

PERC Newsletter, October/November/December 2010

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Inside this issue:

- 1. PERC activities*
- 2. News from the organizations*
- 3. Upcoming events*
- 4. You may be interested*



Dear Friends and Colleagues,

We would like to take advantage of this opportunity to wish you safe and happy holidays, and best wishes for 2011.

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 and who supported us throughout the last year.

We look forward to 2011, 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 !

	<p>PERC Activities</p>
<p><i>Regional Conference on “Building democracy and trade union rights in NIS”, Moscow, 6 December 2010</i></p> 	<p>ITUC-PERC, in cooperation with its Russian affiliates, organised the Regional Conference “Building democracy and trade union rights in NIS”, which brought together more than 150 trade union leaders and activists. The aim of the conference was to facilitate the work in the field of trade union rights in the region and to outline priorities and perspectives for future work, to identify challenges, resources and allies to meet them. The conference was organised in two parts: public one, with open discussions on trade union rights issues with state officials, and internal trade union one that concentrated on trade union strategies. The new ITUC report that summed up the developments in trade union rights sphere in the region was released on the occasion of the conference . ITUC General Secretary Sharan Burrow, ETUC and PERC General Secretary John Monks, FNV President and ITUC HTUR Committee Chair Agnes Jongerius, PERC and FNPR president Mikhail Shmakov, KTR President Igor Kovalchuk, representatives of the IUF, UNI, IMF, ICEM, ITF as well as of the ILO participated in the debates, while Russian state officials were addressing some of the issues raised by the unionists of the two national trade union centres, particularly, from the enterprise level activists.</p> <p>Please see more information on the http://perc.ituc-csi.org/spip.php?article472</p> <p>/PERC/</p>
<p><i>Meeting of the Leaders of national centres from Eastern Partnership countries, Brussels, 25-26 October</i></p>	<p>The PERC organised a meeting of the leaders of national centres from Eastern Partnership countries together with interested colleagues from the EU countries in Brussels, 25-26 of October. The meeting was kindly supported by the FGTB and the LO-TCO Secretariat. The following organizations were present at the meeting: KPA (Armenia), AHIK (Azerbaijan), BKDP (Belarus), CMKOS, (Czech Republic), GTUC (Georgia), LPSK (Lithuania), NSZZ Solidarnosc (Poland), FNPR (Russia), FPU, KVPU, VOST (Ukraine), TCO (Sweden), CC.OO (Spain), FGTB and ITUC/PERC. The meeting provided a forum for information and exchange of opinions on perspectives for the future of all interested actors from ITUC/PERC along three major policy dimensions: assess the overall development of</p>



the operation of the Civil Society Forum; review developments in the recipient countries, the involvement of trade unions in the setting of National Platforms and the prospects for future work on that basis. The meeting was addressed by S. Boyle (EESC-External Relations) and I. Voles, employer group EESC and member of the Steering Committee of the Civil Society Forum (CSF). Discussions on the issues revealed converging opinions about the misconceived structure and pattern of operation of the CSF and the urgent need to address the misbalance between representation of NGOs and social partners in the Forum and the Steering Committee. The unclear status of the Forum in the Thematic platforms of the EaP and the lack of accessible procedures for initiating activities and finding financial support for them have added further confusion and deep disappointment of the trade union organizations with the CSF to the point of questioning the rationale of further participation in the operation. Finally, recognising the importance of being present at least to be properly informed and avoid negative repercussions by leaving all the space for the NGOs the participants settled on the proposal to use the current second meeting of the Forum to try and address the problems identified. Parallel to that PERC in cooperation with EESC and IOE to take joint action towards the EU institutions on the political level to try initiate changes towards rebalancing the structure and operation of the PERC. The issue is to be raised at the meeting of the PERC Executive Committee for further decision depending on outcomes of the actions by that time.

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***Second meeting of the EaP Civil Society Forum
18-19 November, Berlin***



The meeting convened about 200 representatives of civil society organisations from the six countries of the EU Eastern Partnership policy (EaP) region, EU, Russia and EU institutions. The selection procedure implemented by the Steering Committee of the Civil Society Forum (CSF) has been pretty unclear. The technical organisation and communication with participants also has not been a very efficient one. In any case, the unions that have applied in time have been selected for the Forum meeting.

