





Acknowledgments

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UNION OF AUTONOMOUS TRADE UNIONS OF CROATIA

Together we are stronger!

WHO ARE WE?

The Union of Autonomous Trade Unions of Croatia (UATUC) represents 100 000 workers, organised in more than 20 trade unions across the private and public sector.

Our trade unions organise workers and articulate their rights in a number of sectors from manufacturing and the construction industry; through trade, tourism and services: to healthcare, education and utilities.

Established in 1990, UATUC has kept its status as the strongest trade union organisation in Croatia.

We deal with issues which are the shared interest of all our members and we offer support to trade union organising efforts and the work of our affiliated trade unions as well as their local unions established at company level.

In our work and in the way we are financed we are completely independent of employers, state and political parties.

Affiliated to:

European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC)

OUR MISSION

The UATUC protects and improves workers' rights and the overall well-being of its members and all workers through dialogue, activism and advocacy, led by values of justice, equality, solidarity and unity.

100 000 members
22 unions
300+ collective
agreements currently
in place
14 offices

OUR VISION

Work fit for people.



WHY AFFILIATE TO US?

Trade unions affiliate to trade union confederations to be stronger in their struggle for mutual interests.



Affiliation to a trade union confederation enables trade unions to provide **support** and **services** to their members that they would not be able to deliver themselves. It is easier and more efficient to organise legal assistance, trade union education, information and various benefits for members on a joint, cross-union basis.

Being a part of a confederation means also engaging in a **joint struggle** when it comes to issues relevant for members of all trade unions and for workers in general. In strikes, protests and other actions trade unions within a confederation actively support each other. No union on its own can prevent changes to the Labour Act or prevent the increase in the retirement age to 67 years. On many occasions, however, we have proven that, together, affiliated to confederations, we can succeed.

Being part of a confederation is, at the same time, an expression of **fairness** towards all those who take part in trade union activities at the national level which benefit all workers in Croatia.

When our local union joined SOMK, we became part of a much larger trade union family. Soon, a feeling of apathy and helplessness turned into a feeling of power. Being a member of the Union of Autonomous Trade Unions of Croatia has done us a lot of good. Members receive quick and accurate answers to their questions, as well as legal assistance.

By participating in trade union action we have developed new levels of feelings of togetherness and solidarity with workers from other activities. In our town of Zadar, SOMK and UATUC have become symbols of safety in unsafe times. They really care about their members and stand behind them.

Ivana, shop steward in the Trade Union of Education, Media and Culture of Croatia (SOMK)

WHY CHOOSE UATUC?

Joining UATUC means becoming a part of the strongest trade union organisation in Croatia.



Affiliation to UATUC gives **trade unions** a stronger voice at national level and direct influence over the process of the adoption of laws and public policies. Through international trade union organisations, and in partnership with a number of European trade unions, we help to resolve problems which come to our members from outside Croatia.

Shop stewards in our trade unions enjoy daily support from our legal and other experts, providing them with advice and assistance in every aspect of their work.

Members of our trade unions enjoy free legal assistance. Even when they do not need it, it is a guarantee that their rights are protected.

Being a part of UATUC means participating in the fight for a fairer society. Apart from solidarity and togetherness, our fundamental value is **trade union activism**. Whether it is a fight for a better Labour Act or against bogus pension reform, our members take part in our actions and contribute to our joint victories.

At the same time, we are always ready to help any group of workers that wishes to organise and become a part of the Croatian, European and international trade union movement.

us together and helps us be better at what we do. UATUC, affiliated trade unions and our members are important levers in our workers' hands which we need to use in negotiations to improve the position of workers in factories, hotels, shops... The Corona crisis has

proved that we cannot do without trade unions, because trade unions have been the voice of workers. I believe the UATUC will continue to develop and grow because it is built on empathy towards others, help, solidarity, ethics, integrity and togetherness.

Ivan, shop steward in the Trade Union of Tourism and Services of Croatia (STUH)

WHAT DO WE ADVOCATE?

