



PERC PAN-EUROPEAN TRADE UNION COUNCIL CRE CONSEIL REGIONAL EUROPEEN  
 BEPC ВСЕЕВРОПЕЙСКИЙ РЕГИОНАЛЬНЫЙ СОВЕТ

## 2<sup>nd</sup> PERC General Assembly, Brussels, 6 December 2011

### Agenda Item 2: PERC Activity Report 2007-2011

1. The founding congress of the ITUC in Vienna, November 2006 adopted a resolution on the need to create a special regional structure for Europe that will promote ITUC policies and provide a framework for effective interaction of trade union organisations across the continent. The Founding Assembly of the Pan European Regional Council (PERC) convened on 19 March 2007 in Rome. PERC was set up with the unanimous decision of 87 trade union organizations from 55 countries across Europe.

2. In the period since March 2007 PERC has embarked on active work to establish its place and presence in the trade union architecture, to build a profile of operation that best suits the challenges and specificities of the region, to develop efficient patterns of support for member organisations and communication with relevant external international organisations and European political institutions.

3. Currently PERC has 89 affiliated national organizations from 56 countries with more than 85 ml. members. There are also 6 associated organisations.

### **Setup of PERC**

4. The Founding Assembly of PERC in Rome adopted its Constitution, Programme, governing bodies and leaders.

5. In line with the PERC Constitution, John Monks, being General Secretary of the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) became General Secretary of PERC. Mikhail Shmakov, President of FNPR Russia was elected President of PERC. Three Vice-Presidents were elected also: Wanja Lundby-Wedin (LO- Sweden), Anna Knezevic (UATUC Croatia) and Andrzej Adamczyk (Solidarnosc Poland). As from the ETUC Congress in May 2011, PERC is led by a new General Secretary – Bernadette Ségol.

6. The founding documents provided the mandate for PERC – to work within the ITUC programme and facilitate its implementation in Europe. It aims to promote the strategies, priorities and policies of the ITUC and seeks to contribute to social development, the consolidation of democracy and respect for human and workers' rights in the region. Promotion of trade union action, and representation of workers' interests through the strengthening of the trade union movement and support for multilateral and bilateral cooperation are central objectives of the PERC.

7. In order to promote social dialogue, decent work and the values and standards of the European Social Model across the entire continent, the PERC would make a clear partner for ILO Europe and the European Regional Conference as well as for the Council of Europe and the European Social Charter (revised). In all its activities PERC relies also on the close cooperation and expert support from the ETUC.



PERC also actively supports and facilitates ITUC affiliation policy in the region by joint work with organisations applying for membership to meet the necessary criteria.

8. PERC presents the most varied composition of members. It affiliates organisations from countries with the most advanced national systems of industrial relations to organisations operating in contexts of just emerging ideas, institutions and cultures of political exchange and embryonic forms of social dialogue. Facing such a diversity of interests, achieving internal cohesion and genuine joint work on common interests appears a major challenge as well as the key to the success of PERC.

### **Organisational structure and pattern of operation**

9. The main decision-making body of PERC, its Executive Committee, holds one-day meetings in March every year, back to back with the respective meeting of the ETUC Executive Committee. The Executive Committee addresses issues of political and organisational importance identified during the year, and outlines perspectives for the next one, defines the priority areas for activities and approves an annual indicative plan for the operation of PERC .

10. The plan is prepared by the PERC secretariat on the basis of challenges and questions raised in the course of work as well as on proposals from the member organisations communicated to the regional offices. The Women's e and Youth Committees prepare their own sections with activities in the plan. GUFs and ETUFs are also involved in the consultation process along with the members. Relevant NGOs are also consulted in view of possible joint activities – e.g. informal economy, migration, gender policy, human and trade union rights, child labour, trafficking and forced labour, environment and climate change, etc. Once compiled, the first draft of the plan is discussed and coordinated with the solidarity support organisations (SSOs). On the basis of all contributions the final version of the plan is sent to the members and tabled for approval by the Executive Committee.

