



ETUC NEWSLETTER

EUROPEAN
TRADE UNION
CONFEDERATION

N°17
April 2007



Dear Readers,

The European social dialogue, which started 20 years ago, is celebrating an important success. I recently had the pleasure of signing an autonomous Framework Agreement on Harassment and Violence at Work, together with the general secretaries of the other European social partner organisations. After ten months of negotiation, the conclusion of this agreement on such an important issue for European workers is a fine example of the ability of the European social partners to act on their own initiative to drive Social Europe forward.

There is just one month to go before our major event of the year: the 11th ETUC statutory Congress, to be held in Seville from 21 to 24 May. In Seville, the European trade union movement will be discussing the current political, social and economic situation in Europe and agreeing its action plan for the years ahead. Over 1,000 trade union delegates from 36 European countries will be attending, as well as a wide range of European political decision-makers.

The major challenges facing us, notably the debate on flexicurity, casino capitalism, and climate change, will be on the agenda. Our objective is to influence the European political debate and to get the social dimension back to the core of the construction of Europe. The current deadlock within the European Union calls for a powerful commitment on our part to change the status quo and encourage Europe to win back the trust of workers.

The Seville Congress must also create a fresh impetus for the European trade union movement, because we cannot let down the faith that millions of European workers have in us.

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General Secretary

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<http://sevilla.etuc.org/>

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EU News

No respect for the right to strike: the Council of Europe condemns the Bulgarian Government - 12/04/2007

The European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) and its Bulgarian affiliates the Confederation of Independent Trade Unions of Bulgaria (CITUB) and the Confederation of Labour (Podkrepia) welcome **the decision of the European Committee of Social Rights (ESCR)**, a Council of Europe supervisory body on the Social Charters, in which it confirms that **the Bulgarian government is violating the right to strike in the public sector**.

This decision **follows a collective complaint jointly submitted to the Council of Europe by ETUC, Podkrepia and CITUB in 2005, following** the Bulgarian government's refusal to extend the right to strike to civil servants.

"The ETUC insists that the Bulgarian government fully aligns its legislation with this decision and lives up to all the obligations it has under the Revised Social Charter," declared John Monks, ETUC General Secretary.

[ETUC press release](#)[ESCR Decision \(Council of Europe\)](#)

Flexicurity: the ETUC demands a balance between the needs of business and the welfare of working people.

The European Commission organised a **conference on flexicurity**, which more than 400 representatives from the trade union, employers, NGOs and governments attended.

In the ETUC's opinion, the forthcoming proposals for flexicurity in the EU have to demonstrate a socially acceptable balance between the needs of business and the welfare of working people. However, business appears to have hijacked the debate with claims of too much regulation and too little dynamism in the EU economy. **According to the ETUC, strong employment creation is not at odds with robust job protection systems and high levels of trade union organisation.**

The ETUC is alarmed that the current flexicurity agenda threatens to damage the most vulnerable workers, undermining working conditions and job security.

[ETUC press release](#)[Speech by John Monks at the Flexicurity Conference](#)[ETUC Publication 'The Flexicurity debate and the challenges for the trade union movement'](#)[Commission press release](#)

EU and US have to work together for a just and sustainable global economy -30/04/2007

The ETUC and the American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO) have issued a [joint statement](#) to the leaders of European and US governments on the occasion of the EU-US Summit, **calling on them to pursue the interests of working people in their management of the global economy.**

Decent work, the equal distribution of the benefits of globalisation, the setting up of an international regulatory task force on hedge funds, and a global effort to counter climate change are among the top recommendations from the transatlantic trade union movement to US and EU leaders.

[ETUC press release](#)

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ETUC News

● Conference on EWCs: urgent revision of the EU Directive is necessary - 20/04/2007

The European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC), together with the [Social Development Agency](#), organised a [conference on 'The effectiveness of information and consultation rights of employees and their evolution'](#). More than 200 member of European Works Councils (EWC) took part in this event.

The delegates reaffirmed the urgent need to revise Directive 94/45 on EWCs in order to establish an effective system of information, consultation and participation rights and define a legal framework for transnational collective bargaining.

