

Get to know Trade Unions

Handbook for youth



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Get to know Trade Unions Handbook for youth

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FOREWORD

„The first time a group of workers went together to face the boss and say »we want things to be different here,« a union was born. Each time that primal confrontation takes place for the first time in a workplace, the union is born or reborn. The union in law and in fact is a group of workers acting together, confronting their employer for their common concerns“

Dan La Botz, Troublemaker's Handbook 2

Have you ever wondered what exactly trade unions are, what do they do and why are they so important. Since the relationship between worker and employer was established, the worker found itself in a weaker position. The employer who is the owner of production means has the power to freely manage his workforce. To protect the workers from being badly treated or to ensure them a safe and healthy work environment there must be an organization, an organization for workers.

The reading material is a step closer for you to get to know the trade union work and the importance of unionizing.

In the first part of the book you will find information about international background, legal framework, trade union work, history and some concrete arguments about why to join trade union, if otherwise all the information still did not make you wonder of joining yourself.

The second part of the book is focused on four countries, of which trade union organizations have participated in creating this education material. Here you have a chance to get to know more about trade unions and workers' rights in Slovenia, Croatia, Finland and Sweden.

Nonetheless we must always keep in mind the words of a respectful working-class economist Michael D. Yates who said that: "almost everyone who works for a living works for someone else."

Staša Pernat Lesjak, president of the Youth Committee ZSSS



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INTERNATIONAL BACKGROUND

1. INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNION MOVEMENT

Trade unions are organizations whose primary functions are to improve living and working conditions for workers, members and maintain existing standards and rights within the national system of industrial relations.

Trade unions are primary national organizations that have begun already at the end of the nineteenth century associate at the international level, where they have transferred some interests and responsibilities to the international trade union organizations.

The increasing integration of national economies in a single global market and the appearance of new world production systems are demanding stronger coordination of national and international trade union agendas.

International Trade Unions Confederation – ITUC represents the biggest international trade union organization that brings together 175 million workers from 155 countries and 311 national trade union centrals. Its headquarters are in Brussels.

The most important international trade union organization in Europe is the European Trade Union Confederation - ETUC which brings together 60 million workers from 36 European countries and 82 national trade union centrals. Its headquarters are in Brussels.

The International Secretariats combine national trade unions in certain sectors, occupations or industries from different countries. Most major unions are members of one or more global union federations, relevant to the sectors where they have their members. Normally, the individual union will also be affiliated to a national trade union centre, which in turn can be affiliated to a world body such as the International Trade Union Confederation, ITUC. In 2002, 10 secretariats, renamed themselves into Global Union Federations - GUFs. These organizations are mainly focused on providing minimum social standards within multinational corporations.

Examples of such GUFs (13):

IMF – International Metalworkers’ Federation

BWI – The Building and Woodworkers International

EI – Education International

ICEM – International Federation of Chemical, Energy, Mine & General Workers’ Unions

IFJ – International Federation of Journalists

ITF – International Transport Workers’ Federation

ITGLWF – International Textile, Garment and Leather Workers Federation

IUF – International Union of Food, Agricultural, Hotel, Restaurant, Catering, Tobacco and Allied Workers’ Associations

PSI – Public Service International

UNI – Union Network International - UNI Global Union

IAEA – International Arts and Entertainment



2. LEGAL FRAMEWORK

International labour standards (rules set up by ILO) are legal instruments which define basic minimum standards in the world of work. They are drawn up by representatives of governments, employers and workers in a tripartite fashion and so represent the work-related principles of the major actors in the global economy.

Tripartism is the term used to describe equal participation and representation of governments and organizations which represent employers and workers in bodies within the ILO as well as in the national and enterprise level. Promoting social dialogue amongst the three partners is a primary source of social justice and one of the main safeguards of sustainable peace. The ILO is the only tripartite organization within the United Nations system.

The international labour standards, which can be drawn up as conventions or recommendations, are instruments of law that can be ratified by governments and are as such a part of the legal framework of the international community. They serve as guide posts for organizations, companies and individuals concerned with basic principles and rights at work as well as legal instruments with the intention to successfully confront the effects of globalization (*Labour Education Textbook (4,5), International Training Centre of the ILO, 2008*).

Freedom of Association and the Right to Collective Bargaining are considered especially important as they represent one of the fundamental rights and general principles which are included in all major documents concerning human rights.

United Nations (UN)

- a) *Universal Declaration of Human Rights 1948*
Resolution no. 217 A (III) Article 23
- b) *International Pact of Civil and Political Rights 1966*
Resolution no. 2200 A (XXI) Article 22
- c) *International Pact on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights 1966*
Resolution no. 2200 A (XXI) Article 8

International Labour Organization (ILO)

- a) *ILO Convention 87 (1948)*
Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention
It ensures workers and employers, without the prior approval, to establish organizations and to join them by their own free will; it determines the freedom of organization and action; protection in relation to the state,...
- b) *ILO Convention No. 98 (1949)*
Right to Organize and Collective Bargaining
It provides protection for workers against discrimination in employment because of the exercise of trade union freedom; prohibits interference between employer and employee organizations; promotes the development of collective bargaining,...



Council of Europe (CE)

- a) *Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms 1994*
Article 11
- b) *European Social Charter 1999*
Article 5
- c) *Community charter of the fundamental social rights of workers*
A special chapter is dedicated to the right of association and collective bargaining, which includes articles from 11 to 14

European Union (EU)

- a) *Treaty on European Union and treaty establishing European Community 2006*
The Treaty establishing the European Community
Title XI: Social policy, education, vocational training and youth
Chapter 1: Social provisions - Articles 136 to 140
- b) *Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union 2000*
Article 12 and Article 28



TRADE UNIONISM

"Organizing is an attitude. It's the attitude that you and your co-workers together can do something to make things better. It's the attitude that action is better than complaining. It's the attitude that all problems are just situations waiting for a solution. It's the refusal to be discouraged- at least not for long. It's the willingness to listen to others with respect, so that the plan you come up with reflects the good ideas of many people. If you have the attitude, you feel it is necessary to respond to unfairness. You are committed to building power with your co-workers, not just talking about it. You believe in collective action, even if you're just starting to understand it."

Ellen David Friedman, Troublemaker's handbook 2

1. WHAT ARE TRADE UNIONS AND WHY DO WE NEED THEM?

The trade unions were established to protect and improve workers' rights during the period of capitalism. They arose from the need of association for workers and their common interests in dealing with employers and their capitalist tendencies.

Unions mean better pay, benefits, and working conditions for their members and across most of the European countries the rights that unions gain apply for all

working people in the country, still. Apart for that they contribute to better worker-friendly legislation they also force employers to treat employees with dignity and respect; and at their best, they provide a way for workers to make society both more democratic and egalitarian.

Trade unions are the sole protection for workers. In most of the times they are the only thing standing between companies/management and the worker. It is extremely important to be aware that with more workers united, unions can assert our rights more easily and efficiently.

Ask yourself - what would be the level of workers' rights without the unions?

WE WOULD NO LONGER HAVE

- Reimbursement for commuting to and from work
- Payment for annual leave
- Payment for food
- Supplement for working life
- Severance pay

REDUCED WOULD BE

- Minimum basic wage and minimum wage
- Pensions and compensation for sickness absence
- The rates of compensation for less favorable working conditions

WORSE WOULD BE

- Conditions for retirement
- Special protection of women, youth and older workers
- Regulations for health and safety at work

WE WOULD HAVE

- Fewer days of annual leave
- Longer working hours
- More precarious employments
- More exploitation

2. GOOD TO KNOW!

Workers rights as human rights:

- Prohibiting a person from joining or forming a union, as well as forcing a person to do the same, whether by a government or by a business, is generally considered a human rights abuse.

