



ETUC NEWSLETTER

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Dear Readers,

June has been a crucial month in the construction of Europe. After long and bitter negotiations, the European Council on 21 and 22 June agreed to convene an Intergovernmental Conference (IGC) to finalise the details of a new treaty.

As we stated clearly at our Congress in Seville (21-24 May), the ETUC has repeatedly demanded that the Charter of Fundamental Rights should be included in the new treaty. On the eve of the European summit, we held an assembly in Brussels to warn European leaders that unless the Charter of Fundamental Rights acquired binding force, the European trade union movement would have to call for a vote against ratification of the treaty deal.

Although the existing compromise is a step backwards compared with the Constitutional Treaty we originally supported, we welcome the fact that the Charter of Fundamental Rights becomes legally binding (apart from in the UK, which deplorably adopted an opt-out).

Nonetheless, the horse trading is still at an early stage, and nothing can be taken for granted. The ETUC will keep a close watch on how the work of the IGC progresses, starting at the end of July under the new Portuguese EU Presidency. We won't accept any backsliding on the social dimension.

The debate on flexicurity has entered a new phase. The European Commission has just published a Communication that risks being biased against job protection and security. It's better than an earlier version, but giving employers more freedom to fire workers will merely make more work more precarious. More and better jobs for all are the real solution to the segmentation of the labour market and social exclusion.

John Monks
General Secretary

SUMMARY

	Editorial	p.1	
	EU news	p.2	
	ETUC news	p.5	
	EU Agenda	p.6	
	ETUC Agenda	p.7	
	Communications	p.8	
	Special dossier on the ETUC Congress	p.9	

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[Back <<](#)

EU News

ETUC calls on the G8 countries to shoulder their responsibility on climate change - 05/06/2007

The world's richest countries are the ones that have made the biggest contribution to global warming.

As shown by a [recent ETUC study](#), faster climate change would threaten the viability of wide swathes of the European economy and would have most impact on the least well-off countries.

Faced with this scenario, [the G8 members](#) therefore need to show the way by urgently adopting the objectives of keeping the global temperature rise to under 2°C and halving their emissions by 2050.

According to the ETUC, emission reduction policies can be applied with no adverse effects on employment, provided that they include measures to anticipate and support the temporary negative job impact.

[ETUC press release](#)[Documents published at the G8 Summit in Heiligendamm](#)

ETUC invites the European Central Bank to apply a moratorium on further interest rate hikes 06/06/2007

The European Central Bank (ECB) has again raised interest rates, to 4%.

For a year and a half now the Bank has been regularly raising interest rates, fearing inflationary pressure from 'higher than expected' wage developments.

The ETUC believes that the hypothesis underlying this policy is seriously flawed. The real danger to recovery is not that of too high wage outcomes but of excessive interest rates, couple with a euro exchange rate that is too expensive. The ETUC urges the ECB to implement a moratorium and stop the policy of hiking interest rates in the coming quarters.

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

ETUC calls on the European Commission to uphold the essential role of the Posting Directive – 13/06/2007

The Posting Directive plays a key role in ensuring fair competition between service providers across the EU, by guaranteeing respect for workers' rights, labour law, and industrial relations systems in Member States.

In its recent [Communication on the posting of workers](#), the European Commission **endangers the sensitive balance between the freedom to provide cross-border services and the need for effective instruments to monitor and enforce labour standards in the host country.** It announces procedures against Member States that continue to impose requirements regarded by the Commission as incompatible with Community law.

In order to ensure fair competition and protection of workers' rights, the Commission must take account of the diversity of legal systems and industrial relations across the EU.

The ETUC will closely monitor the Commission's action on this important issue.

[ETUC press release](#)[Letter to Mr Van Der Pas, Director-General of DG Employment](#)[Commission press release](#)

[Back <<<](#)

● **Supplementary pensions: the ETUC heavily criticises the directive of the European Parliament - 20/06/2007**

The [European Parliament amended and adopted a proposed Directive on supplementary pensions by a large majority](#). According to the ETUC, **this compromise is a step backwards from the Commission's initial proposal**.

