

## PERC Newsletter, September/October 2009

*Editor in chief:*  
*John Monks,*  
*PERC Secretary General*  
*PERC team*  
*Editor: Olga Nicolae*

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### *PERC activities*

### *Second Summer School of the PERC, 7-9 September, Bratislava*



The second Summer School of the Pan-European Regional Council took place in Bratislava, Slovakia, with more than 80 trade union participants from the PERC area.

The meeting concentrated on the trade union responses to the financial and economic crisis, with special attention being put on the coming World Day for Decent Work on 7 October and other practical actions the national centers affiliated to the ITUC-PERC are undertaking.

The discussion on the crisis was led by the Secretary General of the PERC, John Monks. The topic included analysis of the reasons and causes of the crisis, reflection on policies and on actions the international trade union movement has been implementing and the assessment of the national anti-crisis programs, particularly in the countries that applied for the support from the International Monetary Fund.

Andras Inotai, Director of the Institute for World Economics in Budapest made a general overview on the current state of developments on crisis, Guy Ryder, General Secretary of the ITUC presented the ITUC policy on the crisis and the 2-nd ITUC congress, Peter Bakhvis, Director of the ITUC-GU Washington Office explained the IFIs policies and Bela Galgozi, ETUI researcher presented the situation in Central and Eastern European countries. The case of the Slovak Republic was presented by KOZ SR and the Ministry of Labor of Slovakia.

Comments urged to concentrate on job creating initiatives, through fiscal stimulus, and the need to ensure that there is no return to “business as



usual". The danger of ideological crisis linked with the raise of nationalistic and populist tendencies was underlined as well as the challenges of the years ahead to balance the budgets. The necessity to act on national level to ensure that "broader shoulders" bear "bigger weight", particularly, the need to abolish flat tax practices and return to progressive taxations were voiced by the speakers and supported by the participants.

The School participants discussed also the different initiatives the unions of Europe are going to undertake in the framework of the World Day for Decent Work, particularly basing on the good experiences of the actions in PERC region in 2008. The participants were also introduced to the human and trade union rights policies of the ITUC and the HTUR Network for the PERC region was set up ( see more in next news)

The representatives of PERC Youth and Women committees have introduced the activities and plan of these two groups, concentrating on the discussions about the effects of the crisis.

The participants of the School were informed about the coming ITUC and PERC activities, linked with the preparation of the 2nd ITUC World Congress in June 2009.

/PERC/

### ***Launch of the PERC HTUR Network, 7-8 September, Bratislava***



The General Council in December 2008 in Brussels decided to establish regional networks of HTUR experts to carry out HTUR work at regional and national level as part of the ITUC Human and Trade Union Rights Committee mandate.

On the occasion of the PERC workshop on international and European trade union policy architecture in April this year, it was decided that the PERC HTUR Network would organize the Launch on the occasion of the 2nd PERC Summer School on 7-9 September.

The participants discussed how to build the PERC HTUR Network with the objective of fulfilling the HTUR activities as described in the HTUR mandate and action plan presented by Stephen Benedict. **The report of this workshop as well as the HTUR Mandate and Action plan were presented and discussed at the plenary of the Summer School in the afternoon.** The need for effective participation of affiliates in the HTUR activities and for better and regular communication was highlighted. Participants of the PERC Summer School strongly supported the ITUC HTUR work and the set-up of the Network.

All documents presented at the Plenary of the Summer School are **accessible on the PERC WebPages**. Furthermore, a **letter was sent to all PERC affiliates** asking them to nominate a contact person for the HTUR Network and a mailing list was built to enable regular and easier communication.

Any information regarding the PERC HTUR



Network or the ITUC HTUR activities please contact **Nadine Thevenet**, tel (direct): **+32 (0)2 224 03 10** ; [nadine.thevenet@ituc-csi.org](mailto:nadine.thevenet@ituc-csi.org)

***Informal economy project  
Workshop in Armenia, 12-13  
September***



On 12-13 September 2009 the workshop "Informal work: information, protection and representing of workers" organized in Tsaghadzor in Armenia prepared the launch of the national campaign under the logo 'You deserve decent work'

According to the different sources data from 34% up to 69% of the working age Armenians are involved in informal labor relations. The peculiar feature of Armenia is that informal work is spread by the relatives' ties that cover the cousins of the cousins and relatives of the relatives. The special term is used in the country to characterize such phenomena – the social net. Quite big source of informal work is originating from the refugees from the national conflicts zones. Very big challenge for the country is the economic migration; just within 2002-2007 out of a total population of 3,215,800 as many as 461 000 inhabitants left Armenia.

