

# AGORA

TRADE UNION EDUCATION IN EUROPE

Quarterly Newsletter of the Education Institution of the European Trade Union Confederation



## TRACE – the halfway stage

**T**rade Unions Anticipating Change in Europe (TRACE), a project funded by the European Social Fund, Article 6, is at the halfway stage. The preparations are now made. Project leaders have been trained at a series of preparation and support workshops. Training materials have been produced. Now the project partners are carrying out their own projects.

How are they developing the knowledge and skills of trade union officers and representatives to deal with restructuring situations more effectively? They are providing a variety of responses, in line with different strategic and educational needs:

- identifying significant trends within key industrial sectors and disseminating examples of good and bad practice in dealing with restructuring in the metalworking, chemical, transport, services, printing and textile sectors (EMF, EMCEF, UNI-E, ETF, CGTP-CCOO, CGIL-CGTP)
- improving communication and coordination within European Works Councils operating at the European level in the metalworking, chemical and banking sectors (EMF, EMCEF, CCOO-CGTP)
- examining the impact of restructuring on the local/regional economy and exploring innovative ways of collaborating with other actors at this level (LO-D-CISL)
- exploring possible implications of EU enlargement for economic restructuring, notably the perspective of enterprises relocating to new Member States (SAK-EAKL)
- exploring major structural changes in the public sector and dealing with the shifts in responsibilities between central, regional and local government (EPSU, ETUCE)
- redesigning trade union practices, so as to provide support for trade union officers and

representatives to match the changing economic landscape (ÖGB-TUC)

- developing web-based training materials on the subject of outsourcing (TUC-TCO)

and last but not least

- influencing policy-making at the European level, notably on the Services Directive (UNI-E)



*Participants at one of the TRACE preparation workshops*

Project partners will continue to work on their own specific projects and to prepare a series of tools and policy papers for mainstreaming within their own trade union organisations. These will be presented at a series of review workshops – on 15-18 June for the confederations in Turin, and on 19-20 June for the European Industry Federations in Brussels.

The TRACE team will further develop the TRACE website, available in English and French at [www.traceproject.org](http://www.traceproject.org). It includes a database of materials, which can be searched according to sectors, countries and themes.

A final conference, to be held on 17-18 November, will provide an occasion to present the results of the project to a wider public.

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# Reaching an understanding across cultures

*By Jean-Claude le Douaron, Education Officer*

**T**raining courses on cross-cultural communication for members of European Works Councils (EWCs) aim to help trade unionists from different countries and cultural backgrounds understand what makes their colleagues tick, and how they can work together to reach consensus in the interests of workers employed by the same company in different Member States.

The courses, organised by ETUI-REHS Education Department, ask participants some tough questions. The 'answers' are not always a matter of individual choice, but have to be negotiated with other course members in small working groups. The purpose of the exercises is to make EWC representatives reflect on how much their national trade union cultures impact on how they behave, and how different other members' expectations can be.

For example, EWC members on a recent course were given a fictional account of a situation arising within the European Works Council of a US-based multinational corporation with activities in four EU Member States. 'Peter', the EWC secretary and worker representative on the company's supervisory board, receives news from his local management about company restructuring in Europe. This will bring the closure of less productive plants, and a cut of 20% in the workforce.

## Conflict of loyalties

The information is highly confidential, and the worker representatives are forbidden to pass it on. The exercise focuses on the conflict of loyalties affecting trade unionists in this situation. Does Peter convey the news to EWC members in other countries, or does he respect the trust placed in him by his local management and prioritise long-term good relations between the company and its staff?



In the scenario, Peter eventually passes on the information, and is sacked when management identifies the source of the leak. Reactions from the three other protagonists in the story – a national trade union official and three other EWC members – vary, with one calling for industrial action to win his reinstatement, and another condemning Peter's EWC colleague 'David' for having identified him as the source.

