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UNI Finance

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International News in the Finance Sector

Influencing the FSB

For the first time ever, the trade union movement made its voice heard during a formal consultation with the Financial Stability Board organized by ITUC/TUAC and UNI in Geneva on the 16th of November. Only a limited number of trade union leaders had managed to meet with the FSB in previous years, asking for a broader consultation.

This time, around 60 trade union leaders came together from Asia, Africa, Europe, and the Americas to ensure that the social and employment dimensions would be addressed by the FSB when preparing the Resolution and Recovery Plans for the 28 G-SIFIs, the Global Systemically Important Financial Institutions also called "too big to fail". These 28 companies include some large banks such as HSBC, Deutsche Bank, Bank of America, which, in case of bailout, could jeopardize the stability of the global economy.

For Philip Jennings, Secretary General of UNI Global Union, "the bank employees are the ones who are facing the anger of people losing their jobs and homes; the banks cannot keep their expectations of making a 15 to 20% return on equity when the rest of the economy is stagnating; the FSB has a big role to play to re-establish the morality of banking and secure investments into job creation and real economy."

Major strike in Spain



The general secretaries of the Spanish trade unions CCOO, UGT and USO have reported on the development of the general strike. They have all agreed on the fact that the adherence to the strike is been massive, and therefore they have declared the general strike as a great success.

The strike has been followed by over 90% in the sectors of industry and transports (with only the minimum services operating in the latter). In the public sector, 62% of the workers of the public administrations, 56% in the healthcare and 75% of the teachers have adhered to the strike.

Ignacio Fernández Toxo, general secretary of CCOO has mentioned with special gratitude the participation of those workers who, despite the situation of the Spanish economy, have decided to participate in the strike. He has recalled that unemployment affects already nearly 6 million people – a figure that shows how ineffective the austerity policies have been to solve Spain's situation.

Solidarity meeting in the Mediterranean region



Union leaders from Tunisia, Algeria, Morocco, Lebanon, Italy and France met in Tunis on the 8th of November to develop joint solidarity initiatives. This meeting led by FISAC-CGIL Italy and co-organized by UNI Finance, UNI Africa and UGTT Tunisia, brought together key union leaders from the North and the South of the Mediterranean region. In fact, this alliance is not new as it started back in 2004.

Thanks to the financial support of UNI SCORE and FSU Sweden, the group now has a new window of opportunity to develop a concrete action plan between now and the beginning of 2013. The Algerian Finance Union FNTBA-UGTA, organising about 30.000 employees, also decided to join UNI Finance.

The region has been strongly affected by the events of the Arab Spring. In some cases, like in Tunisia, the unions have been reinforced, as being seen as the leaders of the movement for freedom and democracy. In some other cases, like in Egypt, the union is now in a difficult position, having been an historical partner of the past government. The participants emphasized their will to work in solidarity with all unions to help them go through these difficult changes.

The union leaders will now go back to their national work and work on a mapping exercise to identify the key targets, preparing for the work plan. The results of this survey will give us a clear picture of where the key multinationals are, in which cities and with how many workers and union members. Some of them include Société Générale, BNP Paribas and Intesa San paolo. The participants will meet again in Alger at the end of February 2013, to share the results of the survey, develop the action plan and formalize the regional alliances.

« Etats Généraux »

UNI Finance decided to pull together an emergency meeting gathering trade union leaders from all over Europe to find joint solutions to the current crisis that is having harsh impacts on European workers and their families. The expression "Etats Généraux" refers to a famous episode of the French Revolution History when the King asked the three orders (Nobility, Clergy and Third Estate) to come together to address the debt crisis.

For Philip Jennings, Secretary General of UNI Global Union, "we are at a turning point of history and we need radical change. In some ways, the financial elite behaves like the Nobility in France in 1789, being out of touch of the reality of the communities it is supposed to serve. The regulators act as a clergy, trying to address the roots of the crisis with good faith but not always effectively. And finally, we are the Third Estate, representing the workers and the real people who are suffering from the crisis in their everyday life."

In Europe 26 million people are unemployed. In Greece and Spain, the unemployment rate is 25%, and 50% for the youth; in Greece, it is even 62% for young women.

The European trade union leaders will now develop emergency action plans. With the inputs of guest speakers coming from Fair Pensions UK, the International Institute for Sustainable Development and the United Nations Environmental Programme, the trade union movement will also open up its horizons to alternative solutions for building a new and sustainable financial system in the future.

Santander Brazil: stop cutting jobs !



UNI launched a solidarity action to support the Brazilian bank employees. According to the information we receive, Santander could cut up to 5,000 jobs in Brazil this week. The Bank is still making enormous profits and nothing justifies cutting so many jobs in Brazil, where the economy is still strong, and where the benefits being made are then being sent back to the Headquarters in Spain. Moreover, the dismissals have been decided in an expedite way, targeting a lot of employees who have been working for the company for a long time. Therefore, we are asking for your support. You can make a difference by signing this letter and sending it to the Presidents of Santander in Brazil and Spain. All you have to do send the letter on the UNI Finance website.

Thank you for your solidarity with the Brazilian workers.