PERC participated with six representatives: Solidarnosc and GTUC in Working Group 1 (WG 1) dealing with human rights and democracy, BKDP, TCO and PERC Secretariat in WG 2 – economic reform and



<http://www.easternpartnership.org/>

<http://www.easternpartnership.org/content/call-submissions>

EU integration and the president of PERC Youth Committee in WG 4 – people to people contacts. Along with the PERC members the Belarus official trade union FPB was also participating in WG 2. Employer organisations were even less represented but there were several representatives from business associations/chambers from the EaP countries.

The Forum was addressed by Stefan Fule, EU Commissioner for enlargement, G. Westerwelle, Foreign minister of Germany, representative of EESC and others. All speakers underlined the importance of CSF and its future. The Commissioner recognised there have been problems in the operation of the CSF and mentioned the mismatch of the role of the social partners and their level of involvement in the Forum. The EESC speaker was most direct and sharp at stressing the need to rebalance the composition of the Forum in relation to social partner and third group representation and to clarify the political status and focus of the recommendations of the CSF working groups.

Interaction of trade union representatives with the rest of civil society was good in WG 2 where the recommendation included all trade union demands outlined at the PERC meeting in Brussels in October and even some additional dimensions. The cooperation was not at that level in the other working groups where trade union proposals had certain difficulties to enter the final texts of the recommendations and particularly in WG 1 where there was clear tension with some NGOs and direct demonstration of negative attitudes towards trade unions in some EaP countries.

Despite the fact that at the end the needed texts have entered final documents the pattern of operation of the working groups, the political status and procedural fate of the recommendations, i.e. who is going to consider them and how initiatives can be undertaken and supported financially remained as obscure as at the beginning. A key message of the commissioner: “Don’t panic, money is coming” may sound encouraging as general prospects but for the trade union representatives despite gaining more experience and understanding of the operation the whole confusion in terms of procedure as well as content of the event and its possible outcomes remained mostly unchanged and visions for the future predominantly sceptical.

	<p>A special website was presented at the meeting and launched already at the address: http://www.easternpartnership.org/ . Another address is open for submission of articles, analyses and opinions on various issues of the EaP where everyone interested to read the available materials or to contribute himself/herself can contact the editors at: http://www.easternpartnership.org/content/call-submissions /PERC/</p>
<p><i>The 7th SEE TU Forum, Sarajevo, 9-10 November</i></p> 	<p>On 9 – 10 November 2010, Sarajevo hosted the 7th SEE TU Forum, which was financially supported by: FES Regional Office Belgrade and PERC within the Projects of support to SEE trade unions of LO Norway and LO TCO Sweden. Trade union leaders from the region met to discuss current challenges related to the on-going and future reforms of pension systems in the region and to replace the vacated seat of the the Chair of the Forum. On the first item the results of the work of the regional group of experts on pension reform were presented and followed by an in-depth discussion with the participation of external experts. It revealed the need of more complex approach on the issues particularly addressing the underlying base for an efficient pension system – a sound economy and dynamic labour market securing high and stable levels of employment and the vital role of genuine social dialogue for policy development. Achieving these goals necessitates also tackling the flourishing informal economy and the damaging effects of the pervasive corruption in the societies involving in the policy development processes. The leaders decided to embark on the first joint regional action in 2011:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> *The experts from the project to develop a background policy paper for trade union positions in the region and on that basis to prepare a letter to SEE governments and key actors in the region – the Regional Coordination Council (RCC), IFIs, EU offices, etc.; *All organisations will organise a regional day of action on the same day and present the letter to their governments as well as other actors. The demand will be raised for the RCC organise a regional tripartite conference on the issue. *To take part in the organisation of the conference in the autumn of 2011 with the support of the FES Belgrade office. <p>On the second item a new Chair of the SEE Trade Union Forum - Ms. Marija Hanževački</p>