## Getting consensus

Course participants were asked to assess who acted in the best way, and who in the worst. They also had to guess which European country each of the characters comes from. In small working groups, the participants then shared views and tried to reach a common verdict: "It is about negotiating values in a cross-cultural environment."

The exercise revealed very different responses. Some groups took the view that the EWC is largely an advisory body that should prioritise good relations with central management, and that Peter endangered future goodwill by betraying the trust placed in him. Others thought loyalty to other trade unionists is the prime consideration, and that the EWC represents the core of a transnational network designed to defend workers' rights throughout the company. Even ideas on the home countries of the protagonists varied widely.

The course participants are members of an EWC set up in 1997. Yet the exercise showed clearly that they still have a lot to learn about each other's trade union cultures.



*Euro-demonstration in Strasbourg:  
European consensus gets results  
© European Parliament.*



# More and better jobs and the Lisbon Strategy

*By Antoine Cochet, former Education Officer*

**M**ore and better jobs and the Lisbon Strategy was one of the political priorities of the European Trade Union Confederation for the 2005 training programme of the Education Department of the new institute (ETUI-REHS).

Three courses were planned, in Budapest in November 2005, in Athens in February 2006 and in Sládkovičovo (Slovak Republic) in March 2006. The programme and the specific course in Budapest had as its basic aim: "to equip train trade union officers from the national and regional level to implement the European Employment Strategy more effectively". In order to achieve this aim, the participants needed: "to have an in-depth understanding of the European Employment Strategy; to be familiar with the role that trade unions can play in the process at the national and regional level, and to develop the skills to influence this process".

Twenty-three participants from 11 different countries and a total of 20 national trade union confederations and three European Industry Federations (EMF, ETUF: TCL and EMCEF) attended the first course in November 2005 in Budapest.

The key aspects of the course focused on: *What is the Lisbon Strategy?; The role of the social partners and the national action plans; the concept of competitiveness; Social Europe as a factor in production; and the ETUC, the new Lisbon Strategy and the integrated guidelines.*

From the many discussions that took place it became clear, *inter alia*, that the failure of the Lisbon Strategy is due not to any shortage of structural reforms, but rather to the fact that European macroeconomic policy is unbalanced. In the section devoted to ETUC strategy, the participants showed considerable interest in the analysis and discussion of the role of the European Central Bank, fiscal policy, the rediscovery of the European Social Model as a strong force for productivity and innovation, and the impact of the deterioration of working conditions.



*Antoine Cochet: farewell after 13 years*

## Farewell Antoine

**W**e are bidding farewell to Antoine Cochet, who has worked tirelessly for ETUCO and latterly the Education Department of ETUI-REHS over the last thirteen years.

Antoine, a committed European trade unionist, has been central to the successful development of European trade union education and the European Trade Union College.

He has been responsible for organising many European courses, on a variety of different themes of central interest to European trade unionists: collective bargaining, social protection, recruiting and organising, freedom of movement of workers, more and better jobs, and improving social dialogue.

He has transformed an in-depth young officers' course into an annual opportunity to train future European trade union leaders. He has also set up courses on project management, thus enabling European trade unionists to understand how to run successful European projects.

He has contributed to the development of European approaches to the delivery of trade union education, either through training trainers initiatives or through participation in projects that have been significant in laying the foundations for ETUCO – now ETUI-REHS – training and learning methodologies.

He is not leaving Brussels, nor indeed the trade union world, because he will be going to the Workers' Group in the European Economic and Social Committee.

## Networking trainers

The political and socio-economic upheaval in South East Europe has thrown up a series of immense challenges. As the accompanying article by Valerica Dumitrescu explains, trade unions in the region are faced with a radically changed landscape, and their trade union officers and representatives have some very clear training needs: understanding the impact of recent economic reforms and the ways in which the trade unions can respond.

As the article points out, trainers play a key role in designing and delivering the appropriate training. However, for them to succeed often in difficult circumstances, they too need support. Hence the role of SEELEN in enabling them to network with each other – to learn from each other's experiences, to develop curricula, and to develop and share materials.

