DIFFICULTIES AND OBSTACLES IN IMPLEMENTATION OF
FREEDOM OF ASSOCIATION AND COLLECTIVE BARGAINING
IN AGRICULTURE OF EASTERN EUROPE AND CENTRAL ASIA

ILO/IUF REGIONAL MEETING MATERIALS

Moscow, June 30 – July 1, 2003

The set of information materials is prepared by the Moscow Office of the International
Union of Food, Agricultural, Hotel, Restaurant, Catering, Tobacco and Allied Workers’
Association based on the answers of the IUF affiliated and partner organisations to the
questionnaires of the International Labour Organisation.
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DIFFICULTIES AND OBSTACLES IN IMPLEMENTATION OF FREEDOM OF ASSOCIATION AND COLLECTIVE BARGAINING IN AGRICULTURE

REPUBLIC OF BELARUS

CONGRESS OF DEMOCRATIC TRADE UNIONS OF BELARUS

1. GENERAL POLITICAL SITUATION

The peculiarity of the situation in the agricultural sector of the country is that the state (pseudo-public) form of ownership is maintained in the sector. It is for this reason that the labour market virtually did not form and develop in the recent decade.

Some years ago agricultural workers in the Republic of Belarus had the opportunities to protect their lawful rights and interests. Starting at the end of the 90s, the Agroindustrial Workers’ Union of Belarus that united over 95% of those employed in the sector began to play an important role in the sphere of industrial relations, trying to become a full-time participant of the social partnership in the country. The trade union was more and more active in raising before the government and the employers the issues low wages, disadvantaged situation in health and safety, raised the problems of the degradation of the rural areas. The organisation and its activists, ordinary trade union members took part in protest actions against the decrease in workers’ living standards and their rights’ violations.

The increasing authority and influence of the union, its growing independence could not remain unnoticed. They were an open challenge to the developed political power with the elements of dictatorship. At the end of 1999 there was a direct command of President Lukashenko to ‘remove’ Alexander Yaroshuk, the leader of the union, from the trade union movement. All possible methods were used against the latter – bribery, blackmailing, pressure, intimidation. When all this brought no result, a campaign was launched aimed at reelecting Alexander Yaroshuk at the next trade union congress that was scheduled for July 2000. However, neither the ‘preparation’, nor the pressure imposed on the delegates, nor the already mentioned blackmailing and intimidation worked here. The system made a failure, the administrative resource crashed disastrously, even the nomination of the acting minister for agriculture and food as the alternative to Yaroshuk did not help. The overwhelming majority of the delegates preferred the union leader.

The authorities did not put up with such a serious defeat, with the fact that the trade unions on the whole were becoming a strong factor not only of the socio-economic, but also of the political life of the country. Active participation of the Federation of Trade Unions of Belarus in the presidential election in 2001 resulted in a powerful attack against the organisation and its structures. In December 2001 the Government adopts a resolution prohibiting direct deduction of trade union fees. In the conditions of the financial blockade the republican committee of the trade union of the workers of the agroindustrial complex had to dismiss two thirds of its employees.
However, the organisation was not going to give up and to turn down their activities. Starting in autumn 2001, with the active participation of the International Union of Food and Allied Workers (the trade union was affiliated to the IUF in April 2001), the allied unions of Ukraine and Moldova, the organisation started to actively implement educational projects. The organisational work that was being carried out largely helped to overcome the crisis. As early as by the spring of 2002 the collection of membership fees in cash was being gradually set aright, and the financing of the organisation was being restored.

After the trade union joined the complaint over trade union rights violation, submitted to the International Labour Organisation, another blow came from the authorities. An attempt was made to destroy the sectoral principle of structuring the organisation, to create territorial trade unions acting within the regions. However, this attempt failed, too. Having failed again to cope with the set task of ‘reforming’ the union and placing it under their control, the authorities changed their fighting tactics. Using the fact that trade union activists who were experiencing a very strong moral, physical and financial pressure for many months are extremely tired, the authorities again increased the pressure on the chairpersons of the regional committees, who for the sake of their personal survival initiated the convocation of the extraordinary plenum of the Republican Committee. On September 10, 2002, with grave violations of the Charter and without the necessary powers, the plenum dismissed Yaroshuk from the position of the head of the organisation. Exceeding the authority, in concordance with the minister for agriculture and food present at the congress, a department director of the Ministry for Agriculture and Food was elected chairperson of the Republican Committee right at the congress.

Thus, starting with September 10, 2002 the Agroindustrial Workers’ Union of Belarus lost its independent status and its activities were placed under the control of the authorities. Despite the fact that since then the position of the workers (trade union members) was constantly deteriorating, the real wages did not grow, the tariff agreement was seriously violated, the trade union did not hold a single protest action and did not make a single decision protecting workers’ rights and vital interests. The organisation is indvertibly degrading and becoming a controlled structure, an adjunct of the power that serves its immediate interests.

Keeping this fact in mind, the executive committee of the International Union of Food and Allied Workers (IUF) suspended the affiliation of Agroindustrial Workers’ Union of Belarus to the IUF in April this year.

GENERAL INFORMATION

The agriculture of the country employs 500 thousand people, and this number is decreasing year by year (there has been a 40% decrease since 1995, the same proportion applies to the decrease in the number of working women).

Main articles of export – milk and meat.

The Congress of Democratic Trade Unions of Belarus (BKDP) unites 15 thousand people, out of whom 20% are women (there are 5% of women among the leaders); in
the recent five years the membership of the organisation decreased by more than 30%. Membership of a trade union in rural areas does not exceed 50 members.

2. LEGISLATIVE CONTEXT

The legislation of the Republic of Belarus (the Constitution, the Law On Trade Unions) guarantees a restricted freedom of association of all workers. The Labour Code of the country also covers agricultural workers. The legislation guarantees the right to collective bargaining (in practice many organisations of democratic trade unions are deprived of the opportunity to register and therefore cannot bargain collectively).

Not a single ILO convention of particular importance for the agricultural workers has been ratified.

At law, agricultural workers formally enjoy the same conditions, the same rights to social security coverage as other employees.

3. THE ACTORS

The Government responsible for the present difficulties does not do anything for the implementation of the right to the freedom of association and collective bargaining, only formally considering the social partnership within the framework of the administrative-command system. Employers’ organisations, although not responsible for the existent difficulties, do not do anything for the implementation of the above-mentioned principles, since their activities are largely subject to governmental control.

