

24 Tragic Hours in Santurce: Two deaths in Separate Industrial Accidents

The first incident occurred yesterday in the port where a 58 year old worker 58 was struck by an industrial machine. The second took place on Tuesday when a worker of the same age fell from a height of nine meters in the polygon Balparda [The latter is unrelated to port operations, and will not be covered in this translation].



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A 58 year old worker died Wednesday [11 November] in an accident at the Port of Bilbao when he was struck by an industrial machine, said sources at Basque Homeland Security. The accident occurred at 8.20 pm on one of the piers of the marine terminal when the operator was hit by an industrial machine used for loading and unloading containers.

The man, a resident of Abanto---Zierbena and was about to retire after more than twenty years working in the port, died almost instantly because of the strong impact. The employer was Sociedad Stevedoring Port of Bilbao and at the time of the accident was working in the ferry BRITANNIA SEAWAYS.

The Minister of Employment and Social Policy, Angel Toña, lamented the tragic event and called for "an effort to not allow" this type of disaster. The ALS Association of Transporters and the Autonomous Port of Bilbao (ATAP) expressed support and solidarity to the families, relatives and colleagues of the fatally injured worker.

In a note, ATAP reiterated the need to promote safety campaigns at work and demanded compliance with the prevention of occupational hazards in all sectors, including the port sector. Therefore, this association, which includes 85% of the carriers operating in the port of Bilbao, called on public bodies to adopt the necessary mechanisms to put an end to industrial accidents.

ELA, meanwhile, requires an "immediate" accident investigation to clarify the causes and responsibilities thereof. The union said that the prevention delegates had already alerted the health and safety committee at the company on "poor condition" of these machines front as they had "identified several irregularities that had not been corrected."

The trade union described as "unacceptable" the type of response that "is played again and again" about this type of accident, and cited to "that the lack of safety measures and the abandonment of the companies' commitment in the field of occupational safety and health life the workers". "Although 20 years have passed since the adoption of the law on accident prevention, the law is repeatedly breached and companies do not take steps to ensure minimum safety conditions to avoid," he added.

Unemployment and concentration

The union reiterated that in addition to the 'high' loss ratio, "job insecurity and the continued destruction of rights, including in the field of occupational health and safety" is a principal concern. "This will happen only with the help of institutions that should ensure compliance with them," he lamented.

Finally, the union stated that to denounce this "unfortunate" accident it will stop work at Bergé and today and for another 24 hours at the Port of Bilbao, along with a protest rally at which ELA will participate in demonstrations of protest called by the labor council. The union has invited the company to participate in these concentrations for "denouncing this social scourge."