

**NEW INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATION
MAIN ITEM ON AGENDA OF DOAWTU
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

Last 16-18 February, Lomé hosted the Executive Committee meeting of DOAWTU, the African regional organisation of WCL. Besides the representatives of DOAWTU, WCL, CNV and ACV-CSC took part in the debates. The agenda included the activities and financial reports over 2004, the plan of action for 2005 and the international relations. This last item gave rise to a thorough debate on the new international organisation. The Confederal Board of WCL indeed decided to officially mandate the Secretariat to negotiate with the other democratic international trade union, the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions – ICFTU –, about the creation of a new international trade union organisation that will also be open to democratic and independent organisations affiliated neither to WCL nor to ICFTU. DOAWTU in turn mandated its Secretariat to discuss this matter with ORAF/ICFTU and OATUU. The venue has not been decided yet. We are convinced, however, that this debate will be productive for the future of the workers and women workers.

**PAN-AFRICAN COMMITTEE FOR TRADE
ACTION OF DOAWTU APPROVES INITIATIVE
TO CREATE A NEW INTERNATIONAL TRADE
UNION ORGANISATION**

The Pan-African Committee for Trade Action held in annual session on 7-11 February 2005 at the head office of DOAWTU in Lomé (Togo), in the margin of the Executive Committee of DOAWTU. Besides by the eight secretaries general of the pan-African trade federations, this very important session was also attended by the Secretary General of DOAWTU, Mr Adrien Akouete, the Deputy Secretary General of WCL in charge of Trade Action, Mr Jaap Wiene, and the President of the World Federation of Clerical Workers, Mr Roel Rotshuizen. The Committee evaluated and adopted the reports on the implementation of the plan of action for 2004, assessed the activities in the context of the WCL's trade action programme in Africa and planned the activities in 2005. The Committee approved the initiative to create a new international trade union organisation and mandated all the pan-African trade federations to enter upon formal discussions with their counterparts of the ICFTU/ORAF in Africa. With a view to the continuity of the process of strengthening Trade Action through various programmes, the Committee recommended DOAWTU to take into account, in its debates, the current structures, which guarantee an interactive, productive and efficient dynamics

between Trade Action and the inter-trade action. The matter of the dues was discussed with a



view to implementing the decisions of the Casablanca Confederal Board of WCL. Considering the importance of the debates and decisions, this session was by and large enriching and positive.

**JOHN BENCINI
IS THE NEW PRESIDENT OF CMTU**

After the sudden death of Alfred Buhagiar, CMTU – Confederation of Malta Trade Unions, our affiliate in Malta – organised on 23 February an extraordinary National Congress to elect its new President. John Bencini was elected unanimously. Being a teacher by profession, he has also been, since 1996, President of MUT – Malta Union of Teachers. After having taken his degree for English and Philosophy at the University of Springhill, Alabama, he took up several teaching assignments while being actively involved in the trade union movement. He has sat for many years on the boards of MUT and CMTU, which he has also represented at the national and international levels. He left education at the moment he became full-time President of MUT. We wish him good luck in his new office.

**ILO REINFORCES ITS SOCIAL AGENDA IN
FAVOUR OF THE EUROPEAN AND
CENTRAL ASIAN COUNTRIES**

The 7th European Regional Conference of ILO was held in Budapest on 14-18 February. It resulted in the signing of a tripartite agreement by the representatives of the fifty members states in the region, who pledge "to pursue, through dialogue and cooperation, a common future of democracy, prosperity and social justice". Juan Somavia, Director General of ILO, explained that we were witnessing a strengthening of the ILO's role in the promotion of social dialogue,

