



ETUC NEWSLETTER

EUROPEAN TRADE UNION
CONFEDERATION

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Dear Readers,

This month, the ETUC has gone on the offensive, launching a European campaign in support of 'high-quality public services, accessible to all'. Other important issues for the European trade union movement have also featured on the agenda.

Unfortunately, the EU Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council failed to reach a compromise on amending the Working Time Directive, in particular with regard to ending the opt-out. This issue, which is so important for protecting the health and safety of millions of European workers, must not remain unresolved forever. At the same time, we would not have considered an unacceptable agreement to be a step forward.

We welcomed the publication of the European Commission's long-awaited Green Paper on labour law. A European debate on this subject is now more urgent than ever. However, the Green Paper takes up only some of the issues that must be addressed, and during the current consultation period the ETUC will be tabling proposals on subjects such as working time, temporary agency work, European Works Councils (EWCs), information and consultation, and restructuring.

Now that the European Parliament has approved the Services Directive at second reading, the legislative process has entered its final phase. This is a success for the European trade union movement, especially when the amended text is compared to the initial Bolkestein proposal. However, despite the changes that we have demanded and obtained, along the way, some highly sensitive questions still remain poorly defined, such as the exclusion of labour law and respect for fundamental rights. With the help of our members, we will keep a close watch on the transposition of the directive into national law and its appropriate implementation.

While the Services Directive provides a cross-border legal framework for many commercial services, we have seen a serious and persistent legal vacuum at EU level on public services. The ETUC has repeatedly asked European decision-makers to initiate legislation to define and protect these services, but so far we have had no response. That is why we have decided to act, by launching a European petition for 'high-quality public services, accessible to all'. With your support and commitment, we will make this campaign a success.

We also want to express our solidarity with the Volkswagen-Brussels workers. We are supporting the demonstration organised by Belgian trade unions on Saturday 2 December, in Brussels, and invite you to join us.

John Monks
General Secretary

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Sign the petition for high-quality public services, accessible to all

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EU News

● **ETUC calls for aggregate demand policies to turn the 2006 upturn into robust growth - 06/11/2006**

To coincide with the European Commission's [Autumn Economic Forecasts](#), the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) released a [report on the economic situation and prospects in the euro area](#). According to the ETUC, **the key element in the 2006 upturn was the implementation of 'growth-supporting' aggregate demand policies**, instead of 'stability-oriented' policies.

Moreover, **structural unemployment has fallen and is now below 8%**. In this context, **the European trade union movement urges the European Central Bank (ECB) to stop hiking interest rates** and to support growth. "What macro-economic policy-makers need to do right now is not to withdraw demand from the recovery but to get the economy back into a cycle of high growth similar to the one the euro area had over the second half of the nineties," declared John Monks, ETUC General Secretary.



[ETUC press release](#)



[Commission press release](#)

● **Failure of the extraordinary Employment Council on the Working Time Directive: a missed opportunity to move forward on Social Europe - 08/11/2006**

An extraordinary meeting of the [Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council](#) convened on 7 November in an attempt to find a political agreement on revision of the Working Time Directive. [The attempt supported by the EU Finnish Presidency to reach a compromise failed](#).

The ETUC regrets that the Employment Council did not reach an agreement on this fundamental issue for European workers. ETUC General Secretary John Monks declared: "We regret that there was no progress in Council, as this is yet another signal of Social Europe being stalled. However, we would not have been able to accept just any agreement as 'progress'. We would have welcomed an agreement which would have taken on board trade unions' concerns."

The ETUC emphasises that the Working Time Directive aims to protect workers against health and safety risks from long and irregular hours, and **is surprised that nobody from the Council or the Commission mentioned the word 'workers'** at the press conference after the meeting.



[ETUC press release](#)



[Letter to Mrs Tarja Filatov, Finnish Minister of Labour](#)



[Council Conclusions](#)

● **EU-Russia relations must include a social dimension - 10/11/2006**

The Finnish trade union confederations, together with the ETUC and the biggest trade union confederation in Russia, the FNPR, organised a [Trade Union Forum](#), to [present a statement to Finnish Prime Minister Matti Vanhanen for transmission to the EU-Russia Summit on 24 November in Helsinki](#).