11. The financial base of PERC operations has been secured through five main sources:

- Membership fees from the organisations non-members of ETUC;
- ITUC and ETUC direct support for administrative and technical costs of PERC and for some of the activities, including the ITUC Solidarity Fund;
- the biannual ILO-ACTRAV support programme for ITUC; FES assistance programmes, developed through joint planning and implementation;
- the crucial input from SSOs<sup>1</sup> and joint projects run in the sub-region and particular special country situations – a key source of dynamics for implementation of planned activities;
- PERC reserve fund for events of vital statutory, strategic or urgent nature.

12. All PERC resources are managed and controlled by the ITUC Finance Department. In certain specific situations the administration of targeted activities is done by the SSOs themselves, such as FES, CSC or ACTRAV, or by the ETUC/ETUI.

13. The pressure of the crisis has had its negative impact on the resources for PERC both on internal inflows from ITUC and marginally on membership fees but more substantially on the inflows from SSO channels. The resulting cuts and tightening of

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<sup>1</sup> These include in the first place organisations from Western European countries providing long-term systematic support as well as other with contributions (financial, expertise or in kind) to particular initiatives or events.

conditions have confirmed the orientation of PERC policy to diversify the sources for financing its activities, primarily through more active engagement in developing projects for EU programmes funding. In this way parts of SSO and PERC/ITUC inputs can be used as “own contribution” to secure bigger amounts for longer-term initiatives. This approach allows to significantly multiply the effects of the activities through a leading role and more “ownership” of national organisations while strengthening the financial base for PERC activities and facilitating the maintenance of the sub-regional offices, directly dependent on the incomes from project work. First tests were carried out with support from FES, Belgian trade unions, LO-S and the outcomes have been encouraging. This approach, while motivating organisations on the ground to take the lead in project-making and implementation, needs to be pursued with caution to avoid diverting too much of the attention and the human resources of the organisations from their main tasks and obligations. More precisely projects should be well targeted to real needs of organisations through joint design and development where external support plays a compensatory role for temporary deficits of local actors until own resources are stabilised.

### **Statutory and strategy oriented structures**

**14. Women’s Committee.** Following the requirements of the Constitution and the preparatory work done by the transitional body with the decisive support and contribution from the ETUC, the 1<sup>st</sup> PERC Women’s Conference was held in Turin, October 2008. Delegates of women’s structures from 89 organisations in 43 countries representing more than 30 ml. women members founded the PERC Women’s Committee, adopted its Statutes and elected its members. The committee consists of 12 members and is headed by a President and two Vice-Presidents. The first elected president of the PERC Women’s Committee was Pinar Alkan (TURK-IS, Turkey). The Committee is represented with three seats with voting rights in the PERC Executive Committee.

15. The committee works on a regular mode of two meetings a year, decides the proposals for the PERC work plan in its area of competence and secures the representation of the women’s interests in other PERC activities and projects, in ITUC and external events. It has endorsed and builds upon the work done in previous years in the area of gender and equality policy by the CEE/NIS Women’s Network and the annual Women’s School within the joint ILO/PERC project, financed by the Flemish government. The Committee demonstrated its stability and efficiency in the first critical situations – the need to replace the president in 2009. The committee managed the situation without problems and work continued uninterrupted, led by an interim president – Yanka Takeva (CITUB, Bulgaria). The 2<sup>nd</sup> PERC Women’s Conference in October 2010 elected Hege Hero (YS – Norway) as regular president. The committee works in close cooperation with the ETUC and ITUC Women’s Committees.

16. The main areas of activity and issues taken up for action by the Committee comprise: protection of women’s rights and decent work in a time of crisis – SEE sub-regional seminars in Sofia, participating in the PERC informal economy project, ITUC project for NIS organisations promoting personal development strategies linked to trade union membership (Decisions for life project), training of women activists for project making and management, etc.

