

PERC Newsletter, March/April 2010

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

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The 4-th meeting of the PERC Executive Committee, Brussels, 8 of March

The 4th meeting of the PERC Executive Committee took place in Brussels on the 8th of March, in the building of the European Economic and Social Committee. It brought together some 100 trade union leaders and officials from different European countries.

The evolution of the economic crisis was in the centre of the debate. The meeting in particular focused on the austerity measures many governments are now undertaking, by cutting wages, decreasing benefits or laying of the employees in the public sector. The recent strikes and protests in Greece might be the most visible example of trade unions acting against such policies that make workers and citizens paying of the bill for financial speculations business and government had been engaged in. In Portugal, Turkey, Italy, Spain and other countries mass protest are also taking place. Specific attention was devoted to the role of the International Financial Institutions.

The meeting noted a positive shift in the IMF approach to unions aimed at better communication and involvement in the consultations on national level about the anti-crisis economic measures the countries need to undertake.

The EU Commissioner for Enlargement and European Neighbourhood Policies Stefan Fule delivered a presentation on the Eastern Partnership of the EU and the opportunities linked to it, particularly, for the social partners and other civil society organisations through the Civil Society Forum. He also indicated the importance of proactive approach of the union organisations from the six countries regarding the Eastern Partnership processes. The meeting has discussed different options for working with the Council of Europe and the secretariat of the European Social Charter and agreed to streamline the work through the ETUC arrangements. The report of the PERC activities in the previous year and the plan for 2010 were adopted. The topical event for the PERC this year will be the European Conference in Vienna, organized jointly with OGB which will have to assess the last 20 years of trade union development in Europe and to brainstorm the option for future strategies of trade unions in the region.

	<p>/PERC/</p> <p>PERC activities</p>
<p>Meeting of the Economists Network in Sarajevo</p> 	<p>The second meeting of the SEE TU Economists Network was held in Sarajevo, April 8 -9, 2010, attended by representatives from Albania, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia. The meeting was jointly organized by “Friedrich Ebert Stiftung” Belgrade , and the ITUC/ PERC SEE Office with the support of the LO-TCO. The main topic of the meeting was the European policy of flexicurity, empirical analysis, and reform proposals. The purpose of the meeting was to point out to the key challenges coming out of the policy of flexicurity, consequences on flexible employment, change of political philosophy, instruments, exchanging standpoints and approaches of the trade unions on flexicurity. Strategic options to overcome the situation and to achieve a sustainable social development were discussed.</p> <p>/ITUC/PERC SEE Office Sarajevo</p>
<p>BiH partner meeting on labor trafficking, Sarajevo</p> 	<p>On March 31 – April 1 in Sarajevo, trade unions from BiH and Azerbaijan had a meeting concerning cases of workers trafficked for construction work to Azerbaijan by the SERBAZ company. In October 2009 ITUC received information from NGOs about 700 workers from BiH, Serbia and Macedonia brought to Azerbaijan to work at construction sites of the company “SERBAZ”. They were brought on the tourist visas. Since summer 2009 the salary payments were stopped, passports were taken away, and workers live in scary conditions without food and water. International organizations such as OSCE, ILO and ITUC reacted right away. In December ITUC and BiH trade unions leaders’ delegation has visited Azerbaijan regarding this case and the plans for</p>

