

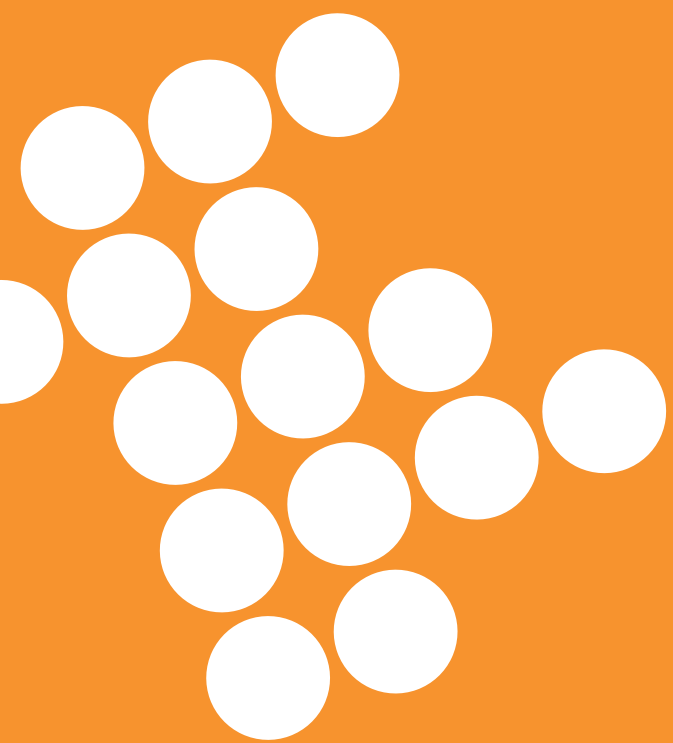


The world's best jobs!



International programme

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The Swedish Trade Union Confederation

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International programme presented for adoption by Congress

LO IS WORKING FOR A WORLD with free, democratic and strong trade unions, where national and international rules guarantee the workers' fundamental rights and working conditions at the workplace. LO will, within the European and the International trade union movement, continue to work for international labour standards, as they are formulated by the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and other important international standards. LO will work to secure the respect and promotion of these rights, in all countries and in all relevant contexts. Without this work, both the national and the international trade union movement will lose ground and possibilities to influence.

International labour standards

THE BASIS FOR THIS WORK is the eight core labour standards of ILO; concerning freedom of association and protection of the right to organize and collective bargaining, prohibition of child labour and forced labour, no discrimination and equal pay between men and women for work of equal value.

These fundamental rights have to be promoted in the policy pursued by international intergovernmental organisations such as the World Bank, International Monetary Fund, WTO, OECD etc and a cooperation must be established between them and the ILO. The International intergovernmental organisations must be persuaded to contribute jointly to a social dimension of the globalisation. The work on human rights in working life should be seen from an overall perspective, with different policy areas working together. It is about fair trade- and investment agreements, public procurement, capital investments, corporate social responsibility, loans, development aid and consumer labelling.

The restructuring of industry almost always has an international aspect. The service sector, the private and the public sectors, are more and more globalized. That is why the influence of workers in companies with activities in several countries is a crucial issue for the trade union strength. The influence is not only crucial as production is being moved, but also in answering the rapidly increasing of contract labour and other insecure forms of employments, all characterized by having no legal rights. The European and International trade union movement should intensify their work to obtain international minimum rules in these areas. One important task is to promote a universal ratification of the ILO-convention no 158, concerning Termination of Employment at the Initiative of the Employer, and the Workers' demands for valid reasons for the termination of employment which must be a prerequisite in all discussions on the so called flexicurity.

The LO Executive Council proposes the Congress to decide:

- LO should work for the respect and promotion of fundamental human rights in the work place in all countries of the world.

Investments of capital

THE ECONOMY OF SWEDEN is open to the world, inter alia through the free flow of capital. The supply of capital for investments in Sweden is not limited to the domestic savings of the Swedish people, but is also affected by the net flows coming from the surrounding world, and also by the Swedish savings placed outside of the country. The companies' economic conditions are decided on the international capital market, that is to a large extent banks, trusts, investment funds and so called risk capital companies. The Swedish risk capital market (investments in unquoted shares) has rapidly developed since the middle of the 1990 and the number of players is estimated to have doubled, at the same time as the administered capital has multiplied.

The invested capital has an important role concerning the influence on the responsibility of companies to have a sound, worker friendly, environment friendly and thereby a long term sustainable activity. The overall demand on LO's own investments is a good long term return. In addition to this LO is demanding that companies must follow the ethical rules of investment of LO with the aim and direction towards fundamental trade union rights and general environmental demands. In these circumstances LO is of the opinion that all investors should show their ethical rules and their owner policy and describe their follow-up work.

During the last decade the international capital has strengthened its position towards workers. A growing phenomenon is the so called "private equity" companies. These companies constitute active owners and act as middle institute where institutional investors (pension funds for instance) invest the capital they administer. The growing number of risk capital companies contributes to the fact that an increasing part of the ownership is not included in the customary national and international codes concerning control, monitoring, employer's responsibility and tax legislation etc.