17. With the stabilisation of the annual cycle of work of the Women’s Committee, Women’s School and almost regular sub-regional activities, the focus has been shifting to the most important level for efficient gender policies – the national activities by the national women’s committees aimed at:

- strengthening the capacities for gender policy development, initiatives and campaigns at national level as well as towards the own organisation – supporting lower level, workplace activities through training, expertise and joint actions;
- boosting the status and policy influence of the national women's structures within the confederations and relevant civil society circles.

**18. Youth Committee.** Facing the more patchy and fragmented state of organisation of youth structures, particularly in Eastern Europe, the setting up the PERC Youth Committee a required longer time and more efforts. The work of the special group created in 2007 to that end backed by the ETUC youth committee led to the PERC Youth Conference in July 2009 in Brussels. There, representatives of 44 organizations, from 33 countries founded the PERC Youth Committee, adopted its Statutes and elected members of the Committee, its Bureau and President – Daniela Alexieva (CITUB, Bulgaria). The Committee is entitled to one seat with voting rights in the PERC Executive Committee and maintains close working relations with the ETUC and ITUC Youth Committees.

19. The committee has held four regular meetings and developed proposals for the PERC plans in 2010-2012. It already registered its first successes in the World Day for Decent Work campaign where innovative and creative approaches to the actions of the young trade unionists in Denmark, Hungary, Croatia, Russia, Baltics, Ukraine, Armenia and others have given particular visibility and attractiveness to the overall campaign.

20. The Committee has also identified key areas for priority activities – first of all - the precarious nature of youth employment and the unfolding crisis situation for young people on the labour market in the coming years. To these ends the committee draws the attention to the development of the systems and quality of vocational education and training, particularly in Eastern Europe. PERC Youth Committee initiatives are coordinated with the ETUC campaign on youth employment and the TUC campaign for equal opportunities for young women and men in the regular women's campaigns, as well as with the ITUC youth campaign targeted on visibility and attractiveness of unionism for youngsters. Other ITUC campaigns are also supported through the Committee activities.

21. The PERC Youth Committee organised an Eastern Europe conference "Breaking gender barriers for youth employment" in Warsaw, October 2010, jointly with the Women's Committee, two sub-regional workshops on trade union campaigning in Baku for NIS (August 2011) and in Podgorica for SEE (October 2011), and also provided support to sub-regional initiatives, such as Palanga and Kaliningrad schools, SEE Youth Network, ILO-ITC training for Youth of SEE, national activities of member organisations, such as the FNPR youth forum (July 2011) or Turk-SEN seminar (November 2011), etc.

22. Other areas which the PERC Youth Committee is targeting for youth activities involve organising and recruiting new members, contributing to trade union policies and actions to curb the "informal" economy and protect young people from being trapped in it, in developing efficient communication and IT skills, etc ... Along these lines young experts in a range of organisations, especially in the SEE and NIS regions, have already contributed significantly to the policy debates on IFIs in the ISCOS SEE project and currently on crisis policy debates in the SEE Economists' Network. Equally young experts have been a key source of information in the project on informal economy and the related issues of trafficking and migration.

23. In the PERC region, specific efforts were made to encourage young people to actively participate in promoting unionism via social media in use by youngsters. Numerous groups and actions were built in the respective e-space.

24. The PERC Youth Committee has also recognised the opportunities for young activists with foreign languages (mainly English) in mastering the development and practical implementation of projects for their organisations – a key priority for PERC strategic orientation.

25. In cooperation with the ETUC, the PERC Youth Committee also engaged in training activities and thematic discussions – on demographic change, migration training, within Council of Europe Youth Council frame, and in a conference on Organising, Youth Employment and Quality.

