

[ETUC newsletter]



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Dear Readers,

All the unions have mobilised to defend the interests of those affected by or likely to be affected by the violence of this crisis. In March, there were a number of high-level meetings and actions during which we had the opportunity to make our voice heard. We are remaining on the offensive. It is our opinion that this crisis is, of course, extremely serious but it is not insurmountable. It requires the introduction of bold and coordinated measures for both the short and long term to tackle the question of massive redundancies, unemployment and jobs. We have to keep workers on the job. We think that this crisis can be defeated if we invest in a New Social Deal that puts the accent on safeguarding jobs and investing in tomorrow's jobs, on lifelong training especially for young people, and on more appropriate use of European funds like the European Social Fund or the Globalisation Adjustment Fund.

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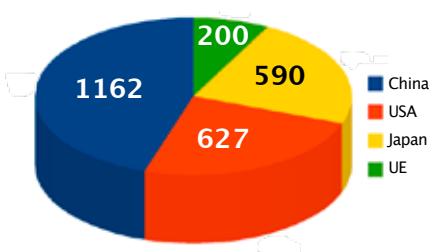
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Figure of the month

Recovery plans in the world (billion of euros)



To face the crisis, China has mobilised €1,162 billion, USA €627 bn, Japan €590 bn, and the European Union has mobilised €200 bn. (Source: Les Echos)

The Employment Summit that was set to take place in Prague on 7 May has been downgraded to a Social Troika, a move we see as a bad signal even as many fear losing their jobs. However, we will not turn down the invitation to make our messages heard there, in spite of the meeting's more limited impact. These messages are certain to carry a particular resonance because they will also be relayed, one week after the Social Troika, by the European action days we are organising in Madrid, Brussels, Prague and Berlin from 14 to 16 May.

John Monks
General Secretary

FIGHT THE CRISIS
PUT PEOPLE FIRST



[ETUC in action]

G-20: ETUC participates in the world day of action

23/03/2009 – ETUC took part in the international world day of action that was organised by the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) to prepare the forthcoming G20 Summit in London on 2 April 2009. John Monks and the General Secretaries of the Belgian trade union members of ETUC met Belgian Prime Minister Herman Van Rompuy and European Commission President José Manuel Barroso in order to submit a [declaration presenting workers' expectations of the G20 Summit](#).

[ETUC press release](#)

[ITUC press release](#)



Source: European Commission

John Monks hailed North-American trade unions' renaissance

04/03/2009 – John Monks took part in the American Federation of Labor-Congress of Industrial Organisations (AFL-CIO) Executive Council in Miami at the beginning of March 2009. During his intervention, which was ahead of the G20 Summit to be held in London at the beginning of April, he stated that **trade unions on both sides of the Atlantic now have a chance to engage with renewed purpose and effect in dealing with the dire economic situation.**

[John Monks' speech](#)

ETUC Executive Committee

16-17/03/2009 – The ETUC Executive Committee met in Brussels mid March. The economic and social crisis, the ETUC campaign 'Fight the crisis: put the people first', as well as the upcoming European Parliament elections were the main topics of the meeting.

[ETUC press release](#)

CONFERENCE : The financial crisis and the European Employment Strategy



05-06/03/2009 – At the beginning of March, ETUC organised a conference on [the financial crisis and the European Employment Strategy](#) in Brussels. Several trade union leaders, European social partner representatives, as well as European Commission representatives took part in the conference. During the conference, ETUC sound once again the alarm about the negative impact of the financial crisis on the real economy, in particular on employment. According to ETUC forecasts, the **unemployment rate in Europe could exceed 10% in 2009**, with an increase of about four million more jobseekers than in 2008. The European trade union movement demanded an **extraordinary European plan against redundancies and for securing careers**.



[ETUC in action]

ETUC CAMPAIGN Fight the crisis: put the people first

ETUC has just launched a European campaign, entitled [Fight the crisis: put the people first](#). For the European trade union movement, it is unacceptable for workers and citizens to pay the price for a crisis they did not cause.

The key events of this campaign will be the four European demonstrations, which will take place **from 14 to 16 May** in Madrid (14/05), Brussels (15/05), Berlin and Prague (16/05).

