

AGORA

TRADE UNION EDUCATION IN EUROPE



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

What should be done with the EU Constitution?

In cooperation with the European Trade Union Confederation, the Education Department of the ETUI-REHS organised a workshop in Berlin on *The EU constitution – Future ETUC strategy*, attended by trade union officers from all major EU Member States.

In his opening remarks, Jeff Bridgford (ETUI-REHS) underlined the fact that the period of reflection proposed by the European Council is drawing to an end, and the ETUC needs to be active in the next round of discussions to ensure that the interests of European trade unionists are properly defended.

for example the introduction of significant measures on economic governance, environmental policy and migration that would reassure public opinion of the value of constitutional changes.

Two labour lawyers, Professor Brian Bercusson (University of London) and Stefan Clauwert (ETUI-REHS), analysed the existing situation and proposed possible options, such as the adoption of a social declaration or social protocol. These options formed the basis of a lively debate with the workshop participants.

Trade union demands

Michael Sommer, President of the German DGB, stressed the importance of balancing discussions on the EU Constitution with the introduction of policies to respond to European trade union demands. The EU needs to have a 'social face' if it is to continue to command support from trade union members.

ETUC General Secretary John Monks concluded by explaining why the ETUC supported the draft Constitutional Treaty. It reinforces social values and principles such as solidarity, equality and non-discrimination, as well as social objectives such as full employment and the social market economy; it recognises the roles of the social partners and incorporates the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights; it also establishes a right of initiative for citizens.

These advances must be safeguarded in any future discussions, but they are not enough. There also need to be concrete measures taken to tackle unemployment and to defend the European social model, subjects that will be at the centre of European trade union debates in the run-up to the next ETUC Congress in Seville in May 2007.



Strategy debate: Michael Sommer, John Monks and Jeff Bridgford

Wolfgang Kowalsky (ETUC) set the scene, reminding workshop participants of the background to the Constitution and the ETUC's strategy. Representatives of the Austrian, Finnish and German governments described the positions taken recently by the Member States within the Council of Ministers. It was left to Andrew Duff MEP, one of the co-authors of a recent European Parliament report on the subject, to make a series of concrete proposals:

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Stepping up the fight against discrimination



Most trade unions have introduced policies to counter unfair treatment of women, and measures to implement them. But as yet, not all take firm and coherent action against other forms of discrimination.

A seminar on Trade Unions and the Fight against Discrimination, in Cyprus, in March 2006, set out to help remedy this situation by raising awareness among trade unionists of European Union laws on the issue, and by examining and sharing good practice.

The event was organised jointly by the ETUI-REHS Education Department and UNI Europa, represented by Jean-Claude Le Douaron and UNI Europa General Secretary Bernadette Ségol respectively.

Working groups offered a forum for participants to share information about what their own unions are doing to fight discrimination in all its guises. Although most if not all the countries represented have laws to implement EU Directives in this field, putting them into practice may not be so easy.

Fevzi Hussein, from the UK Communication Workers' Union, introduced a working group session that set out to tackle specific questions, including how to encourage recruitment of ethnic minority and migrant workers, and raising awareness among the membership generally. Participants discussed how to deal with members who become involved in far-right activities: in several countries they can be expelled from the union.



Fevzi Hussein in the working group



Bernadette Ségol chairs the session

Common obstacles

The groups identified several widespread problems. Gender discrimination is by now recognised as unacceptable, but many trade unions need to formulate action plans to counter unfair treatment on a range of other grounds, including race, ethnic origin, religion, sexual orientation, age and disability.

Furthermore, trade union decision-making bodies still fail to reflect the diverse composition of their memberships or the workers they represent.

In Denmark, said Anthony Silvester, the 3f union has reached an agreement with employers on measures to involve minorities in the labour market.

The seminar produced a number of ideas for action.

At the European level:

- UNI Europa could set up a European network to gather and disseminate information (including examples of good practice in collective bargaining), to organise activities (such as conferences and seminars), and to lobby EU institutions and decision-makers.
- Once or twice a year the network could organise meetings to involve decision-makers from affiliated unions and representatives from minority groups within their membership.

