

«Lavorare Precario Danneggia la Salute e la Qualità
 di Vita»
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PRECARIOUS WORK affects us all

EUROPEAN TRADE UNIONS AND 'PRECARIOUS' WORKERS

Fórum de Outono

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OVERVIEW

- **Introduction**
- **the crisis and globalisation – the roots of ‘atypical’ work**
- **varieties of ‘atypical’ and ‘precarious’ employment**
- **trade unions: challenges and responses**
- **concluding remarks**

GLOBALISATION AND 'THE CRISIS': THE ROOTS OF 'PRECARITY'?

- bargaining decentralisation and increased international competition and capital flight (globalisation)
- neo-liberalism, reduced political influence, crisis and austerity...
- effect of 'the crisis' beginning in 2007 – 8 but now seemingly permanent: increased unemployment, state deficits, the Troika – decline of national decision-making powers

'ATYPICAL' AND 'PRECARIOUS' EMPLOYMENT

- **part-time work on the increase, especially among women**
 - **precarious – not necessarily !**
- **temporary work also increasing (but depends on level of labour protection in each country)**
 - **but what is 'permanent' ?**
- **temporary agency work, especially young workers**
- **subcontracting / outsourcing, result of privatisation**
- **dependent self-employment**
- **posted workers**
- **'informal' or undocumented work, especially BME, migrants**
- **cross-national variation in regulation and deregulation but precarious work increasing in all countries, especially among young, female and minority workers**
- **insecurity: a major cause of stress at work**

LABOUR MARKET INSECURITY, AGE 15-24 (% , 2011)

	Unemployment	Fixed-term contracts
SE	22.9	57.3
DK	14.2	22.1
DE	8.6	56.0
AT	8.3	37.2
NL	7.6	47.7
BE	18.7	34.3
FR	22.9	55.1
IT	29.1	49.9
UK	21.1	13.5
IE	29.4	33.8
ES	45.4	61.4
GR	44.4	30.1



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TRADE UNIONS: CHALLENGES AND RESPONSES 1

- **threat and/or opportunity for unions**
- **almost universally low unionisation rate of these workers – why? workers, unions, or both?**
- **key strategic choice: exclude or include? historical dimension and ideological difference**
- **recruitment, representation, mobilisation**
- **new forms of organisation, incl. separate unions**
- **campaigns and alliances**
- **political pressure for improved regulation and protection**
- **EU dimension**

TRADE UNIONS: CHALLENGES AND RESPONSES 2

- **selective adaptation of 'organizing model' :**
 - NL: Schiphol strike 2009-10
 - DE: ver.di and supermarkets, IG Metall and agency workers
- **redefining interests and constituencies**
 - IT: 'atypical' workers – separate unions
 - FR: CGT and *sans papiers*
- **public campaigning**
 - DE: minimum wage
 - Cooperation between unions, NGOs and youth/student organisations
- **cross-national cooperation**
 - Can we increase international cooperation and networking on precarious work?

CONCLUDING REMARKS

- **complex picture: variations across countries depending on types of unions, role of employers, state and regulation**
- **parallels / interaction of atypical work with age, gender, ethnicity**
- **union responses: resist, control, include**
- **organising workers or regulating work: will, capacity and resource allocation**
- **but some success stories !**