Collective bargaining:

- Collective bargaining is a process between employer and trade union to reach an agreement regarding the rights and duties of people at work. Collective bargaining aims to reach a collective agreement which usually sets out issues such as employees pay, working hours, training, health and safety, and rights to participate in workplace or company affairs.
- A collective agreement functions as a labour contract between an employer and one or more unions and sets the working standards above the legislation/labour law. It sets more favourable conditions for workers.
- Collective bargaining can take place at three levels: company level (between management and the trade union), sectoral level (between sectoral employers' organization and sectoral trade union organization) and national level (between national employers' organization and national trade union organization).

Working time:

- On the First May 1886, several hundred thousand workers swamped major American industrial cities to demand for eight-hour working day.
- In 1919 ILO Convention on the limitation of hours of

work in industrial undertakings to eight hours per day and forty-eight per week was adopted. (Note: Effective Date: 06/13/1921)

International workers' day/ Labour Day:

- Labour Day on May 1 commemorates the fight for the eight hour day. May Day, as it is commonly referred to, has become an international celebration of the social and economic achievements of the labour movement.
- The idea for a »workers holiday« began in Australia in 1856. With the idea having spread around the world, the choice of May 1 became a commemoration by the Second International for the people involved in the 1886 Haymarket affair.

European Social Dialogue:

- European social dialogue is a fundamental element in the European social model that enables the European social partners to contribute significantly to defining European social standards. It encompasses the discussions, negotiations and joint actions undertaken by the European social partners.
- Dialogue between the European social partners exists at both cross-sectoral and sectoral level. The participants in the cross-sectoral dialogue, the ETUC, BUSINESSEUROPE (private sector employers)/UEAPME (small and medium businesses), and CEEP (public employers), have concluded a number of framework agreements: the parental leave (1996) and revised in 2008, the part-time work (1997) and the fixed-term contracts (1999). Those agreements have been ratified by the Council of Ministers and are now part of European legislation.

3. 10 GOOD REASONS TO JOIN A UNION... AND MORE:

1. *To represent and defend your interests as a worker*
2. *To improve your working conditions*
3. *To defend your health and safety at work*
4. *To receive individualized support up-to-date*
5. *To meet other people with the same problems and the same demands*
6. *To promote your values and principals; peace; social justice; freedom; solidarity; equality and democracy*
7. *To enable you to have your say as an active member of society*
8. *To fight against unemployment, precarious work and social exclusion*
9. *To act with others*
10. *To strengthen your commitment to build a better society and fight against discrimination in the workplace*
11.
101. *To help others who are worse off*
102. *To fight for higher wages*
103. *To protect yourself against unfair dismissal*
104. *To have the opportunity of additional education and training*
105. *To actively defend what has been won by the trade union movement through the history*
106. *To connect with your co-workers*
107. *To be stronger and more confident against the employer*

108.To act in solidarity with others

**109.To help build more stronger and powerful union
that can win worker-friendly legislation**

**110.TO DEFEND YOUR SOCIAL STATE...YOUR WEL-
FARE STATE**

111....



SLOVENIA

1. BASIC COUNTRY INTRODUCTION

Slovenia is situated in Central Europe at the crossroads of four main European geographical regions: the Alps, the Dinaric mountains, the Pannonian plain and the Mediterranean. Its territory measures a total of 20,273 km². The country's borderline is 1,370 km long, of which 318 km traces the border with Austria, 670 km the border with Croatia, 102 km with Hungary and 280 km with Italy. The coastline is 46.6 km long. Slovenia has 2,007,711 residents whose average age is 41.4 years. The country's population growth has been negative for several years. Average life expectancy is 76.7 years, 73.04 for men and 80.66 for women. While 83.1% of residents declare themselves Slovenian, 91.1% note Slovenian language as their mother tongue. The majority of inhabitants (57.8 %) declare themselves Catholic.

Slovenia is one of the six former Yugoslavian founding republics. It became independent in 1991 with the dissolution of Yugoslavia. Previously the country was part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, and the history of its capital city Ljubljana dates back to Roman times.

In 2004 Slovenia joined the European Union and NATO – North Atlantic Treaty Organisation. On 1 January 2007 it became the first of the new EU member states to enter the European monetary union and adopt the euro. In

March 2004, Slovenia graduated from borrower/recipient status to donor partner at the World Bank. In December 2007, Slovenia received an invitation to enter into negotiations on its accession to the OECD – Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development.

Major industries in Slovenia include the automobile, chemical, metal, textile and furniture industries, as well as electronics industry and manufacture of electrical equipment.

2. INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS

Industrial relations in the modern sense of the word began to develop more rapidly after 1990, when social partners in Slovenia adopted new roles and gained importance. At the same time, in the period since the establishment of a tripartite dialogue following Slovenia's independence, the development of trade unions and employer organizations saw the emergence of pluralisation and in turn, a significant decrease in membership.

Social partners in Slovenia participate in the Economic and Social Council (ESC), which was founded in 1994 and represents a framework that has consolidated democratic relationships between the social partners. The ESC is a consultative body whose decisions, which are taken unanimously, are binding for all three partners. The significance of the ESC is reflected also in the position of the National Assembly of RS, according to which all acts and policies that in any way affect the interests of social partners must first be negotiated at the ESC level.

The aim of the reforms following the country's independence was to form a socially sustainable market economy. In this respect, the economic development model largely followed the so-called gradualist approach that attempted to – also through social dialogue – distance itself from the practice of economic and political “shock therapies”. Slovenia's endeavours to join the EU, which were realised in 2004, significantly contributed to the changes in the economy.

According to Stanojević (2007, in: *ibid.*) the social market economy during the Slovenian transition pursued the following goals:

- social market economy is primarily founded on market regulations;
- the state withdraws from the market and economy so that market operators can act independently in relation to the state;
- social market economy implies quality production; this in turn means translation of equality and fairness into market efficiency at the enterprise level.

Realistically speaking, these goals were only partially achieved or successfully implemented during the transition process. The increasing privatisation of profit through an increasingly higher number of management buyouts on the one hand, and the socialization of losses that was particularly prominent during the current economic and social crisis and increasing unemployment rate on the other indicate all too well that there are a number of steps to be taken before a social market economy is properly realised.

3. LABOUR LEGISLATION FRAMEWORK

Certain important work-related rights are established in the Constitution of RS as human rights and basic freedoms. The constitution therefore guarantees the freedom of work and the right to free choice of employment, prescribes access to any position of employment under equal conditions and prohibits forced labour.

The most important element of the Slovenian labour legislation system is the Employment Relationships Act (ERA) which regulates individual employment relationships, i.e. those employee – employer relationships that arise upon the conclusion of an employment contract. The ERA stipulates the minimum level of rights guaranteed to workers, while a more favourable regulation is left to collective agreements (CA) at different levels (industry, enterprise CA) and general acts of employers. Special features of employment relationships and civil servants' rights and duties are regulated by the Civil Servants Act.

The ERA lays down the obligation to conclude an employment contract, with which the employee and the employer stipulate their mutual rights and obligations. The contract must be concluded in writing and must contain all elements laid down by the ERA. As a rule the contract is concluded for an indefinite time, although in certain cases the contract may also be concluded for a fixed period (e.g. replacement of a temporarily absent employee, project work). Fixed-term employment contracts may be concluded with the same employee for the same job for a maximum period of two years. Work may also be carried

out within a shorter working period or at home.

Upon the conclusion of the employment contract the employee and the employer may agree upon a probation period or traineeship. Probation periods may not last longer than six months and traineeship no longer than a year. A trainee may only be an employee who starts to carry out work appropriate to the type and level of his/her professional qualification for the first time. A trainee's base salary may not be lower than 70% of the base salary for the position.

The ERA regulates the rights, obligations and responsibilities arising from the employment relationship, including the working hours, night work, overtime work, breaks and rests, annual leave, remuneration, training and similar.