At the national level:

- Network members could organise training activities and events. They could help to ensure trade union education curricula cover this issue, and disseminate information on good practice in other countries.

Trade union activities on sustainable development

By Georges Schnell, Education Officer

The ETUC Congress decided that supporting the ecological, economic and social dimensions of sustainable development should be a priority objective.

Together with affiliated organisations and civil society partners, the ETUC intends to take part in defining solutions at all possible levels, including through social dialogue and in European Works Councils (EWCs). Developing a trade union strategy that links the social and environmental dimensions of globalisation is a major challenge for the European trade union movement.

The Education Department of ETUI-REHS has been participating in this debate and assisting affiliated organisations in developing their strategies, by providing officers with training, and trainers with the skills required to create and carry out national and/or European training activities on this issue.

An initial four-day training course took place in Gdansk, on 23-26 March 2006, under the joint responsibility of the ETUC and the ETUI-REHS Education Department, with the aim of preparing officers and trainers to implement a trade union pedagogical strategy on sustainable development, in line with their organisation's project and within the ETUC guidelines.

During these four days, 17 participants from 15 member organisations examined the various risks and challenges posed by sustainable development, with the assistance of experts from affiliated organisations and the ETUI-REHS.



Major challenges

In a first debate on the subject of risks, Estafania Blount (CC.OO.) compared her views with the analyses of participants and their organisations. The following day – with the assistance of Jean Pierre Bompard (CFDT), Tony Musu (ETUI-REHS) and Sophie Dupressoir (ETUC) – the group took a closer look at major challenges in terms of food safety, chemical risks and climate change.

Finally, on the last day, Joël Decaillon outlined ETUC strategies and the claims made by ETUC-affiliated organisations. All the debates were very instructive and allowed participants to back up their learning through participating in group activities and writing a report.

The training course ended in good spirits and sunny weather with the development of a draft work plan and a personal action and organisation plan by all participants.

A new training activity has already been scheduled in the 2006 programme. It will be conducted in partnership with the Workers' Bureau of the ILO and carried out in its training centre in Turin. It will enable trade unionists from Europe and Latin America to exchange information and experience from two different continental perspectives.



Recognition for the skills of European trade unionists

There are no formal examinations to be passed, no official assignments to be done and no specific diplomas to be acquired to become a trade union officer or representative. So how can trade unionists demonstrate that they have the knowledge and skills to do the job, and how do trade union organisations assess the quality of potential candidates? One way is to make use of the European Trade Union Passport, which is presented in the accompanying article.

This passport enables trade unionists to monitor their own training. They can identify the skills they have acquired, whether on the job, or through formal recognised training or non-formal trade union education. They can keep their own training records in one coherent place and list their own achievements. This in turn provides some form of skills recognition, which can then be used as a part of their individual career development. The passport also allows them to identify the skills they lack, the ones they may need to develop in the future.

This passport is the fruit of a European project which has applied a comparative methodology to a series of different national situations, and as such it provides an opportunity for skills acquired in one country to be understood and recognised in others – an aspect that is increasingly important within the context of transnational trade union bodies, such as European Works Councils.

Jeff Bridgford

Director, Education Department

ETUI-REHS

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Director: Jeff Bridgford

Bld du Roi Albert II, 5, bte 7, B-1210 Brussels, Belgium

Tel: +32 2 224 0530, Fax: +32 2 224 0520

E-mail: education@etui-rehs.org

Website: <http://education.etui-rehs.org/>

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.

The European Trade Union Passport: a tool for validating the skills of trade union officers

By **Ulisses Garrido, Michel Rocca and Georges Séb**

The European Trade Union Passport (PECS) is the culmination of two years of work by a European partnership comprising social partners and academics.

The European trade union confederations directly involved in creating the passport are CC.OO. (Spain), CGTP (Portugal) and MSZOSZ (Hungary). The universities and PECS partner research bodies taking part are the Institute for Social Studies (*Institut d'Etudes Sociales* – IES) of the *Université Pierre Mendès France* in Grenoble, which was responsible for overall coordination of the work, the *Società Ricerca e Formazione* (Italy) and the Working Lives Research Institute (UK). The PECS received financial support from the European Community (via the Leonardo da Vinci programme). It was presented on 16 December 2005 in Paris in the context of the Europass conference, which was attended by 260 people.



