

## Many fights and victories in 2014

**Ricardo Patah, president of UGT**, analyzes the perspectives of workers for this year that starts.

The year of 2014 begins with great perspectives of advances for workers: it will be a year of presidential and senate elections, as well as elections for the House of Representatives. This will also be the year of the Soccer World Cup.

On January 15, UGT had a meeting with other trade union centrals in pro of Brazilian workers. There are several points that were approved during this meetings, especially concerning the fight against the social security factor and the outsourcing of companies core activities, the fight for the reduction of working hours for shift work and the regulation of negotiation with public servants.



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To **Ricardo Patah, president of UGT**, "hosting the Soccer World Cup, with all the international exhibition of Brazil, as well as the elections, will bring conditions to advance in the workers fights for their rights and for better working conditions".

To Patah, "on one hand it is important that the World Cup leaves a legacy of decent work for workers that are involved prior and during the event, in order for that to happen, a higher engagement of the federal government in defense of these workers is necessary".

On the other hand, the situation of deteriorating international accounts of Brazil and the reduction of the industrial production are worrying due to their repercussion in the job market. "It is necessary that our country, just as UGT has foreboded since it was founded, invest more on education to raise its productivity, and that is why we emphasize the fight for using 10% of the GDP in education".

In the end of last year, President Dilma approved the amount of the new minimum wage as set in the Annual Budget Act of 2014. The new minimum will be R\$ 724 by January . "UGT supports the policy of minimum wage increases above inflation, but it considers this present value derisory due to the wealth of the country."

Over the past decade, the minimum wage increased 62% percent. If the minimum wage had not had this real increase it would now be around R\$ 420. But to Dieese (Department of Statistics and Socioeconomic Studies), the ideal value for the minimum wage would be around R\$ 2,200.00, extremely far from its new value.

To Patah, wage increases not only benefit employees but the entire economy. "The new minimum wage, according to DIEESE, will inject R\$ 28.4 billion in the Brazilian economy in 2014 - this is a benefit for all Brazilians."

In 2014, UGT will continue to grow as it has done since its foundation. "We are the Brazilian trade union central that grows the most, and in 2014 it will be no different. We will grow along with the worker's fights in 2014".

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## UGT wants protection of employment

In a meeting with Mantega and Dias, UGT and trade union centrals ask for protection of employment.

Unionists point out the need to use this moment in which there are plenty of job positions to reinforce the Workers Support Fund.

On January 19, Guido Mantega, finance minister, had a meeting in São Paulo with representatives of UGT and of other trade union centrals to "advance in the discussion on the system of protection of employment of the Ministry of Labour and the structuring of measures to be adopted in any crisis", according to Clemente Ganz Lúcio, technical director of the Department of Statistics and Socioeconomic Studies (Dieese).

Besides UGT, the following trade union centrals attended the meeting: Força Sindical, CUT, CGTB and New Central, besides Manoel Dias, Minister of Labour. Ganz Lúcio and Ricardo Patah, president of UGT, were the only ones who talked to the media.

In the meeting, the centrals recalled that in 2013 no progress was achieved with the federal government on what they consider the main themes of their agenda, which are: reduction of working hours for shift work, outsourcing and the end of the security factor. They put in the discussion, as well, the fact that they want to discuss a new policy of increasing the minimum wage.

Ricardo Patah left the meeting before its end and stated that he is in favor of the exemption of workers, as long as there is a counterpart. "In commerce, there is an exemption, but still, companies fire their employees, the turnover is extremely high and the labour market informalization is absurd. Whoever is benefitted by this exemption should maintain employment."

But the wider agenda of the centrals was not the main topic of this meeting. "Today we are dealing with the public employment system", said Ganz Lúcio.

"In the table of discussion, trade union centrals emphasized the importance of the Workers Support Fund being capitalized in a bonanza moment, such as the current moment in the job market, so that it achieves a financing base to support the unemployment insurance in times of crisis."