26. The second youth conference was held with the support of the FES on the occasion of the ETUC Youth Conference "A quality education for a quality job!" on 10 November 2011. The PERC Youth Conference elected the new PERC youth committee and office bearers. 37 participants from 25 countries elected Tugba Balci, Hak-Is, as the President, and Michael Wagner, DGB, Daniela Aleksieva, KNSB, and Ivana Prnjat, CTUM, as Bureau members.

**27. PERC Summer School/Discussion Forum.** The idea for the Summer School was developed in response to the interest expressed by a number of organisations to enable more detailed discussions and exchange of opinions than those allowed for by the format and time frame of the PERC Executive Committee. The aim of the School is to offer a platform for more informal and open policy debates among trade unions leaders from across Europe joined also by external experts on topics of common priority and of importance for their organisations. The first two meetings of the Schools took place in Budapest (2008), focusing on taxation and social protection policies (pension and health reforms) and in Bratislava (2009) – on the economic crisis and the policy of the ITUC Human and Trade Union Rights Department. Some topics have raised really active discussions by both Western and Eastern participants but there have been also cases of lack of motivation for active involvement, eventually leaving a sense of disappointment. A clear source of concern is the mismatch of the status of the participants, namely the absence of top level leaders from the Western unions.

28. In 2010 the School was organised in the format of an European conference jointly with OGB in Vienna. It marked the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of an ICFTU conference in Vienna in 1990 on the trade union policies for the "transition" of Eastern Europe. The proceedings featured an open and lively discussion on the expectations and outcomes of the transition process in CEE and the current diversity of social dialogue arrangements in different countries. On that basis attempts for projecting certain dimensions for the future were made.

29. The last Summer School in Sofia (2011) aimed at building on the experience from Vienna and also at facilitating the work of the forthcoming General Assembly of PERC. It focused on key dimensions of the unfolding crisis, the trade union interests involved and possible perspectives for the next steps in view of the need to develop a new PERC programme for the next period, 2011-2015. Key discussion points involved: the "new economic model" as a way to search for exits of the crisis and developing employment policies; the wave of anti-labour/anti-union policy across Europe; the impact of growing inequalities on society and democracy; the challenge of trade union organisational development in a changing world.

**30. Sub-regional structures.** There are two clearly defined sub-regional structures active on the PERC territory: the SEE Trade Union Forum and the Baltic Sea Trade Union Network (BASTUN). Some other regular events, e.g. the Caucasus Regional Meetings, or Eastern Partnership countries meetings, held every year contribute largely to similar effects.

31. The SEE TU Forum was set up by the ETUC in 1999 as the ETUC Balkans Trade Union Forum to provide all genuine trade unions in the Balkans with a channel for communication with the ETUC and access to the work of the Stability Pact for SEE, launched by the EU. The meetings of the Forum are open to PERC members as the aim has been to bring together union leaders from the region for policy discussion, exchange of experience and coordinating positions and activities within the region and with the wider European trade union processes. In 2007 the Forum was renamed to SEE Trade Union Forum, and PERC took over the operational support through the office in Sarajevo. The policy orientation and agenda was shifted for management to the respective SEE organisations.

32. Parallel to the Forum, two expert networks – of trade union legal experts and of trade union economists are operational on the basis of FES financial support and PERC professional guidance. The purpose is to develop more coherence and synergy between the strategic perspectives, policy expertise and patterns of implementation in areas of common interests of SEE organisations. The first steps have pointed to quite clear interest of the experts in the work of the networks but the Forum is still working to find its bearings and motivating identity.

33. BASTUN was set up as a network for cooperation by the trade unions in the Baltic region and run by themselves. Since its inception PERC has been in contact with BASTUN and over the years links have stabilised in regular participation of PERC representatives – President, regional officers, in the meetings of the network. Mutual information flows on projects and initiatives with participation in activities relevant to the common interests of PERC and BASTUN.