	<p>workers assistance and trade union cooperation were discussed. As result of the meeting an agreement for cooperation between construction unions on both sides has been signed aimed also at support for migrant workers. A next partner meeting is foreseen for November in Azerbaijan, Baku. /PERC/</p>
<p><i>BASTUN meeting in Vilnius</i></p>  	<p>The BASTUN (Baltic Sea Trade Union Network) meeting took place on 13 April in Vilnius, Lithuania. About 30 representative from BASTUN member organisations - from Norway, Denmark, Sweden, Finland, Germany, Poland, Belarus, Russia, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, and ITUC/PERC - attended this meeting. The participants paid a tribute to FNPR National Secretary E.Sidorov and Polish plane crash victims with a minute of silence. It was the last meeting under Lithuanian presidency. From the 15th of June the presidency will pass to Norway. Therefore the agenda and priorities of Norwegian presidency, including health and safety, energetic safety, was discussed and adopted. Participants were introduced to the complaint on violation of association freedoms that the Russian unions sent to the ILO. The BASTUN supports this complaint and, in solidarity with Russian colleagues, the meeting agreed to organize the next session in St. Petersburg, using this opportunity to meet trade union members at their workplaces. The KTR (Russia) was introduced as a new BASTUN member. /ITUC/PERC Vilnius Office/</p>
<p><i>Belarus Country meeting</i></p> 	<p>Following the important developments in consolidating the independent trade unions at the end of 2009 and the need to adjust and streamline policy responses to the current realities in Belarus, the ITUC/PERC jointly with some GUFs and other interested national organisations organised a special country meeting devoted to the problems of Belarus and the future of independent trade unionism the country. The meeting provided a forum where for</p>

	<p>the first time all external supporting organizations and the leaders of BKDP and constituent structures met together to discuss current way of interaction and possible option to raise efficiency of communications, coordination and relevance of activities. A Steering group was set up to provide technical and organisational support for implementation of agreed pattern of operation.</p> <p>/PERC/</p>
<p>An important development on the Russian trade union scene</p> 	<p>Friday – 23 April 2010 – may become one of the historic dates for the trade union movement in Russia. The KTR (Confederation of Labour of Russia) Council members unanimously agreed to accept the VKT (All-Russian Labour Confederation) as an affiliated member of the KTR regardless of any differences of the two organizations regarding the strategy of the independent trade unions development. Practically this means the merger of the two trade union centers and creation of a new strong trade union amalgamation. The general decision to unite the VKT and the KTR was taken last spring; and on 31 May 2009 the Councils of both Confederations held a joint meeting which decided the mechanism of the unification. Says Igor KOVALCHUK, KTR President: <i>“We have considered several schemes of the unification of our two trade union amalgamations. Yet, both legally and politically the unification via merger of the two Confederations into a single one turned to be too complicated – more complicated than we expected earlier. So, it was decided that the best option was VKT affiliating the KTR as a member”</i>. According to the VKT President Boris KRAVCHENKO, affiliation of the VKT to the KTR will allow creation of the new, united trade union center by this summer. Read more on the PERC website.</p>
<p><i>Regional experts’ meeting on pension system reforms in SEE countries, Belgrade</i></p>	<p>The Regional Experts’ Meeting on pension system reforms in SEE countries was held in Belgrade, April 28-29, 2010, attended by legal and economic TU experts from</p>



Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia. The meeting was organized by the ITUC/ PERC SEE Office Sarajevo with the support of LO Norway, and presence of Ms. Siri Relling Adviser, from the LO Norway International department.

The main topic of the meeting was the Pension System Reforms in the SEE countries: challenges and trade union positions. The SEE TU experts presented the national documents on the actual situation in pension system of their countries, and pointed out the key challenges of the reforming process, as well as the trade union opinion to achieve a sustainable pension system. The purpose of the meeting was to point out the key challenges coming out of the policies on pension system reform, impact of poor employment, change of political philosophy, instruments, exchanging standpoints and approaches of the trade unions on pension system reforms in the respective countries, and to discuss strategic options to achieve a sustainable social development as a way to sustainable pension systems.

