

# Report of the 16<sup>th</sup> Capital Cities Conference 2017

## How trade unions can ensure stable work and regulate work migration. Trade unions' role in the integration of migrant workers

8-10 March 2017, Esher Place, London

The 2017 conference was the first time that the European Capitals Trade Union Network had taken place in London and SERTUC was very pleased to participate in the organising group and to host the event at the training centre of our largest affiliate, Unite.

The conference was attended by 38 delegates from: Athens EKA, Berlin DGB, Copenhagen LO-D, Helsinki SAK, La Valetta GWU, Lisbon CGTP, London GLATUC and SERTUC, Madrid CC.OO and UGT, Moscow MTUF, Paris CFTD, CGT, FO and UNSA, Riga LBAS, Rome CGIL, CISL and UIL, Sofia Podkrepa, Stockholm LO-S, Vilnius Solidarumas, as well as a number of experts.

**Liberio Domingues** (CGTP, host of the 2016 conference) made comment on the theme of the conference and **Megan Dobney** (SERTUC) welcomed delegates to Esher Place. The venue has a long history including King Henry VIII banishing Cardinal Wolsey to Esher in the 16<sup>th</sup> century and Russian ballerina Anna Pavlova dancing there in the grass amphitheatre (designed by notable architect Sir Edwin Lutyens). It was a Home for Girls until 1952 and was then bought by the Electrical Trades Union (now a part of Unite).

### The economic impact of migration

The first contributor was **Sonia McKay**, visiting professor at the University of Greenwich, and the University of the West of England.

Sonia made a presentation on *The economic impact of migration on pay, social cohesion and public service in the UK*. Her key points were that immigration to the UK is not new; previous phases were generally characterised as migration for settlement, with the exception of Irish immigrants who often engaged in circular migration and most migrants to the UK came, if not to settle, at least to reside for a long period of time; 21<sup>st</sup> century migration is from all areas of the world; formal study and work are the most common reasons for migration; and 45% intend to stay for one to two years.

She pointed out that migrants have now become a commodity and to the fact that the Mediterranean sea is now a vast cemetery. Research shows that migration has had little or no direct impact on wages, and that it has a positive impact on productivity. 28% of academic staff in UK universities are non-UK nationals as are around 12% of staff in the UK's National Health Service.

Amongst points made by delegates were:

- Organisation amongst migrant workers requires us to carry out the “four Cs”: make Contact, be Combative, improve Communication, and achieve Collective bargaining
- There has been a failure to make appropriate links with the source countries of migrants
- The CGT is running a seminar to train Tunisian shop stewards
- 12% of Madrid workers are migrants
- One in nine care workers in London (mostly private sector) are EU nationals. The system is already under stress and would collapse without them
- The CGTP and the TUC have a Protocol which commits them to organising migrant workers (and supporting that organising effort)
- Trade unions are not the only organisations supporting migrants – there are also many social and community organisations

## European Trade Union Confederation

**Luca Visentini** (general secretary ETUC) addressed the conference outlining their current work. He said there is a wide discussion going on in the ETUC about the European Union – not only on Brexit, but also on the other important issues: the refugee emergency, economic crisis, racism and xenophobia.

Because it is the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Treaty of Rome there will be a summit in Rome on the weekend of 25 March. The Commission will bring a White Paper on the Future of Europe – we believe it to be a disappointing paper, a fragmented proposal with five scenarios and different bits of integration and timescales. A big mess in brief.

Decisions on this will impact on Brexit – what mandate will negotiators have? We

need to limit the damage in the UK and Europe to ensure that workers don't pay the price. On the transposition of European law to the UK – the question is, will the UK become a tax haven or a cheap labour haven. Obviously we oppose both.

There is a need to relaunch the European economy and we need a new strategy, not more austerity. We have to relaunch the European social model.

