

RESEARCH EDUCATION
HEALTH & SAFETY

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The European Trade Union Institute
for
Research,
Education and
Health and Safety



The ETUI-REHS produces a European perspective on issues that are of strategic importance for the labour movement across Europe



The European Trade Union Institute for Research, Education, Health and Safety (ETUI-REHS) is an international non-profit-making Association established under Belgian law.

It has three main objectives:

- conducting research, producing studies and monitoring European issues of strategic importance for the world of labour while building bridges between the academic and research community and the labour movement
- providing education and training activities, programmes and exchanges that strengthen a European trade union identity
- providing technical support in the field of occupational health, safety and protection so as to promote a high level of health and safety protection for workers in Europe.

The ETUI-REHS employs 60 staff from across Europe.

It is financially supported by the European Community.

The ETUI-REHS was created in April 2005 as a result of the merger of three bodies: the European Trade Union Institute (ETUI); the Trade Union Technical Bureau (TUTB); the European Trade Union College (ETUCO).

WITH WHOM WE WORK

- The European trade union movement, its officers and representatives
- Universities, research bodies and trade union related institutes
- European Union institutions
- National occupational health and safety authorities
- Organisations involved in promoting health and safety within the workplace
- Actors working in the field of social Europe.

ACTIVITIES

The ETUI-REHS conducts a number of different activities as outlined in its annual work programme. The research and training dimension that underpins all activities is fundamental to the ETUI-REHS's integrated identity.

Through its research and training activities the ETUI-REHS responds to the intellectual and practical challenges facing workers and trade unions in Europe.



Building bridges between the research community and the labour movement

“The ETUI-REHS produces a European perspective on issues that are of strategic importance for the labour movement across Europe”.

Understanding how the European labour market is evolving and how it affects the daily lives of workers drives the research activities of the ETUI-REHS. Conducting intellectually independent research ensures that the major developments that influence European workers and their rights are thoroughly analysed, discussed and monitored. The research covering industrial relations and social, employment and economic policy (in a nutshell, how social Europe is evolving), is needed by the European trade union movement and a wide range of socio-economic actors from across the European Union.



To conduct its research, the ETUI-REHS brings together networks of European researchers from across the European Union.

Examples of networks include NETLEX in the field of labour law, SEEurope in the field of worker participation, the Trade Union Legal Experts Network for South Eastern Europe or the European Labour Network for Economic Policy on macro-economic and financial policy developments.

Research areas cover labour law, worker participation, collective bargaining, industrial restructuring, relocation, social and wage dumping, the application of European Union directives (such as the European Works Council Directive), social dialogue, the drive for quality employment, the growing financialisation of the economy and its implications for employment, the issue of flexicurity (reconciling flexibility with security) and the social and economic impact of the privatisation and marketisation of service sector employment. It also analyses how European trade unions recruit their members and what strategies they have to attract young people, migrant workers and women.

RESEARCH

Promoting a high level of occupational health and safety for Europe's workers

“Europe’s workers are entitled to a high level of health and safety in the workplace. Europe needs information about occupational health and safety to understand the issue and formulate appropriate policies”

Occupational health and safety is a major concern for Europe’s workers. Four million work-related accidents occur annually within European workplaces. To promote high levels of occupational health and safety within the European workplace, the ETUI-REHS coordinates European networks of experts and produces research on current and future occupational health and safety issues. It uses this research to advise the European trade union movement.

The ETUI-REHS monitors the application of European health and safety legislation including the European Commission’s health and safety strategy (2007-2012) via its Observatory. It provides expertise to support trade union members on the Commission’s Luxembourg-based Advisory Committee for Health and Safety at Work. It works closely with the European Union Agency for Health and Safety at Work in Bilbao and is an associate member of the European Committee for Standardisation (CEN).

The ETUI-REHS monitors health and safety prevention systems and practices, the organisation of work, the incidence of chemical, physical and biological agents, issues surrounding work equipment and the effect of precarious employment on workplace conditions. Its work covers the incidence of stress, violence within the workplace, musculo-skeletal disorders, protecting workers from carcinogens and asbestos, the impact of the new EU regulation on chemicals (REACH) and the rise of nanotechnology.



HEALTH & SAFETY

Strengthening a European trade union identity through training

“European trade unions need their officers and representatives to be fully equipped to operate at European level”

Preparing trade union officers and representatives to defend the interests of working men and women within the European Union is an important ETUI-REHS activity. The ETUI-REHS assists this process by providing practical training courses for the European trade union movement which, in turn, contribute to the development of a European trade union identity.

Training is provided for two specific groups: trade union officers and representatives, and trainers.

For officers and representatives the ETUI-REHS designs and delivers training, which, inter alia, enables them to:

- gain a better understanding of recent developments affecting trade unions in Europe
- acquire a range of operational skills
- influence decision-making at European level
- create European trade union networks.

