

1st Mediterranean Public Service Unions Conference Hammamet (Tunis) 9 -10 November 2005

Final declaration

Ten years after the Barcelona Conference in 1995, the trade union organizations are unanimous to realize that the goals declared have not been fulfilled. The Partnership consisted of establishing a link between economic development, peace and democratization. For the trade union movement, the result of the Partnership is disappointing and it is difficult not to mention the relative failures.

Despite all criticisms and concerns, for the trade union movement the Partnership is the right path to be followed. Its foundation maintains all its use and it deserves to be developed. It continues being a suitable regional frame for cooperation in the Mediterranean that includes the democratization and the promotion of human rights, on the condition to guarantee its coherence and to revitalize it with a more firm political commitment. Also the new European Neighbourhood Policy, whose objectives and Action Plans explicitly refer to the mechanisms of social consultation, to the employment policy, to the trade union freedom and to the international agreements on labour right. This opens an interesting perspective for the unions who participate in partnerships.

The Mediterranean Public Service Unions Conference observes that:

1. The Mediterranean has not been transformed into a peace zone;
2. The economic and social situation has not improved, but, on the contrary in some sectors it has worsened ;
3. The Partnership has not contributed in an effective way to create employment., particularly in the public sector;
4. The migratory question continues being a fundamental problem not solved within the framework of the Partnership.;
5. Little democratic advance and absence of social dialogue.

The Conference reaffirms that the peace, the respect of human rights, the respect of labour rights based on the ILO standards, and the economic policies that promote development and social progress are tightly linked.

For the reinforcement of the multilateral and the regional integrations. A renewed Partnership should reinforce the principles of the process, which are: equality, co-responsibility, solidarity and cooperation in the multilateral framework. The ENP can not drain the Partnership of its regional character. The Euromed Trade Union Forum considers that the new European Neighbourhood Policy should include among its priorities the impulse of both regional integration and south-south sub-regional integration. It has, therefore, to promote a logical idea of regional cooperation and true south-south cooperation, with the goal of settling

the bases of a wider market that is able to attract foreign investments and to develop scientific, technical and cultural co-operations.

For the co-development. The Euromed Partnership has not improved the standard of living of workers and populations. That is why it can not be reduced to a simple zone of free change and it must be transformed into a privileged framework to promote development and democracy. We estimate that free change is not the only answer to development. Policies are necessary for social and territorial cohesion, in which public services and member states play an essential role for accomplishment and for development, in the respect of international labour standards.

For an active employment policy. The trade union organizations consider that employment creation has to be a transversal element of the Partnership and it has to become one of its priority objectives. In this sense they are asking to initiate actual measures to favour employment creation, especially in the public services sector. Moreover, adequate measures must be adopted to create stable, qualified occupation, aiming at eliminating on temporary job in public employment.

The Mediterranean Public Service Unions Conference urges that host countries do not forget that migration remains an unsolved problem. It is fundamental to support measures for the integration of migrant workers and their families. The community must place among their priorities a neighbourhood policy based on legality and the rights of immigrants. It is, therefore, requested that the States ratify the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families.¹

The Conference strongly condemns the criminal terrorist attacks against the three hotels in Jordan causing numerous victims among the civilian population. The public sector unions state the necessity for common international cooperation to combat these attacks.

The Conference supports the right of the Palestinian peoples to an independent state in their territories, within the borders established on June 4 1947, with capital Jerusalem, in full legal respect and in compliance to international law and to the United Nation's resolutions. The Palestinian peoples aspire to global peace and justice, to assure the future generations. We, therefore, call upon the various trade union organizations to give their support to stopping the confiscation of land and the construction of the dividing wall, in order to guarantee access of the workers to their respective working places.

