

WCL EXPRESSES SOLIDARITY WITH MAURITANIAN DOCKERS

On 28 October, the *Confédération Libre des Travailleurs de Mauritanie* (CLTM), affiliated to the WCL, called a general strike of the dockers employed in the *Port Autonome* (autonomous port) of Nouakchott. The dockers demand higher wages, observance of the safety standards, a family allowance scheme and the payment of overtime. In support of the CLTM's demands, the WCL wrote a letter to President Maaouiya Ould Sid'Ahmed, requesting him to enter upon a dialogue with the strikers and to provide a solid social safety net as well as proper working conditions.

We also mention here that on 22 October Pierre Jean Coulon, Vice President of *L'Association Droit à l'Energie SOS Futur*, and Jean Pierre Grihon, Vice President of *CFTC Mines et Energie de France*, were expelled from Mauritania, on their way to a CLTM conference on 'the right to energy'. The WCL considers this an obvious trade union freedom violation in the country.

WOOD & BUILDING SEMINAR GIVES NEW IMPETUS TO TRADE UNION ACTION IN MEXICO

The Latin American wood and building workers are going through difficult times. The economic crisis causes unemployment to rise all over the continent. More and more unemployed land in the informal or "subsistence" economy, in which labour rights and standards are non-existent. At the seminar for wood and building workers, which the World Federation of Building and Woodworkers' Unions (WFBW) in cooperation with its regional organisation FLATIC conducted on 28-29 October in Mexico City, the final conclusion was clear: the globalisation of the Latin American economy forces the workers only further to the fringes of society. The twenty trade union leaders present discussed in particular the role of the government and of the (European) multinationals in this evolution. According to its President, Jacky Jackers, the WFBW has the important task to bring about a dialogue between these decision makers and the local trade unions: "*The Latin American trade unions are ill-prepared for a confrontation and negotiations with powerful global companies. That is why we want to chart the activities of multinationals, strengthen the flow of information between the various trade unions and undertake joint actions.*"

On 30 October, the WCL received information to the effect that the government had intimidated and even arrested members of the *Sindicato de Trabajadores al Servicio de los*

Poderes del Estado e Instituciones Descentralizadas de Carácter Estatal de Oaxaca (federation of workers in state-owned and allied companies) because they had stood up for better social conditions for the Mexican workers. The WCL has urged the President of Mexico to release these trade unionists and to resume the dialogue with the trade unions.

SEMINAR FOR TRADE UNION WOMEN IN MOROCCO: ACV-CSC, CDT, UGTM AND WCL JOINTLY AT THE TABLE

The ACV-CSC, the Belgian affiliate of the WCL, is an important pioneer in the matter of strengthening and expanding international trade unionism. In this respect, the confederation attaches great importance to the support of departments that watch over the labour rights, in particular the ones of women workers. Thus, the ACV-CSC concluded in Morocco a cooperation agreement with the CDT and the UGTM to tackle the 'gender equality' issue. It was within the framework of this cooperation that the three partners, jointly with the WCL, conducted from 28 October to 1 November a seminar in Bouznika. No less than thirty trade union women took an active part in the debates. "*The seminar turned into a dynamic exchange of ideas and strategies to improve the situation of Moroccan women workers*", says Kattia Paredes, head of the WCL "Women and Work" Department. The women trade union representatives pointed out that the 'work and gender' issue should be fully integrated into the political decision-making and actions of trade unions. Moreover, trade unions should continue their efforts to organise themselves in such a way that they can really satisfy the needs of women and fully represent them. The women in the UGTM and the CDT also gave to understand that the movement dealing with 'gender issues' requires permanent support, both from the trade unions as a whole and from the departments in charge of the women workers' rights.

