

Dear readers,

After two consecutive Governments of the centre-right, the economy still struggling to overcome recession, with unemployment at record-high levels and activity rate at equally record low levels, in a controversial political situation in which the governing party (HDZ) is faced with corruption accusations, the centre-left coalition is to win a landslide victory on the parliamentary elections to be held on 4 December, according to all the relevant polls.

In its Election Platform, the UATUC demands new economic and social policy; solving the problem of illiquidity, non-payment of wages and social contributions, eliminating all forms of undeclared work; adopting a systematic and coordinated employment policy; raising minimum wage and reforming the tax system; as well as reforms of the pension, health and education systems. Based on the received responses, the UATUC will assess if any of the political options can be regarded as a credible advocate of the labour and trade union rights, and responsible public policies aimed at improving the living standard of Croatian citizens.

Not surprisingly, EU has been drawn into election campaign, especially by HDZ which is banking on recovering momentum through the prospect of EU membership. The elections all but coincide with Croatia formalising its EU membership status on 9 December, when the Accession Treaty will be signed in Brussels, during the Polish Presidency. However, objective and transparent „communicating EU“ has been absent throughout the accession process. This is one of the reasons why the UATUC, within its own informational campaign, organized a two-day high-level conference on the gains and losses of Croatia's accession to EU. Based on the conference discussions, the UATUC has developed a set of guidelines for future actions and activities related to the EU accession. While continuing to insist on transparency, objective informing of citizens and encouraging public discussion, the UATUC will continue to monitor further development of the European legislation and assess its impact on Croatian workers, and demand the early inclusion of social partners in EU-related decision-making process.

With non-payment of wages still being one of the problems of the struggling Croatian economy, the UATUC continues with its campaign against non-payment of wages and insists on the establishment of a separate guarantee fund. Although a new Criminal Law has been adopted, trade union confederations are dissatisfied with its content especially since it lacks provision qualifying denying or limiting the right to strike as a criminal offence, which brings into question a possibility to effectively realise the freedom of association.

Marking the World Day for Decent Work, the leaders and activists of the UATUC and NHS symbolically reminded the Croatian MPs of the non-decent working conditions of Croatian workers by offering them ironical fixed-term employment contracts and consensual agreement on their termination.

These are just some of the issues you can read about in this UATUC INFO. We hope they will be an interesting and useful read. Please pass it on to your colleagues and contacts ■

Dijana Šobota

Head of International Department

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FIGURE OF THE MONTH

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**POLITICAL PARTIES
CONTEST PARLIAMENTARY
ELECTIONS TO BE HELD ON
4 DECEMBER**

THE UATUC ELECTION PLATFORM

While presenting its Election Platform and key demands to political parties contesting the upcoming parliamentary elections, the UATUC is still to decide if anyone of them can be recognised as a credible advocate of the labour and trade union rights



Zagreb, 31 October 2011 – New economic and social policy; solving the problem of illiquidity and non-payment of wages and social contributions, as well as eliminating all forms of undeclared work; adopting a systematic and coordinated employment policy; raising minimum wage and reforming the tax system; as well as reforms of the pension, health and education systems present the seven key demands from the UATUC Election Platform, presented to the public by the UATUC President **Mladen Novosel** on a press-conference held on 14 September.

The UATUC is expecting from the political parties, i.e. those of them who expect to form a new Government or participate in it, to unequivocally declare their position on the UATUC demands, and that their programmes offer appropriate solutions for the mentioned issues. Based on the received response, the UATUC will assess if any of the political options on the upcoming elections can be regarded as a credible advocate of the labour and trade union rights, as well as of the responsible public policies aimed to improve the quality of life of all citizens of Croatia.

Asked if presented demands are realistic in current economic situation, **Ana Miličević Pezelj**, Head of Department for Organisation, Education and Publishing, stated that none of the demands is unrealistic, but they are only the matter of re-distribution. "The change of the party of government is very

important for young democracies such as Croatia, and for every Government it is important to be aware that it is changeable. The importance of change can not be diminished by the fact that the Social-Democrat led coalition in power from 2000 to 2003 did not fulfil the promises given to trade unions", said Ana Miličević Pezelj.