[ETUC press release](#)

● Wide mobilisation of the European trade unions for the petition on public services - 20/04/2007

In support of its [petition for high-quality public services, accessible to all, launched by the ETUC](#), the European trade union movement is mobilising in the EU Member States to demand that the Commission puts forward framework legislation on public services. From London to Madrid, from Rome to Ljubljana, unions are joining forces to protect public services from being subject solely to market forces. "Actions at national and European level aim to promote public services in Europe. We are asking for a legal framework reflecting the social cohesion role played by these services, rather than blind competition as the sole principle governing an open market," declared John Monks, ETUC General Secretary.

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[ETUC press release](#)

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[ETUC petition on public services](#)

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● Signing of the European Framework Agreement to fight violence and harassment at work - 26/04/2007

After 10 months of negotiation, in the presence of EU Commissioner Vladimir Špidla, the secretaries general of [ETUC](#), [BUSINESSEUROPE](#), [UEAPME](#) and [CEEP](#) officially signed an autonomous Framework Agreement to fight harassment and violence at work. The text commits members of the signatory parties to combat all unacceptable behaviour that can lead to harassment and violence in the workplace.

The agreement proposes procedures to prevent, identify and manage problems of workplace harassment and violence, including cases involving external 'third parties'.

The European social partners committed themselves to implement the provisions of this autonomous agreement before April 2010, in accordance with the procedures and practices specific to management and labour in each country.

[Read More](#)

[ETUC-BUSINESSEUROPE-UEAPME-CEEP joint press release](#)

[Read More](#)

[Framework Agreement on Violence and Harassment at Work](#)



Source: European Commission

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28 April, international day of commemoration for workers who have died at work: ETUC calls for tighter inspections and the replacement of carcinogenic substances - 28/04/2007

On the occasion of the **international day of commemoration for workers who have suffered injury or death at work**, the ETUC drew attention to the unacceptable consequences of forms of work organisation that sacrifice the health and safety of workers to the quest for maximum profits.

According to statistics from the International Labour Organization (ILO), **every year over 150,000 people in the European Union die as a result of accidents at work or diseases linked to the workplace**. Cancer is the major cause of work-related deaths. The fight against work-related cancers is a priority for the European trade union movement, which calls for the replacement of carcinogenic substances. Moreover, the ETUC stresses the importance of strengthening the workplace inspection system. A factory inspectorate with adequate resources is the only way to make regulatory efforts credible.

Read More[ETUC press release](#)

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EU Agenda

April - May 2007

19-20/04/2007	Informal Meeting of Health Ministers (Aachen)	Meeting Agenda
19-20/04/2007	Justice and Home Affairs Council (Luxembourg)	Council Agenda
20-21/04/2007	Informal Meeting of Ministers for Economics and Finance (Berlin)	Meeting Agenda
23-24/04/2007	General Affairs and External Relations Council (Luxembourg)	Council Agenda
23/04/2007	EU Troika – Russian Federation (Luxembourg)	Meeting Agenda
23-26/04/2007	Plenary Session at the European Parliament (Strasbourg)	Plenary Session Agenda
25-26/04/2007	Plenary Session at the European Economic and Social Committee (Brussels)	
26-28/04/2007	Informal Meeting of Ministers for Competitiveness (Würzburg)	Meeting Agenda
30/04/2007	EU – United States of America Summit (Washington D.C.)	Meeting Agenda
07/05/2007	Eurogroup (Brussels)	Meeting Agenda
08/05/2007	ECOFIN Council (Bruxelles)	Council Agenda
09-10/05/2007	'Mini-Plenary' session at the European Parliament (Brussels)	Plenary Session Agenda
14-15/05/2007	External Relations, Security and Defence, Development Council (Brussels)	Council Agenda
15-16/05/2007	Informal Meeting of Ministers for Gender Equality/Family Affairs (Bad Pyrmont)	Meeting Agenda
18/05/2007	EU – Russian Federation Summit (Samara/Russia)	Summit Agenda
21-22/05/2007	Competitiveness Council (Brussels)	Council Agenda
21-24/05/2007	Plenary Session at the European Parliament (Strasbourg)	Plenary Session Agenda
24-25/05/2007 »	Education, Youth and Culture Council (Brussels)	Council Agenda
25/05/2007	ACP - EU Council of Ministers (Brussels)	Council Agenda
30-31/05/2007	Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council (Brussels)	Council Agenda
30-31/05/2007	Plenary Session at the European Economic and Social Committee (Brussels)	

