



NEWSLETTER

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The past two months have been very busy in social and economic terms at both European and Member State level. Social Europe has been the focus of attention, as demonstrated by the debates that have taken place about the 'European social model'. A range of 'experts' have been wheeled in, apparently with the objective of demonstrating the absence of a common model and hence a preference for dealing with social issues at national rather than European level, if at all. But the fact is that there is increasingly one labour market in the EU, the integration process moving fastest in sectors like construction, catering and some transport services, but also spreading more widely. So, common standards are both necessary and desirable. To pretend they are not is to invite hostility and opposition to the single market and to the EU. The ETUC defends a European social model that is not based on protectionist positions, but favours social cohesion and solidarity, which are more necessary than ever. We believe that the social dimension can act as a lever for economic transformation. To meet the challenges of globalisation, the supporters of neo-liberalism constantly advocate adaptability and individual responsibility, while claiming the European social model to be powerless in the face of 20 million unemployed people in Europe. The European trade union movement is well aware of all the challenges linked to globalisation, and it provides its own response to them, set out during the meeting of its Executive Committee on 19 and 20 October. We are not all equally well equipped to adapt. There is always a need for support, whether it be through lifelong training or active labour market policies. And, more widely, macroeconomic policies must be adapted and made more flexible to help the economy grow. The Tripartite Social Summit on 24 October, in which the ETUC played a part, recognised the importance of social justice in Europe, and the ETUC welcomed this. However, it is more than regrettable that the European Summit at Hampton Court, billed as being an informal social summit, should have been so sketchy on social and employment issues. The most important objective for us is now to mobilise the trade union movement, 'post Hampton Court', to keep the initiative in the important battles for the months ahead, starting with the Services Directive.

John Monks
General Secretary

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EU news

● Memorandum of understanding between the European Union and China in the social field – 05/09/2005

A memorandum of understanding on social matters was signed on 5 September in Beijing, at the 8th Summit between the European Union and the People's Republic of China. This memorandum seeks to set up a 'structured dialogue' between Beijing and Brussels on social affairs, notably employment, the development of human resources, social protection and social dialogue. Participation in the events organised within this consultation might be open to the representatives of the social partners, the trade unions and the employers, even if the Chinese social partners are not yet ready for this. The memorandum is valid for four years and is renewable.



[Joint Statement of the Eighth China-EU Summit](#)



[Text of the memorandum of understanding](#)

● Directive on optical radiations - 08/09/2005

At the plenary session of the European Parliament in Strasbourg from 5 to 8 September, the assembly decided to modify the text of the [directive on optical radiations](#) proposed by the Commission. The ETUC regrets that the majority of members decided to delete the part relating to 'sunlight', a source of skin cancers, and to transfer the responsibility to the Member States. The ETUC considers, moreover, that the transfer of responsibility to the Member States runs counter to the Community logic of harmonisation of the rules on health at work.



[ETUC position after the Parliament vote](#)



[The position of the trade union institute ETUI-REHS](#)

● 'New session' Commission press conference - 21/09/2005

Following an informal meeting of the European Commission on 20 September, President José Manuel Barroso held a [press conference](#) to report on the debate on some key issues.

First, he stressed that the EU needed to find an agreement on the [Financial Perspectives for 2007-2013](#) as quickly as possible, in order to 'manage globalisation'. On the future of the European Constitution, even if it is most unlikely that it will be ratified any time soon, the Commission pressed ahead with the debate on the future of Europe at the [informal Summit organised by the UK Presidency on 27 October](#). The Commission President also addressed the buzzword of the moment: 'better regulation'. The Commission recently announced that it planned to simplify the Community 'acquis' of some 70 directives, some of them relating to the social field. [The ETUC reacted immediately](#) following this announcement, which could undermine Social Europe.

The list of [70 deregulation proposals](#) would include the removal of the aspects concerning workers' exposure to solar radiation ([Directive on optical radiations](#)), which the ETUC deems unacceptable. It has sent a letter to Mr Barroso on this subject.

Finally, the official list came out on 27 September. The directive on temporary workers has been excluded. However, the ETUC remains vigilant about further moves towards deregulation.



[Commission press release on 'better regulation'](#)

[ETUC press release on the Commission's deregulation initiative](#)

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Opening of negotiations with Turkey and Croatia - 04/10/2005

The [General Affairs and External Relations Council](#) secured an agreement on 3 and 4 October for the start of negotiations on Turkey's accession to the European Union. The ETUC, which has had [Turkish trade union organisations among its members](#) since 1985, welcomes the opening of the accession process for Turkey, but insists that Ankara must comply with fundamental rights. According to the ETUC, while the Turkish government's efforts to harmonise the country on the Copenhagen criteria have been significant, they must be stepped up, notably in the field of social, trade union and associative rights.

