

## PERC Newsletter, November/December 2009

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New year message to Europe's leaders  
from Europe's people

You've rescued  
the bankers,  
now what about us?

Trillions have been spent to stabilise  
the banks after their orgy of  
speculation. Now the bill has to be  
paid – and so far it is workers, and  
especially the innocent and blame-  
less young, who are paying the  
price through rising unemployment  
and increasing homelessness.

Join our campaign for a Europe-  
wide youth undertaking in 2010,  
a guarantee of quality jobs, work  
experience, training and education.  
And support the PERC campaign for  
a fair burden-sharing to pay for the  
crisis, with progressive taxation on  
the rich and comfortable and a  
new global transaction tax.

Happy new year  
**2010**

**STOP**  
Casino Capitalism!

**SUPPORT**  
the real economy!

**MORE**  
and better jobs!

PAN EUROPEAN REGIONAL COUNCIL

**Dear Friends and Colleagues,**

**We would like to take advantage of  
this opportunity to wish you safe  
and happy holidays, and best  
wishes for 2010.**

**This past year has certainly been a  
challenging one for the PERC and  
we are sure new challenges are  
coming ahead..**

**We would like to thank all of you  
who participated in our activities  
throughout the last year.**

**We look forward to 2010, as we  
collectively work towards ensuring  
the best possible functioning and  
success of the PERC in favour of  
working people in our region.**

**Best wishes !**

## **PERC activities**

### ***The South Eastern Trade Union Forum meets in Belgrade, 11-13 November***



Following the decision of the South Eastern Trade Union Forum held in Zagreb in April 2009, around 30 trade union representatives have participated in the 6-th meeting of the SEE TU Forum in Belgrade from 11 to 13 November 2009. The meeting was organized by PERC in collaboration with the FES Belgrade.

The Forum addressed the questions related to building and strengthening regional and sub-regional union networks; the future of trade union policy in the region under the pressure of the global economic crisis; the consequences of the IMF policy in the region and possible strategies to safeguard working places, decent work and core labor standards.

Before the Forum meeting the economists' network meeting took place which defined future research items in the field of social protection systems, public financial management and crisis management.

/PERC/SEE office/

### ***Meeting of SEE economic experts: "Financial and Economic Crisis in the SEE countries – How to Find Ways Out", Belgrade, 10-12 November***



The first meeting of the SEE TU Economists Network was held in Belgrade, November 10-12, 2009, attended by representatives from Albania, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Hungary and Croatia. The meeting was jointly organized by "Friedrich Ebert Stiftung" and ITUC/PERC SEE Office.

The topic of the meeting was the global economic crisis, its impact on workers and citizens of SEE and ways to overcome it.

The purpose of the meeting was to point out to the key challenges coming out of the pressure of the current crisis on economies and societies of SEE countries, while exchanging standpoints and approaches of the trade unions, and to discuss strategic options to overcome the crisis.

The common issue was the corruption that all countries have to deal with, as well as poverty and inefficient administration, so the conclusion was to reach national consensus that would help solving these important problems, as only then it would be possible to start taking measures at national level.

The next meeting of SEE TU Economic Experts will be held in late February or early March 2010. FES Office Belgrade expresses interest to continue supporting this network.

/PERC/SEE Office/

### ***The 10-th International Trade Union Women's School, Brussels 16-18 October***

The Tenth International Trade Union Women's School on "**Protecting dignity of women in the workplace – Decent work to confront the crisis**", organized by the ITUC-PERC CEE&NIS Women's Network was held in the International Trade Union House in Brussels, the headquarters of the ITUC/International Trade Union Confederation, from 16-18 October. Around 50 participants from 24 countries of Central-Eastern Europe, New Independent States, Caucasus and Central Asia



***The SEE Trade Union Youth Workshop, Dresden, 30 November to 3rd December***



***Regional workshop on forced labor and human trafficking, Warsaw, 2-4 December***



participated in the activity.

The Women's School was established ten years ago in Rovinj, Croatia, and became the focal point for the strategic planning of the ITUC-PERC CEE&NIS Women's Network activities and at the annual regional conference women adopt actions on campaigning and common activities, which, together with the resolutions or declarations of the School, they transmit to their leaderships.

/PERC/

The SEE Trade Union Youth Encounter workshop with DGB Youth held under the heading "Together in socially just Europe's future" took place in Dresden, Germany from 30th November until 3rd December 2009. The meeting was financed by the Friedrich Ebert Foundation and gathered 24 young trade unionists: 17 participants from 9 countries of South Eastern Europe (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro, Romania and Serbia) and 7 from Germany. Presentations were made by the German colleagues from DGB Youth, focused on the following issues: recruiting new members, possibilities and methods of new member recruitment, dual education system and the work of youth work councils in Germany. The encounter was an opportunity of building international cooperation among the trade union youth structures of SEE and DGB Youth. Participants received information about the structure, role and priorities of the ETUC, PERC and its Youth Committee, as well as about the World Social Forum and European Social Forum.