Workers’ organisations not only cannot use the freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining to the full, but are also persecuted or altogether banned.

4. SCOPE OF SOCIAL DIALOGUE

In the recent years the extent and scope of collective bargaining (at all levels) were decreasing. All provisions of the collective agreements are regulated by the labour code, since the state remains the main employer.

Preservation of public property and the administrative-command system also provided for the preservation of the traditional forms of social support to agricultural workers. Among them certain benefits in running the household, ploughing the smallholdings, providing fodder for private cattle, etc. All these provisions are generally included in the collective agreements. However, the constantly decreasing economic standings of collective and state farms, their growing unprofitability result in the decrease in the volumes of this support. This also applies to the volumes of funds allocated for health and safety in agriculture.
5. WORKERS’ ORGANISATIONS

There is only one trade union of agricultural workers in the country, which is controlled by the Government. The national leadership of this union is appointed by public authorities, elected trade union positions are also being concerted. The Agroindustrial Workers’ Union is part of the Federation of Trade Unions of Belarus (FTUB) controlled by the President, that, being formally strong in membership, in fact carries out either control or distribution functions.

Democratic trade unions are united under the BKDP that is in charge of coordinating the relations between workers’ organisations, particularly in the sphere of collective agreements. The objective of the authorities is to disintegrate the trade union organisations, to eliminate the relations among workers’ organisations at the national level. BKDP contacts and coordination with the agricultural workers’ organisations at the international level are very well developed. The Congress has no relations with the Federation of Trade Unions of Belarus and the Agroindustrial Workers’ Union of the country. Constructive cooperation has been established with the ICFTU and the All-Russian Confederation of Labour. There are no good relations with the trade unions of workers’ of automotive and agricultural engineering and radio electronics. There are no MNEs in the country, as well as no private capital in general.

The financial situation of the unions is deteriorating. Before 2002 the Government was prohibiting direct deductions and check-off of trade union dues. Now this system formally is reestablished, but only those trade unions controlled by the state can use it to the full.

6. OBSTACLES TO FREEDOM OF ASSOCIATION

In violation of ILO Convention #87, Presidential Decree #2 is in force that does not provide for the opportunity of forming and carrying out activities of workers’ organisations without registration. To be registered a legal address is required which the employer can provide or not provide at will. Nevertheless, the Congress of Democratic Trade Unions of Belarus managed to obtain a legal status.

Full-time trade union workers, activists and trade union members faced harassment, intimidation, threats, discrimination, arrests, dismissals (illegal dismissal of the underground employees for the strike, dismissal of an employee for not taking part in a subbotnik – a day of free work). The relevant facts were described in the complaints submitted by the Congress to the ILO. The Committee on Freedom of Association considered them well-founded. It was suggested that the Government of the country should take measures aimed at eliminating the violations of trade union rights. Nothing has been done so far.

There are numerous difficulties and obstacles that emerge when attempted to provide for the freedom of association for certain categories of employees. The trade union has the right to organise seasonal, temporary and migrant workers, as well as those performing casual work. However, due to the lack of the labour market these categories have virtually not been involved in trade unions (individual entrepreneurs have been involved). Organising in rural areas is virtually impossible, keeping in mind the complete dependence of rural workers on the local administration and the
directors of the enterprises, as well as the impossibility to protect rural workers’ rights via trade unions in the existent political regime.

7. COLLECTIVE BARGAINING LEVELS

Two BKDP trade unions (out of five) signed tariff agreements. Agriculture is covered by neither of them. The state controlled Agroindustrial Workers’ Union signs the collective agreements suggested by the management that are of formal nature, do not touch upon the issues relevant for the workers and do not regulate the issue of wages.

In the recent years there has been an increase in the number of individual employment contracts, the terms of these contracts being different.

8. RESPECT FOR AGREEMENTS AND CONVENTIONS

Collective agreements in the country are virtually not respected and are systematically violated. The level of trust in the relations among the social partners is either non-existent, or is extremely low. There have been attempts to terminate duly concluded and signed agreements.

9. COLLECTIVE DISPUTES

Labour conflicts are stable in quantity, settlement procedures work satisfactorily and are generally transparent. It is extremely difficult to follow the procedure of calling a strike stipulated by the Labour Code in force. Strikes are virtually banned and heavily suppressed, therefore they are almost non-existent.

Generally speaking, strikes in the agricultural sector are spontaneous, mainly because of non-payment of wages. The nominal salary grows (today it is about 50 US dollars a month), but the real wages do not increase. As a result, the correlation between the wages and the minimum consumer budget is about 65%. The are no procedures of settling labour disputes for the workers who have no right to strike.

10. SOCIAL DIALOGUE

There are bipartite and tripartite bodies in the country for discussing social and labour issues in the agricultural sector, but their work is ineffective since all decision-making on major social issues is within the competence of President Lukashenko. There is a national wage-fixing mechanism for agricultural workers, and last time the wages were reviewed several months ago.

11. TECHNICAL COOPERATION

There are ILO technical cooperation programmes within the sphere of freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining running in the country, and the trade union is directly related to these ILO programmes. This programme is implemented to the full extent; the content of the programme, as well as trade union participation in planning, implementation and monitoring is considered satisfactory; on the whole the programme is evaluated as “good”.

7
Keeping in mind the special conditions in which the activities of the organisation are being carried out, the Congress believes that such programmes should be of permanent and continual nature.
DIFFICULTIES AND OBSTACLES IN IMPLEMENTATION OF FREEDOM OF ASSOCIATION AND COLLECTIVE BARGAINING IN AGRICULTURE

REPUBLIC OF KAZAKHSTAN

AGROINDUSTRIAL WORKERS’ UNION OF THE REPUBLIC OF KAZAKHSTAN

AND

SEMIPALATINSK REGIONAL ASSOCIATION OF THE ‘ASTYK’ TRADE UNION

1. GENERAL INFORMATION

The agriculture of the Republic of Kazakhstan employs 2268.3 thousand people, 6000 among them – in the Semipalatinsk region. Trade union membership is 127.3 thousand people (52% of the total number are women), in the region – 2700 people (36% are women). Among the trade union leaders 32% are women, in the region – 55%.

Membership dynamics in the region between 2000 and 2002 was decreasing, between 2002 and 2003 is growing, but is stable on the whole.

The trade union represents 201 thousand people, among them 3400 people in the Semipalatinsk region.