The UATUC Election Platform, consists in total of 16 topics which beside the mentioned key

demands touch the issues of professionalisation, rationalisation and depoliticisation of public administration and judiciary, implementing universal labour and social standards through national legislation (including ratification of the Revised Social Chapter of the Council of Europe and a number of ILO conventions not ratified by Croatia), strengthening the social dialogue and participative democracy (including easing the legal requirements for popular referendum) and other. Above all, the UATUC is demanding from all parties to secure a rule of law for all the citizens of Croatia, which includes respecting the constitutional definition of Croatia as a "social state".

While the eventual recommendation for which party to vote, if there will be any, will depend on the responses and discussions with the political parties, the UATUC called its members not to abstain from the elections and allow a manipulation with their votes.

Following the public presentation of the Platform, the UATUC has sent it to five political parties or coalitions currently enjoying the strongest support – "Kukuriku" coalition, Croatian Democratic Union, Croatian Peasant Party, Croatian Social Liberal Party and Croatian Labour Party – with an invitation to meet with the UATUC leadership in order to discuss and compare their programmes with the UATUC Platform.

Until now, meetings have been held with the leaderships of the Croatian Peasant Party, Croatian Social Liberal Party, Croatian Labour Party and Croatian Economic Initiative, while the responses from the two main political forces, "Kukuriku" coalition and the Croatian Democratic Union are still awaited. In the last weeks before the Election Day, the UATUC will also organise a traditional public debate between the parties with an emphasis on trade union demands and labour rights ■

GOVERNING PARTY FACING CORRUPTION INVESTIGATION DURING THE ELECTION CAMPAIGN

After the Croatian Parliament voted its dissolution on 28 October, the President of the Republic declared the general elections for 4 December, in line with the agreement reached between the governing and opposition parties some months ago.

The opinion polls are currently suggesting a confident victory of the "Kukuriku" coalition, consisting of the Social Democratic Party, Croatian Peoples' Party – Liberal Democrats, Istrian Democratic Assembly and Croatian Party of Pensioners, which currently has a support level of around 38 percent, opposed to around 20 percent for the Prime Minister **Jadranka Kosor's** Croatian Democratic Union, in power since 2003. With Social Democratic Party being by far the strongest of the coalition partners, its President **Zoran Milanović** is expected to be the next Prime Minister.

While the election victory of the centre-left would be expected even in less controversial political situation, due to two consecutive Governments of the centre-right and the economy still struggling to overcome recession, the governing Croatian Democratic Union is facing further difficulties arising from the corruption accusations being brought against its former President and Prime Minister from 2003 to 2009 **Ivo Sanader**. As a result of investigation of the corruption-network built by the former Prime Minister, the State Attorney's Office for Combating Corruption and Organised Crime (USKOK) has recently opened formal investigation of the Croatian Democratic Union itself, raising the possibility that the party's property could be blocked during the election campaign. While Sanader's successor Jadranka Kosor is claiming credit for the current "anti-corruption campaign" in the country, the formal investigation of the party itself, in whose top leadership she was throughout the Sanader years, is eroding her own credibility. With some of Sanader's trials expected to start during the election campaign (he is currently facing criminal charges in six different cases), and possible charges against the party itself, these issues are putting highlight of the campaign away from the needed debates on the economic and social policy.

PHOTO: Marijana Tomić



Darko ŠEPERIĆ

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CROATIA IN THE EU: WHAT DO WORKERS GET AND WHAT DO THEY LOSE

With no simple, black and white answers on the question of gains and losses of EU accession, Croatia will bear the responsibility to maximise offered opportunities and mitigate existing risks. Notwithstanding the evident imbalance of market and social forces in the EU, staying outside of the EU does not bring bright perspective for Croatia



Zagreb, 28 September 2011 – Two-day conference entitled “Croatia in the EU: What do workers get and what do they lose”, organised in partnership between the UATUC and the Friedrich Ebert Foundation, gathered more than 30 speakers from the Government and political parties, academic community, European institutions, employers, trade unions, civil society and media, in order to discuss the consequences of the EU accession for the Croatian workers and ordinary citizens.

PHOTO Željko Slunjski



The conference was a part of the UATUC activities related to the forthcoming referendum on EU membership, and organised in an effort to objectively inform our members and workers on what will the EU accession mean for their working and private lives. The additional purpose the conference was to foster so far insufficient public discussion on this issue, and to demand from politicians answers which Croatian public has a right, and a need, to know before making its final decision on the far-reaching issue of EU accession.