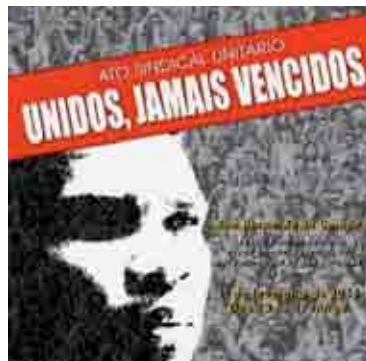
"Nowadays, exemptions, especially for micro and small companies, have affected the income of the Workers Support Fund. This exemption creates positive effects to economy, but it reduces the capital of the fund", according to Ganz Lucio. "What we want is a policy of protection of employment, and the protection is a professional education, a good intermediation system."

At the meeting, the Minister Guido Mantega confirmed that President Dilma Rousseff authorized the Ministry of Labour to invest R\$460 million in the modernization and reorganization of the entire system of intermediation. "The minister also informed that his ministry is increasing the number of inspectors, a longstanding demand of the union movement," said Ganz Lúcio. (*Brasil Atual Network*)

## Union Act: United, we will never be defeated

Act takes place in São Bernardo do Campo on February 01

A unitarian act organized by UGT, other trade union centrals and the Trade Union Collective of support to the workgroup "Dictatorship and Repression to Workers and to the Union Movement" is scheduled for February 01.



The event "United we shall never be defeated" will take place in São Bernardo do Campo, ABC metro region of Sao Paulo, and will recall the 50 year anniversary of the 1964 coup. Workers and unionists who were persecuted by the dictatorship will be homaged with a diploma signed by all trade union centrals.

The Act, which has the support of local authorities, has gathered information, documents and raised testimony in search of recovering the memory and claiming for justice and reparation.

During the 21 years of dictatorship, workers and the trade union movement were targets of the military regime. Unions suffered interventions and workers were harassed, threatened, arrested, tortured and even murdered. In the ABC region, several unions, unionists and workers suffered from repression.

The Act in Sao Bernardo tries to recognize and honor those who fought for freedom, democracy, union autonomy and better wages and working conditions in the metro area of São Paulo. On this day, workers or their families receive a certificate of recognition for their fight, signed by all Trade Unions Centrals.



DIEESE NT n°  
132 - Salário  
Mínimo de R\$  
724

## Young Brazilian unionists in Argentina

Young unionists go to Argentina in an international agreement of cooperation



A delegation of eight young unionists representing Fenascón, an institution affiliated with UGT attended the "1st Exchange Meeting and Signature of the Cooperation Covenant FENASCON (Brazil) and SOM (Argentina)", from October 19 to 24, in Buenos Aires, Argentina.



This partnership establishes an increase of the political action of trade unions in Latin America, common rules and sustainable techniques in the development of activities related to grooming, conservation and cleaning, proposals to improve job contracts, among other issues.

For six days, the integration and fraternization enriched the debates, occasion in which working conditions of the class were evaluated and possibilities of global actions aimed towards the guarantee of workers rights of both countries were discussed. Theme groups also discussed common issues in Latin America, such as sexual harassment at work, health, security, environment among other issues.

The hosts emphasized the contribution of the guests, who "passed on much security in their ideals and contributed with joy so that this work is performed in the future." Undoubtedly, a sharing of ideas and ideals which, together, will have repercussions on common projects and benefits .

"It is amazing how the world suffers from the same problems," argued the delegate Alejandro Ariel Vitagliano, from the province of Buenos Aires, La Plata. He celebrated the meeting with the "fellow Brazilians cleaners, who fight for the same rights as the Argentines".