The Council also ruled on the [start of negotiations for the accession of Croatia](#).

[EU Presidency press release](#)[ETUC press release](#)

Postponement of the vote on the Services directive - 04/10/2005

Philippe Whitehead, president of the [European Parliament's Internal Market Committee](#), postponed the vote on the [Services Directive](#) until 21 November, with the support of a large majority of the members. This has an impact on the deadline for the plenary vote, initially scheduled for the end of October, which is now most likely to be held over until January 2006, under the Austrian EU Presidency.

The postponement of the vote on the [report prepared by Evelyne Gebhardt](#), the German European Socialist Party MEP, was brought about by the very high number of amendments proposed by the political groups in parliamentary committee.

The main areas of disagreement remain the country of origin principle and the decision whether or not to exclude services of general economic interest from the directive.

The ETUC maintains its opposition to this directive and regrets the postponement of this vote.

[European Parliament press release](#)[ETUC position on the 'Services' directive](#)

REACH: the Sacconi report adopted in the Environment Committee - 05/10/2005

On 5 October, the [European Parliament's Environment Committee](#) voted on the [report on REACH by the Italian MEP Guido Sacconi](#) by a large majority. This vote made it possible to strike a fresh balance between the modifications in favour of business, proposed by the Industry and Internal Market Committees, and the demands in terms of health and safety and the environment underpinning the draft regulation.

The ETUC is convinced of the feasibility of the future REACH regulation and is ready to do its utmost to ensure that it forms part of the construction of a Europe that is socially responsible and capable of developing a powerful labour market with plenty of good-quality jobs.

[European Parliament press release](#)[ETUC position on REACH](#)

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ETUC response to the attack by the Commissioner for the Internal Market, Charlie McCreevy, on collective bargaining in Sweden - 06/10/2005

According to some media reports, during a visit to Stockholm, Charlie McCreevy, the European Commissioner for the Internal Market, attacked the Swedish government's support for Swedish collective agreement procedures that establish equal treatment for all workers, regardless of country of origin. Mr McCreevy reportedly said he would be opposing the Swedish government and trade unions in a forthcoming case in the European Court of Justice, claiming that trade union action on behalf of underpaid Latvian building workers on a site in Vaxholm, Sweden, was counter to EU free movement of services. In a letter to Mr Barroso, the ETUC demanded to know whether his remarks reflect the views of the Commission. John Monks declared that *"The obligations on the Commission include the obligation to promote social dialogue, as well as the fundamental social rights laid down in the Charter of Fundamental Rights"*. He added: *"Citizens and workers, in Sweden and the new Member States, have embarked upon the enlargement process north and eastwards in the understanding that this would mean adherence to the values of a social Europe, where economic and social development go hand in hand, and the levelling upwards of living and working conditions, and full respect for national industrial relations systems."*

[Read More](#)

[ETUC press release](#)

Tripartite Social Summit – 24/10/2005

The Tripartite Social Summit was held on 24 October at Lancaster House in London. It brought together top representatives from the current presidency, the two forthcoming presidencies, the Commission and the European social partners. This Tripartite Social Summit is an instrument of the tripartite consultation at European level. It met to prepare for the Informal Social Summit on 27 October at Hampton Court (since 1997, the Council presidency has invited the social partners to meet the troika ahead of the European Councils). The ETUC first welcomed the report by the European Commission, published on 20 October, and the proposal for a 'globalisation adjustment fund' to allow the Member States to adapt to the social shocks arising from major restructuring operations. ETUC General Secretary John Monks insisted that it is essential to build, and to acknowledge, a European dimension in social policy: *"We are not in favour of protectionism, but we want common standards and to know under what jurisdiction workers are operating. We support the Lisbon Strategy and wish to see it revitalised. It is clear that growth and employment must be at the heart of discussions at the Hampton Court summit (Informal Social Summit), but reviving European growth must never take place at the expense of workers' rights."* The real challenge ahead is to reduce the very high unemployment rate in Europe, and give a new boost to growth, without resorting to deregulation that would constitute an attack on labour rights. To conclude the meeting, John Monks reiterated that the Informal Social Summit at Hampton Court must continue along this course, in giving greater weight to social justice. At the same time, it is also important to think about "after Hampton Court". This means launching a programme of work, together with the employers, and with the support of the EU Presidency and the Commission. *"It is essential to have an active work programme with the employers, even if some points of disagreement still exist, for example over the directives on working time, services, and temporary agency workers."*

[Read More](#)

[ETUC press release on the Tripartite Social Summit](#)



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Hampton Court Informal Summit : the ETUC is pressing for a new agenda for social Europe – 27/10/2005

Leaders of the 25 EU Member States met at Hampton Court outside London on 27 October for a much-publicised informal summit designed to focus on the challenges of globalisation and its impact on European social policy.

