

**WORKERS AT THE CENTRE OF  
THE EU – LATIN AMERICA AND  
CARIBBEAN TRADE UNION SUMMIT**



The 2nd Trade Union Summit between the European Union and Latin America and the Caribbean was held in Mexico on 16 April last. The first edition had taken place in Madrid. «A Summit of this scope allows us to remind that the action unity of the trade union movement is an essential factor of protection of the workers worldwide», declared Willy Thys, Secretary General of WCL, during the opening of the debates. Indeed, the workers are victims of abuses and their rights are far from being respected everywhere in the world, particularly in Europe and in the Latin American continent, where the disparities between rich and poor are particularly sizeable. According to WCL, the dialogue between Europe and Latin America and the Caribbean is essential for the rapprochement between both large geopolitical spaces, especially in the present circumstances of globalisation, which can be hopeful if it is not seen from the neo-liberal angle. This dialogue can and must lead to the projection of a genuine political, economic, social and cultural dimension, in other words to relations that go well beyond a concept based only on free trade, in which each social consideration is dangerously absent.

**CARLOS CUSTER AMBASSADOR  
OF ARGENTINA AT THE VATICAN**

We are pleased with the news that Carlos Custer has been appointed Ambassador of Argentina at the Vatican. Carlos was

Secretary General of the WCL from 1989 until 1996. He was also very active in Argentina, where he was the Director of the Association for Governmental Workers (ATE) and a member of the International Council of the *Central de Trabajadores Argentinos* – CTA. We are sure that he will take up this new challenge with his customary gusto, making all-out efforts to promote values such as equality and respect for the workers.

**BELARUS: TRADE UNION  
MOVEMENT REMAINS  
CONCERNED ABOUT THE  
SITUATION OF GSP**

Last January, the World Confederation of Labour (WCL), the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) and the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) learned much to their satisfaction that the European Commission had accepted their proposal. The Committee would indeed institute an inquiry into the violations of the core labour standards in Belarus, in line with the provisions of the Generalised System of Preferences. Such violations are the order of the day in Belarus. For several years already, the government has been conducting a real crusade against the trade unions, imprisoning their leaders and threatening and dismissing unionised workers. The European Commission started the inquiry officially early in February. In the course of April, the trade union movement (ETUC – WCL – ICFTU) has informed the Commission of its interest in the inquiry, insisting on being contacted as it is very familiar with the issues.

**REFORM OF THE INTERNATIONAL  
INSTITUTIONS MAKES ANOTHER  
WORLD POSSIBLE**

This is what confirmed Ubuntu, the world forum of the civil society, which has launched a campaign on this subject. The World Confederation of Labour has lent its full support to this campaign. In its Declaration of London, Ubuntu calls on all the citizens of the world, all the peoples and particularly the leaders of these peoples to do their utmost to start a process of

**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  
Phone: 02/285.47.00  
Fax: 02/230.87.22  
E-mail:  
info@cmt-wcl.org  
Internet:  
www.cmt-wcl.org



through reform of the international institutions. That would make it possible to create a framework for equitable and democratic governance. «The globalisation has caused a growing entanglement of the problems worldwide. The mar-

kets are growing increasingly global, but the power of the political institutions necessary for a equitable, efficient and democratic functioning is decreasing day after day», so it appears from the Declaration. «(...) the policy of the international financial institutions, which is centred on the market, is taking more and more often the upper hand over a policy that pursues sustainable human development as provided for in the millennium goals». The Declaration contains a large number of concrete proposals. Thus, for instance, the citizens should be directly represented in the international institutions, which should be better able to prevent conflicts by developing a collective system that provides for a gradual demilitarisation and the use of legal and arbitration mechanisms. It is also proposed transforming the present Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) into a UN Council for Economic, Social and Environmental Security. A proposal that was approved of during the WCL Congress in Bucharest and that has met with a lot of support from various sectors.

More information on this campaign is available on: [www.reformcampaign.net](http://www.reformcampaign.net)

### **FOLLOW-UP ON THE ILO DECLARATION ON FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES AND RIGHTS AT WORK**

In the context of the follow-up on the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at work, the ILO member states have been requested to draw up an annual report on the non-ratified basic conventions. ILO will make a compilation of these reports. The latest annual report, which appeared last March, contains information to the effect that since 2000, the year in which the Declaration was drawn up, some progress has been made, but poverty and income inequality has kept growing. Moreover, new forms of discrimination have cropped up. Also the number of free trade zones, trafficking in human beings and domestic and foreign migration have still been on the increase. The report calls on



*Free Trade Zone in Honduras.*

the national and international workers' organisations to cooperate more actively on this procedure.

