job and elevate the companies but on the other hand, they also have demands. The new colleagues in this job don't know almost anything about their rights, as well as they don't know how much unhealthy this profession is. They think they will do this job only temporarily. They will constitute a new and docile workforce for the platforms.

The constant increase in the use of phones and computers by the consumers and the imposition of quarantines due to Covid-19 gave enormous impulse to the platforms to take the best advantage of the situation in relation to the traditional way of delivery that dominated in the last decades.

3.2 Working conditions with the platforms

Platforms presented themselves and were advertised in the Greek market both by themselves and by institutions like GESVEE (www.gsevee.gr), Ministry of Labour, etc. as a new, modern, excellent and complete working environment. It is presented as a working paradise, where all happy riders and members of the "team" work and rejoice on the platforms. Having flexible hours that the employees supposedly want, having Personal Means of Protection and all the legal rights. Working with whatever status they want, employment relationship or self-employed or with a title deed or both! In other words, it is promoted as a shiny ideal working condition, as a new trend by the liberal capitalists. Both German Delivery Hero / e-food and the Finnish Wolt, entered the market at about the same time but with diametrically opposite approaches regarding the employment status. Initially, e-food hired only through dependent employment relationship until 2020, and Wolt only a through the status of "partnership" who clearly conceals dependent work, as we have previously mentioned in the memorandum

we submitted to the Ministry of Labour on September 30, 2020.

For us, for the employees that work for the platforms? The reality is completely different. Without being unfair or aphoristic, we have to put it bluntly. Platforms are part of what they claim to be. Let's start with employment contracts. Truth be told, you cannot see immediately if there is undeclared work. Everyone has an employment contract. Most employees prefer and choose the permanent indefinite contract, where it is an option or it has been won with the struggle (see the "Notes" on employment status of the e-food distributors in e-food vol1)

The platforms in Greece, however, appeared with a way of thinking and operating that depends on their software, which considers the employees as self-employed or "partners". This is their ultimate goal. Initially, e-food, for example, hired the first hundreds of workers as full-time or part-time employees. This happened because they needed professional drivers with their own vehicles to begin with, having knowledge of the Greek market. Subsequently it continued to hire workers through the contractor company Manpower with 3-months contracts, holding hostage the employees that cover the permanent and constant needs of the company. But soon with the new labour law 4808/21 of the hard right-wing government, it proceeded to blackmail its workers, saying basically to them: "become a freelancer or leave the company". After the strong reaction of the employees, the organizational work and support of SVEOD and with the Food union, it gradually proceeded to converting the contracts of more than 2000 workers from limited to permanent contracts. But, apart from that, from that moment until now it started hire only freelancers. On the other hand, with Box and Wolt platforms, the employees are only self-employed since the beginning. Only on the small Rocket platform with about 150 drivers, half of them have a permanent unlimited contract. For an indefinite period of time, freelancers are falsely called "self-employed" by the companies or the Ministry, and for this we have a specific registered position (see).

The platforms with the help of the new law 4808/21 legitimize the work by piece or by time (payment by delivery). They promote and ultimately impose the over-flexibilization of employees' working hours. Something that our union and the majority of the workers have been fighting for years now in order to break and deconstruct this narrative and false reality. Both at institutional level and in the mentality of the workers (see the pamphlet in English language, "To our fellow couriers, who work at Wolt"). We fight and cultivate the logic of the 8-hour 5-day period with full insurance rights and permanent contracts. The platforms apply legally and partially the legislation as they interpret it. In relation to small neighbourhood restaurants mainly, which do not apply even the minimum of the labour legislation, they seem privileged. Looking at the Personal Protective Equipment (motorcycle sleeve, helmet, motorcycle gloves and raincoats), the platforms usually give a helmet of dubious protective capacity and a jacket mainly for the purpose of advertising and unsuitable for the complete protection of the driver. Inappropriate PPPs are paid or charged to employees.

