



Christmas 2011

Dear international partners

The year 2011 was a time of great change for workers around the world. The economic crisis had a major impact on European workers in many countries as employers presented them with demands for pay restraint, increased productivity without financial compensation and considerable deterioration of pay and working conditions in a wide range of areas. Several of these demands were accompanied by threats of production relocation or insourcing of cheap foreign labour if the demands were not met. Social dumping is a widespread phenomenon, and the insourcing of labour and use of temporary manpower from agencies constitute a threat to permanent jobs. Instead, employment has become uncertain, and workers have no social security, no right to pay during sickness or parental leave, and no right to holiday pay.

The current labour market is in no way compatible with the labour market and collective agreement system that was originally developed in the Nordic countries. We see the many attacks on this system as an attempt to undermine the Nordic model and the fundamental rights of workers, rights that the trade union movement fought for more than a hundred years to win.

Having collected data on developments, the Nordic and the European trade union movements can now document the virtually systematic obliteration of well-established trade unions and the agreements they have signed. The trade unions in the Nordic area intend to stand together to fight the right-wing ideologies that go against trade unions and collective agreements. Collective bargaining in the coming years must show that the trade unions have maintained their strength and legitimacy, and that they are the only guarantee for decent pay and working conditions.

In collaboration with the European Federation of Food, Agriculture and Tourism Trade Unions (EFFAT), the NU HRCT will implement an EU project that will help identify and understand changes in ownership in transnational hotel and restaurant chains, as well as their impact on workers' rights.

At the NU HRCT Nordic Forum in Trondheim in September 2012 we will focus on these challenges under the headings 'The Nordic hotel, restaurant, catering and tourism industry in the face of global competition', 'The Nordic model in a globalised labour market' and 'The strength of global bargaining in dialogues with corporate management in the light of new ownership structures in hotel and catering groups and similar organisations'.

In November, the NU HRCT, HRF Sweden and 3F Denmark attended a Nordic Council event at which the 2011 Environmental Award was given to the Scandic Hotels group, which is a good example of the usefulness of management involving employees in developing the business. We

believe that all employees are committed to and feel responsibility for their workplaces; they need only the opportunity to show it.

Together with New Nordic Food, Aalborg University and several Danish interest groups, the NU HRCT was in charge of organising a conference held in Helsinki on 10-11 October 2011. Its theme was 'Food for large groups in a Nordic perspective'. Prior to the conference, data had been collected and information about experience gained had been gathered in the Nordic countries to document the societal benefits of changing production and purchasing methods and of setting up eating environments correctly. However, success in this area requires a holistic political approach based on clearly formulated objectives. In this respect, the public sector can further developments by taking the lead.

We see it as a great common challenge for all of us to bring food and meals to the forefront and take advantage of the recent increased focus on New Nordic Food, but an effort must be made to ensure that it spreads to all places where food is produced.

The NU HRCT is willing to take the lead in developing a Nordic network collaboration that can promote development and ensure the sharing of knowledge and experience.

In closing, we would like to thank you for working together with us constructively and well over the year now almost passed, and we wish you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.



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Secretary General



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