



# Global



UNIÃO GERAL DOS TRABALHADORES

Sindicalismo Cidadão, Ético e Inovador

Union News Bulletin

Year 05 n.º 91 - 92

## UGT against interest rates of credit cards

The **União Geral dos Trabalhadores - UGT**, a trade union central that represents 7 million workers all over Brazil, began a national campaign against the high interest rates of credit cards. This campaign was launched through a protest in Sao Paulo, in front of VISA headquarters, one of the largest credit card companies.

The goal of the campaign is to warn society on the interest rate charged by this finance companies, at the cost of the salaries of workers and motivate the government to step up pressure so that the interest rate is lowered in the credit card companies as well.

Data from the National Association of Finance Executives point out that the credit card companies use average monthly fees on revolving credit of 10,69%, which is equal to 238,3% per year, in some cases reaching stratospheric figures of over 400% per year.

"**UGT** defined that the enemy of this year is the credit card, with abusive interest rates of 600% per year. This problem is reaching juridical departments of trade unions, since workers cannot deal with it anymore", said **the president of the trade union central, Ricardo Patah**.

According to **Patah**, the protest has the goal of stepping up pressure on credit cards companies, so that they lower their interest rates. "We make a protest so that they are more aware and not just extreme bookmakers." The president also said that UGT will distribute 1 million notebooks so that workers plan better their expenses.



*"It is a true theft practiced by credit card companies against the salaries of the medium class - which are the base of the consumption pyramid - , constituted, mainly, of workers and retired people, that end up using their credit cards and are massacred with abusive fees".*

*Ricardo Patah, president of UGT*

Besides, the trade union central intends to publicize a survey to guide workers so that they are able to, based on interest rates that are given, choose the best one for them.

"Workers might transfer a 9% rate from a bank institution and get a new one, that could reach 20%, and they are not even aware of that", warns Canindé Pegado, general secretary of UGT. (*Zero Hora and Agência Brasil*)

## UGT in the fight for Decent Work

Commerce workers make protest in front of Gregory demanding decent work

Denouncing the violation of human rights and in defense of labour, respecting essential conditions that are established under the Consolidation of Labor Laws (CLT), the **Commerce Workers Union**, affiliated with UGT, organized, on June 24, a protest in front of the Gregory store, located in Vila Madalena. The act had the goal of showing society that Gregory is a refined store that charges expensive prices for its products but has, in its line of production, workers in situations that are similar to slavery.

**Josimar Andrade de Assis**, director of the trade union relationships department of the Commerce Workers Union, reminded that, last year, the public Ministry assessed Gregory and other companies and that 10 days ago, means of communication showed that Gregory was once again caught in supervision, committing the same irregularities.



**Rene Cesar Barrientos**, president of the Institute of Culture and Justice of the Latin America, explains that these stores that were accused allege that they outsource the production of their goods and, therefore, they were not aware of that situation. Outsourcers are the ones that explore their workers, that are mostly Bolivians, Paraguayans and Peruvians, forcing them to daily shifts of 12 to 14 hours, practically under a confinement regime, since many of them work, live and eat in the same place.

To Barrientos, it is impossible that companies were not aware of the slavery in their productive chain, "there is no way that companies don't know that workers are being explored, it only takes them observing how many pieces of cloth were produced in a short period of time", he said.

Project of Law Amendment on Slave Work is approved in the Chamber of Deputies

On May 22, the Chamber of Deputies approved, in the second round, the text of the Proposal of Constitutional Amendment on Slave Work. The proposal, that had 360 votes in favor, 29 against and 25 absent votes, has the goal of expropriating rural and urban properties in cases of use of slave work.

According to Ricardo Patah, president of UGT, even though the law project must still go a long way until the president Dilma Rousseff sanction it, this is still a huge step to eradicate this practice. "The expressive approval under the Chamber reflects how much society is aware and fighting to face this crime against the working class, human rights and the entire society", explains the unionist.