The ETUC is working on four pillars:

- Support sustainable economic growth – relaunch investment. The ETUC is developing concrete proposals
- Increase wages – they have collapsed in the last decade in most European countries. We have launched “A pay rise for European workers”. 60-70% of the EU economy is internal, therefore we need a significant rise in minimum wages and to boost collective bargaining. This is also an ITUC campaign and strategy so we will work with PERC, the USA, Canada etc.
- Establish a proper European social model – enforce existing legislation and develop new rights. And restore and relaunch social dialogue.
- Mobility and migration – we have a summit in Rome the day before the Treaty of Rome celebrations. The Swedish government is organising a summit after the French, German and Dutch elections – probably mid-November.

The PERC priorities are coordinated with those of the ETUC, plus tackling multinational corporations and their unfair behaviour. They are seeking convergence in the enterprises across the PERC area.

Capital cities are vital to these ends – we need to work at all three levels, European, national, and local. Without local success we will not succeed multinationally.

Delegates commented:

- Portugal raised the minimum wage from 530 euros to 557 euros and was criticised by the EU – their policies are not supporting our needs

- There is a strengthening of voting intentions for the Front National in France. Le Pen's policy is for exit from the euro and possibly Frexit
- It is not only wages that are falling – there is a continued fall in the share of GDP that goes to wages so we are being robbed twice
- Some of the challenges we face are common across the capitals – categories of migrants and sectoral distribution
- Citizens' perception of the levels of migration is higher than reality and this can cause problems
- Unemployment remains a challenge

## Capital cities migration – the questionnaire

**Sara Canavezes** (CGTP), **Bianca Kühn** (DGB) and **Bela Galgoczi** presented and led discussions on the questionnaire circulated by the organising committee.

19 completed forms were received from 15 capitals. The questionnaire focused on migration, with some additional information requested about refugees/asylum seekers. Unsurprisingly there were many similarities between the capitals.

Statistical information was collated on reasons for migration, countries of origin, irregular migration, legal rights for migrants, economic sectors where migrants are working, problems faced, and the mechanisms for labour inspection and avoiding gross exploitation.

Trade union confederations in the capital cities carry out a range of activities. Most offered advice and information, support against discrimination and campaigned for migrants' rights, and cooperation with partner unions. Most organised migrant workers equally with domestic workers.

It was noted that confederations can join Union Migrant Net, and that one of ECTUN's activists could represent us on their

managing group. Affiliating will strengthen both parties.

## Responding to Brexit – the UK trade unions' response

The conference heard from officers from two TUC affiliates. **Tony Lennon** (BECTU) and **Ian Woodland** (Unite).

**Tony's** union BECTU represents cinematographic workers – with a strong London base and an internationally diverse workforce. Particularly at the very high-skill level workers move around the world through the main film production centres so any limit on freedom of movement for work will have a severe impact on the industry in the UK. He outlined just some of the many international agreements relating to the industry that the UK has access to at present via negotiations between the EU and other countries. These cover employment, copyright, chemicals, fees and a host of other issues and will have to be reframed into UK law.

He considered that the constant stream of abuse and denigration towards the EU, by the British media and from both sides of the UK political spectrum, since the days of De Gaulle, were in part the cause of the narrow "out" vote. Plus the debacle of TTIP. It was also worth remembering the democratic deficit in terms of the referendum – EU citizens had no vote.

**Ian** outlined the situation in the UK – the Labour Party engaged in internal fights, high employment in spite of the 2008 banking crisis, but at the same time 900,000 zero hour contracts in the country, public service austerity, and people feeling dispossessed.

Unite's response to Brexit is an economic one – develop an industrial strategy, protect jobs and trade union rights, and campaign for tariff-free access to the single market. The government's proposals have not yet been clarified but we must demand that they are scrutinised by Parliament, and not just carried forward by Government Ministers.



## Visit to London's City Hall

On the Thursday evening London's Deputy Mayor **Joanne McCartney** welcomed delegates to a reception at City Hall, home of the London Mayor and the London Assembly. This enabled delegates to speak with elected Assembly Members Tom Copley, Len Duvall and Valerie Shawcross were also present, and **Luca Visentini** and Joanne both addressed the event.

## Amending our structure

One of the key tasks of the conference was to review our structure as agreed at the 2016 conference in Sesimbra.