/PERC/

On 2-4 December in Warsaw sub regional workshop of the trade unions and NGO's dealing with forced labour and trafficking sphere took place. The event was organized in the frame of ITUC/PERC-Antislavery International project against trafficking and forced labor. In the event participated "La Strada" NGO network' representatives; trade unions representatives from Russia, Belarus, Ukraine, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, Poland and experts from international organizations: ITUC, AntiSlavery International, OSCE, FES. The participants prepared NGO and trade unions' mutual activities plan in the region. It was also decided that trade unions and NGO's in their countries will implement lobbying campaigns on domestic workers' convention in preparation of the International Labor Conference in 2010.

/PERC Vilnius office/

## **Trade union Youth Winter School, Kaliningrad, 11-13 December**



## **Round Table on occupational Health and Safety, Brussels, 14-15 December**



The 2nd North-West Russia trade union youth Winter school took place in Svetlogorsk, Kaliningrad region (Russia), 11-13 December 2009. More than 30 trade union young leaders attended the event - from Kaliningrad region, Latvia, Lithuania, and North-West Russia. Participants from other Russian areas, i.e. Siberia, Ural and Volga were invited to gain the experience of Baltic region youth co-operation and to share the activities results.

The event is traditionally organized in Kaliningrad region. Kaliningrad region is the only Russian Federation area, which is not bordering with main territory of the Russian Federation. Due to its geographic and economic specifics it is actively participating in the activities of Baltic region trade union co-operation.

In this school three main topics were discussed: recruitment of young persons into trade unions, trade union modernization and trade union activities in post-crisis period.

/PERC/Vilnius Office/

The PERC has organized a meeting of its member and partner organizations from the Newly Independent States on the issues of the occupational health and safety in Brussels, 14 and 15 of December. The discussion concentrated upon the perspective of the International Labor Organization, with the ILO specialist Wiking Hasberg as an expert on the standards and methods the ILO is using. The participants were introduced to the different levels of the OHS work: the level of the setting up of a national system, of prevention and monitoring, the level of enterprise and the mechanisms of the social dialog to analyze the risks, of accidents or professional deceases, and to develop means to minimize them.

The second dimension of the meeting was linked with the standards the European Union sets up for the OHS and prevention and monitoring mechanisms functioning in the community. Viktor Kempa of the European Trade Union Institute introduced the respective directive and the framework agreements existing in the EU. It was agreed that the OHS will be prioritized by the PERC in 2010, with a round table to discuss the four main pillars: prevention as a philosophy of OHS; risk analysis; social dialog as an instrument of responsible OHS management and institutional set up of the policies and the respective legal base.

/PERC/

## **News from affiliates**

### **Croatia**

Zagreb main square Trg bana Josipa Jelačića saw around 1.500 members of four trade union confederations – Union of Autonomous Trade Unions

## **Trade Union rally and public discussion about the final draft of the Act on Labor, 19 November, Zagreb**



## **Georgia**

### **ITUC report on the respect of fundamental labor standards**

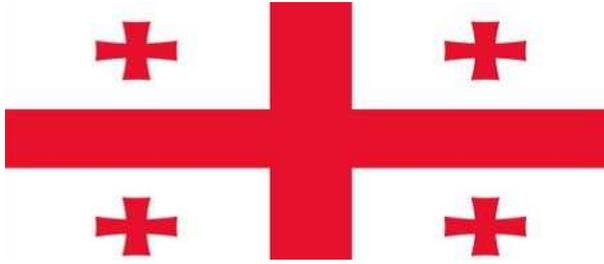
of Croatia (UATUC/SSSH), Independent Trade Unions of Croatia (ITUC/NHS) and Croatian Trade Union Association (HUS) – who gathered at the trade union rally and public discussion about the final draft of the Act on Labour. Trade union leaders Ana Knežević (UATUC/SSSH), Krešimir Sever (NHS) and Ozren Matijašević (HUS) addressed the demonstrators and emphasized that the Government's draft Act on Labour, which has to be amended due to the harmonization process of Croatian legislation with the *acquis communautaire* of the EU, has actually been done under the strong interest influence of the employers' lobby.

UATUC President Ana Knežević said that during discussions and negotiations on the Labour Code the trade unions advocated that the fixed-term employment is used as an exception, and not as a rule, which is the case in Croatia during these last years, however Government betrayed the unions and stood on the side of employers. Trade union representatives distributed leaflets to MPs, before the beginning of the 15th session of the Parliament, which was to discuss the Act on Labour, as the 11th item on the agenda. Trade union leaflets warned against the negative consequences of adopting the Act on Labour in the proposed form. At the end of the meeting on the Main Square, the demonstrators went up the Radićeva street towards the forbidden St Mark's Square, however they were stopped by the police cordon and metal barricades. There was no way through. Only the trade union leaders could pass the barricades to meet with the Speaker of the Croatian Parliament Mr. Luka Bebić who promised to accept the trade union delegation. At this meeting, presidents Ana Knežević, Krešimir Sever and Ozren Matijašević submitted trade union amendments to the draft Act on Labour proposed by the Government.

