

Anticipating change in Europe

ETUCO is launching another large-scale project, **Trade Unions Anticipating Change in Europe (TRACE)**, designed to build capacity within European trade unions to respond to economic and industrial change.

Led by the European Trade Union College, TRACE involves 19 partners from 10 Member States, drawn from European Industry Federations (EIFs) covering the metalworking, chemical, teaching, public services, transport, graphical and services sectors, and national trade union confederations (CC.OO., CFDT, CGIL, CGTP-IN, CISL, LO-D, LO-S, ÖGB, SAK, TUC).

It receives funding from the European Social Fund, Article 6 Innovative Measures, Innovative Approaches to the Management of Change.

minimal social cost, and consider the impact of industrial and economic change on trade union organisation and ways of working.

Colleagues from EIFs and national confederations will design and deliver a series of **Key Actions**, on topics including

- developing new approaches to training and retraining
- improving communication and coordination within European Works Councils (EWCs)
- examining the impact of restructuring on the local/regional economy
- exploring the implications of EU enlargement for economic restructuring and company relocation
- looking at major structural changes in the public sector

Outputs and Results

The project will

- train European trade union officers as trainers/ *animateurs* to lead a range of transnational training and networking activities
- produce a set of basic tools and training and information materials
- establish a multilingual web portal
- develop online networking activities in six European Industry Federations and their affiliated organisations
- develop transnational training activities with 10 national trade union confederations

TRACE will be a significant step forward in European trade union development, and **Agora** will be reporting regularly on the project's progress.

For more details see the TRACE website www.traceproject.org

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Wanja Lundby-Wedin launching the TRACE start-up workshop

Goals and Actions

The aims are to develop the knowledge and skills of trade union officers and representatives in dealing with restructuring situations more effectively, develop and exchange models of good practice in handling restructuring with

TUC chief drops in on ETUCO language course

Brendan Barber, General Secretary of the British Trades Union Congress (TUC), paid a visit to ETUCO's English language course in Newcastle in the UK in early November.

He spoke about the TUC's vision for improving the world of work, through extending training to upgrade workers' skills, creating a better quality of working life, and measures for pensions to give people more security. He also outlined steps to ensure employees are consulted on changes in the workplace. These measures form the basis of the TUC's campaign for the next UK general election in 2005. Childcare will be another crucial issue.

He emphasised the benefits EU legislation has brought for workers, including better rights for working parents and part-timers, and consultation over change. The TUC reversed its previously negative attitude to the EU 25 years ago, when Jacques Delors was European Commission President.

Constitutional debate

A lively debate is underway in the UK on the European Constitution, said Barber, with a referendum promised for early 2006. The key question for trade unions is whether the Constitution extends and protects the social dimension or undermines it. The TUC is just beginning this debate with its member organisations. Public opinion in the UK is currently very negative on Europe, with an anti-EU media establishment setting the agenda.

The 12 course participants from Austria, Belgium, Estonia, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Sweden and Turkey had an opportunity to question the TUC leader on issues like recruitment and relations with the British Labour Party.

Barber described the decline in UK union membership, down from 12 million in 1979 to 6.5 million in 2004, with a huge loss of jobs in manufacturing industries. Services are the jobs growth area, and 60% of members are now in the public sector. Trade unions need to look at the way they use resources and develop organisational skills. This is the aim of the TUC Organising Academy, which recruits and trains young people as future organisers.

Asked about the TUC's communications strategy, Barber highlighted the challenge of reaching a public accustomed



TUC General Secretary Brendan Barber talks to course participants in Newcastle

to sophisticated commercial communication techniques. Cultural changes mean people no longer want to attend evening meetings, and unions need to respond by investing in new approaches such as high quality websites and e-mail bulletins.

A change of image

Another challenge is reaching younger people, who are increasingly mobile in the jobs market. The TUC has been trying to change its "male, pale and stale" image through involving more women and members of ethnic minorities.

It is also strengthening links with student union organisations, since 30-40% of young people go into higher education. Low unemployment means that young people have more choices, so if they encounter a problem at work they change jobs rather than join a union.

The TUC is working on improving relations with the Labour Party and setting an agenda for a possible third term of government. "Skills, rights and pensions will be part of that agenda," said Barber.

UNI EWCs strengthen their networks

By Jean-Claude Le Douaron, ETUCO Education Officer

Misunderstandings and differences of opinion on the role of European Works Councils are fairly common. A French representative will tend to regard the body as a European-level extension of the French *comité d'entreprise*, whilst a German or a Dane would prefer to see it operating like a *Betriebsrat* or a *samarbejdsudvalg* respectively.