The statement stresses **the importance of making labour market and social dialogue issues an integral part of the growing commercial and political relationship between the EU and Russia**. The ETUC regrets that, at the moment, labour market issues are not on the joint agenda.



[ETUC press release](#)



[Speech by John Monks](#)

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● **The ETUC queries the EU's new trade strategy - 13/11/2006**

At a high-level conference on the [new external trade strategy proposed by the European Commission](#), John Monks stressed some key aspects for the European trade union movement. In particular, he called for **support for multilateralism** and **respect for the values articulated in the Charter of Fundamental Rights** to be at the base of the strategy.

The ETUC urged the Commission to act coherently and **not decouple trade policy from social, developmental and environmental considerations**. Moreover, with regard to the countries identified by the Commission as priority targets for the negotiation of Free Trade Agreements, **the ETUC insisted on the need for core Conventions of the International Labour Organization (ILO) to be observed**. In the view of the ETUC, each trade agreement should include a social dimension and the setting up of a **social dialogue committee**.

 Read More[ETUC press release](#) Read More[John Monks' speaking note](#)

● **The adoption of the Services Directive is a success, but the ETUC will still press for progress in certain areas - 15/11/2006**

The European Parliament (EP) approved the amended Services Directive at **second reading**, burying the initial Bolkestein proposal once and for all. The ETUC views this result as a **success for the European trade union movement**.

At [first reading in February 2006](#), MEPs agreed on **many of the amendments the ETUC had demanded to the initial text**, principally **the abolition of the country of origin principle**, the **exclusion of labour law** and of issues related to the posting of workers, **respect for fundamental rights to collective bargaining and action** and **the exclusion of services of general interest**. However, the ETUC was critical of the Council's subsequent introduction of ambiguous language on the exclusion of labour law and respect for fundamental rights, and asked for these ambiguities to be clarified on second reading.

Unfortunately, [the European People's Party \(EPP\) and the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe \(ALDE\) members did not want to support this approach](#). The ETUC and its affiliates **will pay special attention to the transposition of the Directive into national law**, and monitor its proper implementation. Furthermore, the European trade union movement is **committed to better regulation of public services and is pushing for urgent adoption of European rules in sensitive sectors such as temporary agencies**.

 Read More[ETUC press release](#) Read More[European Parliament press release](#)

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● **Climate change: European trade unions assert that employment can create a consensus for necessary efforts - 16/11/2006**

During the **Nairobi world climate change conference**, the ETUC and several European trade unions reiterated their demand for **the EU to adopt an active position in the post-Kyoto negotiations**. They also encouraged efforts to obtain **much greater commitments from the industrialised countries** to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions beyond 2012.

[The ETUC is calling on the EU to commit to a reduction of around 25% in greenhouse gas emissions by 2020 and of around 75% by 2050.](#) Efforts on this scale by the wealthy countries are unavoidable if at the same time we want **to overcome climate change and enable poor countries to develop in future**.

The ETUC representative in Nairobi highlighted the impact such measures might have on EU employment, and referred to an ETUC study currently underway. *"Preliminary results show that employment has more to gain than to lose from an ambitious EU emissions reduction policy, provided that the policy is pursued intelligently and fairly. The job-creation potential in sectors related to the prevention of climate change is enormous. Still, we must not close our eyes. Some economic sectors may be adversely affected, along with the workers. This underlines the importance of anticipation, of support measures for emerging sectors and efficient backing for the impacted sectors."*

[ETUC press release](#)

● **Green Paper on labour law only addresses some of the issues - 22/11/2006**

The ETUC welcomed the European Commission's overdue publication of the Green Paper '[Modernising labour law to meet the challenges of the 21st century](#)', but found it failed to respond to all the issues needing to be addressed.

During the current consultation period, the European trade union movement has promised to make **proposals on working time, temporary agency work, European Works Councils (EWC), information and consultation, and restructuring**.

Workers are under increasing **pressure from changes in production methods, the spread of subcontracting, relocation, and volatile financial capital taking over from enterprise. Workers' protection is inadequate for dealing with these conditions**.

The ETUC believes that **all relevant stakeholders at EU level need to engage in an urgent debate on how to adapt labour law and social policy to fit the modern world of work, while providing fair and decent working conditions and labour standards for all workers on EU territory**, and protecting them against exposure to the whims of the market.

