

SOCIAL ELECTIONS IN FRANCE, CFTC IN THE LEAD

The WCL is congratulating itself on the results obtained by the CFTC (the French Federation of Christian Workers), during the 11th December 2002 elections. 23 departments received more than the minimum 10% votes, an improvement compared to 1997. The victory goes to Alsace, a traditional stronghold of the CFTC, with 20.6% in the lower Rhine and 16.9% in the upper Rhine. «*For the CFTC, the results were up to expectation. A significant proportion of salaried workers decided to be represented, and where necessary, were defended by the CFTC*», declared Jacky Ditingier, General Secretary of the organization, after the elections.

VISIT OF THE GENERAL SECRETARY OF THE MOROCCAN MINISTRY OF EMPLOYMENT TO THE WCL

As had already been announced, on 13th January, the CDT (Democratic Federation of Labour) and the UGTM (the General Workers' Union of Morocco) held joint discussions with the WCL, on the issue of the right to strike and the amendment to the labour law in Morocco. Two current topics that are of great importance to the work of the defense of human rights. Soon after (on 29th January) Willy Thys, the General Secretary of the WCL, received the General Secretary of the Ministry of Employment, Vocational Training, Social development and Solidarity of Morocco, M'Hamed Karmouni. On that occasion, they held discussions about the Moroccan situation. Willy Thys took the opportunity to inform Karmouni about the progress made by the WCL, the CDT and the UGTM with regard to the ILO in order to benefit from technical support from the latter and to evaluate, in the light of international conventions, the relevance of on-going reforms in the labour code and the right to strike.

CLAMT SEMINAR IN PERU

From 8th to 12th January, just before the CLAT Council, a seminar was held in Lima on gender, poverty and the use of child labour in Latin America. This seminar was organized by CLAMT (Latin American Working Women's Committee). The main objectives were to take an interest in the role of women within the workers' movement and to examine the poverty situation and child labour. In the 2002-2004 Plan of Action of the CLAMT, these themes, considered indispensable for the WCL, are clearly defined: «*National organizations must include in their policies, programmes and activities, the theme of real and*

active incorporation of women [...], support the need for decent and worthy work for women [...], improve the knowledge of ILO conventions and the labour law».

THE REGIONAL WCL ORGANIZATION FOR LATIN AMERICA (CLAT) ORGANISED ITS 27TH COUNCIL

The CLAT organised its 27th Latin American Council, in Lima, Peru, from 14th to 18th January. The General Secretary Willy Thys was there to represent the WCL. The Council called the next CLAT congress, which will take place in Brazil in November 2004. One of the main themes on the agenda of the Council was the resolution on the situation in Venezuela. The CLAT has launched an appeal so that the voice of the people of Venezuela can be heard, the Constitution respected and for a referendum to sustain the democratic political process.

DEMONSTRATION AGAINST GATS

On 9th February, a demonstration comprising associations and trade unions, including the CSC and the WCL, was organised in Brussels. More than 15,000 demonstrators walked the streets of the Belgian capital to say no to the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS). They condemned the threats against education, health care, culture, public transportation and also the distribution of water and energy. We must remember that the GATS is an international legal instrument within the WTO, by which, industrialized countries try to strictly apply the doctrine of free exchange to the tertiary sector, the social and economic life sector which comprises all the services.

THE WCL FACES AN UNEQUIVOCAL 'NO' TO THE WAR ON IRAQ

During the discussion about the possibility of the United States leading an offensive against Iraq, the WCL faced a categorical «no». In a press release issued on the occasion of the world demonstration day, the WCL declared it is against the use of violence to resolve conflict situations: «*All nations are supposed to respect United Nations resolutions, a war is only foreseeable within the framework of the UN*». All WCL affiliated organizations were thus called upon to participate in the worldwide demonstration against war. A call which was reaffirmed through solidarity messages and through the presence of trade union delegations to the different worldwide demonstrations of 15th February to say no to war and yes to peace and development.