These different and often contradictory expectations are frequently responsible for the attitudes workers adopt within EWCs. They are invited to one or two meetings per year, where the discussion usually focuses on the agenda for the plenary meeting with management. They are bombarded by management representatives with all sorts of information, some of which is not always relevant. Then they all go back home to do their work as local representatives, without sparing much thought for the EWC until the next meeting.

As well as diverging expectations, this attitude can be explained by failings in the EWC Directive. Concepts like information and consultation are vaguely defined, with sanctions that do little to put pressure on employers.

A key instrument for workers

From a trade union viewpoint, one objective of EWCs has been to increase workers' influence on their managements' strategic decisions. However, a number of studies have shown that direct influence remains limited. Does that mean that EWCs are worthless? Not at all! They provide an opportunity to set up a network of representatives at European level and may also facilitate the flow of information and consultation between local and national representatives in the same group. The EWC can become a key instrument for workers from the various countries involved. The establishment and effective functioning of



such networks is, in any event, a vital precondition for good information and consultation exchange with central management.

One of the tasks of European trade union training is to help EWCs to work well as networks of representatives. At a recent seminar organised jointly by ETUCO and UNI-Europa, EWC members from the Information Technology and insurance sectors examined the different representation systems, examples of good practice and operating difficulties that they encountered in their work. They found the seminar very helpful, as can be seen by some of their comments:

- It is always good to share viewpoints outside one's own works council
- The UNI Charter on Relocations might turn out to be something our committee can use
- The techniques and principles applied in creating networks of EWC representatives have given me some new ideas
- The personal contacts made during this seminar should enable us to have fruitful discussions in the future



Exxonmobil's EWC reps get round the table

Improving the functioning of the Exxonmobil EWC, through better cohesion between representatives from the 21 countries involved, was the main training objective of the ETUCO course for company European Works Councillors on 25-27 October.

The programme covered presentations and activities on:

- National worker representation systems
- Communication between representatives, their select committee and national bodies

- Evaluation of the committee's functioning
- Elaboration of some basic principles for the EWC's internal rules of procedure
- Identification of areas for cooperation

The 27 representatives took an active part, electing a new select committee and EWC spokesperson, during the course activities. It also gave them a chance to discuss draft rules of procedure to clarify the respective roles of representatives, the select committee and the spokesperson.

Information and skills for European trade unionists

As Bernd Kaßebaum points out in his article, trade union education needs to equip trade unionists to carry out their duties effectively. This applies to trade union officers and representatives working within a particular sector at national level, and is also true for their counterparts at European level.

What makes an effective European trade unionist? At times it feels like a variety of superhuman characteristics are needed, but more specifically, these priorities stand out:

- An understanding of the roles and policies of trade unions in national contexts and at European level
- An understanding of the latest socio-economic and political developments affecting trade unions at the national and European levels
- Skills to improve understanding and communication at the European level
- Shared European trade union values

The nature of the information and skills will of course depend upon the political priorities of the ETUC and the pedagogical needs of ETUC-affiliated organisations and their officers and representatives, and it is ETUCO's role to articulate these different priorities and needs. A glance at page 8 of *Agora* shows how ETUCO performs this in concrete terms: for example, training trade union officers for European project management; examining social protection schemes in Europe; establishing a European trade union strategy on health and safety or assessing the impact of EU enlargement on working conditions in the road transport sector. It is in this way that ETUCO provides information and skills to improve the effectiveness of European trade unionists.

*Jeff Bridgford,
Director ETUCO*

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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.

IG Metall starts new course for trade union

*By Bernd Kaßebaum, Education Officer
IG Metall, Germany*

IG-Metall training activities are geared to providing the skills required by newly elected works council members and union representatives, and also to offering opportunities for lifelong learning.

The starting point for any training provision is to ask what skills trade unionists need in order to carry out their union duties effectively as works council members or union representatives. It must therefore develop an appropriate set of skills in view of the officers' and representatives' particular roles and duties.

So from now on, skills will be more closely linked to the notions of competence and development of competence. All seminars will have to make links and comparisons between:

- Political and strategic skills
- Technical skills
- Methodological and social skills

In order to establish a sensible system of training provision, discussions are taking place to determine skill levels. These broadly consist of:

- Initiation
- General/'All-rounder' ability
- Specialisation
- Leadership and networking

An additional aspect is the development of modular-based groups of seminars, i.e. modules designed for specific training requirements that can be chosen freely, depending on the sectors in which workers are involved, individual wishes and the existing knowledge of would-be participants.

