

**3rd Statutory Congress of IG BCE
from October 9 to 14, 2005 in Hannover**

Motion adopted by the Third Statutory Congress of IG BCE

**Extension of the European Union and Globalisation/
Challenges to Trade Union Co-operation**

With the accession of the ten new member states to the European Union on 1 April 2004 the preconditions for sustainable peace and stability in Europe significantly increased again. The extension offers new opportunities for economic dynamism and potentially allows for a significant improvement in global EU competitiveness. It will also have a positive effect on industry and job safety in Germany.

However, these developments will undoubtedly lead to problems in the short run, affecting border areas and the low-wage segment in particular. In neighbouring countries to the east the transition is still creating problems that need to be solved.

The solution cannot be social, environmental and fiscal dumping. This would start a downward spiral that would wind up hurting employees everywhere. The new opportunities are being abused by those employers and politicians who hope to lower social standards and abolish workers' rights by threatening to relocate jobs. This is very detrimental to the climate needed to effectively leverage the opportunities offered by the extension and limit the risks involved.

It is also a challenge to the trade unions and a touchstone of their ability to co-operate successfully on a European level. Their imagination is particularly important now: to balance different interests fairly and to ensure the continued existence of the ideal of a socially minded society in the larger EU. The social model for Europe must be a symbol for social fairness and a just balance of interests, thus constituting a role model for the way globalisation is handled.

Through access to new markets, globalisation offers additional opportunity, particularly to the export-driven German industry. The fact that German industry should invest on a global scale is an inevitable consequence of internationalisation and one of the preconditions for success in global competition. This also benefits and strengthens industrial locations in Germany, However, it is also true that these locations have to face global benchmarking by companies.

To make sure this does not lead to a ruinous competition for ever lower standards and wages, global minimum social and ecological standards are required. Only if an increase in competitiveness is accompanied by an improvement in working and living conditions will globalisation be met with the support it needs.

In particular the International Labour Organisation's (ILO) conventions prohibiting child labour, forced labour and any type of discrimination at work and the right to trade union organisation and free collective bargaining need to be honoured universally.

A social framework for the world economy must be established by enshrining these conventions in trade agreements and in rules for international investors. International

framework agreements, under which multinational companies commit themselves to upholding fundamental social standards anywhere, are also a suitable tool for this. Such agreements are also an opportunity for social dialogue at a global level and the joint establishment of processes that will create a good future for everyone involved in globalisation.

This also requires a new quality of co-operation between trade unions worldwide. Traditional trade union internationalism has definitely become obsolete. The experience made by unions indicating that their national efforts alone are insufficient to effectively promote their members' interests leads to quite concrete expectations to the international trade union organisations. Only if the latter succeed in offsetting the differences in their political views and cultures of action that come to the fore in this context will they gain distinct influence on the future shape of globalisation.

The Executive Committee is called upon to

- continue to promote the solidarity between the European trade unions within EMCEF and ETUC and to support them in their efforts to organise social dialogue, ensure worker participation, co-ordinate wage policies and influence social policy and industrial policy debates in Europe.
- promote the adoption of the European Constitution in co-operation with partner unions in Europe in order to use its social chapter to strengthen the social dimension of the European integration process.
- continue to intensify the relations with the unions in the eastern accession countries in particular, helping them to strengthen their wage policy competence, social dialogue and worker participation and promoting the participation of their representatives in the European works councils, European trade union organisations and the institutions of social dialogue at the European level.
- establish contacts between workers' representatives in Germany and the branches of German companies in the accession countries and develop initiatives allowing for regular mutual exchange on working and social conditions and wage policies. It is necessary to win over companies and employers' and industry associations to support this process and participate in the dialogue.
- provide works councils and shop stewards with support to argue their point and to take action in the debates on investment decisions and relocation of jobs by giving information on the union, social security and wage conditions in the central and eastern European countries and by offering appropriate training.
- support ICEM, ITGLWF and ICFTU in fostering global trade union solidarity to enable them to effectively influence the shape that globalisation takes. The international trade union organisations themselves must review their structures and working methods and adapt them to new requirements. In this context, they must respond to the needs and expectations of their member organisations more than they have in the past.
- call on ICEM to direct its efforts particularly at the implementation of and adherence to internationally applicable social and environmental standards, the implementation of ILO conventions, the support of the UN Secretary General's Global Compact and the establishment of social dialogue at the global level. By concluding global agreements with German multinationals and creating initiatives to establish networks of trade union representations at their branches throughout the world, IG BCE must continue to make its own contribution to achieving these objectives.