

## **EC GUIDANCE ON REGIONAL INDUSTRIAL SECTOR CONFERENCES**

Unite will shortly convene its first round of regional industrial sector conferences, which will in turn elect the first regional industrial sector committees.

Great care must therefore be taken to ensure that these conferences are properly conducted in accordance with the best democratic practice, and that they elect representatives committees in conformity with EC guidance.

Considerable work has been done by senior officers throughout the union to the point where proposals for nearly all the regional industrial sector committees are ready to be put to the EC for approval.

These proposals divide the great majority of committees into clearly-defined constituencies, electing one or more seats onto the committee.

The EC has already resolved that only representatives within a constituency will be able to vote for the committee member(s) in that constituency.

Standing Orders for the conferences agreed by senior officers and tabled for EC consideration have further mandated that nominations for each constituency must be received in advance of the conference.

For further clarity, the EC believes that where a multi-seat constituency on a particular committee represents members from more workplaces than there are seats available (eg a constituency for “smaller workplaces” in a given sector, which might provide four seats for representatives from 20 different companies/workplaces) then no one company/workplace should have more than one representative elected onto the committee.

In such circumstances, the requirements of the Statement of Intent adopted by the EC last May, directing that care should be taken to ensure the fair and proper representation of members from both former sections of Unite in situations in which both former T&G and former Amicus members are involved, should be taken careful note of.

Under the authority of the EC, Regional Secretaries are required to designate themselves or another appropriate officer as responsible for the proper convening and conduct of each regional industrial sector conference (alongside the lay Chair in each case). The EC directs the Joint General Secretaries to make arrangements for the proper briefing of all such officers to ensure that they fully aware of, and accountable for, their responsibilities in ensuring the smooth running of the conferences and the committee elections in particular.

Additionally, urgent work should be undertaken to ensure that the list of eligible representatives is updated and as complete as possible before conferences are convened.

Bearing in mind that this will be the first such conferences and that there may be concerns in some cases, the EC will establish a system for speedily hearing appeals from lay members regarding the conduct of elections, and reserves the power to suspend a regional industrial sector committee from taking office until such appeals are resolved.

Under these circumstances, the EC modifies the guidance issued in January regarding regional industrial sector conferences. As previously indicated, all eligible representatives may attend the conference but there is no requirement to elect voting delegates from amongst their number, since such a procedure could prove bureaucratically cumbersome and divisive amongst our lay representatives who wish to take part in the conference. The EC regards the safeguards outlined elsewhere in this document (including the procedure for appeal) as sufficient guarantee of the representative nature of the elections for the regional industrial sector committees, the issue which the idea of "voting delegates" was designed to address.