More information is available on: [www.ilo.org/declaration](http://www.ilo.org/declaration)

#### ***Schedule of activities***

- 01-04 May: GEFONT: Congress, Kathmandu – Nepal;
- 01 May: CNV Bedrijvenbond: Congress, Utrecht – the Netherlands;
- 03 May: WFIW: Executive Committee, Brussels – Belgium;
- 10-12 May: World Congress of Child Workers, Florence – Italy;
- 11-13 May: TUAC: 112th plenary session and related meetings of OECD, Paris – France;
- 14-22 May: WFBW: seminar and Congress – Bulgaria;
- 17-20 May: CONSAWU: Congress, Johannesburg – South Africa;
- 21-23 May: European seminar on «trade unions and workers in the informal economy», Sofia – Bulgaria;
- 01-17 June: 92nd International Labour Conference, Geneva – Switzerland.

**Please consult our annual schedule on: [www.cmt-wcl.org](http://www.cmt-wcl.org)**



## GLOBAL «INFORMAL ECONOMY» NETWORK OF WCL



The global «informal economy» network of WCL is now a fact. One hundred trade union leaders in all, trained in six courses, will henceforth inform WCL at fixed points of time on projects and initiative in favour of the informal economy workers in their respective countries. The monthly information letter of WCL, «Infor-Mail» will keep all the links of the network informed of these local initiatives.

There is no doubt that the number of informal economy workers also keeps growing in Europe.

## WFAFW WANTS TO CONSOLIDATE EUROPEAN MEMBERS

As agreed at the latest Congress of WFAFW (2003), the European member organisations have decided to organise a European seminar in Bucharest (Romania), in 2004. Participants from Spain, France, Italy, Bulgaria, Lithuania, Serbia, Albania and Romania will discuss the future European activities of WFAFW. Given the forthcoming enlargement of the European Union, the EU's agricultural policy will be an important item on the agenda during the debates. The matter of the impact of the globalisation and the methods of the multinationals in Europe will also be discussed on this occasion. WFAFW clearly needs to be consolidated at the level of its European affiliates. That is why new cooperation agreements have been negotiated and an unprecedented European plan of action has been developed. The results of the seminar in Romania will be presented and assessed at the Executive Committee meeting next June (Caracas, Venezuela).

## SEMINAR ON ENLARGEMENT OF SOCIAL DIALOGUE IN LITHUANIA

The Lithuanian Transport Federation (LTF), affiliated to FIOST, and ACV-CSC (Belgium) recently have conducted a seminar in Palanga. The various working groups debated on safety and health at work and on the social aspects of occupational life. The participants agreed on the necessity of a social

dialogue at all levels, particularly within the company structures. It is of paramount importance that the management informs the staff correctly and completely on the labour code, the evolution of the legislation and the sector-related European directives. According to LTF, protective measures against the abusive dismissal of trade union delegates must be taken up in the labour code. Though they had given to understand at the start of the seminar that they were confronted with huge problems in the field, the participants were pleased with the excellent atmosphere and the content of the seminar. Some participants called on the trade union stakeholders in the field to have more intensive consultations.

## KICK-OFF OF THE «PRESS AND PUBLICITY» TRAINING PROGRAMME DRAWING NEAR

The «press and publicity» training programme will be kicked off before long. This programme is an integral part of the Verba Capacity Building project of WCL Trade Action. Between July and September 2004, around 105 trade union leaders from Africa, Latin America and Asia will participate in it. Most of them have already been selected. They were recruited in the trade federations



of the various continents and have already acquired some experience with press and publicity matters. The programme includes a six-week training period via the Internet (e-learning), followed by a one-week course by a trainer of RNTC (training centre of *Nederlandse Wereldomroep*). Journalistic aptitudes (interview), drawing up of press statements, communication with the rank and file are some of the subject matters. After the training the participants will benefit during one year from assistance and feedback via the Internet. They will be able to help their colleagues who participated in the capacity building, informal economy and multinationals programmes to conceive and implement a communications policy. Their knowledge of communication will also serve to strengthen their respective federations, of course.

