

A stylized world map composed of a grid of dots. Most dots are light gray, but several are red, highlighting specific regions: North America, Western Europe, Central Europe, and East Asia.

The Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung's Trade Union Work in Europe

May 2011

- FES collaborates with numerous trade union partners at the national, regional, European and international level, in a spectrum spanning national federations and their member unions, trade union research institutes and think tanks, and European and international federations and sectoral organisations.
- FES focuses on enhancing the organisational capacity of the trade unions, fostering the positioning process in current social, economic and employment policy debates, and strengthening the unions' ability to assert their interests in the social dialogue.
- FES promotes European cooperation within the trade union movement and assists the search for consensual positions on European economic and social policy through national, regional and European initiatives.
- FES cooperates with the German trade union movement through many different channels, in particular regular bilateral trade union forums with major European partners.

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The Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung's Trade Union Work in Eastern Europe

The Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES) has been working in the states of the former Soviet Union since the collapse of the Eastern Bloc in the late 1980s. FES currently maintains offices in Russia, Ukraine and Belarus. Collaboration with local trade unions is one important aspect of the work of these offices and their staff.

The Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung in Belarus

In 2010 Alexander Yaroshuk, leader of the Belorussian Congress of Democratic Trade Unions (BKDP), was elected Deputy President of the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC). FES is actively involved in networking the BKDP with the international free trade union movement. In Belarus FES works to involve international partners in initiatives to foster cooperation between independent and »old« trade unions. The work focuses on enhancing expertise and organisational skills within the trade union movement and integrating the Belorussian trade unions in European discussions. For example, the pro-government chemical industry union (member of the Federation of Trade Unions of Belarus, FBP) and independent trade unions (members of the Congress of Democratic Trade Unions) have participated together in FES trade union events. In Belarus FES also cooperates with Global Union Federations, for example in 2010 in a GUF meeting on the perspective for trade union rights under the EU's Eastern Partnership. The Belorussian government draws persistent criticism from the international trade union movement for repeated violations of ILO core labour standards, as noted by the annual International Labour Conference (ILC).

The Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung in Ukraine

In Ukraine there are 143 registered trades unions in 16 federations. Currently three federations are members of the ITUC: the Federation of Trade Unions of Ukraine (FPU), the Confederation of Free Trade Unions of Ukraine (KVPU) and the All-Ukrainian Union of Workers' Solidarity (VOST). As the successor to the Soviet-era Council of Trade Unions, the FPU is the biggest federation, with 44 member unions claiming 8.7 million members. The KVPU has nine constituent unions representing about 270,000 members. The work of FES in Ukraine serves to establish a stable dialogue between trade unions and

politicians and to facilitate issue-based cooperation between the different union federations. We place particular importance on contact with the younger generation and reform-oriented partners in all the trade unions. In 2010 FES launched a project for developing participatory organising methods designed to strengthen the trade unions, in which eleven different trades unions take part. Another focus is the participation of Ukrainian trades unions in the social dialogue, which was institutionalised in 2010. The National Tripartite Social and Economic Council and corresponding bodies at the regional level were set up in 2006 and 2007. FES supports the input and organisation of these institutions of tripartite dialogue in order to enhance their effectiveness. Another important field of activity is training trade unionists for active participation in the political discourse on government reform projects, such as tax, pensions and health reforms. Thematic and organisational strategies for tackling the very widespread problem of employment precarity are being developed across the country in conjunction with many individual unions.

The Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung in the Russian Federation

FES and the ILO have been working in Russia for more than 20 years and are currently the only officially registered foreign organisations operating in the field of social policy and trade union work. The successors to the Soviet-era state-run unions still have about 25 million members and are organised in the Federation of Independent Trade Unions of Russia (FNPR) which is a partner of the German DGB federation and thus also of FES. FNPR President Mikhail Shmakov is also President of the Pan-European Regional Council of the ITUC. Most of the new Russian unions that emerged during the 1980s and 1990s are members of the Confederation of Labour of Russia (KTR), which merged in 2011 with the All-Russian Confederation of Labour (VKT). The KTR is also a member of the ITUC.