The following unionists joined the Brazilian delegation that participated in the first phase of work for the formation of the Cooperation Agreement FENASCON - SOM: Amélia Rodrigues (FEACONSPAR - Paraná), Azenira Lazarotto (FEEAC -Rio Grande do Sul), Cassia Renata Souza Aguiar (Siemaco Piracicaba), Zilda Pereira Oliveira Freire (Siemaco ABC), Gabriel Veiga Pussente (SINTHAC - Minas Gerais), Gilberto Cesar de Alencar (SEEACMRJ - Rio de Janeiro), Luis Claudio Vieira Araújo (FETHEMG - Minas Gerais) and John Capana (SIEMACO - SP).

Moacyr Pereira, president of Fenascón, made a point of attending the closing ceremony of the "1st Exchange Meeting and Signature of the Cooperation Covenant FENASCON (Brazil) and SOM (Argentina)", held on October 24 in Argentina. In the picture, Moacyr with Oscar G. Pereira is Rojasm, who presides SOM's Steering Committee.

## Message of UNI Americas

We would like to thank you all for the support that you have provided us during the year that is about to end. We are grateful that you have allowed us to be part of the fight of each one of your trade unions. We thank you for all the informations, ideas and contributions that we have received and that have enable us to better understand each one of the situations that our continent is going through, and this way, act after that.

We thank you for your daily commitment towards the improvement of the lives of American workers; a more decent work; efforts fully recognized.

We thank you for making engines work everyday and allowing workers to have the right to affiliate with a union, with no fear of being persecuted or even murdered. We thank you for defending the right to collective bargaining, as a tool of income distribution. For fighting for inclusion, equality and respect.

Dear colleagues, we would like to salute with you and with workers you represent, as well as their families, a 2014 that will find us more united, more determined, and with more will than ever in the construction of a strong and representative trade union movement.

In solidarity!

UNI Americas



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## Commerce workers run in the 89th Sao Silvestre International Race

On December 31, the team of athletes of the Commerce Workers Union of Sao Paulo, an institution affiliated with UGT, participated in the 89th issue of the Sao Silvestre International Race, in Sao Paulo. The athletes are linked to the Sports Department, headed by the director Cabral, and already attend this event for over five years. According to Cabral, the participation of commerce workers in the most famous street race of Sao Paulo has the goal of stimulating the practice of sports among workers.



For the 89th year, the Sao Silvestre International Race colored the streets of Sao Paulo. This year, nearly 27,500 runners, representing 42 countries, ran across the streets and avenues of Sao Paulo, closing the sports national year. Over the race, thousands of people honored the athletes, which made these sports event of the main street race of Latin America even more beautiful.

## Reducing informal work through social dialogue

Informality at work is one of the main obstructions for the social and economic development of Brazil. Currently, nearly 50% of Brazilian workers face this problem, despite good results of economy.

In order to study, to discuss and create proposals that enable an increase in formalization, DIEESE (Inter Union Department of Statistics and Social-Economic Studies) is developing the project Reduction of Informality through social dialogue.

This initiative is financed by BID (Inter-american Development Bank).

The strategy of this project is stimulating the creation of proposals through social dialogue among workers, businessmen and governments. Among the issues that should be discussed, there are: the access to credit, to technology and to modern methods of management via companies; the role that each one of the social actors have in this issue; the improvement in the dissemination of information on legislation, which could allow many organizations of micro and small business to be legalized; and all the damages that informality caused to the governments, to workers, to economy and to society in general.

In order to support the actions established in this project, DIEESE and BID joined national and international institutions concerned with this issue and created a Technical Committee. This committee is in charge of defining the guidelines, delimiting the reach of this project, creating a database and doing researches.

UGT is part of this committee.



## Overview of the production of the Congress in 2013

In general, the activity of the National Congress in the legislative session in 2013 was below the numbers presented in 2011 and 2012, opportunities in which the Congress produced 15% and 9% more, respectively, approving 220 and 204 propositions in this period.

Quantitatively, this legislative session presented the lowest production of the current legislature. Read the article of Thiago Rego de Queiroz, from DIAP, in full.

*"The União Geral dos Trabalhadores 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*

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