The meeting brought few concrete conclusions, and in the end dedicated little time to analysing the detail of Europe's social model. According to UK Prime Minister Tony Blair, EU leaders reached broad agreement on a strategy to modernise the European economy, including new measures to boost research, energy cooperation and universities. But the summit failed to reach consensus on the controversial liberalisation of the EU internal market for services.

"The most important question is what happens next," commented ETUC General Secretary John Monks. "The ETUC is pressing for a new agenda for social Europe, covering restructuring, demographic change, migration, equality, learning, and outstanding items such as the Services Directive, as well as coordinated economic policies."

He welcomed the fact that leaders approved the European Commission's report on *European Values in the Globalised World*, including the idea of a globalisation adjustment fund. But regretted the absence of an agreed strategy to boost demand and economic growth.



[UK Presidency and European Commission press conference](#)

[ETUC press release](#)

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ETUC news



'Clever commuting' – European Mobility Week – 16-22/09/2005

For the second year in succession, the ETUC was one of the official partners supporting [European Mobility Week](#). This year, the events staged by the European Commission focused on smart ways of getting to and from work, under the slogan 'Clever commuting'. According to the ETUC, better management of daily commuting would benefit not only the environment, but also the health of travellers and the quality of life for all of us. The unions want to get involved in this area, and are encouraging the framing of company mobility plans that are compulsory, participative and fair.

National laws introducing travel plans into companies, which should be adopted by all EU countries, must provide for the participation of workers' representatives.

In a joint manifesto with environmental and social NGOs entitled '[Investing for a sustainable future](#)', the unions called for more public investment in exploring alternatives to the car, especially public transport.

According to the ETUC, this week of mobilisation may mark the start of a European trade union strategy backing sustainable workplaces.



[ETUC press release for mobility week](#)

[Sustainable development according to the ETUC](#)

[Declaration by the ETUC Steering Committee \(15-16/06/2005\) on the review of the European sustainable development strategy](#)



ETUC Steering Committee – 22/09/2005

The Executive Committee met on 22 September in Brussels. It discussed two important topical issues. The first was the [Services Directive](#), which was to be voted on at the plenary session of the European Parliament (see EU news). The Executive Committee called upon the ETUC to reaffirm its position on this subject and draft a statement to be supported by its members before the final vote.

Another important date was the [informal Social Summit on 27 October](#) announced by the UK Presidency last July. A [Tripartite Social Summit on 24 October](#) preceded this event. In the framework of these high-level meetings, but also in a broader context of discussion around the European social model, the ETUC recalls that it is the only organisation at the European level defending the interests of workers. That being so, the ETUC plans to contribute to the current debates on the future of Europe. The Executive Committee debated a position paper entitled 'Shaping a strong and Social Europe'. It warmly welcomed the text, while at the same time proposing some additions and clarifications. This contribution will be presented to the [next meeting of the Executive Committee](#). The setting up of a [pan-European regional council \(PERC\)](#) was also on the agenda. A debate took place on both the form and the content of this new European body, due to be set up next year, and the place that the ETUC might have in it.

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20 years of European social dialogue - 29/09/2005

Launched at Val Duchesse on 31 January 1985 by the then European Commission President Jacques Delors, the [European social dialogue](#) celebrated its 20th anniversary on 29 September.

In the face of current social problems, the celebration of 'Val Duchesse' opened the way for a reflection on the importance of the social dialogue for the Europe of today and tomorrow. In the existing European context, characterised by the increasing precariousness of work, coupled with economic uncertainty, the ETUC considers that [the deregulation policy set in place by the Commission](#) runs counter to the spirit of social dialogue. According to John Monks, ETUC General Secretary, and Candido Mendez, ETUC President, the trend towards the renationalisation of social policies poses a threat to the process of European integration. The ETUC criticises the attitude of [UNICE](#), which does not want to reach agreement concerning questions of salaries and working times.

The ETUC underlines that the construction of Europe has had a strong social dimension, and it hopes that this will survive in the Commissions of today and tomorrow. Accordingly, it is also calling urgently for the ratification of the [Constitution](#), which enshrines the European social dialogue.



