

## **FRENCH PRESIDENT RECEIVES TRADE UNION LEADERS FROM THE G8 COUNTRIES**

On 25 April 2003, French President Jacques Chirac received trade union leaders from the G8 countries in preparation for the G8 Summit in Evian, on 1-2 June. Luc Cortebeek represented the WCL in his capacity as Vice President of TUAC (Trade Union Advisory Committee to the OECD). Jacques Chirac recalled the five main points on the agenda of the G8, namely, growth and employment, the spirit of responsibility all economic stakeholders must demonstrate, solidarity, international security and democracy. The trade union leaders could then present their points of view. Luc Cortebeek, for his part, affirmed during the meeting that the social and ecological aspects during discussions on international trade must benefit from the same attention as economic aspects. For this reason, it is important that international organisations like the International Labour Organisation are able to speak on the course taken by international trade, at the same level as the IMF, the World Bank and the World Trade Organisation (WTO). Hence the proposal formulated by the WCL to put in place a Security Council whose role would be to coordinate the work of international social and economic institutions. Jacques Chirac promised to defend these proposals in Evian. The G8 Summit is also of great importance for the preparation for the 5<sup>th</sup> WTO Ministerial Conference, which will be held in Cancun, Mexico, on 10-14 September 2003.

## **SERBIAN AND KOSOVO TRADE UNIONS RESUME DIALOGUE**

Jaap Wiene, Deputy Secretary General of the WCL, led a mission to the BSPK (Confederation of Kosovo Trade Unions) in Pristina. The leaders of the SSSS, the Serbian affiliate of the WCL, accompanied him. The aim was to renew the dialogue after the terrible war situation the region went through. Ali Dragusha (Vice President of the BSPK) and Zeqir Shkodra (Chief of trade action service) warmly welcomed the delegation. The participants in the meeting discussed the situation. Tripartite consultations have recently been made possible within the socio-economic committee, in which five seats are reserved for trade union representatives. The BSPK has invited the SSSS to occupy one of these seats. This will enable our member organisation to play a role in the needed reconciliation within the region. In fact, although the situation remains difficult, both organisations

attach great importance to the resumption of the dialogue in order to contribute to the reconstruction of the region.

## **PREPARATION OF THE 91<sup>st</sup> SESSION OF THE INTERNATIONAL LABOUR CONFERENCE OF THE ILO IS AT ITS HEIGHT**

The preparation of the 91<sup>st</sup> International Labour Conference, which the ILO organises in Geneva on 3-19 June, is at its height. Below is the list of themes the Conference will deal with:

- Human resources development and training;
- Scope of the employment relationship;
- ILO standard-related activities in the area of occupational safety and health;
- Improved security of seafarers' identification.

To these 4 Committees is added the Standards Committee, which will deal with cases of serious International Labour Conventions violation and dwell on Convention 95 (protection of wages).

## **«TIME FOR EQUALITY AT WORK»: ILO GLOBAL REPORT 2003**

On 12 May 2003, the ILO launched the 4<sup>th</sup> follow-up Global report on the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work: «Time for Equality at Work». This year's report deals with discrimination in employment and examines the shapes it takes. It also offers an update of the political and practical responses for mobilising further support for the elimination of this plague, which persists in increasingly subtle forms. The WCL presented this report on Monday 19 May to the participants at the international seminar on gender, a joint initiative of the International Institute for Workers' Education (IIWE) and the WCL Women and Work Department.

## **ACTION AGAINST OPPRESSION AGAINST TRADE UNIONISTS IN CUBA**

Cuba is among the countries that have approved most of the ILO conventions. Unfortunately, daily practices in this country are far from being in keeping with the law. The trade union *Consejo Unitario de Trabajadores Cubanos* (CUTC), affiliated to the WCL and the CLAT, is yet to benefit from any legal recognition. Furthermore, in mid March, more than 70 people were arrested, among them CUTC Secretary General Pedro Pablo Alvarez and two other members of this trade union; they were condemned to prison sentences of 25, 20 and 15 years respectively. The authorities also seized all the documents from the 'Emilio Máspero' library of the CUTC. The WCL strongly disagrees with this intolerable situation

