

AGORA

TRADE UNION EDUCATION IN EUROPE



Quarterly Newsletter of the Education Department of the ETUI-REHS

TRACE delivers "the best, most successful and most ambitious project"

"Industrial and company restructuring poses a major challenge for European trade unions, in recruitment and organisation, protecting workers, and boosting skills and training," ETUC General Secretary John Monks told the final conference of the TRACE project in Portugal on 17-18 November 2006.

TRACE (Trade Unions Anticipating Change in Europe) was a large-scale and ambitious project run by the ETUI-REHS Education Department and involving 19 partners: ETUC-affiliated organisations, European Industry Federations (EIFs), and research and university bodies. Launched in 2004, it was co-funded by the European Commission.



Eduardo Chagas, John Monks and Manuel Carvalho da Silva at the TRACE seminar in Sesimbra

Some 70 participants from 16 European countries, including the EU's two new Member States Bulgaria and Romania, took part in the final two-day conference in Sesimbra. John Monks opened the event by taking part in a round table debate with Manuel Carvalho da Silva, General Secretary of Portuguese affiliate CGTP-IN, Eduardo Chagas, General Secretary of the European Transport Workers' Federation (ETF), and Jackie Morin from the European Commission.

Never before have so many European trade union organisations taken part in coordinated, cross-border activities, including 56 different seminars,

workshops and courses. They have built networks, undertaken research, and produced reports, handbooks, CD-ROMs and training materials: all concrete tools to help trade unions across Europe to confront economic and industrial change.

Later, the conference format took an innovative turn to enable participants to get a closer look at the projects they were especially interested in. Instead of consecutive presentations in plenary session, project leaders described their activities and answered questions in small, self-selected work groups.

The second day started with an introduction to the large and impressive range of Trace outputs. These include a dedicated website (<http://www.traceproject.org/>) with details of all activities and materials, a handbook for trainers, a series of thematic papers on the different aspects of restructuring, and a short report for wide distribution.

Looking forward

Drawing the conference to a close, ETUI-REHS Education Department Director Jeff Bridgford described Trace as "the best, most successful and most ambitious project we have ever been involved in. There have been some impressive activities and lots of elements to take forward," he added. The ETUI-REHS Education Department will organise trainers' workshops and further seminars on restructuring.

"It's my intention to disseminate the results of the TRACE project throughout the ETUC," said Jeff Bridgford. "We will continue working on this issue. It's vital for European trade unions."

"TRACE will be very much in our minds as we start talks with employers," confirmed John Monks. "Assisting people in the process of change, and improving their skills, is an essential job for trade unions. It's at the heart of what we do. We must ensure that TRACE does not disappear without trace!"

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Course diary

Human Resource Management in trade unions

By Jean-Claude Le Douaron, Education Officer

A seminar aimed at networking on human resource management (HRM) in trade unions in the metal-working sector attracted union representatives from Austria, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Germany, Sweden and the UK to Protaras, Cyprus, in November 2006.

The event, organised by ETUI-REHS Education and the European Metalworkers' Federation (EMF) with EU support, set out to assess the impact of changes in the trade union environment – particularly as a result of mergers – on trade union staff, and examine what improvements in HR policy would help people to adapt.

Jens Bundvad from CO-Industri Denmark and Thomas Beattie from Amicus in the UK presented the outcome of a survey on HR management in EMF-affiliated unions. The participants then divided into working groups to discuss their experiences of trade union mergers.

They reached a number of conclusions – the first being that economies of scale are not achieved at once and sometimes not at all. Local representatives who feel threatened must be involved in consultation. Redundancies resulting from mergers are difficult for trade unions to deal with, so a voluntary approach is always better. Pension costs are an important question: Amicus, for example has had to unify nine different pension schemes.

Changing world of work

Bob Farakerley of SEECHANGE opened a debate on the changing workplace environment and its impact on trade unions. What will work look like in 2045, for example? What can trade unions do to influence change rather than merely react to it, and how can they guarantee a new generation of activists?