Full working hours consist of 40 hours per week, which time includes a daily 30-minute lunch break. Work exceeding full working hours – overtime – may only be imposed on employees by way of exception in specific cases prescribed by law. Overtime work is limited to a maximum of 8 hours per week, 20 hours per month and 170 hours per year (with employee's consent up to a total of 230 hours per year).

Employees have the right to a rest of 12 hours between two successive days of work and an additional 24 hours of rest over a period of one week. They are also entitled to a minimum of 4 weeks of annual paid leave per calendar year. Additional days of annual leave are stipulated by law (e.g. additional day of annual leave for every child

younger than 15 years of age) or collective agreements (e.g. additional days of leave with regard to the complexity of an employee's position, education, working conditions and similar).

The ERA also regulates the remuneration package, which consists of base salary, performance-based remuneration payment, allowances (extra payments for special working conditions related to the distribution of working time, e.g. for night work, overtime, Sunday work and work on statutory holidays and free days; extra payments for special working conditions that ensue from special burdens at work, such as working without natural light; seniority allowance) and a part of the salary that is paid relative to business performance. An employee is entitled to reimbursement of work-related costs (meals during work, travel to and from work, business trips) and other types of remuneration (holiday allowance, jubilee rewards, solidarity aid, severance pay).

Rights ensuing from parenthood are regulated separately. Parents have the right to be absent from work or to reduced working-hours arrangement when using parental leave (maternity leave, paternity leave, childcare leave, adoption leave). The employer is obliged to facilitate the balancing of family and working commitments. Parental leave is regulated under the Parental Protection and Family Benefit Act.

The employer is obliged to provide the conditions for occupational safety and health, which means that they must also provide the means necessary for safe work perform-

ance (such as protective glasses, gloves and similar). The rights and obligations of employers and employees in connection with occupational safety and health and measures for safety and health at work are prescribed by the Occupational Safety and Health Act.

Employee and employer may also terminate the employment relationship. Termination may be ordinary (with a period of notice) or extraordinary (without a notice period). The ERA specifies the termination procedure, the reasons for termination, notice periods and cases when an employee is entitled to severance pay.

If an employee finds that the employer has not met the obligations arising from the employment relationship or that some of his/her employment rights prescribed in the relationship have been violated he/she has the right to request in writing that the employer meets his obligations or remedy the violation. If the employer fails to remedy violations or meet his obligations within 8 days, the employee may seek judicial protection from a competent labour court within 30 days.

Employees' rights are protected by other acts as well, namely by acts regulating pension and invalidity insurance, employment, unemployment insurance, parental protection and family benefits.

4. TRADE UNIONS IN SLOVENIA

Slovenian trade unions developed as a part of Austrian trade unions as early as the late 19th century. They start-

ed as educational and self-help organisations and gradually developed into organizations representing workers' rights. Amendments to labour legislation at the end of the 1980s provided the basis for the development of collective bargaining as a fundamental instrument in industrial relations. Until 1988 only one trade union organisation existed, although changes in the trade union movement had already developed. In 1990 trade union pluralism started to emerge.

Today there are seven representative trade union confederations in Slovenia, in addition to 28 trade unions that are representative for individual sectors or professions. In the first half of the 1990s trade union membership dropped to some 60% of the active population of Slovenia. In the second half of the 1990s trade unions lost about one-third of their members. In 1998 trade union membership rate fell to 42.8% and has remained relatively steady since. In 2009 new data demonstrated a further decline in membership to some 27%. Nevertheless it should be stressed that union membership rate among the active population is the highest among new EU member states and even exceeds that of many old EU member states.

History of the trade union movement in Slovenia

1853	first support fund established in Ljubljana
1867	first graphical workers' educational society in Ljubljana
1868	first workers' educational society in Maribor
1890	first Slovenian socialist brochure on 8-hour work day

1889	two major strikes organized in Trieste and the Zasavje district
1893	Slovenian socialist newspaper Delavec (Worker)
1917	strike wave in Slovenia
1920	unity of political and trade union movement – the Communist Party
1922	establishment of the Yugoslav General Federation of Labour
1934	Slovenian Communist Party
1942	Workers' Unity conference
1945	first Slovenian trade union congress
1950	elections of first workers' councils (self-management)
Until 1990	trade union unitarity – the only trade union is the Association of Trade Unions of Slovenia
After 1990	trade union pluralism – 7 trade union confederations
1990	Association of Free Trade Unions of Slovenia (Zveza svobodnih sindikatov Slovenije)

Within the scope of its powers arising from the Representativeness of Trade Unions Act (Official Journal of RS, No.13/1993), and based on the evidence of meeting the conditions stipulated by the legislation, the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs issues decisions on trade union representativeness for trade union associations or confederations and for independent trade union representatives within their industry, sector, occupation, municipality or broader local community. Presently, the list of representative trade unions comprises 39 trade unions. Seven of these trade union associations are representative at the national level: ZSSS (Association

of Free Trade Unions of Slovenia), Pergam, KNSS (New Trade Union Confederation of Slovenia), K-90, Alternativa (Alternative), Solidarnost (Solidarity), Confederation of Public Sector Trade Unions.

The legislative basis for trade union organization and their operation is provided already by Article 42 of the Constitution of RS (OJ RS 33/1991) which sets out the right of assembly and association, and Article 76 which lays down the freedom of trade unions. Article 77 provides for the constitutional right to strike. Key acts regulating trade union activities are also the Representativeness of Trade Unions Act (OJ RS 13/1993), the Collective Agreements Act (OJ RS 43/2006), the Strike Act (OJ SFRY, No. 23/1991), the Workers' Participation in Management Act (OJ RS 42/2007), the Financial Participation Act (OJ RS 25/2008) and the Employment Relationships Act (OJ RS 103/2007).

5. INTRODUCTION OF THE ASSOCIATION OF FREE TRADE UNIONS OF SLOVENIA (ZSSS)

ZSSS is a voluntary and democratic organisation, independent of political parties, parliament, government and religious communities, founded on 6 April 1990. The association is funded solely by membership fees and project work.

Our representativeness and efforts to establish a high level of social dialogue give us the leverage to negotiate the contents of collective agreements and participate in the Economic and Social Council where we,

together with the government, coordinate law proposals and other documents affecting workers. Social and other agreements related to salaries and specific economic and social affairs are concluded in the framework of a tripartite partnership. ZSSS has representatives in all social security institutions and three representatives in the national council.

Our goals are achieved through negotiations, agreements, strikes or mass manifestations. The advantage of ZSSS and its members over other trade union organisations is its regional union organization network that allows them to provide, in the entire territory of Slovenia, at their regional organizations' head offices and in a number of local trade union offices, legal, professional and other assistance to their members near their place of residence and work.

Since 1999 we remain the country's only full member of the European Trade Union Confederation.

