

“NOT ON OUR BACKS!”

STAGEHANDS AT 36 STAGE XL FIGHT BACK



Berlin
October 12, 2026

“Berlin is pulsating, and rock ‘n’ roll is our calling.” That’s how Berlin’s largest “event services provider,” **36 Stage XL GmbH**, promotes itself. The company organises concerts ranging from classical to hip-hop, in smaller clubs and on the capital’s biggest stages. To ensure fans can enjoy the music, intensive backstage work is required. In the case of 36 Stage XL, this work is poorly paid, dangerous, and extremely precarious. Without stagehands, nothing happens.

Most employees have fixed-term contracts, and the company uses a special form of contract known as “temporary employment.” For those affected, this means that work shifts are assigned on short notice and without transparency. Workers are uncertain whether or not their earnings will be enough to live on. If more than 21 weekdays pass between work assignments, their health insurance coverage expires. Work-related accidents, and the treatment (and payment) for them, repeatedly lead to conflicts with management. *“We never know how much money we’ll have at the end of the month,”* explains G rman G. *“There’s no set number of working hours, no reliable health insurance, no vacation entitlement, and no sick pay.”* The company doesn’t even have to fire employees who ask too many questions or make too many demands — they can simply not assign them any more shifts in the future.

In 2024, employees from 36 Stage XL locations formed a workplace group. Together with the Free Workers’ Union (FAU), they are demanding, among other things, effective measures against overwork and accidents, as well as more predictable work schedules. But since a meeting in the spring, the company has been stonewalling. Employees are being fobbed off with promises of improvements. *“We will not stop making our legitimate demands,”* says Chris H., a member of FAU Berlin. *“We will not let ourselves be ignored.”*

On October 15 at 7 p.m., the stagehands will hold a demonstration in front of the Uber Arena before a concert by The Strokes.

Please get in touch if you have any questions or would like to contact the workers.

Contact email: faub-presse@fau.org

Cell phone: 015 79 23 67 310

PREVIOUS COVERAGE:

- **“In the Shadow of the Spotlight,” March 30, 2026, taz**
<https://taz.de/Arbeitsbedingungen-in-der-Eventbranche/!6166983/>
- **“Exploitation at 36 Stage XL,” March 30, 2026, Labournet-TV**
<https://www.labournet.tv/de/videos/XLstage>
- **Background information on precarious employment**
https://www.deutsche-rentenversicherung.de/DRV/DE/Experten/Arbeitgeber-und-Steuerberater/summa-summarum/Lexikon/U/unstaendig_beschaeftigte

KEY DEMANDS

- Compliance with legal requirements (including: timely and full payment of wages, payment for vacation time and sick leave, and measures to ensure workplace safety)
- The right for all employees to a permanent employment contract rather than a “mini-job” contract
- A wage increase of 2.50 euros per hour
- Protection against discrimination and harassment in the workplace
- Reimbursement of travel costs to and from the work site

TIMELINE

Summer 2023:	First lawsuit filed against 36 Stage XL over the termination of an FAU member
May 2024:	Formation of the workplace group
June 2025:	The “Stage Workers United” website goes live
December 2025:	An FAU member is fired after taking legal action to claim unpaid wages
February 6, 2026:	First letter of demands sent to management, calling for negotiations to improve precarious working conditions
February 20, 2026:	Second letter of demands sent to management, again calling for negotiations and announcing that the demands would be made public to all employees and the general public
March 9, 2026:	Open letter to all employees
March 11, 2026:	Third letter sent to management, informing them of the open letter and reaffirming the demands for negotiations
March 30, 2026:	The labor dispute is made public