34. Responding to the specific challenges and necessities of the trade unions in the Caucasus region, PERC has been organising each year a regional event to discuss problems and policies of trade unionism in the region. Over time these have acquired the profile of a regional discussion forum, strengthened by the participation of ITUC/PERC or ETUC leaders, European Social Charter experts, NGO representatives, etc.

35. Alongside these meetings the EU Eastern Partnership policy (EaP) gave rise to meetings in 2010-11 of the unions from the six partner countries with other organisations from the EU interested in participating in the EaP Civil Society Forum. The meetings discussed possible trade union approaches to solving the unacceptable status of the social partners and the EESC in the frame of the Forum. Confronting the Steering Committee of the Forum on the issue, jointly with IOE and the EESC finally led to a decision to constitute a special social dialogue working group within the Forum to accommodate the social partners and the EESC. However, without a respective policy platform in the EaP to meet governments on the issues, the operation of the working group will have practically no impact on the ground and the interest of the parties involved may not last long.

36. Important instruments for direct communication and support are the **visits of PERC leadership** to the sub-regions. The visits involve meetings with the member organisations, with government ministers and experts, relevant parliamentary commissions or other important actors. They are used to promote international labour standards and the values of the European Social Model where appropriate as well as to promote the positions of national trade unions vis-à-vis national authorities and wider society. In February 2008 the PERC President and General Secretary visited Russia and Ukraine, while a planned visit to Georgia had to be postponed in the aftermath of the war but the Deputy General Secretaries of ITUC and ETUC took part in the regional meeting in Tbilisi in September. In April 2009 the PERC leadership met with the SEE Forum in Zagreb and in June the General Secretary visited Vilnius to meet with the unions from the three Baltic countries.

The PERC leadership, joined by the General Secretary and Deputy General Secretary of ITUC were present for the discussions at the Summer School in Bratislava in September 2009. Meeting the Caucasus organisations was on the agenda for the autumn of 2010. In 2011, in Sofia the new PERC General Secretary had a first chance to meet and exchange ideas with PERC members.

**37. PERC Sub-regional offices.** The day to day management of activities and communications with members in the PERC area is maintained primarily through the regional offices in Moscow and Sarajevo and the secretariat in Brussels. The competence of the offices is to develop relations with the member organizations, to implement the affiliation policy of the ITUC, to secure the flow of information between the members and the PERC secretariat and to implement or facilitate joint projects supported by SSOs, ILO, FES, etc.

38. The plans of the offices are made partly of support for PERC activities in their areas and another part if office specific – mainly projects for the region. The office in Sarajevo is operating on a fully project-financed basis. The project office in Vilnius was closed in 2010 following the expiry of available projects as well as personnel changes within the team and the consequent redistribution of tasks. The Moscow office is only partially dependent on project participation for maintaining itself.

39. PERC has also made contact with a sub-regional structure – **VKP** which affiliates national and industry level structures from the NIS region.

**40. PERC Website and Newsletter.** To secure efficient information exchange with the members, the PERC secretariat maintains a website and distributes a regular Newsletter with short news on the PERC activities as well as activities of the individual organisations and other relevant information, e.g. from the ITUC Washington office on WB/IFC loans to companies in countries in the region. It also draws attention to forthcoming events on the PERC plan, ITUC or ETUC organised or by other external institutions and NGOs. The revision of the PERC web-site is underway, to be finalised under the new PERC programme.

**41. World Day for Decent Work.** Starting as an occasion to demonstrate the unity of action of trade unions on aglobal scale the WDDW has developed a dynamics of its own, motivating action and stimulating creative and innovative ideas from PERC organisations and activists at different levels.

#### **Policy Driven Mechanisms and Initiatives.**

42. To cope with the diverse situations in the region and particular cases of underdeveloped labour relations systems and heavy violations of trade union rights **country-specific meetings** (on Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, Uzbekistan) have revealed considerable potential for coordinated approaches among relevant organizations. These bring together ITUC, PERC, ETUC, GUFs, interested affiliates and SSOs to build and focus policy orientation, define the roles of the partners and provide the basis for coherent and effective action. A specific country campaign on trade union rights in Georgia was set up by the country meeting and systematically pursued all through 2011.