It is important for the trade union movement to identify practices that are not acceptable. Precarious work is a major concern, and unions must be ready to support workers in new



Exchanging experiences of HR management in trade unions

forms of employment. The cross-border dimension is also crucial for a movement that was founded on the principle of solidarity. At the same time, the nature of work is changing, with service industries eclipsing traditional manufacturing jobs. Unions have to prioritise their members' needs – developing better communications systems and devising education and training that equip trade union representatives for their role, as well as serving ordinary members.

Bob Farakerley contrasted the latest trends in HRM to more traditional forms of personnel management. Companies often use HRM as a tool to undermine trade union activities, focusing on business needs and meeting performance targets, with trade union consultation seen as an obstacle to efficiency.

The working groups went on to discuss the role of full-time trade union officers and the qualities and skills they require to fulfil their tasks. They agreed that trade unions need a wider recruitment base to meet the challenges.

Finally, Ulrike Obermayr from IG Metall spoke about the exchange programme for full-time officers from EMF-affiliated trade unions.

At the end of the seminar, participants agreed on a number of areas where full-time officers of the future will need a European or global perspective. These include better working conditions, collective bargaining, restructuring, skills and training, solidarity, multinational companies, and cross-border workers.

ETUI-REHS gets official OK in France

Under the French Labour Code, each year the government issues a list of the organisations it recognises as qualified to carry out trade union training. For the first time, in 2007, ETUI-REHS's name has been added to those of national federation education centres and labour institutes.

This formal recognition means that French trade union representatives taking part in ETUI-REHS education programmes will benefit from all the rights associated with training leave laid down in France's labour law.

A trade union influence on economic and labour market policy

By Valerica Dumitrescu, Education Officer

The role of the trade unions in the pursuit of *Flexicurity and economic growth* was the theme of a course developed by the Education Department of ETUI-REHS and held in Sweden from 26-29 November 2006. Eighteen participants from 10 affiliated organisations in seven European countries attended the seminar in Runö, designed for national trade union officers responsible for labour market, economic policy and collective bargaining issues.

The phenomenon of flexibility coupled with security – so-called flexicurity – is high on the agenda for trade union discussion, so the course aimed to give participants a better understanding of flexibility and security systems, whilst at the same time supplying more information about the role of trade union organisations in the development of macroeconomic policies at national and regional (euro and non-euro zones) level, and developing their capacity to influence those policies.

On the first day, the participants learned about the role of the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) and ETUI-REHS in promoting European Social Dialogue, as well as the work programme of the European social partners for 2006-2008. The presentation by Thomas Janson, from the ETUC, sparked off discussions on the role of trade unions, flexibility and the development of labour markets.

Defining flexicurity

The course continued with a general presentation on flexibility and security and various ways of combining the two approaches. Maarten Keune, the expert on this topic from the ETUI-REHS Research Department, gave a description of some flexicurity models, specifically in Denmark and the Netherlands, followed by the European Commission presenting its position on the issue. Group work to compare the national situations relating to labour market flexibility and security, national trade union positions on the issue, the use of flexicurity and the need to create win-win situations led to lively discussions between the participants.

The trade union officers taking part recognised that there are many differences from country to country and from North to South on flexibility and security in labour markets, and there is no single, common solution. There remains a need to learn from each other and to continue cooperation in view of the new developments in labour markets.

The last two days of the course were devoted to the European framework for macroeconomic policies. Ronald Janssen, from the ETUC, gave a 'user-friendly' presentation of the definition, importance and role of macroeconomic policies.

Fight for workers' rights

The most important element of the course came on the last day, and focused on the role of affiliate organisations' own members in supporting the ETUC approach on flexicurity and macroeconomic policies. The participants recognised that national confederations need to join in the ETUC's fight for decent working conditions and workers' rights, in the context of the challenges created by new labour markets. This led to fresh recognition of the need to continue such courses and to broaden the discussions on flexibility and security of labour markets.