Principal export crop is corn. 4,209,000 tons of corn were exported to 37 countries of the world (Russia, Iran, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkey, Ukraine, Afghanistan, etc.) in 2002.

2. LEGISLATIVE CONTEXT

Freedom of association is guaranteed to all workers by the Constitution of the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Law On Trade Unions, the Law On Non-profit Associations; the right to collective bargaining is confirmed by the Law On Collective Agreements, the Law On Social Partnership, the Law On Labour in the Republic of Kazakhstan (Section 3, Article 52).

The Labour Code of the Republic of Kazakhstan covers those employed in agriculture; agricultural workers enjoy the same rights to social security coverage and the same conditions as other workers. However, in reality their working conditions are different from those of other categories of workers.
3. THE ACTORS

The Government supports the freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining (Law On Social Partnership).

Employers’ organisations are largely responsible for the present difficulties and obstacles – they provide seldom support to the freedom of association and the right to organise.

Workers’ organisations enjoy the freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining to a satisfactory degree, in the region – to a limited degree, face harassment and are even banned.

4. SCOPE OF SOCIAL DIALOGUE

In the recent years the extent and scope of collective bargaining (at all levels) has been expanding.

The following subjects are covered in the collective agreements concluded:
- Hours of work, overtime payment, rest periods, compassionate leaves, guarantees for carrying out trade union work, educational leave (equal to the provisions of the Labour Code);
- wages, accident insurance, healthcare, maternity leave, paternity leave, holidays with pay, minimum age, pension, seniority pay, funeral expenses (superior the provisions of the Labour Code).

The picture is somewhat different in the region. Accident insurance, maternity leave, paternity leave, minimum age and pension are equal to the provisions of the Labour Code, educational leave is superior the provisions of the Labour Code: apart from that several additional articles superior the provisions of the Labour Code were introduced: support and extra benefits for the retired; extra holidays, order and size of compensating workers’ incomes related to the increase in prices for goods and services; organisation of funerals, greetings to the those celebrating anniversaries, retirement; idle time.

5. WORKERS’ ORGANISATIONS

There is only one trade union in the country uniting agricultural workers; the relations between the workers’ organisations at the national level are satisfactory. The Federation of Trade Unions of the Republic of Kazakhstan is responsible for coordinating the relations between workers’ organisations. The most intense cooperation can be found over the issues of bargaining and social partnership, and in the region – at the stage of drafting laws of the Republic of Kazakhstan.

The financial situation of trade unions is generally deteriorating, but in the region of Semipalatinsk in the period between 2002 and 2003 there was an improvement of the situation (the financial situation was deteriorating in 2000-2002).

The check-off system and direct deductions of trade union dues exist not in all organisations; there are numerous examples when the employers do not transfer fees.
Coordination with the agricultural workers’ organisations at the international level is satisfactory (non-existent in the region). It was for the first time in many years that the trade union of the Republic of Kazakhstan started cooperating with the Moscow Office of the International Union of Food and Allied Workers (IUF). Moreover, the Agroindustrial Workers’ Union of the Republic of Kazakhstan expresses its desire to become a full member of the IUF.

The Trade Union ‘Astyk’ non-profit association is affiliated to the Agroindustrial Workers’ Union of the Republic of Kazakhstan and is an independent legal entity, all agricultural trade unions of the region being structural units of the union.

6. OBSTACLES TO FREEDOM OF ASSOCIATION

In Kazakhstan trade unions have the right to organise workers without any restrictions (Law On Trade Unions, Article 4, Law On Non-profit Associations, Convention #87 ratified). In 2000 the Law On Social Partnership and the Law On Labour in the Republic of Kazakhstan were adopted.

Both the “Astyk” trade union and the Agroindustrial Workers’ Union of the Republic of Kazakhstan are officially registered legal entities. At the same time full-time trade union workers, activists and trade union members faced harassment, dismissals when carrying out their trade union duties. Many employers do not transfer trade union fees. There is a case registered when a full-time trade union committee chairperson was offered a position with a good salary plus 50% of the wages of the trade union committee chairperson in return for the elimination of the position of the full-time chairperson. However, the trade union committee managed to defend their rights.

Trade unions face numerous difficulties and obstacles trying to provide for the freedom of association for certain categories of workers. The Agroindustrial Workers’ Union of the Republic of Kazakhstan has the right to organise seasonal workers, local small farmers, outgrowers; the regional union – to unite all categories of workers. Both unions tried to organise women, outgrowers and independent owners, and the regional union also tried to involve workers employed by the outgrowers. At the same time attempts to find full-time trade union representatives turn into problems – low wages in the unions are not attractive for qualified staff.

The Charter of the Agroindustrial Workers’ Union of the Republic of Kazakhstan creates obstacles to organising the above-mentioned categories of workers in the union, therefore changes are expected to be made to the Charter. However, the collective agreements of this union stipulate special conditions concerning seasonal workers, corresponding changes and amendments to the Charter of the trade union were introduced at the 4th Extraordinary Congress of the workers of the union; public authorities do not interfere with the activities of the workers’ organisation.

Pressure on the part of the governmental bodies was registered in the region of Semipalatinsk. Local authorities and the city mayor (actually, the former one) in particular openly declared that nobody needs trade unions; the administration of the enterprises ban trade union representatives from entering the company premises. To complete the picture it should be noted that when trade union elections are being held
at the enterprises, the employer often suggests his own candidate, and the employees often vote for this candidate out of fear of losing their jobs.

7. COLLECTIVE BARGAINING LEVELS

At the moment the Agroindustrial Workers’ Union of the Republic of Kazakhstan has 398 collective agreements; the regional union has 20 agreements, but it managed to sign a collective agreement with a corporation that consists of 5 organisations. At the sectoral level an agreement between the Ministry for Agriculture of the Republic of Kazakhstan and the Agroindustrial Workers’ Union was signed in 2002.

Large agricultural companies (main products – corn, cotton) that do not allow trade unions at their enterprises continue to operate in the country.

In the recent years there has been an increase in the number of individual employment contracts. The average term of these contracts is shorter than the duration of collective agreements: individual labour contract (ILC) is concluded for 3-6 months, whereas the collective agreements is signed for 1-3 years. Trade unions suggested that the new law on labour that is being drafted should contain the provision that ILCs should be concluded for at least 1 year. At the moment, according to the Law On Labour that is in force, the employer is not restricted by any specific terms for concluding ILCs, which marks the dependence of the employee on the employer.