The Education Department of the ETUI-REHS is engaged in similar networking activities – providing basic training at the European level for trainers and regular supplementary opportunities for them to update their knowledge and skills. One such networking initiative has produced a manual on social protection that is presented on page six of this edition of *Agora* and will be used in a second developmental phase later this year as a centrepiece for a dissemination workshop for other trainers. Another network, initially set up for trainers from Central and Eastern Europe to work on the question of EU integration, will be expanded geographically and thematically to cater for some of the needs of trainers coming from South East Europe.

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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.

## South-Eastern Labour Education Network strengthens Balkan trade unions

By Valerica Dumitrescu, SEELEN project leader

September 2001 saw the launch of a project aimed at strengthening the outreach of the Labour Educators' Network to trade unions in South East Europe, in an ongoing effort to contribute to greater regional cooperation and stability.



The Solidarity Center (a non-profit organisation set up to support democratic trade unions around the world) and the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) developed the project with financial support from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).

The South-Eastern European Labour Educators' Network (SEELEN) was formed by trade union confederations from nine countries, entities, and territories: **Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro, Romania and Serbia**. In total, 18 trade union confederations were part of this network.

At the beginning, the project focused more on the impact of economic reforms in the countries of South East Europe, and on creating a network of trainers on economic issues. Now it comprises trainers on general trade union issues.

### Main activities

Roundtables serve to strengthen regional cooperation and promote the sharing of information and experiences among different trade unions. During the project period, eight roundtables were held, with over 300 participants. These

Valerica Dumitrescu: building regional cooperation

## n Europe tutors' ngthens unions



*Participants at a SEELEN trainers' workshop in Albania*

meetings focused on the themes of re-qualification, job placement of redundant employees and trade union advocacy, post-privatisation issues such as how unions can serve the needs of early retirees or young workers (an issue related to the informal economy), free access to information, and strategic planning for organising.

The project also developed cross-border visits, organised more as workshops. Cross-border visits offered an opportunity to examine some issues in greater detail, thus contributing to the development of different educational curricula.

Smaller-group work has enhanced the network's ability to complete curriculum modules on trade union education, by enabling participants to break down complex topics into segments that can be dealt with during a short period of time, and by removing or diminishing the language barrier. Network coordinators will use the curricula developed through the network to increase the number of trade union education programmes offered by their national trade union organisations.

During the last programme year, 2004-2005, educational curricula were developed on the following topics: social dialogue, the informal economy, labour/management partnership, advanced training for leaders on democratic unionism and – more recently – European integration.

Most of the activities developed by the network were supported by experts from other trade union confederations (Poland, Czech Republic, Turkey, USA) or from international organisations (ILO, ETUC and its institutes, ICFTU).

During the second programme year, the network provided limited assistance to help member unions in Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina to develop or improve their own

training programmes through the use of trainer exchanges in train-the-trainer initiatives.

### Website – an invaluable tool

The need to share materials among the network members led to the idea of developing a website. The SEELEN website has become a valuable resource for member unions to track and publish information on their meetings and on the regional economic reform developments they have discussed. The website will continue to provide a place for member unions to exchange information about their education programmes and areas of expertise. The development of this website has also made information accessible to a broader domestic and international audience of trade union trainers, union leaders, union members, civic and human rights groups, students and researchers, and other internet users. In the period from the site's first posting in July 2002 till July 2005, the SEELEN site received 67 397 visits, or 5 167 visits per month.

In addition, the project has begun to develop an electronic library of educational materials on economic reform – the first source of electronic information that draws on educational resources from countries throughout the region, as well as from international donor sources. Now more general education materials – manuals, articles, curricula and guides – can be found.

This network is open to all trade union members interested in education as a priority for trade union development.