The conference was organised as a set of panel-discussions on the topics “Results of negotiations – gains and losses”, “Expected social and economic impacts of the accession”, “Social Europe vs. Europe of liberal capitalism”, “Strategic objectives of Croatia in the EU”, “Social and civil dialogue in the Croatia and the EU” and “Euro-scepticism in Croatia – sources, consequences and responses”.

The opening discussion on the results of the Croatian accession negotiations showed that the transparency of the process remains a highly controversial area. While the Government side continues to insist that the accession process was as transparent as possible, most of the other speakers, including the representatives of the academic community, strongly disagree. Beside the lack of transparency and proper public debate on the membership itself, a number of speakers described Government’s EU information campaign currently underway as oversimplified, not encouraging a proper public debate and even underestimating the ordinary citizen’s ability to understand the issues of European integration.

Throughout the discussions, most of the speakers agreed that there is no simple, black and white answer to the question what is Croatia gaining and what it is losing by the EU accession. The view was expressed that while the EU membership brings certain opportunities, as well as certain risks, both for Croatia as a whole and for its workers and trade unions, the final result of this process will depend on what will be done to use the given opportunities and mitigate the existing risks.

It was frequently stressed out that there is no “one single Europe”, but that the EU is offering only a certain framework within which exist the states with very different socio-economic systems, as well as with different systems of labour relations and social dialogue. It was however also often mentioned that there is an evident imbalance between the highly regulated common market and very rare and loose common social standards.

One of the important conclusions, especially in the context of the current crisis of the European project, is that so far Croatia has been mostly occupied by the date of EU accession and the different criteria

needed to be fulfilled beforehand, while we have very rarely reflected on the issue of which kind of Europe do we want to join, and all the problems and challenges of the European integration project itself.

PRESIDENT JOSIPOVIĆ: EU MEMBERSHIP WILL IMPROVE ENFORCEMENT OF WORKERS’ RIGHTS

“One of the positive changes resulting from EU accession will be better enforcement of labour legislation, as many of workers’ rights existing on paper are not respected in practice. Access to the European Court of Justice will help Croatian workers in that respect”, said President of Croatia **Ivo Josipović** speaking at the opening of the conference. President also stated that he hoped more than 70 percent of Croatian citizens would vote positively on the EU referendum as “European societies outside the EU face future with no prospects”.

Beside President of the Republic, speakers on the conference included Prime Minister’s envoy and State Secretary for the European Integration **Andrej Plenković**, Head of the EU Delegation to Croatia **Paul Vandoren**, Croatian chief negotiator **Vladimir Drobňak**, Chair of the National Committee on Monitoring the Accession Negotiations **Vesna Pusić**, ETUC Deputy General Secretary **Josef Niemiec**, envoy of BusinessEurope **Emanuel Julien**, **Armindo Silva**, Director for Employment, Social Legislation and Social Dialogue in the European Commission, DG for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion, as well as a number of university professors, representatives of various research institutes, Croatian ministries and governmental offices, employers, trade unions, civil society and media.

In this context, although the accession negotiations are now concluded, we will have to continue dealing with the EU, but in a different way than we have been doing until now. In a constant struggle between the two sides of the European project, the common market with its neoliberal policies and the social Europe, there is no other way for trade unions but to choose side and join the struggle. Otherwise we are falling into the trap of attributing all the evil to the EU and its institutions, and seeking into it an excuse for lack of our own civic activism and fight for workers' rights.

PHOTO Željko Slunjski



However, as many speakers also agreed, the change that would happen on 1 July 2013, which is the planned date of Croatian accession to the EU, should not be exaggerated – Croatia is already today highly integrated into the European Economic Area, its economy highly euroised and its legal system mostly harmonised with the European legislation. All this will remain in place even if Croatia formally stays out of the European Union.

Debate on the social and civil dialogue showed diametrically opposed views of the Government and civil society, with the former claiming social and civil dialogue being more than satisfactory and the latter pointing to a huge gap between formal consultation procedures which do exist and a possibility to really influence the decision-making process, which is still marginal. It was concluded that although EU institutions do promote social and civil dialogue, the accession will not by itself improve them on the national level, this being something that will eventually be decided in Croatia itself.