8. RESPECT FOR AGREEMENTS AND CONVENTIONS

Agreements are not very well respected, and the level of trust in the relations between the social partners varies from satisfactory to very low. However, there is no possibility to terminate or denounce an agreement that was duly concluded and signed (consequently, there are no cases of termination or denunciation); changes to the agreement are introduced upon consent of the parties.

9. COLLECTIVE DISPUTES

Agricultural workers have the right to strike (the Constitution of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Article 24, Clause 3; Law On Collective Labour Disputes and Strikes). Conflict situations are numerous and emerge all the time, their number is growing, but there are almost no strikes. The procedures of settling labour disputes regulated by the Instruction on the Order of Considering Labour Disputes by Conciliation Commissions are not very effective on the whole, but the Semipalatinsk union treats them as satisfactory.

In the case of a labour dispute an application is submitted to the conciliation commission containing an equal number of representatives of the employer and the employees (trade unions). Conciliation commission has to consider the labour dispute within three days in the presence of the worker who filed the application. As far as the practice goes, workers very seldom resort to an open conflict and even less often to strikes, again out of the fear of losing their jobs. On the one hand, this is unfounded – according to the law, the employer can terminate the ILC only after its expiration, irrespective of the results of the work of the conciliation commission. On the other
hand, there are almost no jobs in the rural areas, therefore many people leave their homes and go to the cities to earn money.

10. SOCIAL DIALOGUE

Multipartite bodies for discussing social and industrial issues in the agricultural sector work satisfactorily. A tripartite agreement was signed between the Government, the trade unions and the employers. In the region an agreement was signed between the mayor, the council of trade unions, board of directors, entrepreneurs’ association, subsidiary of the republican non-profit association National Federation of Farmers of Kazakhstan “Kaz-Agro”.

There country has no national wage-fixing mechanism for the workers of agriculture – only the minimum wages are fixed. Today the share of the population of Kazakhstan with the level of incomes lower than the subsistence level is 40%, in some regions being 50%. The real salary decreased by 5.8 times in the recent decades. At the moment the Law On Wages is being drafted.

11. TECHNICAL COOPERATION

In 1999 ILO Convention #135 was ratified, in 2000 – Convention #87, Conventions #98, #143, #144. At the same time trade unions did not participate in any ILO technical cooperation programmes on freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining.

The state programme on the revival of the rural areas was adopted in the region, 24.5 million tenge were allocated. It is not clear whether this money will reach the rural population. The wages of a rural worker – the lowest in Kazakhstan – makes just 36% of the all-republican indicator. Working conditions are difficult, health and safety arrangements are not implemented, prosecutor’s control over the implementation of the law of the Republic of Kazakhstan is not carried out, women are being discriminated. In spite of the right to associate, no worker will rise against the employer – the chances of loosing the job are very high. Large strong farms are very few.

According to the trade unions, the region and the country on the whole need programmes aimed at employment, financial support, elimination of discrimination against women, young people and migrants; it is necessary to create safe working conditions in agriculture, introduce compulsory social insurance. Agroindustrial Workers’ Union of the Republic of Kazakhstan confirms its desire to become affiliated to the IUF.
DIFFICULTIES AND OBSTACLES IN IMPLEMENTATION OF FREEDOM OF ASSOCIATION AND COLLECTIVE BARGAINING IN AGRICULTURE

KYRGYZSTAN

AGROINDUSTRIAL WORKERS’ UNION

1. GENERAL INFORMATION

The agriculture of the country employs 749,492 people. The principal export crops are: cotton, tobacco, beans, potatoes, seeds of sugar beet and lucerne.

289,968 people are trade union members; the overall membership of the union (together with members in other sectors) is 310,724 people. Between 1991 and 1997 trade union membership decreased by half, and in the recent years this number remains stable at the level of 300-320 thousand people. The share of women among trade union members is 38-42%, among trade union leaders – 15-20%.

2. LEGISLATIVE CONTEXT

The country legislation guarantees the right to the freedom of association for all workers (Labour Code of the Kyrgyz Republic, Law On Trade Unions, Constitution of the Kyrgyz Republic), as well as the right to collective bargaining (Labour Code of the Kyrgyz Republic, Law On Social Partnership).

The Labour Code also covers the workers of the agriculture; at the same time agricultural workers enjoy the same conditions and the same rights to social security coverage as other workers do. It should be noted here that the level of wages in the sector is 1.5-2 times as low as in other sectors of the economy.

3. THE ACTORS

The Government and employers’ organisations support the freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining. Workers’ organisations try to use the freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining to the full.

4. SCOPE OF SOCIAL DIALOGUE

In the recent years the extent and scope of collective bargaining (at all levels) have been slowly expanding.

5. WORKERS’ ORGANISATIONS

There is only one trade union in the country that unites the workers of agriculture. At the same time the number of organisations of agricultural workers increased in the recent years (as a result of the division of 529 collective farms, state farms and other state agricultural enterprises the following were formed: 130 state-owned agricultural
enterprises; 48 communal and 187 joint-stock companies, 494 agricultural cooperatives, 388 other collective enterprises, 246901 small individual farms).

Relations between the workers’ organisations at the national level are mainly satisfactory; however, there are problems in the relations. At the national level the Federation of Trade Unions of Kyrgyzstan is operating; cooperation is going on in all spheres of trade union activities, most intensely over the issues of working conditions and health and safety, payment and work timing, other social guarantees.

Before 1998 the financial situation of trade unions was deteriorating, starting with 1998 there has been a certain improvement; at the moment it can be said that this is a stable tendency. The system of direct deductions of trade union dues and the check-off system are both functioning in the country. However, most rural producers pay trade union dues in kind. The Government does not interfere with this issue, but it is reflected in the General Agreements.

Coordination with the organisations of the workers of agriculture at the international level is satisfactory. The trade union is affiliated to the International Agricultural Unions Association within the framework of the C.I.S. and to the International Union of Food and Allied Workers (IUF). With the participation of the IUF international seminars on the issues of improving health and safety, elimination of child labour in the rural economy of the country are being held and methodological and consultative support is being provided.

These relations in a way helped to run new forms of negotiations with the MNEs.