**43. Networking of experts in broad policy areas,** e.g. legal experts, economists, OSH experts, informal economy, education and training, communication etc. Two clear networks are in operation in the Balkans – of legal experts (since 2002) and economists (2009). Similar attempts are under way in the NIS region – with legal/human rights experts as part of the whole European HTUR Network, in OSH (after the regional workshop on OSN policy in Brussels, December 2009), of economists (since 2011) and communication

officers (since 2011). Regional networking provides efficient ways to maintain and upgrade the professional capacities of the national experts which they can further use for exchange in the network, for developing national policies and for further training of activists in the lower level organisations. Building on the interest of experts to develop the networks their relations and clear thematic guidance in line with priorities of the confederations requires further efforts to perfect and consolidate.

**44. *Specialised working groups/ task forces*** concentrating on specific issues or challenges for trade unions policy, e.g. organising and recruiting new members, migration, pension reform, issues of gender or youth policy, etc. The first attempts with organising and migration did produce interesting first results and guiding lines for further inquiry but lack of financing, particularly in the second case, effectively prevented follow-up activities. Currently, the expert group on pension reform in the Balkans has a sound base for work to fully test the approach. The first activities have already brought positive responses and demands for further actions – e.g. the forthcoming tripartite regional conference on pension reform in December 2011.

**45. *“Learning by doing”*** has already delivered encouraging results in cases concerning drafts for legislation or institutional design, or for using legal instruments in ILO, Council of Europe/ESC reporting or complaint procedures. Cases involve Georgian labour law and social dialogue institutional arrangements (2008), similar with the first draft labour law for Kosovo (2008), Bosnia and Herzegovina (2008), labour law in Armenia (2010) and law on labour disputes in Moldova (2011) and also in training workshops for project-making (November 2009, July 2010 and May 2011).

#### **Interaction with ITUC, ETUC, ILO, GUFs/EIFs**

46. Along with the planned activities PERC is engaged in joint work with ITUC and ETUC structures on a daily basis as well as in close cooperation with ILO ACTRAV, Geneva and the regional offices, particularly with ILO-CEET in Budapest and the ILC in Turin.

**47. ITUC.** PERC is actively supporting and participating in the activities launched or managed by other ITUC departments in their area of work:

- support and participation in the annual meetings of ITUC with the IFIs, OECD,
- ministerial meeting with IMF in Almati (2009) and
- initiatives of the Washington office (Seminar with IMF, Vienna, 2010)
- events on environment and climate change (Baku, 2009);
- wage policy – ILO conference on minimum wage (2009),
- development cooperation (Madrid, 2010),
- trade union rights (Moscow, December 2010),
- migration and forced labour (Baku, 2011) etc.

48. In July 2011 ITUC/PERC jointly with ETUC organised the first meeting of trade unions from the countries hit hardest from the second stage of the crisis and particularly from the raising wave of anti-labour and anti-union policies across Europe, East and West.

49. PERC plays a key role in supporting and preparing policy materials and organising members' participation in the International Labour Conference, particularly related to tabled trade union complaints as well as for the survey on trade union rights violations – collecting information, checking/editing final texts for PERC countries. Currently PERC has been supporting the setting up and running of the HTUR network in Europe. Promoting HTUR approach in the region remains an important priority in the next period.

50. Within its capacities PERC renders support for the initiative and campaigns of the communications and campaign department, particularly in relation to WDDW, the “Play fair” campaign and child labour in Uzbekistan.

51. At the same time ITUC departments have been responsive to PERC needs for expertise in their fields and delivered at PERC activities in the region.