Organizational structure and its functioning

ZSSS comprises 23 trade unions from different sectors from the whole of Slovenia, from both private and public sectors:

a. Industrial trade unions (8)

- Trade Union of Energy Sector Workers of Slovenia – SDE
- Trade Union of Construction Industry Workers of Slovenia – SDGD
- Forestry Trade Union of Slovenia

- Chemical, Non-Metal and Rubber Industries Trade Union of Slovenia – KNG
- Agriculture and Food Industry Trade Union of Slovenia – KŽI
- Trade Union of Metal and Electro Industry of Slovenia – SKEI
- Wood Processing Industry Trade Union of Slovenia – SINLES
- Textile and Leather Processing Industries Trade Union of Slovenia – STUPIS

b. Service sector trade unions (6)

- Trade Union of Financial Organization Workers of Slovenia – SFOS
- Union of Transportation and Telecommunication Workers – SDPZ
- Trade Union for Catering and Tourism Industry Employees of Slovenia – GIT
- Trade Union of Retail Workers of Slovenia – SDTS
- Trade Union of Public Utilities, Security and Real Estate Workers of Slovenia – SKVNS
- Trade Union of Craft Employees of Slovenia – SDE

c. Public sector trade unions (6)

- GLOSA – Trade Union of Culture Workers of Slovenia
- Slovenian Pre-school, Education and Research Workers Trade Union – VIR
- Trade Union of Civil and Social Bodies of Slovenia – SDDO
- Trade Union of Health and Social Security of Slovenia – SZSS
- Trade Union of Professional Firefighters of Slovenia

- SPGS
- Defence Ministry Trade Union – SMO



d. Other trade unions (3)

- Slovenian Trade Union of Athletes – SŠS
- Trade Union of Retired Persons of Slovenia – SUS
- Free Trade Union of Slovenia – SSS

Achievements

a) Labour legislation

In the Employment Relationships Act we have successfully defended:

- a paid 30-minute lunch break,
- the level of severance pay upon termination of the employment contract,
- reimbursement of costs for meals during work and travel expenses to and from work,
- seniority allowance,
- trade union's role and tasks in connection with employment relationships,
- employment and legal status and protection of trade union trustees,
- the rule that only the collective agreement at the sectoral level may, by way of exception, stipulate rights at a level lower than that prescribed by law.

b) Healthcare legislation

- preserved intergenerational mutuality in supplementary health insurance,
- prevented cuts in wage compensation for long-term absence due to illness (the government proposed a 30% cut in wage compensation),

- c. preservation of autonomy of the sickness insurance fund (which continues to be managed by representatives of contributors from employer and trade union organizations),
- d. prevented attempts to discontinue the right to wage compensation after one year of sick leave,
- e. prevented the introduction of the above standard voluntary health insurance at the expense of compulsory health insurance.

c) Pension and invalidity legislation

- a. preserved the safe intergenerational agreement that remains the foundation of workers' old age security,
- b. prevented the introduction of investment-related compulsory pension insurance,
- c. flexible retirement is encouraged through a number of incentives, not only negative (malus-schemes), but also
- d. positive (bonus) incentives for delaying retirement date.

d) Co-management

We prevented the adoption of amendments to the Co-management act proposed by the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Slovenia:

- a. a reduction in the number of workers' council members to three members (presently the number is determined according to the size of the company – from a minimum of 3 up to 13 or more members, because the number of council members in a company with more than 1,000

workers increases by two members per every 1,000 workers),

- b. worker representation in supervisory boards of companies was to be entirely abolished in companies with less than 500 employees,
- c. also to be abolished were the institution of worker directors in companies with less than 2,000 employees and
- d. the possibility of professional functioning of a workers' council member.

e) Worker participation in profit sharing

Adoption of the Financial Participation Act (at the request of ZSSS after more than 15 years; however, participation is still not mandatory, but voluntary).

f) Occupational safety and health

Adoption of the Occupational Safety and Health Act (with active participation of ZSSS – the union obtained the right to documented information on the occupational safety and health situation with individual employers and the possibility to direct and organize the work of elected worker trustees; upon consultation with workers and worker representatives every employer is required to produce a safety statement with a risk assessment).

g) Tax legislation

- a. Introduction of a two rate value added tax (the government proposed only one – a 20% rate – but trade unions forced the introduction of a reduced rate for basic consumer goods, medicines,

etc., with which we prevented further decline in the quality of life for the lowest paid workers. The reduced rate is now 8.5% and the standard rate 20%.

- b. Prevention of the introduction of a flat tax rate (ZSSS demonstrations, which led to the preservation of the progressive tax system).

Service ZSSS

The Association of Free Trade Unions plays a key role in bargaining at the national, sectoral and entrepreneurial levels and provides its members with free legal assistance, mediation, professional consulting, training, solidarity aid and various benefits. Sectoral trade unions are actively involved in the organization of demonstrations, strikes, sport games, social meetings, holidays and other benefits.

What do we do?

a) The national level

- a. exert influence on the adoption of legislation (ZSSS) – the Economic and Social Council,
- b. special collective agreements – ZSSS (such as wage adjustments with inflation).

b) Sectoral level

- a. collective agreements (sectoral trade unions).

c) Regional level

- a. services for members at the ZSSS regional organizations' offices (legal assistance) – implementation of trade union and ZSSS policy.

d) Enterprise level

- a. collective agreements,
- b. general assistance to members,
- c. information provision,
- d. elections to workers' councils, negotiations in the event of redundancies, strike mobilization and similar.



6. YOUTH ACTIVITIES OF ZSSS

Since 2007 ZSSS includes a Youth Committee, whose vision is oriented towards “mobilization” – recruitment of the young in the formation of a better and socially stable future. The committee’s primary goal is to raise awareness among the young on current social issues, thus bringing them closer together. The young must recognize the trade union’s role and should therefore be engaged in continuing education and outreach activities related to the significance and functioning of trade unions, thus fostering respect for and commitment to workers’ rights. Every year the members of the committee organize round tables and presentations at schools, cooperate with young trade unionists and visit young people in companies or within trade union structures.

As regards communication with the media and the wider public, some useful information is available to the young on the internet (on the blog Sindikalnik (Trade Unionist), Facebook, the ZSSS website and Young-at-work.si).

Handbooks

The committee issued a handbook for the young entitled

"First aid in transition into employment", which contains helpful information for the young who are entering the labour market for the first time. Another publication is the second handbook "First aid for employees", intended for those already employed and recommended to all trade union trustees as a necessary tool in any trade union office.

Labour day poster

Every year the committee organizes a high school and faculty competition for a ZSSS labour day poster dedicated to World Labour Day. The best poster is awarded with a symbolic prize and distributed across Slovenia.

Fejst sindikat (Jolly good trade union)

On 30 May 2009 we organized the first major social event dedicated to the young and all those not acquainted with trade union activity. Fejst sindikat (Jolly good trade union) is an event with which we aim to present the trade unions organized within the ZSSS and introduce the trade union movement and ZSSS activity to the wider public. The event features trade union stands erected for union presentations and evening concerts by popular music groups.

Prepared by: ZSSS Youth Committee



CROATIA

1. BASIC COUNTRY INTRODUCTION

Croatia (official name: the Republic of Croatia) is a European country, geographically positioned between Central and Southeastern Europe. Croatia borders Slovenia to the north and west, Hungary to the north, Serbia to the east and Bosnia-Herzegovina and Montenegro to the south and east. It has a sea-border with Italy. The most significant cultural influences throughout Croatian history came from Central European and Mediterranean cultural circles.

According to the 2001 population census, Croatia has 4,437,460 inhabitants. Some 89.6 percent of the population are Croats; the largest national minority, Serbs, represent 4.5 percent of inhabitants, while all other minorities are represented with less than 0.5 percent of total inhabitants each. With a mainland surface area of 56,542 km² and 31,067 km² of territorial sea Croatia can be considered a medium-sized European country. Its capital Zagreb is the economic, cultural and political center of the country. The Croatian Constitution, adopted in 1990, divided the country into 21 new territorial units-counties (including the City of Zagreb). Croatia has 122 towns, 424 municipalities and 6767 settlements.

Politically speaking, Croatia has been a multi-party democracy with a semi-presidential political system since 1989/1990, and a parliamentary democracy since the amendment of its Constitution in 2001. It has been in-

dependent since 1991, a member of the United Nations since May 22, 1992, Council of Europe since 1996, World Trade Organization since 2000, Central European Free Trade Agreement / CEFTA since 2002, North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), and has been a candidate for EU accession since 2004. The Croatian Democratic Union/HDZ (right center) was ruling party 1990-2000; a six-party coalition (left center/Social Democratic Party and center/other coalition parties) held power 2000-2003; the HDZ regained power between 2003-2007, and since 2007, power has been divided amongst a coalition of HDZ, HSS (Croatian Peasant Party), HSLHS (Croatian Social-Liberal Party), HSU (Croatian Party of Pensioners) and national minority parties (Serbian SDS, Network of Romany Associations. . .).

