

INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNION YOUTH FORUM

RECOMMENDATIONS

On strengthening the trade union youth participation in decision making on European and national level

5 – 7 June, 2015

TechHub

Riga, Latvia

Young trade unionists from European countries like Spain, Italy, Hungary, Sweden, France, Finland, Poland, Estonia, Lithuania, Belgium and Latvia joined forces to identify issues and find solutions for the improvement of youth participation in decision making during Free Trade union Confederation of Latvia (LBAS) International trade union youth forum that took place on June 5 - 7, 2015 in “TechHub”, Riga, Latvia, and agreed to draw attention of the European trade union confederation, national and sector trade unions of the all representative countries and concentrating on main issue - strengthening the trade union youth participation in decision making on European and national level.

Young people in Europe are suffering from the effects of a negative structural social situation that has been exacerbated by the crisis. Employment status has changed in the last years, more precarious works are offered in the labour market. At the same time young people are the most educated generation and they must contribute to vision about situation in Europe – unemployment, creation quality jobs for young people, European economic governance. Trade unions have to hear the voice of young people – there is a need for an agenda that covers needs of young workers and collective agreements supporting young employees and studying employees. This is why all stakeholders, including trade unions, must do more efforts in order to increase the level of participation of young people in the labour market and in the society at large. Trade unions have a role to improve solidarity and cooperation between generations.

The Trade union youth forum in Riga provided expertise and concrete suggestions to improve representativeness and inclusion strategies of youth in the coming years for trade unions across Europe and for the ETUC in its upcoming Congress and the are following:

Raising trade union authority for affecting decision making

Young people in trade union movement are getting less as other age groups. Participants are convinced that the first step to improve authority of trade unions is raising the membership in order to enable trade unions to fulfil their mission. Young people are essentially needed for improvement of representation of trade unions. Therefore, more attractive offers should be provided for young trade unionists. Trade unions Youth committees can be used as one of the instruments to attract more young people into the trade union movement.

To improve the image and strengthen the role of trade union we invite trade unions at European and national level to draw attention to the skills, competences and personal qualities of the trade union leaders and moreover leaders’ abilities to work with youth. As well access to the social media play important role for attracting and informing other young people about trade unions.

Tailored and diversified approaches for recruiting young workers are needed. Young people are a heterogeneous group. Trade unions have to adjust the strategy to the various target groups within the

youth from students over unemployed youngsters and precarious young workers. Every audience has its specific expectations and needs.

We have to keep in minds that the mobility of European workers is predominantly for young workers. European trade unions need to organize this group of young workers - transnational European trade union membership could be solution.

Youth committees in each trade union

Acknowledging the role of youth in the future of trade unions, Youth committees have to be organized in European trade union confederation, in each national and sector trade union.

To organize young people in the trade unions – there is need for additional human and financial resources. More and planned resources for activities of Youth committees have to be provided in each trade union budget. For more successful attraction of youth in trade unions there should be a youth coordinator in each trade union.

In order to allow young trade unionists to take active part in trade union movement, legal status of Youth committees should be set by statutes in all trade unions and in all countries, inter alia, European trade union confederation. Youth committees need voting rights in Governing boards and the access to other trade union structures. Quota of participation of young people in the Governing boards should be ensured to arrange agenda and collective agreements that cover needs of young workers.

Competences of young leaders should be raised – access to training for young trade unionists and young trade unions leaders should be improved. Internships and exchange of best practices between the different countries should be considered as important tool for competence rising of new trade union leaders.

Trade union youth structures should cooperate with NGOs and others stakeholders like close minded parties in civil society and politics which defend the social and economic rights of employees. Students and pupils need chance to join trade unions while studying.

Work with future employees

Young trade unionists consider that trade union work in order to improve youth employment starts already at school level and should be focused on pupils and students. We draw attention to the necessity to educate pupils and students on their labour rights and within it educate about trade unions. Teachers Unions should take more actions to educate pupils and students about trade unions.

Positive campaigns in the language of young people and social media should be used for informing and attracting young people to the trade union movement.

Trade unions should more involve in education processes to ensure employability and mobility of young people. In cooperation with employers trade unions should provide career guidance and more information about labour market needs and trends. More responsibility of training their members should be taken, training of trade unions members must be in every trade union agenda.