



**ETUC EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE:  
WCL REAFFIRMS ATTACHMENT TO  
INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNION  
PLURALISM**

During the ETUC Executive Committee meeting, on 11 March, WCL secretary-general Willy Thys took stock of the recent Congress in Bucharest. The secretary-general seized this opportunity to express again his gratitude to the two national member confederations, Cartel Alfa and the CSDR, for their support, pointing out that the action of democratic trade unions is an element that cannot be left out of consideration in the democratic system. The Bucharest Congress, he went on to say, rejoiced at the emergence of new trade unions in Africa, surely an element of optimism for this continent. In its reflection on the globalisation, the Congress highlighted the importance of world governance. In this respect, says the WCL, the ILO must be considered on an equal footing with the Bretton Woods institutions; moreover, a United Nations Economic and Social Security Council must be created, whose main mandate would be the regulation of the globalisation.

**TELE-FLASH**

is a two-weekly information bulletin containing brief trade union messages, edited by the information department of the WCL.

Responsible editor :  
Willy Thys  
Information officer :  
Mathieu Debroux.

Reproduction  
authorised  
under  
acknowledgement  
of source

**WCL**  
Trierstraat 33  
B-1040 Brussels  
Tel : 02/285.47.00  
Fax : 02/230.87.22  
E-mail:  
info@cmt-wcl.org  
Internet:  
www.cmt-wcl.org

In the second part of his address Willy Thys declared himself on the evolution of international trade unionism: "*The globalisation has weakened the trade union movement, and the WCL has been called on several times to merge with the ICFTU. The WCL has always advocated the preservation of pluralism, also at the international level. The real challenge consists in seeking the best ways to strengthen the trade union movement as a whole.*" The secretary-general reminded that the WCL is in favour of intensifying joint achievements rather than of a merger. In this sense, and in line with the agreement reached in 2001 on the creation of a standing forum, the ICFTU and WCL secretariats will meet on 5 April next. The secretary-general thanked the ETUC for its initiatives enabling a co-operation with the ICFTU, particularly with respect to the EU-ACP and the EU-Latin America and Caribbean relations. The WCL believes that the ETUC should continue to play an important part in this joint ICFTU-WCL action.

In conclusion, Willy Thys pointed out the prominent part of the ETUC and its affiliates in the protection and improvement of the European social model.

**EUROPEAN WCL/EZA SEMINAR**

On 9-11 March, the WCL conducted with the support of the EZA a seminar on "Social Dialogue as Structure Instrument in Trade Union Strategies". In his keynote speech WCL sec-

retary-general Willy Thys reminded of the importance of the WCL's activities in Europe, pointing out the social dialogue as a basis for a stronger social Europe. Jaap Wiene, deputy secretary-general in charge of Trade Action, presented the overall aim of the seminar: to enable an exchange of information between trade unions from Eastern and from Western Europe about the nation- and Europe-wide social dialogue so as to arrive at concrete action proposals the WCL can support. Around sixty participants took stock of the implementation of the social dialogue in their respective countries. Building a bargaining capacity appeared to be an important need for several trade unions. In some East European countries the absence of a legal framework and/or institution impedes a constructive social dialogue. The participants also debated on the European works councils.

The WCL's support to the European organisations was outlined as follows: build the capacity of the European organisations, stimulated branch-related bargaining, strengthen the participation in the ETUC and, within the framework of the European social dialogue, improve the information network, exchange knowledge and experiences, support organisations that file complaints with the ILO, etc.

**DOAWTU EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE  
MEETING IN ACCRA**

The African regional organisation of the WCL assembled its Executive Committee in Accra, Ghana, from 25 February to 1 March. Eduardo Estévez, deputy secretary-general of the WCL, took part in the debates and pointed out the maturity of the DOAWTU on the eve of its tenth anniversary. The organisation advances decisively on the way to consolidation. The meeting was an opportunity to adopt measures in aid of the implementation of the action programme, the strengthening of affiliates and the expansion of the DOAWTU in Africa.

The DOAWTU decided to stage its next Congress in Accra in September 2003. The next Executive Committee meeting is scheduled to take place in Kinshasa, Congo, in February 2003.

OATUU deputy secretary-general Demba Diop attended the opening session of the Executive Committee. The DOAWTU and the WCL paid a visit to the OATUU, which is based in Accra.

**ELECTRONIC CONFERENCE OF THE  
WFAFW**

The WFAFW organised its third electronic conference on 4-15 March. Its theme was "Relations between the European Union and Latin

America and the Caribbean in the Field of Agriculture, Food and Tourism". The WFAFW thanks in particular the United Nations Food and Agricultural Organisation – FAO, the World Tourism Organisation – WTO, the Sistema Economico Latinoamericano – SELA and the WCL for their contributions to the Conference. The speeches are available, in Spanish only, on the WFAFW site <http://www.cmt-wcl.org/femtaa>.

#### **SWITZERLAND UN MEMBER**

The *Confédération des syndicats chrétiens de Suisse* – CSC, is pleased with the fact that the Swiss people has approved of their country's UN membership: *"In becoming full member of the UN, Switzerland can at last normalise its relations with the Organisation and help favour peace, justice and social security on an equal footing with the other countries of the world."*

#### **MORE EUROPE ...**

"More Europe" was the theme of the rally the European Trade Union Confederation – ETUC organised in Barcelona, on the eve of the Council of the European Union. One hundred thousand demonstrators took to the streets to demand, like in Brussels on 13 December last, that the social aspect should not be forgotten in the construction of Europe. WCL secretary-general Willy Thys and many leaders of European affiliates and of the USO from Spain took part in the demonstration.

#### **HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS UPDATE**

**Colombia** - Gilberto Torres Martínez, leader of the *Unión Sindical Obrera*, was arrested in Monterrey (District of Casanare, Colombia) on 25 February. By letter to the president of the Republic, the WCL demanded the immediate release of the trade union leader.

**Guatemala** - Miguel Ángel Ochoa Gonzalez, of the *Unión de Pilotos Profesionales y Transportes Pesado de Carga por Carretera* was arrested on 14 February. Wilson Armelio Carreto López, president of the same organisation, was threatened with death. The WCL has condemned these trade union freedoms and human rights violations, demanding that the physical integrity of both trade union leaders be guaranteed.

The WCL has also demanded that all necessary steps be taken to ensure the safety of Mgr Álvaro Ramazzini of the San Marco diocese, who receive a death threat on account of his support for the cause of poor peasants in the region.

**Palestine** – By letter to prime minister Ariel Sharon, the WCL has reiterated its attachment to a solution of negotiated peace to the Palestinian question.

Only lasting peace can ensure acceptable living conditions for both the Israeli and the Palestinian people. The WCL has also expressed its solidarity with Azmi Bshara, Arab Palestinian intellectual, who has fallen prey to unjust treatment by the Israeli authorities.

#### Schedule of activities

18-20 March 2002: EUROFEDOP Congress, Luxembourg

20-22 March 2002: INFEDOP Congress, Luxembourg

20-22 March 2002: ILO Governing Body, Geneva, Switzerland

25-26 March 2002: Tripartite forum for the advancement of the tripartite Declaration of Principles on multinational companies and social policy, ILO, Geneva, Switzerland

25-28 March 2002: Technical consultation on the improvement of information on the situation and trends in fishing, Rome, Italy