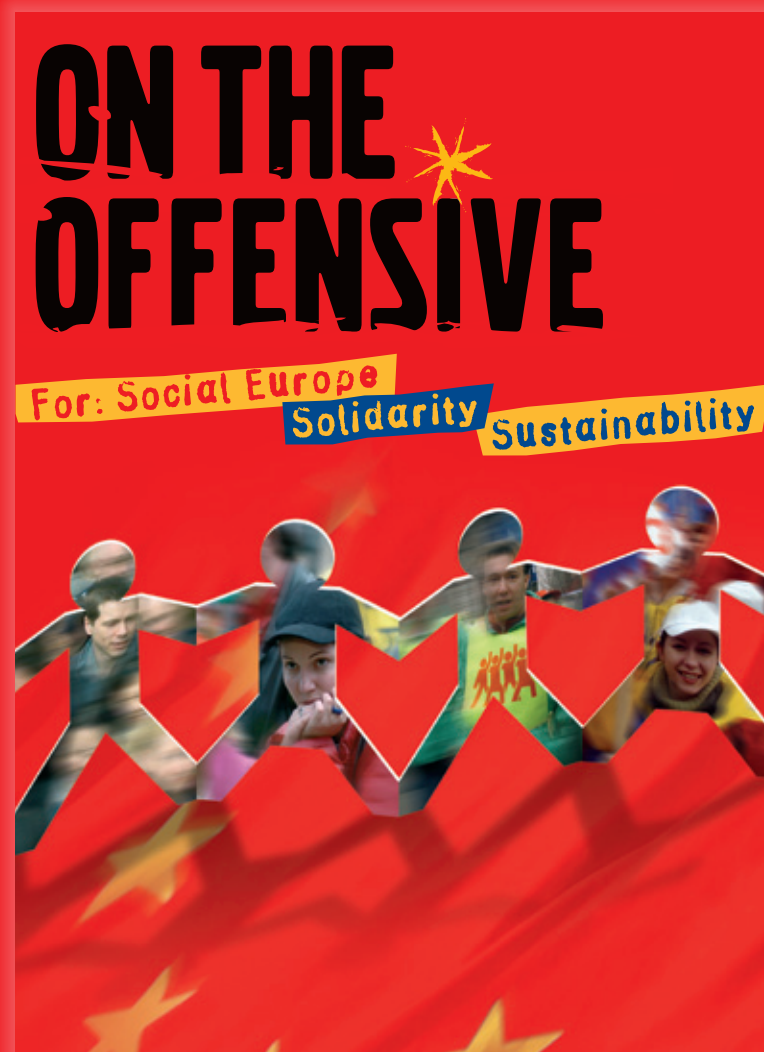


Trade unions and civil society

6



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
- Nigel Rees (Trade Union European Information Project) who was responsible for editing the original texts for these educational booklets, and also Kazim Ates who was responsible for revising them
- Laura Fallavollita, Yücel Top and the other members of the project coordination committee (Osman Yıldız, Uğraş Gök and Kıvanç Eli Açık), 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

CONTEXT

What is 'civil society'? Definitions need to be broad to cover all the different examples, but some basic elements are emerging, and a first definition can be found within the Economic and Social Committee (EESC) of the European Union. Its main task is to advise the three major institutions of the European Union, the European Parliament, the Council of Ministers and the European Commission, and it is made up of representatives of the various economic and social components of organised civil society – 'employers', 'employees' and 'various interests'. According to the EESC, which describes itself as a bridge between Europe and organised civil society, 'Civil society organisations can be defined in abstract terms as the sum of all organisational structures whose members have objectives and responsibilities that are of general interest and who also act as mediators between the public authorities and citizens.'

Civil society is a local phenomenon. Many types of civil society institutions have existed for years – charities, social clubs, sports clubs, community organisations, consumers' organisations, cooperatives, environmental groups, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), non-profit organisations, professional associations, religious groups, voluntary associations – to name but a few. They provide social capital and shared values which act as a glue that helps to hold society together.

Civil society is also a global phenomenon. The United Nations, for example, considers itself to be both a participant in and a witness to an increasingly global civil society. It considers that civil society organisations play a key role at major United Nations Conferences and are indispensable partners for UN efforts at the national country level. The UN organises and hosts, on a regular basis, briefings, meetings and conferences for NGO representatives who are accredited to UN offices, programmes and agencies. More than 3,200 organisations have a consultative status within its Economic and Social Committee. Well known examples are Consumers International, Greenpeace

International, Médecins sans Frontières, International Save the Children Alliance, the International Trade Union Confederation and Oxfam International.

