

Trade unions at the European level

ON THE OFFENSIVE

For: Social Europe
Solidarity Sustainability



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This is one of a series of training modules produced as part of an ambitious European project, *Civil Society Dialogue: Bringing together workers from Turkey and the EU through a shared culture of work*, which aims to ensure better knowledge and understanding of one another and an awareness of the challenges and opportunities of future EU enlargement.

HOW TO USE THIS PUBLICATION

The training modules are intended to offer a short, clear introduction to the subject for a trade union audience, and each will have an educational activity that can be used in the classroom or with groups of members. A list of all the publications in this series can be found below, and copies can be downloaded from the ETUC website www.etuc.org/r/557

PUBLICATIONS IN THIS SERIES

1. Trade unions at the European level
2. Industrial relations at the European level
3. Turkish trade unions and industrial relations
4. Trade unions and industrial relations in EU countries
5. Trade unions and women
6. Trade unions and civil society
7. Trade unions and migration into the European Union
8. Trade unions and freedom of movement of workers in the European Union
9. Working together

ETUC MANIFESTO

At its 11th Congress in Seville, Spain, in May 2007, the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) adopted a Manifesto for Action for the next four years. This manifesto highlights five main areas where the ETUC is committed to going 'on the offensive' on behalf of European workers:

- **the European labour market**
- **social dialogue, collective bargaining and worker participation**
- **better European economic, social and environmental governance**
- **a stronger European Union**
- **stronger trade unions and a stronger ETUC.**

FOREWORD

The European Trade Union Confederation at its Congress in 2007 voted in favour of the accession of Turkey to the European Union, 'provided that it meets, in reality and not on paper, the requirements of membership and the provisions of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights. A transformation of Turkish society with full rights and freedoms should be sought and completed during the challenging process of negotiations'.

It was on this basis that the ETUC, and its affiliated organisations in Turkey and in the European Union, agreed to step up their cooperation and launch this ambitious project *Civil Society Dialogue: Bringing together workers from Turkey and the EU through a shared culture of work*, which aims to ensure better knowledge and understanding of one another and an awareness of the challenges and opportunities of future EU enlargement.

The central elements of the project are:

- 12 exchange and mutual understanding seminars for trade unionists coming from different regions of Turkey on the one hand and from different Members States of the European Union on the other
- 9 training seminars, in cooperation with European Industry Federations.

The project has also produced this series of training modules which will provide an important tool for building capacity within the ETUC, by enabling other workers and trade unionists from both the EU and Turkey to understand the challenges ahead and to accept cultural, social and political differences more readily.



Thanks are due to:

- ETUC affiliated organisations – European Industry Federations and the national trade union confederations from the EU and Turkey that have carried this project forward
- workers and trade unionists from the national unions in Turkey and the EU who have taken part in the different training activities
- trainers from the national unions in Turkey and the EU, and Marcus Strohmeier (ÖGB) who coordinated the training activities and contributed to these booklets
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- Laura Fallavollita, Yücel Top and the other members of the project coordination committee (Osman Yıldız, Uğraş Gök and Kıvanç Eli Açıık), who, under the guidance of Joël Decaillon and Jeff Bridgford, have brought the project to a successful conclusion.

I commend these training modules to trade unionists from the affiliated organisations of the ETUC. I encourage you to use them, so that we are all in a better position to defend workers' interests throughout Turkey and the European Union.

John Monks
General Secretary
European Trade Union Confederation

WHAT IS THE ETUC?

The ETUC was set up in 1973 to promote the interests of working people at European level and to represent them in the EU institutions. It was established following a series of mergers and reorganisations over more than twenty years – the eldest of its forerunners, the European Regional Organisation of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ERO-ICFTU) was founded in 1950. Its aim from the start was to establish an organisation capable of meeting the challenges posed by European integration and to develop a unified workers' voice.

Article 22 of the Single European Act, agreed in 1986, called for the development of dialogue between management and labour at the European level which could, "if the two sides consider it desirable, lead to relations based on agreements". The ETUC was, and still is, the sole trade union participant in this type of social dialogue.

