

EUROPEAN SEMINAR: FROM QUALITY SERVICE TO MEMBERS TOWARDS A STRENGTHENED SOCIAL POSITION

From 20 to 22 June, with the assistance of EZA (European Centre for Workers), the WCL organised a seminar in Budapest (Hungary) having as themes: «Services offered by the European Trade Unions» and «Strengthening the Position of Trade Unions in the Social Dialogue and Society». 25 representatives from 14 countries were present. Imre Palkovics, President of the National Federation of Workers' Councils (NFWC) of Hungary, first welcomed them. Jaap Wiene participated in the seminar as the WCL Deputy General Secretary. He emphasized the importance of having strong unions on account of the expansion of the European Union. During a workshop, the participants studied the services offered by the European unions and drew up a list of aspects that could be improved. The participants also analysed the potential effect of these improvements on the recruitment and development of loyalty of members. The conclusions are to lead to a strategy resulting in the improvement of services offered by the EU trade unions.

TELE-FLASH

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IWEI / WCL SEMINAR: SOCIAL DIALOGUE IN THE GLOBAL ECONOMY

As part of the socio-economic programme, «Functioning of the trade union and honest development through social dialogue in the global economy», the IWEI (International Workers' Education Institute) organised in collaboration with the WCL a training seminar in Ter Nood, Belgium, from 23 June to 4 July inclusive. This international meeting brought together about fifteen union representatives. Among them, the regional coordinators (CLAT, DOAWTU and BATU) of the socio-economic programme, as well as Ramón Vivanco Mugarra, international coordinator and permanent representative of the WCL in Geneva. For two weeks, the points relating to «international coordination» and «management of the socio-economic programme» were examined in detail.

START OF CAMPAIGN FOR STRENGTHENING TRADE ACTION IN ASIA

The presidents and secretaries of 8 WCL trade federations in Asia, comprising all sectors, met in Manila (Philippines) on 4 and 5 July with a view to launching the programme for strengthening Trade Action on this continent. By way

of introduction, Jaap Wiene (WCL Deputy General Secretary) drew up the list of the programme's aims and methods used. On this subject, the participants immediately reached a consensus. Next, the WCL coordinators explained how important the themes of the project were. A programme of the different training sessions was also established. The list of criteria for participation was examined and the participants selected. At the end of the summer season, the launch of the first phase will take place in the two Asian sub-regions – ANASE and ASACR. In the spring of 2004, the Capacity Building activities, until then regional, will be organised at international level. Training seminars will be held in eight different countries (Indonesia, the Philippines, Thailand, Malaysia, India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka). Via the Trade Action projects, the WCL also intends to better boost solidarity in Asia. Industrialization though at an advanced stage is actually in flagrant contrast with the working conditions of many workers of the informal economy.

WOMEN'S SEMINAR IN PARAGUAY FOR COUNTRIES OF THE SOUTHERN CONE

From 16 to 18 June, a summit meeting was organised for the unions and social organisations of the South Cone region in Asunción, Paraguay. A «Women's Seminar» was also organised within this framework. Gloria Aravena Araya, the CLAT and WCL official responsible for 'Women & Labour' issues in this region, delivered some conclusions. «*In order to demand a strong identity within the changing global economy of the Southern Cone, the female trade unionists must be able to take decisions and should no longer be relegated to the rank of 'spectators'. The social and human aspects of development must have priority, not the economic motives linked to the lure of gain. For the realization of these objectives, training is of the greatest importance. In fact, a greater awareness is dependent on training. This is equally true in the case of child labour. With a view to the ratification of the ILO Conventions 138 and 182, the female trade unionists of the Southern Cone collaborate closely with the 'National Commissions for the Eradication of Child Labour'. The neo-liberal trade system is also very hard on immigrant workers. Yet, they ought to benefit from the same rights as all the other workers. The observance of the ILO Conventions and international Human Rights must make it possible to overcome discrimination,*

to strengthen the laws and, in so doing, lead to a strong social security and equitable employment».

THE WCL «STANDARDS» DEPARTMENT CONTINUES TO DENOUNCE THE INTOLERABLE SITUATIONS IN THE WORLD

During the last Labour Conference in Geneva, the 'Standards' Commission undertook a study of 25 cases. Since then, the department has addressed numerous cases of non-observance of ILO conventions. Here is a list of the most recent denunciations:

Guatemala: the guilty remain unpunished..

In January, the CGTG – the organisation affiliated to the WCL in Guatemala – as well as the CLADEHLT informed us that the head of the enterprise 'Finca el Arco' had ordered the assassination of the trade unionist Marcos Alvarez Tzoc. We further learnt that 27 workers had been illegally dismissed. These facts are still riddled with impunity. That is the reason why the WCL has asked for the protection of 'Finca el Arco' workers. Unfortunately, in early June, several persons were again threatened and shot at.

On 8 June, Rigoberto Dueñas, deputy general secretary of the CGTG, was arrested after being wrongly accused of swindling the Guatemalan Social Security Institute.

- Three days later, a colleague in the office of the Human Rights prosecutor was assassinated.
- Finally, in late June, the journalist José Rubén Zamorra and his family were the victims of a murder attempt... The WCL demands that justice be done.

Paraguay: 40 peasant families expelled

Over 40 peasant families from the region of Itakyry (Alto Paraná) were violently expelled on 30 June 2003. The police were said to have acted on the orders of a Brazilian from who is a land purchaser. 5 persons were arrested, others were beaten and fields destroyed. Last June, the Commission for the Application of ILO Standards had urged the Paraguayan government to apply Convention 169 (aimed at the protection of tribes and indigenous people). The WCL has sent a letter to the President, asking him to respect the rights of these peasants.