ETUC is calling for a **New Social Deal** in Europe based on a key five point plan:

- an **expanded recovery programme** to provide more and better jobs;
- **better pay and pensions**, and stronger welfare states;
- an **end to the recent decisions of the European Court of Justice** favouring market freedoms over our fundamental rights and collective agreements;
- **effective regulation of financial markets**, leading to a fair distribution of wealth;
- a **European Central Bank committed to growth and full employment**, not just price stability.

This wide-ranging campaign will serve to make the governments assume their responsibility of providing European responses to this crisis, rather than simply taking case-by-case measures.

FIGHT THE CRISIS
PUT PEOPLE FIRST

Workers, through no fault of their own, are paying a very high price for the recklessness and greediness of the business world especially the banks; unemployment is soaring, precarious work and poverty are spreading, purchasing power is falling, and public debt is increasing.

The ETUC is therefore set the offensive for a New Social Deal in Europe with the following key five point plan:

- An expanded recovery programme to provide more and better jobs, to protect employment in key industries, to invest in new, sustainable technologies, and to maintain vital public services.
- Better pay and pensions, stronger welfare states, higher benefits to protect the purchasing power and effective participation rights needed to boost economies.
- An end to the recent decisions of the European Court of Justice favouring market freedoms over our fundamental rights and collective agreements by confirming the social objectives of the internal market, and guaranteeing equal treatment and equal pay for 'posted' migrant workers.
- Effective regulation of financial markets, a fair distribution of wealth, and no return to casino capitalism or to the "business as usual" of the past 20 years in financial markets.
- A competent central bank committed to growth and full employment, not just price stability.

Support the ETUC's European Days of Action on May 14, 15 and 16, and join the ETUC demonstrations in Brussels, Berlin, Prague and Madrid.

ETUC Demands
NEW SOCIAL DEAL
in Europe

JOIN US

Euro-demonstrations:

14-05-09 Madrid
15-05-09 Brussels
16-05-09 Berlin and Prague

 EUROPEAN TRADE UNION CONFEDERATION (ETUC)
www.etuc.org


Fight the crisis. Put People First.
ETUC Demands
New Social Deal in Europe

MORE INFORMATION:

- ETUC website pages dedicated to the campaign 'Fight the crisis: put the people first':
<http://www.etuc.org/a/5972>
- Dossier on the social and economic crisis – ETUC positions and actions:
<http://www.etuc.org/a/5838>



[Interview]

“Fight the crisis: put the people first”

ETUC General Secretary John Monks presents the measures proposed by ETUC to face the economic crisis and the main events of the campaign ‘Fight the crisis: put the people first’.

Interview with John Monks



1) Which lessons can be learnt from this crisis? And once the crisis will be over, how can we avoid going back to ‘business as usual’?

John Monks (JM): Indeed, we must learn lessons from this crisis. Essentially, modern capitalism has had a heart attack and the damage is causing a worldwide recession, which risks becoming a new great

depression like in the 1930s. The lessons that we have to learn from this crisis are not just about the financial system and its excessive speculation, they are also about the way companies run their affairs, the concept of shareholder value, short-term perspectives, as well as about the need to build a fair and more social economic system. This is the ambition of the world trade union movement and ETUC. Never again, must the excesses of the banks and of many of the rich and powerful be allowed to dominate democracy in the way in which they have done up until now. Today, people are looking towards governments and not the markets – this is a big opportunity for the trade union movement.

To avoid going back to ‘business as usual’, we need a fundamental revision of modern capitalism, and stronger financial regulation is just a start. We also need to introduce new check and balances in the way companies run their affairs. This should include stronger trade unions with greater power and influence in corporate governance. We can hold entrepreneurs to fairer standards than they have become used to in the past 30 years.

2) To fight the crisis, ETUC proposes a New Social Deal. Which are the key elements of this deal?

JM: The first element is that we are looking for a bigger recovery plan than that Europe has so far produced. Industrial output is down 4% in the past quarter. The recovery plan so far is about 0.9% of gross domestic product (GDP) and, frankly, while it is going in the right direction, it is not anything like enough to deal with the crisis. Secondly, it is very important to put specific measures in place that support people who have been made redundant and face unemployment today; this includes schemes promoting short-time working and maintaining workers’ purchasing power. It is very important to keep up wages, benefits and pensions so that people have money to spend. This, in turn, will keep the real economy going instead of engaging in a downward tailspin. Thirdly, we would like to see something done for young people: school and college leavers are going to enter the labour market in a very difficult situation. To overcome these difficulties, they will need particular support to continue education and training. Fourthly, vocational training services should be extended such that people are equipped for the new jobs of the future. Fifthly, European funds, such as the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund and the European Social Fund, should be made available on an emergency basis to support European-wide employment creation projects.

