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Trade Unions from Across Europe Meet in Budapest to Plan Action for Social Rights

Brussels, 2 September 2008 (ITUC OnLine): Trade unions from across the European continent have gathered in Budapest this week to map out regional actions for social rights and economic progress over the coming year. The annual Summer School of the Pan-European Regional Council of trade unions (PERC*), being held at the invitation of the Hungarian national trade union centres, brings together 39 trade union movements from 24 countries from 1 - 3 September.

"Challenges being faced by the Hungarian workers and their trade unions – attacks on tripartism and social dialogue, tax changes which benefit large companies at the expense of workers and their families, moves to cut minimum wages – are familiar to trade unions in many countries in Europe and elsewhere. We need a social Europe, setting the highest standards for decent work in a changing world," said John Monks, general secretary of the PERC and of the European Trade Union Confederation.

The meeting's focus on tax, pensions and health care throughout the continent will provide the basis for national and regional action in the coming period to stop the erosion of vital services and government functions.

Another key feature of the discussions concerns preparations for the World Day for Decent Work on October 7, when European trade unions will join their colleagues from every other continent in a global mobilisation for workers' rights, solidarity and an end to poverty and inequality.

"The World Day for Decent Work will see trade unions in every corner of the globe organising all kinds of activities to focus public attention on the need to stop the erosion of social standards, and put people rather than profit at the centre of globalisation," said Jaap Wienen, deputy general secretary of the International Trade Union Confederation.

(*PERC, the European regional body of the ITUC, was founded in Rome in March 2007.)

The ITUC represents 168 million workers in 155 countries and territories and has 311 national affiliates. Website: <http://www.ituc-csi.org/>

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