

BWI Resolutions

Adopted by BWI World Congress in Durban South Africa
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21. Unity and Solidarity in Pan-European Region

Submitted by: SGIP, Macedonia; seconded by YOL-IS and TARIM ORMAN-IS, Turkey

WHEREAS the role of the trade union movement is to build solidarity. This is particularly important in the pan-European region, where there is a wide gap between the east and the west; and the widening gap between the rich and the poor. Europe has undertaken tremendous changes over the past two decades. Reforms have been made and often these reforms have marginalized the working people.

WHEREAS in many countries in the pan-European region are workers the victims of the economic crisis and neoliberal policies of the governments, facing precarious forms of employment, wage dumping, lower minimum wages and pensions, rising retirement ages, cuts in social benefits and public services, mass redundancies, threats to lose bargaining autonomy, increases in inequality and poverty, attacks on workers' rights and even on democracy.

WHEREAS the weakening of the role of state and its institution by neo-liberal policies and the strengthening of the role of multinational companies in BWI sectors who are pushing for labour market deregulation in order to implement plans of relocation of production and use natural resources by using social and wage dumping strategies, often creating environmental concerns.

WHEREAS the trade union fight for the improvement of working conditions and social standards, for the development of a job creating economy where workers would benefit from decent work is vital. Here, the social dialogue should play a key role. However, social dialogue in a number of countries especially in the east, is not effective in fighting for the rights and benefits of the workers and only way for unions to be treated equal partners if unions are allowed union access to worksites and can freely organise workers.

CONCERNED about the anti-trade union activities of employers, particularly multinational companies, but also governments, manifested in dismissals for trade union membership and activism and putting the pressure on the cancellation of collective agreements, leading to dramatic decline in the number of union members in the pan-European region.

CONCERNED about the nearly everywhere mounting right-wing populism, xenophobia and racism, anti-unionism and union discrimination. The continuing trend of amending labour laws and systems of industrial relations in the countries of the region, often as integral parts of austerity measures pushed through to bring down budget deficits and that particularly



undermine national and sectoral collective bargaining systems to the detriment of working people and trade unions. This has eroded trade union rights across the region, and at the same time social dialogue was often perfunctory or strained.

CONSIDERING that the respect of trade union rights is a precondition for social justice at the workplace, in society, and worldwide. Only when workers are able to organise and to bargain freely can they claim a fair share of the wealth they create and contribute to equity, consensus and cohesion in society, and to sustainable development.

AFFIRMING that the promotion of the European social model remains extremely important in order to equalize the standards at the European continent and further European integration.

AFFIRMING the need to have a strong and united alliance of trade unions in the Pan-European region through the BWI and EFBWW cooperation.

RECOGNISING the work of BWI in providing a platform for all unions in the Pan-European region east and west, north and south - to discuss common issues and build solidarity especially for the small and weak unions who needed greater support; and, its support through capacity-building training, linking-up unions and encouraging solidarity between affiliates, building up of regional campaign network, union organizing and recruitment of workers in multinational companies and infrastructure projects in the sector of construction and road industry, as well as in the timber industry.

THEREFORE, be it resolved that:

1. The conclusion of the workshop for Trade Unions in Central and South East Europe “Changes, Challenges and the New Way Forward” held on 2 July 2015, in Vienna, Austria are incorporated in the BWI Strategic Plan and must now be prioritized and implemented in the next four years;
2. The BWI must continue to support the struggle of the trade unions in the Central, South East and Eastern part of Europe where trade unions are under attack, ILO core labour standards are not recognized and unions are weak; and,
3. The unions in the east must be given a voice and representation in the global and European bodies of BWI.

SIGNATURE:

Pavel Trendafilov, SGIP, Macedonia



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