The final debate on Euro-scepticism in Croatia showed that while the Government is not ready to accept its own part of responsibility for high level of Euro-scepticism (level of support for EU membership at the moment of the conference being around 56%), the critics of the EU membership still seem unable to present well-argued response on what is Croatia losing by becoming a member state or what would be an alternative. In spite of very specific questions in this respect, given answers did not go beyond phrases about "losing our sovereignty" and vague general claims about Croatia being able to develop "on its own" ■

Darko ŠEPERIĆ

GUIDELINES FOR FUTURE UATUC ACTIONS

Based on the conference discussions, the UATUC has developed a set of guidelines for future actions and activities related to the EU accession. While continuing to insist on transparency, objective informing of citizens and encouraging public discussion, the UATUC will continue to monitor further development of the European legislation and assess its impact on Croatian workers. This will be of special importance in sort of "interregnum" period until the date of accession, as Croatia will neither participate in EU decision making, nor negotiate on the implementation of legislation adopted in this period. In the period before the accession date, the UATUC will also work on incorporating the principles of social dialogue in the law which will define the process of adopting Croatian positions on drafts of EU directives and other decisions at the EU level. We will seek for a provision to oblige the Government to forward draft EU decisions to the social partners and consult with them before adopting Croatian position.

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ACCESSION TREATY FINALLY MADE PUBLIC

Zagreb, 31 October 2011 – [Croatia's Accession Treaty](#) to the European Union, announced to be signed in Bruxelles on 9 December, was finally made public on 14 September. Beside a number of amendments to existing treaties in order to provide for Croatia's representation in various EU bodies and policies, as well as financial terms of membership, the Treaty contains the results of the accession negotiations, i.e. various transition periods asked for either by Croatia or the EU.

While Croatia got a number of transition periods, largest number of them being in the fields of agriculture and environment, the most important of only few transition periods asked for by the EU is the one concerning the freedom of movement of workers. While the same conditions will apply as in 2004 and 2007 enlargements, allowing the EU member states to keep their labour market closed for Croatian workers for a maximum of 7 years, it is expected that most of them will not put this provision into practice.

Although the European Commission (EC) will continue to monitor Croatia until the date of the accession (especially in the fields of reforms of judiciary and public administration, combating corruption and market competition), unlike in cases of Bulgaria and Romania, the Accession Treaty does not envisage any special monitoring mechanisms after the date of accession.



With the Accession Treaty announced to be signed on 9 December, it is now clear that the accession referendum in Croatia will wait for beginning of 2012 and the new Government (on the attempts by the current Government to politicise this see [UATUC Info No 15](#)). The Treaty states that ratification documents by all member states should be deposited with the Italian Government not later than 30 June 2013, and that the Treaty will enter into force on 1 July 2013, provided that this condition is fulfilled on time.

In the meantime, on 12 October the EC has published its last Progress Report for Croatia. Expectedly written in a highly positive tone, as Croatia has concluded the accession negotiations in June, the Commission described Croatia as an example of the "transformative power of the EU", stating that it is today a different country than it has been at the moment of opening the accession negotiations. Acknowledging that Croatia faced tougher accession criteria than previous new member states, the Commission said that it will use experiences gained in this case in all further accession negotiations.

While Croatia has committed itself to continuing to implement reforms and further enhance results achieved so far, the EC will publish semi-annual Monitoring Reports until the accession date ■

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UATUC CAMPAIGN AGAINST NON-PAYMENT OF WAGES

While discussions on the guarantee fund for paying the wages to workers whose employers face temporary insolvency continue, new Criminal Law declared “unjustifiable non-payment of wages” to be a criminal offence. The controversy remains about what “unjustifiable” actually means in practice



Zagreb, 30 October 2011 – Although the data presented at the Economic and Social Council in October shows that the number of workers whose wages and social contributions are not being paid regularly is on decrease, 13,000 workers who are still in such position demonstrate that the current Government did not succeed in solving this problem.

The UATUC is therefore continuing to insist on the formation of a special guarantee fund for payment of wages to workers whose employers are facing insolvency, expecting this to be done by the next Government, soon after it takes office. While the current Government declaratory supports the idea and calls for developing the model on which such a fund would function, it is too late for any legal solution as the Parliament is already dissolved.