We believe in solidarity and togetherness among workers, but also between trade unions in different trades and professions.

Only when we are united can we be efficient in protecting and improving the rights and interests of our members with regard to their employer. This also allows us to work better at achieving our objectives, which comprise:

- > preserving and advancing trade union rights and freedoms
- protecting and strengthening labour and social rights
- advancing the interests of workers in economic, social and other public policies
- > preserving and further developing the **welfare state and democratic social system**
- respecting and broadening fundamental human rights
- > promoting equal opportunities and combating all forms of discrimination
- > advocating quality development policies, based on sustainable development and environmental protection
- > delivering a healthy work environment which protects **workers' health and safety**
- > backing an education policy based on a **free** and quality education system.







WORK FIT FOR PEOPLE

Work Fit for People is an integrated definition of the various dimensions that make up a quality job. It is a general aim to which we aspire and, at the same time, a specific list of proposals and demands for improving the quality of jobs in Croatia.

Work Fit for People is a guide for action for our shop stewards and trade unions. Further than that, however, it is a call for cooperation to all those who wish to join us and work with us because they believe that work needs to serve people and that workers' rights need to take their rightful place in society. Croatian workers have the right to Work Fit for People, but it will not be achieved of its own accord. Work Fit for People needs to be fought for, and we can only win it together.

Whether we admit it or not, we all perceive job quality through the material terms and conditions of employment, but these are not always decisive. Even with substantial income, I was frequently dissatisfied with my job. The reasons were mostly interpersonal relations in the company. There is no job satisfaction without a healthy working environment. Work in an environment that is unhealthy causes stress and anxiety. No amount of money can replace this and it has an impact on other members of the family when you come home from work carrying dissatisfaction and anxiety with you.

Dario, shop steward in the Autonomous Trade Union of Workers in Utilities and Kindred Activities of Croatia (SSKH)

Work Fit for People brochure



Work Fit for People is work which is well-paid; does not jeopardise physical or mental health; enables learning and career progress; offers security through openended employment contracts and coverage by social security systems; facilitates voice in the workplace, including freedom of organizing and trade union activity; and is carried out in working time whose quantity and manner of organisation leaves sufficient space for private life and its planning. Work can be

considered good only if it meets all these conditions.

Work Fit for People, in all dimensions of the quality of work, takes into account the well-being of workers and the democratic organisation of the world of work and working environment.

Find out more about the concept and the UATUC campaign *Work Fit for People* at https://radpomjeri.eu or in the *Work Fit for People* brochure.



WHAT DO WE DO?

Our most important activity is the fight for better and fairer laws. By providing free legal assistance, we help our members achieve their rights in practice. Our offices around Croatia bring us close to every member, allowing us to support trade union work at company level and educate the most active trade unionists.

The most important fields of our work include:

Better public policies

The Labour Act, Health and Safety Act and pension laws are well-known but are just some of the many laws that have an impact on the conditions under which we work and live. Those laws are frequently amended or new ones adopted.

Whenever we can, we influence the content of these laws, promoting the interests of our members and all the members of their family. We want laws which will truly transform Croatia into the genuine welfare state embodied in the Constitution and which will effectively protect and promote workers' rights and provide social protection to those unable to work.

How do we do that?

Through **dialogue** with the government and other state institutions, where possible; that is, when they wish to discuss issues with us and are ready to consider our arguments – through the Economic and Social Council of the Republic of Croatia; working groups for drafting laws and strategies; and various other bodies in which we participate.

This includes using legal avenues to mount public pressure, where necessary. **Protests and referendum initiatives**, among others, are a part of the democratic process.

> In 2019, together with other trade union confederations, we launched the 67 is too much referendum initiative, which gathered almost 750,000 signatures in fifteen days. In cooperation with citizens, we succeeded in bringing back the entitlement to retirement at the age of 65 and to reduce the penalisation of early retirement.

