

UNI-Europa Youth Seminar

This was held from 21 to 23 October 2005 at Athens/Greece.
Programs & Activity that was carried out were



Friday, 21 Oct. 05

Program started with the Registration was we were given a welcome kit, which consisted of UNI Europa brochures & activity list.



Ms. Dimitris Tsoukalas (President of the Greek host union OTOE) did opening with Welcome Speech this was followed by Mr. Philip Jennings speaking about Union movement & need for it in European context. President Of OME- OTE was happy to have all of us on their 50th Anniversary.

Ms. Anna Diamantopoulou (Member of the Greek Parliament & Former EU Commissioner for Employment, Social affairs and Equal Opportunities) she highlighted the conditions of Employment & need for equal opportunities.



Introduction into 1st theme "**Immigration**" by Secretary for Immigration Issues of the Greek General Confederation of Workers he was very emphatic in need to look at Immigration in the changed scenario, went to the extent of saying that Athens would not have completed the buildings for Olympics 2004 if the immigrant labor force was not available.

Introduction Working Groups on "**Immigration**" in this I was part of English speaking Working Groups on "**Immigration**" here I was able to bring out the Indian context of Immigration & why Indians were going out in search for jobs. One interesting point that was observed was that Immigrant workers normally lived in small groups & never would come out so the unions had to go out & reach them, lots of discussion were held how to reach the Immigrant & naturalize in a new country.



Mr. Solomon Adebosin (UNI-Africa Youth President) who could not come to the meeting had sent his greetings & Ms. Alke B presented a reported on work that is happening in Africa.



Working Group Reports on “ **Immigration**” was presented which included how to meet the Immigrants, how to ensure their rights are protected, get their children educated & get them acquainted with local language.

A Video on UNI & work that is being done was present but due to poor audio quality it had to be stopped.



Ms. Efi Bekou (Former General Secretary of the Greek General Secretariat of Equality) Introduced into 2nd theme “ **Equal Pay**” this was a very charged topic with speaker giving her own insight & also bringing out that there were still differences in pay even after forming EU & more than forty years of struggle in this field.

Introduction Working groups on “ **Equal Pay**” in this I was part of English speaking Working Groups on “ **Equal Pay**” here the groups were made which was all male & all female so that they could put forth their views. It came as a shock to the group that in India women were working in high-tech industries such as space agency etc.

Saturday, 22 Oct. 05

Working Group Reports on "**Equal Pay**" was presented here it was brought out that sector wise there would be finding on disparity, a communication channel would be setup & employers would be more aware of contribution.



Mr. Silvio Woollands (UNI-Americas Youth President) presented a fiery report on activity that were being carried out including organizing the workers in BPO/ITES & challenges faced by them.



Ms. Alex Ruedig, of UNI Commerce Introduced us into 3rd theme "**European Social Dialogue**" here the highlight was why EU has to be more social & how unions can be part of it.

Introduction working groups on "**European Social Dialogue**" " in this I was part of English speaking Working groups on "**European Social Dialogue**" my contribution was very limited as they were discussing how different

EU had various standards which was creating confusion.