[Speech by John Monks at the celebration of 20 years of social dialogue](#)

[Speech by Candido Mendez at the celebration of 20 years of social dialogue](#)



ETUC contribution to the debate on the future of the policy for economic and social cohesion - 11/10/2005

The policy for economic and social cohesion represents a challenge for the future of Social Europe and for enlargement.

Commenting on the Commission's communication '[Cohesion Policy in Support of Growth and Jobs - Community Strategic Guidelines 2007-2013](#)', the ETUC insists that the Community structural policies should be reinforced in the framework of an enlarged Europe.

According to the ETUC, the principles of cohesion and solidarity, clearly enshrined in the [Treaty](#), constitute two of the most important means of integrating peoples and territories.

[The ETUC reiterates](#) that the future cohesion policy needs to help deliver answers to the major challenges identified at recent European summits. In particular, this policy needs to contribute towards reducing the disparities between regions and promoting a society characterised by full employment, equal opportunities, social insertion, cohesion and thus, more broadly, the European social model. The current reform therefore needs to guarantee important complementarity between the Union's structural policies and the other Community policy areas. The ETUC stresses that the Structural Funds need to be fashioned into genuine key instruments to guarantee the implementation of the Social Policy Agenda 2006-2010.

In the framework of the negotiations on the Financial Perspectives 2007-2013, the ETUC argues that efforts should be stepped up to stimulate growth, employment, competitiveness and the sustainable development of the less developed regions.



[ETUC comments on the Commission communication](#)

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ETUC Executive Committee – 19-20/10/2005

The ETUC Steering Committee met on 19 and 20 October, just ahead of the two major social summits. The Committee adopted the message that the ETUC delivered to European leaders, in a document entitled '[Shaping a strong and Social Europe](#)'. It will now be amended slightly to take in suggestions from Committee members. This document represents a seven-point programme in favour of a European social model. A pamphlet entitled '[More and better jobs for Europe](#)' was approved and will be published shortly. A resolution on the 6th ministerial conference of the WTO in December 2005 was adopted (it will be published at the time of the event), together with a resolution on [higher education with a lifelong learning perspective](#). The Steering Committee also approved a statement on the price of oil. Finally, the ETUC has gained two new members: the European Confederation of Police (EuroCOP) and the Confédération Union sindical Obrera (USO).

(1) Shaping a strong and Social Europe – 20/10/2005

Here is a summary of the statement.

The concept of Social Europe has been central to the development of the European Union. Social rights, social inclusion, social dialogue, and an important role for the social partners have been recognised as key elements of Europe and are among the EU's core values as defined in the constitutional treaty. Economic and social matters go hand in hand, and the balance between the two is part of the social contract entered into as part of the construction of the single market. This is why the ETUC supports the EU.

But now the future of Europe and the European Social Model is in question. The conflict is perceived to be between the choice of a modern Europe with a social market economy and social rights, or a loosely regulated free trade zone. In the meantime, citizens' support for the EU is ebbing, amidst disenchantment over unemployment, delocalisation, insecurity, and a loss of public faith in the ability of government to change people's lives for the better.

The ETUC, with its social partners, wants to play a full part in decisions on the future of Europe, and in particular the role of Social Europe. In advance of the informal EU summit at the end of October, the ETUC urges European leaders, at that meeting, to set out a new vision of Social Europe, and to launch a strategy for listening to people and their concerns.

Europe and globalisation

Europe's common values of solidarity, equality, social justice, internationalism and the belief that social and economic life should be structured to meet human need have much in common with those that define the trade union movement. Nowhere in the world are they enshrined more in governance than in Europe. Globalisation brings challenges that cannot be avoided, but the existence of the EU should make us better able to meet them, and confront other worldwide problems like climate change, environmental damage and international terrorism. This should be at the heart of Europe's 21st century mission.

A sustainable social model

The ETUC emphasises its belief in the existence of a single European social model, rather than 25 disparate national social models in the EU. Its main characteristics are:

- state responsibility for full employment, for providing services of general interest, and for economic and social cohesion;
- fundamental social rights;
- social protection;
- social dialogue;
- social and employment regulation.

At this pivotal moment for the EU, it is vitally important that decision-makers, social partners and civil society should agree a common platform for action to achieve prosperity, equality and solidarity.

In pursuit of these goals, the ETUC supports a new multi-annual sustainable growth and investment programme for more and better jobs in the framework of the Lisbon strategy, identifying full employment as a central objective.