The Social Protocol of the Treaty on European Union (signed in Maastricht in 1992) broadened Community powers in terms of social policy. It was adopted by 11 EC member states. The United Kingdom government finally signed the agreement in 1997. Its objectives were:

- promotion of employment
- improvement of living and working conditions
- adequate social protection
- social dialogue
- the development of human resources to ensure a high and sustainable level of employment
- the integration of persons excluded from the labour market.

In the Lisbon Treaty, 'the Union recognises the rights, freedoms and principles set out in the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union of 7 December 2000, as adapted at Strasbourg, on 12 December 2007, which shall have the same legal value as the Treaties'.

The process of European integration, with the euro, the European Constitution, and the growing impact of EU legislation on daily life, has changed the setting in which trade unions operate and has meant that the voice of working people needs now more than ever to be heard. Coordination of activities and policies across Europe is more and more essential to defend workers' interests and bargain at national level. If unions are to influence the economy and wider society they need to speak with a single voice and act collectively at the European level.

The European Trade Union Confederation has now grown to represent:

- all major national trade union confederations
- all major European sectoral organisations
- in 36 countries, and not just the countries of the European Union.

The ETUC uses a series of means, as follows, and they are presented in the booklet 2 in this series *Industrial Relations at the European Level*, to achieve its objectives:

- engaging in social dialogue
- influencing the EU decision-making process
- campaigning and demonstrating.

The structure of the organisation reflects its belief in democratic policy making. Its supreme authority is the ETUC Congress which is composed of delegates from national confederations according to their size as well as from the twelve affiliated industry federations. It meets every four years to elect the President, the General Secretary, the Executive Committee and other senior officials. Between Congresses the Executive Committee meets four times a year and chooses and mandates delegates to meet employers' associations in negotiation. The smaller, 21-person Steering Committee convenes eight times annually to follow up its decisions. There are also committees for youth and women and inter-regional trade union councils that co-ordinate international links in border areas.

NATIONAL TRADE UNION CONFEDERATIONS

There are 82 national confederations affiliated to the ETUC, ranging from two Icelandic confederations in the west (Althydusamband Islands – ASI, and Bandalag Starfsmanna Ríkis of Baeja – BRSB) to four Turkish confederations in the east (Türkiye Devrimci İsci Senikalari Konfederasyonu – DISK, Türkiye Hak İsci Sendikalari Konfederasyonu – HAK-İŞ, Kamu Emekçileri Sendikalari Konfederasyonu – KESK and Türkiye İsci Sendikalari Konfederasyonu – TÜRK-İŞ); from two Norwegian confederations in the north (Landsorganisasjonen i Norge – LO-N, Yrkesorganisasjonenes Sentralforbund – YS) to two Maltese confederations in the south (Confederation of Malta Trade Unions – CMTU and General Workers’ Union – GWU). The biggest in terms of membership are the Trades Union Congress in the United Kingdom and the Deutscher Gewerkschaftsbund in Germany, with over seven and six million members respectively.

For more details about the different confederations affiliated to the ETUC, see www.etuc.org/a/82

EUROPEAN INDUSTRY FEDERATIONS

There are twelve European Industry Federations affiliated to the ETUC. They represent workers in individual sectors, ranging from journalism and entertainment to the chemical and metal industries. The industry federations are responsible for European social dialogue at sectoral level: the 35 different sectoral committees discuss issues specific to the industries they cover and can agree a wide range of initiatives.

Here is a table of names and websites for the European Industry Federations:

European Arts and Entertainment Alliance www.global-unions.org
EUROCOP European Confederation of Police www.eurocop-police.org
EFBWW/FETBB European Federation of Building and Woodworkers www.efbww.org
EFFAT European Federation of Food, Agriculture and Tourism Trade Unions www.effat.org
EFJ/FEJ European Federation of Journalists www.ifj.org
EMCEF European Mine, Chemical and Energy Workers’ Federation www.emcef.org
EMF/FEM European Metalworkers’ Federation www.emf-fem.org
EPSU European Federation of Public Service Unions www.epsu.org
ETF European Transport Workers’ Federation www.etf-europe.org
ETUCE/CSEE European Trade Union Committee for Education www.csee-etuice.org
ETUF-TCL/FSE-THC Textiles Clothing and Leather www.etuf-tcl.org
UNI-EUROPA (services and communications) www.uniglobalunion.org

Things to find out

Which European Industry Federation covers the sector in which you work? Explore the websites listed above.