For more information about the SEELEN activities and materials, please visit the website: [www.seelabored.com](http://www.seelabored.com)

# New training guide on social protection in Europe

*By Georges Schnell, Education Officer*

This new training guide is an original piece of work, produced with technical support from the Education Department of the ETUI-REHS and devised by a team of Euro-trainers and experts on social protection at European level under the overall guidance of Henry Lourdelle, senior assistant at the ETUC, and Georges Schnell, Education Officer.

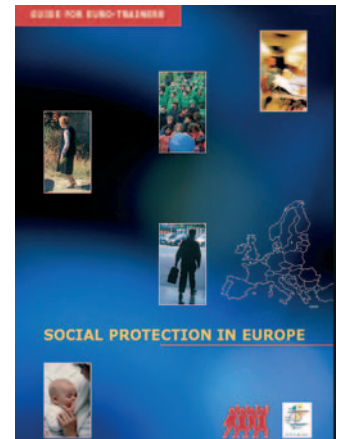
It is not, therefore, the 'umpteenth' document describing and comparing the various social protection systems that exist in the 25 EU Member States. It is first and foremost a tool for activists, addressing the real situations facing women and men throughout the EU and aiming to facilitate:

- awareness of the approaches and thinking underlying European social protection systems
- analysis of the structures and impact of ongoing reforms
- a better understanding of the strategic objectives of the European trade union movement and how these can be pursued at national level

- the broadest possible mobilisation in support of these objectives and the fundamental values of the social protection systems, such as solidarity and social cohesion

The guide employs two main approaches:

- **An initial general approach** to the issues, in the form of information sheets outlining the general structures of social protection in Europe
- **A second, more detailed approach**, in the form of training activities, aimed at increasing awareness of the issues and challenges underlying the various social protection systems. These training activities can be used together or separately.



# Using the European Commission's new budget lines

*By Claudio Stanzani, Managing Director SDA*

The training course for project managers, organised and managed jointly by ETUI-REHS Education and the Social Development Agency (SDA), has become a regular and valued annual event.

This year's course was held in Brussels from 8 to 10 February 2006 at the headquarters of the European Trade Union Confederation. It attracted 24 participants from different countries and trade union organisations throughout Europe.

The key objective was to train a new group of European trade union officers in correctly interpreting the priorities of the different budget lines, with a view to obtaining financial support for activities such as meetings, training events and studies. Topics included: culture and practices of the social dialogue in Europe; information and consultation rights of

workers in multinational enterprises; the creation and functioning of European Works Councils; and the involvement of workers in the European Society (SE).



*Silvana Pennella, Education Officer, and Claudio Stanzani*



## Language training for European trade unionists: a guide

*ETUI-REHS Education, 2005*

This guide describes the concept of language training for trade unionists, and defines the target group and its particular language learning needs. It provides curricula guidelines for four levels of language training. It also outlines a set of methodological principles for various aspects of language training, and for different types of activities, and provides examples. Each of these files can be viewed and downloaded separately: at the end of each file, a link [contents] will take you back to the contents page. The guide will shortly be available on a CD-ROM, which will include the audio files for listening activities.

For more details and orders:

[www.education.etui-rehs.org/en/resources/language/guide.cfm](http://www.education.etui-rehs.org/en/resources/language/guide.cfm)

## Framework agreement on work-related stress

*ETUC, 2005*

This handy 40-page brochure sets out the text and main components of the recent agreement between the social partners (ETUC, UNICE/UEAPME and CEEP) on stress at work. It outlines some of the key debating points and main EU legislation (directives) on aspects of work-related stress.