A resource for European Industry Federations

ETUI-REHS Education has a clear role to play in supporting education initiatives undertaken by the European sectoral organisations, as can be seen from the article by Carola Fischbach-Pyttel, the General Secretary of the European Federation of Public Service Unions (EPSU).

What is this role?

First, ETUI-REHS Education can contribute to the development of training materials – in this case the EPSU toolkit – which can be a useful way of adding a European dimension to national trade union education work.

Secondly, ETUI-REHS Education can coordinate trainers' workshops to develop and disseminate training materials. These workshops can and do offer an important multiplier effect throughout the European trade union movement and an opportunity for trainers to learn how to use and adapt the materials for their own national trade union education work.

Thirdly, ETUI-REHS Education can also coordinate meetings of trainers and experts to facilitate the preparation of joint workshops – in this case, between Germans and Bulgarians on the one hand and the British and Romanians on the other – which are the basis for joint education partnerships. In this way an education project can lead to trade union activities, serving to further the strategic aims of EPSU and its affiliated organisations.

This is, of course, a model that can be transferred to the training strategy of other European Industry Federations. All that is needed is to adapt the training tool and to train the teams to translate trade union education into trade union action.

Jeff Bridgford

Director, Education Department

ETUI-REHS

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Agora welcomes comments or contributions from readers. Please e-mail or send them to the address above. Contact us if you wish to receive more copies of the newsletter.

Forging education partnerships for better cooperation between EPSU affiliates across Europe

*By Carola Fischbach-Pyttel,
General Secretary, European Federation
of Public Service Unions*

Building and supporting active education partnerships can be a good mechanism to encourage cooperation amongst affiliated unions around issues of common interest within the enlarged European Union.

Although EPSU, the European Federation of Public Service Unions (www.epsu.org), is the largest ETUC federation representing 8 million workers, our personnel resources are relatively modest with a total of 12 directly employed staff, and we cannot really afford to have an education officer within the context of limited resources. So together with the ETUI-REHS Education Department, EPSU has worked over the last decade to develop a European education strategy.

The question is therefore, how can we put an education policy into action that engages our member organisations?

The EPSU Toolkit

The EPSU Toolkit training tool (www.epsu.org/a/913) has been developed through a joint project with ETUI-REHS Education. It aims to help EPSU affiliates to understand European integration, develop social dialogue and gain more awareness of the role of trade union organisations in defending high-quality public services.

The toolkit consists of two separate parts:

- **Facts about Europe:** 20 information sheets on various aspects of European policy and the EU decision-making process. They can be used to provide members with basic information about public service issues but also as support for training and education.

EPSU campaign for a EU legal framework on public services



Carola Fischbach-Pyttel: EPSU provides a framework for education activities in partner unions

- **Training activity sheets:** these cover the key issues addressed in the information sheets and are aimed at helping trade union organisations, particularly from the countries joining the EU, to understand European integration.

The EPSU Executive in November 2005 agreed a set of policy points, essentially to define the role of trade union education for EPSU, and EPSU's role in trade union education. Some of these policy points are:

- The toolkit can be instrumental in building EPSU's lobbying, campaigning and mobilising capacity. It can help to build affiliates' identification with EPSU.
- EPSU's role in trade union education is to function as a catalyst, providing the general framework for European trade union training and to kick-start initiatives. Emphasis will be put on 'training the trainers'.
- Affiliates' training programmes have to apply Europe-mainstreaming, i.e. systematically integrating European policy issues into national education programmes.

The toolkit is available in many languages, including new Member States' languages, and Russian and Turkish. A number of pilot projects have been developed to promote the use of the toolkit, and in particular with a view to developing trade union education partnerships.

On the way to European education partnerships

With the help of ETUI-REHS Education, we had the opportunity to run a pilot seminar in the Ver.di Education Centre in Berlin.