Since it's a proposal that changes the Federal Constitution, the PEC will be voted at the Senate and it is necessary that both houses approve the same text. *(Fábio Ramalho UGTPress)*

## Celebration and fight on the Unified May Day

More than a million workers participated in the unified May Day organized by the trade union centrals UGT, Força Sindical, CTB, CGTB and Nova Central –at the Campo de Bagatelle Square, in São Paulo.

The motto "Development with less interest rates, more salaries and jobs", orientate the political speeches that were given during the act, that also includes fight ideals of 2012: reduction of working hours for shift work without a reduction in salaries; education and professional qualification; valorization of minimum wage; reduction of the interest rate; end of the social security factor; equality between men and women and decent work.



Ricardo Patah, president of UGT, talked about the nomination of the new Ministry of Employment. "Currently, there is a Ministry of Employment, which we lacked over the last five months, an interim ministry was representing this position, now we have a nominated ministry, Brizola Neto, and that initiates a strengthening process in the ministry, since the stronger the ministry, the stronger will be the decisions in favor of workers".



The president of UGT also mentioned the message of the president Dilma Rousseff. "Our president released a message on May Day, and considered what UGT has constantly preached since early 2012: the reduction of bank interest rates. And her speech, once again, heads towards the adequate direction, since the higher the interest rates, the less workers earn, because we are leaving misery and most people have the opportunity to purchase white goods, vehicles, and once this class is able to buy such items, they must pay interest rates and a huge part of their salaries is used to pay such rates."

Obviously we are going to defend ideals such as the reduction of working hours for shift work and the end of the social security factor. Our convention of 1950 will be legally ratified to end this tumult and this absurd turnover. And next year, besides these 5 trade union centrals that are here today, CUT will also participate. "Because the more united trade union centrals are, especially concerning macroeconomics policies of those that have a social view, who ends up winning is the working class", ended Ricardo Patah.

The deputy Roberto Santiago emphasized the issue related to the social security factor. "Last week we were able to approve a change in the social security factor of our country. And we are still going to articulate over this issue due to the fact that in recent times workers that contributed all through their lives, that fought and helped building a better country, on the occasion of their retirement, they start going through hard times. The social security factor currently represents a reduction of 30% on the total amount of retirements, therefore, the Federal Legislative body, the unionist bench of the chamber of deputies has been working and will continue to work so that we are able to diminish this security factor", the deputy stated.



**UGT showed its strength and national implantation by celebrating May Day from northern to southern Brazil!**

## Mercosur: Workers Day

*The colleague Valdir Vicente, general secretary of the Southern Cone Trade Union Centrals Coordinator (CCSCS) and secretary of UGT's Department of Public Policies, sent, on the occasion of the celebration of the Workers Day, "a sincere and sympathetic salute of CCSCS to thousands and thousands workers that are represented".*

"Once again we celebrate the international workers day in our countries, a same voice to improve the quality of life to everyone that is the engine of development of our societies and without which sustainability of our countries would be impossible to reach.

Along with our brothers and sisters, we salute the steady and constant fight that we have been doing to maintain the achieved rights and the search of new accomplishments to our working class. We must also strengthen the trade union unity and the international solidarity of workers and their representatives, so that our voices are listened all over the world.

We salute the colleagues, whose dedication and effort have brought a reason to be and to exist to the Southern Cone Trade Union Centrals Coordinator, in search of more and better jobs, social protection and the adequate and necessary right to work, and at a last resort, the happiness of our people and society, the social justice and wealth distribution, always in an environment of cooperation and friendship.

Colleagues, it is necessary to emphasize the need to fight for the permanence of governments that respect voices and opinions of society, and that assure the social dialogue and participation, so that we may never turn into hostages of neoliberal governments, that have oppressed our workers for so long, and continue to oppress in many parts of the world."

## No recovery in sight

### No recovery in sight for labour markets, warns ILO

According the ILO's "[World of Work Report 2012: Better Jobs for a Better Economy](#)", despite signs that economic growth has resumed in some regions, the global employment situation is alarming and shows no sign of recovery in the near future.

Despite signs that economic growth has resumed in some regions, the global employment situation is alarming and shows no sign of recovery in the near future, says the International Labour Organization (ILO).