It is true that on the platforms the drivers do not do other auxiliary tasks such as filling refrigerators, or cleaning the table seats as in small restaurants. This is very good and looks attractive. But they have to do daily extra cash / accounting transactions by depositing funds. It is often the case that this is done after the end of working hours without being paid overtime but also without providing any allowance for managing cash registers. Self-employed drivers must have mobile telephony devices suitable for working with the platform software. They must also have internet connection and talk all the time on their mobile phone to perform their work. All these costs along with the wear costs of the device and the phone accounts weigh on the shoulders of the employees. The platforms through their mode of operation monitor, record and finally train the working drivers in the way they want to work. The drivers' routes are recorded electronically by the company's software and give the company the right to violate the time and the method of delivery, which puts extra stress and pressure on drivers.

The platforms in Greece try to redefine the profession through a partial application of the legislation. They aim to build armies of self-employed people who will be trained by the platforms themselves on the profession. The new initiative of e-food moves towards this direction, with the aim to set up a training institute for its distributors. The program is called e-food riders Academy and is currently only for the company's already working distributors.

0.4 | Freelance and dependent employment relationship

4.1 The deregulation of our profession through the promotion of freelance employment and partnership relations

The model of “freelance” employment rose in Europe over the last decade. It is promoted by the capital and its political chiefs as an innovation which will meet needs of the employees for flexible working conditions, working only when they choose to, allowing them to finally will cope with the “speed of life” in modern European cities. We can easily understand that this model of self-employment aims to abolish all the labor rights that were institutionalized in the last decades. Rights such as paid vacation, sick leave, pregnancy and parental, wedding, Easter, Christmas, holiday bonuses, medical and economic coverage in the event of a work accident, unemployment benefits and taxation which increases according to yearly income. The labor cost for the employers was minimized because piecework showed in the most glossy way that it represents a paradise for their profitability at the expense of employees. Moreover, the term “partner” came to befool the constant clash between employers and employees. Now the employees detached from the dependent employment relationship press only themselves for the coverage of their basic needs.

The newly emerged model of work took advantage of unemployment and precariousness and was promoted as an alternative for the tough economic situation around the globe. It wasn't long before it was delegitimized by the working class. Soon we realized that working with free schedule leads to working without schedule, while the disengagement of employers towards their employees made dismissals easier and increased employee turnover in the profession. The fixed five days a week eight-hours daily shifts with full rights, insurance and salary is targeted by bosses as an outdated model of work which doesn't cope with the modern needs of employees and businesses. The haziness of the above statement aims to confuse the working class in relation to our salary rights. As with debt crisis and states of emergency, the narrative in which bosses and workers share common interests aim at making us even more expendables. It targets us, those who can only sell their labor force.

Against the promotion of freelance work our union suggested the fixed five days a week, eight-hours a day work with permanent work contracts, with full rights, insurance and salary. We also demand unified profession. A single profession for all the workers that uses a two-wheels vehicle for their job (couriers, delivery, external workers). Freelance came to further deregulate the remaining labour rights. Our union is always open to freelance colleagues, against any false division. We believe that in the struggle against freelance work and the deregulation of our profession, we must stand together united as one. We also understand that in our effort to cover our needs and find a job many of us could work as freelancers.

The state of freelance work abroad, its delegitimation by our colleagues who have firm needs and need a firm salary, the conscious circumvention of our collective gains and rights and the struggles against it globally make us proud and give us strength to keep up the struggle. We want to contribute in the general fight against this model of work. We don't want to become bounty hunters who chase orders without benefits, rights and knowledge of our nature of work.

Why we demand fixed five days a week eight hours a day work

Colleagues, five days a week eight-hours a day workweek was established after long and hard struggles by our class. Through collective work contracts (from which our benefits and rights came from) we can struggle to further improve our working conditions. Freelance work tries to block this perspective and to make it impossible to clash with those who exploit us. They claim that through freelance we are the bosses of ourselves and they mean that we can only demand better salaries and work conditions from ourselves. We believe that this ideology will collapse as a result of its own contradictions and our class request for fixed five days a week eight-hours a day work with full rights, insurance and salary will be institutionalized. It is a necessity for our class, for its survival and reproduction.

Any bike or motorcycle worker working full time, in addition to 3,84 euros per hour (plus insurance) is entitled to:

1. Company vehicle or 97,5 euros per month minimum for use and maintenance expenses
2. Compensation in case of labor accident for any medical expenses
3. Paid vacation
4. Any amount of money spent on gas while working
5. Sick leave
6. Christmas bonus (approximately one month of salary)
7. 75% salary increase while working on Sundays
8. Easter bonus (approximately half a salary)
9. 100% salary increase while working on holidays
10. Summer bonus (approximately half a salary)
11. Access to unemployment fund
12. Compensation in case of discharge
13. Access to unemployment fund
14. Full insurance coverage

4.2 Our union's viewpoint on the European Parliament legislative initiative on fair working conditions, rights and social protection for platform workers - new forms of employment linked to digital development (2019/2186 (INI)).

