

# Regions in Action:

# Pan-Europe News

Volume 1 ■ 2018

## Message to Pan-European Affiliates

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

The 4<sup>th</sup> BWI World Congress made important decisions to strengthen our unity and solidarity for a common struggle. This is particularly important in the region of wider Pan-Europe, where our members and workers in the BWI sectors see a widening gap between the rich and the poor. In many countries,



**Johan Lindholm**  
Regional Vice-President  
for Europe, BWI



**Ambet Yuson**  
General Secretary, BWI



**Ramazan Agar**  
Board Member, BWI

workers are facing precarious forms of employment, threats to lose bargaining autonomy, low minimum wages, poor health and safety and attacks on workers' rights and even on democracy, forcing many workers to migration.

The everywhere mounting right-wing populism, xenophobia, anti-unionism and union discrimination, often combined with anti-trade union activities of employers calls for a strong and united struggle of all BWI affiliates and its members for social justice at the work place, in society and worldwide.

We believe that the BWI Strategic plan 2018 – 2021, with its seven convergen-

ces, provides a great platform for all unions in the wider Pan-European Region to work closely together and support each other, encouraging solidarity between the BWI affiliates, through regional campaign networks and organizing of workers.

We are proud that at the 4<sup>th</sup> BWI World Congress our organization has taken up the issue of gender equity and youth in Unions as two of its seven convergences, as we believe that, we in Pan-Europe will give a great contribution to the

efforts of our Global Union in this field of work by campaigning for youth fostering and vocational training as well as for stopping gender based violence and promoting women in BWI trades.

We call on the affiliates to participate and mobilize in support of the implementation of the Strategic Plan. We thank affiliates who participated in the April 28 International Workers Memorial Day that highlighted our campaign for health and safety. As the 2018 World Cup opens next month, BWI will be launching the red card campaign for FIFA for their poor performance in ensuring labor standard compliance in stadium construction.

Various union organizing and collective bargaining negotiations are happening in the region.

## Vote for Women – Vote for Change

“Vote for Women – Vote for Change” - with this slogan women from all BWI sectors around the globe approached delegates of the 4<sup>th</sup> BWI Congress in Durban, South Africa. BWI women leadership succeeded in incorporating at least one third women's representation in BWI bodies and throughout activities; all chairs of Regional Women's Committees became members of World Council and six women were elected to the World Board. This historic amendment of the BWI constitution at the Durban Congress should give women more energy to continue campaigns for gender equality and woman in trades. We are looking forward to meeting women from Europe and Pan-Europe in September in Sarajevo, where the European regional women's



**Rita Schiavi**, Chair of BWI European Regional Committee

conference will take place, and we will have the opportunity to discuss our campaigns for the next four years.

Finally, with great pleasure we would like to announce that the BWI in cooperation with the Friedrich Ebert Foundation (FES) and YOL-IS (Turkey) is convening a Pan-European Regional Workshop on Innovative Unionism on 4-5 of October 2018, in Istanbul. This would be a great opportunity to discuss our four-year action plan and mobilize support for our regional organizing campaign.



**BWI**  
Building and Wood  
Workers' International  
[www.bwint.org](http://www.bwint.org)

## BWI Campaign on World Cup 2018 Russia

The World Cup 2018 will begin on the 14<sup>th</sup> of June in Russia. Millions of fans and spectators will be watching and following this mega event, and we believe will be watching more than the Games. We were able to show with our 2018 World Cup Decent Work Campaign, the FIFA and the hosting country that labour is part of the team.

The Campaign focused on the work, expertise, and experience of BWI and

dignity for all workers including migrant workers in Russia.

BWI and Russian Building Workers Union (RBWU) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with FIFA and FIFA LOC. The MoU provided an opportunity to undertake formal joint monitoring visits (inspections) to the World Cup construction sites. BWI, BWI affiliates from Finland and Sweden and RBWU engaged in **35 joint monitoring visits (inspections) to 2018 World Cup stadiums.**

In the framework of the inspections and Campaign activities, trade unions managed to address key violations of workers' rights: a non-transparent system of wages and wage arrears; OSH violations and fatal accidents; the absence of employment contracts; and poor living conditions.

Despite all the efforts the goal of zero fatal accidents and decent working conditions was not achieved during the Campaign in Russia: **21 fatal accidents and 7 strikes and protest actions** happened on 2018 World Cup stadiums. The BWI will continue to fight for workers' rights in the frame of preparations to the global sport events and push global sport bodies to impose decent work standards.



affiliates in its engagement with international sports organizations, construction companies, governments with the objective of ensuring decent work, safe and healthy working and living conditions, living wage, and respect and

## 2018 International Women's Day

At the BWI 4<sup>th</sup> World Congress, the 2017-2021 Strategic Plan was adopted. One of the seven convergences focus on gender equality. Within the pillar of Build, a key outcome is to push for non-discriminatory practices and provisions to stop all forms of gender-based violence in the work place.

For International Women's Day in 2018, BWI affiliates across Pan-Europe mobilized under the theme "Power to the Women---Stop Gender-Based Violence" to raise awareness of gender-based violence through actions and activities, for example, in Israel, Turkey, and Macedonia.



At the upcoming 2018 International Labour Conference of the ILO, a key discussion will center on the adoption of an ILO convention accompanied by a Recommendation, on "Violence and Harassment against Women and Men in the World of Work", with a strong focus on the gender dimension of violence. Last year, in preparations for these discussions the BWI provided feedback and recommendations to the survey solicited by the ILO.

