

Getting a taste of recruitment and organising training in Poland



(19 March) Earlier this month EPSU staff, Agnieszka Ghinararu attended a recruitment and organising course in Poland organised by the NSZZ “Solidarność” confederation.

Agnieszka and Miloš have been working with a number of colleagues around Europe to help them develop their experience in recruitment and organising and particularly in preparing a short, basic training course for EPSU affiliates.

The “Solidarność” seminar was run by experienced trainer and organiser Janusz Zabiega, head of the confederation’s National Education and Organising

Department. While based on American and British experience in recruitment and organising, the content was adapted to the reality of the situation in Poland. This basic seminar is run at various levels – company, branch, territorial, regional and national.

On this occasion the seminar was held at the Bridgestone tyre plant in Poznan where the local union wanted to develop the union, involve more workers and make them active and so strengthen the union position in upcoming negotiations at the end of this year. After some growth last year, there are 737 “Solidarność” members at the plant out of a total of around 2000 workers. The union now has an action plan and clear targets in different departments of the company with a view to increasing membership by 300 by October. The monitoring will be done by the leaders of the union with assistance of the regional organisers.

NSZZ “Solidarność” has been developing its recruitment and organising training over the past 20 years, emphasizing the importance of building a strong union presence to support collective bargaining and that means not just recruiting more members but ensuring that they are active and engaged. The general aim of the workshop was to raise awareness on the need to organize new members and to acquire practical skills to organize employees more effectively in the conditions of today's labour market. The more specific objectives included:

- making participants aware of the benefits of creating their own strong workers' representation and working together to improve their working conditions;
 - becoming aware that the most effective form of joint action is joining a trade union;
 - providing arguments refuting the popular (often stereotypical) views that block workers from joining a trade union or creating their own trade union organisation; and
 - acquiring practical skills in working with workers in order to recruit them to a trade union.
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