



Press release

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OFFSHORE CATERERS TRADE BODY CALLS ON UNION MEMBERS TO VOTE

The trade body that represents offshore catering companies is calling on employees to turn out and vote in the ongoing industrial ballots.

Unite and RMT unions opened their ballots asking members if they are prepared to take strike action or action short of a strike after COTA companies decided to freeze pay.

Peter Bruce, chair of the Caterers Offshore Trade Association, said: “Our message to the workforce is that if you don’t support the industrial action proposed by the unions you need to cast your vote. There are no turnout restrictions in the ballots so the result won’t accurately reflect workers’ views unless everyone takes part. If a strike goes ahead it will damage our industry and you will be impacted whether you voted yes, no or not at all.

“Like the rest of our industry, our businesses are under pressure to stem spiralling operating costs against the backdrop of the oil price slump and an aging basin. The oil price is currently sitting just below \$50 per barrel compared with \$103 when the two year pay deal was signed.

“Our member companies are already being forced to make redundancies and we simply cannot expect our businesses to remain competitive if we continue to increase wages. We believe a pay freeze is fair, particularly when UK inflation is in negative territory at -0.1% and many other companies are cutting pay.

“We understand workers’ frustration at the original deal being retracted but we believe that employers and employees need to pull together at this challenging time if we are to secure the long term future of the industry and ensure there continue to be well paid offshore jobs for decades to come.

“Strike action can only do damage to that goal and we hope that employees will support us by voting no in the ballots.”

Unite’s ballot closes on Wednesday 21 October while RMT’s ballot closes on Tuesday 27 October.

Ends

About COTA

The Caterers Offshore Trade Association (COTA) represents six companies which supply catering and auxiliary staff to offshore platforms in the North Sea – Aramark, Entier, ESS, FOSS & ESG, Sodexo and Trinity International Services.

Together we employ almost 3000 staff, including chefs, stewards and administrative team members.

COTA was established over 20 years ago to represent member companies to agree terms and conditions for staff employed by COTA companies and encourage members to work collaboratively on health and safety requirements (HSEQ).

Terms and conditions of employment are negotiated with representatives of Unite and RMT of which some of our staff are members.