Participating unions came from Bulgaria, Romania, the UK and Germany. As well as exploring the issues of minimum wages and minimum standards, the idea of the seminar was to establish concrete plans for joint educational partnerships.

Why is this important for EPSU?

When it comes to education and training, EPSU should provide the general framework – in this case the EPSU Toolkit – and then initiate, broker, organise and accompany education partnerships between interested unions, if possible over an extended period of time. With this mutual-learning approach, we take advantage of the fact that many unions are very interested in engaging in concrete partnerships for cooperation and that these partnerships are ongoing. The challenge for EPSU is to 'bundle' affiliates' interests and in some cases the will and capacity to invest resources under the EPSU umbrella within a multi-annual education programme.

The Berlin seminar was a useful platform for establishing a first set of joint education activities, which will be carried out in cooperation with ETUI-REHS Education. German and Bulgarian representatives agreed to set up a roundtable discussion in Bulgaria in October 2007 on minimum wages. Representatives from Romania, the UK and Ireland are planning to hold a steering group meeting in spring 2007 to develop plans for possible contents, materials, resources and timetables. In each instance, our aim is to promote very practical activities: activities that can at the same time feed into a longer-term EPSU policy perspective.

Sign the ETUC's petition for high quality public services in Europe at: <http://www.petitionpublicservice.eu/>

Trainers' network strengthens trade union activity in a wider Europe

By Georges Schnell, Education Officer

Since the Founding Congress of the International Trade Union Confederation, in Vienna in November 2006, agreed to the establishment of a Pan-European Regional Council (PERC), the Education Department of ETUI-REHS has been keen to make its contribution to strengthening this regional structure in Europe through trade union education.

Using its practical experience of working with its trainers' network in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, the department will continue to support such networks as a means of implementing a broader trade union strategy.

Whilst embodying the values of the ETUC's European trade union identity, this trainers' network is able to provide a comprehensive vision, develop a combination of experimental approaches and share skills and knowledge of trade union issues, pedagogical methods, and the tools and projects produced by the affiliated organisations in this region.

The network also aims to be a force for innovation and a window for innovative pedagogical practices, by contributing to the development and enhancement of trade union training skills within trade union organisations.

A pool of experience

Trade union organisations from the Balkan region took part in an initial meeting to analyse the needs of trainers, education officers and affiliates in terms of new training activities. The meeting also looked at which particular areas of competence are available for strengthening this new cooperation within the ETUC and with the new structure (PERC). This led to the introduction of some new training tools for building an organising and recruitment strategy.



A broader vision of European trade union education

A discussion took place about the pool of trade union training know-how available at the national, European and international levels, and how that could best be channelled into the conception and organisation of projects and the provision of tools, expertise and experienced trainers. This amounted to a preview of future cooperation between the ITUC, the ETUC and the operational structures set up to strengthen the union movement.

Further meetings will be held to support the PERC and the development of the trainers' network, to help strengthen European trade union identity and implement a broader trade union strategy.

Intercultural dialogue built on strong foundations

By Silvana Pennella, Education Officer

In advance of the 2008 European Year of Intercultural Dialogue, the European Commission's Directorate-General for Education and Culture held a conference in Brussels in November 2006, including an exhibition of best practices from European projects funded by the DG.

The conference consisted of three workshops focusing on intercultural dialogue in the workplace, in daily life and in education and training. They confirmed that intercultural dialogue should be implemented through a bottom-up approach rooted in the direct participation of citizens.

"Diversity at the workplace can be seen as a new opportunity, since some workplaces are significant platforms for intercultural dialogue," concluded Director-General Odile Quintin.

Transnational mobility of workers can also be considered a powerful tool for eliminating prejudices and promoting intercultural understanding. That is why the social partners have an important role to play, both as mediators of that dialogue and as multipliers of experience and best practices – an objective that is at the heart of the training strategy of ETUI-REHS Education.