6. OBSTACLES TO FREEDOM OF ASSOCIATION

The law of the country gives agricultural unions the right to organise workers without restrictions. In the recent years changes and amendments were made to the Law On Health and Safety, new variant of the Labour Code of Kyrgyzstan is being prepared. Comments and suggestions of the trade union on these issues on over 20 articles were published in the Slovo Kyrgyzstana newspaper. The changes mainly concerned trade union rights in the case of dismissals on employer’s initiative, as well as trade union participation in production management.

Carrying out their trade union work, full-time trade unionists, activists and trade union members face certain difficulties. Thus, for instance, at the joint Kyrgyz-Chinese venture Kitlap (the town of Kara-Balta, the Chu region of the Kyrgyz Republic) there are registered cases of harassment against the trade union committee chairperson on the part of the Chinese management, when he demanded from the management to implement their commitments concerning wages, no overtime work and improvement of working conditions. The fact that these issues had been ignored by the administration resulted in collective appeals to superior trade union bodies. Having considered this issue at the Presidium, the Central Committee of the trade union restored the rights of the workers and of the trade union body.

Besides, when an employee is being dismissed from the enterprise, the opinion of the trade union committee is not always considered; as for the implementation of the
collective agreements, the administration does not always consider the rights of the trade union committees.

The Agroindustrial Workers’ Union of Kyrgyzstan is officially registered with the Ministry of Justice of the Kyrgyz Republic and has the right to organise seasonal, temporary, migrant workers (also those performing casual work), outgrowers, self-employed small farmers. The trade union trying to organise women, outgrowers and workers employed by them, small farmers.

Employers’ obstruction to forming trade union organisations creates a practical problem. Public authorities do not openly interfere with the activities of the trade union bodies.

7. COLLECTIVE BARGAINING LEVELS

The trade union signed a tri-partite collective sectoral agreement with the Ministry of Agriculture, Water Resources and Processing Industry of the Kyrgyz Republic and the Associations of Water Consumers and Seed Growing Enterprises for 2001-2003. A collective agreement was signed with the Kitlap enterprises.

In the recent years there has been an increase in the number of individual employment contracts. Such contracts are generally with a longer duration than that of the collective agreements (according to the Labour Code), with the exception of seasonal and temporary workers and workers that have not completed the probation period.

8. RESPECT FOR AGREEMENTS AND CONVENTIONS

Collective agreements are not too well respected in the country. The level of trust in the relations between the social partners is satisfactory. There is a possibility to terminate or denounce a contract duly concluded and signed, but no such facts have been registered.

9. COLLECTIVE DISPUTES

According to Articles 72-85 of the Labour Code of the Kyrgyz Republic, both agricultural workers and workers of other sectors of the economy have the right to strike. Workers who do not have this right should go to court.

There are almost no strikes in the country. Labour conflicts are few, procedures of settling labour conflicts are not too effective and are of a private nature.

10. SOCIAL DIALOGUE

Bodies for discussing social and industrial issues in the agricultural sector are not very efficient. There is no national wage-fixing mechanism in the country for agricultural workers, although wages are annually reviewed, being increased by 10-15% (for those employed in the budget sphere).
11. TECHNICAL COOPERATION

The ILO technical cooperation programme (with the participation of its representatives) on freedom and right to collective bargaining was running in the country in 1998.

The trade union is sure that within the framework of the International Labour Organisation it is necessary to provide assistance in the work aimed at protecting the rights of migrant workers in Kyrgyzstan and Central Asia, as well as at eliminating child labour in the Republic.
DIFFICULTIES AND OBSTACLES IN IMPLEMENTATION OF FREEDOM OF ASSOCIATION AND COLLECTIVE BARGAINING IN AGRICULTURE

REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA

NATIONAL FEDERATION OF FOOD AND AGRICULTURAL WORKERS ‘AGROINDSIND’

1. GENERAL INFORMATION

The agriculture of the country employs 400 thousand people, among them 116226 are trade union members; trade union membership is constantly decreasing. The trade union represents 167 thousand people, among them 47% are women (share of women among the overall number of trade union members is 49.2%; among leaders – 42.6%).

Principal export crops are tobacco, sunflower, wheat, fruit (grapes), and vegetables.

2. LEGISLATIVE CONTEXT

The legislation of the Republic of Moldova guarantees the freedom of association to all workers, the right to collective bargaining. The Labour Code also covers agricultural workers, but the conditions for the agricultural workers are worse than in other sectors; level of pensions and other social benefits of the agricultural workers are lower.

3. THE ACTORS

The Government supports the freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining; the President of the Republic suggested the initiative to create trade union organisations in every working collective; employers’ organisations in the person of the National Federation of Sectoral Patronage supports the freedom of association and the right to organise. In spite of this many employers use every means to impede and block the formation of the unions, including under the threat of dismissals (workers’ organisations are even banned by some individual employers). Therefore they cannot enjoy the freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining to the full; this possibility emerges only due to the interference of superior trade union bodies.

4. SCOPE OF SOCIAL DIALOGUE

In the recent years the extent and scope of collective bargaining (at all levels) have been expanding. The collective agreements concluded contain the following issues:
- hours of work, overtime pay, rest periods, holidays with pay, accident insurance, healthcare, maternity leave, paternity leave, compassionate leave, educational leave, minimum age, seniority pay, pension, funeral expenses (equal to the provisions of the Labour Code);
- wages, leisure and recreation for workers and their children, education for trade union leaders (superior to the provisions of the Labour Code).
5. WORKERS’ ORGANISATIONS

There is only one trade union in the country uniting the workers of agriculture, and the number of organisations of agricultural workers has increased over the recent years.

Relations between the workers organisations at the national level are satisfactory. The Confederation of Trade Unions of the Republic of Moldova is in charge of coordinating the relations between workers’ organisations. The most intense cooperation is going on over the issues of concluding collective agreements at the national and sectoral levels, of adopting normative acts in the socio-economic direction by the Government.

The financial situation of the trade unions in the country is stable. The check-off system is used for transferring trade union dues. The Government, in contrast to the employers, does not interfere with this system of direct deductions.

Coordination with the organisations of agricultural workers at the international level is satisfactory and is mainly carried out via the International Union of Food and Allied Workers (IUF). MNEs in agriculture are non-existent.

6. OBSTACLES TO FREEDOM OF ASSOCIATION

The legislation of the Republic gives the agricultural unions of the country the right to organise workers without limitations.

Agroindsind is officially registered organisation that has the right to organise seasonal and temporary workers, outgrowers, self-employed small farmers, workers performing casual (non-recurrent, subsidiary) work and some other categories.