The LO Executive Council proposes the Congress to decide:

- LO should work for a national and international cooperation aiming at an increased transparency and control, the strengthening of the rights of workers and ownership neutrality.

Trade union organising and decent work

IN THE CURRENT SITUATION, with a global labour market larger than ever before, the need for a closer and improved cooperation is clear. LO has to cooperate with other strong trade union organisations to decrease the risk of workers being put against each other in a low-bid competition (race to the bottom) in the global market. ITUC, the International Trade Union Confederation, the new global trade union body, with 168 millions members and founded in 2006, has as one important task to support the building of strong, democratic trade union organisations all over the world. The work to giving globalisation a social dimension, including the respect of human rights at the work place, is another of its priorities. The ILO must be given increased possibilities to promote decent work all over the world, with focus on rights and standards, employment, social security, good working environment and a developed social dialogue. Through the ITUC and the Global Union Federations, an pressure is put on the WTO, the World Bank and the IMF (the International Monetary Fund). Globalisation makes the right to international solidarity actions at the industry level even more necessary and they must be guaranteed on global level. This is about solidarity with workers in other countries, and helping them in their fight.

The right to organise has to be made reality for all workers without the risk of violations. Trade union strength and influence is determined by the trade union density in Sweden and in the world. Every unorganised work place in Sweden and in the world means less overall trade union strength. The global situation is extremely serious, as the unionisation rate continues to decrease in many countries, a trend which has to be turned. The rate of unionisation is also influenced by the increase of the informal economy. The informal economy is characterized by the lack of legal rights of the workers and consequently it is very difficult to organise.

An overall goal for trade union assistance and development work is therefore to support workers in developing countries, in their work to develop independent and democratic trade union organisations and thus enabling themselves to improve their working and living conditions. It is about helping brothers and sisters to help themselves. The trade union assistance and development work should be seen as one tool out of several to achieve trade union goals. There is a need for a common strategy in order to achieve this goal.

The European and the international trade union movement have trade union representatives at different levels and in different arenas contributing to achieving all the goals. Their contributions complement each other and the purpose is to use the available resources as effectively as possible and always trying to attend to trade union problems at the appropriate level.

If the legislation in a country prohibits the establishing of free and independent trade union organisations, then it's mainly an issue for the national trade union organisations and the ITUC. If the problem concerns a specific branch, it will mainly be an issue for the affiliated unions and for the global union federations. One important task for the regional trade union work which requires international solution, is how to handle workers moving across the nation borders and to safeguard their rights. Another important issue is the negotiations within multinational companies where consultations have to take place between all workers in the undertakings and in all countries of said multinational company. Also important is the demand on Swedish companies to respect the fundamental human rights, when having activities abroad. Another example of local trade union work is to put pressure on municipalities and county councils not to buy products from countries that violate fundamental trade union and other human rights.

A priority for the international trade union movement is to achieve binding rules for the CSR (corporate social responsibility). The heavy opposition from companies and from many governments, has resulted in the fact that the Guidelines for Multinational companies of the OECD and ILO declaration for multinational companies, are still only voluntary. More and more companies have adopted codes of conduct, that state how the companies themselves want to act ethically and morally. The international trade union movement considers codes of conduct as a step on the way to reach binding agreements. An increased pressure from the consumers and a closer surveillance from media have contributed to greater demands on companies concerning the conditions under which products are made, for instance through Fair Trade and demands for ethical investments.

Swedish companies should not contribute to the exploitation of workers from other countries. Companies should be demanded to work actively for the respect of fundamental workers' rights by subsidiary companies and by trading partners in other countries. In 2007, there were 56 company agreements in total, six of them concern Swedish companies (Skanska, SCA, SKF, H&M, IKEA and Securitas). The global framework agreements, mainly signed by the global trade union federations and the Multinational Company must include all the ILO Core Labour Standards and prevent workers being exploited regarding minimum wages, working environment and working hours. To bring about such agreements, has priority in the trade union movement.

The LO Executive Council proposes the Congress to decide:

- LO must work for the development of strong, free and democratic trade unions and well functioning industrial relations all over the world. The trade union development cooperation and global framework agreements are important parts in this work,
- LO must work for a better follow-up and control of the CSR, based on the guide-lines and declaration of the ILO and the OECD, with the aim to obtaining binding rules and
- LO must work for the right to international solidarity actions on global level.

European trade union cooperation

THE MAIN GOAL for the European trade union cooperation is to strengthen the position of workers on a labour market with free movement of capital, labour, goods and services. This imbalance between capital and work is otherwise risking to increase and thus resulting in insecure employments and a pressure on wages. EU has a unique possibility to regulate the labour market through minimum rules in the labour legislation, and they are consequently binding for all member states.

As a result of Sweden's membership in the EU and its external market, the national handling of a growing number of trade union issues for instance economic policy, labour market policy and labour legislation, economic policy, trade policy, transport policy, foreign-and development assistance policy, are all affected by decisions taken in the EU. This means that the trade union organisations in their national work at different levels must to a greater extent integrate the European dimension and in relevant matters also the international aspects. This demands the right and appropriate knowledge for the trade union representatives.