- After a years-long fight, in 2019 we finally succeeded in abolishing completely the prospect of vocational training without an employment relationship (the so-called SOR). Part of this fight was won together with the Croatian Youth Network, through the *I am Worth More* initiative.
- After years of stagnation, the minimum wage has finally been substantially increased. We have directly contributed to that with our campaign *Croatia needs a pay rise It's time for OUR recovery* (2017-2019). At the same time, our trade unions have concluded hundreds of collective agreements, thus delivering a significant wage increase for tens of thousands of workers in numerous sectors.

Legal assistance to members

We provide free legal assistance to our members, including advice and representation before the courts in **fulfilling and protecting rights pertaining to the employment relationship**. Legal assistance is provided by our lawyers and legal advisors, who are trade unionists, and by trade union professionals.

To members of our trade unions we also **offer advice** in other areas of law, such as in status law (marital and family relations, inheritance proceedings), land registry law, property law, compensation for damages, and concerning misdemeanours and penal law. We provide this form of legal assistance in cooperation with a law firm.

I actively participated in the "67 is too much" referendum initiative through which we wanted to collect as many signatures as possible and force the government to step back from increasing the retirement age. After two weeks of collecting signatures, in bad weather, we succeeded. I regard this action not only as a trade union success and a success of the initiative, but my personal success too. We proved that our engagement makes a difference. This makes me very proud!

Miroslav, shop steward in the Metalworkers' Trade Union of Croatia – Industrial Trade Union (SMH-IS)



of labour disputes

settled by our lawyers are resolved in favour of workers



Local support to shop stewards

We are the only trade union confederation which covers the entire territory of Croatia with as many as **fourteen offices.** This means we are always close to local trade union work and can quickly attend and deliver support to members of all our affiliated trade unions.

Organised workers, and shop stewards who were elected by those workers as their representatives, can always contact our offices and receive **responses**, **advice and practical support** in relation to:

- > organising members locally; i.e. trade union work at company level
- collective bargaining with employers on wages, material rights and other working conditions
- communicating with employers to resolve the problems of union members at local level
- > organising strikes and other trade union actions
- > organising new union members.

With the help of the UATUC, and the assistance of the legal representative in the Osijek office, we resolved the problem of unpaid overtime. Her availability and readiness to solve the problems brought positive results, and we are thankful for that. This kind of



support helps me perform my task as a shop steward because, whenever I need it, I can get good feedback, legal advice or any other support that helps me tackle the problems of our members.

Ksenija, shop steward in the Trade Union of Commerce of Croatia (STH)







Trade union education

UATUC is the only trade union confederation in Croatia with a developed system of education for trade union work. **EDUCA@SSSH** is a system for the training of members of our unions who carry out trade union tasks including as shop stewards, workers' representatives and trade union activists.

Our courses deal with topics of **practical trade union work**, they are based on **active learning methods** and are delivered by **experienced trade unionists** from UATUC and our affiliated unions, with the unique advantage of bringing together trade unionists from different occupations and sectors and allowing them to network together.

By attending our courses, trade unionists acquire knowledge and skills that help them become better and more successful in their trade union work – to be more successful in organising workers in their workplace and in their environment, negotiate better with employers and be more effective at protecting and advancing the rights of members.

Every year, several hundred trade unionists, from all over Croatia, complete one or more of the 17 various courses that we deliver. We are constantly developing new courses and more innovative ways of education, including online education and learning tools.

- > From 2016 up to the end of 2019, we delivered more than 80 courses, with the participation of more than 1,000 trade unionists.
- > In 2020, we launched regular internet education (webinars).

96%

of our participants think that attending EDUCA@SSSH courses has significantly helped them improve their trade union work



www.educa.sssh.hr



Through EDUCA@SSSH I gained great experience and met other trade union colleagues from healthcare and other activities. The knowledge and skills I acquired helped me greatly and made my union work easier in my institution. The approach by the trainers and the concepts on which education is based are excellent. This reflects a modern approach to learning built on the interactive participation of each and every participant on the course. I highly recommend EDUCA@SSSH to anyone dealing with trade union work because it will be of great use in their future work, through access to information and contacts with other colleagues. All this provides a really valuable basis for sound trade union work.