We also propose a new Declaration on European economic renewal, with a Lisbon implementation plan including greater coordination of member states' budget policies and a new role for the European Investment Bank to fund new investments. These economic points are developed in an accompanying ETUC paper on **More and Better Jobs**.

A joint responsibility

The ETUC's role is not simply to defend the status quo. But we are conscious of the need to act with people's consent, to identify issues for change, develop an agenda for action and then reach agreements. Central to this is the role of collective bargaining, which has been an important element in the construction of many European countries and must remain so. At EU level, employers need to be more ready to tackle subjects outside the strict confines of workplace or labour market relations.

The ETUC is proposing a new **agenda for action** by the EU institutions and social partners, focused on:

- 1. Further development of social policy and legislation** – with urgent progress on ending the opt-out in the Working Time Directive, agreeing standard protection for temporary agency workers, revising Directive 94/45 on European Works Councils, and radically revising the Directive on Services in the Internal Market.
- 2. A strong framework to face delocalisation and restructuring** – with support at European level through Structural Funds.
- 3. Addressing demographic challenges in a forward-looking way** – enabling older people to stay in employment.
- 4. Active labour market policies and lifelong learning** for all workers.
- 5. Equality for all** – with action to combat discrimination in the workplace and society.
- 6. A sustainable legal framework for migration and mobility** to remove the uncertainties currently surrounding the standards applying to migrant workers.
- 7. A stronger external dimension.** The European Social Model should not just be for Europe. The EU should confidently promote its social values in all trade and development dealings and by ensuring European companies apply equal standards outside the EU.

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Dossier

The European social dialogue: from its implementation up to the present

As a clear part of the Treaty establishing the European Community (TEC), the [European social dialogue](#) is a fundamental element in the European social model. It encompasses the discussions, negotiations and joint actions undertaken by the European social partners.

At Community level, workers are represented by the [European Trade Union Confederation](#) (ETUC). European employers are represented by three different organisations: the [European Centre of Enterprises with Public Participation and of Enterprises of General Economic Interest](#) (CEEP), created in 1961, and the [Union of the Industrial Federations of the EEC countries](#) (UNICE), founded in 1958; in addition, following a cooperation agreement signed in 1998, the [European Association of Craft Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises](#) (UEAPME) participates in the social dialogue as a member of the UNICE delegation.

The involvement of the social partners at the European level is organised around three different types of activities:

- **tripartite consultation**, which describes the exchanges between the social partners and the European public authorities;
- **consultation of the social partners**, which covers the activities of the consultative committees and the official consultations in the spirit of Article 137 of the Treaty;
- the [European social dialogue](#), which is the name given to the bipartite work of the social partners, whether or not it stems from the official consultations of the Commission based on Articles 137 and 138 of the TEC.

The [European social dialogue](#) has brought many results, notably the adoption of some 60 joint texts by the interprofessional social partners: this process supplements the national social dialogues existing in the majority of the Member States. The European dialogue, which is now structured within the governance of the Union, allows the social partners to make a significant contribution to the definition of European social standards.

The consultations between the social partners began in the mid-60s within the consultative committees, the permanent committee on employment and tripartite conferences on economic and social questions. However, it was in 1985, with the launch of a bipartite social dialogue, promoted by Jacques Delors, the President of the Commission at the time, that the social dialogue at the Community level evolved into a genuine European negotiating forum.

The evolution of the social dialogue process has gone through **three stages**:

I – (1985-1991) In this first period, the bipartite activities resulted in the adoption of resolutions, declarations and joint opinions, without any binding force.

II – (1992-1999) The second phase was opened with the signature, on 31 October 1991, of an agreement between the social partners, which was subsequently integrated into the protocol on social policy and annexed to the Maastricht Treaty in 1991.

Thanks to the Maastricht Treaty, the agreements negotiated by the European social partners could, if the partners so wished, be given binding legal effect via a decision by the Council.

In 1997, the 1991 agreement was incorporated into the [Amsterdam Treaty \(Articles 138 and 139 of the TEC\)](#). In that context, the European social dialogue led to the implementation of three framework agreements (on [parental leave](#) in 1995, on [part-time work](#) in 1997, and on [fixed-term contracts](#) in 1999) via Council directives.

III – (1999-2005) The third stage began in December 2001, when the European social partners presented a [joint contribution](#) to the [Laeken European Council](#). In accordance with the 1991 agreement ([Art. 139 par II TEC](#)), this last phase has been characterised by greater independence and autonomy for the social dialogue: at the Summit in Genval on 22

November 2002, the social partners adopted their [first joint multi-annual work programme for the period 2003-2005](#).