More and better jobs for Europe

ETUC, 2006

This 20-page brochure in two languages outlines the ETUC's proposal for a *Pact for European Economic Renewal* to tackle the problems in the European economy, which it considers to be performing badly. Low growth in the euro area over the last five years is a major headache and unemployment has started to rise, reinforcing insecurity amongst workers. The brochure is clearly written and provides an interesting analysis that trainers could use to stimulate debate within course programmes.

Available to download from:

<http://education.etui-rehs.org/en/downloads/moreandbetterjobsen.pdf> (English)

<http://education.etui-rehs.org/fr/downloads/moreandbetterjobsfr.pdf> (French)

Fact Sheets

ETUC Press Department

The fact sheets produced by the ETUC Press Department provide useful background information on the current policy priorities, demands and achievements of the ETUC. The sheets will provide trainers with a basic grasp of key issues and the relevant ETUC positions, as a basis for drafting their presentations for training activities.

They can be downloaded (in French and English) from the 'Press Room' on the ETUC website (right-hand frame) at: www.etuc.org

Free copies are also available from the ETUC: etuc@etuc.org

Out of the Shadows – Organising and protecting domestic workers in Europe: the role of trade unions

ETUC, 2006

This bilingual report is based on the proceedings of a conference organised by the ETUC in cooperation with migrant workers' support groups, associations concerned with domestic workers, women's organisations and NGOs. Domestic work is one of the fastest growing economic sectors in Europe, but protecting and organising the workers involved is often complicated. The report provides examples of positive achievements by trade unions in various countries including a major success story from the USA.

The report is available in printed form from the ETUC (etuc@etuc.org) or to download from:

www.etuc.org/IMG/pdf/Rapport_domestic_workers-3.pdf (English)

www.etuc.org/IMG/pdf/Rapport_domestic_workers-3.pdf (French)

unionlearn

TUC, 2006

The TUC's *unionlearn* project uses funding from the EU's EQUAL programme to provide advice, support and training to the thousands of union 'learning representatives' around the UK. They in turn assist workers in obtaining new workplace skills and improving their general educational qualifications. The TUC's aim is to provide lifelong education to as many working people as possible. A short DVD shows the launch of the main project and provides some examples of the work being done locally.

Available from:

TUC *unionlearn* project

Tel: +44 20 7079 6920

E-mail: unionlearn@tuc.org.uk

www.unionlearn.org.uk

Lifelong Learning Periodical (Education permanente)

CREFI, 2006

The *Centre de Recherches en Education, Formation et Insertion* (CREFI), based at the University of Toulouse II, has published an edition that addresses trade union education in France and how it has been delivered in French universities in partnership with trade union organisations. Chapters of interest include: the future of the French 'labour institutes' and their links with trade unions and universities; ways in which trade union education can address economic policy, the law and training for leadership posts; trade union education at university level since 1955; and the European Passport in Trade Union Competence (PECS = *Passeport Européen de Compétence Syndicale*).

Available online, in French only, from:

<http://w3.univ-tlse2.fr/crefi/sommaire/publications/Couv16.html>

Understanding Environmental Issues in the Workplace

TUC Education, 2006

The TUC Education unit has brought out a 40-page training manual on tackling environmental issues. It consists of a series of activity sheets, model questionnaires and surveys for use in training activities. These are supplemented by compact and useful information sheets tracing UK trade unions' environmental policy in recent years, together with practical suggestions for encouraging workers to make concrete improvements in their own environmental behaviour and that of their companies, both in the workplace and the environment outside.