Stjepan, shop steward in the Autonomous Trade Union of Healthcare and Social Welfare of Croatia (SSZSSH)

Information and communication

There is no organising or trade union work without information sharing.

We **inform** our members, shop stewards and trade unions on everything we do, as well as on other issues important to their trade union work. We also want to **hear their voice** and are constantly creating new channels through which they can reach us, via questions, polls and surveys and by organising and facilitating discussions. We need to know what is important to our members in order to be able to articulate the need for it.

We continually invest in the development of new communications channels to use the advantages of new **digital tools**. We are aware that nothing can replace direct interpersonal communication; therefore, we regularly organise **meetings**, **assemblies** and rallies of shop stewards and other forms of gatherings with our trade union activists to be able to have a direct and open discussion about trade union work.

We help our trade unions in their communications with members and the public – in preparing communications materials, issuing press releases, organising media conferences and assisting with other activities.

No other trade union confederation in Croatia can compete with our **knowledge**, **experience and results**. In the area of communications and public campaigns, we take a leading role in all the big, joint trade union demonstrations and actions.

UATUC communications channels:



www.sssh.hr





https://radpomjeri.eu





www.educa.sssh.hr





meetings of shop stewards at **UATUC** offices





leaflets, brochures and handbooks





Together we are stronger smartphone app





Facebook pages: UATUC, **EDUCA-SSSH** and Work Fit for People









UATUC e-newsletter





Together we are stronger app

Together we are stronger is a smartphone app for our members who are active trade unionists: shop stewards; workers' representatives; and other activists in our affiliated unions.

The app delivers rapid information on the activities of the UATUC and trade unions; and allows its users to ask questions and send comments or ideas with regard to trade union

work, either to UATUC or to an affiliated trade union.

It is possible to exchange messages with other trade unionists and to find out their contact details via the app's address book.

The app also provides a concise overview of labour rights, guides on legal assistance and advice on trade union work, as well as a membership form for recruiting new members.

The app is available for Android and iOS.



International cooperation

Without cooperating with workers and trade unions from other countries and parts of the world we cannot deal with the issues raised by capital that knows no borders.

We were the first Croatian trade union confederation to take out international affiliations – with the **European Trade Union Confederation** (ETUC) and **International Trade Union Confederation** (ITUC). Through affiliation to these organisations, we are able to make our contribution to international trade union struggles, but we also receive expert and other specialist assistance regarding our work in Croatia. International activity enables us to have an impact on EU policies, as well as to influence the decisions of the most important international organisations.

Alongside trade unions from Slovenia, Austria, Germany, Italy, UK, France, Norway, Hungary and other countries, we cooperate on specific projects which serve to improve the position of workers and build a fairer and more just society, as well as strengthen trade unionism.

- At international level, UATUC has been the most active and known trade union organisation in south-east Europe and is one of the founders of the Regional Trade Union Council Solidarnost.
- > We actively participate in the work and decisionmaking of the international trade union organisations. We also have our own representative on the European Economic and Social Committee.

Our international activities have prevented the adoption of a number of damaging laws, helped workers in many strikes, protected jobs in companies undergoing restructuring and forced many foreign companies to comply with Croatian laws.

It is extremely important to be a part of the European and international trade union organisations. Since I actively participated in the work of the Health and Safety Committee in my trade union and in the *UATUC, for me it was most* useful to take part in various international education and other activities. This exchange of experience with colleagues from different countries enabled me to acquire knowledge on occupational health and safety, and I could use such practice in my everyday trade union work.

Ljubomir, a member of the UATUC OHS Coordinating Committee from the Trade Union of the Construction Industry of Croatia (SGH)



HOW DO WE TAKE DECISIONS?

UATUC is a democratic organisation. A democratic structure and way of functioning are obligatory also for all the trade unions that affiliate to us.