In this context, the social partners concluded the first agreements in a new generation of 'autonomous' initiatives, whose implementation at the national level was entrusted to the social partners themselves. This fresh approach allowed the conclusion of two important framework agreements on [teleworking](#) (2002) and on [work-related stress](#) (2004), [a framework of actions for the development of lifelong skills and qualifications](#) (2002) [and a framework of action on equality between men and women](#) (2005).

Drawing on [Article 139 TEC](#), the European social dialogue process makes provision for consultation with the social partners at Community level across the entire raft of subjects relating to employment and social affairs, listed in [Art. 137 TEC](#).

This process is organised via two compulsory phases. First, the Commission consults the social partners on the possible direction of a Community action; then it consults them on the content of that action. If, after each of these phases, the partners fail to reach agreement on the opening of bipartite negotiations, but the Commission still believes that the said action is desirable, it presents a proposal.

Since 1997, the Council presidency has invited the social partners to meet the 'troika' ahead of the European Councils: since the [Nice Summit \(2000\)](#), it has been decided that these meetings should be held annually, before the spring European Council. The [decision by the Council on 6 March 2003](#) stipulates that the Tripartite Social Summit is made up of representatives of the incumbent Council presidency, the next two presidencies, the Commission and the social partners.

The setting up of the Tripartite Social Summit represented a remarkable political step, for it recognises the role of tripartite consultation at the highest level of European decision-making. The fields covered by tripartite consultation are macroeconomic dialogue, employment, social protection, education and training.

The Social Dialogue Summit on 29 September celebrated the 20th anniversary of the [European social dialogue](#). The social partners confirmed in a [joint press release](#) that they "intend to continue contributing constructively to the EU integration process". Likewise, "the EU social dialogue counts on the EU Council and on the Commission to give a clear signal that they intend to steer Europe out of lethargy".

As John Monks stressed during this celebration, all the members of the Union are suffering common problems calling for a common response. The need to modernise European policies should not adversely impact on the European social model, which is based upon the balance between economic growth and social development.

As to the new social dialogue working programme for the period 2006-2008, the ETUC is committed to the establishment of a new programme for Social Europe. The programme is likely to allow the Union to resolve these common problems. Cooperation and the will of the other social partners and the Community institutions remain crucial in rising to these challenges.

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ETUC Agenda

September – October – November 2005

■ 12-15/09/2005	TUC congress (Brighton, United Kingdom)	Congress programme
■ 22/09/2005	ETUC Steering Committee (Brussels)	
■ 29/09/2005	Celebration of 20 years of European social dialogue (Brussels)	Programme of the celebration
■ 05/10/2005	Congress of the GWU (Malta)	GWU internet site
■ 7-8/10/2005	ETUC seminar 'Young trade unionists in action in the enlarged Europe' (Vilnius, Lithuania)	Seminar programme
■ 19-20/10/2005	ETUC Executive Committee (Brussels)	
■ 20/10/2005	ETUC press conference (Brussels)	Press conference programme
■ 20-21/10/2005	ASI congress (Iceland)	Congress programme
■ 3-4/11/2005	Trade union press meeting (Brussels)	
■ 05/11/2005	USS congress (Switzerland)	Congress programme
■ 12-15/11/2005	STTK congress (Finland)	Congress programme
■ 14/11/2005	ETUC Steering Committee (EESC, Brussels)	
■ 15-18/11/2005	CFTC congress (Bordeaux, France)	Congress programme
■ 17-18/11/2005	ETUC-TUC conference 'Challenging times: Innovative ways of organising working time: The role of trade unions' (London)	Conference programme

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EU Agenda

September – October – November 2005

■ 26-29/09/2005	Plenary session of European Parliament (Strasbourg) General Affairs and External Relations Council:	Agenda of the plenary session
■ 3-4/10/2005	Opening of negotiations with Turkey and Croatia (Luxembourg) Competitiveness Council (Luxembourg)	Council agenda
■ 11/10/2005	ECOFIN Council (Luxembourg)	Council agenda
■ 11/10/2005	'Mini-plenary' session at European Parliament (Brussels) Environment Council (Luxembourg)	Plenary session agenda
■ 17/10/2005	Round table on poverty in Europe (Glasgow, United Kingdom)	Council agenda
■ 17-18/10/2005	Round table on social inclusion (Edinburgh and Glasgow, United Kingdom)	Round table agenda
■ 17-19/10/2005	Tripartite social summit (Lancaster House, United Kingdom)	Round table agenda
■ 24/10/2005	Plenary session of European Parliament (Strasbourg)	Summit agenda
■ 24-27/10/2005	Ministerial conference on development (Queens, United Kingdom)	Plenary session agenda
■ 24-25/10/2005	Informal European Council (Hampton Court, United Kingdom)	Conference agenda
■ 27/10/2005	Conference and ministerial meeting on equality between men and women (Birmingham, United Kingdom)	Informal Summit agenda
■ 7-9/11/2005	ECOFIN Council (Brussels)	Conference agenda
■ 08/11/2005	Education, youth and culture Council (Brussels)	Council agenda
■ 14-15/11/2005	Plenary session of European Parliament (Strasbourg)	Council agenda
■ 14-17/11/2005		Plenary session draft agenda

