



**industrialAll**

EUROPEAN TRADE UNION

[industrial-all-europe.eu](http://industrial-all-europe.eu)



# **EU-funded project “Strengthening trade unions in the South-East European TCLF sector”**

**Laurent Zibell, Policy Adviser**

**Social Dialogue “Textile & Clothing” Working Group meeting**

**Brussels, 20 April 2018**

# Building union power: new focus on TCLF industries in Southeast Europe

- Very low union density, 2-10%
- Low wages, long working hours
- Few collective agreements
- Big informal sector
- Unions have small resources
- Lack of organizing strategies
- Presence of NGOs



- Time for a change!



*Demonstration  
for living wages  
in Sofia, Bulgaria  
27 October 2017*

# TCLF industries in Southeast Europe: some figures

- Monthly gross minimum wages (euros)
  - Bulgaria 235 – Romania 318 – Albania 177 – Serbia 250
- Average gross wages not much above minimum
  - Bulgaria 324 – Romania 450 – Serbia 380 euros/month
- Percentage of TCLF companies with union presence
  - Bulgaria 4% - Romania 5% - Serbia 3%
- Very weak employers' organisations
- In almost all SEE countries, no sectoral collective agreements
- Big organizing potential – number of TCLF workers
  - Romania 250,000 – Bulgaria 117,000 – Serbia 60,000

# EU Commission approves 2-year industriAll Europe project 2018-19

- Start: mapping of union situation and brand presence
- Special focus on GFA and ACT brands + methods
- National workshops
  - Bulgaria-Romania-Serbia-Croatia-Macedonia-Albania
- Analyse findings and discuss game-changing strategies
- Training on organizing, CBAs, GFAs, ACT methodology
- Interaction with brands, suppliers, **national employers' organisations**, governments, NGOs, Western European unions (IT-DE-ES-SE...)
- National level follow-up
- Final conference in October 2019



# Action – Collaboration – Transformation (ACT) MoU



- Led by sister organization IndustriALL Global Union
- First countries of application: Cambodia, **Turkey**
- 17 brands signed (mainly EU)
- Purpose: link between
  - **living wages** for workers
  - **industry-wide collective bargaining**
  - better **purchasing practices**
  - more **investment** and **quality-based** differentiation
- Project: adapt ACT MoU to South-East European context

# Expected results

- Better unionized workforce
- Bigger and stronger unions, capable of serving members
- Rebuild **collective bargaining** at national level with **national employers' organisations**, increase CBAs at company level
- Public awareness – communications strategy
- Improve image of unions
- Strengthen position towards governments
- Trained union representatives, capable of bargaining and solving problems
- Path towards living wages – build mechanisms