TELE-FLASH

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REGIONAL TRADE ACTION MEETINGS IN GHANA AND PERU

In mid January, the WCL Trade Action team visited Lima, in Peru and Accra in Ghana, to attend meetings with the Presidents and all the trade federations of Latin America and Africa. The subject of the discussion centered mainly on the content and implementation of the «Programme for the strengthening of trade action» which will be introduced by the WCL. This programme emphasizes «capacity building» – or strengthening the operations and structures, the defense of members in the face of multinationals, as well as the strengthening of the position of workers employed in the informal economy. The kickoff will be in March on the occasion of the «train-the-trainer» programme. The WCL team noticed a very positive attitude towards the programme and has great confidence with regard to collaboration. For Jaap Wiene, Deputy General Secretary of the WCL, in charge of Trade Action, the travel to Ghana was also the occasion for wide exchange of ideas with Abraham Koomson, General Secretary of the GFL (Ghana Federation of Labour).

SBSI SEMINAR IN INDONESIA

From 31st January to 12th February, the SBSI (Indonesia) organized a seminar on Trade Action. Michel Bovy, President of the Trade Action Committee of the WCL and Vice-President of the WCL as well as Jaap Wiene, Deputy General Secretary of the WCL, discussed with all those present the painful circumstances in which the 14 Indonesian trade federations are constrained to work and have defined the strategy for the future. The SBSI has already obtained impressive results and an active approach is evident by the admission of new members. This potential will continue to increase due to the assistance of the WCL. The seminar was also the occasion to lay the first foundations for the admission of three new trade federations.

DEATH OF HENRI KRASUCKI

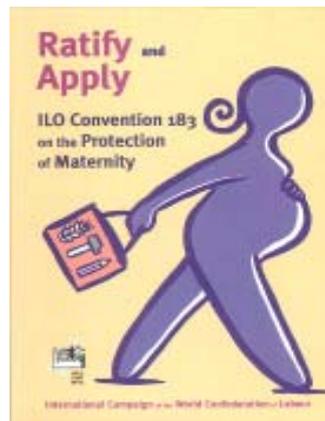
We are sorry to inform you about the death of Mr. Henri Krasucki on 24th January. Henri Krasucki was the son of Polish immigrants and a trade union member at heart. Communist militant, at the beginning, the latter undertook some assignments within the CGT (the General Federation of Labour – Paris) where he was General Secretary from 1982 to 1992. He spent a great part of his life in the trade union struggle as well as engaging in social dialogue; he advocated the dignity and future of French workers. Henri Krasucki died at the age of 78 years.

JACQUES JOURET LEAVES CSC TEXTILE

During the trade union day of the CSC Textile (a confederation of ACV/CSC – Belgium) on 31st January, Jacques Jouret, President of the textile confederation, passed the baton to Dirk Uyttenhove who is currently the General Secretary. Jacques started his career within the trade union in 1973 as the local secretary. After his debut as General

Secretary, Jacques quickly became the national secretary of the textile sector, to assume the presidency from 1994. For eight years, Jacques Jouret exhibited unlimited enthusiasm for the defense of workers and continued to improve the functioning of the confederation. «*The CSC Textile is, among others, at the origin of the implementation of a solid social support meant for workers who are victims of restructuring and insolvency. A luxury that is not superfluous in the sector where employment has not increased in these last years*», declared Jacques. There is no doubt that his investment and ambition have gone beyond the borders of our country. For years, Jacques Jouret was the Vice-President of the WCL. Furthermore, as President, the latter will remain the driving force of the International Federation of Textile and Clothing (IFTC), very active in Eastern Europe, Africa and in Latin America. He will continue to occupy this position until the IFTC Congress, which will take place next September.

THE WCL IS STRIVING FOR THE PROTECTION OF WOMEN AT WORK AND THEIR CHILDREN



Let us remember that the WCL still considers the ILO Convention No.183 on Maternity Protection as the social «basic document» for the protection of working women and their children. More than two years later, only four countries have ratified this convention (Slovakia, Romania, Italy and Bulgaria). The WCL department of

«Women» continues to appeal to all governments to take up their responsibilities and ratify Convention 183 very quickly.

Calendar of activities

- 22-27 February: BATU/ILO seminar: «ILO Declaration on Principles: a new instrument to promote fundamental rights», Jakarta – Indonesia;
- 28th February - 01st March: European section + European seminar: «Participation of workers in the social dialogue and institutionalization of the position of workers», Brussels – Belgium;
- 28th February - 01st March: ILO: Ministerial Conference on Social Dialogue and Labour Law Reforms for ILO Constituents in the European Union Accession Countries, Malta.

The last agenda items on our calendar are available on our web site at: <http://www.cmt-wcl.org>