/ITUC/PERC SEE Office Sarajevo

Upcoming events:

PERC –FES round table on workers’ rights in NIS

18-19 May, Minsk

Baltic HTUR meeting

25 May, Vilnius

Baltic Youth Summer Camp

2 June to 2 July, Palanga

PERC Women’s Committee meeting

2 July, Brussels

	<p><i>You may be interested</i></p>
<p><i>IMF study: No drop in unemployment without specific job creation measures</i></p>	<p>The IMF's first substantial study on unemployment revises upwards the Fund's earlier predictions of joblessness in industrialized countries as a result of the current economic crisis. It states that there will be no decline in the unemployment rate before at least 2012 unless countries adopt "policies to jump-start job creation".</p> <p>The study has its shortcomings and contradictions, but importantly puts the finger on "persistently high unemployment" as "the key policy challenge" that many industrialized economies will face in the coming years. The paper predicts that the current high unemployment rate, which averages 9 per cent in industrialized countries, will remain at that level until the end of 2012 unless aggressive job-creation measures are adopted. The paper makes no prediction beyond end-2012.</p> <p>The IMF research team that prepared "Unemployment Creation during Recessions and Recoveries" will hold discussions on it in the coming weeks in Washington and in some European cities (Brussels, Paris, Berlin and Milan) and is available to debate the study with interested trade union organizations.</p> <p>The unemployment study is available on the IMF's web site at: http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/weo/2010/01/pdf/c3.pdf</p> <p>/ITUC/Global Unions - Washington Office</p>
<p><i>The ITC-Turin is launching the ILO summer school on labour economics for development, which will be held in Turin at the ITC between June 28 - July 2, 2010</i></p>	<p>The ITC-Turin is launching the ILO summer school on labour economics for development, which will be held in Turin at the ITC between June 28 - July 2, 2010. The summer school on labour economics for development is a special 5 days event that supports the sharing of latest knowledge on labour economics and employment-related development challenges between experts from middle income and low income countries, ILO experts, and economists from</p>

	<p>other organisations (World Bank, OECD). The summer school targets senior labour market researchers, policy analysts, and advisers, who are actively involved in labour market policy development in developing countries. If you need more information contact Michela Ripandelli(m.ripandelli@itcilo.org)</p>
<p>HTUR</p> <p><i>The 2010 edition of the ITUC's Annual Survey, covering the period January to December 2009 will be launched on the 9th June in Geneva during the International Labour Conference</i></p>	<p>The 2010 edition of the ITUC's Annual Survey, covering the period January to December 2009 will be launched on the 9th June in Geneva during the International Labour Conference. This year, the ITUC would like to encourage regional and national events for the launch of the Annual Survey, on the 9th of June simultaneously with the Geneva launch or later; the aim being to give a better visibility to the Annual Survey as well as to ensure affiliates' appropriation of the Annual Survey according to their means. In this objective, the ITUC is producing communication materials including posters, and leaflets to be used during launching events.</p> <p>If you want to receive posters and leaflets in order to organize launching events, please contact the HTUR department (tur@ituc-csi.org or +32 2 224 03 04). Furthermore, we would be very grateful if you could inform us about the event you are planning to organize.</p> <p>/ITUC/HTUR/</p>
<p><i>IFC loan update</i></p>	<p>The following proposed loans were posted to the IFC website since the last update:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Akenerji Elektrik Uretim A.S.(hydropower) - Turkey 2. TCE Ege Konteyner Terminal Isletmeleri A.S. (transport) - Turkey 3. Globino Meat Processing Plant - Ukraine 4. KEP Trust (Finance) - Kosovo 5. Green for Growth Fund (finance) - Southern Europe region 6. CJSC Myronivsky Khiboprodukt (agriculture) - Ukraine 7. Gorenje (manufacturing) - Southern Europe region (Serbia & Czech Rep.) 8. Cernavoda and Pestera Wind Farms -

	<p>Romania 9. Transcapitalbank - Russian Federation 10. Societe Generale Banka Srbija AD Beograd (finance) - Southern Europe region 11. ALD Automotive (finance) - Ukraine</p> <p>For more information, please search the project number provided here in the IFC projects database (www.ifc.org/projects) or contact Global Unions' Washington Office.</p> <p>Francesca Ricciardone ITUC/Global Unions - Washington Office</p>
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