In particular **the ETUC regrets** the following points:

- **the lengthening of the vesting periods, making it harder for workers on fixed-term contracts to acquire supplementary pension rights;**
- **the provision enabling employees moving from one company to another to transfer 'acquired rights' and reinvest them in the pension fund attached to their new employment has been deleted;**
- **the minimum age for the acquisition of pension rights is raised;**
- **the lack of transparency in information on the rights acquired by workers.**

The proposal as amended and adopted does not respond to the challenges facing working life today.

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

● **ETUC welcomes the European Council agreement: the Charter of Fundamental Rights will be legally binding - 23/06/2007**

The ETUC welcomes the agreement reached at the [European Council](#): **the ETUC believes that the outcome represents a step forward, but regrets that the European Council did not go further**. The new text is of course more positive than the Nice Treaty, but worse than the Draft Constitutional Treaty.

However a move forward was very important: the Charter of Fundamental Rights will be legally binding, apart from in the United Kingdom, which deplorably adopted an opt-out.

The ETUC will monitor carefully the work of the Intergovernmental Conference (IGC) organised by the Portuguese EU Presidency, calling for the close involvement of the social partners.

[ETUC press release](#)[European Council Conclusions](#)

● **Communication on flexicurity: the ETUC regrets the Commission's approach - 27/06/2007**

The Commission published a [Communication on flexicurity](#). In the view of the ETUC, **the Commission approach is biased against the protection and stability of jobs, which is a key worker's right**. According to John Monks, 'Giving companies more freedom to dismiss, which appears to be the core idea of the Communication, will only make matters worse'. **Reforms should complement and not replace job protection systems. Moreover, flexicurity must incorporate security as well as flexibility, backed by strong social protection.**

More and better jobs for all are the real solution to labour market segmentation and social exclusion, and not more precarious jobs for all.

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

[Back <<](#)

● **Green Paper on adaptation to climate change: the risks of restructuring have to be subject to negotiations - 29/06/2007**

The ETUC welcomes the Commission's adoption of the Green Paper on adapting to climate change. **The Green Paper quite rightly focuses on the social aspects of adaptation.**

In Europe, **jobs might be threatened in many economic sectors which depend upon the climate, such as farming, tourism, fisheries or water, and the transition costs could thus be very high.**

For those reasons, **the social partners must be closely involved in the framing and application of adaptation policies**, so as wherever possible to avoid restructuring and to support the professional retraining required.

The ETUC therefore calls for the European social partners to be represented in the European consultative group on adaptation to climate change which the European Commission plans to set up in the months ahead.

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

[Back <<<](#)

ETUC News

● **Trade union assembly for the Charter of Fundamental Rights - 20/06/2007**

On the eve of one of the most important European summit meetings in recent years, the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) organised **an assembly in Brussels, to call for the Charter of Fundamental Rights to be included in any new European constitutional treaty.**

Many trade unionists from several European countries took part. **A trade union delegation, led by John Monks, met with European Commission President José Manuel Barroso.** The ETUC went 'on the offensive', warning that if the new treaty text did not include the Charter of Fundamental Rights, then trade unions would campaign against it.

[ETUC press release](#)[John Monks' speech](#)[Emergency Statement on the Charter of Fundamental Rights adopted by the Seville Congress](#)[Pictures of the meeting of the trade union delegation with José Manuel Barroso](#)

● **First meeting of the Executive committee after the Seville Congress - 26/06/2007**

European trade union leaders gathered in Brussels for the first ETUC Executive Committee after the 11th ETUC Congress.

Delegates mainly talked about the outcome of the European Council.

In addition, the members of the Committee discussed a joint report from the social partners on the Key Challenges facing European Labour Markets.

● **ETUC meeting with EU Portuguese Presidency - 29/06/2007**

An ETUC delegation met José Sócrates, the Prime Minister of Portugal, to present the Trade Union Memorandum of demands for the next six months.

Concerning the Intergovernmental Conference (IGC), the European trade union movement raised a number of outstanding questions left by the EU summit, including the precise status of the Charter of Fundamental Rights, a legal framework for vital public services, the role of the social partners, and decision-making procedures in areas such as social policy and migration.