Colombia: Workers and unionists in danger

- Many Colombian public enterprises are undergoing restructuring. In particular, the army occupies Telecom, and tens of workers and union leaders have been dismissed.
- Moreover, the personal bodyguards of union leaders who are threatened like Julio Roberto Gómez (general secretary of the CGTD) and Cérvalo Bautista (responsible for Human Rights at the CGTD) have been replaced without consulting them. Having refused this change, the two unionists are today without protection.
- On 3 July 2003, Manuel Hoyos Montiel, president of a CGTD regional department in «*El Atlántico*», was the victim of a murder attempt. The WCL has expressed its solidarity with the CGTD and has demanded that the Colombian government respect the ILO conventions.

Mauritius: legislation modified to the detriment of workers

The Mauritius government has just modified the Law on Labour Relations. This amendment means danger for the rights of workers. For this reason, the WCL demands that the law be re-evaluated in consultation with the unions, and particularly with the National Trade Unions Confederation of Mauritius (NTUC), the member organization of the WCL in Mauritius. This measure is being undertaken within the context of threats to the freedom of association. Thus, Toolsyraj Benydin, president of the NTUC though appointed delegate of workers of Mauritius, was unable to participate in the 91st International Labour Conference in Geneva. The WCL has sent a letter on this subject to Juan Somavia.

Republic of Guinea: social peace disturbed at the CBK

The CNTG – National Confederation of Guinea Workers, a member of the WCL – informed us that the «Compagnie des Bauxites de Kindia» (CBK) had dismissed several workers, including some leaders of the CNTG. The «Standards» department of the WCL has sent a letter on this matter to the Minister of Employment so that social peace can be restored in the enterprise, dialogue with the workers resumed and that the workers dismissed can get back their jobs.

Indonesia: mass dismissals

On 7 July, the WCL made a complaint to the Indonesian Ministry of Public Enterprises to protest against the illegal dismissals of 700 workers employed by «*Boma Bisma Indra Company*». Among them are also 210 members of the F-KUI SBSI, a trade federation affiliated to the WCL. The WCL is demanding that the workers be reinstated as soon as possible, and that Conventions 87, 98 and 122 of the ILO be respected (convention on the freedom of association and protection of trade union rights / the right to organise and to collective bargaining / the employment policy).

Philippines: Bayer infringes on the freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining

A thick file transmitted by the *Employees Union of Bayer Philippines* (affiliated to the *Federation of Free Workers*) has just revealed the disloyal practices being applied by the Bayer pharmaceutical company in the Philippines. In 1988 the EUBP, a union linked to the FFW within the company, was recognised. The first ten years of the functioning of the union took place in a climate of social peace. But from 1998, the company began to deliberately exert negative pressure on the workers, which led some to become afraid and to want to withdraw from the union. Meanwhile, the company is reported to have favoured the emergence of another organisation whose legitimacy is contested by the EUBP. Worse still, it is reported to have put serious obstacles in the way of negotiations with the EUBP for the new collective

agreement. The WCL, in support of its affiliate in the Philippines, has launched a campaign with a view to guaranteeing the full respect for Conventions 87 and 98.

THE COMMITTEE FOR THE FREEDOM OF ASSOCIATION DEALS WITH SEVERAL COMPLAINTS LODGED BY WCL ORGANISATIONS

The Committee for the Freedom of Association met in June 2003 to study 90 cases of violation of Conventions 87 and 98 transmitted by workers' organisations.

The Committee first expressed its concern about the fact that it had to examine certain cases without response from governments or on the basis of incomplete information, which delays the adoption of final conclusions.

- In Morocco (n° 2243): the CDT complained of acts of antiunion discrimination by the Central Fizzy Drinks Company (under the responsibility of Coca Cola);

- In Chili (n° 2215): the CLAT denounced the fact that the union leader Pedro Pablo Castillo Castillo had been the victim of an antiunion dismissal;

- In Costa Rica (n° 2231): A case involving the threat of dismissal of workers after the formation of a union within the enterprise Propokodusa Ltd. was submitted by CLAT;

- Given several cases of violation of the freedom of association and of collective bargaining in Colombia (n° 1787, 2068 and others), the Committee did not fail to reiterate its deep preoccupation.

The Committee has also acknowledged receipt of the WCL complaint about the violation of freedom of association in Cuba following the arrest of three leaders of the CUTC.

All this information is available on the ILO site: www.ilo.org

Schedule of activities

- 28 July – 05 August: 55th session of the Sub-Commission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights, Geneva – Switzerland;
- 23-28 August: International Seminar of the CNV-Kunstenbond, Netherlands;
- 25-29 August: Seminar and Congress of the FPTICB (regional organisation of the World Federation of Construction and Wood Organisations -FMCB), Lome – Togo;
- 30 August - 4 September: WVBH seminar, Democratic Republic of Congo.
- 01-05 September: CSC Congress Congo, Kinshasa – Democratic Republic of Congo;
- 01-12 September: International IWEI/WCL Seminar on «Social dialogue for avoiding conflicts», Lome – Togo;
- 10-14 September: 5th Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organisation (WTO), Cancún – Mexico;
- 13-19 September: International IWEI/WCL Seminar on «Social dialogue for avoiding conflicts», Accra – Ghana;
- 15-19 September: DOAWTU Congress, Accra – Ghana;
- 25-27 September: 33rd World Congress of the International Federation of Textiles –Clothing (IFTC), Doorn – Netherlands;
- 10-12 October: 90th anniversary of the NAPFE, Chattanooga – United States;
- 19-25 October: WCL Confederal Board, Jakarta – Indonesia.

The schedule is regularly updated on our site: www.cmt-wcl.org