### **TELE-FLASH**

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

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and is appealing for the release of the prisoners. It is imperative that human rights and trade union rights are respected in Cuba and that the CUTC is able to function in total freedom. This is why the Human Rights and International Labour Standards Department has filed a complaint with the ILO and a campaign is being organised to mobilise all WCL organisations. In this regard, the international department of the CNV (Christian Trade Union Confederation of the Netherlands) organised on 17 April a demonstration in front of the Cuban Embassy in The Hague. Meanwhile, the CNV is inviting Dutch companies to dialogue on the social responsibility of companies investing in Cuba. The WCL hereby thanks all the organisations for the solidarity with their Cuban colleagues they have demonstrated.

***The Cuba dossier is accessible via the opening page of our Internet site at the address: [www.cmt-wcl.org](http://www.cmt-wcl.org)***

#### **WCL PARTICIPATED IN SEMINAR OF THE EUROPEAN GROUP OF WORKERS' PASTORAL**

On 25-26 April 2003, Isabelle Hoferlin, head of the WCL Human Rights and International Labour Standards Department, participated in a seminar of the European Group of Workers' Pastoral (GEPO) in the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg. Based on decisions taken during the latest WCL Congress, in Bucharest, Isabelle Hoferlin presented the WCL's point of view on neo-liberalism and its responses to it. She also asked participants to show solidarity with the oppressed Cuban trade unionists and to support the WCL's solidarity campaign. She also took part in a workshop on relations between the GEPO and trade unions.

#### **A CSC-CONGO DELEGATION PAYS A VISIT TO THE WCL**

On 6 May 2003, the WCL secretariat in Brussels received a five strong delegation of the CSC-Congo. This visit to Belgium was part of a working meeting with Eduardo Estévez and Isabelle Hoferlin, Deputy Secretary General and head of the Human Rights and International Labour Standards Department



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respectively. After the presentation of the WCL's "NORM" programme, the participants discussed the possibilities of strengthening activities relating to the labour standards within the CSC-Congo and the technical assistance the WCL could provide in this regard. Other meetings will be necessary to optimise the harmonisation between the standards programme and the actions.

#### **FOURTH WORLD SOCIAL FORUM IN MUMBAI, INDIA**

It is decided this time, definitely. The next World Social Forum (WSF), the fourth edition, will take place in India, in Mumbai (formerly Bombay), on 16-24 January 2004. The International Council, of which the World Confederation of Labour has been an integral part since the first edition, will meet on 23-26 June in Miami to prepare for this new meeting of alternative globalists' movement. The choice of venue is obviously not insignificant. It is the result of a consultation among members of the Council and «*the need to strengthen the WSF process and the peace movements in the United States*». According to the organisers of the WSF, the meeting will make it possible to achieve that a whole series of North American organisations that play an important role in the fight against neo-liberal globalisation are more strongly linked to, and integrated into, the WSF process. Apart from that, these organisations constitute an important element in the dissemination of the Forum's ideas and proposals in the United States. Let us add that the Belgian Social Forum was held in Brussels on 10 May 2003 and that the WCL was well represented.

#### **SBSI: CONGRESS AND SEMINARS**

The Congress of the SBSI – the Indonesian WCL affiliate whose President, Muchtar Pakpahan, is the WCL Vice President for Asia – was held in Jakarta from 25 April 'till 1 May. After the official opening ceremony, WCL Secretary General Willy Thys presented an analysis of the socio-economic situation worldwide. He saluted very particularly Muchtar Pakpahan, who has chosen to commit himself to the political field (to the social democratic Labour Party). To replace him, the Congress elected Rekson Silaban President. Brother Silaban will strengthen the position of the SBSI nationwide, and worldwide within the WCL. All our best wishes go to him.