3) How does the European trade union movement judge the Commission’s and Council’s approach to the crisis? What do you think about the fact that the European Council has downgraded the Employment Summit scheduled on 7 May in Prague to a Social Troika meeting?

JM: The Commission and the Council are not moving fast enough. They are too cautious in their initiatives and actions, as well as risking of being accused to act in compliance. The recovery plan was useful and the coordinated bank rescue was a good move; however, more moves are required and a New Social Deal in particular. This deal should contain specific measures to help workers who are paying the price in terms of jobs and wages for the speculation and irresponsibility of bankers and others. So, our demands are more measures and funds, and those quickly.

Concerning the Employment Summit on 7 May next, I regret the decision of the European Council to organise it on a Social Troika basis. This decision is a very bad signal to citizens and workers as it suggests complacency. It



[Interview]

« Fight the crisis: put the people first » (following)

gives the impression that European leaders are not sufficiently concerned about unemployment and we lose now a major opportunity to be heard at the very top level. Nonetheless, we will take part in this 'diminished' summit in the interests of European workers, but it underlines our call to people for supporting and joining the European action days in mid May. We need a European-wide coordinated effort on jobs and, for the time being, we are not getting it.

4) ETUC has just launched the campaign 'Fight the crisis: put the people first'. Which are the main events of this campaign?

JM: We are organising three European actions days in four European capital cities on 14-16 May. The Euro-demonstrations will take place successively on Thursday 14 May in Madrid, Friday 15 May in Brussels and

Saturday 16 May in Berlin and Prague. We invite all our member organisations to participate massively in these four Euro-demonstrations, backing our demands to put the people first in the fight against the crisis.

5) Why is it important for ETUC to support the national protest mobilisations which reveal rising social unrest in several EU countries such as in France or Ireland?

JM: We have been warning European authorities that social unrest would develop and accelerate. The mood is changing from worry to frustration and anger, and the demonstrations in France and Ireland, in particular, are showing that people will not put up with bank rescues and misery for many in exchange. We are channelling some of that frustration and anger in our European action days.

[Trade Union Agenda]

March – April 2009

05-06/03/2009	Conference 'The financial crisis and the European employment strategy' (Brussels)	
17/03/2009	ETUC Steering Committee (Brussels)	
17-18/03/2008	ETUC Executive Committee (Brussels)	
19/03/2009	Joint demonstration of French ETUC affiliates (CGT, CFDT, CFTC, FO and UNSA) for employment and purchasing power (Paris)	
20-21/03/2009	UGT-P Congress (Portugal)	
24/03/2009	Meeting of the Group II 'Workers' of the European Economic and Social Committee (Brussels)	
27/03/2009	ETUC press conference on economic crisis (Brussels)	
28/03/2009	TUC demonstration on the eve of G20 Summit (London)	
01-04/04/2009	UGT Congress (Spain)	
28/04/2009	ETUC Steering Committee (Brussels)	



[Focus on the EU and trade union positions]

European solidarity is necessary to fight the crisis

02/03/2009 – The extraordinary European Council on 1 March 2009 decided to assist central and eastern European Member States in dealing with the economic crisis on a case by case basis. For ETUC, **this approach is insufficient**. The European trade union movement called on the European Commission **not**

to allow the International Monetary Fund to abuse currency crises by imposing lending conditionalities undermining the European Social Model.

[ETUC press release](#)

[EU Czech Presidency press release](#)

European leaders must face the challenges posed by the new depression



Source: EU Czech Presidency

19/03/2009 – An ETUC delegation, led by its President, Wanja Lundby-Wedin, and its General Secretary, John Monks, took part in the **Tripartite Social Summit focusing on the economic and social crisis**. To face this crisis that is turning into a new depression, ETUC called on European leaders to act. Moreover, the European trade union movement **proposed lines of action on a New Social Deal**, notably by **investing in social Europe, avoiding wage cuts**, promoting European solidarity to protect all of us against the irrationality of financial markets.

