



October 8, 2007

- **To workers' representatives in the "Luxembourg" Advisory Committee on Safety and Health at Work**
- **To ETUC member organisations**
- **To European trade union federations**

Invitation

"The experience of workers' safety representatives: a key dimension of health strategies at work"

**11 and 12 February 2008**

ITUH Auditorium - Bld. du Roi Albert II, 5

1210 Brussels

Dear Fellow Workers,

Re: ETUC Conference on workers' safety representation in Europe

The representation of workers on safety issues at work is a decisive factor for the improvement of working conditions. At both European and national level, reinforcement of such representation must be seen as a priority for the development of a health and safety strategy at work.

In debates on the European Union's strategy, the ETUC has steadfastly defended a dual objective:

- extension of the range of workers concerned by such representation (notably by lowering representation thresholds in countries where they are too high)
- improvement of the functioning of such representation (in particular by strengthening representatives' right to information, training and expertise; by encouraging the creation of trade union networks that provide support for these representatives; by protecting representatives against dismissal or discrimination, etc.

What is more, in 2008, the European Week of the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work, based in Bilbao, will focus on risk evaluation. Quality risk evaluation



necessarily requires workers' participation. We plan to highlight that element in all the activities organised for the European Week.

Workers' safety representation systems are also a priority of the research programme of the Health and Safety Department (HESA) of the European Trade Union Institute for Research, Education and Health & Safety, ETUI-REHS. The HESA Department has launched research into the factors of effectiveness of representation systems in collaboration with trade unionists and researchers.

It is in that context that we are organising the conference scheduled for 11 and 12 February 2008. It concerns the experience of workers' safety representatives. The conference has two overriding aims:

- to review ongoing research into the factors of effective workers' health and safety representation; to demonstrate the usefulness of such research, which all too often has been neglected by the public institutions, and to draw the appropriate conclusions for trade union organisations. The conference will also present the findings of a wide survey conducted by workers' representatives in Belgium and propose ideas for a trade union tool for the evaluation of the activity of safety representatives;
- to place workers' safety representation at the top of the political agenda in the formulation of Community and national strategies for safety at work.

The conference has financial support from the European Commission.

The budget available for the conference enables us to invite trade union representatives from throughout Europe based on the following arrangements: the ETUC will cover the costs of travel and accommodation for three persons per Member State and for two persons for European Union applicant countries. It will also cover the travel and accommodation costs of one person per European trade union federation.

For the Member States, the travel and accommodation reimbursement will cover the active and alternate members of the "Luxembourg" Advisory Committee. If any of these members are unable to participate in the conference, they may be replaced by another person provided all the ETUC affiliated organisations give their consent.

For the applicant countries, participants must be appointed by agreement of the trade union confederations affiliated to the ETUC.

For the European trade union federations, participants must be appointed by the federation concerned.



Trade union organisations may obviously send additional participants at their own expense.

We ask you to:

1. send us the names of the participants for your country, no later than 5 December 2007;
2. Publicise the conference in your country in such a way as to increase its impact.

Fraternal greetings,

Walter Cerfeda,  
Confederal Secretary

Marc Sapir,  
Director of ETUI-REHS

For all queries concerning the conference, please contact Bezaye Girma at [bgirma@etuc.org](mailto:bgirma@etuc.org)

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