	<p>from the NHS – Croatia. The leaders agreed to have the next meeting of the Forum in the autumn of 2011 after the ETUC Congress and before the proposed regional conference on pension reform. It will prepare trade unions for the conference but the key topic of the Forum will be the challenges of trade union organisational development in the region.</p> <p>/Enisa Salimovic, SEE TU Forum Coordinator/</p>
<p><i>“Youth employment: breaking gender barriers for young women and men” in Warsaw, Poland, 14 and 15 October</i></p> 	<p>The PERC, in cooperation with the Friedrich Ebert Foundation, has organised a two-day conference “Youth employment: breaking gender barriers for young women and men” in Warsaw, Poland, 14 and 15 October. The conference brought together some 30 participants from different countries of Central and Eastern Europe. The discussion was devoted to the mismatches between skills and competencies that young people are acquiring in their education (general and vocational) with those demanded by the labour markets. The discussion also included the gender dimension, in particular, the gender stereotypes in certain professional occupations in the process of education and socialization that result in bringing young women to lower-paid jobs; unemployment and the underemployment, and quality of jobs available for young people. It was strongly stressed that while even before the crisis the jobs that young people could achieve were of precarious nature, with the effects of the crisis and austerity measures the governments are taken to reduce budget deficits, the jeopardy that the young people of Europe - yesterday’s, today’s and tomorrow’s newcomers to the labour markets - will be “a lost generation”.</p> <p>/PERC/</p>
<p><i>The Trade Union Women’s School of the CEE&NIS Women’s Network , 24 and 25 November, Brussels</i></p>	<p>The Trade Union Women’s School of the CEE&NIS Women’s Network took place on 24 and 25 November in Brussels with the financial support from the ILO and the Belgium unions and was followed by the PERC Women’s Committee Conference on 26 November. The main theme of the School this year concentrated on the issue of Equality Against Poverty and how to stop the feminization of poverty and the evaluation of the work done during the ILO/FLA project and in identifying the main priorities for the Women’s Network in the next period. In the meeting participated around 50 women from the women’s structures in the CEE and Nis region. ILO/ACTRAV was invited together</p>



with the ETUC , the Belgium unions and the ILO/FLA discrimination project coordinators. The main topics of the School included an analyses of the impact of the crisis on the public services and situation of women on the labour market, combating poverty through employment, decent work country programs and country studies on concrete facts on the grassroots. The School has discussed also strategies and policies to combat discrimination in the labour market, strategies and mechanisms for empowering women in trade unions. The School was followed by the Annual Conference of the Women's Network which worked on the recommendations to the PERC Women's Conference and adopted a resolution on the future of the Women's School and the CEE and NIS Women's Network
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The Conference of the PERC Women's Committee , Brussels, 26 November



The Conference of the PERC Women's Committee took place on 26 November in Brussels with the participation of around 60 women from organisations in the PERC region. The main purpose of the Conference was to discuss the work program of the PERC Women's Committee for the period 2011-2012: establish the priorities, stimulate PERC member unions to initiate equality activities and policy mainstreaming on the national level, role and responsibilities of the PERC Women's Committee and its members. The Conference was opened by Sharan Burrow the ITUC General Secretary who presented the challenges women are facing during the extreme difficult economic and social conditions generated by the present crisis.

The Conference took into consideration in its debates the recommendations of the CEE and NIS Women's Network on : intensifying the Decent Work for Decent Life Women Campaign; discussing a system of gender awareness training programs; positive action to further strengthen women's involvement in trade union decision-making and strengthen the position of women's structures in their unions; mainstreaming gender equality; intensify campaigning on national level for the ratification of the ILO Conventions and support for the Domestic workers ILO recommendations; work on the elimination of workplace violence. All recommendations fit in the proposed working program which include the following priorities: Decent Work for Decent Life for Women campaign; increase union activity on pay equity and work life balance; coherence in trade union