Available as a hard copy in English or French, or download from:

English version: [www.etuc.org/a/1792](http://www.etuc.org/a/1792)

French version: [www.etuc.org/a/1793](http://www.etuc.org/a/1793)

## Changes in national collective bargaining systems since 1990

*T. Schulten, WSI, 2005*

This comparative study for the Dublin Foundation reviews the development of national collective bargaining systems since 1990 in the EU Member States (except Luxembourg and Portugal) plus Bulgaria, Norway and Romania. It examines the legal framework for collective bargaining; national data and documentation on collective agreements; the basic features of the countries' bargaining systems such as bargaining levels, coverage, and extension procedures; changes since the early 1990s; and the views of the social partners and political actors on the future development of collective bargaining. The report is available from the Foundation's website:

English version:

[www.eiro.eurofound.eu.int/2005/03/study/tn0503102s.html](http://www.eiro.eurofound.eu.int/2005/03/study/tn0503102s.html)

French version:

[www.eiro.eurofound.eu.int/2005/03/study/index\\_fr.html](http://www.eiro.eurofound.eu.int/2005/03/study/index_fr.html)

The author has also produced a useful PowerPoint presentation of some of the main findings and statistics in his report. It can be downloaded from the Education Department resource centre database (please use 'collective bargaining' in the keyword search):

<http://ert.etuc.org/ert/index.cfm?fuseaction=home.&lang=EN>

## Transfer: Sectoral Social Dialogue

*ETUI-REHS, 2005*

A number of sector-specific reports from different sectors ranging from the manufacturing heartland of industrial relations (e.g. shipbuilding, chemicals) to the different strands of the service economy (e.g. commerce, finance, private security) and public services, offer qualitative perceptions of the social dialogue, analysed in turn by its proponents and critics.

Other articles consider the interaction of the sectoral social dialogue with related processes and actors, such as the cross-sectoral social dialogue, the European Employment Strategy, the coordination of sectoral collective bargaining strategies, civil society, and emerging forms of local 'societal' dialogue and territorial social dialogue.

For more details and orders:

[www.etui-rehs.org/publications/transfer/2005/3\\_2005\\_sectoral\\_social\\_dialogue](http://www.etui-rehs.org/publications/transfer/2005/3_2005_sectoral_social_dialogue)

## Glossary of labour law and industrial relations (with special reference to the European Union)

*ILO, 2005*

This 287-page, easy-to-use glossary provides substantive entries and cross-references between international labour standards, EU directives, resolutions and regulations. It also explores the most relevant issues surrounding the debate on the social dimension of globalisation and includes entries on current achievements, ideas and programmes, as highlighted in the 2004 report of the Director-General of the ILO on the World Commission on the *Social Dimension of Globalisation*.

Price €33

[www.ilo.org/public/english/support/publ/xtextle.htm#b7318](http://www.ilo.org/public/english/support/publ/xtextle.htm#b7318)

## The World Trade Organisation: Stakeholder of Globalisation

*WCL, 2005*

This *Manual on the functioning of the WTO* was produced by the socio-economic department of the World Confederation of Labour and describes this controversial international institution with a strong neo-liberal policy and alleged lack of transparency and democracy in its negotiation and decision-making procedures. This brochure was produced as part of a programme aimed at strengthening the capacities of trade unions in the countries of the South.

Available in French, English and Spanish from:

[info@cmt-wcl.org](mailto:info@cmt-wcl.org)

or to download from the WCL website:

[www.cmtwcl.org/cmt/ewcm.nsf/\\_/7CD4AE9B1BDFCF89C1256EDA0053DB38?OpenDocument](http://www.cmtwcl.org/cmt/ewcm.nsf/_/7CD4AE9B1BDFCF89C1256EDA0053DB38?OpenDocument)

## May 2006

### English for CEEC trade unionists II

AIMS	To enable trade union officers from different Central and Eastern European countries with a basic level of English to operate more effectively for professional purposes in a transnational English-speaking environment
PARTICIPANTS	Trade union officers or representatives from CEEC trade union organisations with at least a basic knowledge of English
WORKING LANGUAGE	English
DATES	13 – 20 May 2006
COURSE REF. N°	652.08.LAN

