

## EPSU-ILO Decent Work Project: Report of fourth regional meeting in Sofia

(7 September 2015) More than 25 participants from five countries took part in the fourth regional workshop of EPSU's project with the International Labour Organisation's training centre at the beginning of September. The meeting took place in Sofia with representatives of EPSU affiliates from Bulgaria, Romania, Turkey, Azerbaijan and Moldova. They were welcomed to the meeting by Ioannis Parteniotis, President of the FCIW construction, water and industry union and Vice-President of the Podkrepa confederation, and Ivan Kokolov, President of the FTU-HS health services union and Vice-President of the CITUB confederation. As with the other regional workshops, the agenda had been prepared at the project launch meeting in Brussels in February. The meeting included sessions on collective bargaining, organising and recruitment, press and campaigning and action to increase recruitment and participation of young workers in EPSU unions. Evelin Toth of the ILO Training Centre provided some background information on the project and outlined some of the main developments in industrial relations in the public sector across Europe. Collective bargaining trends across Europe Richard Pond of EPSU provided a short introduction to highlight recent developments, with a focus on those countries that were emerging from the crisis and austerity as well as those where collective bargaining in the public services was still very much affected by austerity policies.

- [Richard Pond - CB](#)

Workshops on major challenges for trade unions Key challenges facing EPSU affiliates in South East Europe were debated in workshops. These included labour law reforms and the impact of neo-liberal policies. Other subjects tackled in the workshops included trade union pluralism and labour migration. Organising and recruitment Richard Pond of EPSU began the debate around organising and recruitment by outlining membership developments in EPSU, initiatives on organising and, in particular, proposals for a new project on organising that would take place in 2016. This theme was taken up by Eddie Stam of the FNV confederation in the Netherlands who discussed some general principles about organising and the main challenges for trade unions. Greg Thomson, head of strategic organising at Unison in the UK picked up some of Eddie's themes and

related them to the work Unison was doing in specific sectors, particular in a major national employer in private social care.

- [Eddy Stam - Organising](#)
- [Greg Thomson - Organising](#)

Dr Nicola Countouris of University College London introduced a discussion on precarious employment, examining what it means and outlining how the policies being promoted across Europe have contributed to its spread. The European institutions had yet to come up with alternative policies to tackle precarious employment.

- [Nicola Countouris - Precarious Employment](#)

Alex Flynn, of the Unite trade union in the UK, described some of the main campaigns that his union had been involved in, looking at the different techniques used to communicate the aims of these campaigns. Alex underlined the importance of trade unions being effective in communicating their successes in lobbying, campaigning and collective bargaining. In the final session of the meeting five young trade unionists put forward their ideas about the challenge facing trade unions in recruiting and organising young workers. They emphasised that it wasn't just about the way trade unions interacted with young people but also about how they worked internally to encourage young members to develop in the union.

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