As part of the discussions between the EU and Turkey, the European Commission has underlined the importance of Civil Society Dialogue and set up a series of initiatives to deal with this – www.csdproject.net/web/. Its objectives are to:

- strengthen contacts and mutual exchange of experience between all sectors of civil society in the Member States and Turkey
- ensure a better knowledge and understanding of the Turkey within the European Union
- ensure a better knowledge and understanding of the European Union within Turkey.

This has in turn led to the establishment of a Civil Society Development Center in Turkey www.stgm.org.tr/ and a number of important projects, of which this is one.

TRADE UNIONS AND CIVIL SOCIETY

Trade unions have often grown up alongside other civil society groups. In the United Kingdom, for example, so-called friendly societies, some of which developed into unions, were founded at about the same time (1823) as the Anti-Slavery Society, seen as one of the first international NGOs. The Red Cross and Save the Children followed in the 1850s. After the Second World War trade union activism in civil society helped to found organisations like Oxfam.

Trade unions have often accompanied the activities of different NGOs. Some issues are of such significance to civil society, including workers and their organisations, that the only way to tackle them is through the broadest possible coalitions. Take for example the Clean Clothes Campaign, which is supported in Belgium, for example, by two major trade union confederations, the Algemeen Christelijk Vakverbond/Confédération des Syndicats Chrétiens

The Clean Clothes Campaign is dedicated to improving working conditions and supporting the empowerment of workers in the global garment and sportswear industries.

Since 1989, the CCC has worked to help ensure that the fundamental rights of workers are respected. We educate and mobilise consumers, lobby companies and governments, and offer direct solidarity support to workers as they fight for their rights and demand better working conditions.

The Clean Clothes Campaign is an alliance of organisations in 12 European countries. Members include trade unions and NGOs covering a broad spectrum of perspectives and interests, such as women's rights, consumer advocacy and poverty reduction. We rely on a partner network of more than 200 organisations and unions in garment-producing countries to identify local problems and objectives, and to help us develop campaign strategies to support workers in achieving their goals. We cooperate extensively with similar labour rights campaigns in the United States, Canada, and Australia. www.cleanclothes.org

(ACV/CSC) and the Algemeen Belgisch Vakverbond/ Fédération Générale des Travailleurs de Belgique (ABVV/FGTB), and some their affiliated organisations, and a series of civil society groups, such as Oxfam Solidarité; in the Netherlands by two major trade union confederations Christelijk Nationaal Vakverbond (CNV) and the Federatie Nederlandse Vakbeweging (FNV); in Germany by the training department of the Deutscher Gewerkschaftsbund (DGB) and its metalworkers' union IG –Metall.

In turn the Clean Clothes Campaign has supported trade unions. A recent example would be its year-long campaign on behalf of Deri-İş against the DESA leather factory in Turkey, which ended in a protocol stating that:

- DESA will recognise Deri-İş as the single authorised union at the factory
- DESA will not engage in any positive or negative attitude to employees in regard to the union
- DESA will reinstate five dismissed workers now, and one more later, on top of the six already reinstated. Other dismissed workers will be given first priority in any new hiring opportunities
- All employees will be given a document stating that unionisation is a constitutional right.

The two Belgian trade union confederations, mentioned above, CSC and FGFB, and the other Belgian trade union confederation Centrale Générale des Syndicats Libéraux de Belgique (CGSLB) are members, along with another 70 organisations, of the Centre National de Coopération au Développement, which, as its name suggests, supports the development of North-South relations.

The French Confédération Générale du Travail (CGT) has worked with the civil society organisation Greenpeace to strengthen the EU Directive REACH on the control of chemical substances. The French Confédération Française Démocratique du Travail (CFDT) and France Nature Environnement have agreed to work together on environmental issues.

In another case the Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU) is a national coordinator of the Global March against Child Labour, whose mission is to 'mobilise worldwide efforts to protect and promote the rights of all children, especially the right to receive a free, meaningful education and to be free from economic exploitation and from performing any work that is likely to be harmful to the child's physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development.'