Available in English to download from:

<http://ert.etuc.org/ert/index.cfm?fuseaction=home.catalogdetails&ID=941&fkeyword=All&cPage=23&lang=EN>

May 2007

A European dimension to supervisory boards

AIMS	To analyse the role and function of workers' representatives at company board level in a European perspective To compare training possibilities for those board representatives To set up a network between institutes proposing training activities for those board representatives Trade union officers and representatives
PARTICIPANTS	3 – to be decided
WORKING LANGUAGE	4 – 6 May 2007
DATES	752.26
COURSE REF. N°	

June 2007

Training Eurotrainers level 1

AIMS	To reinforce European cooperation in the field of trade union training by developing a methodology adapted to European programmes and multicultural activities and by responding to latest developments in adult education To organise transnational training programmes Trade union trainers with responsibility for European level training
PARTICIPANTS	English, French
WORKING LANGUAGES	20 – 24 June 2007
DATES	752.30
COURSE REF. N°	

August 2007

Summer school – Facing the challenge of industrial change

AIMS	To analyse the trends affecting companies in EMCEF sectors in the context of global competition To examine the impact of restructuring measures such as mergers, sub-contracting, offshoring and outsourcing on employment conditions in MNCs as well as in SMEs in EMCEF sectors To discuss trade union strategies aiming at improving employment and working conditions in EMCEF sectors Trade union officers and representatives
PARTICIPANTS	3 – to be decided
WORKING LANGUAGES	29 – 31 August 2007
DATES	752.22
COURSE REF. N°	

September 2007

Collective bargaining summer school

AIMS	To broaden and deepen the EMF collective bargaining coordination strategy To investigate and analyse the current pressures on collective bargaining rounds and systems, including the ongoing trend towards decentralisation To debate future perspectives in the collective bargaining work of EMF Trade union officers and representatives
PARTICIPANTS	3 – to be decided
WORKING LANGUAGES	8 – 11 September 2007
DATES	752.23
COURSE REF. N°	

How to set up training activities on sustainable development

AIMS	To prepare officers and trainers to define and implement a trade union or pedagogical strategy in connection with their organisation's project and the ETUC guidelines, on the social and environmental dimension of globalisation and sustainable development To develop information and training tools useful to the definition of a trade union and pedagogical strategy on Europe and sustainable development by carrying out actions of national or European dimension and preparing pedagogical resources Trade union officers, education officers and trainers
PARTICIPANTS	English, French
WORKING LANGUAGES	13 – 16 September 2007
DATES	752.33
COURSE REF. N°	

Reinforcing social dialogue in the CEECs

AIMS	To discuss ETUCE activities on social dialogue and the implementation of the Action Plan on "Strengthening social dialogue in education" To define adequate legal frameworks for social dialogue in new Member States To decentralise negotiations Trade union officers and representatives
PARTICIPANTS	3 – to be decided
WORKING LANGUAGES	23 – 25 September 2007
DATES	752.20
COURSE REF. N°	

October 2007

Promoting collective bargaining in the EFJ sector

AIMS	To evaluate and develop trade union recruitment and organising strategies and practices for union growth in the EFJ sectors To analyse organisational change and steps towards overcoming resistance to organisational change Trade union officers and representatives
PARTICIPANTS	3 – to be decided
WORKING LANGUAGES	5 – 7 October 2007
DATES	752.38
COURSE REF. N°	

How to coordinate European Works Councils

AIMS	To analyse and develop the trade union coordination of EWCs in UNI-Europa sectors To train coordinators, secretaries/chairs of EWCs by exchanging information about good and bad practices and Uni-Europa policies Trade union officers and representatives
PARTICIPANTS	3 – to be decided
WORKING LANGUAGES	12 – 14 October 2007
DATES	752.25
COURSE REF. N°	

November 2007

How to set up training activities on Europe and globalisation

AIMS	To prepare education officers and trainers to implement a teaching strategy that will successfully meet their organisation's objectives and at the same time follow ETUC guidelines To define a European training strategy on Europe and globalisation by defining European and national concepts To prepare teaching resources on Europe and globalisation Trade union officers and trainers
PARTICIPANTS	English, French
WORKING LANGUAGES	7 – 10 November 2007
DATES	752.32
COURSE REF. N°	