#### **The SBSI supports workers in the informal sector**

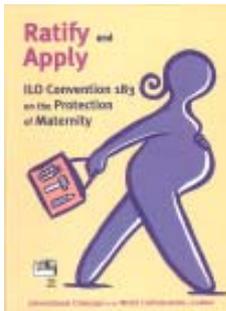
On the occasion of the SBSI Congress, the leaders of SBSI-KUI held a seminar on social dialogue to support workers in the informal sector. The KUI deals with the building sector and the informal economy. Given the constantly growing number of informal workers, the SBSI continues to seek creative solutions in order to offer them dignified work and trade union protection. Thus, participants in the seminar dwelt on the alternative methods of payment of dues, education and training, and the creation of a structured network in order to strengthen the position of the informal workers. Rallying people for improvement brings the SBSI trade union close to the people.

### **What about women?**

The female members of Indonesian trade unions also met on the occasion of the SBSI Congress. During the seminar on 25-26 April, 32 participants made a resolution to increase the representation of women within the SBSI and to guarantee the finances necessary for funding campaigns on gender equality. Members of the Congress then approved this resolution.

### **EUROPEAN WOMEN'S SEMINAR: «GENDER AND COLLECTIVE BARGAINING»**

On 1-6 April, the WCL organised in Madrid (Spain) a seminar on «Gender and Collective Bargaining» – as a follow-up to the Plan of Action formulated during the women's seminar that was held prior to the WCL congress in Bucharest (2001). All heads of «Gender/Equal Opportunities» active within WCL member organisations were invited to this meeting. The WCL Women and Work Department and the political leaders and co-ordinators in charge of women's issues in Europe undertook the preparation, organisation and follow-up of this seminar. Its main aim was to improve the understanding of the gender issue and of formulate a concrete approach in the field. In fact, it is of capital importance that trade union leaders learn to handle the concepts of equality and that this is reflected in their policies and action. During the seminar, special attention was paid to the application of gender in the collective bargaining process. It was not only an information seminar, but also a joint reflection on trade union practices in the area of collective bargaining and the integration of the gender perspective. Participants received, on this occasion, teaching materials to use in disseminating information on gender in trade unionists' groups, and by so doing, to strengthen the «gender» network. The seminar was a great success. Participants highly appreciated the methodology. In fact, it was not a seminar at which the classical methods of passive participation were used, but rather one at which the participants actively shared their experiences to come up with proposals for concrete actions.



The WCL Women and Work Department continues to work for the ratification of ILO Convention 183, namely, the fundamental instrument aimed at protecting pregnant workers and their children.

### **THOMAS LUKUSA HAS LEFT US**

We regret to announce the death of our colleague at the WCL, Thomas Lukusa Tshiananga, on 4 May 2003. Thomas was National Secretary of the confederation CSC-Congo and in this capacity in charge of the mineral exploitation, metal works and Press & Books departments. He participated in several trade union missions to Africa and Europe. Thomas Lukusa had been a trade unionist in spirit since 1962 and dedicated his life to the protection of the workers' rights. We express our most sincere condolences to his family, friends and colleagues at the CSC-Congo.

### **THE WCL DEPLORES THE ASSASSINATION OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE CFTUI IN INDIA**

It is with profound sadness that the WCL learnt of the death of the President of our Indian affiliate, the Confederation of Free Trade Unions of India (CFTUI), member of the BATU, the WCL's regional branch in Asia. Ashok Kumar Trivedi was assassinated on 15 May 2003 while leaving a bank in Parna (in the north of India), from which he had just withdrawn the money required for the organisation of his Congress. The WCL fully associates itself with the CFTUI and the BATU, and strongly condemns this act of extreme violence. The CFTUI Congress will assemble as scheduled on 20 May, but only for one day; a day dedicated to our colleague and friend Trivedi. The WCL General Secretary will attend the Congress.

### **Schedule of activities**

- 26-29 May: 10<sup>th</sup> Congress of the ETUC, Prague – Czech Republic
- 3-19 June: 91<sup>st</sup> International Labour Conference of the ILO, Geneva – Switzerland
- 4-7 June: CSD/Quebec Congress (Confederation of Democratic Trade Unions), Quebec – Canada;
- 4-7 June: Mission to Bulgaria, Sofia – Bulgaria;
- 20-22 June: WCL: European Seminar: «Trade union services for European organisations. Strengthening the position of trade unions in society and in the social dialogue».

***The latest update on our schedule of activities is available on our Internet site at the address:  
[www.cmt-wcl.org](http://www.cmt-wcl.org)***