The model trade unions are calling for would provide for a fund paying for one monthly wage to the workers whose employer is facing temporary insolvency, with the fund recovering that money from the employer once he becomes solvent again. The fund would therefore serve a function of bypassing the effects of short-term disturbances in doing business for the workers. While the trade unions consider the fund would not require significant amounts of money to function, especially since the number of non-paid wages is expected to decrease due to other measures, the employers remain strongly opposed to any solution which means new expenses for them (the fund is meant to be financed by a small contribution to the wage paid by employer).

Additional controversy has been raised around the new Criminal Law adopted by the Parliament on 20 October. One of the new provisions is a possibility of treating non-payment of wages as a criminal offence. While the trade unions insist that every non-payment of wage by the employer should be a criminal offence, as it is not an ordinary violation of contractual obligation but the kind of it that threatens mere existential safety of the worker, for whom it is not relevant which are the reasons for such an act.

However, the final solution envisages treating as a criminal offence only non-payment of wages which is not caused by the disturbances in doing business. In other words, non-payment of wage will be treated as criminal offence only if it is proved that the employer did have the needed money available but deliberately decided not to use it for paying the earned wages.

Although the Ministry of Justice pointed at array of other measures available to the workers in order to recover their non-paid wages, the UATUC President **Mladen Novosel** warned on a long-term practice of some employers to continue doing business even with blocked bank accounts, while using this as an excuse for non-payment of wages. “We expect further improvements in this provision, as not every blockage of bank account can be considered a justified reason, or an alibi, for non-paying the wages”, said Mladen Novosel during the discussion at the Economic and Social Council ■



TRADE UNION RIGHTS PROVISIONS OF THE NEW CRIMINAL LAW UNACCEPTABLE FOR TRADE UNIONS

In an open letter sent to the Prime Minister Jadranko Kosor five trade union confederations expressed their dissatisfaction with provisions of the new Criminal Law dealing with the trade union rights. Although the new law qualifies denying the right to establish a trade union as a criminal offence, its freedom of activity is not protected in any way. Existing protection in the Labour Code, where employer's attempt to supervise establishment or activity of trade union is qualified as a minor offence, is not sufficient in this respect. Since the purpose of the existence of trade union is not its establishment, but its activity, it should enjoy the same level of legal protection.

Furthermore, the legislator did not accept the trade union demand that the new Criminal Law includes a provision qualifying denying or limiting the right to strike as a criminal offence. The rights to strike and to free and unobstructed activity are the fundamental trade union rights guaranteed by the ratified ILO conventions, and a lack of their legal protection brings into question possibility to effectively realise the right of association.

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CROATIAN TRADE UNIONS SUPPORT 15.O MOVEMENT

Around 1,000 trade union members joined demonstrations held at the central Zagreb square on 15 October, after five confederations jointly supported the 15 October movement, finding its proclaimed goals to be in line with the fundamental aims and interests of the workers and trade unions



Zagreb, 30 October 2011 – The leaders of five trade union confederations on a press conference held on 14 October stated their support for the 15 October – Movement for a Global Change and called their members to join the demonstrations organised in Zagreb and four other Croatian cities.

“Participating in a protest against disastrous effects on the ordinary citizens of neoliberal economic policies, multinational corporations, financial institutions and political elites connected with them logically follows from the purpose and the mission of trade unions”, says the declaration in support of the demonstrations signed by all five confederations. “As the proclaimed goals of the movement and demonstrations are in line with the fundamental aims and interests of the workers and trade unions, Croatian trade union confederations support the movement of 15 October and citizens’ demonstrations announced for that day in Zagreb and other Croatian cities”.



PHOTO Darko Šeperić

“The political parties are working for the one percent of capitalists who are funding their election campaigns, and later they are obliged to repay this debt. Such kind of the government and such politicians we do not need anymore in this country”, said UATUC President Mladen Novosel. From this context, trade unions saw a demonstration as an opportunity on an eve of the parliamentary elections for sending a message to the new government that the current social and economic model is not sustainable anymore.

Approximately 1,000 trade union members participated in the demonstration held at 6 pm on 15 October on the central Zagreb square, gathering some 5,000 people. Various speakers, all of them being ordinary citizens, called for more direct democracy and government which would work in the interest of all the citizens, and demanded to stop erosion of the social state and privatisation of the public goods. Significant number of speakers also called for Croatia not to join the EU, qualifying it as a neoliberal organisation which embodies all that is wrong with today’s capitalism. Although none of the trade union confederations considers such position to be a viable solution for problems faced by Croatia, the need to support general aims of this protest action was found to be much more important than the difference of view in particular issues with

some of the other people or organisations who also joined.

