

## Unions

- Unions champion the interest of workers and are usually trustworthy in Germany. Membership is voluntary but usually costs 1 percent of your monthly wage
- In return, unions offer advice and sometimes cover the cost of legal disputes at court

## The FAU

The FAU (free workers union) is a small grassroots-union. We are working people like you and want to defend our collective rights and advance them further. Our groups (syndicates) exist in many cities in Germany. We are organized from the bottom-up, independently from the state and political parties; this means we won't be bought or bribed. We freely work in the union during our free time. Our membership fees are low, a first consultation always free of charge.

We support all those who dependent upon wage income through consultation, union action, publicity, and mutual help. We fight exploitation and discrimination.



**IT'S TIME TO ORGANIZE!**



**contact  
information**

Email: [kontakt-gruene-gewerke@fau.org](mailto:kontakt-gruene-gewerke@fau.org)  
Web: <https://gruene-gewerke.fau.org>



**Know your labor  
rights in  
Germany!**

**Some initial information from the  
FAU grassroots union**



Many workers within and outside of the European Union want to find waged labor within Germany quickly. This also leads to the exploitation of workers by their bosses. The bosses think that foreigners know less about their legal rights and capitalize on this. This flyer summarizes the most important information on the German labor law. If you feel that you are being exploited or treated unfairly—do not stay alone with it! The FAU is a labor union and can help you. A (first) consultation with the FAU is always free of charge! If you then want to proceed, a membership is not expensive (e.g., 5€ per month) and helps you to fight back. The FAU is a union in Germany, which has branches (called “syndicates”) in many cities. You can find our contact information below.

## The labor contract

- There has to be a labor contract concluded in writing or orally
- The contract has to cover, among other things, your wage, weekly working hours, and activities/tasks on the job
- In any case, you should mark down your actual labor time and work breaks every day. This can be very important later for wage demands. Collect contact information and/or signatures of colleagues who can testify to your labor time.
- Working hours: 8 hours per day are the norm, 10 hours are the exception. After 6 hours of work, you have the right to take a break of half an hour.
- Sign nothing that you do not understand!
- At least, you should obtain a copy of the labor contract and seek help to understand what it says
- Even if you have no written labor contract, you have most of the rights detailed in this leaflet!

## The wage

- There is a minimum wage! Currently, that's 12€ per hour (starting in January 1st 2024, this will likely increase to 12.41€ per hour)
- A piece rate, such as a fixed wage per harvested box in case of harvest work or per cleaned room in the case of cleaning work, may be paid but must not amount to less than the hourly minimum wage in the end
- Taxes and social security contributions are deducted from the wage
- Beware of people who offer lodging (hotel, room, or apartment) in return for labor. These agreements are often times bad for workers and fall below the minimum wage level. If you feel that you are being taken advantage of, contact the FAU or another helpline
- If your wage isn't paid, you have to act fast (within 2 weeks time). Immediately contact the FAU or another helpline

## If you are sick

- If you are sick, go get a health insurance certificate from a doctor (incapacity for work certificate)
- Submit this certificate to your employer. They must pay you your full wage during your sick leave for up to 6 weeks (continued pay)
- Nobody can be fired because of illness

**IT'S TIME TO ORGANIZE!**

## Termination of employment

- The termination of employment must be sent by mail and be signed! If it has only been communicated orally or without signature, keep offering your labor power or keep working!
- The notice period has to match your employment contract. In most cases, you can keep working for at least another four weeks before the termination of employment takes effect
- Do not sign a dissolution agreement that would terminate your employment without contacting the FAU or another helpline in advance! Otherwise you could lose money

## Leave

- You have the right to paid leave
- Tell your boss as soon as possible when you want to take your leave days (if you are ill, you do not have to take your leave days)
- This means that you do not work but still get paid about 20 days per year (in the case of fulltime employment)
- If you only work three days a week, you still have the right to paid leave

## Working hours and overtime

- In the agricultural sector, the regular working hours can amount to 48 hours at 6 days of the week
- The time it takes to drive from one field to the next counts as labor time
- Between two consecutive shifts you must be granted a rest period of at least 11 hours
- If nothing else has been agreed upon (e.g., in a work contract or broader wage agreement), the boss may demand that you work overtime
- You never have to work more than 10 hours on a single day, though
- Overtime work has to be paid