[ETUC press release](#)

[EU Czech Presidency press release](#)



[Focus on the EU and trade union positions]

Downgrading of the Employment Summit of 7 May 2009: a bad signal to European citizens

23/03/2009 – ETUC deplored the decision of the European Council to downgrade the Employment Summit, due to be held on 7 May 2009, to a simple Social Troika. For ETUC General Secretary John Monks, *'this decision gives the impression that European leaders are not sufficiently concerned about unemployment. On the contrary, we need a European-wide coordinated effort on jobs and we are not getting it'*.
[ETUC press release](#)

Public sector wages under ECB pressure

04/03/2009 – The European Central Bank (ECB) has clearly attacked public sector wages, backing governments keen on implementing wage cuts to the order of around 15%. For Reiner Hoffmann, ETUC Deputy General Secretary, *'it is frightening to see how the President of the ECB has forgotten the lessons of the Great Depression of the 1930s. It is not wages but rather interest rates which should be cut'*.

[ETUC press release](#)

Strengthening the social dimension to cushion the shocks of the crisis

05/03/2009 – The European Commission published the [annual report on social protection and social inclusion](#). For ETUC, in today's context of an economic crisis ravaging across Europe, it is crucial to build on solidarity and to enable social protection systems to play to the full their role of providing stability.
[ETUC press release](#)

International Women's Day : gender inequality risks being exacerbated by the crisis

08/03/2009 – On the occasion of the International Women's Day (IWD), ETUC drew attention to the **importance of gender mainstreaming the various policies and actions that are currently developed to tackle the economic crisis**. According to the European trade union movement, now more than ever, the focus must be on issues of equality and non-discrimination.

[ETUC press release](#)

Working time: social progress has to be guaranteed

17/03/2009 – At the launch of the conciliation process on the Working Time Directive between the Council and the European Parliament, ETUC emphasised the need for strengthening the European social model, by adopting a revision of the Working Time Directive guaranteeing social

progress. Less than three months to the European Parliament elections, ETUC hopes that all European workers, who demonstrated in Strasbourg on 16 December 2008, will not be disappointed.

[ETUC press release](#)



[EU Agenda]

March – April 2009

01/03/2009	European Council (Brussels)	Council Agenda
02/03/2009	Environment Council (Brussels)	Council Agenda
05–06/03/2009	Competitiveness Council (Brussels)	Council Agenda
09–12/03/2009	Plenary Session at the European Parliament (Strasbourg)	
09/03/2009	Eurogroup Meeting (Brussels)	Meeting Agenda
09–10/03/2009	Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council (Brussels)	Council Agenda
10/03/2009	ECOFIN Council (Brussels)	Council Agenda
16–17/03/2009	General Affairs and External Relations Council (Brussels)	Council Agenda
19–20/03/2009	European Council (Brussels)	Council Agenda
22–23/03/2009	Informal Meeting of Ministers for Education (Prague)	Meeting Agenda
24–25/03/2009	Plenary Session at the European Economic and Social Committee (Brussels)	
23–26/03/2009	Plenary Session at the European Parliament (Strasbourg)	
27–28/03/2009	Informal Meeting of Ministers of Foreign Affairs (Hluboká n/V.)	Meeting Agenda
01–02/04/2009	Mini-plenary Session at the European Parliament (Brussels)	
02/04/2009	G–20 Summit (London)	
03–04/04/2009	Informal ECOFIN Meeting (Prague)	Meeting Agenda
05/04/2009	USA–EU Summit (Prague)	Summit Agenda
06–07/04/2009	Justice and Home Affairs Council (Luxembourg)	Council Agenda
14–15/04/2009	Informal Meeting of Ministers for the Environment (Prague)	Meeting Agenda
21–24/04/2009	Plenary Session at the European Parliament (Strasbourg)	
27–28/04/2009	General Affairs and External Relations Council (Luxembourg)	Council Agenda



[You may be interested]

Press conference 'Economic crisis: It is time to act!'



27/03/2009 – On the eve of the G20 Summit, ETUC's press and communications department organised a **press conference in Brussels on the economic crisis**. John Monks, ETUC General Secretary and Walter Cerfeda, ETUC Confederal Sec-

etary presented the elements of a New Social Deal to tackle the economic crisis and announced the launch of the 'Fight the crisis: put people first' campaign. About 20 journalists took part in the conference.

European Commission publications

The following report is now available:

- [Joint Report on Social Protection and Social Inclusion 2009](#)
(05/03);

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PUT PEOPLE FIRST

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