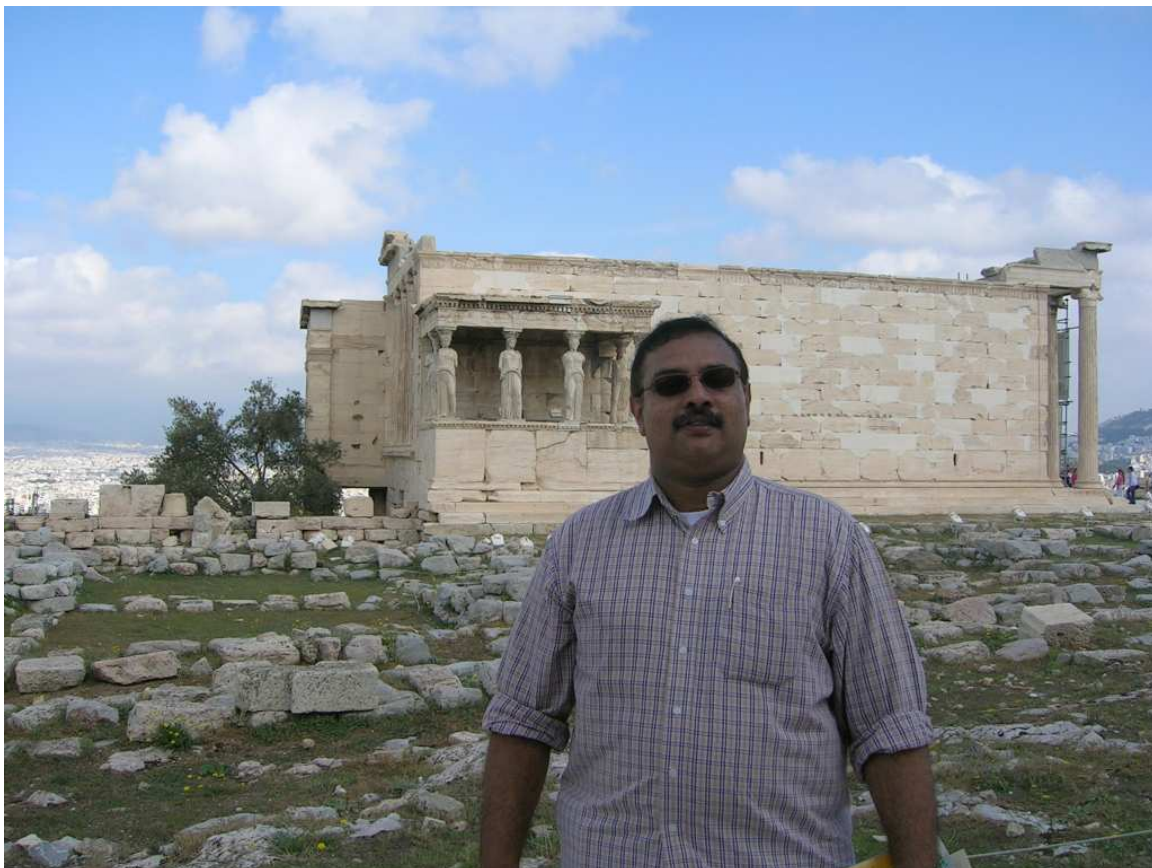
Working Group Reports focused on setting up of regular meetings & ensure that by 2006 Russia meeting they would have done considerable progress.

Ms. Alke B presented a report on activities by the UNI-Europa Youth Steering Group & UNI-Europa Youth Summer school which also has an Internship Program to ensure the young leaders get more aquatinted about unionism.

Conclusions and Closure followed this with OME-OTE had organized a grand Party in their union office.

Sunday, 23 Oct. 05

9.00 Excursion to Athens Acropolis was organized & this was mandatory for all the participants.



First UNI Call Center Conference Athens,

Monday, 24 October 05

This was held from 24 to 25 October 2005 at Athens/Greece. Programs & Activity that was carried out were

Program started with the Registration we were given a welcome kit, which consisted of UNI Call Center Charter & offshoring Charter brochures & activity list.



Ms. Dimitris Tsoukalas (President of the Greek host union OTOE) did opening with Welcome Speech this was followed by Mr. Philip Jennings speaking about historical conference & asked all the participants to look at the possibility of Union following wherever the work was going.



Decent work for Call Center workers Global Call Centre Survey

Rose Batt, Professor at Cornell University (USA) made this presentation this is not yet complete she was very articulate the highlight of this survey was their was Zero percent unionization & the pay was the lowest in the world. Questions & Answers (Q&A) followed this.

UNI Call Centre Charter and the UNI-ETNO Guidelines (Guidelines for Customer Contact Centres in the European Telecommunications Industry) Presentation was done by Alke Boessiger (UNI Campaigns & Organising) and Neil Anderson (UNI Telecom) here they emphasized on need for implementing global agreements that were already signed.

