

ETUC resolution for the integration of migrants and the consolidation of the UnionMigrantNet

Adopted at the Executive Committee Meeting of 2-3 July 2020

Summary

1. By means of this resolution, ETUC takes a further stand for the protection of migrants' rights and their integration in Europe and beyond. It aims at a further consolidation of the UnionMigrantNet (UMN) as the European network of trade unions, organisations and associations of migrants promoted by trade unions, providing assistance to migrants with a double-folded feature of being an instrument for cooperation among its members and a source of information and support for the migrant population through its counselling structures (contact points).

Background

2. The [ETUC Resolution on avenues of work for the ETUC in migration and asylum fields \(2019-2023\)](#) points out that integration of migrants is the flagship of the trade union agenda on migration and asylum.
3. UnionMigrantNet is the European trade union network of local, regional and national trade unions structures that assists in the integration of migrants. It has proved to be a good platform for the trade union movement at EU level to raise awareness on the subject of migration. It also turned out to be an effective instrument to build on best practices. As an overarching trade union network, UMN had the attention of institutions and showed added value to reinforce cooperation that trade unions build in Europe or with third countries.
4. ETUC is in the process of consolidating the network, also it is updating and relaunching the existing web portal that will become a reference point for all migrants and their trade union related counselling structures in Europe. UMN can also be reinforced to respond to the ETUC priority to better involve migrants in trade union life and decision-making processes.
5. UnionMigrantNet was set up in 2015 as a network of contact points for migrants; it has been established, managed and supported by trade unions. UnionMigrantNet will continue coordinating and supporting the work of trade unions, fostering its service component. The main goal of the network is to support labour mobility. The aims of the network are to:
 - Strengthen trade union activities aimed at protecting the individual and collective rights of migrants regardless of their status;
 - Increase the visibility and accessibility of services and facilities supporting the integration of migrants in the host societies and local communities;
 - Encourage, through support and good practices, trade union membership among the migrant population;
 - Facilitate dialogue and cooperation with other regional trade unions networks focused on migrants' activities;
 - Encourage cooperation and support to migrants, among all trade unions in Europe

Challenges

6. The integration of migrants requires a revamped commitment of the European trade union movement. Notwithstanding the repeated crisis that afflicted the EU economy and society, migrant population has increased during the last decade. Today the EU is hosting about 22.3 million third country nationals. There are 63 million foreign born people (all migrants included) in countries covered by the ETUC membership. It is estimated that 100.000 third country nationals (TCNs) enter the EU for seasonal employment and half of them for less than 90 days. It is difficult to estimate how many TCNs work for short periods having entered the EU with a Schengen Visa. Nonetheless, there still are about 4 million undocumented migrants, this number has increased because of lack of transparent regular channels and mismanagement of asylum demands. UMN estimates that 7% of TU member are migrants. In certain sectors or regions, migrants may also represent up to 50% of local or sector unions.
7. The COVID crisis has demonstrated how essential migrant workers are for the services and production sectors. The precariousness of non-citizens has been further exposed when the economy or health systems of hosting societies are severely stress. The most affected sectors, such as tourism, construction, agriculture, care and domestic work, are the ones that employ a high amount of migrant workers. Limited access to social protection is creating areas of vulnerability and often a situation of poverty that emergency measures are meeting difficulties to deal with. As such, women are particularly exposed.

Priorities

8. In recent consultations with the European Commission, the economic and social partners (who also belong to the Partnership for Integration) have shared the view that people movements from and to the EU will continue to exist in substantial numbers, despite the difficult post-pandemic situation. ETUC affirms that it is necessary to open well-managed and transparent legal channels; furthermore, work permits should be released and associated with rights and equal treatment at work for all the workers. ETUC advocates a reinforcement of the Partnership for Integration within the new EU Pact on Migration and Asylum with the aim of enlarging the scope to economic migration and renewing the engagement with economic and social partners. This would allow national organisations to be better supported in their efforts to provide information, training, inclusion and protection to all migrants. LABOUR-INT will remain the operational framework that is specific to asylum seekers and refugees.
9. The world of work and the work of migrants are closely interrelated. Having a job is a very important step in the integration process. Joining a union aids in providing integrity and dignity for migrants. However, we are aware that the EU will go through periods of high unemployment. It may exacerbate the defensive positions aimed at protecting local labour markets. In the post-pandemic crisis, we can expect that the position of economic migrants will require higher attention from the trade union movement to avoid distortive effects on the labour market, ensure their regular stay, defend their interests as workers when involved in crisis, with the same conditions of nationals.

