

Amazon staff stage strikes in Germany on big sale day

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Amazon workers went on strike in Germany to demanding better wages as the US online retail giant launched its Prime Day global shopping extravaganza

Amazon employees went on strike at seven locations in Germany on Monday, demanding better wages as the US online retail giant launched its two-day global shopping discount extravaganza called Prime Day.

Workers in Germany walked out early Monday, with Orhan Akman, a spokesman for labour union Verdi, telling AFP: "Well over 2,000 took part, that is more than we expected."

"We are satisfied that we have succeeded in putting the subject back in the spotlight and our message is that we won't give in."

Akman said the strikes would continue on Tuesday and criticised the US giant.

"Amazon offers these discounts to customers at the expense of its own employees' salaries and by fleeing [collective bargaining](#)," he added.

Amazon had insisted in advance that Monday's [strike](#) would not affect deliveries to customers.

On Monday, Amazon employees at the two distribution centres in Bad Hersfeld, as well as sites in Werne, Rheinberg, Leipzig, Graben and Koblenz, went on strike under the motto: "No more discounts on our incomes".

The strike action coincided with Amazon's announcement on Monday that it would create another 1,000 jobs in Poland as it opens a new logistics depot in the country's southwest near the German and Czech borders.

The company said it would offer new employees in Poland "a competitive salary of 20 zloty (4.68 euro, \$5.82) per hour gross".

In Germany, Amazon employees start with a [minimum wage](#) of 10.78 euros per hour before tax, according to management figures, and after 24 months' employment, they draw an average monthly salary reaching 2,397 euros before deductions.

The company has faced several rounds of walkouts by workers seeking better conditions.

In 2018, around 50 strikes were organised in Europe and, in a rare show of cross-border solidarity, some were coordinated to hit simultaneously in several countries.

In April, Amazon trade union representatives from 15 countries met in Berlin to co-ordinate their efforts.

Meanwhile in the United States, employees at Amazon's warehouse in Minnesota planned a walk-out for the first six hours of Prime Day to highlight their wage demands, according to local media reports.

Protests were also planned at Amazon's UK sites in Rugeley, Swansea, Peterborough, Warrington, Coventry, Doncaster and Milton Keynes.

GMB, the union for Amazon workers in the UK, claims some of their members "have to use plastic bottles to urinate in instead of going to the toilet" and "pregnant women have been forced to stand for hours on end".

Germany's Verdi argues that money for better wages is "available" as in the first quarter of this year alone Amazon posted record profits of 3.2 billion euros.

However Amazon rejects the trade union's demands and sees no need for collective agreements.

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