The Conference sadly notices that peace and fundamental rights in Cyprus are continuously violated, due to the occupational forces of

¹ The International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families was adopted by General Assembly resolution 45/158 of 18 December 1990 and entered into force on July 10 2003 after ratification by the first 20 States (Azerbaijan, Belize, Bolivia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Burkina Faso, Cabo Verde, Colombia, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Ghana, Guatemala, Guinea, Kirghizia, Mali, Mexico, Morocco, Philippines, Senegal, Seychelles, Sri Lanka, Tajikistan, Timor East, Uganda, Uruguay). It therefore deals with an international treaty with a binding character for the States that ratify it. Web link: http://www.unhchr.ch/html/menu3/b/m_mwctoc.htm

Turkish troops stationing in the North for many years now. The Conference points out the need for a prompt solution to the conflict on the basis of the United Nations Resolutions and upon the principles of the European Union, of which Cyprus is a member.

The trade union organizations insist on a prompt end to the occupation of Iraq, as well as the fundamental role that the UN must have in the process of recovery of the sovereignty, the reconstruction and the guarantee of unit of this country. Also, they support the efforts made by the ICFTU, the WCL and the CISA to help to the reconstruction and the unit of the trade union forces in Iraq, on the base of democracy and independence,. This is the only to way to fully defend the rights of labour. Therefore, sectorial trade union structures must be consolidated little by little to allow – in our case – for us to give answers to the problems of the men and women public services workers of Iraq.

The Conference demands all the truth to be known about the assassination of the former Prime Minister of Lebanon and those found guilty to be judged. Nevertheless, this question must be kept to the respect of the international law and not respond to political ends with the purpose of establishing sanctions on Syria, what would pose a threat of increasing the destabilization in the region.

The Conference expresses its support for the efforts undertaken by the ICFTU and by WCL the for the creation of a new single trade union world centre. This world wide unity represents a challenge in the trade unions' regions' of interest, for example the Mediterranean area. In this sense, we affirm the need for strenghtening the Euromed Trade Union Forum. Therefore, in support of the final resolution and of the working program approved in Barcelona on the 6th and 7th of November 2005, we believe that this reinforcement must take into consideration the sectorial problems. The Conference invites the Euromed Trade Union Forum and the European Public Services Union (EPSU) to encourage public service unions to participate in the Euromed Trade Union Forum.

Moreover, the Conference proposes that EPSU and PSI organize and sponsor a meeting on the European Neighbourhood policy. Not only should the unions from the Mediterranean area participate at this meeting, but also those from Eastern Europe interessted in the Neighbourhood Policy. Main object of this meeting should be to evaluate the situation and make proposals starting from the policy carried on by the European Union regarding its neighbours, proposals that deal with the whole of public services in those countries as well as with the conditions of public employees.

The Conference positively evaluates this first encounter. In order to guarantee continuity decides to:

1. To go deeper into the issues treated by this 1st Conference:
 - a. Public services in the framework of the Euro Mediterranean Association and the European Neighbourhood Policy;

- b. **Social dialogue and collective bargaining. With particular reference to ratification of the ILO Convention 151²;**
 - c. **The campaign in defence of public services that EPSU and PSI is carrying on; the Conference establishes to adapt the contents to the Mediterranean reality so that it can be used in the Mediterranean public service unions' action.**
 - d. **Face some new issues: social protection systems, public services and immigration ...**
2. **Create a Coordinating Commission assigned to monitoring the decisions adopted and for proposing future initiatives. Initially the Commission will be composed by the UGTT of Tunis and by the Italian and Spanish unions, but it will be open to all those organizations that wish to take part, even if the most urgent thing would be to involve a representative from one of the organizations in the Near East.**
 3. **Immediately create a network of contacts with all the present union organizations. The Coordinating Commission will keep the entire network informed with the most important news and initiatives in our field, particularly those relative to the Euro Mediterranean Association and the European Neighbourhood Policy, regarding public services.**
 4. **The Coordinating Commission will evaluate, on the basis of the economical conditions the possibility of organizing the II Conference of the Public Service Unions.**

Hammamet, Tunis, November 10 2005

² C151 Labour Relations (Public Service) Convention, 1978: Convention (No. 151) concerning Protection of the Right to Organize and Procedures for Determining Conditions of Employment in the Public Service, Adopted on 27 June 1978 by the General Conference of the International Labour Organisation at its sixty-fourth session entry into force 25 February 1981, in accordance with Article 11(2)Text in <http://www.ilo.org/ilolex/cgi-lex/convde.pl?C151>