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*Bernd Kaßebaum:
training activities can
boost the capacity of
unions to intervene in a
demanding social
situation*

Works councillors and union representatives

In 2005, two sets of training programmes along these lines will be provided. The first is a programme for newly elected works councillors, consisting of seven modules. They include one on co-determination rights on personnel issues, matters relating to working conditions, changes within companies, economic decisions and participation. One particularly important module is on collective bargaining and addresses the collective bargaining rights of works council members.

Union representatives have been offered a parallel set of five modules, including two that are identical to those offered to works councils (on participation and economic decisions), whilst the others address the specific tasks of union representatives.

These sets of courses are generally delivered in the training centres. They correspond to the 'general/all-rounder' level of training. The next stages in the process are clear. First, we need to coordinate this process with training activities at local and regional level. Accordingly, a group of individual projects is being carried out with IG Metall branches, aimed at building on the training provision for this level with an emphasis on the skills needed by full-time trainers and on the issue of organising training and advisory services.

Secondly, we need to develop ongoing training at the specialisation, leadership and networking levels. Two project groups are currently working on this and producing some specific ideas and proposals. A new set of modules has also been developed with the theme

of 'political' training, which adopts a task-based approach.

There are clearly a number of issues raised by this process: for instance, some current seminar drafting groups have come up with such precise requirements that there is scarcely any time left for open, participant-based training processes. Some are concerned that the high standard of political and participant-based approaches is being undermined.

Duration of modules

Another concern is to what extent modular training is understood. Isn't too much being left to chance within such a free system and shouldn't the trainers be providing more guidance? Don't trade union officers really need a set of 'minimum' training requirements? There is another debate going on concerning the duration of the new modules, since they usually last one week and sometimes conflict with other two-week courses provided by IG Metall.

At the same time as these innovations and the practical and conceptual effort they involve, IG Metall is organising a discussion to work on a new and common model for its training activities. The aim is to develop a common understanding of the need for further development of this work. That partly requires looking at the internal training structures of IG Metall, of course. However, the other approach is equally important and addresses how training activities can boost the capacity of unions to intervene in what is a very demanding social situation.

Building a trainers' network in Central and Eastern Europe

By Georges Schnell, ETUCO Education Officer

For over 10 years now, ETUCO has been working with leading members of the trade union education community in the Central and Eastern European Countries (CEECs) to establish a trainers' network to support the European integration process.

The focus is on trade union education activities and promoting the values of the European trade union movement based on ETUC policy guidelines.

So far, various courses and projects have been carried out with different education and training actors, also involving the ICFTU. A conference held in the Slovak Republic in March 2002 discussed the development of training activities at both national and European level. And a subsequent event in January 2003 in Slovenia looked at establishing a new approach for carrying out jointly run East-West projects on trade union training.

Clear objectives

This trainers' network has met regularly, on a twice-yearly basis, to address some precise objectives:

- Building an effective strategy for trade union and trade union training projects, so as to make best use of available means and resources
- Promoting increased autonomy for the national organisations in carrying out projects that meet trade union objectives
- Becoming a driving force for proposals and innovations, i.e. a key player in the areas of project management and the delivery of training activities
- Engaging in collective reflections on how the ETUC's affiliates can best support each other in the specific field of trade union education

Key tasks for the future

The latest meeting, held in October 2004 in the Czech Republic, agreed on some of the key tasks of the network:

- To provide European trade union training resources to organisations by making advice, expertise and assistance available to trainers and education departments
- To develop discussion of methodology and activities as well as cooperation between the organisations involved and the European level
- To facilitate the sharing of resources and expertise within the network and the development of precise objectives and tasks that support trade union training
- To act as a group of professionals who can assist policy-makers in their decision-making. It provides a forum for discussion and consultation between professionals, who are recognised as such on the basis of their experience and achievements in the field of European integration
- To provide a fully operational and cooperative body capable of promoting innovative approaches and debate, whilst acting as a contact between partners who recognise its knowledge and know-how

ETUCO has been able to establish and support this network. Its informal nature creates an atmosphere where members can engage in fruitful discussions, and pass on their ideas to the policy-makers. The network acts as a think tank for the development of innovative pedagogical approaches, cooperation and exchanges. As such, it is enriching the European trade union education community, and by extension the whole European trade union movement.