**52. Cooperation with GUFs/ ETUFs.** Industry level structures have full access to PERC operations as they can participate in the sessions of the General Assembly and the Executive Committee of the PERC with speaking rights only. They are regularly invited to relevant PERC activities and in some cases PERC takes part in GUF/ETUF events or projects: 6 GUF project in the NIS area; ETUF-TCL projects in the Balkans, IUF in specific countries, EPSU on energy, public services, EMF .

**53. ETUC/ETUI.** The ETUC had been a key driver in the process of setting up PERC and further on in its structuring and everyday operation. It provides not only the General Secretary but equally importantly it provides policy perspectives on the basis of the European Social Model, examples of policy operation in practice with the respective experience of implementation approaches and patterns of action.

54. The ETUC was warning against the dangers of “casino” capitalism and stressing the need to introduce robust financial market regulation long before the full-blown economic and financial crisis erupted in the summer of 2008, marking a turning point for the period under review. The London declaration of the same year, the campaign for a New Social Deal defined by the ETUC’s Paris declaration of 28 May 2009, for a united EU response to the crisis, including an expanded recovery programme to provide more and better jobs, the position that no “exit strategies” from the crisis should be contemplated before reversing the unemployment situation in Europe have been very helpful for PERC activities linked to the crisis. The close cooperation of ETUC with the ITUC and TUAC in these campaigns, notably in the G20 context, has made the policies even more easy to use in relevant situations across PERC region.

55. On purely European matters the ETUC/ETUI have widely contributed to discussions where EU dimensions have been important, e.g. on:

- the effects of incorporating the Charter on Fundamental Rights in the Lisbon treaty
- freedom of movement, migration and securing the preprotection of workers is not undermined, i.e. guaranteeing equal treatment and equal pay for ‘posted’ migrant workers
- the effects of the cases of the European Court of Justice on workers’ rights and services provision in EU
- resisting the pressure of the flexicurity debates on workers’ rights and protections against the growth of precarious work
- ensuring the right for all workers to be able to reconcile work and family life
- establishing a European Social Union underpinned by strong public services
- pension reform policies
- the use of the instruments of CoE and the European Social Charter for strenghtening workers rights outside the EU
- the possibilities to use EU institutions for particular issues or country cases of violation of labour rights, etc.

56. The support was further strengthened by the readiness of the ETUC and ETUI experts to join PERC activities and actively to contribute to policy discussions like the

meetings with Baltic unions on the crisis in 2009 in Brussels and a year later in Vilnius, the meetings of the SEE economists network and in the summer schools in Bratislava, Vienna and Sofia.

57. Along with the policy and expert contributions of ETUC/ETUI there was also direct involvement in the process of structuring and organisational development of PERC. The setting up of the Women's and Youth committees of PERC has been the result of this direct interaction and joint efforts with ETUC women's and youth structures which laid a sound basis for cooperation continuing until now.

58. Following the agreement from the start the ETUC and ETUI have been covering the costs of PERC participation in the activities they organise, the costs for the provision of ETUC/ETUI expertise in PERC activities and also part of the administrative and technical costs for the operation of the secretariat.

**59. ILO.** Following the appearance of PERC, the work with ILO ACTRAV, its regional representatives and the Workers' Group on issues, concerning the European region has been steadily shifting towards the PERC.

60. PERC has been increasingly involved in the preparations for the Annual Labour Conference of the ILO, assisting coordination, mainly with CEE organisations, with particular attention to special cases presented to the Committee on Application of Standards – Belarus, Georgia, Bulgaria, Uzbekistan, Ukraine, Serbia, etc.

61. PERC successfully acted as the main interlocutor with ETUC and ETUI in providing the reference policy documents for the workers' participants in the 8<sup>th</sup> European Regional Conference of the ILO, February 2009. It also engaged in the organising of trade union participation on the spot and in support for the negotiating team at the conference.