Moreover, the delegation also urged the incoming Portuguese EU Presidency to push forward in identifying ways to promote the European Social Model.

The future of the Lisbon Strategy, the definition of framework legislation on public services, sustainable development, the revision of the Working Time Directive as well as the adoption of the Temporary Agency Workers Directive are among the trade union priorities for the next six months.

[ETUC Press release](#)[Trade Union Memorandum to the Portuguese Presidency](#)

[Back <<<](#)

EU Agenda

June - July 2007

01-03/06/2007	Informal Meeting of Environment Ministers (Essen)	Meeting Agenda
04/06/2007	Eurogroup (Luxembourg)	
05/06/2007	EU – Japan Summit (Berlin)	Summit Agenda
05/06/2007	ECOFIN Council (Luxembourg)	Council Agenda
06-07/06/2007	'Mini-Plenary' Session at the European Parliament (Brussels)	Plenary Session Agenda
06-08/06/2007	Transport, Telecommunications and Energy Council (Luxembourg)	Council Agenda
12-13/06/2007	Conseil "Justice et affaires intérieures" (Luxembourg)	Council Agenda
17-19/06/2007	Conseil "Affaires générales et relations extérieures" (Luxembourg)	Council Agenda
18-21/06/2007	Plenary Session at the European Parliament (Strasbourg)	Plenary Session Agenda
21-22/06/2007	European Council (Brussels)	European Council Agenda
25-26/06/2007	Competitiveness Council (Luxembourg)	Council Agenda
27/06/2007	'Mini-Plenary' Session at the European Parliament (Brussels)	Plenary Session Agenda
28-29/06/2007	Environment Council (Luxembourg)	Council Agenda
02/07/2007	Joint Meeting of the Portuguese Government and the European Commission (Porto)	Meeting Agenda
04/07/2007	EU-Brazil Summit (Lisbon)	Summit Agenda
05-07/07/2007	Informal Meeting of Ministers for Employment and Social Affairs (Guimarães)	Meeting Agenda
09/07/2007	Eurogroup (Brussels)	Meeting Agenda
09-12/07/2007	Plenary Session at the European Parliament (Strasbourg)	
10/07/2007	ECOFIN Council (Brussels)	Meeting Agenda
11/07/2007	Plenary Session at the European Economic and Social Committee (Brussels)	
13/07/2007	ECOFIN Council (Budget) (Brussels)	Council Agenda
19-20/07/2007	Informal Meeting of Ministers for Competitiveness (Lisbon)	Meeting Agenda
23-24/07/2007	General Affairs and External Relations Council (Brussels)	Council Agenda

[**Back <<<**](#)

ETUC Agenda

June - July 2007

● 20/06/2007	Trade Union Assembly for the Charter of Fundamental Rights (Brussels)	Practical information
● 25-29/06/2007	Congrès de la Confédération générale du travail Force ouvrière (Lille)	Congress programme
● 26/06/2007	ETUC Steering Committee (Brussels)	
● 26/06/2007	ETUC Executive Committee (Brussels)	
● 29/06/2007	ETUC Meeting with the Portuguese EU Presidency (Lisbon)	
● 11/07/2007	Meeting of the Group II « Workers » of the European Economic and Social Committee (Brussels)	

[Back <<<](#)

Communications



ETUC film on trade union membership

The ETUC has produced a film on trade union membership, which was presented at the Seville Congress. The film is part of the trade union membership project, and shows four best practices (Italy, Sweden, Poland and United Kingdom).

At present the film is available in English only, and lasts for 17 minutes.

[A web format version is available on the ETUC website.](#)

Affiliated or media organisations that wish to obtain a high definition version should contact Patricia Grillo: pgrillo@etuc.org



[ETUC film on trade union membership \(Format web/Avi\)](#)



The ETUC in the media: a new section of the ETUC website

The ETUC website now includes a new section: [The ETUC in the European media](#). This section is dedicated to radio and television programmes focusing on the ETUC.

Moreover, there will be more new features appearing on the ETUC website in the coming months: please check regularly on our home page!!!



