



# MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

*on Cooperation between Social Democratic Parties and Trade Union Confederations in South-East Europe*

*Sarajevo, 29-31 October 2012*

*We, the representatives of the social democratic parties and trade union confederations in South-East Europe, have come together in a regional workshop "Social Democrats and Trade Union Confederations Towards Economic and Social Justice for Workers in South-East Europe" held on 29-31 October 2012 in Sarajevo, expressing our will to establishing regional dialog and cooperation, understanding that this kind of cooperation is needed more than ever, recognizing the need to exchange knowledge and experiences and to nurture dialog and partnership, with the aim to strengthen and promote regional solidarity, committing ourselves to protecting, strengthening and promoting issues of significance and interest for workers in our countries, and strengthening peace, equality, democracy, sustainable economic development, fair distribution of resources and development of inclusive welfare societies in the countries of South-East Europe.*

*In the spirit of our time and current challenges, faced with the consequences of transition process, nationalistic and neoliberal politics, high unemployment rate and informal economy, wide-spread poverty and exclusion of citizens from participation and decision-making, including workers' participation and decision-making, but taking active social role and responsibility in the ongoing processes and consequences of dramatic transition to capitalism, we recognize common historical roots, values and interests of social democracy and trade unions, as a fundamental base for our regional cooperation.*

*Values such as democracy, socialism, gender equality and solidarity guide our political and trade union work and present an alternative to the right-wing and neoliberal politics and practices of brutal capitalism that oppress and marginalize workers in the countries of our region. We are committed to actively build partnership so as to coordinate our views and opinions with regard to current social processes in our region.*

# 1. Background and signing parties of Memorandum of Understanding

This Memorandum of Understanding represents an agreement and expression of political will and commitment by signing parties, social democratic parties and trade union confederations, to strengthen regional solidarity in the countries of South-East Europe in the spirit of partnership and mutual respect.

This Memorandum of Understanding builds on the:

- Dialog and conclusions from the regional workshop "***Social democrats and trade unions: Justice for workers through partnership***" held on 30 June 2010 in Sarajevo, and
- Open, frank and reflective discussions and conclusions from the regional workshop "***Social Democrats Together Towards Economic and Social Justice for Workers in South-East Europe***" organized on 20-31 October 2012 in Sarajevo.

The ***Parties*** see this Memorandum as an appropriate instrument and starting point for promoting and strengthening regional cooperation between them. The ***Parties*** will cooperate through exchange of experiences and information, sharing knowledge, proposing and developing innovative solutions of relevance for the SEE region, initiating common projects and activities and nurturing and strengthening mutual solidarity, dialog, cooperation and partnership.

The *Parties*<sup>1</sup> in this agreement are Social democratic parties and trade union confederations from the region of South-East Europe and other related organizations as follows:

- CEE Network for Gender Issues
- Confederation of Free Trade Unions of Slovenia
- Confederation of Independent Trade Unions of Bosnia and Herzegovina
- Confederation of Independent Trade Unions of Croatia
- Confederation of Trade Unions of Albania
- Confederation of Trade Unions of Republika Srpska
- Democratic Party
- League of Social Democrats of Vojvodina
- Social Democratic Party of Bosnia and Herzegovina
- Social Democratic Party of Croatia
- Social Democratic Party of Kosovo
- Social Democratic Party of Montenegro
- Social Democratic Party of Slovenia
- Social Democratic Union of Macedonia
- Socialist Party of Albania
- The Union of Independent Trade Unions of Kosovo
- Trade Union Confederation Nezavisnost
- Trade Union Confederation of Macedonia
- Trade Union of Textile, Leather and Shoes of Republika Srpska
- Trade Union Confederation of Montenegro

In the presence of our sister organizations that support our work:

- Labour Party, Great Britain
- International Center Olof Palme
- Fridrich Ebert Foundation
- National Democratic Institute
- Social Democratic Party of Ostergotland

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<sup>1</sup> *Parties* are signatories of this Memorandum of Understanding

## 2. The purpose and objective of Memorandum of Understanding

The purpose of this Memorandum of Understanding is to create common ground for establishing systematic regional cooperation between *Parties* of this agreement. The objective is to outline the framework for regional cooperation between the *Parties* that encompass formal structure of regional cooperation, its content and principles, possible areas of work and financing issues.

### 2a. Structure of regional cooperation

Regional cooperation will be formalized as a Regional Network based on the members signing this Memorandum of Understanding. The Regional Network will be managed by a **Coordination Board**, a political body, which will have a mandate to take strategic political decisions related to the work of the Network, and an **Executive Board** which will implement these decisions. This body needs to be integrated into existing infrastructure of the partnering organizations so as to ensure full integration and reduce costs. **Coordination Board**, chaired by a president, will consist of one representative for each organization, which by signing this agreement becomes a member of the Regional Network. **Executive Board** will consist of 3-4 persons working with operational issues implementing decisions made by **Coordination Board**.

The Coordination Board meetings will be held every six months in different cities of the SEE region, in which the participants will discuss different political issues and search for different strategic solutions and initiatives. Representatives of partner and sister organizations such as Labour party, OPIC, FES, PES, NDI, SI, PES Women, Balkan Forum, FEPS, RCC and others may be invited to take part in the meetings.

Detailed functioning of the Regional Network will be defined in documents, which will be outlined and discussed in the first constitutive meeting, including giving the name and visual identity to the Regional Network. Also, precondition to a successful and effective regional cooperation is a good cooperation between social democratic parties and trade union confederations at the national level.