Guide for mobile European workers

ETUC, 2004

This guide, written by a pair of Belgian and Dutch trade unionists who both live in crossborder regions themselves, provides a wealth of practical information on coping with the legal and financial implications of working in a different country bordering on your country of residence. The key EU Treaty articles and legislation are analysed together with their transposition into national regulations on taxation, social security entitlements, right of residence, supplementary pensions and other important issues affecting crossborder workers and jobseekers. The guide includes websites and other sources of information and is essential reading for all those living and working or wanting to live and work in crossborder regions.

PDF versions of the guide are available in five languages: Dutch, English, French, German and Italian.

Free of charge from the ERC:

<http://ert.etuc.org/ert/index.cfm?fuseaction=home.catalogdetails&ID=897&&fkeyword=A4F0CE91-C516-11A1-7A07BDC867DC3539&cPage=2&lang=EN>

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Industrial relations in Central and Eastern Europe: transformation and integration – a comparison of the eight new EU Member States

ETUI, Brussels, 2004

This study looks at developments in labour law and practices at the company, sectoral and national levels in eight different CEE countries. Despite a general orientation towards Western European practices, the individual industrial relations developments are extremely varied, in line with a highly differentiated transformation process. Specific instances of structural deficit are described, together with some innovative forms of workplace participation and examples of increased concertation and distribution policies. As well as an East-West comparison of industrial relations, the repercussions of eastwards enlargement on the central tasks of labour policy and collective bargaining and the challenges posed to the European Social Model are addressed.

Available in English, German (updated versions) and French
€27

Further details and orders from:

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Fax: +32 2 224 05 02

e-mail: etui@etuc.org

www.etuc.org/etui/New/KohlPlatz.cfm

Mai 2004: die EU wird größer

DGB, 2004

The DGB produced this 60-page, German-language brochure to inform its members about the new Member States of the EU and the likely impact of their accession in Germany. Some basic facts about the countries are included (standard of living, GDP, etc.), and the probable impact on employment in Germany (subcontracting,

company transfers, migrant and seasonal work, immigration regulations, etc.) is analysed.

Further details and orders (postage and packaging costs payable) from:

DGB-Bundesvorstand

Department of international and European affairs

Postfach 11 03 72

D-10833 Berlin

Tel: +49 30 2 40 60 742

Fax: +49 30 2 40 60 408

www.dgb.de

Globalisation & International Development in Textiles & Garments – Tutor's Pack on the web TGWU (UK)

These materials come from the 'Education in International Development' sub-section of the TGWU website, which provides materials and activities designed specifically for use in trade union education. The resources are part of a UK government-sponsored project aimed at raising awareness and understanding of the processes of international development, and ensuring that an international perspective is integrated into all TGWU educational programmes. As well as the textiles sector, there are other materials covering other areas. They can be downloaded and adapted to different situations/sectors. The site also provides links to additional materials that tutors and reps will find useful.

www.tgwu.org.uk/TGWUInternatEd/Textiles/course_notes1.htm

Globalisation. Who's winning and who's losing? Canadian Labour Congress & Tony Biddle (2004)

This is a short, easy-to-read comic-format booklet of great value to all trade unionists and trade union tutors. In just 12 pages it works through *What is globalisation?* and *How we got here ... a quick history lesson* to *So how does the world look today?* and *Action for change*. The booklet poses questions from a range of perspectives on globalisation and its effects. It is both informative and a good stimulus to discussion and debate.

Available online in English:

www.clc-ctc.ca/web/issues/globalization/CLC-globalization-english.pdf

and in French:

www.clc-ctc.ca/web/issues/globalization/CLC-globalization-french.pdf

Europa: 09.05.2004

European Commission, 2004

This DVD, produced to coincide with the recent enlargement of the EU, works like a CD and provides access to a wide range of useful brochures (in PDF format) on a series of European policy issues (these are also available on the Europa website but less conveniently). The brochures cover: EU institutions, enlargement, the single market, food quality, justice and home affairs, the EU economy, sustainable transport, the environment and solidarity towards the victims of humanitarian crises. Some helpful maps are also included.