The purpose of this discussion is to achieve an agreement, a revision to our current structure, that allows us to move forward in our work and develop our relationships with the ETUC and PERC. This will ensure our increasing relevance, a better alignment to the European policies of these organisations, and improve access to funding streams ensuring our future existence in these financially difficult times.

The issue of who can be a member of the European Capitals Trade Union Network was discussed and it was clear that the requirement is for the member to be a trade union organisation that includes in its remit the capital city – therefore, not a person delegated by a national

confederation. Having said that, some organisations have no such structure but have participated in the past and are therefore members. The intention is to ensure a real representation of the capital, not to exclude people.

After discussion the formulation "trade union territorial organisations based in the European capital regions" was agreed.

A document was tabled that covered three main areas (the main objectives are unchanged):

- The role of the conference
- Establishing a permanent committee
- Developing our relationship with the ETUC and PERC

Following much discussion the new Rules for ECTUN were agreed unanimously by delegates present. The document is attached as Appendix 1 to this report.

Draft geographical regions were noted and will be subject to consultation. They are attached to this report as Appendix 2.

The key points are:

- The **conference** will meet annually to pursue its objectives
- The conference will elect a Permanent Committee

- The conference will decide the location/s and topic/s of the next conference/s
- The **Permanent Committee** will be composed of six members (organisations) from six capitals
- It will have one mandate for three years
- It will elect a coordinator
- It will organise the conference/s
- Its composition will reflect European diversity (two from each of the geographical regions when confirmed)
- It will be reinforced by one local member (of the next host city) who will participate for one year
- ECTUN will develop its relationship with **ETUC** and **PERC/ITUC**
- The election of the first Permanent Committee will take place in La Valetta, Malta.

As agreed in Sesimbra the host of the 2018 conference is the GWU in La Valetta. Nominations or applications were called for for the 2019 conference. It was unanimously agreed that the conference would be held in Sofia (Podkrepa will work with colleagues in KNSB/CITUB).

It was proposed and agreed (with one abstention) that the existing organising committee (Berlin, La Valetta, Lisbon, London, Moscow) would carry out the necessary actions in this transition period to the La Valetta conference in 2018.

The following actions will be carried out:

- The new Rules will be circulated to participants to enable confederations to consult within their structures if necessary. Organisations to send in their formal agreement within 90 days
- The draft “Geographical regions of the capitals” will be circulated for confederations to comment on and amend if necessary – within 90 days
- The organising committee will meet to formalise this approval process and review the geographical regions

**Jason Deguara** GWU proposed the conference should be held in January or February to avoid the Maltese general election in March. It was agreed that it will be held on three days in the week Monday 29 January to Friday 2 February 2018.

He suggested the topic might be around austerity and wages – this met with general approval and, noting the forthcoming general elections around European countries, will be further discussed by the organising committee.

*Please note: this is not a verbatim report. It aims to capture the essential discussion and decisions taken.*

Megan Dobney  
SERTUC  
2 May 2017



## **The ECTUN (European Capitals Trade Unions Network)**

is the network of trade union territorial organisations  
based in the European capital regions  
and all agree on these rules.

The main objectives of the network are to enhance a regular exchange of information, of contacts and of best practices, and to establish spaces for dialogue as for actions among the trade union organisations of the capital cities and their regions.

So, the **ECTUN** will:

- Promote and defend solidarity, workers' rights, the negotiation/bargaining systems in employment and welfare, fight against social dumping and inequalities, etc;
- develop actions and/or initiatives aimed at the promotion of the dignity of workers and more in general contributing to the improvement of workers' and people's quality of life in the regions of the capital cities.

### **ECTUN organises a yearly Conference**

Delegates appointed by the capital regions trade union organisations meet at an annual Conference, according with its main objectives.

The Conference decides the general policy of the ECTUN, common activities or actions, the alliances and relation's policy involving the ECTUN members.

The yearly Conference of ECTUN elects a Permanent Committee.

All trade union organisations based in the European capital regions – whose national confederation is an affiliate of the ETUC and/or of the PERC – can participate in ECTUN conferences.

