

Conference statement

The 12th Permanent Conference of European Capitals Trade Unions September 19th to September 22nd in Moscow

"Realization of the 'Decent Work' Concept under Conditions of Crisis. Risks and Challenges for the European Capitals. Searching for the New Ways of Fighting for the Worker's Rights"

The 12th Permanent Conference of European Capitals Trade unions were held in Moscow from 19th to 22nd September 2012.

The representatives of 21 European capitals Trade unions from 16 European capitals covered the theme "Realization of the 'Decent Work' Concept under Conditions of Crisis. Risks and Challenges for the European Capitals. Searching for the New Ways of Fighting for the Workers Rights".

The result of working together the delegates focused on the main aspects included in this statement.

The 12th Permanent Conference of European Capitals Trade Unions participants point out:

European Capitals are a leading part of the economic development of our countries and almost 10% of the population of the European Continent lives in the urban areas of the capital cities and Trade Unions are in important and necessary part of the structures in European communities.

It is important to strengthen the basis of the Trade Union movement, pursuing the objectives of the EU 2020 strategy by proposing concrete measures to achieve these objectives in the perspective of the capital cities. These cover employment, research and innovation, climate change and energy policy, education and fighting against poverty and social exclusion.

The 12th Permanent Conference of European Capitals Trade Unions participants proclaim:

In Europe as in the whole world workers should work under the conditions, of the concept of decent work, accepted by the International Labor Organization at its 87th session.

But now we cannot speak about the realization the concept of decent work while millions of people all over the world are losing their jobs and getting cuts in their wages. Such measures are not the solution to the crisis which was caused mainly by uncontrolled financial speculation.

Everywhere labor contract conditions are no longer observed; norms of labor and health and safety are not fulfilled; all levels of workers' living conditions are decreasing; job offers are eliminated especially for youth and migrants, people with disabilities and women; collective agreements are not fulfilled and unemployment increases and the pension age gets higher and higher.

Part-time jobs, short-time jobs and other forms of non-secure jobs are spreading. They cannot provide enough earnings for decent living conditions. Unemployed and those approaching the poverty line or beneath it, are driven to despair caught in social exclusion.

Reluctance of the local authorities and employers to lead evidence-based negotiations with Trade unions is seen in many countries. Denial of “social dialogue” occurs, and leads to a deterioration of labor relationships and social strain. Trade Unions in the capital cities should negotiate where possible the taxation levels adopted at regional/local level, promoting the implementation of progressive taxation systems. Furthermore capital region authorities are reducing public services for the population and the approval of the Stability Pact will create even more problems in financing public services.

Employers do not want to reinvest profits either into creation of jobs and to negotiate fundamental labor rights achieved in the 20th century. Labor legislation changes implemented by governments encroach upon workers’ rights, undermine the agreements, and lead to decreases in wages and employment.

The increasing unemployment rate and the deterioration in economic conditions can cause real social disaster in the near future. And we will only be able to dream about decent work in European communities.

The 12th Permanent Conference of European Capitals Trade Unions participants consider:

European Capitals Trade Unions joint initiatives can help our countries to implement the concept of decent work in to overcome the crisis and change the situation for the better.

Our initiatives:

- It is necessary to develop a consistent social framework, based on the concept of decent work and to promote its realization in our capitals by general efforts.
- It is necessary to communicate with youth using modern techniques by Trade Unions and running youth trade union programs (including international).
- Workers coming from other countries into the capitals should be assisted and offered information about their rights also in their own languages.
- We will continue working with the European Trade Union Confederation to protect workers’ rights in the face of the governmental and employers clampdown.
- Our duty is to inform all workers about changes in labor legislation and their rights, about actions and plans of the government and employers. There is a current lack of information. Due to this situation we consider it necessary to create advice and training centers and Internet sources for workers. It is necessary to consult workers on education and employment, and the training of the unemployed and potentially unemployed. Those fired due to the crisis have to overcome the social shock and must be helped.
- Continue analyzing the situations that come up during the crisis and develop innovative trade union measures to deal with them.
- We must act together to achieve this aim. Looking at the policies of the International Labor Organization will assist us to take practical measures for defending workers’ rights and interests in the crisis and to implement them.
- We must support trade union struggles in capital cities that fight the attacks on workers which are being launched using the financial crisis as an excuse.

- We must support and build solidarity for key industrial struggles in capital cities (increasingly against the same multinational companies operating in our capitals) and investigate ways in which practical measures can be developed.
- We must support the campaigns to organise workers at the base level in companies operating across European capitals.