

CENTRAL ARBITRATION COMMITTEE
TRADE UNION AND LABOUR RELATIONS (CONSOLIDATION) ACT 1992
SCHEDULE A1 - COLLECTIVE BARGAINING: RECOGNITION
DECLARATION OF RECOGNITION WITHOUT A BALLOT

The Parties:

Unite the Union

and

National Bank of Greece

Introduction

1. Unite the Union (the Union) submitted an application to the CAC dated 15 May 2016 that they should be recognised for collective bargaining purposes by National Bank of Greece (the Employer) for a bargaining unit consisting of “Accounts officers, Clerks, Bank Clerks, Messenger/Administration Officers, Computing Department Assistants, Relationship Managers, Banking Officers, Head of Retail Banking, HR Administration Managers, Administrators, Messenger/Administration Officers, Private Bankers, Finance Officers, Head of corporate and credit Administration, Chief Dealers, Head of Financial and Management Accounting Department, Senior Relationship Managers, Head of Back Office and Settlements, Head of Loans and Trade Finance Administration”. The CAC gave the parties notice of receipt of the application on 17 May 2016. The Employer submitted a response dated 17 May 2016 which was duly copied to the Union.

2. In accordance with section 263 of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992 (the Act), the CAC Chairman established a Panel to deal with the case. The Panel consisted of Her Honour Judge Stacey, Chairman of the Panel, and, as Members Mrs Jackie Patel and Mr Michael Leahy OBE. The Case Manager appointed to support the Panel was Linda Lehan.

3. By a decision dated 27 May 2016 the Panel accepted the Union's application. Following this decision, as the Employer had confirmed in its response to the application that it agreed with the proposed bargaining unit the Panel instructed the Case Manager to ascertain whether the Union claimed that it had a majority of the workers in the bargaining unit as its members and should therefore be granted recognition without a ballot and, if it did so claim, to seek submissions from the Employer on whether or not a ballot should be held.

Issues

4. Paragraph 22 of Schedule A1 to the Act (the Schedule) provides that if the CAC is satisfied that a majority of the workers constituting the bargaining unit are members of the union, it must issue a declaration of recognition under paragraph 22(2) unless any of the three qualifying conditions specified in paragraph 22(4) applies. Paragraph 22(3) requires the CAC to hold a ballot even where it has found that a majority of workers constituting the bargaining unit are members of the union if any of these qualifying conditions is fulfilled. The three qualifying conditions are:

- (i) the CAC is satisfied that a ballot should be held in the interests of good industrial relations;**
- (ii) the CAC has evidence, which it considers to be credible, from a significant number of the union members within the bargaining unit that they do not want the union (or unions) to conduct collective bargaining on their behalf;**
- (iii) membership evidence is produced which leads the CAC to conclude that there are doubts whether a significant number of the union members within the bargaining unit want the union (or unions) to conduct collective bargaining on their behalf. Paragraph 22(5) states that "membership evidence" is (a) evidence about the circumstances in which union members**

became members, or (b) evidence about the length of time for which union members have been members, in a case where the CAC is satisfied that such evidence should be taken into account.

The Union's claim to majority membership

5. In a letter dated 27 May 2016 the Union was asked by the CAC if it claimed majority membership within the bargaining unit, and if so, whether it submitted that it should be recognised without a ballot. By an e-mail dated 31 May 2016 the Union stated that it was claiming that it had majority membership within the bargaining unit and therefore submitted that it should be granted recognition without a ballot.

6. On 31 May 2016 the Union's e-mail was copied to the Employer and it was invited to make submissions on the Union's claim to majority membership and the three qualifying conditions specified in paragraph 22(4) of the Schedule.

The views of the Employer

7. In an email dated 31 May 2016 the Employer stated that it had no reason to doubt the veracity of the Union's statement about 'majority membership' and did not contest their assertion.

Considerations

8. As set out in paragraph 4 above, the Act requires the Panel to consider whether it is satisfied that the majority of the workers constituting the bargaining unit are members of the Union. If the Panel is satisfied that the majority of the workers constituting the bargaining unit are members of the Union, it must then decide if any of the three conditions in paragraph 22(4) is fulfilled. If the Panel considers that any of them is fulfilled it must give notice to the parties that it intends to arrange for the holding of a secret ballot.

9. The Union stated in its application that the bargaining unit consisted of 34 workers and the Employer in their response stated that there were only 30 workers in the bargaining unit as 4 members of staff were on Greek employment contracts. In an email dated 1 June 2016 the Union clarified that they agreed with the Employer that the agreed bargaining unit, as defined in their application, consisted of only 30 workers taking into consideration that 4 staff members were on Greek employment contracts. The Union stated in their application that they had 21 union members within the bargaining unit giving a membership level of 70%. As stated in paragraph 7 above, the Employer had no reason to doubt the veracity of the Union's statement about 'majority membership' and did not contest their assertion.

10. In the absence of any evidence to the contrary, the Panel is satisfied that the majority of the workers in the bargaining unit are members of the Union.

11. The Panel has given thorough consideration to each of the qualifying conditions laid down in paragraph 22(4) of the Schedule.

Paragraph 22(4) (a)

12. The first condition is that the Panel is satisfied that a ballot should be held in the interests of good industrial relations. In this case neither party has submitted evidence that holding a secret ballot would be in the interests of good industrial relations. The Panel is therefore satisfied that this condition does not apply.

Paragraph 22(4) (b)

13. The second condition is that the CAC has evidence, which it considers to be credible, from a significant number of the union members within the bargaining unit that they do not want the union to conduct collective bargaining on their behalf. The CAC has no such evidence and this condition does not apply.

Paragraph 22(4) (c)

14. The third condition is that membership evidence is produced which leads the CAC to conclude that there are doubts whether a significant number of the union members within the bargaining unit want the union to conduct collective bargaining on their behalf. No such evidence has been produced, and this condition does not apply.

Declaration of recognition

15. The Panel is satisfied in accordance with paragraph 22(1)(b) of the Schedule that the majority of the workers constituting the bargaining unit are members of the Union. The Panel is satisfied that none of the conditions in paragraph 22(4) of the Schedule are met. Pursuant to paragraph 22(2) of the Schedule, the CAC must issue a declaration that the Union is recognised as entitled to conduct collective bargaining on behalf of the workers constituting the bargaining unit. The CAC accordingly declares that the Union is recognised by the Employer as entitled to conduct collective bargaining on behalf of the bargaining unit comprising “Accounts officers, Clerks, Bank Clerks, Messenger/Administration Officers, Computing Department Assistants, Relationship Managers, Banking Officers, Head of Retail Banking, HR Administration Managers, Administrators, Messenger/Administration Officers, Private Bankers, Finance Officers, Head of corporate and credit Administration, Chief Dealers, Head of Financial and Management Accounting Department, Senior Relationship Managers, Head of Back Office and Settlements, Head of Loans and Trade Finance Administration”.

Panel

Her Honour Judge Stacey, Chairman of the Panel

Mrs Jackie Patel

Michael Leahy OBE

6 June 2016