

[ETUC newsletter]



Dear Colleagues,



The year 2010 has not started off under the best of auspices. The economic recovery is still nothing more than a mirage. Unemployment continues to rise and plant closings – like the Opel plant in Antwerp – are announced on a regular basis. This vicious spiral has to end! A large-scale action on employment, and especially youth employment, is imperative.

For the European trade union movement, employment is the top priority. We have repeated this incessantly at every level. We recently reiterated it to the new Spanish EU Presidency, to whom we handed over the ETUC memorandum. We have also warned European political leaders not to give in to the temptation of reducing public expenditure, which remains essential for stimulating the economy and maintaining social cohesion. Public spending can no longer be considered essentially as a cost item.

The ETUC also continues to fight for effective financial rules because we are seeing the financial world return to its old ways, namely developing risky products and paying staggering bonuses.

Lastly, I recently had the opportunity to participate in two economic forums, in Paris and then in Davos. My message was very clear: it is unacceptable for the financial world to carry on as if nothing had happened. Banks must not forget that they were bailed out with public money and that it is workers who are paying for their mistakes. Banks owe a huge debt to society. There has to be a 180° turn to reverse the culture of short-term profits and the lure of gain. If banks themselves do not reverse the trend by focusing on serving the real economy, they should not be surprised to see certain governments try to legislate and impose financial regulations to keep the same destructive causes from producing the same disastrous effects.

The latest figures from Eurostat show that around 19 million people (i.e. 8% of the working population) are working poor. We cannot remain insensitive to this situation. The European Year for combating poverty and social exclusion, for which the ETUC is a partner, will be a way of reconsidering these phenomena and proposing responses to a problem experienced by a growing number of Europeans.

We welcome the decision by the European Council President to convene an extraordinary European Summit on the economic crisis, on 11 February. We will be watching closely to make sure its deliberations are translated into concrete results.

John Monks
General Secretary



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Figure of the month

19 million working poor in Europe

In 2008, 8% of European workers, about 19 million people, were classified as 'working poor'.

(Source: Eurostat)

Note



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[ETUC in action]

Earthquake in Haiti: ETUC expresses its solidarity

18/01/2010 –The ETUC subscribes to the international movement of solidarity launched by the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) calling for an urgent mobilisation in Haiti following the violent earthquake that struck this country on 12 January. **The ETUC also expressed its total solidarity with the Haitian people** and urged the Development Council meeting for an extraordinary session on 18 January to boost its aid measures in support of the victims.

[ITUC appeal](#)

ETUC joins the European campaign against Poverty and Exclusion

(see the dossier on the following page).



The ETUC Women's Committee has a new Presidium



Following the elections on 16 December, the **ETUC Women's Committee has a new Presidium**. Ms **Claudia Menne** from DGB (Germany) is the **new President of the Committee**. The two Vice-Presidents are Ms Karin Ennod from LO-N (Norway) and Ms France Sponem Perez from FO (France). Gitta Vanpeborgh from FGTB (Belgium), Montserrat Sagarra from EFFAT and Gloria Mills from TUC (United Kingdom) were elected substitute members of the Presidium. The ETUC thanks outgoing President Viviane Goergen and the members of the previous Presidium for their commitment during their mandate.

[More information on the ETUC Women's Committee](#)

ETUC Youth committee: first meeting of the new Bureau

18–19/01/2010 – The newly elected Bureau of the ETUC Youth committee met in Brussels to define its action plan for 2010. The priority of this action plan will be youth employment. The Committee will organise a conference on employment and the fight against unemployment. This conference will be held in Madrid from 22 to 24 April 2010 and it will gather around one hundred people. This subject is among ETUC's political priorities. The Bureau of the Youth Committee is composed by 6 members: President Tomasz Jasinski from OPZZ (Poland), Vice-Presidents Yannis Poupkos from GSEE (Greece) and Hans Richardt Schmidt-Nielsen from AC (Denmark), as well as three members, Loraine Mulligan from ICTU (Ireland), Ana Pires from CGTP-IN (Portugal) and Thiébaud Weber from CFTD (France).