## 2b. Principles and content of regional cooperation

The content of the work of the Regional Network will be defined in an annual work plan approved by Coordination Board, and implemented by Executive Board. At the end of the year all activities of the Regional Network will be presented in and an annual report, which will be distributed to all member organizations, as well as other relevant actors and media. The activities will be also presented on a website and in an annual electronic Newsletter.

There is a need to have a continuous dialog on understanding what social democracy is and how it should be implemented in public policies in the context of modern circumstances and processes, as well as to conduct research and comparative analyses on various welfare models, labour legislation and its enforcement, public employment policies, EU integration processes, institutional protection mechanisms of labour legislation (eg. Special labour courts), functioning of Economic-social Councils, the position and status of migrant workers, respect of gender sensitive and decent work agenda etc. The specific areas and topics will be defined in an annual work plan, and based on the needs and priorities of its members.

## 2c. Financing work and activities of the Regional Network

Activities of the Regional Network will be financed through:

- (1) Own means provided by member organizations to cover the costs of their participants in the regional activities;
- (2) Financial support from partner and sister organizations for specific projects and activities;
- (3) Resource mobilization through project applications with EU funds and in cooperation with partner organizations.

Coordination Board will determine details related to finances.



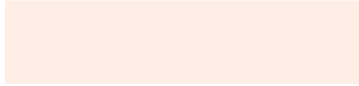
### 3. Timeframe for signing the Memorandum of Understanding

By signing this Memorandum of Understanding *Parties* agree on its content and express their political will and commitment for establishing effective regional cooperation.

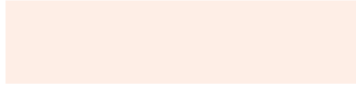
This Memorandum of Understanding is to be signed within 3 months from the day of its reception, and each signing organizations will appoint a representative for taking part in the work of Coordination Board and the first constitutive session of the Regional Network.



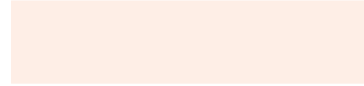
# 4. Signatories



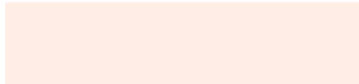
For Democratic Party,  
Dragan Đilas



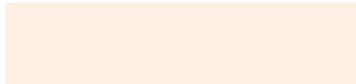
For Confederation of Trade Unions of Republika  
Srpska, Obrad Belenzada



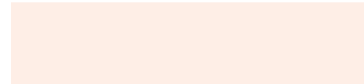
For League of Social Democrats of Vojvodina,  
Nenad Čanak



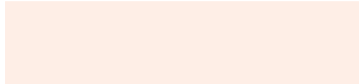
For CEE Network for Gender Issues,  
Daša Šilović



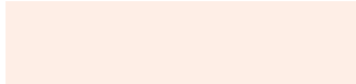
For The Union of Independent Trade Unions of  
Kosovo, Haxhi Arifi



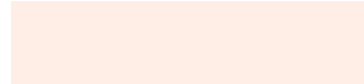
For Confederation of Independent Trade Unions  
of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Ismet Bajramović



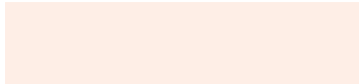
For Trade Union Confederation of Montenegro,  
Zoran Masoničić



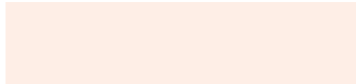
For Confederation of Trade Unions of Albania,  
Kol Nikollaj



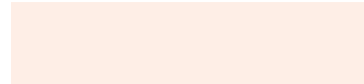
For Confederation of Independent Trade Unions  
of Croatia, Mladen Novosel



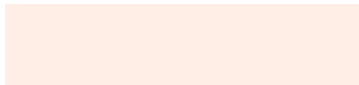
For Trade Union Confederation of Macedonia,  
Živko Mitrevski



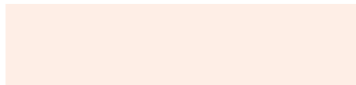
For Confederation of Free Trade Unions of  
Slovenia, Dušan Semolić



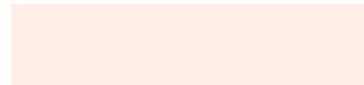
For Trade Union of Textile, Leather and Shoes of  
Republika Srpska, Danko Ružičić



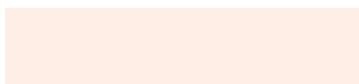
For Social Democratic Party of Slovenia,  
Igor Lukšič



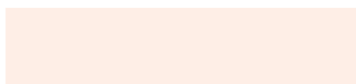
For Social Democratic Party of Bosnia and  
Herzegovina, Zlatko Lagumdžija



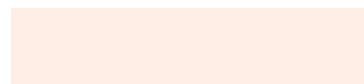
For Social Democratic Party of Montenegro,  
Ranko Krivokapić



For Social Democratic Party of Croatia, Zoran  
Milanović



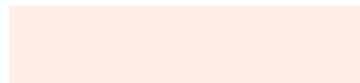
For Social Democratic Party of Kosovo,  
Agim Čeku



For Social Democratic Union of Macedonia,  
Branko Crvenkovski



For Socialist Party of Albania,  
Edi Rama



For Trade Union Confederation NEZAVISNOST,  
Branislav Čanak