The Italian Confederazione Generale Italiana del Lavoro (CGIL) joined recently with hundreds of other organisations in a movement which organised a large-scale demonstration to combat racism in October 2009 in Rome. The French trade union confederations mentioned above CGT, CFDT and also FSU and UNSA, also joined with a series of civil society groups, Solidaires, Ligue des Droits de l'Homme, Cimade, Autremonde, Femmes Egalité, RESF, Droits Devant !!, to lobby the French government on behalf of striking immigrants.

In the United Kingdom, environmental or green representatives are becoming more and more common at the workplace. The British TUC handbook 'Go Green at Work' lists reasons why environmental matters should be part of union negotiations.

It also stresses the benefits to recruitment of mobilising young people in particular who often have a greater awareness of green issues than of trade unions. UNISON, a UK public service union, has begun to recruit environmental representatives and the job description highlights the development of links with civil society organisations like Friends of the Earth and Greenpeace who, with UNISON, are members of the Stop Climate Chaos coalition.

WORKING WITH NGOS AT THE EUROPEAN LEVEL

At the more formal and structured level European trade unions work within the European Economic and Social Committee, which exists to give a voice both to the traditional social partners (employers and trade unions) and civil society organisations including NGOs. Its 'various interests' group brings together representatives of farmers, the professions, small businesses, crafts, co-operatives, consumers, environmentalists, families, the disabled and the academic community. The Committee values its role of consulting beyond politicians to 'men and women [who] work actively "in the field" in the economic and social life of their country'. It also encourages civil society organisations in non-EU countries; for example, it has instituted a Joint Consultative Committee (JCC) with Turkish members from co-operatives, consumer associations and various NGOs as well as representatives from employers and trade unions. Recently the JCC called for 'more visible progress', involving civil society organisations, towards EU accession and presented a report on trade union rights to the Turkish government.

The European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) has long worked with non-governmental organisations. Back in 2000 when a convention was formulating a new constitution for the European Union the ETUC joined with the Platform of European Social NGOs, which includes 'organisations of women, older people, people with disabilities, people who are unemployed, people affected by poverty, gays and lesbians, young people, children and families', to press for the adoption of a Charter of Fundamental Rights. Two years later an alliance of the European Trade Union Confederation and a series of NGOs (the European Region of International Lesbian and Gay Association – ILGA-Europe, the European Network Against Racism – ENR, the European Women's Lobby – EWL, the European Youth Forum – EYF, the European Anti-Poverty Network – EAPN, Solidar, and the European Older People's Platform – AGE)

campaigned together to support a proposed EU Directive outlawing discrimination on a whole range of grounds, including disability, age, religion or belief and sexual orientation.

For some time European trade unions have accepted that climate change, and its environmental effect, is an issue that must be addressed. Not only do they see it as a duty to take a part in tackling such fundamental problems for civil society, but they also recognise that the repercussions on industry and job creation will end up in their own back yard of social dialogue and collective bargaining.

In 2006 the ETUC lobbied the EU Council of Ministers in favour of a new sustainable development strategy in conjunction with both the Platform of European Social NGOs and the European Environmental Bureau, an umbrella for 143 pro-environment organisations. In January 2009 the ETUC joined with the European Environmental Bureau (EEB), the Social Platform and Concord to launch the 'Spring Alliance' campaign in January 2009, with the aim of making social and sustainable development the ultimate goal of the new Social Agenda and the post-Lisbon Strategy. The campaign drew up a joint manifesto, which was presented to the President of the Commission Barroso in July 2009, and which proposed a series of measures:

- using progress measurement tools that go beyond the Gross National Product, including indicators on poverty levels, equality, natural resources use and ecosystem pressures
- harmonising capital gains taxation to avoid fiscal, social and environmental dumping at European and international levels
- producing a detailed European biodiversity plan
- setting out annual binding timetables to reach a target of 0.7% of Gross National Income in official development aid.

WORKING WITH NGOS AT THE INTERNATIONAL LEVEL

The International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC), which represents 175 million workers in 155 countries and territories and has 311 national affiliates, including most European and Turkish trade union confederations, recently joined up with three international civil society organisations – the Global Progressive Forum www.progressiveforum.org, Social Alert www.socialalert.org and Solidar www.solidar.org. They together set up a campaign, Decent Work for a Decent Life, www.decentwork.org/, whose aims are, as follows:

- building awareness of Decent Work amongst citizens, decision makers and key institutions
- showing that Decent Work is the only sustainable way out of poverty and is fundamental to build democracy and social cohesion
- placing Decent Work at the core of development, economic, trade, financial and social policies at the national, European and International level.