Agreement with Santander Italy



After intense negotiations involving FABI and other Unions, an agreement was achieved with Santander. All twenty workers fired from Santander will be entitled to access, upon request, to the Emergency Fund, the social safety net that will allow them to receive approximately 80% of the salary for the next two years.

Negotiations with Santander has been particularly complex. The Spanish institute, about a month ago, decided to close the branch of "Debt Recovery" due to economic reasons, and laid-off 20 employees applying the new Labour Law ("Fornero Law"). The initial plans were to proceed to the lay off, without any agreement with Trade Unions that could have protected workers. After a strong mobilization of Trade Unions, which intervened upon ABI (Italian Bankers Association) and UNI Global Union, the bank began to *rethink the* initial plan and an agreement was reached. "We are pleased," said Cosimo Torracco, FABI-Turin Provincial Secretary with responsibility for Santander, "because we were able to give significant guarantees to redundant workers, which threatened to stay at home without salary and hope to get a new job, because of the new "Fornero" law.

With this agreement, the banking companies will be encouraged to re-employ these workers through special tax breaks. "

UNI Americas Finanzas conference

The 3rd conference of UNI Americas Finance took place in Montevideo, gathering around 60 union leaders from the continent, who re-elected Carlos Cordeiro as President, adopted an ambitious action plan to break through the impacts of the global financial crisis, in an atmosphere of both solidarity and professionalism.



Up to now, the finance sector in Latin America has been rather protected from the devastating impacts of the global financial sector. But there is a greater risk of recession in the region with the deepening of the crisis in Europe and in the US. The economies in the Latin American countries are slowing down, with the decrease (in volumes and prices) of exports towards Northern countries, the reduction of capital investments, and the restructuring taking place in large multinational banks, which have branches in Latin America.

The financial system in Latin America is more resilient than in Europe because the banks have been less exposed to risky derivative investments and they have more margin in terms of capital ownership. The level of internal consumption demand is also still high,

boosting the economy, in spite of the decreasing exports. The trade unions also play a very important, pushing their governments to adopt economic policies which support internal demand and additional cash flows, contrary to the austerity measure which have been adopted in Europe. The European trade union movement has a lot to learn from its Latin American colleagues.

Cooperatives movement in Nepal

UNI Liaison Council Japan (LCJ) Finance affiliates and UNI Nepal Liaison Council Nepal organized a Commemorative Seminar to mark the International Year of the Cooperative Movement in Kathmandu, Nepal. Re-Awaken the Cooperative Movement – Strengthen the Producers and Consumers in Real Economy was the theme of the seminar. Yutaka Seki UNI Apro Finance President said that UNI LCJ Finance affiliates shared some best practices from Japanese cooperatives that contributed to social progress of the marginalized and rural population.

These positive experiences in Japan could be beneficial for Nepal as a developing country with a vast rural and agricultural economy.

Jayasri Priyalal UNI Apro Director for Finance also emphasised that trade union leaders need to introduce innovative services to increase trade union membership in Nepal. Priyalal congratulated FIEUN Nepal for establish-



New EU project

UNI Europa has been awarded a grant from the European Commission to launch a project on "Life Long Learning: Follow up of the joint declaration and promotion of the EU sectoral social dialogue". Ten years after the signing of the joint declaration on Life long learning by the European social partners, the project investigates the implementation of this declaration by identifying best practice. Life long learning will be used as a vehicle to stimulate social dialogue. The project focuses on Croatia, Romania and Bulgaria, with workshops in these countries.

Liikanen report

UNI Europa Finance has replied to the EU Commission consultation on the Liikanen report, which provides many positive proposals that can create more stable financial markets serving the needs of society, consumers and employees.

However, UNI Europa Finance believes that impact assessments are needed before defining the right regulatory approach. Banks should be classified into commercial, universal or investment banks based on the level of capital utilised in real bank and speculative investment banking respectively. Ring-fencing should be introduced to ensure that the liabilities caused by speculative investment do not undermine the well-functioning of real banking activities of the same banking group. Investment bankers should be excluded from top management functions in a banking group.

EU Commission



UNI Europa Finance met with Michel Barnier, the European Commissioner for Internal Market and Services to share trade union views on financial regulation, Banking Union and the Liikanen report. Commissioner Barnier said he would work towards a better inclusion of social dimensions into regulation. Overall the meeting was positive and the Commissioner showed an open attitude towards trade union concerns.

UNI Europa Finance also had its bi-annual meeting with the European Commission's Directorate General Internal Market and Services. The Commission gave us an update on legislative proposals that all contain employment dimension important to us. 19 out of 20 financial legislative proposals are yet to be implemented and still 'stuck' in political negotiations. To follow all these new regulations, UNI Europa Finance will coordinate our efforts both at national and European level.

Upcoming meetings

14-16 January: UNI Staff meeting
23 January: EWC working group
24 January: Sales & Advice group
4-5 March: UNI MENA meeting in Algeria

Happy New Year !

We would like to thank all of the UNI Finance affiliates for their hard work to improve working conditions in the finance sector, protect employees, improve financial regulation and make the UNI Finance family grow and flourish.

More than ever, the world needs a strong, stable and sustainable financial sector which serves society, and not the other way around.

Wishing you a very successful and happy New Year !

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