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## **Seventh meeting of the EMF Communications Working Group Sofia, 4-5 May 2010**

### *Communications action plan for the South-Eastern Europe Region*

#### *Introduction*

The EMF organises 16 trade unions in the South-Eastern Europe Region. Together these unions have approximately 240.000 members. The majority of new affiliated organisations at the EMF come from this region. The EMF Secretariat has one colleague responsible for the region.

Colleagues from the region meet on a regular basis to discuss issues such as trade union strategies in the global economic crises and efficient trade union management and strategic approach towards works councils.

You can read more about activities here:

<http://www.emf-fem.org/Areas-of-work/South-Eastern-Europe-Region-Baltic-States>

List of EMF affiliated organisations:

<http://www.emf-fem.org/Affiliated-organisations>

#### *Background*

The recent EU enlargement with the intake of 10 New Member States in 2004 and 2 New Member States in 2007 was a tremendous step forward in the creation of a historical area of peace, freedom, democracy and solidarity in Europe. Though, it is not at an end and future enlargement waves and ongoing negotiations processes open new perspectives and challenges for our affiliates in South-Eastern Europe.

Following the idea that the unification of Europe is a project to bring and to safeguard justice and human rights, as well as economic development and employment and the improvement of living standards throughout Europe, the EMF sees itself as a staunch supporter of this project. Therefore we established already in 2003 a South-Eastern European Forum (SEEF) to contribute to EU enlargement in this specific European region.

Together with the metalworkers' trade unions in the region we look at accompanying measures for the forthcoming waves of enlargement and the consequences of this process.

In some countries of the Western and Eastern Balkans, trade unions are confronted with the fact that there are weak employer organisations or none at all. At the same time there are some employers who do not respect basic labour rights, that some governments are using the implementation of the 'acquis communautaire' as an excuse to withdraw fundamental and labour rights, and that some foreign companies are not implementing or improving good practice with regard to social dialogue and collective bargaining. On the other hand, there are some examples of responsible behaviour and even of good practice in some companies and employer organisations.

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The current strategy within the region focuses on the following aspects:

- Helping trade unions and strengthening their capacity to participate in social dialogue and European cooperation
- Cross-border cooperation between unions in the region
- Observing and contributing to activities of companies bringing foreign direct investment (FDI) into the region
- Analysing economic developments in the metal industry in the region
- Supporting the ongoing processes of collective bargaining

#### *Actions*

So far little effort has been made to communicate these aspects or their results. Therefore the EMF suggests launching a special communications action together with all affiliated organisations around Europe. The EMF suggests the following:

1. Organise a communications working group meeting in the region
2. Obtain an overview of current cooperation between trade unions in region and the rest of Europe
  - a. Spread information to all affiliates about the different forms of cooperation
3. Regular feedback from the meetings in the region to the Communications working group
4. Publication of activities, policy issues, solidarity needs and campaigns in trade union magazines to obtain a cross border relationship and relevance for workers and unionists in other countries
5. Share press lists in order to increase the awareness of the region in all parts of Europe
6. Relay policies from the region to the European institutions

#### *Expected results*

These actions aim to 1) increase awareness with trade unions around Europe, with media, workers and the EU institutions 2) create closer relationships between EMF affiliates 3) create stronger unions in the region 4) improve labour rights in the region 5) improve overall visibility of the region

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