Training courses at a glance:

- Developing future European trade union leaders
- Reinforcing Social Dialogue and collective bargaining in Europe
- Dealing with free movement of labour in Europe
- Creating more and better jobs
- Recruiting and organising
- Anticipating and managing change;
- Managing European projects
- Learning French and English for trade union purposes.

At the request of trade union representatives, the ETUI-REHS also provides specialised training for members of European Works Councils within a wide variety of multinational companies.

For trainers the ETUI-REHS offers basic training, at two different levels, which enables them to:

- become Eurotrainers within their own organisations at the national level
- take on responsibilities within the context of European education programmes.

It also offers Eurotrainers ongoing training opportunities to develop their skills, with participation in:

- workshops on a variety of topics (Europe and globalisation, sustainable development, collective bargaining in Europe, social protection in Europe)
- European projects, as for example DIALOG ON, TRACE and Transatlantic Labour Dialogue
- networks, most notably for Eurotrainers from Central and Eastern Europe
- initiatives to design and prepare European training materials.



EDUCATION

RESPONDING TO CURRENT CHALLENGES

Three examples of what we do:

The ETUI-REHS has set up three working groups on three issues of growing importance to the evolution of social Europe: precarious work, mobility and worker representation.



PRECARIOUS WORK

The ETUI-REHS is analysing various aspects of precarious employment and providing information and training to support trade unions in developing responses to this growing phenomenon. The results of this research will be disseminated to ETUC affiliates and the public through a conference, seminars and training sessions.

The background :

In recent years the European labour market has witnessed an increase in precarious employment. Employment can be precarious for a variety of reasons related to wages, working conditions and representation. Examples include jobs characterised by low pay, long working hours or extreme working time flexibility, or exposure to physical, mental and organisational risk factors which impact health and safety. Other examples are contracts that fail to provide longer-term security (e.g. fixed-term contracts, low-hours part-time employment, temporary agency work), or precarious types of self-employment. Finally, workers that have no access to training, social security or to representation mechanisms and trade union support are often considered to have precarious employment.



MOBILITY

The ETUI-REHS's work on labour mobility focuses on the causes and consequences of labour migration between EU Member States. Firstly, it addresses both the short- and long-term labour market and social impacts based on intensive case studies of three migrant 'sending' and three 'receiving' countries. Secondly, the project scrutinises the conditions under which migrant workers work, especially with regard to health and safety issues. Possible trade union policies to tackle the issue are also examined. The published findings will be discussed during a major international conference in 2008 and will feed into trade union educational and training material.

The background :

Increased cross-border mobility of workers between the new Member States and the old EU Member States, while desirable, poses challenges to the European social model and raises important questions for European trade unions. To date, labour migration flows overall have been limited, although they are substantial for certain sending and receiving countries and certain categories of worker (especially young people). Furthermore, substantial wage differentials remain in the enlarged EU (around 1:20 following the accession of Bulgaria and Romania) and this will remain as one of the main factors driving cross-border labour migration. One of the key issues here is how to promote the notion of upward convergence and avoid a downward spiral where workers would lose out. It is vital that the principle of the free movement of workers in an enlarged European Union is upheld, but it must be on the basis of equal wages and working conditions for equal work in the same workplace and on the same territory.

WORKER REPRESENTATION

The ETUI-REHS gathers relevant and available information that can support trade unions and workers' representatives at EU level. It is particularly interested in information on the application of the EU Directive on information and consultation, the European Works Council Directive and the influence of the EU Directive on workers' involvement in European companies (SE) and European cooperative societies (SCE). The information can be accessed via a new ETUI-REHS website: www.worker-participation.eu. The research findings provide information that will be used to develop new training programmes which will concentrate on improving coordination between European Works Councils and workers' representatives in boardrooms of European Companies.

The background :

Developing effective worker representation guarantees practical implementation of the European social model in the workplace and promotes social inclusion as a positive alternative to the pervasive shareholder capitalism model. It is an important part of democratising decision-making within European businesses, encouraging corporate social responsibility and creating obligatory rights that must be respected by employers and investors. Statutory or collective-agreement-based worker involvement implies that employees have rights such as timely and complete information, means of effective consultation and participation within boardrooms in order to monitor and influence management decisions. European Works Councils and advisory committees on health and safety within the workplace ensure that rights provided by European legislation are effectively exercised and ensure trade union representation within a company at European level. The first European Companies (SE), including Allianz SE, MAN Diesel SE and Strabag SE, demonstrate that employers and shareholders accept the principle of having worker representation in company bodies.

