



Trade Union  
Advisory Committee  
to the OECD  
*Commission  
syndicale consultative  
auprès de l'OCDE*

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## **TUAC CALLS FOR THE OECD TO UPHOLD FUNDAMENTAL VALUES, AS COLOMBIA JOINS THE OECD**

### **PARIS, 30 MAY, 2018**

At the 2018 OECD Ministerial Council Meeting, Colombia joined the OECD alongside Lithuania, without having achieved sufficient and satisfactory progress on-the-ground on respect for human rights as expected and required by the accession process. Trade unions remain gravely concerned about the ongoing situation concerning the rights and safety of workers, trade unions and other human rights defenders in Colombia.

- TUAC will continue to work with the Colombian trade unions and Global Unions partners to hold the Government of Colombia to account in the upcoming post-accession monitoring framework.
- In future accession processes, the OECD should give much greater priority to issues concerning the effective rule of law and the observance of human rights.
- OECD Members share a commitment to the fundamental values of democracy, rule of law and human rights, which serve as the foundation of the like-mindedness of OECD Members. It is imperative that the OECD upholds these fundamental values and defends its tradition of high standards for Membership.

TUAC recognises the work carried out by the OECD over the past five years to evaluate Colombia's progress with regard to the respect of labour rights, including the rights and safety of Colombian trade unionists. This unprecedented process delivered valuable recommendations for Colombia to tackle violence against unionists, reduce informality, strengthen labour law enforcement and support collective bargaining.

Recent evidence shows, however, that Colombia is still failing in its obligations to respect, protect and fulfil human rights, including the protection of trade unionists and the rights of workers to form and join trade unions and to bargain collectively. In 2017, 22 trade unionists were assassinated – an increase from 20 in 2016 – yet protection was reduced or withdrawn. So far in 2018, 5 trade unionists have been assassinated. Impunity for crimes against trade unionists remained constant at 95% in 2017. Informality was 65.9%, rising to 87% in agriculture. Labour law inspection remained weak and improvements in collective bargaining limited.

OECD Members share a commitment to the fundamental values of democracy, rule of law and human rights, which serve as the foundation of the like-mindedness of OECD Members. It is imperative that the OECD upholds these fundamental values and defends its tradition of high standards for Membership. Colombia's Membership of the OECD must be used to deliver policies and practices that deliver sustained improvements on-the-ground for Colombian citizens, including workers and trade unionists.

Colombia will now be subject to a “post-accession monitoring framework” covering several policy areas where improvements are expected by the OECD, including the judiciary and labour rights. This requires the robust implementation of post-accession conditions on trade union safety, labour rights, and the effectiveness of the judicial system in a transparent process that involves the Colombian trade unions as well as TUAC. TUAC will continue to work with the Colombian trade unions, affiliates and the ITUC to hold the Government of Colombia to account.

In future accession processes, the OECD should give much greater priority to issues concerning the effective rule of law and the observance of human rights. This includes the introduction of criteria on workers' rights in the pre-accession evaluation process, and providing the opportunity for information from trade unions, other civil society organisations from prospective countries and TUAC to be taken into account at an early stage.

**To Read More:**

TUAC Submission on Trade Union Rights and Safety in Colombia, 132nd Session of the Employment, Labour and Social Affairs Committee, 8 March 2018

<https://tuac.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/18-03t tu 07-ELSAC TUAC -Sub Fin-1.pdf>

“No Progress on Trade Union Rights and Safety in Colombia? No OECD Accession” say Colombian Trade Unionists: <https://tuac.org/news/no-progress-trade-union-rights-safety-colombia-no-oecd-accession/>

TUAC Briefing: OECD Membership and the Values of the Organisation, 28 May 2018

[https://tuac.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/140PS\\_E\\_8-membership.pdf](https://tuac.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/140PS_E_8-membership.pdf)