

[ETUC newsletter]



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Figure of the month

200 million migrants

In 2008, there were more than 200 million international migrants in the world, i.e. 3% of the world population and two and a half times more than in 1965.

(Source: 2008 report from the International Organisation for Migration)



Dear Reader,

2008 ended with three major successes for Social Europe.

Firstly, the draft working time directive proposed by the Council was rejected by a significant majority in the European Parliament. Our mobilisation in the streets of Strasbourg on the eve of the vote contributed to this success and thanks to all those trade unionists from all over Europe which supported it.

By the same token, we welcomed the agreement on overhauling the directive on European Works Councils. This is a very important agreement for the European trade union movement after many years of mobilisation in this area.

There is also a third progressive item – a new directive on equality for temporary agency workers. All these measures are the culmination of years of hard campaigning by the ETUC and its affiliates.

However, other massive challenges await us this year. Everyone agrees that the economic crisis will worsen in 2009, as can be seen in the daily reports of layoffs and restructurings. Job security will be further eroded as a result of the collapse of casino capitalism now spreading rapidly into the real economy. That is why we remain – now more than ever – mobilised for Social Europe and workers' rights – and we shall be campaigning hard for jobs, a 'New Green Deal' and for a social progress protocol to combat the recent decisions of the European Court of Justice which are damaging collective bargaining and trade union rights.

I wish you all a Happy New Year in 2009.

John Monks
General Secretary



European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC)

Boulevard du Roi Albert II, 5 | B-1210 Bruxelles (Belgique)

Telephone: +32 (0)2 224 04 11 | Fax: +32 (0)2 224 04 54

E-mail: media@etuc.org | www.etuc.org



[ETUC in action]

Executive Committee

03-04/12/2008 – The ETUC Executive Committee met in Brussels on 3 and 4 December.

The [trade unions' reaction to the Commission's proposals for a European Recovery Programme](#) was the main item of the debates. **José Manuel Barroso, President of the European Commission, took the floor in order to present this recovery programme to the Executive Committee members.**

The follow up on the salary campaign and ETUC actions and activities on promoting equal rights were also part of the main subjects of the meeting.

Euro-demonstration on working time: 15,000 demonstrators say 'no' to social regression

16/12/2008 – In response to the ETUC call, **15,000 workers demonstrated in Strasbourg on the eve of the European Parliament vote on the Working Time Directive.**

Under the slogan 'Priority to workers' rights, not longer working hours', the demonstrators urged the members of the European Parliament not to weaken the Working Time Directive. **The mobilisation contributed to an important**

success: the day after the Euro-demonstration, the **European Parliament rejected the Council position and confirmed its support for a revision of the working time directive which would be positive for European workers.**

You will find a selection of images from the Euro-demonstration on the following page

[ETUC press release](#)

Social dialogue Stress at work: EU agreement makes a difference

15/12/2008 – The **European Social Partners (ETUC, BUSI-NESSEUROPE, UEAPME and CEEP)** presented their report on the implementation of the [autonomous framework agreement on work-related stress adopted at EU level in 2004](#). This report has shown that the European agreement is of **real added value**, by raising awareness about the importance of dealing with work-related stress.

[ETUC press release](#)

[Trade Union Agenda] December 2008 – January 2009

03/12/2008	Meeting of the Group II 'Workers' of the European Economic and Social Committee (Brussels)	
03/12/2008	ETUC steering committee (Brussels)	
03-04/12/2008	ETUC executive committee (Brussels)	
16/12/2008	Euro-demonstration on working time (Strasbourg)	Euro-demonstration programme
17-20/12/2008	Comisiones obreras Congress (Spain)	Congress Programme
14/01/2009	Meeting of the Group II 'Workers' of the European Economic and Social Committee (Brussels)	



[ETUC in action]

**15,000 demonstrators said
'no' to social regression !**



**“ Priority to workers’
rights, not longer
working hours. ”**



EURO-DEMONSTRATION – STRASBOURG – 16 DECEMBER 2008



[Focus on the EU and trade union positions]

ETUC welcomes the compromise on energy and climate change package

11-12/12/2008 – ETUC welcomed the **compromise reached at the European Council concerning the energy and climate change package**, but **deplored the lack of measures to ease the consequences on workers**. Despite pressure from employers, the **objectives of a 20% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions and a 20% increase in the share of renewable energy were confirmed**. At the same time, ETUC [renewed its proposal](#) of a European low-carbon economy adaptation fund to ease hardship for workers squeezed out of the workplace due to climate change measures.