What is the European Trade Union Passport?

PECS (2003-2005) is the extension of a programme previously set up within the same partnership and piloted by the IES (VALSYNDIC: 1998-2001), which highlighted the many skills that trade union officers already possess, often acquiring them through campaigning. Several seminars took place between 2003 and 2005 in Spain, France, Great Britain and Hungary. The passport takes the form of an easy-to-use CD-ROM (of which 1,500 copies have been made). It is available in six languages, English, French, Hungarian, Italian, Portuguese and Spanish.

Trade Union Passport (PECS): Creating de

astien



The PECS project team in Grenoble

The CD-ROM enables users (priority users are trade union officers) to audit their skills (knowledge, abilities, training courses undertaken, skills acquired) with a view to engaging in personal projects or professional development.

A four-pronged structure

The PECS summarises all skills regardless of how they have been acquired. In addition to initial training, many skills are gained through experience. Many trade union officers have taken training courses within their organisation or have themselves conducted trade union training sessions. Moreover, their role means that they automatically occupy a position on the communications interface. The passport pays special attention to the benefits of their experiences in these areas.

In order to give greater recognition to these skills, the PECS is structured into four sections. The first enables individuals to set down a chronological overview of their status and the career positions they have held. The second deals with both the various diplomas, certificates and qualifications gained and training courses followed (excluding trade union training).

The third section summarises skills developed through trade union training. In addition to a chronological account of all training taken, this section enables individuals to go into further specific details of skills acquired in communication and learning. These are two key areas in trade union training in several European countries. Two special systems had to be developed in order to detect and assess these skills.

The final section of the passport is for individuals to give details of the knowledge and skills they have acquired in the context of trade union activities and via the various responsibilities they

have held. This knowledge and these skills may have been gained in many different circumstances: through autonomous study, voluntary work, trade union and associated responsibilities and so on.

How useful is the passport?

As a general rule, the PECS enables individuals to monitor their training and skills development throughout their lives. It helps them to prepare a skills assessment, validate the abilities they have acquired, compile a CV or support retraining or a bid for promotion. In specific terms, the PECS plays a central role in giving higher recognition to formal and informal learning among an atypical group, namely trade union officers. In this sense, it helps to strengthen the trade union role in social dialogue.

Further information:

The PECS CD-ROM is available from the IES or any of the other project partners:

IES
UFR ESE - BP 47
F-38040 Grenoble CEDEX 9
France
Tel: +33 4 76 82 56 20

Or find out more from the websites:

<http://web.upmf-grenoble.fr/pecs/>

www.europass-france.org/espace_public/actualites/actualites.htm

New English training materials for European trade unionists

By Jacky Barry, Languages Adviser

The Education Department of ETUI-REHS has long recognised the importance of foreign language training, which has always formed a significant part of its programme.

The delivery of courses and the publication of language training materials have aided easier communication between trade unionists from across the EU. The recent Language Trainers Guide (<http://education.etui-rehs.org/en/resources/language/guide.cfm>) – a guide to good practice for organisations wishing to introduce language training – is a further contribution.

It is now more than a decade since ETUCO published 10 units of English language training materials, funded by a LINGUA project, for upper intermediate and advanced level learners, since this was the group most likely to need to use the language for professional purposes.



The Health and Safety unit was successfully piloted at a recent language-training course run by the Education Department for the Freudenberg European Works Council in Budapest

These materials were the first of their kind to be designed specifically for the trade union target group, and there were significant differences to the commercial materials available that concentrated on English for business purposes. *English for European trade unionists* was based on a participative and communicative approach to language teaching and learning, and was designed to increase learners' confidence and autonomy in the language, as well as promoting shared responsibility and peer support within the learning group, through a range of activities based on authentic resources relevant to trade unionists.