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Communications

Communication to readers

As from 2006, this newsletter will appear monthly, because we believe more frequent publication to be appropriate. However, the formula will change somewhat. The dossier and interview will appear every two months. Please also note that as from 2006, the dossier will be dedicated to unionisation. If you have any examples of good practice in this area, please send them to Daniele Melli: dmelli@etuc.org. Our aim is also to provide a platform for our members' opinions.

The ETUC produces material for a campaign to encourage young people to join a trade union

The Summer School in July 2005 emphasised the importance of getting young people to join a union. The ETUC informs its members that campaign material is available to them (in English and French) if they want to raise awareness of union membership among young people. The following is on offer: posters (a series of three posters), a leaflet (setting out why young people should join a union) and stickers.

If you would like some of this material, please contact Juliane Bir: jbir@etuc.org



[Section of ETUC site on youth issues](#)

Campaign 'For diversity, against discrimination': the ETUC's commitment

The ETUC welcomes the action by the European Commission to counter discrimination in all its forms ['For diversity, against discrimination'](#): under this initiative, hundreds of activities have taken place since 2003 across all the member countries of the Union.

The ETUC confirms its commitment to raising awareness in the workplace of the problems linked to discrimination. It will be working with the other social partners to update the 'Joint declaration against racism' (signed in 1995) over the final quarter of 2005. The ETUC is supporting the Commission's campaign, and invites its members to join in at the national and local levels.

For further information on the campaign, please contact Ms Barbara Nolan: empl-antidiscrimination@cec.eu.int

Meeting with the Swedish press – 18/10/2005

John Monks and representatives of the Swedish trade unions - Sture Nordh, President of the Swedish Confederation of Professional Employees (TCO) and Erland Olauson, Vice-President of Landsorganisationen i Sverige (LO) - met with Swedish journalists in Brussels in October. They discussed the European social model and the Vaxholm case.

ETUC press conference on the European social model – 20/10/2005

After the Steering Committee, and on the eve of the Tripartite Social Summit and Informal Social Summit on 24 and 27 October, the ETUC organised a press conference, attended by 25 journalists. This was the opportunity to present the document 'Shaping a strong and Social Europe', adopted at the Steering Committee on 19-20 October.



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Interview

A fight for the future of Social Europe

Interview with ETUC General Secretary John Monks

Q. You are now halfway through your first four-year mandate. Can you make a mid-term assessment of progress?

JM: It has been a very difficult two years. There is not as much to show for them as I had hoped. Social Europe is under a lot of pressure from critics arguing that it is too expensive and too inflexible, not market-oriented enough, that unemployment is high, growth low, and competitiveness poor. Europe more generally is struggling with two referendum results in France and the Netherlands. You can see pressures to renationalise policy and use Europe as the excuse for things that go wrong. There is a real problem of the perception of Europe in the minds of people. Opinion polls show Europe has a very poor standing in a number of major countries. So it's a disappointing start, in part due to the new European Commission 'finding its feet', in part to a failure of political leadership – especially in the larger Member States – and in part due to difficult economic circumstances including the rising price of oil. But there has been some good news. I think enlargement has been a marvellous success. The opening up of central and Eastern Europe, their fast growth rates and increasing confidence are a real bonus. You can see there the power of the European idea. I am confident that in 20 years these countries will have taken the Irish route to success and prosperity and benefited other countries in Europe and elsewhere too.

The other positive thing is the support Europe's trade unions have given the ETUC. We have had big, successful demonstrations in Rome and Brussels, and enthusiastic backing for what we are trying to do. That has been very heartening, and it gives us a good basis on which to operate in a difficult climate.

Q. What are the main challenges for the rest of your mandate?

JM: The first priority is to forge a common project to boost employment and growth and develop Social Europe. We need more demand in the economy. The most important problem we have got is the failure of consumers to spend because they are worried about their jobs and their future. At the same time we need to address key problems, including delocalisation, the demographic challenges of an ageing population and low birth rates, the need for mobile workers to be properly protected and not treated as second class, and more help for workers affected adversely by change. That's what we proposed to the EU Informal Social Summit.