Decent Work for Call Centre Workers in Belgium Presentation by Claude Lambrechts (ACV-CSC, Belgium) brought out the way unions were organized in Belgium here they had a success rate of ninety eight percent.



ILO Standards and Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work - What's in it for Call Centre Workers Presentation by Michihiro Ishibashi (ILO/ ACTRAV) told us that we are not using ILO instruments effectively & need to use it more in order to get collective bargaining power. He also spoke on using Solicomm for networking of Information Technology infrastructure.

Equal opportunities for Call Centre Workers in Brazil Presentation by Sintetel, Brazil had the success story of Brazilian counterparts.

Global Framework Agreements and their importance for UNI's work with multinational companies Presentation by Philip Jennings, UNI General Secretary had all the agreements that were in place, he also went on to say more action is in place & few more will be signed soon. He openly praised the efforts that was in progress at Asia in order to organise the Call Center & BPO workers.

Strategies for organising and recruiting workers in customer service centres **Conclusions and suggestions from the Global Call Centre Survey** with regards to the organizing and recruiting of call centre workers Presentation by Rose Batt, Professor at Cornell University (USA) had some great suggestions also told us need to be more focused & use their survey once this was public.

Unions are good for call centers!! Presentation by Troy Dibble (Finsec, New Zealand) had the efforts that had gone in unionising workers of



Newzeland

The unionisation of "Greenfield" call centres in Tasmania, Australia Presentation by Matt Goodwin (ACTU, Australia) had the knowledge of making inroads in Australia, their experience was simillar to ours in India.

Substantial constructive change: From contract worker to permanent staff Presentation by Michael Bride (CWU, Ireland) here Michel showed how to ensure collective bargaining was used with United Airlines.

The Amicus - HSBC Outsourcing Agreement by Fazia Hussain (Amicus, UK) told us the work that was going on in her sector.



Strategies for organising customer service workers in the insourcing countries Presentation by Karthik Shekhar (UNITES, India) here I spoke about our first few steps & how we would like to network & take it forward this was welcomed by all.

Organising customer service workers under the threat of outsourcing of jobs from Ireland to Poland & India Presentation by Michael Bride (CWU, Ireland) Michael has promised to work with us in future whenever the work is moving from Ireland to India.

Videolink with the CWA (USA) here we got the American perspective of outsourcing.

Dinner with Greek Cultural evening was hosted by OME-OTE

Tuesday, 25 October 05

Health & Safety for customer service professionals Preventing acoustic shocks Presentation by Matt Goodwin (ACTU, Australia) he spoke about ensuring Health & safety measures in Customer Service & how we could use it to get entry into organisations

Health & Safety for call centre workers Presentation by Jukka Moilanen (VvL, Finland) highlighted their effort in Finland.

Training and Certification for customer service professionals Value of skilling to both, employees and employers Presentation by Gitte Lindholm Nielsen (DM, Denmark) suggested how a part of earnings was given to Union to ensure the skills are always upgraded this contributions goes as high as six percent of the employees wages.

Networking Creation and/or expansion of global networks on multinational companies (multinational alliances and virtual committees) Presentation by Neil Anderson (UNI Telecom) Here Neil spoke of being in tune with MNC in their moves.

Creation of global/regional/sub-regional networks of union organisers for exchanges of experiences, ideas and activities among unions and unionists (SoliComm) Presentation by Michihiro Ishibashi (ILO/

ACTRAV) Hiro gave an idea of how to use cutting edge technology of Union to be more effective.

Working Groups on Customer Services Introduction into Working Groups including Working Groups on a UNI Action Plan on Organising Call Centre Workers consisted of how to reach out to new employees, how to ensure attrition is less, how to encourage skill development. Enforce global agreements.