The ILO's "World of Work Report 2012: Better Jobs for a Better Economy" says that around 50 million jobs are still missing compared to the situation that existed before the crisis. It also warns that a new and more problematic phase of the global jobs crisis is emerging.

First, this is due to the fact that many governments, especially in advanced economies, have shifted their priority to a combination of fiscal austerity and tough labour market reforms. The report says such measures are having devastating consequences on labour markets in general and job creation in particular. They have also mostly failed to reduce fiscal deficits.

The narrow focus of many Eurozone countries on fiscal austerity is deepening the jobs crisis and could even lead to another recession in Europe", said Mr. Raymond Torres, Director of the ILO Institute for International Labour Studies and lead author of the report. (ILO News)

[Web Portal on the World of Work report 2012 "Better Jobs for a Better Economy"](#)

## ILO report on fundamental rights at work

ILO publicized a report on the world situation regarding its fundamental principles and rights at work: union freedom and collective bargaining, forced labour, child work and discrimination.

The report, entitled Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work will be discussed in the International Labour Conference, which will take place in Geneva from May 30 to June 15.

This is the first report on these fundamental principles publicized in the 2008 ILO Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization, and it emphasized the special importance of these rights in order to keep the bond between economic growth and social progress.



"The report analyzes complexities of real life of the labour world, tries and identifies changes and main opportunities and, above all, will determine what exactly ILO should be doing, along with its member states and social interlocutors, to surpass them", stated Guy Ryder, ILO's Executive Director for International Labour Standards and Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work.

The report emphasizes that the respect to fundamental principles and rights at work is widely recognized as a crucial element to obtain a fair and sustainable globalization and as one of the pillars of the ILO Decent Work Program, a previous condition of social justice to everyone.

The report points out that more than half of the world population live in countries that still haven't ratified the ILO Conventions on Freedom of Association and Collective Bargaining, at the same time that nearly 90 per cent of the 184 member states ratified the eight fundamental conventions.

The report emphasizes the specific circumstances of those that live in the informal market - that compose more than 90% of poor workers in many developing economies - and other categories that face concrete difficulties while performing their rights.

"This report has the goal of stimulating the universal commitment regarding the fundamental principles and rights at work for a more efficient action to accomplish it", said Guy Ryder. "More than ever, in times of crisis, when working conditions are subject to pressures in many countries, it is important to keep steady in order to guarantee that labour rights are not disabled and move towards its universal achievement".

The fundamental conventions are: Convention 87 and 98 on freedom of association and collective bargaining; Conventions 29 and 105 on forced labour; number 100 and 111 on discrimination and number 138 and 182 on child labour.

The conference will discuss, besides these conventions, the "General Report" of the Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations that, for the first time, examines the challenges and successes on the implantation of the eight fundamental conventions. (*ILO News*)

## Guy Ryder was elected General Director of ILO



The Administration Council of ILO elected Guy Ryder (in the picture, during a visit to UGT) as the next General Director of the organization, during its 314th meeting. His five year tenure will start in October. The candidacy of Guy Ryder, currently Executive Director for International Labour Standards and Fundamental, had the support of UGT and the international trade union movement.

**Ricardo Patah, national president of UGT, congratulated Ryder wishing him good luck in his management and a great advance in the world fight for decent work.**

## Brizola says that work is the root of wealth at G20

The minister of Labour and Employment, Brizola Neto, emphasized, during a meeting of labour ministries of the G20, that took place on June 18 and 19 in Mexico, that the growth of the Brazilian economy is related to the valorization of work and workers, especially, due to the social protection of more vulnerable populations.

The minister talked about the policies that were adopted by Brazil during the crisis and the view of the president Dilma that recognizes employment as a goal of macroeconomic policies, and that should receive as much attention as inflation, interest rate and exchange.

Brizola Neto also use the opportunity to invite the ministries to the UN Conference Rio+ 20. "in this Conference, we want to learn but we also want to share what we learned, with so much effort: that the growth must be inclusive and must be linked to a process of economic, social and environmental sustainable development."



"A progress that is merged in employment and decent work, with equality of opportunity to the youth, women and African-Americans, disabled people, among others, and that is in the center of the process of creation and implantation of public policies", the minister continued.