Changing times

Since these materials first appeared in 1995, ETUCO (now the Education Department of ETUI-REHS) has run dozens of courses, and the original units are now out of print. Times have changed, and busy trade union officers and representatives spend more time with their computers these days – so we are currently producing new, web-based versions of a series of units which will in this way be more accessible to a greater number of people. The collective and collaborative principles upon which the original materials were based have not changed, but there are now more opportunities for autonomous computer-mediated learning, and the study guides that accompany these units provide for this.

The seven new units are:

- Introductory unit: Language-learning strategies for European trade unionists
- Three Level 3 units (upper intermediate): Trade union organisation; Trade unions and Europe; Health and Safety
- Three Level 4 units (advanced): Working women; Workers of the World; European Works Councils

The units will be available free of charge on our website from July 2006.



Language learners from the Freudenberg EWC visit the Kecskemet plant

Transfer 4/2005: Innovations for union renewal

ETUI-REHS Research, December 2005

This quarterly edition examines the major challenges facing trade unions from, for example, the reconfiguration of global production, neo-liberal economic policies, changes to the character of work and the shift from manufacturing to services.

Further details and order forms available on:

www.etui-rehs.org/publications/transfer/2005/4_2005_innovations_for_union_renewal

Benchmarking Working Europe 2006 – The European Social Model under pressure

ETUI-REHS Research, 2006

This sixth edition of *Benchmarking Working Europe* examines some of the key challenges to the European Social Model, in areas like macroeconomic policy, employment, wages, working time, and European social dialogue.

For information:

www.etuirehs.org/publications/benchmarking_working_europe/benchmarking_working_europe_2006

The European Company – Prospects for worker board-level participation in the enlarged EU

Edited by Norbert Kluge and Michael Stollt, SDA and ETUI-REHS, 2006

The new booklet provides information on the European company, as well as the different national systems of worker participation on supervisory or administrative boards throughout the EU.

For information and orders:

Pierre Nguyen, SDA publications service, Tel: +32 2 224 04 66

E-mail: pnguyen@etuc.org or sda-asbl@etuc.org

www.sda-asbl.org/

European works councils and the OECD guidelines for multinational enterprises

TUAC, 2006

Training materials on the OECD guidelines, specifically for EWCs. A basic manual is available for downloading in four languages, English, French, German and Czech:

www.tuac.org/statemen/communiq/TUAC%20training%20En.pdf

www.tuac.org/statemen/communiq/TUAC%20training%20Fr.pdf

www.tuac.org/statemen/communiq/TUAC%20training%20Ge.pdf

www.tuac.org/statemen/communiq/TUAC%20training%20CZ.pdf

A CD-Rom is also available, with sets of slides for use by trainers in the four language versions.

For information and orders:

TUAC-OECD, 15 rue Laperouse, F-75016 Paris, France

Tel: +33 155 37 37 37, Fax: +33 147 54 98 28

E-mail: tuac@tuac.org

Your new EWC agreement – what's in, what's not? A guide for workers' representatives

Social Development Agency, September 2005

A practical guide to negotiating and renegotiating EWC agreements, coming just over 10 years since the adoption of the EWC Directive in 1994. Available as a 90-page booklet (English only) or CD-ROM in four languages (English, French, German and Italian).

Free of charge from:

Pierre Nguyen, SDA publications service, Tel: +32 2 224 04 66

E-mail: pnguyen@etuc.org or sda-asbl@etuc.org

European industrial relations dictionary

European Foundation, 2005

This English-only dictionary lists the most commonly used terms in employment and industrial relations at EU level, with almost 300 alphabetical entries. It follows a series of national industrial relations glossaries published in the 1990s and still available online, though not updated:

www.eurofound.eu.int/emire/emire.html

The dictionary is available on CD-ROM or on the Foundation's website:

www.eurofound.eu.int/areas/industrialrelations/dictionary/index.htm

Labour rights education: world maps

ICTUR, 2006

The International Centre for Trade Union Rights has produced a series of world maps to support education and campaigns around the ILO and the core labour standards. Four different maps are available, covering child labour, forced labour, equality at work, and freedom of association.

They are available in English, Spanish or French

€8 euros each, or €150 for a set of 50 maps.

