

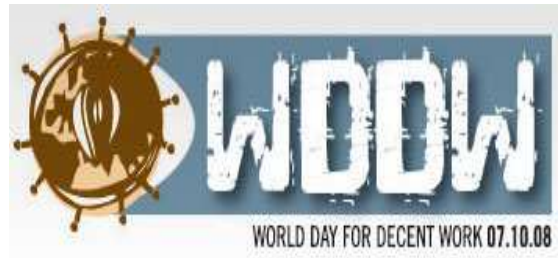
PERC Newsletter, September 2008

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1. The European unions are actively preparing the World Day for Decent Work. The WDDW website now counts more than 30 countries of Europe where national actions will take place on 7 October. More unions are expected to join this week



2. PERC Summer school, Budapest, 1-3 September



Trade unions from across the European continent have gathered in Budapest on 1 to 3 September to map out regional actions for social rights and economic progress over the coming year. The annual Summer School of the Pan-European Regional Council of trade unions, being held at the invitation of the Hungarian national trade union centers, brought together 39 trade union movements from 24 countries.

"Challenges being faced by the Hungarian workers and their trade unions – attacks on tripartism and social dialogue, tax changes which benefit large companies at the expense of workers and their families, moves to cut minimum wages – are familiar to trade unions in many countries in Europe and elsewhere. We need a social Europe, setting the highest standards for decent work in a changing world," said John Monks, General Secretary of the PERC and of the European Trade Union Confederation.

The meeting's focus on tax, pensions and health care throughout the continent will provide the basis for national and regional action in the coming period to stop the erosion of vital services and government functions.

Another key feature of the discussions concerned preparations for the World Day for Decent Work on October 7, when European trade unions will join their colleagues from every other continent in a global mobilization for workers' rights, solidarity and an end to poverty and inequality.

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3. PERC activities



Global March Against Child Labor Pan –European and Maghreb region, Sofia, 15 to 18 September

The conference of the Global March Against Child Labor Pan - European and Maghreb region took place in Sofia from 15 to 18 September.

In the meeting participated 22 organizations from 16 countries in the region. The conference agreed to create the Pan-European and Maghreb organization and fully endorsed the Sofia conclusions. The participants agreed on an urgent establishment of a regional secretariat in Brussels..

The constitution of the new organization was largely discussed and the structure of the new organization was established. There was a large debate also on the future plan action of the organization. The main elements of the plan of action are: reinforcing activities and coordination at national level; promoting the Decent Work Agenda, secure employment, social security, elimination of child labor and poverty reduction; child trafficking considering the migration consequences in the region; strategies on data collection and knowledge management; press the multinational enterprises to respect fundamental rights at work; work closely with national alliances, regional organizations, PERC and ILO -IPEC.

Consultation will start with ITUC and ITUC/PERC on composition of the Global March Committee. Proposals have been made during the meeting a final decision will be taken as soon as possible.

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Demographic changes: challenge for Europe

Study session for young unionists from Europe was organized by the ETUC in the Youth Centre of the Council of Europe on 8-13 September, in Strasbourg. This year the study session was extended to participation of young unionists from the PERC region.

Approximately 30 participants from different European Countries took part in the activity, discussing the most pressing demographic issues in the contexts of different European countries. Different elements were raised, including

- growing burdens on working populations linked with higher life expectancy and the dependency ratio;
- lowering fertility rates linked with challenge for working women and men to find a balance between family and career inspirations;
- migration processes that bring risks of social dumping and brain and skills drain, which, however, can, at least partly, help in sustaining the labour force in developed countries;
- growing “generations” gap and issues of youth unemployment and work precariousity, need to ensure balance between education and workplace experiences.

Certain “perculiar” situations were mentioned: low male life expectancy in Russia and Ukraine due to high mortality rate, including work related rates; uncared children in Romania due to exodus of working age population to other countries; closed schools due to insufficient subscription rates, integration mechanisms for CEE migrants in UK and others.

The group has drafted a resolution to be submitted to the ETUC Youth Committee /PERC/

Over 35 trade union leaders and activists from the ITUC/PERC affiliated Federation of Trade Unions of Kyrghizstan (FPKr) together with ACTRAV, IUF and IPEC took part in the 4 day brain storming workshop aimed at planning union strategy in combating child labour in Kyrghizstan.

Seminar consisted of 2 stages. During the first stage sector unions of FPKr identifies main areas, problems and challenges and developed approach to planning union sector strategy. At the second stage participants tried to incorporate sector strategy into the overall policy of FPKr aimed at elimination of CL at the national level. Intensive and fruitful discussion disclosed a whole complex of problems directly and indirectly influencing the use of child labour. This broad picture involves not only economic, but also social cultural issues, traditions, legal and illegal immigration, government labour policies, informal economy, etc.

It has been recognized that only joint efforts of all interested parties, including unions, natural allies among the NGOs, enforcement of government CL policy and socially responsible business may really change situation.

Some unions from the sectors where CL does not exist also found their role and place in a joint effort. Thus medical workers and teachers unions recognized their role in education of people on the adverse impact of CL on kid’s health, family and human values.

Interestingly enough that while looking for the most effective scenario of cooperation in CL elimination both sector unions and FPKg leaders came to conclusion that current structure and functions of the unions require basic changes and that union capacity building element should be integral part of the



PERC, ACTRAV, GUF, IPEC and Federation of Kyrghizstan Trader Unions Join Efforts to Eliminate Child Labour, Bishkek, July 15-18

future work.

The work will continue with two sector union's strategic planning workshops in the fall and a 4 day workshop finally identifying strategy and action plan for the unions struggle against chills labour.

/PERC Moscow Office

4. Upcoming events

Forced labour and trafficking

International Trade Union Conference on Combating Forced Labour and Human Trafficking, Athens, 21-23 November 2008

Energy

Round table, Kiev, 22-23 October 2008

Gender

The 9-th International Trade Union Women's School, Turin 27-29 October 2008

The Founding Conference of the PERC Women's Committee, Turin, 30-31 October 2008

Organising

Nordic-Baltic Organising project conference, 23-24 October, Druskininkai, Lithuania

SEE organizing meeting, 17-18 October, Banja Luka

5. You may be interested

Organised civil society in South Caucasus



The European Economic and Social Committee issued a study on "Organised civil society in Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan, particularly against the backdrop of the European Neighbourhood Policy"

Given the historical, political, social and economic context of the South Caucasus, the aim was to investigate the role of organised civil society in three neighbouring countries.

From October on the study will be available on www.eesc.europa.eu