The trade union is trying to organise women, independent owners, workers with fixed-term contracts, outgrowers and workers employed by them, as well as forestry and social sphere workers and fishermen.

In the process of carrying out their trade union work full-time trade unionists, activists and trade union members faced harassment and dismissals, which proves the existence of numerous difficulties accompanying the attempt to provide the freedom of association for certain categories of workers.

Interference on the part of public authorities was registered when the Solidarity – an alternative confederation of trade unions - was being created that split the General Confederation of Trade Unions of the Republic of Moldova.

7. COLLECTIVE BARGAINING LEVELS

By the present moment the Federation has concluded collective agreements with 368 companies. The United Trade Union Committee works on concluding a multi-company collective agreement.
The number of individual employment contracts remained unchanged over the recent years. Upon request of the trade unions the Constitutional Court reviewed the resolution of the Government of the Republic of Moldova on transferring to the form of individual labour contracts and cancelled it, having considered it unlawful and violating the main human rights to work.

8. RESPECT FOR AGREEMENTS AND CONVENTIONS

Collective agreements are not respected too well in the country; the level of trust in the relations between the social partners is satisfactory. In the recent years there have been no registered cases of terminating or denouncing duly concluded and signed contracts.

9. COLLECTIVE DISPUTES

Agricultural workers of the country enjoy the right to strike; there is a special procedure for settling labour disputes involving workers who do not have this right. Strikes are becoming less and less numerous, but conflict situations occur all the time. Procedures of settling them work satisfactorily.

10. SOCIAL DIALOGUE

Bi- and tripartite bodies for discussing social and industrial issues in the agricultural sector work satisfactorily.

The wage-fixing mechanism is the same for all sectors, and the wages are fixed only for the first qualification category. Category coefficients are established by the Resolution of the Government. The wages are fixed by means of negotiations and stipulated in the collective agreement at the level of the enterprise or in the individual labour contract.

11. TECHNICAL COOPERATION

There have been no ILO technical cooperation programmes on the freedom of associations and the right to collective bargaining in the country over the recent years, but the Federation has some suggestions concerning future cooperation programmes:
– develop and implement a project aimed at forming trade union associations of farmers (research into the issue, organising);
– develop and implement a project aimed at spreading legal knowledge among workers and trade union members;
– develop and implement a programme of researching the key issues trade unions in different countries face and work out possible working strategies and tactics;
– develop and implement information programmes about the structure of trade unions and their activities;
– establish and develop bi- and tripartite social dialogue at all levels (research and practical implementation);
– increase the awareness of trade union members about the ILO standards and their application.
DIFFICULTIES AND OBSTACLES IN IMPLEMENTATION OF FREEDOM OF ASSOCIATION
AND COLLECTIVE BARGAINING IN AGRICULTURE

RUSSIAN FEDERATION

AGROINDUSTRIAL WORKERS’ UNION

12. GENERAL INFORMATION

The agriculture of the country employs about 4 million people. Principal export crops are corn and sunflower.

4,002,320 agricultural workers are trade union members; all in all the trade union unites 4,693,641 members, the membership is decreasing. The share of women among trade union members is 47%, among trade union leaders – 46.6%.

13. LEGISLATIVE CONTEXT

The legislation of the country guarantees the freedom of association to all workers, as well as the right to collective bargaining.

The Labour Code also covers the workers of the agriculture; agricultural workers enjoy the same conditions and same rights to social security coverage as other employees.

14. THE ACTORS

The Government and employers’ organisations support the freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining, although the Government is responsible for the present difficulties. Workers’ organisations can enjoy the freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining to the full.

15. SCOPE OF SOCIAL DIALOGUE

The already concluded collective agreements contain the following issues:
- hours of work, overtime pay, rest periods, holidays with pay, accident insurance, maternity leave, educational leave, minimum age, seniority pay (equal to the provisions of the Labour Code);
- wages, leave for trade union activities, funeral expenses (superior to the provisions of the Labour Code).

16. WORKERS’ ORGANISATIONS

There is only one trade union organising agricultural workers in the country. The number of organisations of agricultural workers remained unchanged over the recent years.
Relations between the workers’ organisations at the national level are well developed, the Federation of Independent Trade Unions of Russia (FNPR) is operating.

The financial situation of trade unions is gradually improving, although remaining difficult. There is the system of direct deductions or the check-off system in the country. The Government does not interfere with this issue.

Coordination with agricultural workers’ organisations at the international level is satisfactorily developed.

17. OBSTACLES TO FREEDOM OF ASSOCIATION

The law of the country gives the agricultural trade unions the right to organise workers without restrictions. Public authorities do not interfere either with the formation of workers’ organisations, or with the development of the Charter of the union, or with the trade union elections.

When carrying out their trade union work full-time trade unionists, activists and trade union members face certain difficulties (there is spoken information about harassments and threats, but there are no official applications).

The Agroindustrial Workers’ Union of the Russian Federation has the right to organise seasonal and temporary workers (also performing non-recurrent work), self-employed small farmers. In its attempts to provide for the freedom of association for certain categories of workers the trade union generally faces numerous difficulties.

18. COLLECTIVE BARGAINING LEVELS

The trade union concluded collective agreements with 75% of the companies; an agreement at the sectoral level has also been concluded.

There has been an increase in the number of individual employment contracts in the recent years.

19. RESPECT FOR AGREEMENTS AND CONVENTIONS

Collective agreements are not being respected too well in the country. The level of trust in the relations between the social partners is satisfactory. There is a potential possibility to terminate or denounce a duly concluded and signed agreement, but there have no been no registered facts like that so far.

20. COLLECTIVE DISPUTES

Agricultural workers enjoy the right to strike. Workers who do not have this right should apply to labour dispute commissions or to regular courts. Strikes are almost non-existent in the countries; lockouts are prohibited.

Labour conflicts are stable in quantity and occur all the time; procedures for settling labour conflicts are fairly effective and transparent.
21. SOCIAL DIALOGUE

Bodies for discussing social and industrial issues in agriculture work satisfactorily. Last time the national wage-fixing mechanism was reviewed in May 2002.

11. TECHNICAL COOPERATION

ILO technical cooperation programmes on the freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining have not been implemented in the country.
1. GENERAL INFORMATION

The agriculture of the country employs 1,150,000 people, among them 258,000 people are trade union members, 50% are women (the overall membership of the trade union including members in other sectors is 785,000 people), the membership is increasing. The trade union is represented by 184 full-time workers and elected representatives (10% among them are women), 8% among trade union leaders are women.