[ETUC press release](#)[Commission press release](#)

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ETUC News

● **Founding Congress of the International Trade Union Confederation - 01-03/11/2006**

More than **1,500 trade union delegates from every continent** participated in the founding congress of the new International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) in Vienna.

The ITUC replaces, at global level, the two former international trade union organisations: the **International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU)** and the **World Confederation of Labor (WCL)**, which held their dissolution congresses just days before the ITUC was launched.

Representing 168 million workers from 154 countries and territories, the ITUC unites **307 national trade union organisations**, including some that were not previously affiliated to any international organisation.

The European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) welcomes the foundation of the ITUC and will be cooperating closely with it, in particular through the new **Pan-European Regional Council (PERC)**. Unifying the international movement within the ITUC will enable trade unions to play a major role in the **promotion of the workers' rights within the new context of globalisation**.



[International Trade Union Confederation Web Site](#)



● **The trade union response to the new capitalism - 14/11/2006**

ETUC General Secretary John Monks delivered the fifth annual Aneurin Bevin memorial lecture at the House of Commons in London.

In his speech, **John Monks highlighted the trade union view of the new capitalism and the possible responses**.

Confronted with this **finance-based capitalism**, mainly **focused on quick returns**, and leading to job losses and rising levels of inequality, **worker shareholder power should be mobilised**. Moreover, **instruments to foster productive investment**, research and development, and innovation should be revitalised, and full use made of the European dimension.



[Speech by John Monks](#)

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● **Trade Unions Anticipating Change in Europe: the TRACE project - 17-18/11/2006**

Industrial and company restructuring poses a major challenge for European trade unions, in terms of recruitment and organisation, protecting workers, and boosting skills and training, **John Monks told the final conference** of the [TRACE project](#) in Portugal. Trade Unions Anticipating Change in Europe (TRACE) was a large-scale and ambitious programme involving 20 partners: ETUC-affiliated organisations, European industry federations, and research and university bodies.



Launched in 2004, it was coordinated by the ETUI-REHS Education Department and co-funded by the European Commission.

Never before have so many European trade union organisations taken part in coordinated, cross-border activities, including 56 different seminars, workshops and courses.

They have built networks, undertaken research, and produced reports, handbooks, CD-ROMs and training materials: all concrete tools to help trade unions across Europe to confront economic and industrial change.

ETUC policy calls for socially responsible restructuring in consultation with trade unions and workers.

"Trade unions do not merely wish to play a role in managing the social consequences. They want to play an active and pro-active role in anticipating restructuring," it affirms. ***"Assisting people in the process of change, and improving their skills, is an essential job for trade unions. It's at the heart of what we do.*** We must ensure that TRACE does not disappear without trace!" said John Monks.

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EU Agenda

November - December 2006

06/11/2006	Eurogroup Meeting (Brussels)	Meeting Agenda
07/11/2006	ECOFIN Council (Brussels)	Council Agenda
07/11/2006	Extraordinary Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council (Brussels)	Council Agenda
13-14/11/2006	General Affairs and External Relations Council (Brussels)	Council Agenda
13-16/11/2006	Plenary session at the European Parliament (Strasbourg)	Plenary session Agenda
13-14/11/2006	Education, Youth and Culture Council (Brussels)	Council Agenda
21/11/2006	ECOFIN Council (Brussels)	Council Agenda
23/11/2006	Transport, Telecommunications and Energy Council (Brussels)	Council Agenda
24/11/2006	UE-Russia Summit (Helsinki)	Summit Agenda
27/11/2006	Eurogroup Meeting (Brussels)	Meeting Agenda
28/11/2006	ECOFIN Council (Brussels)	Meeting Agenda
30/11-01/12/2006	Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council (Brussels)	Council Agenda
04-05/12/2006	Informal Education Council (Helsinki)	Meeting Agenda
04-05/12/2006	Competitiveness Council (Brussels)	Council Agenda
04-05/12/2006	Justice and Home Affairs Council (Brussels)	Council Agenda
11-12/12/2006	General Affairs and External Relations Council (Brussels)	Council Agenda
11-12/12/2006	Transport, Telecommunications and Energy Council (Brussels)	Council Agenda
11-14/12/2006	Plenary session at the European Parliament (Strasbourg)	Plenary session Agenda
14-15/12/2006	European Council (Brussels)	Council Agenda
18/12/2006	Environment Council (Brussels)	Council Agenda