CONGRESS OF THE CSDR IN BUCHAREST: POSITION OF TRADE UNIONS IN THE ROMANIAN SOCIETY MUST GROW STRONGER

"*The WCL is proud to count the CSDR among its affiliates for such a long time already.*" This is the opening sentence of the speech Jaap Wienen, WCL Deputy Secretary General, delivered at the Congress the *Confédération des Syndicats Démocratiques de Roumanie* (CSDR), on 1-2 November in Bucharest. The Congress discussed the place of the trade union movement in the Romanian society and examined how trade unions could strengthen their

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position both to the government and to their members. "As a protector of the labour rights and as a full member of the European Trade Union Confederation, the CSDR has conquered an important, structural position", said Jaap Wiene, "and the entry into the European Union can only benefit the social dialogue." For the future he sees two important challenges: "First, workers' and employers' organisations should keep fighting for a solid standards system that guarantees the workers' welfare and gives them optimum chances of self-fulfilment. Besides this, also individual services to the members are very important." This requires a proper trade union network, nation- as well as world-wide. "The WCL will therefore continue to cooperate closely with the CSDR and with Cartel Alfa as well as with all its other affiliates from Eastern Europe", Jaap Wiene concluded.

A few days after the Congress, we received from Cartel Alfa the message that four trade unions (including the CSDR) and two employers' federations had signed an agreement by which they suspended any participation in tripartite organisations for an indefinite period of time. They did so in protest against the lax and indifferent attitude of the government towards the social partners. The protest will continue until the Romanian government adopts a more democratic position.

EUROPEAN SOCIAL FORUM IN FLORENCE

On 6-10 November 2002, tens of thousands of representatives of social organisations met in Florence for the very first European Social Forum. The meeting fitted in with the activities of the World Social Forum, which has taken place every year since 2001 in Porto Alegre, Brazil, under the motto of *Another world is possible*. The leading thread running through the over 160 seminars and workers was the struggle against neo-liberalism and its market model. The topics were privatisation, workers' rights, repression against women and social minority groups, the social exclusion of migrants and the unemployed, the loss of the environment... all of them themes very near the heart of the WCL. The Forum culminated on 9 November in a mass demonstration against a possible war against Iraq.

BOOKLET ON 'INTERNATIONAL LABOUR STANDARDS' HAS A NEW LOOK!

As announced in the previous number of Teleflash, the WCL booklet on 'International Labour Standards at the Service of Social Justice' has been given a new look. The standard-setting system of the International Labour Organisation (ILO), the WCL's stands to codes of conduct, decent work, standards in the informal economy, women workers... you will easily find them. You can order your copies – in English, French or

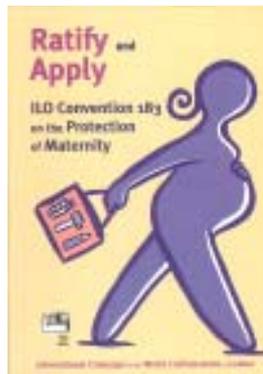
Spanish – via info@cmt-wcl.org. Please mention clearly a contact person and the address the booklets have to be sent to.

TRADE UNIONS QUESTION IMF AND WORLD BANK IN WASHINGTON

"It is high time the IMF and the World Bank adapted their measures to the real international context, listened to the third world and took to heart the problem of the international labour standards." That was in a nutshell the message trade union leaders from 92 organisations gave to the top delegation of the World Bank and the IMF during their international meeting from 21 to 23 October in Washington. Those who want to read in detail the discussion themes can download the PDF format of our special Flash from the website: www.cmt-wcl.org (section 'Publications', subject 'Tele-flash').

WORKING MOTHERS ARE ENTITLED TO PROTECTION

Worldwide, there are countless working mothers. In order to provide an optimum protection of their rights, the ILO adopted in June 2000 Convention 183. This Convention is meaningless, of course, unless as many countries as possible endorse it. To this day, only Slovakia, Romania, Italy and Bulgaria have ratified the Convention. The Women and Work Department of the WCL there calls on all national trade unions to step up their efforts in this field; it continues unabated the international campaign the WCL has launched for the ratification of Convention 183!



Schedule of activities

- 01-06 December 2002: World Congress of the International Federation of Trade Unions of Transport Workers (FIOT), Morocco;
- 02-04 December: UNCTAD Conference, Geneva – Switzerland;
- 09-11 December 2002: 4th National Congress of the CTA; Buenos Aires – Argentina;
- 10-13 December 2002: 15th regional meeting of the Americas; Lima – Peru.