There are first results of work with the workers in informal economy, namely – one of the biggest petrol stations chain has been organized as well as the Yerevan jewelry workers, agricultural workers. The ITUC/PERC IE project is being implemented in close coordination with the ILO Migrant workers' protection and ITUC campaign against forced labor. The migrant workers' information centre is opened in the HAMK (Trade Union Confederation of Armenia), there is a hot line for the forced labor victims.

/ITUC Vilnius/

***The First Trade Union  
Conference on Labor and  
Environment for Eastern Europe  
and Central Asia, 23-25  
September, Baku, Azerbaijan***

Unions from NIS participated in the First Trade Union Conference on Labor and Environment for Eastern Europe and Central Asia, organized by the ITUC and Sustainlabour.

The main objectives of the conference were to discuss and adopt common strategies on sustainable development, raise awareness about linkages between Environment and Occupational Health and Safety, identify the needs of workers, build action networks and support the development of regional actions and campaigns.

25 trade union representatives have lively discussed about climate change and the need to act



For more information on the joint project on “*Strengthening trade union participation to international environmental processes*” please consult also the Sustainlabour web site: [www.sustainlabour.org](http://www.sustainlabour.org)

### ***EuroNeman Trade Union Network 5 Years Anniversary meeting, 9-10 October, Lithuania***



### ***United platform against forced labor and Human being Trafficking of South East Europe Trade Unions and NGOs, Bucharest, 13-15 October***

and stop occupational hazards related to chemicals.

The conclusions of the two working groups: one on climate change and the other on chemicals indicate that for the trade unions in the regions the most important needs are awareness raising work with trade union leaders, training sessions for union members and policy making on climate change and chemicals. The proposals and recommendations presented by trade unionists in the region will be further disseminated in the task force meeting on health and safety which will be organized by PERC by the end of this year.  
/PERC/

On October 9-10, 2009 EuroNeman Trade Union Network 5 Years Anniversary meeting took place in Druskininkai, Lithuania. With the assistance of FES and ITUC/PERC Vilnius office trade union participants from near border areas of Poland, Lithuania, Belarus and Kaliningrad region five years ago had established trade union network in Euro region Neman that carry the name of uniting them river Neman (Nemunas).

Participants had evaluated the work done by the partners, and planned further network events. The chairman of Lithuanian Trade Union Confederation (LPSK), Northwest Russia FNPR Secretary M.Grinnik, Mayor of Druskininkai, and “Solidarnosc” chairman of Podliask region of Poland welcomed the network.

A day before Network meeting, the women section has met to discuss gender balance and women’s right issues.

/ITUC Vilnius/

On 13-15 October the first joint workshop “United platform against forced labor and Human being Trafficking” of South East Europe Trade Unions and NGOs took place in Bucharest, Romania.

The event was co-organized by the International Trade Union Confederation/Pan-European Regional Council (ITUC-PERC) and Anti-Slavery International in the framework of a two-year joint initiative against trafficking for labour exploitation in Europe, supported by the European Commission. The initiative is hoping to bring together NGOs and trade unions across Europe, to raise awareness; share good practice; foster communication and



development of an integrated strategy for workplace action on trafficking and the protection of trafficked people. A strategy applicable across Europe, that carried forward by a group of NGOs and trade unions that would continue working jointly to prevent and address trafficking and related issues.

The seminar has focus on exchanging experiences in reducing forced labour and anti-trafficking actions, establishing networks between trade unions and NGOs in region, looking at development of common action plans. The workshop provided an opportunity to brainstorm potential implications of the world economic crisis on trends of labour migration in the region. Participants from Greece, Bulgaria, Serbia, Macedonia, Moldova, Armenia, and Romania agreed to support organizations, which work on these problems, to set up a date base, to establish information network, and have prepared national action plans.