[Trade Union Agenda] January – February 2010

20/01/2010	Meeting of the Group II 'Workers' of the European Economic and Social Committee (Brussels)	
04/02/2010	ETUC Steering Committee (Brussels)	
17/02/2010	Meeting of the Group II 'Workers' of the European Economic and Social Committee (Brussels)	



[Dossier]

2010 – European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion TOGETHER, FIGHT POVERTY

ETUC decided to join the '[European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion](#)', a campaign conducted by the European Commission during the year 2010. ETUC will participate in a whole range of events. The ETUC will also work with civil society with a view to eradicating poverty and consequently social exclusion in the European Union. **The ETUC and its member organisations also plan to make the most of the opportunity offered by this European campaign to place their initiatives within the process of the employment campaign it will conduct in 2010.**

For this occasion, we have developed a section of our web site entirely dedicated to this campaign, where you will find all the actions done by the ETUC and its members, as well as several information and useful links: <http://www.etuc.org/r/1506>.



bating poverty also requires developing quality social and healthcare services that are accessible to all and affordable.

The ETUC did not wait for the European Commission's campaign to become active on the ground through its member organisations. **It has taken action in this area for more than 20 years.** The European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion must be an opportunity to enhance

the ETUC's determination and mobilisation through a variety of initiatives.

USEFUL LINKS

1. Last resolution of the ETUC Executive Committee: <http://www.etuc.org/a/6838>
2. ETUC video announcing the campaign against poverty (available only in French): <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NX1HA8f7O3A>



FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Józef Niemiec, ETUC Confederal Secretary in charge – among other issues – of poverty and social protection issues: jniemiec@etuc.org

ETUC positions

The Lisbon Strategy aimed to contribute to the eradication of poverty in Europe by 2010. [There is no escaping the fact, however, that poverty and social exclusion remain firmly anchored in the European Union.](#) The situation is growing worse with the crisis. This explains why the ETUC considers that **strong mobilisation and unwavering commitment are more necessary than ever to combat poverty.** This mobilisation must be led simultaneously on two fronts: **social protection and employment.** **Tackling poverty is not just about providing remedies, but also involves working upstream to strengthen and improve social protection systems.** It also means **ensuring a decent income for all**, whatever the individual's social, professional or personal situation. **Com-**

Insight to poverty in Europe



Last Eurostat' statistics on poverty and social exclusion speak for themselves: **poverty does not stop at European boundaries.** On average, in 2008, 17% of the citizens from the 27 members

of the European Union were at risk of poverty, and this, after social transfers. Children and elderly people are more inclined to be in a poor condition: **the at-risk-of-poverty rate for those aged up to 17 years was 20% in the EU27, while the one concerning people aged over 65 reached 19%.**

Despite the fact that being employed strongly reduces the risk of poverty to 8%, we have to notice that **8% of European workers are classified as working poor.**

Concerning the evaluation of the social exclusion, the [Eurostat' report](#) focused on the estimation of the material deprivation rate, which is defined as 'the enforced lack of at least three of nine items'. According to this analysis, **17% of the EU27 population was materially deprived.** In fact, in 2008, 37% of European citizens could not afford a one week annual holiday away from home, 10% could not afford to keep their home adequately warm, 9% could not afford a meal with meat or fish every second day.



[EU Agenda] January – February 2010

12-14/01/2010	Informal meeting of European Affairs Ministers (Segovia)	Meeting Agenda
14-17/01/2010	Informal meeting of Environment Ministers (Seville)	Meeting Agenda
18/01/2010	Eurogroup Meeting (Brussels)	Meeting Agenda
18-21/01/2010	Plenary Session at the European Parliament (Strasbourg)	
19/01/2010	ECOFIN Council (Brussels)	Council Agenda
20-21/01/2010	Plenary Session at European Economic and Social Committee (Brussels)	
20-22/01/2010	Informal meeting of Ministers for Justice and Home Affairs (Toledo)	Meeting Agenda
24-25/01/2010	General Affairs and External Relations Council (Brussels)	Council Agenda
27/01/2010	Informal meeting of the social troika with European Social Partners (Barcelona)	Meeting Agenda
28-29/01/2010	Informal meeting of Ministers for Employment and Social Affairs (Barcelona)	Meeting Agenda
07-09/02/2010	Informal meeting of Ministers for Competitiveness (San Sebastian)	Meeting Agenda
08-11/02/2010	Plenary Session at the European Parliament (Strasbourg)	
11/02/2010	Informal meeting of the European Council (Brussels)	Meeting Agenda
12-13/02/2010	Informal meeting of Ministers for Transport (A Coruña)	Meeting Agenda
15/02/2010	Eurogroup Meeting (Brussels)	Meeting Agenda
15/02/2010	EU-Brazil Summit (Madrid)	Summit Agenda
15-16/02/2010	Education, Youth and Culture Council (Brussels)	Council Agenda
16/02/2010	ECOFIN Council (Brussels)	Council Agenda
17-18/02/2010	Meeting of Development Ministers (Segovia)	Meeting Agenda
17-18/02/2010	Plenary Session at European Economic and Social Committee (Brussels)	
22-23/02/2010	General Affairs and External Relations Council (Brussels)	Council Agenda
25-26/02/2010	Justice and Home Affairs Council (Brussels)	Council Agenda