## Resolution 14: BWI Youth – Global Activism and Organizing

I want to thank everyone for their solidarity, support and coordinated action in the collective action to get the Resolution 14 "BWI Youth – Global Activism and Organizing" approved by the BWI 4<sup>th</sup> World Congress, which paves the way for the formation of the BWI International Youth Committee.

We started working on the formation of the International Youth Committee by developing a road map with basic steps to build up regional youth committees, leading to the formation of the International Youth Committee (IYC) of the BWI in 2019.

There will be a preliminary meeting at the IG BAU Sunrise Festival on 25-27 May with youth representatives of BWI European affiliates in order to discuss youth issues in Europe, major action points and our pathway to the formation of the BWI European Youth Committee. We will start an official consultation process for nominations of the members of the BWI European Youth Committee in June 2018. The process will be finalised before May in 2019. I would like to invite all to support and encourage your union's youth representatives and young workers to organise and engage in building up a youth union movement in BWI.



**Vasyl Andreyev**, Interim Chair of BWI International Youth Committee



**Building and Wood Workers' International**

Route des Acacias 54  
CH-1227 Carouge GE, Switzerland



Tel.: +41 22 827 37 77

Fax: +41 22 827 37 70



Email: [info@bwint.org](mailto:info@bwint.org)

URL: [www.bwint.org](http://www.bwint.org)

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## Union campaign for health and safety in Chinese Multinational Companies

Over the last five years, there is an increase in the number of projects in Central and Eastern Europe by Chinese MNCs, often financed by Chinese Banks.



Photo credit: Filip Roganović

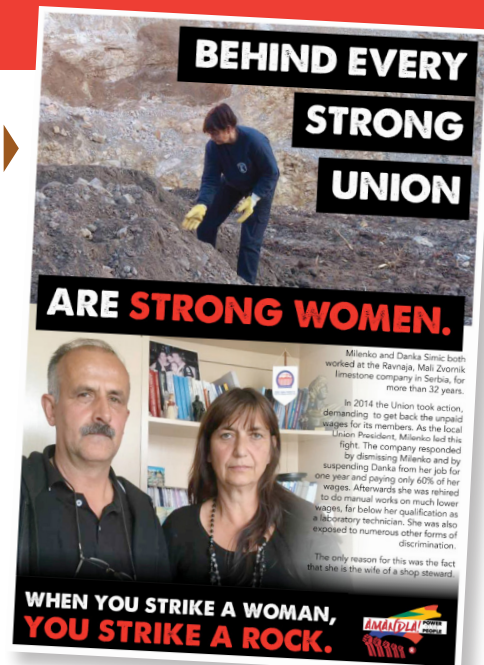
A number of BWI affiliates seek to organise workers in these projects to ensure better working conditions and health and

For elimination of any form of discrimination against women in Serbia

safety. In some cases, like in Macedonia, there has been success.. However, this is not the case in Montenegro, where the SGIGMCG warned the China Bridge and Road Corporation (CBRC) about poor working conditions, from the beginning of the biggest highway infrastructure project in the country, with more than 3500 workers on site.

The CBRC project cost the fourth life of a worker in less than 8 months and despite several attempts of the Union to establish cooperation on health and safety, the company is rejecting it. This attitude is against European and international standards as well as established good practice.

The behaviour of the CBRC is irresponsible and unacceptable. The Union, supported by BWI, continues its campaign activities. In a recent public round table



the Union brought all parties to the table, including the Ministry of Transport and Maritime Affairs to demand respect of national laws and international labour standards. The authorities of China, the European Commission and the public in the region was informed about the violations. The union's struggle continues.

### NEWS FROM THE EFBWW

## The European Construction Industry welcomes the rejection of the proposed services e-card by the European Parliament

After strong lobbying by the EFBWW to reject the proposed services e-card on 21.03.2018, the Internal Market and Consumer Protection Committee (IMCO) of the European Parliament turned down the report containing the European Commission's proposal to introduce a services e-card, which would include the construction industry.

European Federation of Building and Woodworkers



This was welcomed by the European construction industry; the European Federation of Building and Woodworkers (EFBWW), the European Construction Industry Federation (FIEC) and the European Builders Confederation (EBC).

The proposed e-card would have introduced the country of origin principle

through the backdoor and would have facilitated bogus self-employment.

## The European Labour Authority

On 13<sup>th</sup> March 2018, the European Commission proposed the creation of a European Labour Authority. This new Agency should ensure that cross-border labour mobility is fair. The Agency will have a range of tasks:

1. facilitating the access to information on the rights and obligations for workers and employers;
2. fostering a cooperation between Member States on labour mobility cases
3. coordinating concerted and joint inspections across the border
4. making analytical and risk-assessments of cross-border labour mobility aspects
5. strengthening the capacity of the Member States in cross-border labour inspections
6. voluntary dispute resolution between Member states

Over the last decade, the EFBWW have observed a steep increase of cross-border social fraud, abuse and circumvention cases. The current European labour market makes it easy for fraudulent companies to exploit mobile workers. The current flaws exist at EU level, but also within certain Member States. Therefore, we urgently need a European coordination body with a clear mandate to improve the cooperation between the different national authorities.

The proposed Authority is not interfering with or questioning national labour market models. Although this should be better explained in the legislative act and it will be necessary to make sure that the proposed Authority is not transformed in a new Internal Market tool, serving the interests of the companies.

The European labour Authority is an operational tool, aimed to improve cross-border labour mobility. This Agency could significantly contribute to a fair cross-border labour market.