[ETUC press release](#)

Working time directive: Social Europe wins at European Parliament

17/12/2008 – ETUC welcomed the **outcome of the European Parliament's vote in second reading about the revision of the working time directive**. This vote rejected the very negative proposals made by the Council last June. For John Monks, *'[The Euro-demonstration](#), comprising 15,000 trade unionists in Strasbourg, lifted our campaign and helped persuade European parliamentarians to do the right thing'*.

[ETUC press release](#)

Recast of the EWC directive: ETUC welcomes the vote of the European Parliament and of the Council

17/12/2008 – Regarding the recast of the European Works Councils (EWC) Directive, **the European Parliament confirmed by a huge majority the political agreement reached with the Council on 4 December**. The political agreement is based on the **joint advice given by the social partners in August 2008**. On the same day, the **'Employment and Social Affairs Council' confirmed the reform**.

For Reiner Hoffmann, ETUC Deputy General Secretary *'Strengthening the rights of EWCs is the correct response to limit the negative impact of the economic crisis. Workers need effective information and consultation rights which give them the chance to influence management decisions in order to anticipate and manage structural change in a socially acceptable direction.'*

[ETUC press release](#)

[European Commission press release](#)

Deflation risk: interest rates should be drastically reduced

03/12/2008 – On the eve of the governing council of the European Central Bank (ECB), **ETUC called for drastic cuts in interest rates of at least 100**

base points, in order to avoid inflation falling to zero level and consequent deflation.

The ECB partially took into account ETUC's call, by reducing

the interest rates by 75 base points.

[ETUC press release](#)



[EU Agenda]

December 2008 – January 2009

01/12/2008	EU-China Summit (Lyon)	Summit Agenda
01/12/2008	Eurogroup Meeting (Brussels)	Meeting Agenda
01-02/12/2008	Competitiveness Council (Brussels)	Council Agenda
02/12/2008	ECOFIN Council (Brussels)	Council Agenda
03-04/12/2008	Mini-plenary Session at the European Parliament (Brussels)	
03-04/12/2008	Plenary Session at the European Economic and Social Committee (Brussels)	
04-05/12/2008	Environment Council (Brussels)	Council Agenda
08-09/12/2008	Transports, Telecommunications and Energy Council (Brussels)	Council Agenda
08-09/12/2008	General Affairs and External Relations Council (Brussels)	Council Agenda
11-12/12/2008	European Council (Brussels)	Council Agenda
15-16/12/2008	Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council (Brussels)	Council Agenda
15-18/12/2008	Plenary Session at the European Parliament (Strasbourg)	
22/12/2008	UE – Brazil Summit (Brazil)	Summit Agenda
12-15/01/2009	Plenary Session at the European Parliament (Strasbourg)	
14-15/01/2009	Plenary Session at the European Economic and Social Committee (Brussels)	
15-16/01/2009	Informal Meeting of Ministers for Justice and Home Affairs (Prague)	Meeting Agenda
19/01/2009	Eurogroup Meeting (Brussels)	Meeting Agenda
20/01/2009	ECOFIN Council (Brussels)	Council Agenda
23-25/01/2009	Informal Meeting of Ministers for Employment and Social Affairs (Luhachovice)	Meeting Agenda
25-27/01/2009	General Affairs and External Relations Council (Brussels)	Council Agenda
29-30/01/2009	Informal Meeting of Development Ministers (Prague)	Meeting Agenda



[You may be interested]

Conference organised by the European Economic and Social Committee

The European Economic and Social Committee is organising a conference entitled [“Rien ne va plus”? Ways to rebuild the European Social Market Economy](#), which is scheduled to take place on Thursday, 22nd January 2009 and Friday, 23rd January 2009.

The conference will be an important event to discuss intensively the appropriate measures for sustaining growth and employment, improving financial market regulation and revising the international financial architecture with European institutions, financial actors, social partners and other civil society organisations.

For more information, please contact Mariachiara Esposito : mariachiara.esposito@eesc.europa.eu.

European Commission publications

The following reports are now available:

- [Proposal to revise the European Globalisation adjustment Fund](#) (16/12);
- [Public consultation on Hedge Funds](#) (18/12).

Editorial Team

MANAGING EDITOR: John Monks

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF: Patricia Grillo

EDITOR: Daniele Melli

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