Workshop was led by ITUC/PERC and AntiSlavery International experts. Next sub regional event in frame of the project for Central Eastern Europe is planned in Warsaw Poland 2-4 December 2009.

/PERC/

### *News from affiliates*

#### ***All-Ukrainian protest action against poverty in Ukraine, 17 October***



On 17 October, the Federation of Trade Unions of Ukraine has held the all-Ukrainian protest action against poverty in Ukraine on occasion of the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty. At 10.00 on the main square of Ukraine, Maidan Nezalezhnosti, a fifteen thousand strong rally started. The rally gathered representatives of all regions of Ukraine and all sectors of the national economy. After the rally participants in the protest action marched to the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine where after half an hour picket of the Government's building three groups were elected to handle the resolution to the President of Ukraine, Prime-Minister of Ukraine and Chairman of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine. The trade unionists call all the Ukrainian people to unite around fair trade union demands and join the united front in order to protect their rights, to say "NO" to poverty, "NO" to antisocial actions of power.

The FPU protest action and FPU demands were supported by the International Trade Union Confederation, General Confederation of Trade Unions, national trade union confederations of Russia, Moldova, Tajikistan, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, some sectoral international and national trade unions. Totally 27 international organisations have sent their letters in support of the FPU demands to the President of Ukraine, Prime-Minister of Ukraine and Chairman of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine. The FPU is sincerely grateful to every organisation that sent the letters.

Solidarity is our strength. And with solidarity we will surely win.

/FPU/

### ***The 3rd FNPR Youth Forum, 22-15 October, Yekaterinburg***



The third FNPR Youth Forum took place in Yekaterinburg (Russia), October 22-25, 2009, in which more than 100 young trade unionists from all over Russia, from Sakhalin to Kaliningrad, young colleagues from Estonia, Latvia, Ukraine, Kazakhstan took participated. The new Chairman of the FNPR Youth Council was elected - Aleksey Slyazin, the representative from the Ekaterinburg region.

Young people have worked in four working groups in order to prepare plans and recommendations to cover in the following areas: the priorities and directions of activities of young trade unionists; trade union structure modernization and efficiency; dissemination of information among young people and representation, organization and protection of young workers in informal economy.

During the forum the young people were actively debating with the Russian Duma deputies, representatives of the FNPR leadership. A lot of attention was given to the strengthening of the international cooperation among young people plans.

/ITUC Vilnius office/

### ***Upcoming events:***

#### ***Youth***

**31 October-2 November, NIS youth policy meeting, Kiev**

#### ***Education***

**9-11 November, SEE education meeting, Turin**

#### ***Economists meeting***

**10-12 November, SEE economists meeting, Belgrade**

#### ***SEE Trade Union Forum***

**12-13 November, SEE Trade Union Forum, Belgrade**

#### ***Development cooperation***

**18-20 November, New Member States, South Eastern Europe and New Independent States development cooperation seminar, Brussels**

## *You may be interested*

### ***International Financial Institutions***

***[www.ifc.org/projects](http://www.ifc.org/projects)***

***EPSU, the European Federation of Public Services Unions, has started a twitter***

***<http://twitter.com/energyunions>***

***The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) expects economic growth to be negative in 21 of its 29 "client" countries in 2009***

***The EBRD's one-page table with its adjusted GDP growth forecasts is available at:***

***[http://www.ebrd.com/new/pressrel/2009/091015\\_forecasts.pdf](http://www.ebrd.com/new/pressrel/2009/091015_forecasts.pdf)***

The following proposed loan was posted to the IFC website since the last update:

\* CI Russia Residential Energy Efficiency Finance / Agribusiness Finance

For more information, please search the project number provided in the IFC projects database ([www.ifc.org/projects](http://www.ifc.org/projects)) or contact Global Unions' Washington Office.

EPSU seeks to publish news of the energy unions in Europe research company developments and other stuff. Recent posts include:

- New European Works Council in GdfSuez
- Strike announcement of Belgian union Gazelco
- Outsourcing of car maintenance in Slovakian SPP (EON and GdF)
- 22-39 kg of unrecorded plutonium found in French nuclear reactor
- Social Forum and lack of progress on Social Action plans in Balkans
- Mexican government action to destroy electricity union (SME)

Please do not hesitate to subscribe to twitter and keep posted on what ticks for energy workers in Europe.