[The ETUC in the European media](#)



Latest ETUC publications – June 2007

– [EU - Latin America Trade Union cooperation following the Vienna Summit](#)

– [Mobility on the labour market and lifelong learning](#)

– [Study on climate change and employment](#)



Publications- recent Commission documents

The following reports are now available:

- [Communication « Posting of workers in the framework of the provision of services »](#) (13/06);
- Communication [« Towards Common Principles of Flexicurity »](#) (27/06);

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

- Mid-term review of Industrial Policy (04/07);
- Communication [« Options for reducing the pay gap between women and men »](#) (18/07).

[Back <<<](#)

Dossier

"On the Offensive – For Social Europe, Solidarity, Sustainability" – 11th ETUC Congress

The **11th Congress of the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC)**, held at the convention centre in **Seville from 21 to 24 May 2007**, was this year's flagship event for the European trade union movement.

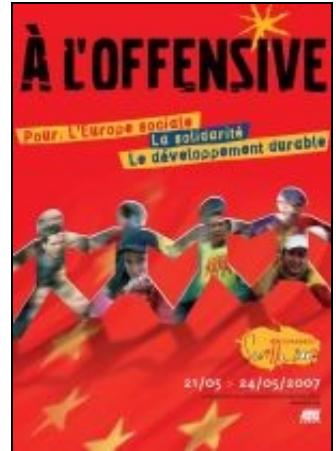
Some 700 trade union representatives from the ETUC's 81 national member organisations took part in the Congress. Three hundred guests also participated.

During the four days of proceedings, delegates debated and agreed the ETUC action plan for the coming years and elected a president, general secretary, two deputy general secretaries and four confederal secretaries.

Several national and European political figures addressed the plenary, including: [José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero](#), **President of the Spanish Government**; [Franz Müntefering](#), **German Vice-Chancellor and Minister of Labour and Social Affairs**; [Cristina Narbona Ruiz](#), **Spanish Environment Minister**; [Jesús Caldera Sánchez-Capitán](#), **Spanish Minister of Labour**; [José Manuel Barroso](#), **President of the European Commission**, [Vladimír Špidla](#), **European Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities**; and [Jean-Claude Trichet](#), **President of the European Central Bank**.

Some 200 journalists from newspapers and TV stations across Europe covered the event. All participants and journalists were able to follow the debates in 14 European languages.

An "**exhibition**" area, with stands put up by around 50 exhibitors, gave participants the chance to make inquiries and obtain documentation on trade union activities in the different countries and on the European institutions.



Election of new leadership

As laid down by the [ETUC Constitution](#), **the Congress elected its new leadership for the coming years**.

Delegates were asked to **elect a new ETUC President**, in accordance with the rule establishing a non-renewable four-year term of office. [Wanja Lundby-Wedin](#), President of Sweden's Landorganisationen (LO), **was elected President of the ETUC**, succeeding Candido Mendez, General Secretary of the Union General de Trabajadores (UGT).

The outgoing secretariat (2003-2007) was re-elected for an additional four-year term.

[John Monks](#) **was confirmed as General Secretary of the ETUC**, together with [Maria Helena André](#) and [Reiner Hoffmann](#) **as Deputy General Secretaries**. [Catelene Passchier](#), [Joël Decaillon](#), [Walter Cerfeda](#) and [Josef Niemiec](#) **were re-elected as Confederal Secretaries**.



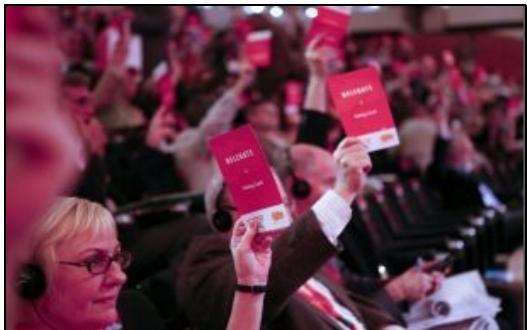
Wanja Lundby-Wedin

The main debates

As summed up in the Congress slogan, the **European trade union movement has decided to go on the offensive for a social Europe, solidarity and sustainable development**, working actively to influence the European political agenda in the coming years.