Croatia failed to follow-up the transition initiated in the late 1980s with the process of consolidation of democracy - a longer and more complex socio-political process than the one conducted in the Republic of Croatia. However, in the Republic of Croatia this process was marked by extended continuous rule of the Croatian Democratic Union (HDZ) focused on the issue of statehood, rather than on democratic transition, war (1991-1995) and the Croatian privatization model privatizing public property to the advantage of the political elite in power and politically likeminded entrepreneurs.

2. INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS AND SOCIAL DIALOGUE

Provisions of Articles 43 and 59 of the Constitution of the Republic of Croatia, granting both employees and employers the right to organize as a fundamental human right, are of special relevance for the social dialogue in the Republic

of Croatia. The Republic of Croatia also ratified the conventions of the International Labour Organization no. 87 and 98, on the right to organize and collective bargaining. It also ratified the European Social Charter granting the right to organize.

The right of employees to organize into trade unions and employers to form employer associations is elaborated in the Labour Act. Moreover, the Labour Act also regulates the issues of collective bargaining and legal power of collective agreements. The Act provides for the possibility of the forming of an Economic-Social Council as a national body of trilateral cooperation between the Government of the Republic of Croatia, trade unions and employer organizations. The Labour Act also provides for the establishment of Workers' Councils and participation of employee representatives in supervisory and other appropriate bodies of companies and institutions. A separate Act on the Manner of Establishment of the Level of Representation of Higher-Order Union Associations in Tripartite Bodies at the national level proscribes a procedure for determining which union federations are to be represented in the Economic-Social Council and other tripartite national bodies.

Due to requirements on the establishment of trade unions (10 work-capable persons of age) proscribed by the law, there is a relatively large number of trade unions in the Republic of Croatia. 254 trade unions and 24 higher-order union associations (trade union federations) are registered at the national level. The majority of registered trade unions gather under five representative trade union federations represented in the Economic-Social Council (Association of Independent Trade Unions of Croatia-SSSH, Independent

Trade Unions of Croatia-NHS, Association of Trade Unions of Croatia-MHS, Croatian Trade Union Association-HUS and Workers' Trade Union Association of Croatia-URSH). However, due to changes pertaining to economic restructuring (strengthening of the service sector to the disadvantage of the industrial sector), trade union membership is in a slightly downward development. In addition, trade unions have more difficulty recruiting members in the growing service sector – in small-sized and multinational companies – than in the previously dominant industrial sector. In representative trade unions, the private industry sector features as the main representative sector, followed by the public services and state administration sectors. Trade unions highlight the problem of organization of workers in the private service sector.

Union membership fees are practically the only source of funding for the trade unions.

The system of determination and distribution of the trade union membership fee differs from union to union. The predominant system is one in which the union membership fee is determined by the trade union (most frequently a branch union forming a part of a trade union federation). Although the membership fee is most frequently determined as a percentage of the worker's net or gross salary, some unions set it as an absolute (fixed) amount. The percentage of membership fees differs significantly (0.2-1.5 percent). With the consent of the worker, the employer is legally obliged to deduct the trade union membership fee from the worker's salary and pay it out to the trade union in accordance with the decision of the Union of which the respective worker is a member.

Since the requirements for the establishment of employers' associations are also easily met (minimum of three physical or legal persons), 39 employers' associations are currently registered at the national level in the Republic of Croatia. The only representative higher-order employers' association is the Croatian Employers' Association. Apart from employers' associations, the Republic of Croatia still has the Croatian Chamber of Commerce, with mandatory membership, but this organization does not participate in the bilateral and trilateral social dialogues.

Trilateral cooperation of social partners and the Government of the Republic of Croatia

The main national body of trilateral cooperation between the Government of the Republic of Croatia, trade unions and employers in the Republic of Croatia is the Economic-Social Council (Croatian: GSV). In accordance with the provisions of the Labour Act, the Council was established by treaty between six trade union federations, the Croatian Employers' Association and the Government of the Republic of Croatia. The Council has broad, mostly advisory powers relating to economic and social issues. Prior to adoption of any major economic and social development plans, the state budget and acts and measures from the domain of economy and social policy, the Government of the Republic of Croatia is obliged to inform its social partners thereof at the session of the GSV, followed by discussion and drawing of conclusions. The Council plays an important role in the promotion of all forms of social dialogue, stimulation of collective bargaining and peaceable settlement of labor disputes (especially collective labor disputes).

Social partners are also represented in the Governing Coun-

cils of social insurance institutions (Croatian Pension Insurance Institute, Croatian Institute for Health Insurance), national employment service (Croatian Employment Institute), Advisory Council of the Fund for Development and Employment, National Competitiveness Council, National Safety-at-Work Council and in several parliamentary committees in the capacity of expert members, without voting rights.

Collective bargaining

Only the Collective Minimum Wage Agreement was concluded at the national level (cross-sector collective agreement) in the Republic of Croatia. The application of the above collective agreement was administratively broadened on the basis of the relevant legal provisions to include all employed persons. In the domain of public services, the Government of the Republic of Croatia participates in collective bargaining even when it is only an indirect employer, if direct employers are state-owned public institutions (e.g. schools, hospitals). Due to the coverage of workers by collective agreements, collective agreements concluded at the sectoral level (branches, activities) and collective agreements concluded at the level of individual employers (so called in-house collective agreements) take the dominant place in the Croatian collective labor relations system. At the sectoral level, collective agreements are typically entered into by trade unions associated into trade union federations, which often provide professional aid in the bargaining procedure. Only collective agreements regulating the labor relations of local servants employed in counties and towns are concluded at the regional level (county and town level). Trade unions united into representative trade union federations often participate in the conclusion of employer-level collective agreements. In-house collective

agreements are highly significant for the establishment of the level of workers' rights.

Although the coverage of trade union members with collective contracts is high, generally above 50 percent, trade union federations hold collective bargaining procedures to be quite disappointing, especially due to the lack of readiness of employers' associations to conclude sectoral collective agreements.

3. LABOUR LEGISLATION FRAMEWORK

Basic workers' rights are proscribed by the Labor Act. A higher level of rights is determined by collective agreements. An employer employing a minimum of 20 workers is obligated to adopt a Labor Rule Book proscribing the rights of workers. Individual worker's rights can also be established by means of an agreement between the employer and the Workers' Council, if a Workers' Council is established with the employer, provided that the employer regulates certain issues, such as issues of wage, work time or other issues governed by collective agreement, by treaty with the Workers' Council.

In cases of discrepancy between the above documents pertaining to any workers' right, that right most advantageous for the worker is applied.

Minimum wage is determined by the Minimum Wage Act. The Act guarantees workers minimum full-time wage. The amount of the minimum wage is established by the Central Bureau of Statistics based on a legally determined formula, in May of every year, for the ensuing one-year period.

4. TRADE UNIONS IN CROATIA

Currently, there are 5 representative trade union federations active in Croatia:

- SSSH - Association of Independent Trade Unions of Croatia (ETUC, ITUC)
- NHS - Independent Trade Unions of Croatia (ITUC)
- MHS - Association of Trade Unions of Croatia
- HUS - Croatian Trade Union Association
- URSH - Workers' Trade Union Association of Croatia

The number of trade union-organized workers is declining (estimated 35%). Data by sectors and branches is not available (since the Republic of Croatia does not have in place a Trade Union Representativeness Act, their representativeness is not officially established, which creates problems each time they engage in collective bargaining, etc.). State and public sectors are better organized than the private sector. There is a noticeable trend towards reduction of the number of branch collective agreements and an increase in in-house collective agreements. Sindikalno sta bolje organizirana državni in javni sektor kot zasebni sektor. Opazen je trend zmanjševanja števila panožnih KP in porast hišnih kolektivnih pogodb.