Principal export crop is cotton.

2. LEGISLATIVE CONTEXT

The legislation of the country guarantees the freedom of association for all workers, as well as the right to collective bargaining. The Labour Code also covers the agricultural workers who enjoy the same conditions and rights to social security coverage as other workers.

3. THE ACTORS

The Government and workers’ organisations support the freedom of association and the right to organise and bargaining collectively, therefore workers’ organisations can use these rights to the full.

4. SCOPE OF SOCIAL DIALOGUE

The extent and scope of collective bargaining (at all levels) remained the same in the recent years. The already concluded collective agreements contain the following provisions:
- Hours of work, overtime pay, rest periods, accident insurance, healthcare, maternity leave, guarantees of trade union activities, educational leave, minimum age, pension, funeral expenses (equal to the provisions of the Labour Code);
- wages, holidays with pay, compassionate leave, trade union committees receive 0.15% of the wages fund (superior to the provisions of the Labour Code).
5. WORKERS’ ORGANISATIONS

There is only one trade union in the country uniting agricultural workers; the number of agricultural workers’ organisations has increased over the recent years. The relations between workers’ organisations at the national level are well-developed. The Federation of Trade Unions of Tajikistan is in charge of coordinating the relations between workers’ organisations; the most intense cooperation is going on over the issues related to paying wages.

The financial situation of the unions is improving. Trade union dues are transferred using the direct deduction system; the Government does not interfere with the existing system.

Coordination of the trade union with agricultural workers’ organisations at the international level is satisfactory. Agroindustrial Workers’ Union of Tajikistan is in contact with the International Union of Food and Allied Workers (IUF), contacts with the agricultural unions of the neighbouring countries are being established.

6. OBSTACLES TO THE FREEDOM OF ASSOCIATION

The legislation of the country gives the agricultural unions the right to organise workers.

The Agroindustrial Workers’ Union of Tajikistan is an officially registered organisation that has the right to organise seasonal workers (who enjoy the same rights as regular workers), outgrowers, self-employed small farmers, workers performing casual (non-recurrent, subsidiary) work.

The trade union was trying to organise women, independent owners, outgrowers and workers employed by them. Nevertheless, lack of information is a problem for the trade union when organising these categories.

In the course of carrying out their trade union work full-time trade unionists, activists and trade union members faced only one case of harassment that was settled with the assistance of the Central Committee of the union.

Public authorities do not interfere with the activities of the union.

7. COLLECTIVE BARGAINING LEVELS

At the present moment the trade union does not have collective agreements with any company, but the Central Committee managed to sign a sectoral agreement with seven ministries and committees.

The number of individual employment contracts remained unchanged over the recent years, the duration of such contracts is equal to the duration of collective agreements.
8. RESPECT FOR AGREEMENTS AND CONVENTIONS

Collective agreements are respected well in the country, the level of trust in the relations between the social partners is satisfactory. Over the recent years there have been no cases of terminating or denouncing duly concluded and signed agreements.

9. COLLECTIVE DISPUTES

The agricultural workers of the country enjoy the right to strike. Labour conflicts are not numerous (their number is decreasing); it can be said that there are virtually no strikes and lockouts in the agricultural sector of the country. The procedures for settling conflicts work satisfactorily.

10. SOCIAL DIALOGUE

Bi- and tripartite bodies for discussing social and industrial issues in the agricultural sector work satisfactorily.

The country has a national wage-fixing mechanism; latest adjustments were made in April 2003.

12. TECHNICAL COOPERATION

There have been no ILO technical cooperation programmes on the freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining running in the country in the recent years, but the Trade Union has suggestions to make concerning future cooperation programmes:
- provide more information from the regions
- strengthen the cooperation with the trade unions of other countries.
DIFFICULTIES AND OBSTACLES IN IMPLEMENTATION OF FREEDOM OF ASSOCIATION AND COLLECTIVE BARGAINING IN AGRICULTURE

UKRAINE

AGROINDUSTRIAL WORKERS’ UNION

1. GENERAL INFORMATION

The principal export crop in Ukraine is wheat. The agriculture of Ukraine employs 1 million 755 thousand people, 1 million 533 thousand of them being members of the Agroindustrial Workers’ Union.

Overall membership of the union is 2 million 701 thousand people, 47% among them being women; among trade union leaders 19% are women: at the national level these are deputy chairperson of the union, out of 37 regional trade union organisations 7 are chaired by women, out of 487 district organisations – 24%.

Over the recent 5 years trade union membership has been demonstrating a clear tendency towards reduction. For instance, in 1999 the trade union united 4 million 976 thousand people, by January 1, 2003 its membership decreased by 2 million 275 thousand people. On average the annual reduction of trade union membership is between 500 and 700 thousand people. This process is caused by an objective factor – the reduction of the number of workers employed in the sectors of the agroindustrial complex (1999 – 4 mln 282 thousand, beginning of January 2003 – 2 mln 458 thousand, including for agriculture – 2 mln 794 thousand to 1 mln 755 thousand, respectively).

2. LEGISLATIVE CONTEXT

The legislation of Ukraine guarantees the freedom of association for all workers – ILO Conventions #87 and #11 were ratified in 1957. The right to organise is guaranteed by the Constitution of Ukraine (Article 36) and by the Law On Trade Unions, Their Rights and Guarantees of Activity adopted in 1999.

The legislation of Ukraine also guarantees the right to collective bargaining – ILO Convention #98 is ratified, Law On Collective Agreements (1993), On Enterprise, On Wages were passed; the Code of Labour Laws also covers agricultural workers.

Agricultural workers enjoy the same conditions as other workers. All three types of social insurance (in case of temporary disability, unemployment, occupational accident and illness) cover agricultural workers. At the same time, for peasants (about 600 thousand people) cultivating their own land social insurance is voluntary. Keeping in mind the real economic situation in the agrarian sector, this category of people is in fact socially unprotected.
3. THE ACTORS

Neither the Government, nor employers’ organisations (that are largely responsible for the existing difficulties and obstacles) do anything for the implementation of these principles; workers’ organisations use these rights to a satisfactory degree.

4. SCOPE OF SOCIAL DIALOGUE

The extent and scope of collective bargaining (at all levels) have been expanding in the recent years.