During the four days of Congress proceedings, delegates debated and put to the vote the

strategy and action programme proposed by the Secretariat, to which the member organisations contributed actively in the preparatory committees. Delegates also adopted the [Seville Manifesto](#), which sums up the political priorities of the European trade union movement.



and environmental challenges.

Numerous political, economic, social and environmental **challenges** lie ahead for trade unions. At European level, **unemployment remains high** in many countries and **a large proportion of the new jobs being created offer little security and are poorly paid**. What is more, **financial investment strategies are increasingly based on the short-term and on speculation**, offering few prospects for innovation and enhanced productivity. Deregulation and liberalisation are not the answers to today's social

Accordingly, in the coming years, a trade union offensive is needed on five main fronts, summed up in the [Seville Manifesto](#) approved by the Congress:

- **Stronger European trade unions;**
- **An emerging European labour market: quality working conditions for all;**
- **Europe: an area of social dialogue, collective bargaining and workers' participation;**
- **A European Union with effective social, economic and environmental governance;**
- **A stronger European Union.**

The ETUC has decided to go on the offensive on wages by launching a campaign for fairer pay in Europe. The campaign aims to improve the situation of workers and their families, in the context of an increasing lack of security.

The question of flexicurity was also at the heart of the debates. For the ETUC, flexibility must work to the advantage of both workers and companies and, above all, must not lead to deregulation that penalises first and foremost the most vulnerable workers. **The key elements of an acceptable flexicurity are to provide European workers with appropriate protection against the impact of globalisation, such as an investment in training, as well as active employment policies to support workers during transitional periods, without disregarding the role unions should play in this process, particularly through training and consultation of workers.**

The evolution of the debate on the **European Union's institutional reforms** was also a focus of the delegates' discussions, particularly in relation to the future of the Constitutional Treaty. An urgent resolution was adopted, calling on Europe's leaders not to water down or abolish the Charter of Fundamental Rights at the European Council on 21-22 June. **The Charter of Fundamental Rights must be written into the future treaty to give it binding legal force.**

The Seville Congress reference documents

- [Activity Report 2003-2006](#)
- [Seville Manifesto](#)
- [Urgent resolution on the Constitution](#)
- [Resolution: "On the offensive on pay" \(provisional version\)](#)
- [Strategy and action plan \(provisional version\)](#)

Wide visibility in the media

The Seville Congress obtained **very wide coverage in the European media**. The Press and Communications Department put in place **different tools and events to facilitate the work of the 200 accredited media representatives at the Congress**. These included a daily press conference, a dedicated website and direct broadcasting of the key debates. Those initiatives helped ensure very wide media coverage of the event.

Press conferences

A press conference was held daily, following the agenda of the proceedings and debates in plenary. John Monks was the speaker at the press conference on the first day. The main subject that day was his opening address. Trade unionism and financial capitalism were also discussed.

The second day, Maria Helena André and Walter Cerfeda answered journalists' questions on flexicurity, wage policy and collective bargaining.

The third and last press conference at the congress focused entirely on the [Laval and Viking cases](#) currently before the European Court of Justice: Wanja Lundby-Wedin and John Monks commented on the opinions of the Court's Advocate Generals on these two cases, of monumental importance for the future of collective bargaining in Europe.

Website

The internet site <http://sevilla.etuc.org/en>, dedicated entirely to the Congress, kept users constantly informed of events and programme changes. **The bilingual English-French site, which was updated daily, was the portal to the 11th ETUC Congress in Seville**: users could consult press releases, supporting documents, working papers and a wide selection of photos and videos.

Web-TV

For the first time ever, **the Congress proceedings were broadcast live in four language versions**. Viewers were able to follow the key debates during the four days of proceedings. [A selection of pre-recorded videos is also currently online in the video section of the ETUC website to allow users to see the best moments of the Seville Congress again.](#)

Seville Congress multimedia resources

[Photo gallery](#)

[Selection of videos](#)



« ON THE OFFENSIVE – FOR SOCIAL EUROPE, SOLIDARITY AND SUSTAINABILITY »

THE 11TH ETUC CONGRESS IN PICTURES





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