

[ETUC newsletter]



Dear readers,

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Figure of the month

9,6%

Only **9,6%** of Europe's adult population (24-64 years) take part in **vocational training programmes**.

(Source: Eurostat)

Make a note

SIGN our petition for high-quality public services, accessible to all

www.petitionpublicservice.eu

The future of social Europe is under threat.

The recent judgement by the European Court of Justice on the Laval case has been a disappointment to the European trade union movement. Even though it recognises the right to strike as being a fundamental right in the EU, this judgement is liable to have adverse consequences on the ability of the trade unions to guarantee equality of treatment and protection for workers, irrespective of their nationality.

We are also disappointed at the implications that this judgement has for the Swedish collective bargaining system and those of certain other Nordic countries, which have proved themselves amply and which represent models of flexicurity encouraged by the European Commission.

“The future of social Europe is under threat.”

On top of this, we see the persistent stalemate on two key social measures to which we are firmly committed: the revision of the 'working time' directive and the draft directive on temporary workers. The Employment and Social Affairs Council has been unsuccessful in finding a compromise to break the deadlock. We shall bring pressure to bear on the Slovenian and French presidencies to try and achieve a positive outcome.

The signature of the Lisbon Treaty marked the end of a difficult period for the EU, particularly from the institutional point of view, and the legally binding character granted to the Charter on Fundamental Rights represents a major step forwards. We are convinced that this text must represent a springboard for more ambitious social policies, and we urge Europe's leaders to work towards this.

Season's greetings to you all.

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General Secretary

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[ETUC in action]

Federation campaigns

Unilever action day

04/12/2007 – The European Federation of Food, Agriculture and Tourism Trade Unions ([EFFAT](#)), the European Mine, Chemical and Energy Workers' Federation ([EMCEF](#)) and the UNILEVER European Works Council (EWC) organised a **European day of action in Rotterdam to protest against the loss of 10,000 to 12,000 jobs at UNILEVER**.



This decision on restructuring was taken **without full notification of workers' representatives on the UNILEVER EWC**. Seven hundred workers, together with trade union delegates from 16 European countries, presented a list of demands to the UNILEVER management.

[More information on the European day of action](#)

Major meetings – Conferences

ETUC Executive Committee

05–06/12/2007 – The last meeting of the ETUC Executive Committee in 2007 took place in Brussels. **Migration, the revision of the directives on European Works Councils and working time, the draft directive on temporary agency workers, climate change, and the crisis in global financial markets** were all on the agenda.

The European Commissioner for Economic and Monetary Affairs,



Joaquín Almunia, took part in the first day's proceedings.



[Trade Union Agenda]

December 2007 – January 2008

04–05/12/2007	European Federation of Building and Woodworkers General Assembly (Luxembourg)
05/12/2007	ETUC Steering Committee (Brussels)
05–06/12/2007	ETUC Executive Committee (Brussels)
06–09/12/2007	TURK-IS Congress (Ankara)
10–12/12/2007	UNIO General Assembly (Oslo)
12/12/2007	Meeting of the Group II « Workers » of the European Economic and Social Committee (Brussels)
15/12/2007	Travail Suisse Congress (Berne)
18/12/2007	ETUC press conference on « Laval » and « Viking » cases (Brussels)
16/01/2008	Meeting of the Group II « Workers » of the European Economic and Social Committee (Brussels)



[Focus on the EU and trade union positions]

Employment Council:

deadlock persists on working time and temporary agency workers

06/12/2007 – The Employment and Social Affairs Council was unable to reach an agreement either on revision of the Working Time Directive or on the draft Temporary Agency Workers Directive.

On the eve of the Council meeting, the ETUC again called for the proposed directive on temporary agency workers to be adopted, and opposed the watering down of the Working Time Directive. Thus, it was very disappointed with the outcome. The ETUC hopes to see these two issues reach a positive conclusion under the Slovenian and French presidencies. The European trade union movement remains mobilised and will keep up the pressure for a solution during the course of the year.

[ETUC press release](#)

[Conclusions of the Employment and Social Affairs Council](#)

EU–Africa Summit:

the social partners must be involved

08/12/2007 – The ETUC took part in European Union–Africa Summit in Lisbon on 8–9 December.

Maria Helena André, ETUC Deputy General Secretary, presented key elements of the declaration adopted at the EU–Africa Trade Union Summit: the fundamental importance of decent work, the promotion of democracy, recognition of the role of the social partners as actors in economic and social development, and a common strategy on migration and development.

The ETUC took the opportunity to push once again for the deadline for the conclusion of Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) to be extended.

[ETUC press release](#)

[More information on the EU–Africa Summit](#)



EU AFRICA SUMMIT
CIMEIRA UE ÁFRICA

«Laval Case»:

The ETUC is disappointed with the ECJ judgement

18/12/2007 – The European Court of Justice (ECJ) delivered its judgement on the “Laval” case. Although the judgement contains positive elements, including recognition in EU law of the right to strike as a fundamental right, the ETUC was disappointed at the unexpected decision of the ECJ and feared the consequences of this case on the Swedish system of collective bargaining. In fact, the narrow interpretation of the posted workers’ directive could have negative implications for unions’ ability to promote equal treatment and protection of workers regardless of nationality.

[ETUC press release](#)

[European Court of Justice press release](#)



ECB talks of raising interest rates,



ETUC expresses disbelief

10/12/2007 – At their meeting on 6 December, the members of the governing board of the European Central Bank (ECB) discussed the possibility of a further increase in interest rates.

The ETUC expressed its amazement at this ‘hawkish’ attitude, and demanded instead a drop in interest rates to help boost the economy.

