

Unions believe that the minimum price of labor in trade should be at least as much as the minimum consumer basket is worth

I work as a cashier, storekeeper, seller, exhibitor of fruits and vegetables, drinks. I set prices, I have deadlines, I also work on hygiene in the facility... The list is endless. I run in all directions, and for the minimum. This is the most common story that can be heard from store employees these days.

There are many reasons for such a situation in the field, and the main one is the lack of labor force due to low wages, so that traders essentially have an increased volume of work. Otherwise, workers generally avoid this job because of low wages, hard work in shifts, on weekends and during holidays. Employees also complain about overtime staying at work, which is usually unpaid.

That is why the need for cashiers, assistant workers and warehouse workers is not diminishing. There are about 300,000 employees in trade in Serbia, but a large number of them receive the minimum wage or a little more than the minimum wage.

According to the Association of Independent Trade Unions of Serbia, the average salary is from 45,000 to 50,000 dinars, while cashiers, for example, earn even less - about 40,000 per month.

Radoslav Topalović, the president of this union, reminds that the situation has not changed for years.

- Unions therefore believe that the minimum price of work in trade should be at least as much as the minimum consumer basket is worth. That should be the bottom line for earnings in that area. Our union already had the initiative to reduce the number of working weeks in this branch, to even suspend work on Sundays in the trade, but so far nothing has come of it.

We have not received an answer from the authorities. The only thing left for us is to conclude collective agreements with the employer individually, so we did that with "Deleza", "Merkator" and "Metro", trying to agree on better working conditions at the company level than according to the Labor Law - emphasizes Topalović.

The labor shortage problem exists throughout the retail industry. Not only in Serbia, but also in the entire region. In the market, the positions of sellers of various profiles, butchers and storekeepers are in particular shortage, which is certainly reflected in the difficulty of finding candidates for those positions.

In "Idea" they admit that, although they announce regular competitions that are active throughout the year, at any moment they need about 300 new employees, and that in the territory of the whole of Serbia. "Univerexport" admits that there have been generational changes, both in terms of employee profiles and the offer of jobs, but also when it comes to the expectations and retention of employees in one job.

- Once the whole working life in the same company, today it has become a "concept of the

past". It has been replaced by the modern trend with more and more frequent workplace changes - emphasizes Olivera Ćirković, director of marketing at Univereksport. Owners of small private shops, who, at least as they claim, often offer higher wages than domestic and foreign trading companies, also suffer from a lack of employees. Competition for workers is increasingly visible, but large retail chains are still reluctant to talk about the level of wages. The fact is that wages are low, which is why the workforce is increasingly walking from employer to employer.

Despite the earnings and performance work that comes with a fixed salary, some retail chains have a problem with a shortage of labor, especially in warehouses. One chain from Vojvodina currently lacks as many as 15 warehouse workers. That is why this employer plans to increase wages by at least 15 percent from next year, in order to attract more workers.

The situation in trade is bad, both for employers who complain more and more that they are tax-exhausted, and for employees who are disappointed. However, in one well-known trade chain, salaries are significantly higher than the rest of the competition, but the workers there have to work hard to earn a hundred euros more.

This means that higher earnings require more work, and so, as we unofficially learn, the average cashier in such a system makes 40 knocks per minute, which is almost twice as much work, compared to the requests that come from competing companies on the Serbian market, Politika writes.