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ETUC Agenda

April - May 2007

● 20/04/2007	European Works Councils Conference (Brussels)	
● 23-25/04/2007	UNI-Europa Regional Conference (Athens)	Conference Programme
● 25/04/2007	Meeting of Group II (Workers) of the European Economic and Social Committee (Brussels) Joint Press Conference	
● 26/04/2007	ETUC-BUSINESSEUROPE-UEAPME-CEEP Social Partners' Agreement on Harassment and Violence at Work (Brussels)	
● 03-05/05/2007	FERPA Congress (Brussels)	
● 08-10/05/2007	TCO Congress (Stockholm)	Congress Programme
● 10-11/05/2007	CITUB Congress (Sofia)	
● 10/05/2007	ETUC Executive Committee (Brussels)	
● 21-24/05/2007	11th ETUC Statutory Congress (Seville)	Congress website
● 31/05/2007	Meeting of Group II (Workers) of the European Economic and Social Committee (Brussels)	

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Communications



Publication of the 'Trade union guide to Economic Partnership Agreements in ACP countries' - 17/04/2007

The European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC), with the support of the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC), has published a **guide for trade unions** as part of a project aimed at **'building the capacities of trade union organisations in the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries in the context of the Economic Partnership Agreements (EPA)'**.

This project was carried out in cooperation with the Confederation of Workers' Unions of Togo (Confédération syndicale des travailleurs du Togo, CSTT), on behalf of all trade union organisations in the ACP states. The trade union organisations intend **to assist workers from the ACP states and their trade union representatives to achieve the Cotonou Agreement objectives of the eradication of poverty, sustainable development and gradual integration into the world trading economy.**



 [Trade union guide](#)



European social partners hold a joint seminar on restructuring in Ireland - 24/04/2007

On 23 and 24 April 2007, ETUC, BUSINESSEUROPE, UEAPME and CEEP held a seminar in Dublin on the issue of industrial restructuring. The seminar is the first of a series of events that the EU social partners will organise to discuss this important topic in nine other EU countries.

Representatives of the Irish social partner organisations (including ICTU for the trade union side and IBEC, the Irish employer association member of Businesseurope) highlighted the need to sustain the rapid growth in the Irish economy by paying attention to the quality of jobs being created and protecting the rights of the numerous migrant workers contributing to this progress. A national report including the findings of an expert study, based on a country visit as well the seminar conclusions, will soon be available.



Publications- recent European Commission documents

The following reports are now available:

- [Communication: Global Europe: A Stronger Partnership to deliver Market Access for European exporters](#) (18/04);

The European Commission plans to issue these publications in May 2007:

- Proposed Budget 2008: Growth and employment at the heart of EU spending;
- Spring 2007 Economic Forecast (07/05);
- Communication: Towards a comprehensive EU migration policy (16/05).

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Dossier



The 11th Congress of the European Trade Union Confederation Seville – Congress Palace – 21-24 May 2007

The Congress is without a doubt the high point of the European Trade Union Confederation's democratic calendar. It takes place every four years, with the participation of [all the organisations affiliated](#) to the ETUC.

More than 1000 trade union delegates will discuss and define the confederation's action plan for the coming four years. They also elect the General Secretary, the two Deputy General Secretaries and the four confederal secretaries, as well as the ETUC President and the members of the ETUC Executive Committee.



Seville Congress Palace (Source: www.turismosevilla.org)

The 11th ETUC Congress will be held at the Congress palace in Seville, Spain, this coming 21 to 24 May. Joining the trade union delegates will be some of Europe's leading political decision-makers, including Spanish Prime Minister José Zapatero ([Congress presentation video](#)).

The slogan on the Seville Congress poster, '**On the offensive. For Social Europe, Solidarity, Sustainability**', sums up the political priorities of the ETUC for the years ahead.

Over this coming period, the ETUC aims to play an active role in debate at the European level and to be able to influence European Union policy-making.