Another example at the international level would be the Play Fair campaign that involves different international trade union federations and NGOs, such as the ITUC, the Global Union Federation for the Textiles, Leather and Garment industry (ITGLWF), the Building and Wood Workers' International (BWI), and the Clean Clothes Campaign. Labour rights groups and trade unions from many countries in the developing and transition countries, have been supporting and participating in the campaign. It aims to ensure that sports events are fair for workers making sporting goods and building venues, as well as fair for the athletes – no matter whether it is the Olympics, UEFA, FIFA, the Commonwealth Games or any other sports event. Internationally agreed upon standards should be respected in the workplace as well as in the stadium.

Unions and Communities in the United Kingdom

According to 'Unions in the Community: A survey of union reps', which was carried out in the United Kingdom, union representatives are heavily involved in campaigning and activities outside the workplace. Trade union representatives are eight times more likely than the general population to engage in voluntary work and give more of their time to community organisations.

The research, found that:

- 8 per cent of representatives are school governors
- 5 per cent are trustees or sit on the governing bodies of local organisations
- 19 per cent are volunteers in local community organisations like sports or social clubs
- 20 per cent spend up to five hours a week on community activities

Asked about their faith, of the 27 per cent who described themselves as religious, 84 per cent said that there was a definite link between their religious faith and their union activities, citing shared values such as compassion, justice and respect.

This report clearly shows that union members and their representatives are at the heart of civil society and are active in their local communities.

Play Fair wants IOC (the International Olympic Committee) to commit to supporting fundamental workers' rights in the Olympic Charter, to require that all companies which have licences for the Olympic Games respect these rights, to have a mechanism for receiving information and complaints about exploitation and to fix the problems that arise.

For the 2010 Soccer World Cup and 2012 European Cup, Play Fair will promote decent work for workers in the construction industry.

TRADE UNIONISTS AS CITIZENS

The member organisations of the European Trade Union Confederation are working hard to reverse the decline in their membership. One interesting and potentially fruitful idea is to use the links which trade unions naturally develop with other campaigning organisations, some of which we have seen above, and the grass roots participation of union members in their local communities, to reach out to groups of people who are currently unaware of, or uninterested in, the work of trade unions.

The report in the adjacent box suggests that many of the 200,000 trade union representatives and activists in the United Kingdom are themselves members of other social networks. Not only does this make alliances in the community easier but, by wearing their 'union hats' when engaged in their roles outside, they can benefit recruitment and general awareness of union activities. When asked which were the most important campaign issues in which trade union representatives were engaged in, the answers were disability or health issues, tackling racism and the far right and Environmental issues - issues that require alliances with civil society organisations.

At European level the EU Commission has been running an Active European Citizenship programme. From 2007 a new 'Europe for Citizens' programme was initiated with a budget of €215 million. Its aims

include: giving citizens the opportunity to interact and participate in constructing an ever closer Europe, developing a sense of European identity, fostering a sense of ownership of the European Union among its citizens and enhancing mutual understanding between European citizens. Specifically relating to trade unions, the action on active civil society in Europe seeks to foster action, debate and reflection related to European citizenship and democracy, shared values, common history and culture through projects run by civil society organisations. According to a report from the European Trade Union Institute (ETUI), as unions represent the the largest Europe-wide network of membership-based organisations active in civil society and, given their desire to involve their members in citizenship in general and EU issues such as the constitution, life-long learning and social dialogue in particular, so trade union-run projects should prosper under the new budget heading.

As mentioned at the beginning of this training module, the European Commission has also underlined the importance of Civil Society Dialogue within the context of EU-Turkey relations, and it has set up a series of initiatives to support this.

Activity

Unions and Civil Society

AIMS

To enable you to:

- consider your role as a union representative in a wider social context
- support your members in conjunction with civil society organisations.

TASK

Make a note of the organisations outside your workplace and your own union which help you to support your members.

Consider the workplace problems and issues referred to you over the last year and make a note of those which could not be resolved by normal union negotiating channels.

Which agencies could help? How can they be contacted?

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/



This project is funded by the European Union



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

The contents of this publication are the sole responsibility of the European Trade Union Confederation and can in no way be taken to reflect the views of the European Union

ETUC

International Trade Union House (ITUH)
Boulevard Roi Albert II, 5
B-1210 Brussels
Belgium

April 2010



The Central Finance and
Contracts Unit is the Contracting
Authority of this Project

Design: www.design-mill.co.uk