Further details and orders from:

Info Point Europe

Rond Point Schuman, 12

B-1049 Brussels

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Fax: +32 2 296 54 00

e-mail: daniele.d'hossche@dg10.cec.be

February 2005

Training Trade Union CEEC Officers for European project management (4 days)

AIMS	To provide project managers with the necessary skills and tools to manage and lead transnational projects To enable participants to share and consider their experience in the planning and management of projects
PARTICIPANTS	Trade union officers from education and training departments with experience in the management of European projects
WORKING LANGUAGES	English, French
DATES	2 - 6 February 2005
COURSE REF. N°	EPM.04.010

French for European trade unionists (intermediate) (11 days)

AIMS	To enable trade union officers with at least a basic level of French to operate effectively for professional purposes in a French-speaking environment
PARTICIPANTS	Trade union officers or representatives with at least a basic knowledge of French
WORKING LANGUAGES	French
DATES	6 - 17 February 2005
COURSE REF. N°	LAN.04.006

How to establish a European trade union strategy on health and safety (3 days)

AIMS	To equip trade union representatives with the knowledge and skills needed to carry out their functions as health and safety representatives
PARTICIPANTS	Health and safety key officers in confederations from CEECs
WORKING LANGUAGE	English, French, Italian, Hungarian
DATES	10 - 13 February 2005
COURSE REF. N°	ENL.04.038

Training trade union officers for EU budget lines on Social Dialogue (3 days)

AIMS	To provide national confederations and European Industry Federations with an opportunity to increase their chances of success when presenting projects to the European Commission
PARTICIPANTS	Project promoters and managers from trade union organisations with experience of dealing with European projects
WORKING LANGUAGES	English, French
DATES	14 - 16 February 2005
COURSE REF. N°	EPM.04.015

English for European trade unionists (intermediate/advanced) I (2 weeks)

AIMS	To enable trade union officers with an intermediate level of English to operate effectively for professional purposes in an English-speaking environment
PARTICIPANTS	Trade union officers or representatives with at least an intermediate knowledge of English
WORKING LANGUAGE	English
DATES	14 - 24 February 2005
COURSE REF. N°	LAN.04.004

Free movement of workers II (5 days)

AIMS	To equip key trade union officers with the knowledge and skills • to face the challenge of the free movement of workers in a broader Europe • to contribute to ETUC initiatives to carry out its action plan on migration
PARTICIPANTS	National trade union officers responsible for integration and labour market issues
WORKING LANGUAGE	Czech/Slovak, German, Polish
DATES	15 - 20 February 2005
COURSE REF. N°	ENL.04.009

The impact of enlargement on working and employment conditions in the road sector (3 days)

AIMS	To examine the development of crossborder road transport To assess the impact on national collective bargaining systems in the light of EU enlargement
PARTICIPANTS	National trade union officers responsible for social affairs
WORKING LANGUAGES	English, French, Hungarian, Spanish
DATES	18 - 20 February 2005
COURSE REF. N°	ENL.04.033

March 2005

Workshop - Developing language training in European trade unions (3 days)

AIMS	To consider the organisational and pedagogical challenges of language training for European trade unions To share examples of good practice in language training activities To examine ways of introducing elements of e-learning into language training
PARTICIPANTS	Language trainers and trade union trainers with experience of language training in a trade union context; trade union officers responsible for language training within their organisations
WORKING LANGUAGES	English, French
DATES	3 - 6 March 2005
COURSE REF. N°	PED.04.021

English for CEEC trade unionists II (5 days)

AIMS	To enable trade union officers with a basic level of English to operate effectively for professional purposes in an English-speaking environment
PARTICIPANTS	Trade union officers or representatives from CEEC trade union organisations with at least a basic knowledge of English
WORKING LANGUAGES	English
DATES	12 - 19 March 2005
COURSE REF. N°	ENL.04.041

English for European Works Councils (intermediate) II - 5 days

AIMS	To enable European Works Council members with a basic or intermediate level of English to operate for professional purposes in an English-speaking environment
PARTICIPANTS	Members of European Works Councils and trade union officers dealing with EWCs with at least a basic knowledge of English
WORKING LANGUAGE	English
DATES	14 - 18 March 2005
COURSE REF. N°	EWC.04.032

Social protection in Europe - health care: what types of reform? what form of financing? (5 days)

AIMS	To identify and support those elements of health care systems that favour cohesion and solidarity To contribute to ETUC policy-making and European policy-making on the subject of health care
PARTICIPANTS	National trade union officers responsible for social policy issues
WORKING LANGUAGES	English, German, Polish
DATES	15 - 20 March 2005
COURSE REF. N°	SOC.04.012

Training trade union officers for European project management (4 days)

AIMS	To provide project managers with the necessary skills and tools to manage and lead transnational projects To enable participants to share and consider their experience in the planning and management of projects
PARTICIPANTS	Trade union officers from education and training departments with experience in the management of European projects
WORKING LANGUAGES	English, French
DATES	29 March - 3 April 2005
COURSE REF. N°	EPM.04.014

For further details see: www.etuc.org/etuco/en/courses