The ongoing transformation of Russian society requires trade unions to adopt new forms and methods. FES responds to these demands in its trade union advisory work, which concentrates on the metal and car industries. We cooperate with the German IG Metall, for example advising the workforce of the Lada plant



at Togliatti, discussing themes such as agency workers in transnational corporations like Ford and VW with the Interregional Trade Union of Autoworkers (ITUA) and achieving improvements for the workforce. Geographically the union events supported by FES are concentrated in Chelyabinsk in the Urals (metal industry), Togliatti

(Lada plant), Kaluga (VW plant) and St. Petersburg (Ford plant). Another strongpoint of the FES office in St. Petersburg is union youth work. The most successful projects are those where young people from Russia and Germany discuss their shared problems.



The Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung's Trade Union Work in East-Central Europe

The Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung has been active in the countries of East-Central Europe since the collapse of the state communist regimes in 1989. Close cooperation with the trade unions at the national level is an important aspect of our work in this region. FES also organises joint regional activities to promote regional networking and cooperation with the European and German trade union movements.

The Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung in the Baltic States – Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania

Our trade union activities in the Baltic states focus on involving the trade unions there in the European debates around social justice in times of financial and economic crisis. FES also organises workshops and regional conferences, for example together with the Free Trade Union Confederation of Latvia (LBAS) and other trades unions in the service, education and health sectors, as well as raising questions of labour market discrimination of women and minorities with employers' organisations. We also offer workshops and seminars for union members and leaders designed to promote social dialogue and strengthen the role of the trade unions as social actors.

The Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung in the Czech Republic

In the Czech Republic FES works with the Czech-Moravian Confederation of Trade Unions (ČMKOS) and with a number of individual unions including the metalworkers' union (KOVO), the health service union (OSZSP) and the union of commercial workers (OSPO). In the Czech Republic FES also cooperates very closely with ČMKOS's youth council and equality committee. Here too, our trade union work concentrates on promoting social dialogue, strengthening regional and international exchange and developing trade union positions on the European economic and social model.

The Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung in Hungary

In Hungary FES cooperates above all with the Hungarian trade union federation MSZOSZ and its youth organisation SZISZ, and with the Democratic League of

Independent Trade Unions (LIGA) and its women's and equality committees. FES in Hungary joins forces with MSZOSZ and LIGA to organise the Social Dialogue Forum where experts from Germany and other EU member states meet with their Hungarian colleagues to discuss the issues of the day, such as the new union strategies required in a situation of financial and economic crisis, perspectives for social dialogue, labour relations in East-Central and South-East Europe, and workplace training. With this format FES has established a respected platform that lends important momentum to the process of organisational renewal and programmatic positioning in the Hungarian trade unions in response to the shared social and economic challenges in Europe.

The Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung in Poland

In Poland the FES office cooperates with the two biggest Polish federations, NSZZ Solidarność and the All-Poland Alliance of Trade Unions (OPZZ). In close coordination with NSZZ Solidarność, OPZZ and the DGB, FES is organising the third German-Polish Trade Union Forum in 2011. This bilateral format brings together German and Polish union leaders to discuss shared problems, new challenges and mutual interests. Our trade union work in Poland also involves training addressing issues and methods for young activists and union leaders.

The Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung in Slovakia

In Slovakia FES cooperates with the Confederation of Trade Unions of the Slovak Republic (KOZ SR) and maintains close working relations with its member unions, including the Slovak metalworkers' union (OZ KOVO), the chemical and energy workers' union (ECHOZ) and the public service union (SLOVEZ). Our trade union work focuses on developing the next generation, strengthening the social dialogue and preparing trade union positions on questions of social and economic reform.

Regional Project on Labour Relations and Social Dialogue in East-Central Europe

FES's Regional Project on Labour Relations and Social Dialogue in East-Central Europe has been operating since



the late 1990s in Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, the Czech Republic and Slovakia. More than 60 events are held each year with East-Central European unions and federations and their European – especially German – partners. The objectives of the regional project include advising on modernisation of the trades unions (towards the European social model and modern labour relations), promoting the inclusion of women and young people in workplace representation, and supporting cooperation among trade unions within and between the individual countries. Our continuous and longstanding cooperation with trade unions, employers' organisations and ministries oils the wheels of social dialogue at national, regional and sectoral level. At another level, the regional project communicates important expertise for successful workplace representation by trade unions and works councils. Setting up international trade union networks (including European works councils) and strengthening

trade union education structures are equally important fields of activity for the regional project.