RESOURCES

Website:

The ETUI-REHS website provides the very latest information on the activities of the ETUI-REHS. A wealth of documentation can be consulted and key publications downloaded.

www.etui-rehs.org

The ETUI-REHS Documentation Centre:

The ETUI-REHS's recently refurbished documentation centre is a major source of information on the European and international trade union movement, social and economic issues, industrial relations and worker health and safety. More than 19,000 publications and over two hundred specialist periodicals are available for consultation. The centre is open to the public by appointment and offers reading and working facilities. Our documentalists are on hand to provide professional search assistance and information services.

Contact: doccent@etui-rehs.org;

tel: +32 (0)2 224 0483.

Labourline:

The Labourline database is the electronic catalogue of the ETUI-REHS documentation centre. It provides access to more than 42,000 references of relevance to the world of labour. The database is enriched by an ever growing number of downloadable documents.

www.labourline.org

Networks:

Academic networks are essential components of the ETUI-REHS research and training activities. They assist in compiling information and developing lines of argument in areas that are relevant for European trade unions. Researchers from both within the ETUI-REHS and outside regularly participate in conferences, forums and workshops. They maintain regular contact with the European institutions and provide in-depth expertise to the ETUC.



Publications:

The ETUI-REHS publishes a wealth of books, reports, studies and policy briefs that examine and underpin the European social model. It also publishes *Transfer* the European Review of Labour and Research, the South East European Review for Labour and Social Affairs (in tandem with the Hans Böckler Foundation) and many discussion papers. It also produces the annual *Benchmarking Working Europe* report. It publishes two newsletters: *HESA Newsletter* and *Agora*.

On-line worker participation information:

A new resource that provides users with information on national systems of industrial relations and worker participation issues at the European level such as European Works Councils, European Companies, corporate governance and EU social dialogue. A common framework is provided for compiling information, expertise, training activities and networks.

www.worker-participation.eu

On-line European Works Councils Database:

A database that contains information on multinationals that have concluded (or are in the process of negotiating) an EWC agreement. The database is the most up-to-date source containing EWC agreements in both the original language and English. The database can be searched using several different criteria. A number of substantive agreements concluded by EWCs and management are also available.

www.ewcdb.eu

The European Union Information Service:

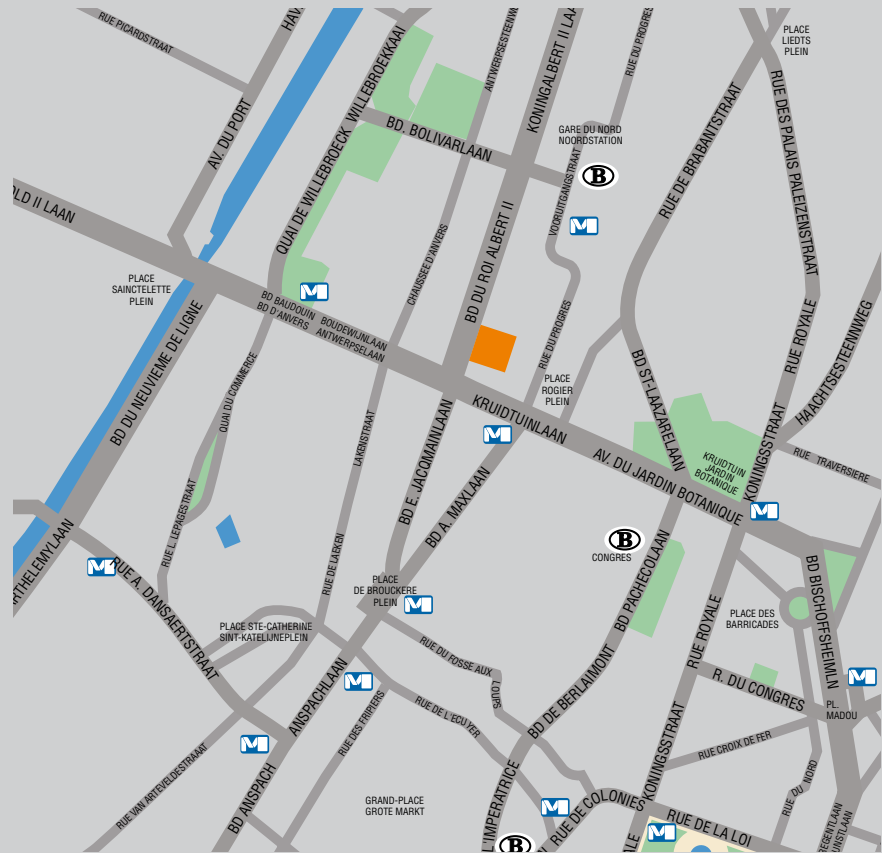
This service provides information to those seeking assistance in financing trade union training projects. The service provides information on possible EU sources of finance in the form of a regularly updated on-line library which includes a list of tenders.

www.etui-rehs.org/education/eu_information_service

Training courses:

For more details on training courses and resources contact: education@etui-rehs.org





HOW TO CONTACT US

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