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ETUC Agenda

November – December 2006

● 01-03/11/2006	Founding Congress of the new International Trade Union Confederation (Vienna, Austria)	
● 08/11/2006	ETUC seminar on « Contribution of the trade union organisations to improving workers' mobility » (Brussels)	Seminar programme
● 09-11/11/2006	SGB/USS Congress (Bern, Switzerland)	Congress programme
● 09-11/11/2006	ETUC - FNPR (Federation of Independent Trade Unions of Russia) Trade Union Forum and Baltic Sea Trade Union Network High level Meeting (Helsinki, Finland)	Forum programme
● 15-16/11/2006	FTF Congress (Copenhagen, Denmark)	Congress programme
● 16/11/2006	ETUC Steering Committee (Brussels)	
● 28/11/2006	Press conference on the launch of the ETUC Petition on Public Services (Brussels)	Press conference Program
● 07/12/2006	ETUC Steering Committee (Brussels)	
● 07-08/12/2006	ETUC Executive Committee (Brussels)	

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Dossier

Union membership strategies of the Polish trade union Solidarnosc

After our review of the strategies and activities used to boost union membership in the United Kingdom and Sweden, we now look at Poland, and in particular Solidarnosc, a European Trade Union Confederation affiliate since 1995.

Introduction

Because of its history, **Poland is different to the other examples** we have already examined in this dossier.

Fifty years of Communist domination and the recent democratic transition process have significantly influenced workers' attitudes to unions.

The rate of union membership is currently no higher than 15%¹. Further analysis of this figure shows that **most unionised workers in Poland (around 76%) are employed in the public sector**. This brings an **additional challenge** for unions, since **around 70% of Polish workers are employed in the private sector**. Likewise, **75% of employees work in companies where there is no trade union representation**.

The low rate of union membership limits unions' leeway in the drive to improve workers' living and working conditions. Abuses in terms of rights and pay (including even the non-payment of wages), blackmail and threats against those wishing to join a union are unfortunately quite widespread.

Fear of losing ones job, prejudice against unions and union members, and a lack of knowledge of the support that union membership offers are some of the causes of the low level of union membership in Poland.

In the face of these problems, **Solidarnosc has decided to react by launching a programme for the development of trade union membership** at national, regional and company levels.

Launch of the Union Development Department

In 1998, the National Commission of Solidarnosc decided to put in place a new structure: the Union Development Department.

The aim of this department is to promote activities in the field of union organisation and membership agreed by the political secretariat of Solidarnosc.

To attain its goal, the department is putting in place a **training system for regional union organisers** and a national-level **recruitment campaign** in companies.

Since its foundation, this new body has been attracting increasing attention.

While Solidarnosc had only one organiser **in 1998**, **eight years on it has a team of around 40 people**, five of whom work at national level, and the others in different regions of the country. The task of these organisers is to provide **support and coordination for workers who organise trade union action at their workplace**.

This **work on the ground** focuses primarily on sectors showing strong growth in Poland, in particular **private security services, mass marketing and supermarkets, the agri-food industry, hotels and cleaning services**.

¹Source: J. Waddington, [La syndicalisation en Europe](#), ETUI-REHS, July 2005

Action on the ground

Several stages are planned. The first aims to review and **identify the companies where the union will consider launching a union membership campaign**.

This phase of investigation and information-gathering involves **meetings with workers in order to identify their problems** and to find **trade union representatives in the company**. Subsequently, **trade union officials train these individuals, who take an active part in the organisation process**. The idea is to attract as many workers as possible.

Solidarnosc can list a number of actions that have produced concrete results, particularly in big groups such as Securitas, Carrefour, Volkswagen, Auchan, Géant, Jerenimo Martins and Tesco.

One example is the case of **Jerenimo Martins**, a mass marketing company operating at national level. It has **more than 800 supermarkets located in most regions of Poland**, and employs some **13 000 workers**. The organisers met more than **1 250 workers, of whom 440 decided to join**, i.e. a **success rate of around 40%**. These workers participated in union meetings and some of them attended basic union training. As a result of this work, **five new teams of union organisers and eight new union sections were created**.