	<p>gender policies and gender audits; strengthen women's involvement in trade union decision-making; domestic workers and campaigning for the ratification of the ILO Conventions. After debates on the work program the Conference elected some new members for the vacant positions in the committee. Hege Hero/YS Norway was elected President; Tatyana Frolova/FNPR Russian Federation Vice-President and Natalya Levitska/KVPU committee member. The Conference was followed by a Committee meeting to discuss how to better organize itself and how to distribute the tasks within the committee. More information about the School and Conference on http://perc.ituc-csi.org</p> <p>/PERC/</p>
<p><i>Workshop on Health and Safety Issues for the NIS region, Kiev, 8 and 9 December 2010</i></p> 	<p>Following the PERC work program dedicated to health and safety issues a workshop for NIS countries took place in Kiev with the financial support of the LO/TCO. Around fifteen participants were present from Ukraine, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Moldova, Hungary and Czech Republic. The workshop was meant to continue the work done already in the region and to suggest future actions to be taken. The ILO expert Wiking Husbert presented the ILO perspective on occupational health and safety with the accent on standards, mechanisms and technical assistance. He stressed the importance of developing social dialogue when negotiating health and safety clauses and the importance of introducing the preventive culture when discussing the national programs. Gyorgy Karoly from MSZOSZ Hungary referred to the EU perspective on occupational health and safety and the role of trade unions and Vlastimir Altner from CMKOS Czech Republic explained the challenges faced by the workers in the mining sector. The participants stressed the importance of the health and safety issues, the necessity to develop their work in the field and proposed a bigger event to take place in the region with the involvement of trade union leaders.</p> <p>/PERC/</p>
	<p><i>News from the organizations</i></p>
<p><i>Round table on “SEE Trade Union Role in Pension system Reforms”, Belgrade, 12 October</i></p>	<p>Within the Project “SEE Trade Union Role in Pension system Reforms”, financially supported by LO Norway, the National Round Table for Serbia was held on Tuesday, 12 October 2010 in Belgrade. Organizers of the Round Table were the trade union confederations head offices –</p>



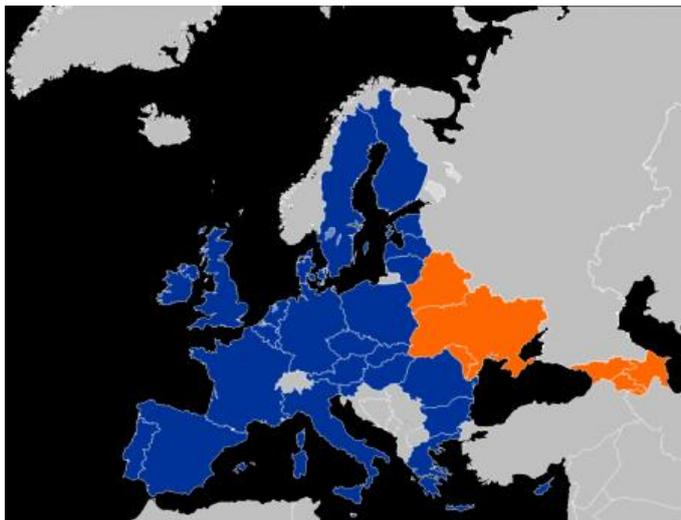
UGS“Nezavisnost”/ and CATUS. Following the introductory remark by the President of UGS “Nezavisnost” and representative of CATUS, and the Office Coordinator of ITUC / PERC SEE Office, the discussion included the representatives of the Ministry of Work and Social Policy, Tax Administration, Association of Employers in Serbia, IMF, World Bank, and Confederation of Independent Trade Unions of Croatia. ETUC Expert for the matters of pension and disability insurance reform, Martin Hutsebaut, talked about the fundamental prerequisites required for the overall reform of this area, comparing the conditions in Serbia with the conditions in the countries in the region and the European Union. Basic conclusion of the Round Table was that the Trade unions will, irrespective of inadequate, ignoring attitude of the Government towards the positions and proposals of the trade union head offices, remain interested that the new Law protects the interests and improves the rights of the workers and pensioners. Following the Round Table, the Press Conference was held where the representatives of the trade union head offices presented their positions and proposals.