INTERREGIONAL TRADE UNION COUNCILS (IRTUCS)

The IRTUCs bring together the regional trade union organisations of national ETUC-affiliated confederations in cross-border regions. There are 45 IRTUCs, ranging from the Saar/Lorraine/Luxembourg/Trier/Westpfalz in France, Germany and Luxemburg, which was set up in 1976, to the latest Steiemark Podravje/Pomurje in Austria and Slovenia, which was set up in 2009.

The IRTUCs have continued to develop and reinforce their three major priorities for action:

- the free movement of workers and the cross-border EURES (job mobility portal and advisers);
- employment policy and the structural funds;
- and to a lesser extent, the social dialogue.

The IRTUCs are a fundamental resource for European trade unions. They provide trade unionists with a forum for the exchange of information and experience about industrial relations issues from one border region to another, but equally they have the potential to develop a real cross border bargaining presence.

They have produced a valuable *Guide for Mobile European Workers*, in Dutch, English, French, German Italian and Spanish, which examines issues such as the free movement of workers, the coordination of social security, cross-border employment law, coordination of taxation and the right of residence.
www.etuc.org/a/50?var_recherche=mobility

EUROPEAN WORKS COUNCILS (EWCs)

Around 10 million workers across the EU have the right to information and consultation on company decisions at European level through their European Works Councils. The Works Council Directive applies to companies with 1,000 or more employees, of which at least 150 must be working in two or more Member States.

There are now just under 900 EWCs in operation covering thousands of workers within the European Union and beyond, in well known companies, such as Adidas, Air France/KLM, Akzo Nobel, Axa, Carlsberg, Credit Lyonnais, ExxonMobil, Fiat, Michelin, Nestlé, Nokia, Pirelli, Unilever, Vivendi Universal and Volkswagen. But there is still some way to go before the initial legislation meets its full objectives, and the ETUC has been pressing for it to be improved and updated. Finally, in April 2009 there was a 'recast' of the original Directive, which provided the following improvements to the workings of the EWCs:

- a clearer definition of just what information and consultation has to be provided by management
- a clearer definition of trans-nationality and clarification of the trans-national competence of EWCs
- an obligation on employers to provide EWC members with training.

European Works Councils operate in a variety of different industrial sectors. The largest number is in the metalworking sector, with just over 350; followed by the chemical sector, with over 200; the food, hotel, catering and agriculture sector with just under 100.

They may have a wide influence geographically. Over 50% of them operate on behalf of multinational companies with subsidiaries in more than ten countries. This influence can be extended to subcontracting companies. As can be seen from the table on the next page, a multinational company, such as Club Méditerranée, has agreed to ensure that its subcontracting companies undertake to respect company agreements and collective agreements applicable to them, where such agreements exist.

For details and texts of agreements that have established EWCs, as well as agreements negotiated by EWCs on specific topics (substantive agreements) see www.ewcdb.org/

Club Med European Works Council

One example of an effective EWC is that of Club Méditerranée. The European Foundation for Living and Working Conditions, in a 2005 report, found that "...the philosophy for action in the Club Med EWC, which is based on the desire to boost the development of the European body of Club Med in a practical and progressive manner, undoubtedly contributes greatly to the positive dynamic which is sustained between the various players in this EWC, each with their respective level of commitment".

In terms of output, operations of the Club Med EWC have had tangible benefits:

- effective joint action during restructuring programmes with an impact on employment;
- production of ethics guidelines on subcontracting support in solving local conflicts; and
- exchanges on strategic orientations or organisational changes within the group.

In addition, Club Méditerranée ensures that the subcontracting companies hired by Club Méditerranée establishments undertake to respect the company agreements and collective agreements applicable to them, where such agreements exist, and also comply with the regulations governing social security, particularly the fundamental principles and rights at work as provided for in the ILO declaration of 18 June 1998.

