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**FIRE BRIGADES UNION**  
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CIRCULAR 2009HOC0238AD

28 April 2009

TO: ALL MEMBERS

Dear Brother / Sister

**WORKING TIME DIRECTIVE - TALKS END**

You will be aware that for some time now there has been much ill-considered propaganda being peddled concerning the Working Time Directive, following the amendments agreed by the European Parliament on 17 December last year.

Some insignificant organisations who operate on the fringe of the Fire and Rescue Service, have been lining up with an unlikely mixture of political bed-fellows; i.e. Fire and Rescue Authorities (FRA's); Westminster Government departments and Ministers, and opposition MP's, on the issue.

It is of note that many of those FRA's are among the most hostile to firefighters of all roles (ranks) and duty systems, many of whom have implemented cuts and attacks which include:

- Their refusal to give equal development and training opportunities to RDS personnel
- Their continued refusal to allow RDS personnel the opportunity to access promotion systems
- Their opposition to retained duty system (RDS) personnel being considered part-time firefighters and forcing the FBU to take the matter all the way to the House of Lords
- Their opposition to RDS personnel from having sick pay and forcing the FBU to take the matter all the way to the House of Lords
- Issuing secondary contracts at flat-rate rather than pay overtime at premium rates
- Their refusal to pay ARA's
- Their resistance to make implementation of CPD fair
- Their refusal to oppose the implementation of the Regionalisation of controls and have co-operated in the establishment of regional control rooms (RCC's) and are co-operating with the loss of hundreds of control room jobs
- Making cuts in establishment levels across all duty systems
- Closing fire stations
- Standing by whilst £1.4 billion which could have been invested in front line services is sunk into the RCC project

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It is of note that the Ministers and Departments in question have been responsible for insisting on cuts to the Fire and Rescue Service, and holding back progressive measures for fire and rescue which include:

- Continuing to waste £1.4 billion of public money on the RCC project
- Opposing retained duty system (RDS) personnel being considered part-time firefighters
- Opposing RDS personnel from having access to the Firefighters' Pension Scheme (FPS)
- Refusing to make flooding a statutory duty on FRS's and thereby withholding proper funding
- Insisting on £100 million pounds worth of cuts in FRS's on shifts and other human resources (i.e. frontline jobs) in this year's budget
- Forcing the FBU to take them to court over the right to "a job or a pension"
- Implementing the removal of national standards of fire cover
- Implementing harsh Comprehensive Spending Review settlements for Fire and Rescue Authorities
- Overseeing the reduction of pre-determined attendance levels at fires by FRA's
- Overseeing the increase in attendance times at fires by FRA's

Those opposition MP's are on record a stating that if their party forms the next Government they will:

- Insist on deeper cuts in public expenditure (which will include the Fire and Rescue Service)
- Push through savage attacks on public sector pensions schemes

Rather than line-up with these politicians or engage in scare-mongering, the FBU has been working without ceremony through recognised structures, working with our lawyers and speaking to key players in the UK and Europe to ensure the interests of firefighters of all roles (ranks) and duty systems and the Fire and Rescue Service itself.

The discussions in Europe between the European Commission and the European Parliament have now concluded. These talks, conducted through the Conciliation Committee (made up of representatives of both the Commission and the Parliament), resulted with no agreement on changes being reached. The current directive therefore remains in force and there will be no changes to current arrangements.

A report will be given to the next meeting of the Executive Council and to Conference.

Best wishes.

Yours fraternally



**ANDY DARK**  
Assistant General Secretary

AD/jh