Solidarnosc also targets the **private security sector** as part of its union membership strategy. **In cooperation with the UNI Property Services Federation**, which co-financed the activity, **Solidarnosc put together a project to organise workers from the private security services sector in the Mazowsze region**, which includes Warsaw. **Eighty trade union leaders met more than 3 000 workers from this sector**. The region was selected because of its high density of companies and workers (more than 25 000).

The project began in the second half of 2005 with a phase of **strategic study and planning of future campaigns**.

This information and planning phase was designed to **gather useful information and compile detailed knowledge of the sector**, particularly as regards the different companies, their structures, the institutions they protect and, above all, **their working conditions and systems**. After this initial phase, **eight companies were selected on the basis of their strategic importance in the region**. In January 2006, the approved action plan was put into effect.

A **team of six organisers - four of them hired for the project - assisted by a researcher, a communications professional and a lawyer** working for the Solidarnosc National Commission, developed the plan.

Coordination and monitoring is provided by the Development Department of the Solidarnosc National Commission and by a representative of UNI Property Services. At the end of April 2006, an initial meeting took place with representatives at the workplace. **This work on the ground represents a solid basis for the launch of the second phase, focusing on building trade union membership among these workers**.

Facts for reflection

In spite of some encouraging results, the **rate of union membership is not rising**.

Solidarnosc has decided **to step up its efforts with the aim of reversing this trend**.

Cooperation between national and regional bodies has been at the heart of this renewed drive. During the first half of 2006, a cycle of seminars entitled "**Trade union development strategy**" was launched. It brought together members of the national secretariat, as well as regional representatives and union activists responsible for trade union organisation. At the eight meetings, 126 participants took part in debates and drew up a consistent and integrated approach to trade union development, valid at both the national and regional levels. **The most recent Solidarnosc congress (28-30 September 2006) confirmed the commitment to union membership and organisation**, considered one of the priorities of trade union action.

The focus on increasing union membership among workers in expanding sectors, particularly services and trade, is an important element of this strategy.

Indeed, thanks to this approach, the trade union can enhance its presence and visibility among

young people and women, who make up the majority of workers in these growing sectors. **A presence on the ground, guaranteed by the commitment of trade union representatives and of workers recruited into the union directly at companies, remains the cornerstone of Solidarnosc's approach** to trade union membership and represents the basis for all future action.

Useful contacts:

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Communications

Launch of the ETUC petition on public services - 28/11/2006

At a joint press conference, **John Monks**, ETUC General Secretary, **Anne Demelenne**, General Secretary of the [Fédération générale du travail de Belgique \(FGTB\)](#) and **Claude Rolin**, General Secretary of the [Confédération des syndicats chrétiens \(CSC\)](#) launched a Europe-wide petition on public services.

The European trade union movement calls on the European Commission **to take action to protect and strengthen public services that are vital to the wellbeing of all European citizens.** "Services in the EU need a strong regulatory framework to **ensure continuity of supply and fair access for everyone**," said John Monks. "They must be of the highest standard, and therefore accountable to both consumers and workers in these crucial sectors."

The ETUC has already put forward a draft directive, as have other key actors, giving the Commission a basis to work from. But so far, despite repeated requests, no proposal has come forward.

The petition campaign will be coordinated by the ETUC in cooperation with its affiliates in EU Member States and other partners.



[Sign the petition for high-quality public services, accessible to all](#)

Publications- recent Commission documents

The following reports are now available:

- [Autumn Economic Forecast](#) (06/11);
- Report: [Employment in Europe 2006](#) (06/11);
- Regular report: [Enlargement - the state of play and the way forward](#) (08/11);
- [White paper on enhancing the single market framework for investment funds](#) (16/11).
- Report: [The EU Economy Review 2006](#) (22/11);
- Green Paper: [Modernising labour law to meet the challenges of the 21st century](#) (22/11);
- [Communications on a comprehensive European migration policy](#) (30/10);

The European Commission plans to issue these publications in December 2006:

- Growth and Jobs Annual Progress Report 2007 (12/12)

Publications- recent documents from the [Trade Union Institute for Research, Education and Health and Safety \(ETUI-REHS\)](#)

The following documents are now available:

- [Review: Transfer](#) 3/2006
- [Trace Project Report](#) (Trade Unions Anticipating Change in Europe) 11/2006
- [Trace Project Handbook](#) 11/2006

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