Actions

10. This resolution aims to engage all ETUC members to strengthening cooperation intended at reinforcing their activities in favour of integration of migrants, including those performed by the federations representing those sectors in which migrants are highly presents. In particular, it focuses on networks and services that help with integration of migrants. Participation is voluntary and can take different forms, according to the scope, objectives, resources and adapted to local realities. A richness of practices which trade union movement should benefit from.
11. We have also learned that the exchange of practices and cross-border networking is beneficial for both trade unions and migrants. ETUC members benefit from the exchange of experience and mutual learning activities. Furthermore, they enlarge the offer of cross-border assistance offered to their members. They also benefit from a stronger position of the trade union movement in the political arena.
12. Services and networks built by ETUC members will be crucial to support a fair management of migration and ensure a high level of integration of migrant population. UnionMigrantNet demonstrates that when trade unions invest in services for integration of migrants, they become a point of reference for the local population and its added values is recognised not only by migrants but by all components of local communities, including their administrative authorities.
13. It is beneficial for migrants because UnionMigrantNet increases the visibility and accessibility of trade union structures to migrants, especially outside the workplace. UMN creates cross-border opportunities for counselling services so that they can better support migrants that decide to move from one member state to another and they can find continuity in the trade union support in their new endeavours.
14. UnionMigrantNet is also a network of networks and services working for the integration of migrants, provided or supported by trade unions in the EU and beyond. It will continue to have a double-folded feature of being an instrument for cooperation and exchange among ETUC members and counselling structures (contact points) together with a service component for migrants, especially through its relaunched portal www.unionmigrantnet.eu.
15. The UMN portal should serve the following aims:
 - Reinforcing cooperation among ETUC members providing services and assistance for integration to migrants. These Trade Unions will build cooperation and mutual exchanges, also connecting local staff, through targeted events (conferences, trainings, seminars, exchange of materials) and through the UMN portal that will have a section reserved to TU operators. In these reserved sections, they can develop common tools of work. UMN will be open to all ETUC members and their counselling structures. UMN aims for the active and ongoing inclusion of all interested trade union organisations in this field.
 - Promoting the conditions for a dialogue about the issue of mutual recognition of trade union membership. Based on a common charter of values, UMN can facilitate access to trade union support to workers that decide to move from one country to another.
 - Increasing visibility of trade union contact points/counselling structures, through a geo-localisation of closest trade union offices or desks assisting migrants through a web portal and mobile application. Set as multilingual tool, the app will have

access to a multitude of contact points that can be sorted according to their localisation, spoken languages, and services offered.

- Online services may be experimented through a limited number of pilot actions that will involve trade unions, associations or organisations promoted by trade unions. Feasibility plans can be done on the basis of these pilot actions. A participatory approach will be encouraged, as well as the participation of migrants' themselves. This would help in developing a portal and mobile app that would serve as a concrete and useful tool for the migrants.

16. The more active the unions are the most powerful UMN is. ETUC will encourage participation through these initiatives:

- Conference of trade union contact points for integration of migrants
- Organising trainings and mutual learning exchanges also in cooperation with the ETUI
- Developing materials or supporting exchange of materials produced by ETUC members
- Making the UMN a portal a crossroad of trade union services for migrants
- Stepping forward towards a mutual recognition of membership for those building on the potential of the UMN portal

17. The Governance of the network will be further developed in cooperation with the Steering Committee members of the UMN project and the ETUC Standing Migration and Inclusion Committee.

18. This resolution implements one of the objectives under the ETUC resolution on avenues of work for the ETUC in migration and asylum fields (2019-2023). ETUC will continue working on the political level to push for a more favourable environment for the integration and protection of migrants' rights irrespective of their immigration status or nationality.