With the action plan for the European Social Rights Pillar, the European Commission has announced that by the end of 2021, it will present a legislative initiative to improve the working conditions of workers on digital platforms.

According to the EU:

- a) employees of digital platforms are private individuals performing work or providing services through a digital platform
- b) the current European legal framework does not cover new developments in this form of employment

c) it becomes necessary to revise the regulatory framework.

We, as a union, strongly disagree with the above narrative because:

a) those employed on digital platforms are employees with a dependent labor relationship and not self-employed individuals, freelancers, associates, partners or freelancers

b) the proposed European legal framework falsely claims that new developments in this form of employment are not covered by the existing legislation of the Member States and seeks to create multi-level workers, with the main aim of reducing labour cost for digital mediation companies (platforms).

c) the revision of the regulatory framework of labour relations becomes necessary for companies as it enables them to take advantage of the fragmentation of labour and legislate the transfer of labour cost to the employees.

Working on a platform is a growing phenomenon, which is facilitated by the development of digital technologies. However, we will never stop repeating that the introduction of applications (apps) in any work related to the platforms, office work, call center, warehouse, delivery, on site or online does not change the nature of the job. If we remove the digital wrapping, platforms are no different from traditional businesses. The much-touted new opportunities and choices of place, time, flexibility and frequency of work remain dependent labour. And to be perfectly precise, **shredded dependent labour**.

We believe that digitization (as in applications which deliver products and services) works in a disorienting manner, as a smokescreen, and does not concern the essence of work. That's why there is no objective reason to revise the legislation at the expense of labour rights.

The fact that working on a platform (just like traditional forms of work) covers different realities and is characterized by a high degree of inhomogeneity in the activities carried out does not mean that employees are not entitled to full rights, insurance and wage.

In digital brokerage companies as in any business, in any financial sector, there are different job categories and employee profiles vary. But in any case, with the exception of the introduction of applications (apps), the characteristics of employment, the nature of [the job] remains the same.

For example, domestic helpers continue to clean, cook and take care of homes, postmen, couriers, bike and motorcycle riders continue to transport, distribute products and provide services. For us, the dependence of our work on the employer is self-evident and that is why the laws of all European countries have for decades legislated that we are entitled to work with full insurance and salary rights whether we work eight hours, four hours, morning, night, many or a few hours a week.

There is no tangible reason, logical argument or new reality that justifies the revision of the regulatory framework of labour relations, that justify the violation of labour rights. Platforms are consciously investing in part-time jobs, gig economy and small-scale employment because they invoke the non-existent legal loophole mentioned above, fragment work and bypass labour and tax laws. And while the proposed EU legal framework seeks to convince us that platform work facilitates access to the labour market through modern forms of employment, the digital manipulation of our job choices shows the following contradiction: although platform economy workers tend to be younger and more educated than the general population, the minority of workers have relatively good incomes while the majority are low paid.

To put it as discreetly as possible, we consider the EU proposal for the inclusion of riders, and not only, in the status of the self-employed, to be wrong. For us, for the working class across Europe, around the world, new forms of employment should enjoy the same level of social

security and wages as traditional forms of employment.

The EU has announced that by the end of 2021, it will present a legislative initiative to improve the terms and conditions of employees on digital platforms. But it is moving in the opposite direction. It is trying to gild the pill of our devaluation, using the art of power to deceive us.

It tries to overturn the existing legislative reality by introducing legal procedures for resolving labour disputes that **do not exist**. It is said that the devil is in the details. The Bible itself teaches us that in order to place an "apple" you need to possess the art of discreet bilingualism. According to the EU, in the case of legal proceedings, employees should not be considered self-employed, **unless** employers prove the absence of a dependent employment relationship.

The constant employer demands to reduce labour cost, to pass on health care and pension contributions on us, to create multi-level workers, are introduced through the back door as legislation to "protect" our rights and not as blatant violations of labour law.