[Focus on the EU and trade union positions]

"Have we managed the crisis well?"

07/01/2010 – John Monks took part in the symposium [‘Have we managed the crisis well?’](#), organised in Paris on January the 7th. Several European leaders and famous economists participated at the second edition of this event.

In his speech, **John Monks warned of the human cost of the crisis**, in particular **growing youth unemployment**. ETUC General Secretary also alerted listeners of too premature exit strategies, in a moment when welfare states should be reinforced.

[John Monks' speech](#)

[Link to the videos of the symposium](#)



Job security should be at the heart of the EU 2020 Strategy

11/01/2010 – ETUC sent its contribution to the consultation on **EU 2020 strategy**, launched by the European Commission on 24 November. ETUC gave a critical final evaluation of the Lisbon Strategy. ETUC criticised the move towards more flexibility and deregulation. For the ETUC, **a course change is needed**. The European trade union movement proposed some measures to face the crisis. **The European Spring Summit on 25 and 26 March** will be the occasion, for the European trade unions, to continue the debate and reaffirm their positions.

[ETUC contribution to the consultation](#)

ETUC meets EU Spanish Presidency

20/01/2010 – A trade union delegation led by John Monks met the President of the Spanish government, José Luis Zapatero, to advance the European trade unions' priorities during the Spanish Presidency of the European Union. **According to the European trade union movement, the fight against unemployment and against precarious jobs will allow Europe to get out of the crisis in a sustainable way.** The implementation of an effective financial regulation, the fight against climate change as well as the improvement of the European social model are among the main demands presented to the new EU Presidency.

[Trade Union Memorandum to the Spanish Presidency](#)



Source: <http://www.eu2010.es>

Do not reduce public spending!

27/01/2010 – ETUC took part in the Social Troika due to meet the day before the informal Council of the European Ministers in charge of Employment and Social Security from 27 to 29 January in Barcelona. The ETUC asked that **employment, and especially youth employment, as well as policies for investment in training and research, be placed at the heart of the European agenda**. *'It is the young and the most vulnerable workers who are suffering from the economic crisis. Our message is clear: beware of the temptation to reduce public spending. The priority is first to extend the mechanisms limiting redundancies and ensuring workers' protection. Economies still need to be supported if we are to avoid the private sector collapsing'* declared Joël Decaillon, ETUC Deputy General Secretary.

[ETUC press release](#)



[Focus on the EU and trade union positions]

Are you able to reverse the short-termism trend?



28/01/2010 – John Monks addressed the World Economic Forum, organised in Davos from 27 to 31 January. He warned **against the return to risky financial practices** and argued for a financial system that supports the wider economy. Addressing the

world's business leaders, John Monks said: ***'The question is how you plan to reverse the trend of three decades of a culture of short-term profit? Are you going to take steps to change this culture? Are you going to move towards a more socially***

responsible model and recognise the full scale of the economic disaster caused by your world?'

[John Monks' speech](#)
[John Monks' video](#)



[You may be interested]

Would you like to know what is going on in Europe in your language?

If you would like to know what is going on in another European country but you are not a 'pro' in foreign languages, here you will find two well organised websites to help you: www.eurotopics.net and www.presseurop.eu. These two sites propose translations of article published by the most important newspaper and magazines in Europe into different languages, for free.

We remind you also that ETUC has developed a Netvibes portal where you can find some links to the online versions of some of the best known European media, as well as RSS links to EU institutions and ETUC info: <http://www.netvibes.com/etuc>.

European Commission publications

The following reports are now available:

- [Eurobarometer survey on poverty and social exclusion](#) (January 2010);
- [Living conditions in 2008](#) (18/01/2010).

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