For information and orders:

International Centre for Trade Union Rights,

177 Abbeville Road, London, SW4 9RL, UK

Tel: +44 207 498 4700, Fax: +44 207 498 0611

www.ictur.org

E-mail: ictur@ictur.org

The EU Temp Trade: temporary agency work across the European Union

TUC, 2005

This topical report looks at the rights of temporary agency workers in the EU, in light of the continuing failure to reach agreement on a Temporary Agency Work Directive.

The report can be downloaded (in PDF format) from:

www.tuc.org.uk/extras/eu_agency.pdf

Hard copies can be ordered from the TUC

Tel: +44 207 467 1370

E-mail: smills@tuc.org.uk

For information: Chidi King

E-mail: cking@tuc.org.uk

October 2006

Free movement of workers (5 days)

AIMS	To influence the national legislation process on regulating issues concerning the free movement of workers To exchange best practice on open labour markets To develop a national action plan to implement the recommendations of the European Commission and the ETUC
PARTICIPANTS	National trade union officers responsible for integration and labour market issues or coming from a sector/region affected by the free movement of workers
WORKING LANGUAGES	English, German, Hungarian and Polish
DATES	4 – 7 October 2006
COURSE REF. N°	652.13.ENL

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

AIMS	To build social dialogue capacity for the trade unions representing professional and managerial staff in the new Member States, especially concerning the anticipation and management of change
PARTICIPANTS	Professional and Managerial Staff (PMS) trade union representatives from new EU Member States
WORKING LANGUAGES	English, Russian, Lithuanian and Polish
DATES	8 – 10 October 2006
COURSE REF. N°	652.48.SOC

Social dialogue in the European postal sector (3 days)

AIMS	To compare industrial relations and collective bargaining within the postal sector To examine implementation of EU legislation To propose ways of implementing good practice and approaching employers and government, and draw up a plan for discussion with employers in the EU postal social dialogue committee
PARTICIPANTS	Trade union officers and representatives from UNI-Europa affiliated organisations who are responsible for collective bargaining questions in the postal sector
WORKING LANGUAGES	English, French, Russian and Czech
DATES	20 – 22 October 2006
COURSE REF. N°	652.25.ECB

November 2006

Networking on human resource management in trade unions in the metalworking sector (3 days)

AIMS	To analyse the impact of changes in the trade union environment To assess the consequences of mergers for trade union staff To examine the development of human resource policies to facilitate adaptation to changes
PARTICIPANTS	Trade union employees with responsibilities in the field of staff recruitment, staff development and HR management
WORKING LANGUAGES	English, German and one other
DATES	6 – 8 November 2006
COURSE REF. N°	652.49

Coordinating collective bargaining at the European level (3 days)

AIMS	To examine effective collective bargaining in the EMCEF sector, notably on lifelong learning
PARTICIPANTS	Trade union officers and representatives from EMCEF affiliated organisations who are responsible for collective bargaining
WORKING LANGUAGES	3 – to be decided
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

Freedom of movement of workers in the hotel and catering sector (3 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 from EFFAT affiliated organisations
WORKING LANGUAGES	3 – to be decided
DATES	3 – 6 December 2006
COURSE REF. N°	652.41.EWC

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 working conditions To discuss the trade union response to prison reforms To assess implementation of EU social and equality directives
WORKING LANGUAGES	3 – to be decided
DATES	8 – 10 December 2006
COURSE REF. N°	652.24.ECB

January 2007

English for European Works Councils (intermediate) I (5 days)

AIMS	To enable EWC representatives with an intermediate level of English to improve their confidence and ability to communicate in a transnational English-speaking environment
PARTICIPANTS	EWC members and full-time officers responsible for EWCs with at least a basic knowledge of English
WORKING LANGUAGE	English
DATES	22 – 26 January 2007
COURSE REF. N°	652.27.EWC

February 2007

French for European trade unionists (intermediate) 11 days

AIMS	To enable trade union officers with at least an intermediate level of French to operate more effectively for professional purposes in a transnational environment
PARTICIPANTS	Trade union officers or representatives with at least a basic knowledge of French
WORKING LANGUAGE	French
DATES	11 – 22 February 2007
COURSE REF. N°	652.06.LAN