/UATUC/

A new ITUC report on the respect of fundamental labor standards in Georgia strongly denounces the country's 2006 Labor Code, which has caused massive violations of the rights of Georgian workers and trade unions. Although the government had made a formal undertaking to respect those rights in its application for the EU's trade benefits under the GSP+ scheme, workers' rights are blatantly disregarded in practice.

In 2006, under the new Labor Code, the extreme neo-liberal government eliminated labor inspection in the country. Unsurprisingly, the authorities provide insufficient protection for union members and organizers. Under the Labor Code, unions are in practice unable to benefit from the protection of the law: court cases on discrimination and freedom of association are lost because the courts apply the anti-trade union provisions of the Labor Code. The law gives a *de facto* green light to union busting and marginalization of collective bargaining, and there are many reports of anti-union discrimination and restrictions on the right to strike. Although Georgia has ratified all eight ILO conventions on core labor



standards, there are serious inconsistencies between the Labor Code of 2006 and Georgia's international commitments to respect workers' basic human rights. In particular, the government has failed numerous times to comply with requests by the ILO Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations to bring the Labor Code of 2006 into line with ILO core labor standards conventions. Furthermore, the report notes that discrimination in access to employment and remuneration is widespread, with serious impact on women.

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

#### ***PERC Youth Committee***

**22 January 2010, PERC Youth Committee meeting, Brussels**

#### ***PERC Women's Committee***

**8 February 2010, PERC Women's Committee meeting, Brussels**

#### ***PERC Executive Committee***

**8 March 2010, PERC Executive Committee meeting, Brussels**

#### ***Informal economy***

**10 February, Informal economy conference**

## *You may be interested*



### **BASTUN**

#### **“Road to recovery” Baltic Sea Trade Union Network High Level Meeting, Vilnius, 26 November**

### **International Financial Institutions**

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

### **Decision for Life Project in CIS countries**



On 26 of November in Vilnius the Baltic Sea Trade Union Network High Level Meeting was held. Leaders from all 22 Trade Union Confederations, which are BASTUN members, participated. In 2009-2010 BASTUN is chaired by the Lithuanian Trade Union Confederation (LPSK) in cooperation with Lithuanian Labour Federation (LDF) and Lithuanian Trade Union „Solidarumas“.

The 1st session's topics were about economic crisis and how it's affecting Baltic Sea Trade Union Movement and what are the political priorities for the Baltic Sea trade union movement in order to counteract the crisis. Speakers for these topics were:

Mr. Mikhail Shmakov (President of Federation of Independent Trade Unions of Russia, FNPR, and the Pan European Regional Council, PERC) Mr. Peteris Krigeris (President of Free Trade Union Confederation Latvia, LBAS) Ms. Raita Karnite (Academician of the Latvian Academy of Sciences, Doctor of economic sciences) The 2nd session was devoted to membership, need for strategic transnational organized projects; social dialogue promotion and Trade Union political strengthening and how can be made use of Baltic Sea Labour Network (BSLN) in this context.

Meeting's conclusions were presented by Ms. Bente Sorgenfrey (President of Confederation of Professionals in Denmark, FTF, and Nordic Trade Union Council, NFS).

Also during this Meeting the Resolution regarding Belarusian Trade Unions was adopted.

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

1. RED Union Fenosa (Electricity distribution) - Moldova
2. NLB Tutunska banka, A.D. Skopje - Macedonia
3. Borets International (manufacturing for Oil production) - Russian Federation
4. OMA LLC (Retail) - Belarus
5. Schwarz Group (Retail) - Bulgaria & Romania

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.

### **CIS-countries (Azerbaijan, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Ukraine): Soaring numbers of web visitors**

Earlier in 2009 dedicated websites were brought online in these 4 CIS-countries by the international WageIndicator team. By the middle of December the figures of web visitors continue to soar. Their numbers increased in Belarus with 50% in the preceding month and reached 19,000. In Ukraine, these figures were 30% increased and reached 10,000 visitors. Kazakhstan showed 40% up to reach 3,000 visitors. Azerbaijan – which started only in October – also went up 40% to attain the level of 2,000 visitors.



**Belarus: Regional meeting, Minsk, December 7-11, 2009**

Representatives of the trade union and web teams from Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan, Ukraine and Belarus met to fine tune their campaign plans for 2010, to receive training on commutation and campaign strategies, and to share experiences.

607 Women vendors signed up for a new trade union in Belarus. The trade union team of BKDP in Belarus organized 143 meetings for women market vendors (of the 300,000 estimated workers, 90 % are young women) during which 607 signatures were collected.

**Press conference in Kazakhstan inspired journalists to set up a union for journalists**

CFTUK launched the campaign in 3 big regions focusing on maternity protection and child care. They organized events, meetings and training for young women workers (hairdressers, small/ medium sized shops and markets, IT workers). More than 600 women were reached. Young women journalists who were present at CFTUK's press conference in Almaty were so inspired by the Decisions for Life campaign that they are now forming a union for journalists.

/ITUC Equality/