

# Trade union strategies to organise migrant workers in Europe

## How can migrant workers contribute to trade union revitalisation?

**Date: 19 January 2021**

**Venue: Online conference**

### **Introduction**

The EU enlargement of 2004 resulted in high levels of labour migration from Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) to the Western European member states. Western European trade unions responded to the phenomenon of CEE migration by developing various initiatives which combined existing recruitment and inclusion strategies with innovative practices, such as new forms of organising, and a heightened focus on trade union revitalisation. The economic crisis of 2008 and the consequential precarisation of the labour market has shifted the position of unions by including migrants in the larger group of precarious workers. The more recent refugee 'crisis' of 2015 has additionally pushed unions to develop novel policies that focus on refugees. However, the challenges related to migration are not only reduced to Western European countries, but they also concern trade unions from CEE countries such as Poland or the Czechia, which have become countries of destinations for workers from Eastern Europe.

The conference will engage and discuss research on the recent trade unions experiences and strategies in organising migrant workers and refugees with active scholars, studying the field of trade union renewal and migration. The conference aims to discuss the above challenges as well as to reflect on lessons learnt from the trade unions experiences over the past 17 years. The conference will also assess the level of preparedness of unions to future flows of migration and precarisation due to the 2020 pandemic and ensuing economic crisis. Finally, it aims to address how migrants are contributing to trade union renewal within the context of decreasing trade union membership.

The conference will be divided into three panels. The first will provide a background discussion on the evolution of trade unions' dilemmas and strategies in organising migrant workers. The second will examine trade unions' approaches to Spanish, Polish and Ukrainian migrant workers. The last panel will focus on undocumented workers and refugees.

The conference is addressed to scholars and trade unionists, and is on invitation only. Interpretation English/French/Polish and Italian will be available.



The ETUI is financially supported by the European Union.

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## Agenda

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<b>9:00- 9:20</b>	Opening <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Philippe Pochet, General Director of ETUI</li><li>- Ludovic Voet, Confederal Secretary ETUC</li><li>- Adam Rogalewski, London Metropolitan University</li></ul>
<b>9:20-10:20</b>	Trade unions' strategies to organise migrant workers in Europe. Lessons learnt after the 2004 enlargement of the EU, the economic crisis of 2008 and the refugee 'crisis' of 2015 Chair: Stefania Marino (Work and Equalities Institute, University of Manchester) <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- <i>Trade Unions and migrant workers: new dilemmas in an enlarged European Union under neo-liberal policies</i>, Rinus Penninx (University of Amsterdam)</li><li>- <i>Broadening our horizons: solidarity and memory in the understanding of migrant and labour movement relations</i>, Miguel Martinez-Lucio (Work and Equalities Institute, University of Manchester)</li><li>- <i>Trade unions and migrant workers: From union integration strategies to migrant self-organising?</i> Maite Tapia (School of Human Resources and Labor Relations, Michigan State University), Jane Holgate and Gabriella Alberti (Centre for Employment Relations, Innovation and Change, University of Leeds)</li></ul>
<b>10:20- 10:40</b>	Discussion
<b>10:40- 11:10</b>	Coffee break
<b>11:10- 12:10</b>	Challenges for the European trade unions to organise migrants Chair: Guglielmo Meardi (Faculty of Political and Social Sciences of Scuola Normale Superiore, Florence) <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- <i>Comparison of Swiss and British trade unions strategies to organise Polish migrants</i>, Adam Rogalewski (London Metropolitan University)</li><li>- <i>Spanish migrant workers in Germany: working conditions, self-organisation and relationships with trade unions</i>, Beltran Roca Martinez (University of Cádiz) and Simone Castelliani (University of Lisbon)</li><li>- <i>Polish trade unions versus migrant workers from Ukraine: together or not?</i> Dominika Polkowska (Institute of Sociology, Maria Curie-Skłodowska University, Poland)</li></ul>
<b>12:10 - 12:30</b>	Discussion
<b>12:30 - 14:00</b>	Lunch break
<b>14:00 - 15:00</b>	Trade unions' experiences in supporting undocumented migrants and refugees Chair : Rossana Cillo (Ca' Foscari University of Venice) <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- <i>Comparison of trade unions approach to undocumented workers in France and the UK</i>, Sylvie Contrepolis (Centre de Recherches Sociologiques et Politiques de Paris) and Heather Connolly (Grenoble Ecole de Management)</li><li>- <i>Italian trade unions and undocumented workers</i>, Irina Aguiari (Scuola Normale Superiore, Florence)</li><li>- <i>German and Austrian trade union movement and their responses to the refugee crisis</i>, Neva Löw (University of Kassel)</li></ul>
<b>15:00- 15:20</b>	Discussion
<b>15:20- 15:40</b>	Conclusions: Trade unions and migrant workers – an even more challenging relationship in the light of the Covid-19 pandemic and its economic consequences <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Adam Rogalewski, London Metropolitan University</li><li>- Nicola Countouris, Director of the ETUI Research Department</li></ul>
<b>15:40-16:00</b>	The way forward: Laurent Berger, President of ETUC

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