5. INTRODUCTION OF THE SSSH

The Association of Independent Trade Unions of Croatia (SSSH) is a voluntary workers' interest group systematically working toward the improvement of workplace quality as well as working and living conditions of residents of Croatia. The SSSH is entirely independent from

employers, government, political parties and religious organizations. The SSSH, as an independent and voluntary interest trade union organization, was founded on May 11, 1990. At the moment, the SSSH is an umbrella organization gathering 22 branch trade unions, with approximately 165,000 members and 60,000 pensioners, whose interests it also represents. The SSSH employs 104 persons in 21 county offices. The SSSH has been a full-fledged member of the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) and International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) for years.

Achievements

Seventeen branch collective agreements concluded and over 600 collective agreements signed on behalf of company employees.

The SSSH is also recognized as a relevant social partner of the Government of the Republic of Croatia and the Croatian Employer's Association, participating in the operation of the Economic-Social Council, a body entrusted with the harmonization or convergence of views on the economic-social guidelines of state policy, acting as a forum for social dialogue.

Services of the SSSH

The SSSH strives to realize its tasks and goals by representing workers' interests in a number of national bodies and state governing organizations:

- Economic-Social Council
- Committee for Labour, Health and Social Welfare of the Croatian Parliament

- Committee for economy, development and re-construction of the Croatian Parliament
- Governing Council of the Croatian Health Insurance Institute
- Governing Council of the Croatian Pension Insurance Institute
- National Competitiveness Council
- National Safety-at-Work Council
- Economic-social councils at the level of local self-government units

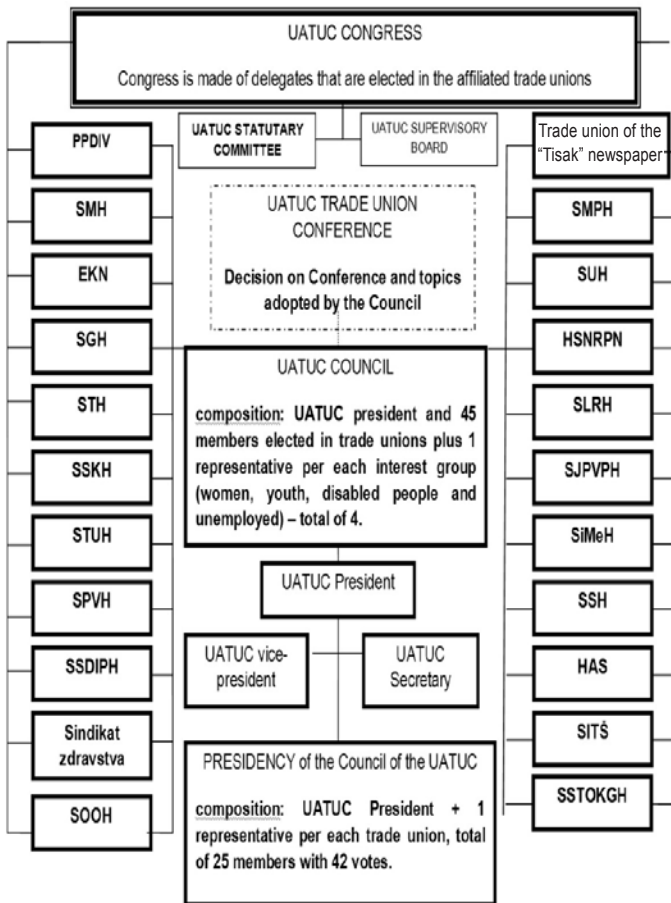
What do we do?

Recognizing the true role of trade unions in the development of a democratic society and the need for active participation in the decision-making process, the SSSH promotes the necessity of taking action in all domains of the social-political life in the country, the effects of which will reflect on the benefit of the citizens of the Republic of Croatia, foremost on the benefit of its workers.

The SSSH fields of activity:

- full employment and safety at the workplace,
- fair wage for fair work,
- fighting against undeclared work,
- social justice and social protection,
- right to health and quality protection at work,
- right to quality education and lifelong learning,
- freedom of organization into trade unions and collective bargaining,
- right to be informed and worker participation in the decision-making process,
- gender equality, and
- generational solidarity

Composition of the organization



6. YOUTH ACTIVITIES OF SSSH

Today, when young workers are mainly employed for a definite period or simply left to fend for themselves on the labour market and their rights are often ignored, youth does not always work to their advantage. Recognizing the specific needs and forms of employment of young workers, the SSSH decided to gather young workers in an equally specific manner, provide them with insight regarding what they can expect on the labour market, and show them how to fight for their rights. The youth section also organizes annual education cycles and training for work under trade union auspices, as well as public appearances, i.e. teaches them to take an active role in the events around them. Some of the goals of the Section are: to mobilize the potential of young people for purposes of improving union operation and realization of goals like organizing and recruiting young people into trade unions, creating more and better jobs for the young, and quality education for everyone, not only to the advantage of the youth, but to the advantage of all members, strengthening and encouraging founding of youth sections at the level of associated branch trade unions, strengthening of communication and more. We all should and must do much more; both in society as a whole and in the trade unions, to give young people the opportunity to resolve the problems they face!

*Prepared by:
The Association of Independent Trade Unions of Croatia (SSSH)*

FINLAND

1. BASIC COUNTRY INTRODUCTION

“Homogenous, stable, safe”

- 5.3 million inhabitants, sparsely populated
- Salary differentials small, but growing
- Progressive taxation, financial aid based on incomes
- Well organized society, low levels of corruption
- Both men and women work outside the home
- Gender equality relatively good, but income gaps exist

Finland is a Nordic country situated in the Fennoscandian region of Northern Europe. It is bordered by Sweden on the west, Norway on the north and Russia on the east, while Estonia lies to its south across the Gulf of Finland. The capital city is Helsinki.

Around 5.3 million people reside in Finland, with the majority concentrated in the southern part of the country. It is the eighth largest country in Europe in terms of area and the most sparsely populated country in the European Union. The native language of nearly all of the population is Finnish, which is part of the Finno-Ugric language family and is most closely related to Estonian. The language is one of only four official EU languages not of Indo-European origin. The second official language of Finland – Swedish – is the native language of 5.5% of the population.

Finland is a parliamentary republic with a central government based in Helsinki and local governments in 342 municipalities. A total of about one million residents live in the Greater Helsinki area (which includes Helsinki, Espoo, Kauniainen, and Vantaa), and a third of the country's GDP is produced there. Other major cities include Tampere, Turku, Oulu, Jyväskylä, Kuopio, and Lahti.

Finland was historically a part of Sweden and from 1809 an autonomous Grand Duchy within the Russian Empire. Finland's declaration of independence from Russia in 1917 was followed by a civil war, war against the Soviet Union and a period of official neutrality during the Cold War. Finland joined the United Nations in 1955, the OECD in 1969, the European Union in 1995, and the Euro-zone since its beginning.

Finland was a relative latecomer to industrialization, remaining a largely agrarian country until the 1950s. Thereafter, economic development was rapid, and the country reached the world's top income levels in the 1970s. Between 1970 and 1990, Finland built an extensive welfare state. In the aftermath of the country's severe depression in the early 1990s, successive governments have changed the Finnish economic system through some privatization, deregulation, and tax cuts.

Finland is well placed in many international comparisons of national performance such as the share of high-technology manufacturing and health care.

2. INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS

The Finnish labour market system is based on widespread organisation of employees and employers and a strong tradition of bargaining and co-operation. The collective bargaining coverage rate has been about 90% in the past 10 years; in fact, it has been nearly constant since 1990.

