

**THE THIRD REGULAR CONFERENCE OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE
REGIONAL ENERGY TRADE UNIONS NETWORK OF SOUTH EAST EUROPE
(RETUNSEE)**

Belgrade, 19-9-2009

WELCOME SPEECH BY MR MILAN KOVACEVIC

Dear friends and colleagues, esteemed guests,

Welcome to the III regular conference of the General Assembly of the Regional Energy Trade Union Network of South East Europe, welcome to Belgrade and Serbia, welcome here to the crossroads of many cultures and world civilisations!!!

Dear friends and colleagues, unfortunately, we have gathered here today, in very difficult and unrestful time of the global economic crisis, which has stricken all employees, pensioners and citizens in Europe and worldwide. The world crisis was engrafted onto the already existing big and dramatic problems: famine, diseases, poverty, lack of energy and potable water, devastation of environment, local and regional wars, antagonism among big powers, etc.

The history of mankind is, unfortunately, for a good measure a history of crises, wars, conflicts and bloodshed... Over the past two decades we witnessed many wars, a good deal of which were motivated by quest of energy and other wealth on Earth, and now they added the world economic crisis to this.

It is no secret, as we very well know that the world economic crisis was generated by multinational companies and gross capital, world banks and funds, certain financial lobbies, political parties and governments of some rich countries!! They have all been implementing, for over 20 years now, a neoliberal policy and the economy of chaos, destroying the society and state of social justice, destroying the fundamental principles and institutions of humanism, democracy, union and citizen rights!

Neoliberal spontaneous and chaotic economic trends have caused even bigger concentration of wealth in the hands of few countries and people on one hand, and further impoverishment of vast part of mankind (Asia, Africa, Latin America, Europe, etc.), then impoverishment of medium and lower strata all over the world on the other!!

They propagated free market, sound competitions and abolishment of monopolies, and they were pursuing a protectionist policy instead, creating even bigger European and global monopolies, privileged multinational companies that will control regional and world market! They are violating the basic foundations and principles of sound competitions and free market, they have caused even bigger, dramatic social differences and created legion of unemployed, destroying Earth resources and the environment! As evil has no boundaries, the advocates of neoliberal economy have imposed by force their protectionist policy and created privileged companies, so they conquered markets and protected their own interests even with armoured vehicles and missiles!

Employees, citizens, trade unions, the world of labour, have to act with concerted efforts, unified and coordinated in order to protect their fundamental rights and interests, to defend

and preserve the achievements, principles and institutions of social justice, democracy, humanism and trade union movement! Also, they have to advocate and fight for maintenance of peace, friendship and cooperation in the region and worldwide, for settlement of all disputes in amicable way, through dialogue!!!

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In that spirit, I call upon all public company trade unions in South East Europe to get unified and to create a big regional network that will have a vision, a long-term strategy, clear goals and that will represent powerful weapons, an instrument and the battering ram of trade union movement and the world of labour!!!

I appeal to all Conference participants, especially the delegates, to invest additional efforts in future, in order to reinforce our network, to cascade the ideas, positions, the vision and adopted documents of the General Assembly and RETUNSEE to their unions, membership, colleagues and friends!

I believe this conference will make a new impetus and significant contribution to our just union struggle!

MILAN KOVAČEVIĆ