G20 includes the largest economies of the world and emerging economies, and the European Union as a group. The group of 19 countries, is composed of Argentina, Australia, Brazil, UK, Canada, China, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Mexico, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, South Korea, Turkey and US, besides the European Union.

By the end of the meeting, ministers approved an action program to create quality and green jobs and jobs for young people.

## UGT approves conclusions of the meeting

UGT and international trade union organizations saluted the program that was approved by labour ministries of G20, but warned leaders of G20 that they should urgently promote a coordinated investment to increase its application.

Sharan Burrow, secretary general of the International Trade Union Confederation, said that ministries of employment should take this message to the G20 meeting in Los Cabos and urge leaders to coordinate the investment in infrastructure, prioritizing green infrastructure and green jobs.

"The commitments to fight against a growing youth unemployment which raises the learning contracts and investments on education are also important to guarantee the inclusion in the job market."

The economic analysis of the Millennium Institute shows how an investment of only 2% of the economy on green economy each year during a 5 year period might create up to 48 million jobs.

"Without a safe income, workers and their families cannot consume; in order to restore security and trust, families that work need quality jobs. It is necessary to fill the difference between the commitment of governments towards employment and the necessary investment", said Sharan Burrow.

The G8 meeting, that took place on the following week, at Camp David, approved a declaration leaving aside austerity measures and measures to contain expenses that were, up until then, focused on investment and employment.

The international trade union movement considered the change auspicious.

### Laerte Teixeira is reelected at TUCA

The election of new directors and the speech of the new president, Hassan Yussuff, ended the II Congress of the Trade Union Confederation of the Americas (TUCA), in Foz do Iguaçu. "We must change our structures, trade unions must be more efficient in terms of representability", said the Canadian Yussuf.

Held in the Brazilian city of Foz do Iguaçu, the congress elected, for the period of 2012-2016, the new board of directors, the board of executives and the fiscal council of this organization. Ratified by the applause of delegates that were present, the continental meeting expressed the challenges of the international trade union movement, such as self reform, sustainable development, decent work and the massive incorporation of women and young people.



The **general secretary, Victor Báez**, was reconducted to his position, as well as the colleague **Laerte Teixeira da Costa** (in the picture), to the position of secretary of Social Policies.

### Lula is a citizen of Sao Paulo



The ex-president **Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva** received, on May 21, the title of Citizen of Sao Paulo and the Anchieta medal through a solemnity in a plenary session at the chamber of deputies of Sao Paulo. The Anchieta medal was also accompanied by the Gratitude diploma of the City of Sao Paulo.

Ricardo Patah, national president of UGT, invited to the act, attended the solemnity and saluted the ex-president Lula as "a president of all Brazilians, a citizen of the world and now a citizen of Sao Paulo".

### Commerce workers of Belo Horizonte are in UGT

The Commerce Workers Union of Belo Horizonte and Metro Region is the most recent affiliated of UGT. The decision of the affiliation took place on May 21, during a disputed assembly, where the consult to establish which trade union should be affiliated was put to vote. A majority of workers opted for the affiliation with UGT.

The president of this institution, the unionist José Alves Paixão, said that the workers option was the most correct, because not only is UGT one of the largest trade union centrals in Brazil but this institution is lined in the defense of an ethical, civic and innovative unionism, practices that are defended by commerce workers of Minas.

Ricardo Patah, national president of UGT, said that "the affiliation of the union presided by the colleague Alves is very important to commerce workers of all over Brazil. That happens due to the fact that we have many commerce unions affiliated with UGT, and the affiliation of colleagues from Minas consolidates this trade union central as the largest representative of commerce workers in Brazil.



"The General Workers Union reaffirms its historic commitments to the working class, while seeking to expand its methods of action, with ethics, courage and the certainty that Brazil can be better and more just. " Ricard Patah – UGT's President ]

UGT Global – the International Newsletter of the UGT

**Press secretary of UGT: Marcos Afonso de Oliveira – MTb 62.224/SP**

**Publisher: Mauro Ramos**