The EU, in order to camouflage the employer attack, includes it in the "action plan for the European pillar of social rights". And indeed, the legislators of the employers' interests always manage to sound ideal, they almost make us feel bad when we enter the process to question their moral integrity.

As bike and motorcycle riders on digital platforms, we demand fair working conditions, which means dependent employment contracts with full insurance and salary rights. We demand insurance and pension coverage. Health care in case of accidents. We demand that algorithms for job distribution and evaluation on platforms to be transparent, non-discriminatory and subject to an ethical framework.

We demand that employees of digital platforms, such as food distribution services, have the same rights as traditional employees, access to collective representation and the right to participate in collective bargaining. We demand that fixed costs such as the use and maintenance of the bike or motorcycle, petrol, Personal Protective Equipment or mobile telephony have to be borne by the companies.

Employees of the platforms do not "incorrectly" join the self-employed. This is a conscious circumvention of our collective gains and rights by digital brokerage companies, with the consequence that the labour costs are passed on to us and that companies are exempted from employers' contributions to the social security system.

Colleagues,

We present our central viewpoint as a first sample of trajectory analysis, of the union's goals for the next period, as digital mediation companies (platforms) have invaded our lives globally with the aim of reviewing labour law for their benefit.

Today, as SVEOD, faithful to the 14 years of our unmediated trade union presence, we declare that in this struggle we will be present, on the side of our class, on the side of working society.

We structure our arguments by invoking simple logic and common experience. We lock our thoughts and gaze on the struggle, on the expansion of the collective class counterattack in Europe and the world. To be led to the only reality that corresponds to the size and gravity of the history of our class. To victory.

4.3 E-Food

A. E-Food in Greece

Until recently, the profession the delivery worker could be spotted in small neighborhood businesses such as souvlaki shops or mass merchandise such as Domino's pizza and Pizza hut. With the foundation of Delivery Hero (owner of e-food), Wolt and other mass merchandisers in Greece over the last five years, many delivery workers started working for platform companies. These platforms manage the orders by making contracts with the local shops according to their needs, while they delegate to subcontractor companies the task to find and hire delivery workers. This transition massively changed work conditions in our profession. The fact that we have to stay on the road for as long as we are working, the extended work areas, our working contracts and many other aspects, made our profession's circumstances even harder.

This process was accelerated by the mass recruitments of e-food in their first period of development. The under-declared or even non-declared employment "offered" by employers in Greece, the "free" working schedules, all of this worked in favor of these companies who – at first glance – seemed to provide all the benefits prescribed by the law. After the first mass recruitments in e-food, many problems started to become evident. No protection from the weather, inadequate application of the law 4611/2019 (a law that has been conquered by our union), division of our colleagues based on their productivity, working accidents through the intensification of our work, freelance work, threats of ending workers shifts in case of non-compliance with the company's extra directions and finally retaliate dismissals of our members because of their syndicalist activities.

Which is, nothing of what was being promised by the platform companies, e-food included, corresponded to reality. On the contrary, we saw our working conditions getting even worse. The "hostage state" created by the three month contracts formed by the subcontractor company Manpower, based on the platform's needs and the workers obedience on the company's requirements, our division and segmentation on batch 1,2,3,4 depending on the respective productivity of the worker (meaning, the speed of delivery), the distances employees had to cover in order to deliver, the order to stay on the road even in extreme weather conditions such as heat, rain and snow, the fact that workers couldn't even access toilets in their zones, made the intervention of our union (many members of which already worked in e-food) essential to create an organized response to this situation. This necessity flourished in the big victory of September 2021 against the company and the freelance model they wanted to dictate. It is worth our time to take a step back and investigate the reasons that created the power correlation that allowed us to achieve the great victory of September 2021.

B. The struggle of September 2021

On 15 of September, with a sudden message to 115 workers of the "batch 3" category, the company imposed the conversion of the employment relationship from limited contract to self-employed (freelancers), as the only way for them to continue to work for the company. The reaction by the colleagues was immediate in all of Greece, and the public outrage on social media contributed to give publicity to the events.

Our union, the committee of e-food workers of SVEOD, the colleagues, together with the second-level union for foodservice, tourism and related professions, we all started to put into motion our plan for struggle.