## June 2006

### English for European trade unionists (intermediate/advanced) I

AIMS	To enable trade union officers with at least an intermediate level of English to operate more effectively for professional purposes in a transnational environment
PARTICIPANTS	Trade union officers or representatives with at least an intermediate knowledge of English
WORKING LANGUAGE	English
DATES	5 – 15 June 2006
COURSE REF. N°	652.04.LAN

### Free movement of persons and services in the European road sector (3 days)

AIMS	To understand the latest legislation on working time and the posting of workers To understand the phenomenon of 'cabotage' To shape a European trade union strategy and the necessary means for its implementation
PARTICIPANTS	Trade union officers and representatives from ETF affiliated organisations and who are responsible for collective bargaining questions
WORKING LANGUAGES	Czech, English, Polish
DATES	11 – 13 June 2006
COURSE REF. N°	652.21.ECB

### Networks and synergies in UNI-Europa – property services sector (3 days)

AIMS	To develop European trade union networks in maintenance and private security for collective bargaining purposes
PARTICIPANTS	Trade union officers and representatives from UNI-Europa affiliated organisations and who are responsible for collective bargaining questions
WORKING LANGUAGES	3
DATES	19 – 21 June 2006
COURSE REF. N°	652.40.ECB

## September 2006

### Coordinating collective bargaining in the European metalworking sector (4 days)

AIMS	To organise a first evaluation of the objectives of the EMF Common Demand on training 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 prepare the EMF congress and the debate on future perspectives and the collective bargaining work programme of EMF 2007-2011
PARTICIPANTS	Trade union officers and representatives from EMF affiliated organisations and who are responsible for collective bargaining questions
WORKING LANGUAGES	3
DATES	17 – 20 September 2006
COURSE REF. N°	652.23.ECB

### How to reinforce social dialogue in the education sector in the new Member States (3 days)

AIMS	To discuss ETUCE activities on social dialogue and the implementation of the Action Plan on "Strengthening social dialogue in education" To map the employers in the education sector To define adequate legal frameworks for social dialogue in new Member States To decentralise negotiations
PARTICIPANTS	Presidents and General Secretaries of ETUCE organisations from new Member States
WORKING LANGUAGES	3
DATES	22 – 24 September 2006
COURSE REF. N°	652.20.SOC

## October 2006

### Consolidating a European trade union network for health and safety (3 days)

AIMS	To reinforce a European network of trade union experts by defining a trade union strategy on health and safety for the period 2007-2012 Trade union officers responsible for health and safety
PARTICIPANTS	3
WORKING LANGUAGES	3
DATES	8 – 10 October 2006
COURSE REF. N°	652.43.ENL

## November 2006

### Coordinating collective bargaining at the European level (3 days)

AIMS	To examine ways of coordinating collective bargaining effectively in the EMCEF sector, notably in the area of life-long learning (access to training, content of training, recognition of qualifications)
PARTICIPANTS	Trade union officers and representatives from EMCEF affiliated organisations and who are responsible for collective bargaining questions
WORKING LANGUAGES	3
DATES	10 – 12 November 2006
COURSE REF. N°	652.22.ECB

### English for European trade unionists (intermediate/advanced) II

AIMS	To enable trade union officers with at least an intermediate level of English to operate more effectively for professional purposes in a transnational environment
PARTICIPANTS	Trade union officers or representatives with at least an intermediate knowledge of English
WORKING LANGUAGE	English
DATES	27 November – 7 December 2006
COURSE REF. N°	652.05.LAN

## December 2006

### Working and living conditions in correctional services in Europe: collective bargaining issues (3 days)

AIMS	To examine trends in working conditions and trade union rights of prison staff including prison wardens/officers, as well as social, educational and probation workers To discuss collective bargaining systems and the role of social dialogue in improving prison staff's working conditions To discuss trade union responses to prison reforms and effects on working conditions, collective bargaining structures and trade union rights To assess implementation of EU social and equality directives in prison and correctional services
WORKING LANGUAGES	3
DATES	8 – 10 December 2006
COURSE REF. N°	652.24.ECB