In its latest revised forecasts, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) expects economic growth to be negative in 21 of its 29 "client" countries in 2009, negative growth to continue in four of them in 2010 -- Bulgaria, Hungary, Latvia and Lithuania -- and unemployment to increase further throughout the region. This, despite the EBRD's assessment that the recession is "bottoming out" in Central and Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union.

The global financial and economic crisis affected the region more strongly than any other, with double-digit GDP declines this year in five countries. In comments quoted by the FT (article below), the EBRD's chief economist blames foreign banks for the severity of the regional crisis because they contributed to higher debt levels, fuelled credit bubbles and increased foreign exchange exposure. However he concludes that "we need to find ways of addressing the failures of this model without fundamentally changing it". The EBRD's one-page table with its adjusted GDP growth forecasts is available at

[http://www.ebrd.com/new/pressrel/2009/091015\\_forecasts.pdf](http://www.ebrd.com/new/pressrel/2009/091015_forecasts.pdf)

## **ISCOS-CISL**

***Project " Economic democracy and participation in organizing processes in the textile and shoe sectors, in Italy, Romania, Bulgaria and Turkey"***



ISCOS-Cisl published a study titled " Dialogue sociale et délocalization: voyage dans le secteur textiles, tetements et chaussures de la Roumanie et Bulgarie" in the context of the project " Economic democracy and participation in organizing processes in the textile and shoe sectors, in Italy, Romania, Bulgaria and Turkey" co-financed by the European Commission , DG Employment, Social Affairs and Equal opportunities. The study compares the present economic and social situation in the textile, clothing and footwear sectors in Romania and Bulgaria.

Graphics and data show the impact of the crises on these specific sectors that are losing more and more employees, the fragile situation of the sectors and the reliance of using subcontracting for re-exportation. In addition, the research contains a paragraph concerning the situation of immigrant workers in Romania within the textile, clothing and footwear sectors.

The volume is part of the book series "Collana ISCOS" and is available in Italian, French, Romanian and Bulgarian

For any additional information do not hesitate to contact:

Lorenza Lo Sasso, Information and Project Officer

ISCOS IAL Cisl Bruxelles  
Boulevard du Roi Albert II, 5  
1210 Bruxelles  
Tel: +32 2 201 49 55  
Fax: +32 2 201 49 56  
Email: [iscoseu@iscos-cisl.org](mailto:iscoseu@iscos-cisl.org)

***Social Europe Journal:***

***<http://www.social-europe.eu/>***

The Social Europe Journal is intended to be both a source of information and a forum for debate on European social, political and economic issues from a (broadly defined) centre-left perspective.

The journal is issued four times a year (electronically), but perhaps more importantly you can read and comment on articles, blogs and columns on-line – and even launch your own blog. There are links to twitter and face book, for fans of new media.

It would be great if European trade union colleagues would 'join the debate'.

/ETUI/

***New online Debate: 'Where now for European Social Democracy?'***

***Social Europe Journal and Soundings Journal, supported by Compass and the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung are running a pan-European online debate on the future of European social democracy.***

Entitled "The Good Society Debate" this is the first time ever such a wide-ranging discussion has been organised.

Starting on Monday 2 November and running for seven weeks, 70 leading thinkers, politicians and activists from all over Europe will publish their views and debate the ideas in the document 'Building the Good Society' written by Jon Cruddas, Labour Party MP and the German social democratic MP Andrea Nahles.

"Adaptation to the political mainstream over the last

one and a half decades was a strategy that gave short-term electoral success at the price of the long-term viability of social democratic politics. Recent national and European election results prove that this short-term success is over and that the crisis of social democratic politics has reached worrying levels indeed. It is therefore vital to reenergise European social democracy with a new politics and a new identity. We need a new epoch of novel social democratic thinking.'

**You can read articles here:**

**<http://www.goodsociety.social-europe.eu>**

**For further information contact:**

**[goodsociety@social-europe.eu](mailto:goodsociety@social-europe.eu)**