62. PERC offices are directly involved in ILO-SRO in Budapest projects on social dialogue and informal economy in the SEE region, in national programmes coordinated by ILO-SRO in Moscow;

63. PERC and ILO ACTRAV are in constant communication and coordination on challenges and activities on national level, primarily in Eastern Europe – Belarus, Georgia, Ukraine, the Western Balkans countries, etc.

64. Relations with the ILC in Turin have been gradually developing also towards more common aims, providing orientation for activities both in Turin and in the regions – seminars on training systems for the NIS region and SEE region, on sectoral social dialogue, on the union policies to informal economy, etc.

### **Relations with European and EU institutions**

**65. Council of Europe (CoE) – European Social Charter (ESC).** The PERC region practically coincides with the coverage of the Council of Europe and most countries have signed and ratified the ESC (R) which makes it an important instrument for promoting worker and trade union rights in Europe. To secure the more effective use of the ESC by CEE trade unions PERC contacted the Secretariat of the Charter already in 2007 and experts from the Committee of Experts have presented the Charter at the regional workshops for mastering ILO and ESC (R) instruments in Tbilisi (2007) and Budapest (2008). In January 2010 PERC, jointly with ETUC, met with the commissioner for human rights of the CoE and presented to him the contradictory and concerning picture of trade union rights and social dialogue in the region. The ETUC representatives at CoE Committee advocated Georgian and Ukrainian cases in 2011.

**66. EU institutions.** As much as the interests of PERC in the EU are driven basically by the policy of enlargement and the European Neighbourhood Policy/ Eastern Partnership on the EU side, and primarily by the violations of labour rights in a range of countries in Eastern Europe the main counterparts to PERC are DG Enlargement, DG External Relations and DG Employment and Social Policy. The position of the ETUC in the EU policy architecture has been very helpful to reach the right structures of the European Commission and European Parliament and arrange direct meetings with the member organisations concerned to present their cases themselves – e.g. Georgia. Representatives of the DGs or Commissioners have been invited to explain particular EU policy almost at every meeting of the PERC Executive Committee, while MEPs were taking part in specific initiatives such as Eastern Partnership meeting (May 2011) or Georgian unionists policy visit (October 2011).

67. The General Secretary has had special meetings with the Commissioner for Enlargement on issues of trade unions from the Western Balkans and whenever ETUC and PERC had sent letters to draw the attention of the Commissioner to particular concerning developments in the region, e.g. the problems of the nationalisation of the assets of the Albanian trade unions (2007 and 2009) there has been a serious reaction urging the EU delegation on the spot to look into the matter and talk to the government on the issue.

68. PERC has been a constituent member of the Social Forum of the EU Eastern Partnership policy in 2009, 2010 and 2011. It had also organised a set of consultations with the affiliates involved on a coordinated policy and actions development (October 2010, May 2011, November 2011).

69. In addition to the DGs PERC has raised with TAIEX the possibilities to use its service for activities with PERC members in Brussels and in the respective countries. Positive initial reactions have led to several items on the PERC plan for 2010-11 to be submitted to TAIEX for support but the initial response has been predominantly negative.

**70. European Economic and Social Committee.** Due to the inevitable closeness of interests and fields of activities PERC has been in contact with the EESC and established working relations with it. PERC is invited for consultation on particular country cases – Macedonian ESC, in the process of preparation of opinions of EESC or discussions for their adoption. PERC has been also invited to the civil society conferences, organized by EESC for different regions – Balkans, Black Sea area, etc.

71. The common challenge faced in the Civil Society Forum of the EaP has resulted in constant interaction with EESC and IOE in attempts to influence and press changes with the Steering Committee of the Forum and EU institutions to interfere and help remedy the situation. The current decision for a special working group on social dialogue in the Forum is to a great extent due to the pivotal role of the EESC supported by PERC, ETUC and IOE.

**72. European Training Foundation.** The PERC was involved in a set of thematic conferences organised by the ETF for Balkans (February 2010) and Eastern Partnership countries (October 2010), while ETF experts participated in the PERC Executive Committee in March 2010.