ETUC POLICIES

Following on from the Seville Congress, the ETUC planned to go 'on the offensive' on five broad fronts:

For a European Labour Market

- Fighting for more and better jobs and full employment
- Campaigning for European standards in areas such as working conditions, trade union rights, and health and safety
- Combating and reversing the rising trend towards precarious work
- Campaigning for rising minimum wages and real pay increases for European workers
- Prioritising the elimination of the wage gap between men and women
- Fighting 'delocalisation', stimulate negotiations on restructuring and provide a stronger framework of information, consultation and involvement, including involving independent experts on restructuring
- Promoting equality and gender mainstreaming
- Fighting racism, discrimination and xenophobia
- Striving for a better framework of mobility of Europe's workers based on the principle of equal treatment in the place where the work is done, or the service provided
- Promoting a pro-active migration policy, opening legal channels for migration, while combating labour exploitation of migrant workers including undocumented migrants
- Campaigning for union rights to take strike action at transnational level
- Capturing the 'flexicurity' debate from those aiming to cut employment protection and unemployment benefit
- Promoting better social protection and welfare states with comprehensive services for minimum income, pensions, health, long-term care, lifelong learning, sick and unemployment benefits, active labour market and childcare; and positive action to handle the ageing population of Europe

- Fighting for the strengthening of existing Directives on Working Time (the end to the opt-out), European Works Councils and Posted Workers, and for the adoption of a strong Temporary Agency Workers Directive.

For Social Dialogue, collective bargaining and worker participation

- Promoting a higher quality social dialogue and a European level of dispute resolution
- Reflecting on developing and coordinating European level collective bargaining, including at sectoral, cross border, and transnational company levels, and supporting the work of the European Industry Federations
- Strengthening collective bargaining over the borders in Europe to improve each other's bargaining position and end 'beggar my neighbour' approaches
- Developing better conditions for European Works Councils and promote worker participation
- Campaigning for much higher standards of corporate governance, based on recognition of the interests of all the stakeholders not just shareholders, and also for more commitment to real corporate social responsibility
- Exposing and combating 'casino capitalism' and short-termism more generally, by taxation, regulation and worker involvement.

For more effective European economic, social and environmental governance

- Giving new life to the Lisbon Strategy and redefine urgently its terms of reference and place in European construction
- Developing a macroeconomic policy framework which encourages growth and innovation, uses a higher inflation target and aims for an exchange rate which is more growth friendly
- Promoting effective coordination of taxation policies
- Allocating a bigger European budget especially to help with enlargement and solidarity between regions and countries

- Building stronger public services within a new European framework
- Developing industrial and innovation strategies including sustainable technologies, high productivity, a highly qualified workforce, recognition of the enduring importance of European manufacturing, major spending increases on research and development, and a better regulation agenda based not only on economic, but also on social and ecological criteria
- Promoting a more sustainable Europe through 'smart' growth strategies, different production and consumption patterns, and meeting the Kyoto targets on carbon emissions; and make environmental and energy related issues part of the mainstream trade union agenda.

For a stronger EU

- Defending the substance of the constitutional treaty, especially the Charter of Fundamental Rights, and the trade union rights to organise and to strike
- Taking a positive approach to enlargement towards the Balkans and Turkey based on full compliance with the requirements of EU membership and with fundamental rights including trade union rights; generous neighbourhood policies to the east of Europe, and in the Mediterranean; and co-operation with the other regions of the world
- Taking an approach to trade which includes respect for rights and ILO standards, promotes jobs in Europe, opposes the use of trade to promote aggressive liberalisation in developing countries, and seeks more coherence between trade policy and development, social and environmental objectives
- Supporting an external policy based on defence of peace, adherence to the UN and its constitution, respect for the rule of law, the use of 'soft' power to promote democracy and human rights, and total condemnation of terrorism
- Supporting the development of a genuine EU Common Foreign and Security Policy.