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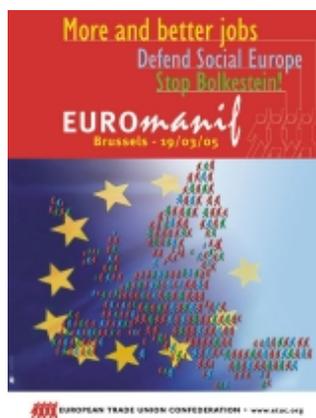
Juan Somavia, Director General of ILO

governance and social integration at the service of the common future of Europe and Central Asia. Anyway, the promotion of the social dialogue cannot but strengthen the development of decent work. Similarly the Conference took the view that the report of the World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalisation is "a useful commitment to dialogue at the national, regional and international levels, enabling the promotion of decent work as a

global aim". A strong delegation of affiliates and of representatives of the international secretariat of WCL was present in Budapest. One of the delegation members, Viviane Goergen of the LCGB from Luxemburg, stated the following: "This Regional Conference has drawn our attention to the problems facing the trade unions and the workers: mass youth unemployment, lack of qualifications and training, lack of job quality and security, the ageing of the workers and their decent retirement." The trade union leader added that a lot remained to be done in the gender matter, despite a significant progress. At the end of its proceedings the Conference called on the countries that had not yet done so to ratify the eight basic conventions of ILO.

For further details: www.ilo.org

DEMONSTRATION OF EUROPEAN TRADE UNIONS ON 19 MARCH IN BRUSSELS



ETUC – European Trade Union Confederation – has called a "Euro-demonstration" on 19 March next in Brussels. The march, organised in prospect of the Spring Summit scheduled for 22-23 March, should bring together more than 50,000 trade unionists and other activists, who will walk the streets of Brussels in defence of employment and the social rights. They will also declare themselves against the Bolkestein Directive on

Services in the Internal Market. The European leaders are indeed deciding on the future course of the Lisbon strategy, a ten-year programme to vitalise the European economic growth and competitiveness, associated with social and environmental aims. The message of the demonstrators will be clear: employment must be a priority in the future policies of the European Union. The European trade union movement calls for: *more jobs and better jobs; quality jobs and services; no to the Bolkestein Directive* (the draft of the Directive rests on two principles: suppression of authorisations and requirements deemed useless, and country of origin principle); *promote the basic social rights to strengthen the social Europe*. The World Confederation of Labour lends its full support to this demonstration and calls on all its members to mobilise in defence of employment and the social rights!

For further details: www.etuc.org

DENUNCIATIONS

Arrest and searching of trade union offices in Nepal

The World Confederation of Labour has launched a campaign on two alarming cases that occurred recently in Nepal, jeopardising the democratic process. On 18 February last at around 10 am, the Nepalese trade union GEFONT received a visit from the police. The staff of the trade unions are said to have been threatened and terrorised. Then they were told to leave the office. The key was confiscated and returned the same evening at around 6 pm. There is reason to suspect that documents were searched. Other most alarming case: WCL has been informed that Gauri Pradhan, member of the Global March against Child Labour, was arrested on 21 February last. Fortunately he has already been released under international pressure. He was arrested at the immigration desk at the airport upon his return from a mission related to the children's rights. He was detained at the general police headquarters. The World Confederation of Labour strongly condemns these two attacks on the civil and political rights. In a message to the authorities of the country, WCL Secretary General Willy Thys has demanded all-out efforts to clarify these facts. He also insisted on respect for the human rights and democratic guaranties in Nepal.

Labour Code reform in Romania

The Romanian Labour Code was established after two years of discussions with the social partners. The Romanian government has now decided to revise this Code and to start its reform. This decision follows on a letter of intent signed with the International Monetary Fund at the end of 2004. Cartel Alfa and CSDR – Confederation of Democratic Trade Unions of Romania, the two Romanian affiliates of WCL – have mobilised immediately to denounce this attempt at decline on the part of the authorities of the country. They demanded the unconditional preservation of the present Code. These facts were denounced during the 7th Regional Conference of ILO, in Budapest.

Schedule of activities

March 2005

- 10: TUAC – G8 Conference on employment (London);
- 10: Visit to the African Development Bank, ADB (Tunis);
- 14-18: UNCTAD – Commission on Trade in Goods, Services and Comm. (Geneva);
- 15: FIOST – Daily Management Board (Brussels);
- 15-16: ETUC – Executive Committee (Brussels);
- 16-19: BATU – Pre-Congress Conference (Bangkok);
- 17: WCL – European Section (Brussels);
- 17-18: World Bank / IMF – Spring Meetings + Trade Union Seminar (Washington);
- 18-20: LDF – Lithuania: Congress (Anycksciai / Lithuania);
- 19-20: BATU – Executive Committee (Bangkok);
- 31/03 - 02/04: World Social Forum – International Council.