

Jeudi, 8 novembre 2007

Clôture à Hammamet de la conférence annuelle de l'émigration

La conférence annuelle de l'émigration, organisée, du 5 au 7 novembre 2007, par l'Union générale tunisienne du travail (UGTT) en collaboration avec la Fondation Friedrich Ebert et l'Organisation arabe du travail, a clôturé, mercredi, à Hammamet, ses travaux.

Les travaux de la conférence, à laquelle avaient pris part des représentants des syndicats arabes, africains et européens, et des associations de l'émigration, notamment en France, ont été axés sur des questions se rapportant aux "causes et conséquences de l'émigration des pays subsahariens vers l'Europe", aux "politiques maghrébines en matière d'émigration clandestine", à "la politique européenne face à l'immigration africaine" et aux "droits des travailleurs africains dans les pays maghrébins de transit".

Au programme de cette conférence annuelle figuraient aussi des ateliers de travail sur "l'émigration et le développement dans les pays du Sud" et sur "le rôle socio-économique des émigrés en Europe", outre l'organisation d'une table ronde sur "la problématique de l'intégration et les spécificités culturelles des émigrés en Europe".

Dans le rapport final, les participants ont appelé les gouvernements devant participer au Sommet "Europe-Afrique" qui se tiendra, en décembre prochain, à Lisbonne, à réviser leurs politiques en matière d'immigration et à oeuvrer à protéger les droits des immigrants. Ils ont également invité les associations opérant dans le domaine de protection des émigrés à coordonner leurs efforts et à intensifier leur coopération pour arrêter des programmes et des plans d'action à même de contribuer à la garantie des droits des émigrés et à la diffusion de la culture de la tolérance. Les participants ont, par ailleurs, insisté sur la nécessité d'associer toutes les parties concernées par l'émigration, syndicats, associations et parties internationales, en vue de concevoir des approches permettant aux différents gouvernements de traiter la question de l'émigration sans se limiter au volet sécuritaire.



Published on Magharebia (<http://www.magharebia.com>)

http://www.magharebia.com/cocoon/awi/xhtml1/en_GB/features/awi/features/2007/11/13/feature-01

Tunisian seminar calls for defence of immigrants' rights

13/11/2007

African and European labour union activists gathered in Hammamet to pursue greater protection for immigrant workers in Europe.

By Jamel Arfaoui for Magharebia in Tunis –
13/11/07

A three-day international seminar held last week in the Tunisian coastal city of Hammamet called on European and African countries to accelerate their ratification of United Nations and International Labour Organisation agreements on immigrants.

The November 5th-7th event brought together union representatives from the Maghreb, Europe, Mali, Chad, and Nairobi.

"We are trying to secure the continued stay and rights of legal immigrants and protect them from unfair competition from illegal immigrants, who are in turn subjected to outrageous exploitation from the labour market mafia in Europe," said Mohamed Trabelsi, external affairs officer for the Tunisian General Labour Union, which organised the seminar with the support of the Frederick Ebert Foundation and the Arab Labour Organisation.

The closing statement of the seminar called for drawing up a joint plan between workers' unions in Europe and Africa to spread a culture of tolerance and acceptance of the other. It also called for combating illegal immigration as it violates human rights as well as the rights of legal immigrant workers.

Seminar attendees agreed that Maghreb countries are no longer acting as exporters of illegal immigrants, but have instead turned into a transit region. Many illegal immigrants looking for opportunities to cross the sea towards Europe from the Maghreb are often forced to work secretly, subjected to exploitation. They may also become involved in illegal acts to fund their journeys. In view of such a situation,



[Jamel Arfaoui] The seminar brought together union representatives from the Maghreb, Europe, Mali, Chad, and Nairobi.

Trabelsi argued, the Maghreb governments are required to enact laws that respond to these new realities.

The closing statement called on the governments of the Maghreb transit countries to "respect the rights of illegal immigrants who are arrested before attempting to infiltrate into Europe, because they are, after all, human beings."

Ouaddaye Yvette, a union official from Chad, held African governments responsible because "they didn't deal seriously with the problems of development in order to prevent the attempts made by the best of our young men to go into adventures that usually have tragic endings."

The seminar also dealt with the living conditions of immigrants in their host countries. Rising unemployment made it difficult for Europe to provide jobs for immigrant workers, often leading to social exclusion and impressions that they are stealing jobs.

Jean-François Courbe, Euro-Mediterranean affairs representative for France's CGT Union, told Magharebia that not involving immigrants in public life in the host country and dealing with them as if they were coming to steal jobs would lead to "introversion ... and many other problems that are difficult to solve later on."

Mohamed Trabelsi pointed to "cultural factors" affecting the livelihood of immigrants. "Immigrants coming from Arab countries, especially the Maghreb countries, are accused of terrorism until proven innocent. We have reached such a situation after it has become an easy thing for racist movements in Europe to mix between immigration, terrorism and Islam. Through this seminar, we seek to reach solutions that would help us get past the dilemma that is getting increasingly deeper day after day."

In order to involve governments in drawing up a comprehensive and collective solution to the issue of immigration and immigrants, seminar participants decided to refer their conclusions to the annual African European summit next December in Lisbon.