ITUC/PERC SEE Office and Ms. Zlata Zec, Project expert/

Project “Bilancia” KNSB -Work-life balance practices in Bulgaria, Romania, Poland, Hungary, Italy, Spain, Germany



The project BILANCIA, promoted by the Confederation of Independent Trade Unions in Bulgaria (KNSB), aims to analyze the social and economic impact of work-life-balancing strategies in the partner countries and to offer a profound information and communication tool in order to promote a higher implementation of work-life-balancing measures and mechanisms on company level in Europe. It is also meant to supporting trade unionists to create the frame for a better reconciliation of work and private duties of workers and employees, and a higher level of engagement of employers in these issues on regional, national and European level. The project partners are trade union organizations/training institutions from six EU member-states, namely: Zarząd Regionu Małopolska NSZZ “Solidarnosc”, Poland; Magyar Szakszervezetek Országos Szövetsége (MSZOSZ), Hungary; Istituto Addestramento Lavoratori – IAL/CISL Piemonte, Italy; Union General de Trabajadores de Extremadura, Spain; National Trade Union Confederation – “Cartel Alfa”, Romania and

	Berufsbildungswerk Bfw/DGB, Germany.
	<i>Upcoming events</i>
<i>Deadline for Survey materials</i>	1 January 2010
<i>SSOs meeting</i>	27-28 January 2011, Brussels
<i>PERC Executive Committee</i>	7 March, Brussels
	<i>You may be interested</i>
<p><i>“Regional conference on the trends and challenges of labour markets and employability of human capital in the six Eastern countries”, 27 October</i></p> 	<p>The EU Commission DG Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities and the European Training Foundation organized the “Regional conference on the trends and challenges of labour markets and employability of human capital in the six Eastern countries”, in which representatives of the different ministries and social partners from the six Eastern Partnership countries took part, as well as representatives of the ITUC-PERC, IOE, ILO, OSCE, EU Commission, World Bank and experts from New member states of the EU. At the conference the EU Agenda “New Skills and Jobs” was presented to the participants and its relevance to the EP countries was debated, as well as the key findings of the recent ETF regional labour market review. The ITUC-PERC contributed to the “international panel discussion” on the Eastern Partnership policies and the place of the VET in it, calling for a strong institutional framework based on social dialog principles in EP polices - national and regional - particularly on the issues related to the labour market matching, decent work promotion and transition from school to work. Both PERC and IOE representative expressed deep frustration with the present arrangement of the EP Civil Society Forum and with the lack of understanding of the social dialog by its actors.</p>

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<p><i>Belgian Presidency Conference on Gender Equality, 25-26 October 2010</i></p> 	<p>In 2008, the salary gap between men and women stood at 18% on average within the European Union. This salary gap comes from various causes of professional inequalities in the employment market. The aim of the Conference organized by the Belgian Presidency was to examine effective action strategies in the fight against the salary gap at national and European levels. The Conference brought together around 150 participants from various national government departments in charge of gender equality policies, civil society, business and trade unions. Both ETUC and ITUC/PERC took part in the conference together with representatives of trade unions in Europe: Poland/Solidarnosc, LO Denmark, LO Norway, FGTB, LDF /Lithuania, etc. Belgian presidency was represented by the Vice Prime Minister, Joelle Milquet and the European Commission by its Vice-President, Viviane Reding . The next European presidency –Hungary was represented by Miklos Rethelyi, Minister for Equal Opportunities . The Conference started with the presentation of the European report on the salary gap situation in the 27 Member States and followed by a discussion on the causes of the pay gap. This discussion was followed by establishing the possible responses to the salary gap issue, action strategies of the Member States action strategies of the social partners (Business Europe, UEAPME, ETUC, CEEP) and effective specific actions in the European countries. The Conference established guidelines for action and concrete commitments towards the elimination of the salary gap in the European Union.</p> <p>Please find more information and documents on the http://www.eutrio.be/pressrelease</p>
<p><i>IMF publications</i></p>	<p>An interesting publication of the IMF dealing with the interdependencies of the effects of accumulating inequalities in societies, falling incomes as leading to expanding practices of leverage to maintain living standards and consequently to the current financial and economic crisis – “The Great Recession”. IMF Working Paper: Title: Inequality, Leverage and Crises Author/Editor: Kumhof, Michael ; Ranciere, Romain Series: Working Paper No. 10/268</p>

	<p>Date: November 1, 2010 http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/cat/longres.cfm?sk=24378.0</p> <p>Also the latest IMF Working Paper - WP/10/265 What Caused the Global Financial Crisis?— Evidence on the Drivers of Financial Imbalances 1999–2007 Prepared by Ouarda Merrouche and Erlend Nier1 December 2010 http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/wp/2010/wp10265.pdf</p>
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