During the past four decades, the national incomes policy agreement (tulopoliittinen kokonaisratkaisu, often called tupo) has been a tripartite accord drafted by the government together with trade union confederations and employer organisations. It is a policy document covering a wide array of economic and social issues, such as pay increases, taxation, pensions, unemployment benefits and housing costs, as well as a range of qualitative working life measures. The agreement represents collective bargaining taken to its logical maximum, covering virtually all wage earners. Enforcement of the agreement has been made easier by the generally binding nature of collective agreements. However, the era of centralised incomes policy agreements dating from the so-called 'Liinamaa I' agreement in 1968 seems to be coming to an end in the Finnish labour market.

3. LABOUR LEGISLATION FRAMEWORK

The most essential legal framework for collective bargaining is the Collective Agreements Act (Työehtosopimuslaki) of 1946, which is complemented by basic agreements between trade union confederations and employer organisations.

Labour market relations are characterised by close co-operation between the state and the social partners. Almost all legislation concerning working life is based on a tripartite consensus.

The Labour Court monitors the implementation of collective bargaining. Under the existing law, the court hears and tries legal disputes arising out of collective agreements or collective civil servants' agreements or out of the Collective Agreements Act or the Act on Collective Civil Servant Agreements.

No national minimum wage is set in Finland; nevertheless, since the beginning of the 1970s, collective agreements define the minimum wages.

4. TRADE UNIONS IN FINLAND

The three main trade union confederations are SAK, the Finnish Confederation of Salaried Employees (Toimihenkilökeskusjärjestö, STTK) and the Confederation of Unions for Academic Professionals in Finland (Akateemisten Toimihenkilöiden Keskusjärjestö, AKAVA). Union density was in 2009 about 74 %.

- SAK, which was founded in 1907, is the largest trade union confederation in Finland. Its 22 affiliated member unions have 1.04 million members in the private and public sectors. Nearly half of the members (480,000) work in manufacturing industries, while 324,000 members are employed in the private services sector, and 240,000 are in the public sector.

- STTK, established in 1946, has 640,000 members in 20 trade unions. It is the confederation for unions of professional employees in a wide range of economic sectors: manufacturing, private services and the public sector at local, regional and national level. The biggest member groups include nurses, technical engineers, police officers, secretaries, institute officers and salespersons.
- AKAVA, set up in 1950, has 33 member unions representing workers with university, professional or other high-level education. It was formed by 33 affiliates and has about 540,000 members. AKAVA's bargaining rights for the public sector are handled by its Public Sector Negotiating Commission (Julkisalan koulutettujen neuvottelujärjestö, JUKO). The Delegation of Professional and Managerial Employees (Ylempien Toimihenkilöiden Neuvottelujärjestö, YTN) conducts private sector bargaining for AKAVA.

5. INTRODUCTION OF STTK

The Finnish Confederation of Professionals STTK is one of the three trade union confederations in Finland. Our 20 affiliated trade unions represent approximately 640 000 professional employees. Members are working in the public sector, in private industry and in the private service sector. Nearly 70 % of members are women. Typical member groups are for example nurses and practical nurses, technical engineers, police officers and secretaries.

Organizational structure and its functioning

STTK has 60 member council and 30 member board. Council meets twice a year and it is the highest organ. Once every four years it elects chair of STTK and board. Board is based on union-mandates. For everyday work there are many working groups etc. on certain field or issue. There are 35 people working in STTK office in Helsinki. The head of office is General Secretary.

Accomplishments

- 1917 act on 8 hour workday
- 1922 First act on annual holiday
- 1940 Employers recognized unions as negotiation partners
- 1948 Childbenefit
- 1968 First TUPO (National Incomes Policy Agreement)
- 1973 Four week summer holiday
- 1977 Winter holiday

Service STTK

Our main task is to offer knowledge and informational aid to our member unions and also represent our members in different kind of working groups related to improving worklife. We assist our member unions in international, educational, regional and economical issues.

What do we do?

STTK negotiates framework agreements. During the last 30 years our collective agreements have usually been based on a framework prices-and-incomes solution ne-

gotiated by the employers and the employees' confederations and our national government (National Incomes Policy Agreement (TUPO)). This way we have obtained many important benefits in the fields of social and employment policies.

Tripartite co-operation is as a rule a part of the Finnish labour market organisations every day work. The centralised incomes policy agreements have been complemented by collective bargaining at sectoral level. The third level of collective bargaining has been local agreements at workplaces for the past 60 years. The number of issues negotiable at local and workplace level has increased all the time since early 1990's.

STTK's fields of activity

We:

- negotiate framework agreements
- influence national economic policy and social issues
- work for full employment
- promote life long learning and educational issues in general
- provide equal opportunities for men and women
equal pay for work of equal value
- support international co-operation

6. YOUTH ACTIVITIES OF STTK

STTK-Students

STTK-Students is Union-based organization for student-members in Unions under STTK-Members that are

sectoral Unions. There are approximately 50000 student-members in all Unions under STTK. Chair and 6 members in a board (from different Unions) are responsible for the activities together with Special Advisor. Board is supervised by a 30 member council which is the highest organ and it has two meetings in a year. Most of the active-members in board or council are involved in the activities for 1-2 years.

Activities have 3 major purposes:

- 1) Training. To give the active-members some kind of basic knowledge of how Unions and STTK works. Members of board have for instance right to participate in working groups in STTK. Chair have right to participate in STTK's board and council meetings
- 2) Cooperation with other student organizations. Lobbying important issues together etc.
- 3) Spread knowledge about working life to students

PlusMinus30 activities

PlusMinus30 activities are for Union members around their thirties. The idea is based on notion that it's hard to get young people in basic Union activities. At the same time actives are ageing rapidly in Unions. PlusMinus30 activities tries to find new actives that will become trustees in the future. It's easier to organize activities in Central Organization level than at the individual Union level (c. 130000 potential actives).

There are bigger events twice a year. They are combined

by seminar and party. PlusMinus30 has its own webpage (www.sttk.fi/plusminus30) and own group in facebook etc.

Prepared by: Toimihenkilökeskusjärjestö - STTK



SWEDEN

1. BASIC COUNTRY INTRODUCTION

Sweden is in the northern part of Europe and one of the Nordic countries. The capital is Stockholm, which is the largest city in the country. With 9.2 million citizens, Sweden has the largest population of the Nordic countries.

Sweden is a constitutional monarchy with a parliamentary system of government and a highly developed economy. In 1971 the Riksdag became a single-chamber Parliament. Its 349 members are elected on basis of proportional representation for a four-year term. Sweden entered in European Union in 1995.

2. INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS

Sweden experienced a late but rapid industrialisation and the country has been characterised by a well organised trade union movement and powerful employer organisations ever since. The welfare state and employment system continue to feature a high level of social protection based on universal coverage and solidarity, a large public sector, relatively low unemployment and a labour market regulation based largely on collective agreements.

The existing main agreement (Saltsjöbadsavtalet) was negotiated in 1938 between the social partners and gives them the right and responsibility to regulate pay and

employment conditions. This agreement – Saltsjöbad-savtalet – is the foundation for the cooperation between the social partners in the Swedish labour market model. Self-regulation through collective bargaining is therefore strong. The social partners are often represented in advisory bodies or reference groups to government committees or enquiries.

While trade union density is one indicator of potential bargaining strength and solidarity among employees, bargaining coverage measures the extent to which employees benefit from union-negotiated terms and conditions of employment. The coverage rate of collective agreements was 92% in 2001 and 91% in 2007. Having remained at this level since the 1990s, the coverage rate continues to be well above the EU average.

In Sweden, tripartite negotiations are rare because the social partners do not welcome the government or any other party intervening in collective bargaining. The idea of self-regulation through collective bargaining by the social partners is strong in Sweden.