The already concluded collective agreements cover the following subjects:
- hours of work, overtime pay (equal to the provisions of the Labour Code);
- rest periods, holidays with pay, compassionate leave, seniority pay (superior to the provisions of the Labour Code).

5. WORKERS’ ORGANISATIONS

There are several trade unions in the country uniting agricultural workers, their number has increased in the recent years, but the relations between these organisations at the national level are non-existent and at the international level are considered satisfactory (in December 1998 the trade union was affiliated to the IUF, which marked the beginning of the international cooperation for the trade union). The agrarian sector of Ukraine is not represented by multinational enterprises, with the exception of Cargill that has its enterprise in the Donetsk region. Attempts to create a union at this enterprise have so far turned unsuccessful. According to the quick-look data, the Shelton Oil Company invests its capital in agriculture, but as for today the trade union has no contacts with the regional management.

The Agroindustrial Workers’ Union of Ukraine is affiliated to the Federation of Trade Unions of Ukraine that coordinates trade union activities and concludes the General Agreement with the Government of Ukraine and employers’ bodies.

According to Article 42 of the Law of Ukraine On Trade Unions, Their Rights and Guarantees of Activity, there is the system of direct deduction of trade union dues on the basis of written applications of the workers who are trade union members. This norm has existed since the Soviet times. With the adoption of the above-said law this norm obtained the legal status; applications are supported by the provisions of the collective agreement or by a special agreement by which the employer is obliged to perform this financial operation, i.e. to hold back dues from the wages and transfer these funds to the account of the trade union committee. However, the financial situation of the unions is deteriorating.

6. OBSTACLES TO FREEDOM OF ASSOCIATION

The legislation of Ukraine gives the agricultural trade unions the right to organise workers without any restrictions. The adoption of the Law of Ukraine On Trade Unions, Their Rights and Guarantees of Activity did not substantially influence the development and strengthening the trade union movement. There is one registered case of interference with the creation of workers’ organisations on the part of public
authorities (the Crimea, the Krasnogvardeiskoye District Committee of the union); the trade union took legal action on this matter.

In accordance with the above-mentioned law, the Agroindustrial WU underwent the notification official registration with the Ministry of Justice of Ukraine, on the ground of which all organisations of the trade union – from regional to primary – underwent notification registration with the bodies of justice in their location.

In their trade union work full-time trade unionists, activists and trade union members faced harassment (in the hidden form), as well as with numerous difficulties when trying to provide for the freedom of association for certain categories of workers. This is mainly because of the attitude of the employers of Ukraine to the trade unions and a lack of civilised attitude towards workers’ organisation. Nevertheless, the trade union has the right to organise seasonal and temporary workers, self-employed small farmers and outgrowers.

Having tried to organise independent owners, outgrowers and workers employed by them, the trade union faced a number of practical problems (for instance, lack of programmes for women, lack of experience of working with farmers and outgrowers, weak argumentation for joining the union).

7. COLLECTIVE BARGAINING LEVELS

Collective agreements are concluded at the level of the enterprise between the employers and trade union committees. By today collective agreements have been concluded at 80% of the enterprises with the system of the agroindustrial complex, including 76% of agricultural enterprises. National legislation does not provide for the opportunity of concluding collective agreements covering several enterprises – sectoral agreements are concluded for this purpose (the trade union has concluded several agreements like that).

There has been an increase in the number of individual employment contracts in the recent years (more often these are seasonal contracts lasting 6 months). ILO Convention #158 is ratified by Ukraine, national legislation defined the sphere of application of individual employment contracts. Application of contracts is not provided for at the enterprises with foreign investment. However, in violation of the legislation, employers attempt to use the contract form of labour agreement, the duration of these contracts being between 6 months and 5 years. The trade union generally resists its application (there are cases when the trade union managed to protect the system of open-end labour contracts).

There are large agricultural companies operating in Ukraine that do not allow trade unions at their enterprises (Cargill, Shelton).

8. RESPECT FOR AGREEMENTS AND CONVENTIONS

The level of trust in the relations between the social partners is satisfactory, but the collective agreements are not respected too well. At the same time, the legislation of Ukraine does not provide for the procedure of terminating duly concluded and signed collective agreements or sectoral agreements.
9. COLLECTIVE DISPUTES

The agricultural workers of Ukraine enjoy the right to strike that is almost not used by them. For the workers who do not have this right, according to the Law of Ukraine On the Order of Settling Collective Labour Disputes (Conflicts) adopted in March 1998, the procedure of settling labour disputes is performed by the National Mediation and Conciliation Service, as well as by courts of all levels, including the Supreme Court of Ukraine, with the consideration of international norms and practice.

Labour conflicts are not numerous, procedures for settling them work satisfactorily.

10. SOCIAL DIALOGUE

Bipartite bodies for discussing social and industrial issues in the agricultural sector of Ukraine work satisfactorily. The country has a certain legislative mechanism of establishing minimum wages for all workers, irrespective of the sector and form of ownership. Suggestions should be developed by means of collective bargaining between the trade unions and the employers on a bipartite basis. They can be discussed at the session of the National Council for Social Partnership on a tripartite basis.

As of January 1, 2003 a new minimum wage is established – 185 hryvnya (34.7 US dollars) per month.

11. TECHNICAL COOPERATION

At the present moment the ILO technical cooperation project ‘Ukraine: Assisting the Implementation of the Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work’ is being carried out in Ukraine. Within the framework of this project there was a seminar held in December 2002 on the ‘Freedom of Association, the Right to Organise and Bargain Collectively in the Agrarian Sector of Ukraine’ for trade union leaders, representatives of the sectoral management bodies and employers.

In 2002 within the IUF work on the basic course ‘International Labour Standards for Agricultural Workers’ two seminars for trade union activists were held.

Mr V.Chepur, Chairperson of the Agroindustrial Workers’ Union, participated in the working group developing ILO Convention #184 On Occupational Safety in Agriculture. After its adoption a round table for the trade union activists was held with the participation of the deputies of the Supreme Council of Ukraine and the representatives of sectoral management bodies.

Keeping in mind the serious changes that have taken place in the agrarian sector in the recent years (changes in organisational and legal forms of activities, reforms in land relations, development of small-scale agricultural production and farms), the Agroindustrial Workers’ Union of Ukraine desperately needs an ILO project aimed at the implementation of the fundamental trade union principles – the freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining. Agricultural workers who are members of the union have virtually no knowledge about the International Labour Organisation and core international standards.