

ICFTU OnLine

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Romania: 70,000 children engaged in worst forms of child labour, foreign investors criticised for obstructing unionisation

Brussels, 28 November 2005 (ICFTU OnLine): Although Romania has ratified the major ILO Conventions on workers' rights and has laws on its statute books to guarantee trade union rights, in practice there are problems with forming trade unions and the right to strike, according to a report released today by the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU). The report has been produced to complement the WTO's Trade Policy review of Romania.

In particular, there are 3.9 million economically active children in Romania, including over 300,000 child labourers in agriculture and low skilled jobs, and 60,000 to 70,000 engaged in the worst forms of child labour. Trade unions in Romania have called for faster adoption and implementation of a new law on labour inspection, in order to improve the government's capacities in this area. The government is working with the ILO and has established a programme against child labour.

Furthermore, although the government has ratified Conventions 87 and 98 on Freedom of Association and collective bargaining, significant problems remain. In particular, unions in Romania have criticised government inaction in the face of the anti-union views of foreign investors which do not accept the existence of trade unions in their companies.

The ICFTU concludes its report by saying that the government should deliver on its promises to set up labour courts (on the basis of good new labour legislation) and that it should bring its definition of essential services in line with ILO guidelines. In addition, it should take far more urgent and active measures to address the extremely high level of child labour in Romania.

The ICFTU called on the WTO to draw the Romanian government's attention to the commitments it made to observe core labour standards at the WTO Ministerial Conferences in 1996 and 2001.

The full report can be found on the ICFTU Website on:
<http://www.icftu.org/displaydocument.asp?Index=991223108&Language=EN>

The ICFTU represents 145 million workers through its 234 affiliated organisations in 154 countries and territories: www.icftu.org

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