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Regional Trade Union Conference in Moscow - New Report Highlights Barriers to Union Rights

Brussels/Moscow, 3 December 2010 (ITUC OnLine): A new ITUC report "Building Democracy and Trade Union Rights in the NIS" released in Moscow today highlights barriers to legitimate trade union organisation in the newly independent states, as patterns of union representation have evolved over the past decade. The report, which sets out key challenges for union organising and collective bargaining and highlights concrete steps to overcome violations of workers' rights, will be the focus of discussions at a regional conference of the ITUC-PERC* in Moscow, which opens today.

"This report details the major impediments to trade union organisation in the NIS (new independent states) countries, and ways to overcome them. Trade union leaders from across the region will be mapping out strategies at the Moscow event to ensure that the rights to freedom of association and collective bargaining are respected. Respect for these rights is fundamental to ensuring good industrial relations including implementation of ILO standards, protecting workers from exploitation and building strong and healthy economies," said ITUC General Secretary Sharan Burrow.

The Conference, "Building Democracy and Trade Union Rights in the NIS", is being attended by union representatives, including top leaders, from across the NIS as well as from international and European trade union bodies and national trade union representatives from a range of other European countries.

"There is a trend of increasing trade union rights violations in all the countries of the region. This is a threat to the development of democracy " said PERC President Mikhail Shmakov. "This conference will help us to develop the common strategy we need to face this issue."

Priorities areas to be discussed at the Conference include implementing new strategies to tackle violations of fundamental workers' rights by governments and private employers, increasing inter-union cooperation in the region and internationally, and ways to expose the barriers to trade union work including identifying and responding to specific attacks on organising and bargaining rights as well as on other rights enshrined in ILO Conventions.

"The outcomes of this event will provide an important boost to union action in the NIS countries, building on years of work already done to build strong and vibrant trade unions, which are able to confront and overcome exploitation and ensure a good future for working women and men," said Burrow.

To see the full report: <http://www.ituc-csi.org/ituc-perc-regional-conference.html?lang=en>

- The ITUC's Pan-European Regional Council, PERC, was created in 2007. It works to promote the strategies, priorities and policies of the ITUC and seeks to contribute to social development, the consolidation of democracy and to respect for human and workers' rights in the region. Promotion of trade union action, and representation of workers' interests through the strengthening of the trade union movement and support for bilateral and multilateral cooperation, will be central objectives of the Council.
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The ITUC represents 176 million workers in 151 countries and territories and has 301 national affiliates. <http://www.ituc-csi.org> and <http://www.youtube.com/ITUCCSI>

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