

Research: the perception of trade unions has increased

About four-fifths of population supports the new confederation

On Work Day three trade union confederations announced –as an answer to the changed social and economical situation - they will make a unified organization. In this context Policy Agenda poll, and we want know what the society thinks about this step, and what the general perception of trade unions is.

Nowadays the Hungarian trade union movement is fragmented. People cannot understand their activity because there are lot of persona and interests. The Hungarian trade union movement draws an analogy to a multi-level system. The six trade union confederations have the biggest media because they work in the national reconciliation. So they can stand up for a case easily. But this system causes that these organizations can be hacked against each other by political motivation. So the power of the worker's interest reconciliation decreased.

In this situation there is only one real answer, which was given by the Autonomous Trade Union Confederation (ASZSZ), the National Confederation of Hungarian Trade Unions (MSZOSZ) and the Forum for the Co-operation of Trade Unions (SZEFE). They want to make unification, and this change will result qualitative and quantitative changes. The three confederations announced it on Work Day and if it is achieved it will be the biggest Hungarian

worker's interest reconciliation alliance.

Less than one-third (31%) of the population heard about the notification. This fact shows that, the trade unions have a narrow space in media, because of big, and hysterical political fight.

A 77% of respondents said they agree with the unification of the confederations. The absolute majority (54%) thinks "a planning in unification will make the biggest trade union and the government will be forced to negotiate". However, there are lot of people who are sceptical in this question. A quarter of the respondents think this organization change will not take a new thing in the interest reconciliation because the government selects among trade unions on a political basis. The support of assumption is quite significant, the loyalty to the government will decide who will negotiate with the government about the topics of labour market. Twenty-one percent of respondents, who perhaps have more sympathy with the work of the government, think this unification will not change, because the government treats the trade unions equally, so they must not change this habit.

On the Labour Day the confederations stated: they want to keep a good distance from political parties. The interest reconciliation decreased, because the government and the political parties would like a closer contact with the trade unions than it is actually. This situation causes a permanent headwind and suspicion against the organizations of work's interest reconciliation. As a result consequently an 80% of respondents said, the new confederation will not make an alliance with the parties.

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Policy Agenda asked in their poll several times, who should give more right in order to defend the interests of workers. (The respondents could choose from more answers.) The answers to this question give a very interesting picture about the soul of the society. When the Hungarian Parliament accepted the new Labour Code it was a big conflict between the government and the trade unions. At this time the relative majority of respondents (40%) marked the trade unions, the state bureau got only 31% “vote”. At the end of last November the balance of power tied. The state offices got 33%, and the trade unions 31%. The reason for this was that, in autumn it occurred a consolidation.

The new research brings back the earlier (November of 2011) public mood. The 38% of respondents said, they would like to give more right to the trade unions, and only 34% said the same to the state offices. Works council has a big support (26%), but only 9% said civil organization can work much better for workers, and they have to get more chance in this work.

Perhaps this turning point can explain the next data, which give a picture about the Hungarian wages. The government raised the value of net minimal wage. The data of Central Statistical Office (KSH) show wage growth, but the majority of the society do not feel it. The 26% of respondents feels, they receive lower wages, and 43% think the level of their wage stagnates. A little bit more than a quarter (26%) indicated the wages increased ca. under 5%, and only a very little minority (5%) feels a bigger wages growth.

The representative telephones surveys are made by 1000 answers in 4-8 May 2013.

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