The most important decisions, including amendments to the rules, the adoption of a programme of work and the election of the UATUC President are taken at the UATUC Congress, which is held every four years. Delegates to the Congress are members of our trade unions and are elected to that responsible position. The election of the President at Congress, as well as all the other elections within the UATUC, are by secret ballot.

The senior decision-making body of the UATUC between congresses is the **Council**. The Council decides, among other things, on organising industrial action, requests for affiliation to the UATUC and

financial issues. The Council is comprised of 40 members from among the ranks of our trade unions, and it meets three to four times a year.

The **UATUC Executive Committee** is in charge of implementing the programme of work agreed at Congress; it meets once a month. The decision on the composition of the Executive Committee is taken by the UATUC Council.

UATUC decision-making bodies are characterised by open **discussion and expression of differences of opinion**. The decisions we take are the result of an attempt to reach agreement given the sometimes different positions of our trade unions, and they often have their source in **discussions initiated at regional shop steward meetings**.

The **UATUC President** represents the UATUC; calls and chairs the meetings of the decision-making bodies; and is responsible for the implementation of decisions. The Statutory Committee ensures that the UATUC rules are respected; while the **Supervisory Board** monitors its financial operations. These two bodies are elected at UATUC Congress.



OUR TRADE UNIONS

UATUC associates 22 trade unions from the private and public sector.

You can seek assistance, advice and information on trade union organising and recruitment by contacting UATUC or our affiliated unions.

Scan the QR code to fill in the membership form:



- Autonomous Trade Union of Workers in Public Utilities and Housing Services of Croatia (SSKH)
 - +385 1 46 55 716 sskh@zg.t-com.hr www.sskh.hr
- 2. Commercial Trade Union of Croatia (STH)

+385 1 46 55 051 sth@sth.hr www.sth.hr

3. Metal Workers' Trade Union of Croatia – Industrial Trade Union (SMH-IS)

+385 1 46 55 018 smh@smh.t-com.hr www.smh.hr

4. Autonomous Trade Union of Workers in Power Industry, Chemistry and Non-metal Industry of Croatia (EKN)

+385 1 46 55 024 ekn-hr@zg.t-com.hr www.ekn.hr

5. Trade Union of Construction Industry of Croatia (SGH)

+385 1 46 55 017 sgh@sgh.hr www.sgh.hr

6. Trade Union of Tourism and Services of Croatia (STUH)

+385 1 46 55 620 stuh@stuh.hr www.stuh.hr

Trade Union of Transport and Communications of Croatia (SPIVH)

+385 1 46 55 641 spivh@hi.t-com.hr www.sindikat-pvh-zagreb.hr

8. Autonomous Trade Union of Croatia (SSH)

+385 1 46 55 019 ssh@sssh.hr

9. "Novine" Trade Union

+385 1 46 12 165 sindikat.novine@sssh.hr

10. Trade Union of Healthcare of Croatia (SZH)

+385 51 658 566 szh@kbc-rijeka.hr www.sindikatzdraystya.hr

11. Trade Union of Engineers and Technicians of Forestry (SITŠ)

+385 31 750 083 www.sits.hr

12. Trade Union of Education, Media and Culture of Croatia (SOMK)

+385 1 46 55 688 somk@somk.hr www.somk.hr

13. Dockers' Trade Union of Croatia (SLRH)

+385 51 496 350 www.slrh.hr

14. Trade Union of Agriculture, Food and Water Inustry of Croatia (SPIV)

spiv@sssh.hr

15. Trade Union of Public Professional Fire Brigades of Croatia roman.gotal@gmail.com

16. Croatian Trade Union of Manufacture and Administrative Workers in Private Sector

+385 40 313 490 / +385 52 213 950

17. Autonomous Trade Union of Healthcare and Social Welfare of Croatia (SSZSSH)

+385 1 46 55 043 sszssh@sszssh.tcloud.hr www.sszssh.hr

18. Seafarers' Trade Union of Croatia (SPH)

+385 51 325 340 info@sph.hr www.sph.hr

19. Trade Union of Police of Croatia (SPH)

+385 1 23 33 138 sph@sindikatpolicije.hr www.sindikatpolicije.hr

20. Spačva Vinkovci Trade Union

ilijabudimir.vk@gmail.com

21. Trade Union of Slavonia and Baranja (SBS)

+385 31 212 955 usbs@os.t-com.hr

22. Retired Persons' Trade Union of Croatia (SUH)

+385 1 46 55 146 suh@zg.t-com.hr www.suh.hr

ASSOCIATED TRADE UNION CONFEDERATION

Association of Workers' Trade Unions of Croatia (URSH)