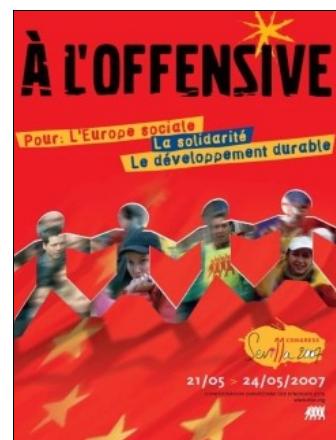
Its objective is to go beyond defending workers, and to **move on to the offensive**, working on the principle that attack is the best form of defence.

Three major political priorities will be at the heart of the European trade union movement's political activity in the years ahead: Social Europe, solidarity and sustainable development.

- **Social Europe:** reinforcing and building a more social Europe is the only way to guarantee growth and social development in the future EU. Europe is the only region in the world where over the years the economic and social dimensions have developed in tandem. One crucial characteristic of the European Social Model is the ability of the social partners to



ETUC founding conference, Brussels, 7-8/02/1973



negotiate agreements that create a balance between the demands of workers and the interests of employers. However, the European Social Model is under threat. Its critics claim that the ESM represents a burden for European competitiveness. The ETUC rejects this idea, precisely because it is in the countries with the strongest and most highly developed social dialogue that we have found the highest growth rates. So it is important to promote this model by pushing for full employment, quality jobs, equal opportunities, social protection, social integration and fundamental rights.

- **Solidarity:** social cohesion is the essential factor in the battle against poverty and discrimination. For a number of years, social statistics have been showing a constant increase in the numbers of people living in poverty or close to the poverty line in Europe. This undermines the dignity of Europe's citizens and harms our communal life. Trade union solidarity empowers workers so that they can make real changes in society. The principles of solidarity and trade union cooperation are the main counterweight to the aggressively competitive approach of some businesses, which have no qualms about chipping away at the social 'acquis'. Solidarity also needs to guide the relations between Europe and the developing countries whose citizens are struggling to improve their standard of living.
- **Sustainability:** safeguarding the environment and the question of energy supply are among the most significant political challenges facing the world. The European trade union movement is aware that environmental issues deserve the same attention as social and economic objectives. On the basis of that awareness, the ETUC strongly recommends that tough action should be taken on climate change and the use of sustainable energy sources. Europe must be ready to embrace change by promoting investment in new technologies and achieving major reductions in greenhouse gas emissions.

Congress programme

The work of the Congress will run over four days, from Monday 21 to Thursday 24 May. Five sessions have been scheduled. Each session will be devoted to one specific topic where the European trade union movement has decided to move on to the offensive:

- **Stronger European trade unions;**
- **An emerging European labour market: quality working conditions for all;**
- **For Europe, a forum for social dialogue, collective bargaining and worker participation;**
- **A European Union with effective social, economic and environmental governance;**
- **A stronger European Union.**

Round tables will be organised on the fringes of the Congress, linking into the different sessions. At the last sitting, delegates will vote on the action programme for the next four years.

A number of European trade union leaders and politicians have already confirmed their plans to attend the Congress. ([Provisional Congress programme](#)).

Programme for the media

Throughout the Congress, a fully-equipped press centre will be available in the Congress Palace, for the exclusive use of media representatives.

In addition, the ETUC's Press and Communications Department has devised a series of events and tools to allow the media to participate fully in the activities of the Seville Congress.

- Daily press briefing

A press conference on the major subjects on the programme will be held every day, with interpretation.

The staff of the ETUC's Press and Communications Department will be available on site to help you in arranging interviews, collecting audiovisual material, and identifying relevant trade union officials.

- Internet site

A new internet site, <http://sevilla.etuc.org/fr>, has been set up.

This site, in English and French, will be online throughout the Congress.

You can use it to find speeches, press releases, summaries of the debates, photographs and video clips.

- Live internet streaming

Live audiovisual broadcasts of the work of the Congress will be accessible via this website. Viewers will be able to monitor the live broadcast by selecting from three different language versions (English, French and Spanish), as well as the original language.

Video archiving is also arranged, so that the highlights of the Congress can be transmitted later.

Editorial team

Managing Editor: John Monks

Editor-in-chief: Patricia Grillo

Editors: Daniele Melli, Kate Holman