Since the first moment and for 10 days straight without any rest, our members run right and left, working hard from the morning to the night to show to the colleagues that this was the only way to victory. In these events, we saw "the moment and the possibility", we considered this an "historical opportunity" for our profession and the working society in general. We worked as a fighting mechanism, writing and sharing immediately our texts and our calls

for action. It was mostly with our text on Saturday 18 September, that was read in front of 70-80 colleagues, and that was collectively completed in the assembly, that we gave a significant mark to this mass effort we were building. We brought to the spotlight the major issue of freelance work, of the organized plan of the company to impose the destruction of our working, insurance and negotiating rights. We shifted the conflict from the "sentimental" to the logical level, analysing, discussing and stating specific goals for the struggle. In short, we did what we always did. We organized work stoppage and a motorbike demo to the offices of e-food on Tuesday 22/09, one of the largest ever organized by our union. Athens was all red. The maneuvers of the company in the negotiation with our members, when we arrived in the offices of e-food, showed us that the continuation of the struggle was the only path to take. By raising their hands, the colleagues decided to proceed with a strike and a motorbike demo on Friday 24/09 for all the profession, with an ultimatum of 1 hour to the company for answering to our two uncompromising demands:

- Permanent contracts for everybody
- Abolition of the ranking system

The silence of the company didn't intimidate us. The strike was announced. The whole mechanism was working restlessly again to prepare the strike and communicate it to all the colleagues. The afternoon of Thursday 23/09 we were all in the streets to propagandise to strike. The message from e-food arrived, saying they were giving up completely on our demands. We immediately hugged whoever was on our side in that moment, our struggle had defeated them. The strike of the following day had a joyful and cheerful spirit, we celebrate the triumph of Athens. When the worker really wants something, he/she can accomplish everything.

To summarize, 4 major factors acted as catalysts for the result of the victorious struggle:

- 1.** The syndicalist conscience and organization in our profession, which is the result of the "ant's work" of our union, with the steps of the strike of the previous years and especially of April 2019 that lead us to the law 4611/2019.
- 2.** Alliance of the unions upon specific demands: permanent contracts and abolition of ranking systems. The common action of SVEOD and the second-level union for foodservice, tourism and related professions broke the dominant narrative about syndicalism and showed our real possibilities.
- 3.** The practical solidarity from the society transformed the internet from a privileged ground for the platforms, to a place of deconstruction of their narrative: it demonstrated that the companies for digital intermediation, they are nothing more than a "trend" of the kind "joyful Sunday, sad Monday". On the contrary, we are the face and the body, their strength and their real image. The platform companies don't have a real productive social force. They are empty intermediaries that control the flow of the customers to the retail. They are the miserable epitome of the marketing. It's us who produce, cook, prepare, sweat, drive, manage the cash. We are the ones that produce their profits, we hold the entire mechanism in our hands. And if we demand something with logical arguments, they are forced to listen to us and do it.
- 4.** The cannibalistic competition of the companies, with one company eating the digital body of the other⁵. This deterministic competition, can became an assist for the goal at the right moment and with the right premises.

For further information about the struggle against e-food, check out the article on our website: "Notes on the victorious struggle in e-food", <https://sveod.gr/?p=3757>).

⁵ The Ukrainian multinational company Rocket, when it saw e-food loosing a big portion of the market due to the public uproar, it informed the conversion of all its working contracts in permanent contracts, with the result of intensifying the pressure on e-food, to accept the demands of our struggle.

0.5 | International day of mobilization on May the 1st, 2022

An invitation from Athens to the world

Colleagues, brothers and sisters, the invisible production line of the global distribution factory that bonds us all is constantly expanding. And we are all tangled in its cogs, millions of employees, who speak all the languages of the world and carry innumerable products for thousands of employers.

We deal with the same hardships, anxieties and needs. We are the ants of this gigantic factory. Working for the giant and at the same time digging its grave. Our struggles spring up globally like fountains of clear water and our common demand is clear: WE ARE NOT GOING TO LIVE AS SLAVES. And that is why we aim for a worldwide standstill on Sunday, May the 1st, 2022.

We want the invisible production line of the global distribution factory that bonds us all, to stop at the same time in all the small and big cities of the world.