Each conference decides the location and topic(s) of the next conference(s). The TU Capital region member or members of the ECTUN in that location will indicate the person to represent them in the Permanent Committee.

### **ECTUN permanent committee**

A permanent committee, composed of six members in the name of their organisations, is elected during the yearly Conference, for one mandate of three years only. The Permanent Committee will elect on the first meeting, from among its members, a coordinator and also define its rules of operation.

The composition of the Permanent Committee will reflect the European diversity and ensure the geographical balance, according to the three regions annexed to this document.

The Permanent Committee is responsible for the coordination of the network and for the dynamic of the contacts, the intensity of exchanges, the enlarging alliances, relations and networking and the proposition and organisation of common projects, actions or activities. It is also responsible, in cooperation with its hosting member(s), for the organisation of the yearly Conference. One local member reinforces the permanent committee on organising the Conference. The Permanent

Committee is also committed to obtaining the necessary financial resources, in particular through participation in projects. For these projects the framework of partnership will involve preferentially the ETUC or the PERC and the members of the ECTUN.

The Permanent Committee represents the ECTUN and develops or improves privileged relations with the ETUC and with PERC/ITUC and related institutions or organisations, for example, ILO, ACTRAV, Council of Europe, Eurocities, Euromediterranean cooperation.

## **ECTUN has a cooperative privileged relationship with ETUC and PERC/ITUC**

ECTUN is a “ground floor” organisation with practical experience, related with capital cities and their regions. ECTUN offer an added value to the work of ETUC and of PERC. ECTUN considers ETUC and PERC privileged partners.

Reinforcing that cooperation, both ETUC and PERC can be invited to the meetings of the Permanent Committee.

## **ECTUN faces a new phase**

ECTUN will invite for the next Conference, 2018 at La Valetta / Malta all the European Trade Unions Capital regions of the organisations that are members of the ETUC and/or PERC.

The application of these agreed rules, namely the election of the Permanent Committee, will take place for the first time at Malta’s Conference 2018.

In the meantime, and while it is not feasible to finance the network via projects or develop deeply the cooperation with ETUC and PERC, ETUC offers the guarantee of trainings for the ECTUN members as a specific target group.

London, 9/3/17

This document was voted by the unanimity of 22 participating organisations at the 16<sup>th</sup> conference in London, 9 March 2017.

The document needs to be validated by some organisations, to be done during the next 90 days.

Organisations present:

<b>Roma</b>	CGIL Roma e Lazio
	UIL
	CISL Roma
<b>Paris</b>	UNSA
	URI CFDT
	FO
	URIF CGT
<b>Vilnius</b>	Solidarumas
<b>Riga</b>	LBAS
<b>La Valette</b>	GWU
<b>Madrid</b>	CCOO de Madrid
	UGT Madrid
<b>Stockholm</b>	LO S
<b>Athens</b>	EKA
<b>Copenhagen</b>	LO D
<b>Sofia</b>	Podkrepa
<b>Helsinki</b>	SAK
<b>Lisbon</b>	USL CGTP
<b>London</b>	SERTUC
	GLATUC
<b>Berlin</b>	DGB Berlin
<b>Moscow</b>	MTUF

## Appendix 2

Geographical regions of the capitals (*to be completed and perfected*)

<b>Athens</b>	<b>Luxembourg</b>	<b>Moscow</b>
<b>Nicosia</b>	<b>Brussels</b>	<b>Vilnius</b>
<b>La Valetta</b>	<b>Amsterdam</b>	<b>Riga</b>
<b>Paris</b>	<b>Bern</b>	<b>Tallinn</b>
<b>Lisbon</b>	<b>London</b>	<b>Prague</b>
<b>Rome</b>	<b>Dublin</b>	<b>Bratislava</b>
<b>Madrid</b>	<b>Vienna</b>	<b>Budapest</b>
	<b>Berlin</b>	<b>Bucharest</b>
	<b>Helsinki</b>	<b>Sofia</b>
	<b>Copenhagen</b>	<b>Ljubljana</b>
	<b>Stockholm</b>	<b>Zagreb</b>
	<b>Oslo</b>	
	<b>Warsaw</b>	