+385 1 461 77 91 ursh@ursh.hr www.ursh.hr

SECTIONS AND COORDINATING COMMITTEES

Young workers and women are particularly affected by increasing job insecurity, and we have specific structures for both to respond to the need for better union organisation.

The Youth Section is an activist organisation of young union members. Through its activities, it works towards improving the position of young people in trade unions and on the labour market. The activities of the Youth Section may be joined by all who are members of our trade unions up to the age of 36.

The Women's Section gathers women union members who wish to join the fight for gender equality in the world of work and in the union.

The coronavirus pandemic has highlighted the importance of occupational health and safety, which has long been a particular focus of UATUC. Special attention is given to collective bargaining and the rights of workers in a globalised economy.

The Occupational Health and Safety Coordinating Committee gathers together health and safety representatives from various trade unions affiliated to UATUC in order to swap information and prepare joint activities.

The Collective Bargaining Coordinating Committee is comprised of experts from our unions; it deals with the exchange of information and best practice, and provides guidelines and recommendations for collective bargaining.

The Multinational Companies Shop Stewards Coordinating Committee works towards the harmonisation of activities and finds solutions to the common problems faced by workers employed in multinational companies.



 ■ The activism and engagement of all trade union members is extremely important because it is only through our participation in union activities that we can show workers' power and thus influence changes. Union successes depend on members and on how much they are ready to get involved. In the last couple of years I have become active in my trade union and I have already felt more useful because I can make an impact on changes. First I attended various trade union education opportunities to get to know more about union work; I participated in protests and the collection of signatures; and then I became active at the local union level and in the work of the UATUC Youth Section.

Ana, UATUC Youth Section President

THE "TOGETHER WEARE STRONGER" PROJECT

This brochure was produced by the "Together we are Stronger" project, whose aim is to strengthen the joint organisation and work of UATUC and our affiliated trade unions through a number of activities:

- analysis of the tasks of shop stewards and workers' representatives and defining the competences needed for their successful performance
- the development and implementation of new courses within the EDUCA@SSSH education and training system to strengthen the competences of shop stewards and workers' representatives
- training and widening the network of trade union trainers within EDUCA@SSSH
- producing the UATUC Strategic Plan
- training UATUC and affiliated unions' legal experts and public policy specialists
- improving internal communications between members, shop stewards, trade unions and the UATUC through developing a smartphone app and organising a series of meetings around Croatia
- designing and implementing bespoke training courses for teams in our affiliated trade unions and local unions

Together we are stronger

- > organising a series of training events for young trade union activists and the conference 'Young people in the 21st century trade union'
- > producing materials on young workers' rights
- organising a number of short informative workshops and half-day training events for young people on entry to the labour market.

The project was implemented by the Union of Autonomous Trade Unions of Croatia and the project partners were: Trade Union of Commerce of Croatia (STH); Autonomous Trade Union of Energy, Chemistry and Non-Metals Industry of Croatia (EKN); Trade Union of the Construction Industry of Croatia (SGH); Trade Union of Tourism and Services of Croatia (STUH); Metalworkers' Trade Union of Croatia – Industrial Trade Union (SMH-IS); and the Croatian Youth Network (MMH).

"Together we are Stronger" project, with the total value of 1,497,833.92 HRK (198,967 EUR), was cofinanced by the European Union by the European Social Fund. The project was implemented between 4 October 2018 and 3 July 2020.







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You can find the contact details of the UATUC territorial offices at www.sssh.hr





Together we are stronger