On Sunday, May the 1st, 2022 our aim is a global march on the streets we daily ride on, the streets of our everyday struggle. Our worldwide actions can be coordinated as the common ground has already been cultivated. And as exploitation knows no borders, we, the ants of this world, have common goals and nothing to stand between us or divide us.

The parallel and coordinated, constant resistance to the governments that serve the interests of the powerful, of the small, medium and large businesses, but also of the multinational giants all over Europe and all over the world, is a struggle of vital importance for our working rights and our everyday lives.

Brothers and sisters, working for platforms is no different from "traditional" distribution in couriers, fast food outlets, restaurants or any other business. It is falsely presented as "different" because it serves the interests of big corporations and multinationals. It's a cheap but heavily advertised trick so that employers can transfer all the labour costs to the employees, maximizing profits and minimizing expenses.

Brothers and sisters, we are not expendable. We must put a stop on labour "accidents". Wage labour resembles trenches of war when intensification is combined with lack of hygiene and safety, exhausting hours, contra shifts, work without breaks, non-provision of Personal Protective Equipment, pocket money wages and employer arbitrariness.

Professional bike riding must be insured as a hazardous occupation for all professional motorcycle and bike drivers because our profession is difficult, dangerous and unhealthy. We work on the road, accidents on the job are extremely frequent, we are exposed to all weather conditions, road defects and incessant noise. We are a high-risk working group for a number of musculoskeletal disorders and occupational diseases.

Proposed list of demands:

1. Hazardous occupation insurance for all bike and motorcycle riders.
2. Work contracts must be permanent and with full rights, insurance and salary for all platform and non-platform workers including bike and motorcycle riders.
3. Company vehicles must have a cargo component for all bike and motorcycle riders.
4. Bags of all kinds must be removed off the backs of all bike and motorcycle riders.

5. Work phones and internet data contracts must be provided for all bike and motorcycle riders.
6. Traditional companies and platforms must provide all safety equipment personally to every worker including helmet, shoes, compatible clothes for all weather conditions.

Our idea for the 1st of May would be to call strikes in as many countries as possible in Europe and in rest of the world. However, we understand the difficulties of each single case. The international day of mobilization may happen in a variety of different ways. We encourage every union, collective and assembly to participate in the way they think is best according to local conditions and possibilities: from going on strike to the blockage of delivery services, from banners to graffiti, from a solidarity action to sharing informative texts between colleagues. Every way of participating can be really important and it can contribute to the success of the strike.

What we would like to achieve, is to start a common process of dialogue between colleagues of all the world that will finally lead us to have **common demands** for the day of international mobilization on May the 1st, 2022. To make it clear that, just as the companies attack us on a global scale, we also started to think and organize internationally, together with a common framework and common demands.

The proposed list in order of importance to us:

1) Hazardous occupation insurance for all bike and motorcycle riders. Professional bike riding must be insured as a hazardous occupation for all professional motorcycle and bike drivers because our profession is difficult, dangerous and unhealthy. We work on the road, accidents on the job are extremely frequent, we are exposed to all weather conditions, road defects and incessant noise. We are a high-risk working group for a number of musculoskeletal disorders and occupational diseases.

2) Fight against freelance work. Bike and motorbike riders are workers with full rights, we are not self-employed. We fight to work with full employment insurance and wage rights for every driver of the platform companies as well as non-platform workers. Hundreds of courts in Spain, England and Italy have ruled that freelance work hides a dependent employment relationship. These decisions must be reflected in practice and in the law of every country. For us, free-time work paves the way for non-hourly work.

3) The cost of carrying out the work must be put on the bosses, not on us. Personal protective equipment, fuel, telephone use, vehicle maintenance, etc., must be provided and paid by bosses, businesses, and platform companies.

For class re-organization and counterattack.

SELF-ORGANISATION – HORIZONTALITY – ANTI-HIERARCHY

RESISTANCE – SOLIDARITY – PARTICIPATION

**WE ARE THE STORM IN THE EYE OF THE CYCLONE. FROM STRUGGLING IN THE STREETS,
TO THE STREET OF THE STRUGGLE.**

UTOPIA IS TO THINK THAT THINGS WILL NEVER CHANGE.

First-level Union of the job (courier, delivery riders and external workers)
“Base Union Assembly for Bike and Motorbike Workers” (SVEOD).