3. LABOUR LEGISLATION FRAMEWORK

The Codetermination Act (Medbestämmandelagen, MBL, 1976:580) regulates employee consultation and participation in working life. The MBL is the main law for the system of collective regulations; it is a framework law that must be implemented through collective agreements. It gives trade unions, as collective agents for their members, the right to elect their representatives,

receive information or be consulted about management decisions.

The Employment Protection Act (Lag om Anställningskydd, LAS, 1982:80) is a fundamental law in the Swedish labour market regulating when and how an employee can and cannot be dismissed. The law protects employees from being given notice or dismissed without objective reasons, such as shortage of work or serious misuse. The act also gives the employer considerable responsibility for finding suitable replacement employment for the worker before the person can be fired.

Another important law is the Work Environment Act regulating the work environment in the labour market. The Swedish Work Environment Authority (Arbetsmiljöverket) is responsible for monitoring the implementation of the Work Environment Act as well as the Working Time Act.

Swedish labour law as a whole is a comprehensive code of statutes. Presented below are some important examples of the statutory and contractual rights – and obligations – that the workers have.

The rights of workers are to be found in what is collectively called labour law. This is based on statutes, ordinances and regulations of various kinds. Labour legislation has given workers the following rights: participation in decision-making at the workplace, to provide time off for union duties, 25 vacation days a year, eight hours of work a day, better working environment, increased employment security, being home with your child for

450 days, and get paid from the parental insurance.

The legislation of social insurance also contains important components for the protection of workers. This applies to such things as national health insurance, occupational injury insurance and national pension insurance.

There is also the specific form of regulation called the collective agreement, which is concluded between the trade union and the employer. Many important rules of labour law are mandatory to the benefit of the worker – that is to say, collective agreements that deviate from the law must be more advantageous than the law for the individual worker.

One example of a mandatory rule is the requirement that there must be objective grounds for termination of a permanent employment contract. Other rules in labour law are optional, which means that it is possible to agree on a deviation from the law to the advantage of the individual worker through a collective agreement. Examples of such rules are the rules of the Act on Security of Employment (LAS) concerning the various forms of employment restricted in time. The collective agreements also cover, apart from provisions concerning pay, conditions of work etc, a number of insurance solutions that supplement the statutory insurance protection in case of sickness, occupational injury, unemployment, death and extra old age pension.

Almost all the labour market is covered by collective

agreements; therefore, Sweden has no legislation for national minimum wages. Minimum wages are negotiated as part of the collective agreements at sectoral level between the social partners.

Thus, minimum wages vary in different sectors. As noted, sectors that are dominated by women have traditionally had lower wages than those dominated by men. LO highlighted this disparity in its collective negotiations in 2007, trying to equalise the differences in pay between the genders.

4. TRADE UNIONS IN SWEDEN

Trade union membership rates have historically been high in Sweden, especially in the public sector. An important explanation for the relatively high trade union density, which is around 68 %, is the high unionisation among white-collar workers. Sweden has three trade union confederations:

- Swedish Trade Union Confederation (Landsorganisationen i Sverige, LO), with 1.28 million members among blue-collar workers;
- Swedish Confederation of Professional Employees (Tjänstemännens Centralorganisation, TCO), with about 950,000 members – mainly white-collar workers;
- Swedish Confederation of Professional Associations (Sveriges Akademikers Centralorganisation, SACO), which organises almost 460,000 civil servants and professional employees with academic degrees.

5. INTRODUCTION OF LO - THE SWEDISH TRADE UNION CONFEDERATION

LO is the central organisation for 14 affiliates which organise workers within both the private and the public sectors. The 14 affiliates together have about 1.700.000 members of whom about 770.000 are women. The 14 affiliates of LO have independent status, and LO is primarily an organisation for co-ordination, research, signing labour market insurance schemes and creating public opinion at central and regional levels.

Wage bargaining, international activities, trade union education, children's and young people's education, equality of sexes and social security are some of the areas for which LO is responsible for co-ordinating. The individual affiliates have full responsibility within their industrial sectors at central, regional and local levels. They are also responsible for the administration of the unemployment insurance funds.

An important task for LO is to protect the trade union movement's interests in relation to Parliament, the authorities and other organisations. LO is therefore a body to which proposed legislative measures affecting society as a whole are referred for consideration. It also has representatives on the governing bodies of various governmental authorities. LO is also involved in matters concerning the Swedish labour market and the political development as a whole.

Through the LO Districts and LO Sections, LO can effectively co-ordinate trade union efforts and effectively mould public opinion at local level.

Contacts with the Social Democratic Party are frequent and LO has a representative on the party's executive committee elected by the Party Congress. LO and the Social Democratic Party are two independent organisations which have common goals and common viewpoints on most questions. On the other hand, LO and the Social Democrats may sometimes hold different opinions as to the best way of achieving these goals.

Within the labour movement, there are also a number of organisations and enterprises which are close to LO, such as the educational organisations ABF (Workers' Educational Association) and Bilda (Correspondence School), as well as the insurance company Folksam.

6. YOUTH ACTIVITIES OF LO

Union's helpline

Throughout the year LO has a helpline open where members and unorganized young people can call and ask questions about their rights and other union business. During the summer months a lot of young holiday workers call, therefore is the helpline extra staffed. There is also a possibility to e-mail the question. During June and July 2009 we were contacted by 3200 people.

Youth Forum

Once a year LO organizes one big meeting for young active members. In these meeting there are a various programmes; seminars, lectures, workshops, and the most important of all, networking and the possibility to discuss with other young unionists from other affiliates.

Unions in school - Outreach activities in schools

A "School patrol campaign" in spring 2009.

"Patrols" containing young unionists visited the high schools in LO-districts in order to meet the teachers, principals and "study and careers advisers" to work up good relationships and book up classroom lectures.

Classroom Information, high schools

Young people who currently enters the labour market has a lack of knowledge of how the union and the labour market works. This activity aims to give pupils at high school a first glimpse at how the Swedish labour market and how the trade unions operate.

Planned activities:

The union's pleas

The union's pleas last for three days and will be the first gateway to the continued union and political commitment; it should give a first overview of our organization, our history, our ideology, the social security system and the society. It should be activated so that the participants want to continue on a more focused training in their union's field. The course will be multidisciplinary and open to all young LO members younger than 30 years old.

Unions and Policy

Training is a follow up course to the union's pleas or equivalent. Training is three days and aims to give young people knowledge of the trade union movement's responsibility for community development. The course will provide an overview of the different ideologies and politi-

cal movements that affect our society and demonstrate the trade union political interaction. The course is made by the Socialist Youth League, SSU and LO.

Union youth leaders training

Education is the third part of the LOs youth training. The aim is to train youth workers union that can operate both multidisciplinary as within their respective union organizations. Participants will be able to both trade union and political offices and act as leaders in our trade union and political development at both local and regional level.

Unions and summer jobs

Inform young people about what their rights are when they have holiday / extra work. Brochures, posters and ads that tell about the number 020 and the operation. The aim is that all LO district will implement outreach activities targeting young people at their summer jobs.

Unions in the winter work

The problem of extra staff being treated poorly at work in the Swedish mountains has increased in recent years. Several of young people who work are not in the union and have no knowledge of their rights. Six LO districts will implement outreach activities targeting young people who ferie working at ski-lifts, restaurants and shops in the Swedish mountains.



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RESOURCES:

- Organized Labour Portal: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Portal:Organized_Labour
- Bureau for Workers' Activities (ACTRAV): <http://www.ilo.org/actrav/lang--en/index.htm>
- European Trade Union Confederation: <http://www.etuc.org/>
- Global Unions: <http://www.global-unions.org/>
- Slaughter, Jane. 2005. A Troublemaker's handbook 2. A Labor Notes Book, Detroit.
- ZSSS: <http://www.zsss.si>
- SSSH: www.sssh.hr
- STTK: www.sttk.fi
- LO: www.lo.se

NOTES