In our regional activities we cooperate closely with the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC), the Pan-European Regional Council of the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC-PERC), the European Metalworkers' Federation (EMF), the International Federation of Chemical, Energy, Mine and General Workers' Unions (ICEM), the International Union of Food, Agricultural, Hotel, Restaurant, Catering, Tobacco and Allied Workers' Associations (IUF) and the Building and Wood Worker's International (BWI). The Regional Project operates in close consultation with the German Confederation of Trade Unions (DGB) and its member unions – especially closely with the metalworkers union' (IGM), the service union (ver.di) and the mining, chemical and energy workers' union (IGBCE).

The Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung's Trade Union Work in South-East Europe

The Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung has been active in South-East Europe since the collapse of the communist regimes, particularly since the break-up of Yugoslavia. Close cooperation with the trade unions at the national level is an important aspect of our work in this region. FES also organises joint regional activities to promote regional networking and cooperation with the European and German trade union movements.

The Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung in Albania

In Albania FES cooperates with the Confederation of the Trade Unions of Albania (KSSH) and its member unions and with the Union of the Independent Trade Unions of Albania (BSPSh) and its member unions. For many years FES has been supporting training for union leaders and working for the inclusion of the trade unions in social policy debates. We also help unions to move towards reorganisation and to reorientate the substance and strategy of their work.

The Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung in Bosnia and Herzegovina

In Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) FES works with the union federations Konfederacija Sindikata BiH (KS-BiH), Savez Samostalnih Sindikata BiH (SSSBiH), Savez Sindikata Republike Srpske (SSRS) and Sindikat Brčko Distrikta (SBD). The goal we pursue is to create the required framework for an equitable economic and social order, in the process seeking to strengthen the participation of the unions in economic and social policy debates. Our central contribution is the FES Trade Union School, which runs training courses designed to strengthen the participation of young trade unionists in trade union work and organisation. As well as communicating knowledge about the objectives of trade union work, the programme seeks to bring the youth organisations of the different trade union federations in Bosnia and Herzegovina closer together.

The Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung in Bulgaria

In Bulgaria FES cooperates with the Confederation of Independent Trade Unions in Bulgaria (CITUB), the Youth Forum 21st Century, and with the Confederation of La-

bour Podkrepa (KA Podkrepa) and its youth network. For years FES has been training trade unionists in the application, instruments and regulations of European labour and social law. Networking between Bulgarian trade unions and their European partners – established and developed with our support – has been a crucial factor in making the trades union a respected and much sought-after discussion partner for political parties and employers. One of the main functions of the social dialogue between unions and employers is implementing the EU's social standards.

The Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung in Croatia

In Croatia FES cooperates with the Union of Autonomous Trade Unions of Croatia (SSSH) and the Independent Trade Unions of Croatia (NHS). We work to promote organisational consolidation and to strengthen expertise in questions relating to state welfare services and EU accession, striving to give trade union positions greater prominence in political debates. Through various events addressing important labour market and social policy issues, FES has helped the Croatian federations to develop solid negotiating positions for the social dialogue.

The Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung in Kosovo

In Kosovo FES works together with the BSPK federation. Cooperation with individual unions in the health, metal-working and telecommunications sectors is still in its infancy. Our aim is to ensure that the question of social inclusion is not neglected in the rapid process of economic development. Alongside political decision-makers, the trade unions bear a great responsibility to identify and pursue questions of sustainability in social policy and intervene competently in the social dialogue.

The Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung in Macedonia

In Macedonia FES cooperates with three federations: the Federation of Trade Unions of Macedonia SSM, the Confederation of Free Trade Unions of Macedonia (KSS) and the Union of Independent and Autonomous Trade Unions of Macedonia (UNASM). The work focuses on analysis of labour-related legislation, placing it in the Eu-

European context and developing proposals on workers' rights for the social dialogue. We also have a focus on training at different levels, especially to advance women and young people. Networking between trade unions nationally and in the broader region augments this co-operative approach.

The Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung in Montenegro

In Montenegro FES cooperates with the Confederation of Trade Unions of Montenegro (SSCG), principally on training measures to equip workers' representatives to participate actively and competently in political and economic debates. The themes focus on issues of special importance for Montenegro's process of accession to the EU. FES also works to strengthen the organisational and conceptual competence of the Montenegrin trade unions.

The Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung in Romania

In Romania FES works together with the union federations Cartel Alfa (CNSCA), BNS, CNSLR – Fratia and CSDR. Our work in Romania aims to strengthen the competence of union representatives in social policy matters, focussing on economic policies serving workers' interests, organising effective collective bargaining and securing the legislative foundation for trade union work. The organisational heart of our cooperation with all four federations is a jointly run trade union academy offering a four-module basic training programme for young trade union activists. Consolidating and modernising the national trade union structures represents a further sphere of activity, while integrating the Romanian trades unions in the structures and standards of European labour representation is also on the agenda.

The Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung in Serbia

Our Serbian partners at the national level are the Confederation of Autonomous Trade Unions of Serbia (SSSS) and the Nezavisnost Trade Union Confederation, with cooperation concentrating on training in the fields of collective bargaining, health and safety, labour law and social dialogue. Positive resonance for existing activities

led to an expansion of the spectrum of themes in 2011 to include the union perspectives on basic economics and European integration. Special emphasis is placed on supporting and networking youth and women's movements within the individual unions.

The Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung in Turkey

In Turkey FES works principally with the DISK union federation as our main partner. The themes addressed are support for international cooperation, the upcoming reform of trade union legislation and campaigns to recruit more women and encourage their participation. FES also cooperates with individual unions in Turkey's largest federation, TURK-IS. Furthermore we assist young trade unionists in participating in programmes of the Global Labour University, and have been supporting an M.A. course on work and social rights at Istanbul University for many years.

Regional Project on Labour Relations and Social Dialogue in South-East Europe

FES's Regional Project on Labour Relations and Social Dialogue in South-East Europe has been operating since the late 1990s, bringing together trade unions – and their social partners in South-East Europe – to exchange opinions and experience on particular issues. The partners of the Regional Project are trade unions in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Hungary, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro, Romania, Serbia and Slovenia. The Regional Project supports joint initiatives by the trade unions in the region as well as regional and European exchange, thus helping to strengthen international solidarity and trade union cooperation at the levels of national federations, sectors and multinational corporations. The Regional Project also promotes European policy competence within trade unions working for a social Europe and places great weight on improving the inclusion of women and young people in trade union work. Regional discussion about improving the social dialogue and developing the welfare state in the countries of South-East Europe is a further focus, to support and thematically expand the debate within the countries of the region.



The Regional Project's close cooperation with European and international trade unions is of strategic importance. Partnerships currently exist with the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC), the Pan-European Regional Council of the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC-PERC), the European Metalworkers' Federation (EMF), the European Federation of Public Service Unions (EPSU), the International Federation of Chemical, Energy, Mine and General Workers' Unions (ICEM), the

International Union of Food, Agricultural, Hotel, Restaurant, Catering, Tobacco and Allied Workers' Associations (IUF) and the Building and Wood Worker's International (BWI). The Regional Project operates in close consultation with the German Confederation of Trade Unions (DGB) and its member unions – especially closely with the metalworkers' union (IGM), the service union (ver. di), the mining, chemical and energy workers' union (IG-BCE), and the food and catering union (NGG).

The Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung's Trade Union Work in Western Europe

The Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung in Brussels

Our European Office in Brussels makes an essential contribution to our European and international trade union work. The most important theme here is strengthening the social dimension of European integration and the internal market: the rights and powers of European works councils, European working hours regulations, and the question of agency workers. Other fields of activity include shaping the social aspects of globalisation, especially in relation to EU expansion, neighbourhood and development policy, equality and intra-European migration. Alongside running discussions and working groups with trade union experts, the dialogue programmes run by our European Office provide a communications hub linking trade unionists from across Europe and the world with the Brussels-based European and international trade union federations and EU institutions. This serves two objectives: strengthening union-building capacities in the EU member states and other countries worldwide, and exchanging and deepening union-related knowledge especially in connection with the EU. Moreover, for more than 100 national and regional projects run by the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, our European Office is the foremost point of contact to the Brussels representations of the European and international trade union organisations.

The Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung in France

The annual Franco-German Trade Union forum is a pillar of FES's trade union work, with meetings held alternately in Berlin and Paris with the German DGB and the French federations CFDT, CFTC, CGT, FO and UNSA. Here, top union leaders from Germany and France have the opportunity to discuss the economic and social situation in their countries away from the glare of publicity, and explore joint approaches. FES also organises regular events with the French union-funded Institute Lasaire, addressing concrete themes of social partnership and cooperation in a comparative framework with economists and trade unionists from Germany and France. We also lend organisational support to the Franco-German industrial policy working group, in which the German IG Metall and the French CGT, CFDT and FO meet twice a year in Frankfurt, Berlin or Paris.

The Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung in the Nordic Countries

The office of the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung in Stockholm works closely together with the national federations (LO-N, LO-S, LO-DK, SAK) and the most important individual unions in the Nordic countries, and maintains constructive relations with the Joint Committee of the Nordic Social Democratic Labour Movement (SAMAK), and with union-linked think tanks. An economic council meets monthly in Stockholm to develop strategies for the challenges that the labour movement currently faces, addressing issues such as falling wage share, organising and new recruitment methods, developing and implementing a »decent capitalism«, etc.

The Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung in Italy

In the FES office in Rome trade union work has traditionally played a large role, because Italy's federations CGIL, CISL and UIL are – alongside the DGB – among the best-organised in Europe. In recent years we have staged many seminars on questions such as the Europeanisation of collective bargaining, the future of the European social model and the trade union responses. Another concern of FES in Italy is dialogue activities aimed at developing the European works councils. Our Rome office is also planning events to explore what the German codetermination model can offer to the Italian discussion.

The Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung in Portugal

FES in Portugal works principally with the UGT federation and its member union SINDEL (energy, metal, environment). Our most important partner in the CGTP federation is the Socialist Tendency (CSS), which has succeeded in establishing functioning structures since its 1998 relaunch. Since 2009 we have also been working with a broader movement of non-communist activists in the CGTP who argue for accession to the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC).



The Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung in Spain

Our office in Spain maintains longstanding close contacts to the Spanish federations UGT and CC.OO. In the context of the Spanish EU Council Presidency last year we held two important seminars on social progress in Europe and on the EU-2020 Strategy, with the participation of UGT, CC.OO, DGB and ETUC. The central themes addressed by FES together with Spanish unions are wage and employment policy, social security, economic policy and the European social model.

The Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung in the United Kingdom

The British-German Trade Union Forum organised jointly by FES, the Hans-Böckler-Stiftung, the German DGB and the British TUC is an established date in the trade union calendar of the FES office in London, and celebrates its tenth anniversary in 2011. Each year the Forum examines a current issue of relevance to both sides to explore lessons learned and experience drawn. This year FES is also organising a British-German conference to discuss the content and practical relevance of the new EU directive on European Works Councils.



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Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung | Department of Central and Eastern Europe
Hiroshimastraße 28 | 10785 Berlin | Germany

Responsible:
Dr. Ernst Hillebrand, Head, Department of Central and Eastern Europe

Tel.: ++49-30-269-35-7726 | Fax: ++49-30-269-35-9250
<http://www.fes.de/international/moe>

Order | Contact:
info.moe@fes.de

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in Europe and worldwide

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Labour Relations and Social Dialogue
in South-East Europe
<http://www.fessoe.de/>

Global Trade Union Policy
http://www.fes.de/GPol/en/trade_union.htm

Global Labour University
<http://www.global-labour-university.org/>

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