

Press Release

Florence, 13 May 2017

The Network European Lawyers for Workers (ELW) in coordination with [CGIL](#) and [ELDH](#) organised the

## **European Labour Law Conference**

### **"Social dumping and recent challenges for labour law in Europe: regaining the initiative"**

which took place in Florence 12 and 13 May 2017 with about 100 participants from 10 European states, including 16 speakers – labour lawyers, professors of labour law and trade-unionists.

Speeches and discussion at the conference demonstrated that labour rights and the fundamental right of free collective bargaining in Europe are severely endangered and undermined by austerity politics pursued by European governments and the EU Commission, which are connected closely with the diffusion of new business practices. This conference provided a fertile ground where ideas and initiatives aimed at strengthening workers' rights could be developed.

Specific attention was given to: the role that can (still) be played by collective rights, the delicate issue of posting of workers, also with consideration to the abusive practice of letterbox companies, the function of social clauses in public procurements, and the approach of European Courts (ECJ and ECtHR) towards social and labour rights, as well as examples of good practices of defending labour rights.

The participation of experts from different fields of practice (trade union associations, academia, law practice and international organization) enabled the adoption of a multifaceted and competent response to the problematic aspects of labour law in Europe.

Strategies on future constructive policies to enhance labour rights will be the object of expert discussion. Initiatives in support of workers' rights are necessary, especially in the light of a critical appraisal of EU social policy. The recent political developments for example in UK (Brexit), Hungary, Poland, Netherlands, France and Germany (rise of nationalist right wing parties) make it clear that the EU can only survive if the social rights of the overwhelming majority of European population are strengthened.

#### **Coordinating Committee,**

Jose Joao Abrantes (Lisbon), Jan Buelens (Brussels), Rüdiger Helm (Munich/Cape Town), John Hendy (London), Leila Lahssaini (Brussels), Declan Owens (Brussels), Silvia Rainone (Amsterdam), Sergey Saurin (Moscow), Thomas Schmidt (Düsseldorf), Michael Schubert (Freiburg), Neil Todd (London), Jean Luc Wabant (Lille/Paris)