

Trade unions and the threat of populism and far right: how to win back the workers' vote

23 January 2019

Auditorium, ITUH

Right-wing populist movements and parties are rising almost everywhere in Europe. A growing number of working people, including trade union members, feel attracted to the populist discourse and simplistic promises for preservation of jobs and the increase of public provisions. The ethnocentric worldview of the radical right clashes with democratic and pluralistic founding values of the trade union movement. The trade unions are among the actors fighting extreme right trends in the society but at the same time workers and some trade union members have been seduced by populist ideas. This conference will investigate the broader picture of far right in Europe and look at how trade unions have reacted to these developments in different European countries. What options are there for trade unions and what is their potential? What tools are being used by populist movements to spread their message and how should trade unions deal with that? And lastly, what is the political strategy of the different political families at the European level and how do they see the role of the trade unions in the battle against racism and extreme right?

agenda

13:00-14:10 Opening remarks and setting the scene

Peter Scherrer, Deputy General Secretary ETUC and Thiébaud Weber, Confederal Secretary ETUC
Manuela Caiani, Associate Professor at the Institute of Scienze Umane e Sociali at the Scuola Normale Superiore (SNS) of Florence
Q&A

14:10 – 15:15 Trade union strategies to fight extreme right

Therese Guovelin, Vice President LO Sweden
Frédéric Sève, National Secretary CFTD
Steve Turner, General Council member, TUC
Q&A

Moderator: Thiébaud Weber, Confederal Secretary ETUC

15:15 – 15:30 Coffee break

15:30 – 16:30 Political mobilization strategies of the far right

Ruth Wodak, Em. Distinguished Professor; Chair in Discourse Studies, Lancaster University/University of Vienna
Tim Dixon, More in common
Q&A

16:30 – 17:30 What does extreme right mean for European political parties

Tanja Fajon, MEP, S&D Group in the European Parliament

Philippe Lamberts, MEP, Group of the Greens/European Free Alliance in the European Parliament
Anne Sander, MEP, European People's Party in the European Parliament TBC
Q&A

Moderator: Peter Scherrer, Deputy General Secretary ETUC

17:30 Conclusions

Peter Scherrer, Deputy General Secretary ETUC
Thiébaut Weber, Confederal Secretary ETUC

Simultaneous interpretation FR/EN will be foreseen.



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