[ETUC press release](#)

[ECB press release](#)



[Focus on the EU and trade union positions]

The Viking case:

the right to collective action is an integral part of European Community law



11/12/2007 – The European Court of Justice (ECJ) gave its judgement in the [Viking Case](#), confirming that **the right to collective action is a fundamental right that can justify restrictions on the freedom of establishment guaranteed by the EU Treaty** if undertaken for the protection of workers and their conditions of employment.

The ETUC welcomed the ruling. However, the Court's judgement is less clear about **transnational trade union rights**. The European trade union movement would have preferred a **clear recognition of the right to cooperate across borders** to counterbalance the power of organised business in an increasingly globalised economy.

[ETUC press release](#)

[European Court of Justice press release](#)

The Lisbon Treaty

must be a springboard for a stronger social Europe

13/12/2007 – EU heads of state and government have signed the **Treaty of Lisbon**. The ETUC welcomes the reinforcement of objectives such as **full employment**, the reference to a **social market economy** and the **protocol on public services**. The **Charter of Fundamental Rights** becomes **legally binding**, except for Poland and the UK, which have secured opt-outs. The European trade union movement deeply regrets this opt-out.

The ETUC believes that European decision-makers must use **this treaty as a base for progress on social Europe**.

[ETUC press release](#)

[Portuguese EU Presidency press release](#)

Bali Conference: highs and lows

18/12/2007 – The United Nations Conference on **Climate Change** has resulted in the definition of a **roadmap for future negotiations**. The ETUC welcomes the roadmap, but regrets the **lack of binding commitments and targets for reducing the greenhouse gas emissions** of the developed countries in the immediate future. At the conference, representatives of the European trade union movement **asked for the impact of adaptation to climate change on workers in the commitments for the period after 2012 to be taken into account**.

[ETUC press release](#)

[Commission press release](#)

European Council:

a commitment to Social Europe is needed

14/12/2007 – At the European Council meeting, the [ETUC expressed its point of view](#) on important social issues on the summit agenda: **flexicurity and the Lisbon Strategy**.

On flexicurity, EU decision-makers must take account of three aspects: promoting transition from precarious to secure jobs with stable and open-ended contracts, safeguarding the role of the social partners and collective bargaining in implementing flexicurity policies, and the need for new and reliable indicators for evaluating progress.

At the same time, the **quality of work** must be a priority in the **forthcoming cycle of the Lisbon Strategy to be launched in 2008**.

[ETUC press release](#)

[European Council conclusions](#)



[EU Agenda] December 2007 – January 2008

03/12/2007	Transports, Telecommunications and Energy Council (Brussels)	Council Agenda
03/12/2007	Eurogroup (Brussels)	
04/12/2007	ECOFIN Council (Brussels)	Council Agenda
05–06/12/2007	Employment, Social Policies, Health and Consumer Council (Brussels)	Council Agenda
06–07/12/2007	Justice and Home Affairs Council (JHA) (Brussels)	Council Agenda
08–09/12/2007	UE–Africa Summit (Lisbon)	Summit Agenda
10/12/2007	EU–Russia Troika (Brussels)	Meeting Agenda
10–13/12/2007	Plenary Session at the European Parliament (Strasbourg)	Plenary Session Agenda
10–11/12/2007	General Affairs and External Relations Council (Brussels)	Council Agenda
10–11/12/2007	Ministerial Troika EU/USA (Washington)	Meeting Agenda
12/12/2007	Signature of the Charter of Fundamental Rights (Strasbourg)	
12–13/12/2007	Plenary Session at the European Economic and Social Committee (Brussels)	
13/12/2007	Signing ceremony of the Treaty of Lisbon (Lisbon)	
13–14/12/2007	European Council (Brussels)	Council Agenda
20/12/2007	Environment Council (Brussels)	Council Agenda
14–17/01/2008	Plenary Session at the European Parliament (Strasbourg)	
16–17/01/2008	Plenary Session at the European Economic and Social Committee (Brussels)	
21/01/2008	Eurogroup (Brussels)	Meeting Agenda
22/01/2008	ECOFIN Council (Brussels)	Council Agenda
24–26/01/2008	Informal Meeting of Ministers for Justice and Home Affairs (Brdo)	Meeting Agenda
28–29/01/2008	General Affairs and External Relations Council (Brussels)	Council Agenda
29/01 – 02/02/2008	Informal Meeting of Ministers for Employment, Social Policy and Gender Equality, and Ministerial Conference on Gender Equality (Brdo)	Meeting Agenda



[You may be interested]

Media



Press conference on Viking and Laval cases

18/12/2007 – The ETUC Press and Communication department organised a press conference on “Viking” and “Laval” cases, in Brussels. **John Monks**, ETUC General Secretary, **David Cockroft**, International Transport Workers’ Federation (ITF) General Secretary, and **Claes-Mikael Jonsson**, LO-Sweden legal adviser, answered the questions posed by the many journalists present.

The ETUC in the media

The ETUC in ‘Le Monde’

You may be interested to read an article on the ETUC in the French daily **Le Monde**. You can find it at:

<http://www.lemonde.fr/web/article/0,1-0@2-3232,36-989254,0.html>



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Publications

The Seville Manifesto

is available
in 11 languages



The Seville Manifesto, adopted at the [11th ETUC Congress](#), is now available in [11 languages](#): German, English, French, Spanish, Italian, Dutch, Norwegian, Polish, Portuguese, Slovenian and Swedish.

Recent European Commission documents

The following reports are now available:

- [Commission's Strategic Report on the renewed Lisbon Strategy for Growth and Jobs and its accompanying measures](#) (11/12)
- [Communication: Regions delivering Lisbon through Innovation and Cohesion Policy 2007-2013](#) (12/12)

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