When decisions are taken at European and global levels we must ensure that our values and policies are largely accepted by the trade union organisations of which LO and its affiliates are members, that is on the Nordic, European and international levels.

For this work we need resources and capabilities to create alliances and getting support for the Nordic model which is based on collective agreements and thereby unique in many aspects in the European Union. Added to this we have our close cooperation with the socialdemocratic party of Sweden, an important part of our work in the institutions of the EU. The Services Directive adopted in 2006, is one important example, which has shown that we, through powerful actions, have succeeded in getting into place radical amendments in the original proposition of the Commission. In this process we got support from the ETUC, the ECOSOC, a majority in the European Parliament and finally in the Council of Ministers.

At the same time the ruling of the Court of Justice of the European Communities concerning the Waxholm/Laval case show us that we must continue our work to guarantee that our Swedish labour market model and our trade union rights are not undermined. The need to explain and defend the Swedish collective agreement system has become more obvious as a result of this ruling. This work must be carried out vigourously both in Sweden and in the ETUC. In order to defend and develop the model of collective bargaining and collective agreements both at the national and on the European level there is a need for a strong coordination between the national organisations and the unions in countries with a similar view to

ours concerning collective bargaining and the position of the social partners.

ETUC decided at its latest congress to fight for increased minimum wages. Other priorities of the ETUC also correspond very well to our work and signify a support for our own trade union priorities such as higher trade union density, a campaign for human rights at the work place and the right to international solidarity actions. ETUC has also supported a proposition from LO to work for a more uniform and improved regulation on the information and consultations with workers. In the new EU treaty, where fundamental human rights become binding you also find that the legal support for these rights increase and thereby decrease the risks of future Laval cases.

With the social dialogue, the social partners at EU level are given a possibility to influence the regulations, through agreements, on issues concerning the labour market. The social partners have signed several agreements in the last few years, which have been incorporated nationally through collective agreements.

At present and as part of the social dialogue, there are 31 branch or sector committees and around 300 branch/sector agreements in the form of contracts, guidelines, codes of conduct and joint statements. The branch and sector dialogue is missing in several areas and LO and its affiliates must jointly and actively work in getting more branches and sectors included in the social dialogue.

The Lisbon strategy has since the year 2000 been an important part of the EU co-operation. Starting 2010 the present strategy will be replaced. LO will work for a strategy which like the present one will consist of three parts, economic, social and ecological sustainability. Security in transformation should be key policy in this strategy. We have to oppose all attempts that give "flexibility" on the labour market a major importance at the expense of security.

Cooperation always will improve and enhance our common strength and capability to advance. To this end there is an agreement on cooperation between LO, TCO and SACO, mainly on the European work. The point of departure is that we believe in seeking mutual understanding and by doing coordinated actions we can increase the possibility to getting approval for questions we have in common. This co-operation has also led to the creation of our joint office in Brussels working as watchdog together with lobbying and information.

The trade union cooperation in the Scandinavian countries and around the Baltic Sea is getting more and more important. It's about protecting a Nordic model, based on collective bargaining and collective agreements. Cooperation is needed to bring about rules for a more joint labour market with an increasing mobility across borders. Cooperation is also necessary to save the environment in the Baltic Sea area.

The Council of states around the Baltic Sea is a political body of cooperation. It works with issues regarding the development of the region. Today

there is a permanent advisory committee on trade and industry (BAC) attached to the working group of the Council and dealing with economic co-operation. LO considers it urgent that the trade union network BASTUN (Baltic Sea Trade Union Network) obtains the same status as BAC in order to give continuity and to strengthen the tripartite co-operation in the region.

Another urgent topic is trafficking, that is the abominable criminal trade with human beings. In Europe there is trading of slaves for sexual commercial exploitation. However, a growing problem in Europe is the trafficking of people to work under conditions similar to slavery meaning fierce exploitation of labour. The convention of the European Council against trafficking, in force since the beginning of 2008 for a number of member states, together with the ILO conventions, constitute an essential part of the work against trafficking. But an increased trade union commitment both nationally and in our immediate surroundings is called upon, to secure that such violations of the fundamental human rights are prohibited.

The LO Executive Council proposes the Congress to decide:

- LO, in cooperation with other national trade union organisations should work in defending and consolidating our labour market model based on collective bargaining and collective agreements and with its trade union rights.
- LO must work to achieving a reinforced social dimension of globalisation in order to obtaining a social, financial and ecologically sustainable development.



Together we create the world's best jobs

Employment is a prerequisite for being able to create the life that we want to have and to fulfill our dreams. LO wants to create more jobs – but also better jobs.

Low wages and poor conditions do not belong in the future labour market. Nobody should be forced to compete for jobs by reducing their demands. The labour market's demands for flexibility should not shatter people's security. Nobody should be caused to get sick or die because of their jobs.

In the future labour market jobs are to be secure and fulfilling. Wages are to be decent, conditions – fair, and work environment – safe. Everyone should have influence on his/her working situation. Everybody should have the right to reasonable compensation in case of sickness or losing the job, and better opportunities of returning to working life. Security develops both people and society.

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The Swedish Trade Union Confederation