Q. What is the next step in the debate on the Services Directive?

JM: The Services Directive is scheduled to complete its progress through the European Parliament at the mid-January plenary. In Strasbourg that day there will be a major ETUC demonstration in support of our demands for the exclusion of the country of origin principle as it affects collective agreements, common labour standards, and services of general interest.

It is vital that the Services Directive is only approved if and when workers have got sufficient guarantees about their future. At the moment the guarantees are too little, too late. We are working very hard with the Parliament to get this directive in a shape that protects workers and boosts employment and services.

Q. What is your view of the Commission's move to cut back European regulation?

JM: I seem to remember bonfires of red tape taking place for the last 30 years. It's a convenient political slogan where there is often precious little action. No one supports unnecessary regulation, but often one person's irritating regulation is another person's essential protection. We will not tolerate the scrapping of essential protections for workers

and other citizens.

Q. How do you judge the outcome of the recent Informal Social Summit?

JM: The most important question is what happens next. The ETUC welcomed approval of the Commission paper on *European Values in a Globalised World*, including the idea of a globalisation fund. What was lacking was an agreed strategy to boost demand and economic growth. This central issue – crucial for more and better jobs – was largely absent, while there was much talk about greater flexibility in welfare and employment standards. The ETUC is pressing for a new agenda for Social Europe, covering restructuring, demographic change, migration, equality, learning, and services of general interest. But to resolve the problem of unemployment, above all we need strong, coordinated economic policies.

Q. What follow-up would you like to see on the ETUC's submission to the Summit: 'Shaping a strong and Social Europe'?

JM: Generally, we have got now to fight for Europe against the nationalists – including some on the left. We have got to establish that there is a European social model, because when Social Europe is under attack, the whole concept of Europe is in danger. Those who are now claiming that a single Social Europe does not exist, but only 25 national systems or possibly five categories of systems, and that social policy should therefore cease at European level, are missing one huge factor. There is now one single market covering 25 countries, which in sectors like construction, hotels and catering and road transport is creating one single labour market. How can there be a single labour market without common standards? For example, under what conditions and jurisdiction do migrant workers operate? And what is the status of collective agreements in the single market?

Q. How do you define the European social model?

JM: Social Europe, unlike other parts of the world, is characterised by welfare states, public services, and influential trade unions. Apart from glimpses in Japan and Canada, this social model doesn't exist anywhere else in the world.

Q. What are the main issues the trade union movement must address to respond to the concerns of European workers and citizens?

JM: The first challenge is to be better at organising and recruit more people into trade unions. Trade union membership has been falling in a majority of European countries over the last 20 years.

The second is the delocalisation issue. Some of the worries are probably exaggerated, but that doesn't mean to say they won't be right if present trends accelerate. Getting more influence over companies, to exert control over these decisions, is very important.

The third is the demographic challenge. Falling birth rates and longer lives create different kinds of problems that we have not had before, and are tough to resolve in many countries. These are the three things at the top of the to-do list.

Q. In September we celebrated 20 years of European Social Dialogue. How have relations between the social partners evolved in that time?

JM: They have certainly got better. Everybody in the ETUC looks back to the presidency of Jacques Delors, which was one high-water mark for social dialogue. He was threatening the employers with law unless they chose to conclude collective agreements. That era seems to have passed, with the Commission now merely passing problems to the social partners with a polite expression of neutrality as to the outcome.

Delors was trying to balance the single market with a strong social dimension. We have to recover that motivation, and to secure Commission and Member State support for measures at the European level, to show that Europe does protect workers and that it cares. Those feelings have been largely absent in recent years and contributed to the 'no' referendum votes.

It has been 20 years of ebbs and flows for the social dialogue. We have been in an ebb period recently. Now we need for Europe's sake to move forward in a determined way.

Q. You were General Secretary of the UK TUC and now you head the ETUC. How far is action at European and national level linked?

JM: As General Secretary of the TUC I was a member of the ETUC executive for 10 years. I didn't feel I was dealing with foreign policy, but things that were intrinsic to British trade union life. I still feel that. The EU fills a large part of the landscape in which national trade unions operate. Our job is to progress their interests at EU level in close concert with them.

We have been improving our internal working relations, with some success, for example on issues like the Services Directive, which was effectively halted by our campaign that started with 80,000 people on the streets of Brussels on 19 March.

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