UnionMigrantNet and Cities Together for Integration

Newsletter #1

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UnionMigrantNet is a European network of contact points established, managed and supported by trade unions. The services provided by UMN contact points are aimed at promoting the collective and individual interests and rights of migrant and mobile workers.

The UnionMigrantNet (UMN) was set up in 2013 as a network of local, regional and national trade union structures that assists in the integration of migrants. The aims of the network are to:

- -Strengthen trade union activities aimed at protecting the individual and collective rights of migrants regardless of their status;
- -Increase the visibility and accessibility of services and facilities supporting the integration of migrants in the host societies and local communities.
- -Encourage, through support and good practices, trade union membership among the migrant population;
- -Facilitate dialogue and cooperation with other regional trade unions networks focused on migrants' activities;
- -Encourage cooperation and support to migrants, among all trade unions in Europe;

The services directed to the final users are provided face-to-face or online in different countries, as represented in the UMN portal as contact points. Due to the COVID- 19 situation some services are currently provided only by distant counselling.

National hub desks in Belgium, Bulgaria, Greece and Italy will also be implemented throughout the project.

The UnionMigrantNet & Cities Together for Integration project is based **on three main pillars**:

- -National integration activities where UnionMigrantNet members and local authorities will undertake targeted measures aiming at fostering migrant's integration in the labour market.

- -Mutual Learning Programmes (MLP) between local authorities and UnionMigrantNet members in five EU countries.

- -Update of the UnionMigrantNet Portal to facilitate its use for migrants by improving the on-line access to UMN structures and enhancing the digital networking of contact points. Besides, new IT tools will be developed to improve the exchange of information among contact point operators, as well as UnionMigrantNet's visibility in the social media.

Partnership of twelve UnionMigrantNet members (ETUC, Fisascat CISL, ANOLF Milano, ANOLF FVG, UIL, CISL, CITUB, CEPAG, Le Monde des Possibles, ZRC SAZU, Generation 2.0, EKA) and **seven local authorities** (Municipality of Athens, Municipality of Milan, Municipality of Pordenone, Municipality of Muggia, Sofia Development Association - Municipality of Sofia, Municipality of Ljubljana, Municipality of Liège).

Greek partners: Athens Labour Unions Organization (EKA), Generation 2.0 for Rights, Equality and Diversity (G2RED) & Municipality of Athens are the three partners for Greece with EKA being the coordinator of country's activities. The three organizations are going to cooperate in the delivery of:

- National Hub Desk operated by Migrant Point EKA
- Employability training for refugees and asylum seekers
- Awareness-raising event on the TCNs labour market integration
- A digital guide of good practices on TCNs' labour market integration in Greece
- Dissemination materials such as newsletters and videos
- A final conference

EKA and G2RED are responsible for this newsletter and the ones that are going to be produced during the following months.

About us

EKA, was founded in 1910 and is the largest second-level regional Trade Union organization in Greece. EKA brings together workers from sector and business primary Unions of the city of Athens and the wider area of Athens for the protection and claim of professional, labor and social rights of employees, as well as the development of collective working consciousness. The Migrant Point EKA was created in 2006 to provide individual and group legal and vocational counselling to mobile workers, migrants, asylum seekers and refugees for

their better integration in the country and equal access to the Greek labor market.

Generation 2.0 for Rights, Equality & Diversity (G2RED) is an initiative launched by a group of young people with migrant origins. Operating as an informal group as far back as 2006, referred to as 'Second Generation', our mission had been focused on securing the rights of the otherwise invisible generation of children, born and/or raised in Greece from migrant backgrounds. Today, G2RED is a nonprofit organisation and consists of an interdisciplinary team, representing a mix of ethnicities and social backgrounds, sharing the common vision that all of us have the right to equal and active citizenry on an individual and communal level. G2RED mission focuses on equal participation in a diverse society following a holistic approach with action and research, aiming to promote human rights, equality and diversity and fight against racism, xenophobia and discrimination.

Generation 2.0
For Rights Equality & Diversity

Labour Unions in Greece and the pandemic

We are going through particularly critical moment for Europe and the world, as we experience an unprecedented health crisis that is causing a catastrophic economic crisis.

During the pandemic, workers are at the forefront of the battle in hospitals, public transport, nursing homes, and various services, helping to keep society and the economy alive.

At the same time, millions of workers face many difficulties in their lives and earn a living, caused by measures to combat the coronavirus.

As far as we are concerned, the pandemic has drastically changed the working landscape in our country as well.

A recent large-scale research (20/02/2021) on the private sector during the period of the pandemic carried out by the Labour Unions, clearly reflects the intensity of financial and job insecurity and the growing concern of private sector workers for the changes brought about by the pandemic to their wages and labour rights.

Specifically: 56% of workers report that their incomes fell during the pandemic. Reductions that for 22% of employees mean losses of more than 31%, while for 14% mean losses of 21-31%.

Besides, the 40% of those working from home, evaluates negatively the rapid development of teleworking in relation to their professional development, the development of their pay, their working hours, their employment and labour rights, their personal life and their mental balance.

At EKA, from the first moment, we faced the pandemic with a sense of responsibility in the difficult times that our country is going through and in this situation, Public Health and the social interest are paramount.

Through proposals and various initiatives and actions, we declared from the very beginning that health crisis could not be a pretext for introducing regulations that invalidate labour law and condemn to unemployment a large part of the country's workforce.

That is why we are constantly emphasizing the need to combat infringements in the labour market and their enrichment with the new issues arose due to intensification of digitalization.

Municipality of Athens

As part of the European pilot project **Curing the Limbo**, the **Municipality of Athens** through the Development and Tourism Promotion Company (EATA) implements the co-Athens initiative, joining forces with Athenian citizens and refugees for the benefit of the city. Indicatively, the Foodies team invites locals and refugees to cook live on zoom, famous dishes of Syrian & Middle Eastern cuisine with ingredients that sends to participants, Sabar Bar searches for stories from the Exarcheia neighborhood and invites refugees and residents to online workshops every Monday night, the Athens Niroo Community is working with refugees to create an online community around renewable energy. Also, within the framework of Curing the Limbo, job counseling actions, vocational training seminars and skill workshops are organized in different professional fields with the aim of empowering refugees.

Job Adverts Thursday by Generation 2.0 RED

The **Job Adverts of Thursday** aim to bring to their audience job adverts from even more companies and organisations, from even more sectors of economy, supporting already with the job announcement the equal treatment, and offering job opportunities to everyone without exception; **Read more**

Solomon's articles on labor and migration

Solomon is an Athens-based, non-profit, independent, investigative digital media outlet that creates content in English and Greek, and combines on-the-ground reporting with collaborative research methods.

"I wonder if I'm a slave": Domestic workers in a state of modern slavery

Testimonies from women who are facing the pandemic while trapped in "self-isolation" for months on end.

Read more

"Greece will regret not making use of our potential"

As the government appoints a Deputy Minister responsible for integration, images of evicted refugees living on the streets can be seen all over Greece. "Since you don't want us here, at least let us move on and best wishes to you all," said the Syrian we met in Karditsa. **Read more**

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