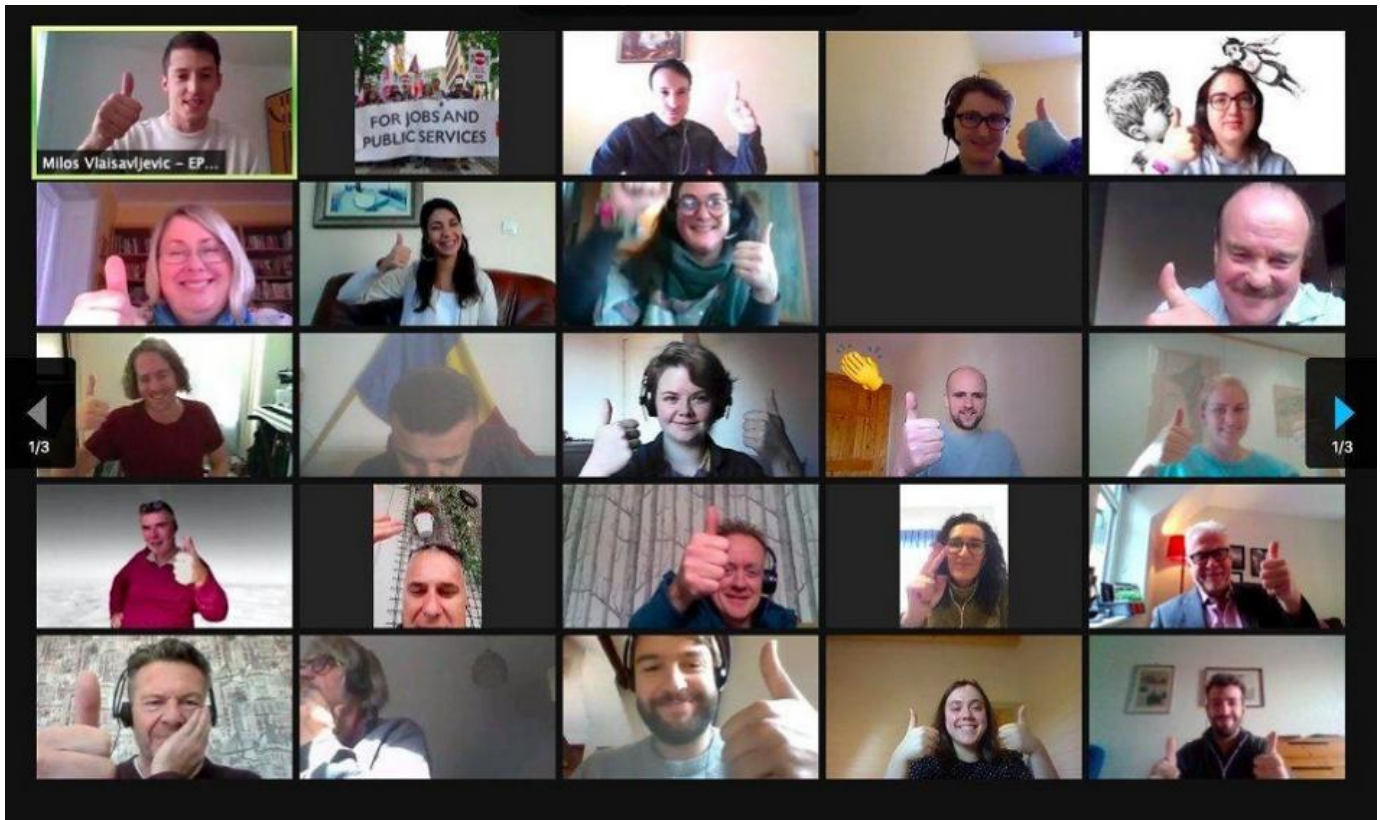


Young workers - the recruitment challenge for trade unions



(23 October 2020) Over 100 trade unionists, organizers, union officers and activists, from more than 55 unions and 30 countries in Europe took part in the first webinar of EPSU's recruitment and organizing (R&O) network. This was a joint event with EPSU's Youth Network and addressed the question: "Do young workers really NOT want to join trade unions?"

The aim of the webinar was to identify and exchange on innovative trade union responses to this key question. The debate addressed the broadly felt trend of an increasing distance felt by many young workers from trade unions, even though they often find themselves in precarious working conditions and are disproportionately hit by recurring economic crises.

Two speakers, Clare Coatman of the TUC (UK) and Frank van Bennekom of the FNV (Netherlands) described successful examples of youth campaigns:

We heard from Clare about the TUC's WorkSmart app that seeks to reach young workers directly on their smartphone, thereby lowering barriers for trade union entry. She also spoke about the attitudes of the young workers in the UK towards the unions and how to address and engage with them.

Frank told us about the success of the FNV's youth section "Young and united" in combatting the student loan system. A very tangible success, made possible through effective organizing and campaigning.

There was a number of questions to the speakers in the end, and there are many left open for the discussion in the future. The questions raised concerns about the work of the youth committees and their actual power to influence the change in the unions, as well with the problem of limited number of mandates and the need for mentorship and training of young colleagues. There were questions on the media impact of the campaigns, which proved to be useful in bringing young people closer to the union.

The next webinar will focus on organizing in the pandemic and is planned for December. You can sign up to the EPSU R&O network by sending an email to: mavram@epsu.org

The network has been created to create a space where we can share ideas and good examples in the field of organizing and recruitment. It is also intended to help members who are seeking help and assistance on specific issues/campaigns. Lastly, the idea is to have open discussions of what works, and what doesn't work in R&O.

In future the network will focus on:

1. Online webinars (twice a year – or more if there is a need) focusing on specific set of skills and experiences, or focusing on a specific field of organizing. EPSU will organize these webinars according to our knowledge, expertise and availability of other experts. We encourage participants to suggest topic or to co-organize events with us
2. The network mailing list will be used to share updates on developments and advertise events (seminars/workshops/webinars, etc.)
3. Once in 2-3 years an European conference or workshop for organisers.

Hope to hear from you,

[\[RP1\]](#) Can you recall if anything specific

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