At the same time demonstrations were also held in Split, Pula, Rijeka and Čakovec. Although the participants of Zagreb demonstrations before leaving the central square around 8.30 pm decided to come back next Saturday, the subsequent demonstration gathered only few hundreds of people ■

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FIXED-TERM CONTRACTS FOR MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT

Trade union action for the World Day for Decent Work found rare Members of Parliament who came on time on their workplace not aware what kind of day workers were marking on 7 October



Zagreb, 7 October 2011 – Marking the World Day for Decent Work, the leaders and activists of the Union of Autonomous Trade Unions of Croatia and the Independent Trade Unions of Croatia greeted the Members of Parliament on the entrance to the Parliament building, offering those of them planning to contest for Parliament seats on the upcoming elections a fixed-term work contract.

Offered contract was accompanied by immediately signed consensual agreement on its termination, such as in practice often demanded from Croatian workers to sign at the moment of their employment, which allows the employer to dismiss the worker without any further obligations whenever it suits him.

The aim of the action was to symbolically remind of the existing lack of dignity in all segments of the Croatian labour market, as well as of the fact that MPs really are employed on fixed-term basis, although they usually behave as having an open-term contract with their voters.

Contract offered to the MPs also envisages the wage according to their performance, which would be measured both by their actual activity in the Parliament and by the improvement of the quality of life of the citizens. Failure to thoroughly perform their duties, or to fulfil promises given in the election campaign, would result in immediate cancellation of the work contract.

One of the interesting provisions of the contract offered to the MPs is the lack of the right to use a break during work hours, because of “justified risk that the worker would not return to the workplace after end of the break”, referring to the widespread non-attendance of the parliamentary sessions, except for the days when the voting is on agenda. That this hit the right spot was showed by the fact that although the session that day started at 9.30 am, only a dozen or so MPs actually entered a building on time. Rare MPs who came on their workplace on time were found to be surprised by the trade union action and not aware what kind of day workers were marking on 7 October ■



PHOTO Marijana Tomić

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PETITION FOR LIMITING FIXED-TERMED CONTRACT APPLICATION



PHOTO SMH-IS

Zagreb, 12 October 2011 – The Youth Section of the Metalworkers' Trade Union of Croatia – Industrial Union presented on a press conference its petition for limiting the application of the fixed-term contracts on the level of individual employer.

Reminding on the fact that 80 percent of new employment contracts in Croatia is signed on fixed-term, young metalworkers are calling for a new provision in the Labour Code which would limit a number of newly concluded fixed-term contracts at each employer to maximum of 15 percent of all newly-concluded labour contract on an annual basis.

With widespread practice of dismissing the workers on open-term contract and replacing them with those on fixed-term, the former is becoming a standard form of employment, although law qualifies it as an exemption. In effect workers employed on fixed-term are being demoted to the citizens of second category, as they are unable to enjoy certain human rights guaranteed by the Constitution (starting from the impossibility to take loans and enjoy all services offered by the banks).

The metalworkers' Youth Section will collect signatures for the petition during the election campaign and deliver them to the new Government after it takes office ■

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SOCIAL ASPECTS OF ENERGY MARKET LIBERALISATION AND ENERGY EFFICIENCY

Zagreb, 30 September 2011 – Representatives of the regional and local public administration, universities, trade unions, business sector, educational institutions and media gathered on a conference entitled “Achieving social, environmental and economic sustainability through energy efficiency”, held in Zagreb on 29 and 30 September. Conference was organised as a part of the EU funded project CENEP, in which UATUC is one of the four implementing organisations.

UATUC experts **Ana Milićević Pezelj**, **Jagoda Milidrag Šmid** and **Darko Šeperić** spoke about the social aspects of energy policy in Croatia in the context of currently undergoing process of energy market liberalisation, and the prospects of using energy efficiency as a social policy tool in Croatia.