For stronger unions and a stronger ETUC

- Developing a strategy of organisation to help affiliates increase the numbers of members
- Constructing a stronger ETUC, more able to lead campaigns and to promote more solidarity
- Working with the ITUC and its Pan European Regional Council, and also with the Global Unions Federations and TUAC, to build a trade union organisation which is more cohesive and influential in the world.

Activity

Worker Representation in Europe

AIMS

This activity will enable you to:

- develop understanding of the ways in which workers are represented in Europe
- consider how you can keep up to date with developments.

TASK

Reflect on ways in which your interests are represented through the ETUC structure. Further information is available through the ETUC website www.etuc.org

FURTHER INFORMATION

The European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) was set up in 1973 to promote the interests of working people at European level and to represent them in the EU institutions. The ETUC's objective is an EU with a strong social dimension that safeguards the wellbeing of all its citizens. At present, the ETUC has in membership 82 national trade union confederations from 36 European countries, as well as 12 European Industry Federations, plus observer organisations in Macedonia, Serbia, and Bosnia and Herzegovina. Other trade union structures such as EUROCADRES (the Council of European Professional and Managerial Staff) and EFREP/FERPA (European Federation of Retired and Elderly Persons) operate under the auspices of the ETUC. In addition, the ETUC coordinates the activities of the 45 IRTUCs (Interregional Trade Union Councils), which organise trade union cooperation at a cross-border level.

The ETUC is one of the European social partners and is recognised by the European Union, by the Council of Europe and by EFTA as the only representative cross-sectoral trade union organisation at European level.

www.etuc.org

PROJECT PARTNERS

	Algemeen Belgisch Vakverbond – Fédération Générale du Travail de Belgique – ABVV-FGTB	www.fgtb.be/
	Algemene Centrale der Liberale Vakbonden van België – Centrale Générale des Syndicats Libéraux de Belgique – ACLVB-CGSLB	www.aclvb.be/
	Algemeen Christelijk Vakverbond – Confédération des Syndicats Chrétiens – ACV-CSC	www.acv-online.be/
	Confédération Française Démocratique du Travail – CFDT	www.cfdt.fr/
	Confédération Française des Travailleurs Chrétiens – CFTC	www.cftc.fr/
	Confédération Générale du Travail – CGT	www.cgt.fr/
	Confédération Générale du Travail – Force Ouvrière – FO	www.force-ouvriere.fr/
	Union Nationale des Syndicats Autonomes – UNSA	www.unsa.org/
	Ανώτατη Διοίκηση Ενώσεων Δημοσίων Υπαλλήλων – ΑΔΕΔΥ	www.adedy.gr/
	Γενική Συνομοσπονδία Εργατών Ελλάδας – ΓΣΕΕ	www.gsee.gr/
	Confederazione Generale Italiana del Lavoro – CGIL	www.cgil.it/
	Confederazione Italiana Sindacati Lavoratori – CISL	www.cisl.it/
	Unione Italiana del Lavoro – UIL	www.uil.it/
	Konfederácia Odborových Zväzov Slovenskej Republiky – KOZ SR	www.kozsr.sk/cms/
	Landsorganisationen i Sverige – LO-S	www.lo.se/
	Türkiye Devrimci İşçi Sendikaları Konfederasyonu – DİSK	www.disk.org.tr/
	Türkiye Hak İşçi Sendikaları Konfederasyonu – HAK-İŞ	www.hakis.org.tr/
	Türkiye İşçi Sendikaları Konfederasyonu – TÜRK-İŞ	www.turkis.org.tr/
	Trades Union Congress – TUC	www.tuc.org.uk/
	European Federation of Food, Agriculture and Tourism Trade Unions – EFFAT	www.effat.org/
	European Metalworkers' Federation – EMF	www.emf-fem.org/
	European Federation of Public Service Unions – EPSU	www.epsu.org/
	European Transport Workers' Federation – ETF	www.itfglobal.org/etf/
	European Trade Union Federation: Textile, Clothing and Leather – ETUF-TCL	www.etuf-tcl.org/
	UNI-Europa	www.uni-europa.org/



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Civil Society Dialogue – Bringing together workers from Turkey and the EU through a shared culture of work

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