Working Group Report was tabled & accepted & they are

Report of Group Discussions

Group 1

Point 1: Enabling Environment

- To share information/knowledge/ideas obtained in this Conference (members,activists)
- To more effectively use UNI Charters (Call Center / Off-shoring) to promote/ensure compliance in countries (with different legislative situations)
- To promote European works council (different attitude of an employer in different countries)

Point 2: Networking

- Network across the borders
- Website – opportunities to share information, to promote campaigns, to coordinate Activities at different level (international, regional and national) – how can we ensure That all unions (including unions in developing countries) can set up their website – link with the existing UNI project
- Facilities to ensure access to the Internet – to create a level playing field – lobby to the government and the management

Point 3: Tools

- To identify good and bad practices – to highlight bad employers
- To ensure compliance

Point 4: Actions you commit

- To set priorities (reasonable, realistic, achievable priorities)
- To convey the messages to the leadership of the unions and start discussing for

Setting the priorities

- To include various groups (e.g. youth, women) in the discussions so that their specific needs are also incorporated
- To identify a team of officials, who can take initiatives, coordinate the works

Group 2

Point 4: Actions you commit (General)

- To organize the unorganized call center workers
- Educate them
- Communicate with them (different ways – e-mail, leaflet, phone, website, desk-to-desk, home visiting, blood donation, influencing drivers, sporting events, company internet, youth activities, youth volunteers, hot workplaces)
- Professional reps (need for education for unions – the needs for organizing call centers)

Point 4: Actions you commit (Specific)

- Report on problems
- Strategies/ideas
- Good/bad stories
- Use of new technologies
- More regular communications among the affiliates
- International instruments for promotion of FOA
- Understanding the impact of globalization, the structure of supply-chains

Point 4: Actions you commit (UNI)

- More Global framework agreements
- How MNEs are behaving, particularly in developing countries
- Specific policies on training/education, particularly for unions in developing countries,
and to make the information available for them
- As a global union, UNI should take care of all the countries in the world



Group 3 (International Group)

Point 1: Enabling Environment

- More members in Call centers – to understand their visions, needs, etc.
- Methods for communications that young workers are attracted

Point 2: Networking

- List of those countries where call centers are organized (and not organized), and make a database of the countries/organized companies, including the contact information
- SoliComm – to set up forum for discussions on call center issues – to share experiences in call center organizing

Point 3: Tools

- Need for more binding legal instrument (rather than social labeling approach)
- To raise consumer awareness

Point 4: Actions you commit

- To share all the information/knowledge with colleagues back home
- To build alliance with consumer networks
- To promote contact with call center workers and to share information with assistance of UNI

Group 4

Point 1: Enabling Environment

- To use UNI Call Center Charter more effectively to promote standards at call centers / to adopt it to suit the local situations
- To effectively use UNI Call Center Action Month (October) for more publicity on their efforts
- To establish better cooperation with employers of call centers
- To develop a new standard on Call Centers

Point 2: Networking

- SoliComm – to set up mailing list / website for promoting communications with call center workers

Point 3: Tools

- Classification Functions – setting standards for different job classifications (to check over qualification)

Point 4: Actions you commit

- To establish a systematic way of identifying good/bad companies and sharing the information
- To share information about the procedures/operations at different call centers

Conclusions and Closure of the program was followed.

UNITES PROFESSIONALS GAIN From the Conference



Now I have made network with almost all the participants have become aware that India is not a threat to their job (this was the feeling that the European youth & Customer Service professionals had!) they know whom to contact to ensure a level playing ground & we are also concerned about ensuring quality work environment & decent pay.

In short I got to meet about three hundred people in about five days & the kind of network that was built would have never happened in such a short time. The Solidarity achieved is tremendous & hard to quantify.

My Sincere thanks to **Brother Christopher, Brother JSR Prasad & Brother NR Hegde** from UNI in supporting me & nominating me for this event.

Special Thanks to all the UNITES working committee members in general & to President Ms. Almas Nakhudha in particular for all the support.