Activities carried out as part of the CENEP project are part of UATUC's effort to advocate for appropriate social dimension of energy policy in Croatia, which is almost completely absent. Set of new energy laws, which will harmonise Croatian legislation with the Third EU Energy Package and further liberalise the energy market are currently in process of adoption and are expected to result in significant rise of energy prices. Unfortunately, the Government has missed to adequately address the social dimension of the process and ensure appropriate protection for vulnerable customers, which UATUC has repeatedly called for in discussions on the new laws. Moreover, the draft laws are failing to address EU recommendation to define the vulnerable customer through the concept of energy poverty, and do not envisage using energy efficiency as a tool which can simultaneously help lifting people from energy poverty and lower the emission of greenhouse gases ■

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PHOTO **Marijana Tomić**

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GOOD PRACTICES OF SOCIAL DIALOGUE IN THE EU



Split, 30 September 2011 – The workshop on the good practices of social dialogue in the EU, organised jointly by the UATUC, Croatian Employers' Association and BusinessEurope as part of the EU funded project “BOSMIP 4”, was held in Split on 28 and 29 September.

Mentors of the project representing the Federation of Belgium Enterprises and the Central Economic Council of Belgium shared the Belgian experiences on the role of employers in the social dialogue, history of bipartism and role and importance of the Central Economic Council of Belgium, while the UATUC Territorial Officer for Primorsko-goranska County **Jadranka Tomašić** talked about the Croatian trade union experiences in conducting the social dialogue.

On the second day of the workshop, the participants engaged in the roll-play on the subject of negotiating the wage policy.

The representatives of UATUC used the opportunity to repeat the call for establishing the agenda of bipartite dialogue between the UATUC and the Croatian Employers' Association ■

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IMPORTANCE OF COMMUNICATION IN TRADE UNION

Donja Stubica, 14 October 2011 – Seminar on the importance of trade union communication, organised by the Trade Union of Commerce of Croatia, gathered around 20 shop stewards from various parts of Croatia. During the two days, communication experts of the UATUC held presentations and workshops on the trade union communication at the company level and different communication tools ranging from the bulletin board and leaflet to the internet and new media. Covered topics also included the UATUC Communication Strategy, the aspects of external and internal communication and communication of the EU related issues in the public discourse in Croatia. This seminar is also one of the results of the long-standing and ongoing bilateral cooperation and project between the UATUC and Norwegian LO/LOFF, aimed at capacity building of the UATUC in the field of information and communication. ■



PHOTO **Željko Slunjski**

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YOUNG WORKERS IN THE REGION FACING SIMILAR PROBLEMS



PHOTO ZSSS

Ankaran, 17 September 2011 – The first youth meeting of the Regional trade union council “Solidarity”, bringing together representatives of youth structures of seven trade union confederations from Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Montenegro and Macedonia, took place at Slovenian sea resort Ankaran on 16 and 17 September.

During two days young trade union activists discussed the problems faced by young workers on the labour market, situation of migrant workers in Slovenia and plans for future joint activities. Besides drafting the rules of procedure for the “Solidarity” Youth Committee, young trade unionists agreed on producing a document on joint problems faced by young workers in the region, which would, among other, serve as a basis for a joint leaflet ■

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UATUC PUBLICATIONS (IN CROATIAN)



LABOUR CODE

New Croatian Labour Code, harmonised with the EU legislation, has entered into force on 1 January 2010. Publication brings full text of the new law, together with a guide on implementation of new provisions written by Marina Kasunić Peris, Head of UATUC Industrial Democracy Department ■



EU OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH & SAFETY POLICY

Trade union guide to occupational health and safety policies of the European Union is aimed at workers' representatives involved in health and safety issues on national and European level. Guide brings an overview of the EU institutions and procedures in the field of OHS, as well as the trade union role in this field ■



LAW ON OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH & SAFETY

New Croatian Law on Occupational Health and Safety, harmonised with the EU legislation ■

If you are interested in any of these publications, please contact international-uatuc@sssh.hr, or order through www.sssh.hr

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Please pass this newsletter on to your colleagues and contacts who might be interested.



Union of
Autonomous
Trade Unions
of Croatia

Together we are stronger

Edited by UATUC International Department

UATUC Int. Dept: Dijana Šobota (Head), Darko Šeperić (Coordinator for European Integration)

UATUC President: Mladen Novosel

Tel: + 385 1 46 55 026, Fax: +385 1 46 55 011

international-uatuc@sssh.hr, sssh@sssh.hr

www.sssh.hr