

[ETUC newsletter]



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Figure of the month

4 million jobs lost

In 2009, the European Union lost about 4 million jobs (Source: Eurostat)

Note



Dear Readers,



March has seen a number of momentous political events at European level.

First of all, the European social partners signed an agreement on inclusive labour markets. Through this agreement, we pledge to take concrete measures in areas such as training, apprenticeship and recruitment, so as to help the disadvantaged to enter, remain and develop in the labour market. Annual monitoring of the activities implemented will be provided by our member organisations at national level.

The ETUC also participated in the Tripartite Social Summit, at which we warned the European authorities against the negative effects that cuts in public spending would cause. Across Europe, over 4 million jobs were destroyed in 2009, and the first quarter of 2010 has seen no reversal in the trend. We cannot be announcing 'exit strategies' or disengaging support from public spending while we are still mired in the crisis: such a scenario would exacerbate the deterioration in the economic and social situation.

The financial aid to Greece made the front page at the last European Council. Even though an agreement has been secured, several major questions remain unanswered. The ETUC backs the initiative by the European Council President, Mr Van Rompuy, on a European economic government. We hope that this initiative will generate some common answers, on a basis of solidarity, to the economic and social problems we are facing. The point is that we must avoid any situation where countries fall back into purely national reactions.

Finally, we back the campaign by the Global Progressive Forum, among other things, on the idea of a tax on financial transactions. This is a proposal equally put forward by the ETUC with regard to the regulation of the financial markets.

John Monks
General Secretary





[ETUC in action]

EUROPEAN SOCIAL DIALOGUE

Inclusive labour markets: European social partners' agreement

25/03/2010 – The ETUC, BUSINESSEUROPE, UEAPME and CEEP signed [an agreement on inclusive labour markets](#). With this agreement, **the social partners commit to taking concrete actions to help disadvantaged people to enter, remain and develop in the labour market**. National social partners have three years to implement the agreement and will report on their activities annually. A final implementation report will be drawn up on this basis in 2014.

[Joint ETUC–BUSINESSEUROPE–UEAPME–CEEP press release](#)

MAJOR MEETINGS – CONFERENCES – PROJECTS

ETUC Executive Committee



09–10/03/2010 – ETUC Executive Committee met in Brussels. The Executive Committee adopted a [declaration on the occasion of the Spring European Summit on 25–26 March](#), calling on political leaders to do not reduce public spending to avoid suffocating the economy, to put in place European economic governance and to regulate financial capitalism. A [solidarity resolution with Greek workers](#) has also been adopted.

Moreover, the Executive Committee approved **the Agreement on Inclusive Labour Markets, negotiated by the European Social Partners**. Resolutions on the social dimension of the internal market and on the revision of the Posting of workers directive have been also adopted.

Trade union Erasmus: the second edition officially launched

04–05/03/2010 – ETUC, in cooperation with the European Metalworkers' Federation (EMF), organised in Brussels the opening conference of the **second edition of "Towards a Trade Union Erasmus" project**. Thanks to this project, several trade unionists from ETUC members' organisations will spend a traineeship in another trade union organisation in Europe. A [blog](#) dedicated to the exchange and the sharing of information among different participants in the project has also been launched.





[ETUC in action]

OTHER CAMPAIGNS

ETUC supports information campaign on REACH

03/03/2010 - The ETUC and the European Chemical Workers' Federation (EMCEF), [support the information campaign launched by the European Commission](#) targeted at firms that market chemicals. **This campaign aims to draw attention of European firms, especially SMEs, to their obligations under the REACH and CLP (classification, labelling and packaging) regulations on chemicals.** The REACH regulation states that industrial operators

must register any substances they manufacture or import in quantities above one tonne a year with the new European Chemicals Agency (ECHA). The CLP regulation specifies that they have to notify ECHA of the classification and labelling of all hazardous substances they place on the market, no matter what the production volume.

[More information on the campaign](#)



[Trade Union Agenda]

March – April 2010

02-04/03/2010	UIL Congress (Rome)	
09/03/2010	ETUC Steering Committee (Brussels)	
09-10/03/2010	ETUC Executive Committee (Brussels)	
17/03/2010	Meeting of the Group II 'Workers' of the European Economic and Social Committee (Brussels)	
18-20/03/2010	GSEE Congress (Kallithea)	
09-10/04/2010	CMKOS Congress (Prague)	Congress programme
20/04/2010	ETUC Steering Committee (Brussels)	
28/04/2010	Meeting of the Group II 'Workers' of the European Economic and Social Committee (Brussels)	



[Dossier]

DOSSIER ON GENDER EQUALITY

On the way towards equal pay?

Since the signature of the Treaties of Rome in 1957, Europe has recognised equality between men and women as a fundamental value. However, there has been far from universal respect for this principle, particularly in terms of wages. Despite the fact that the European Union has had a directive since 1975 that bans any form of discrimination in all matters relating to wages between men and women, in line with the principle of 'equal pay for equal work', the reality is very complex.

According to the [latest statistics](#) supplied by the European Commission, the wage gap between men and women in Europe stands at 18% in favour of men.

This differential has remained unchanged for at least 15 years.

At the same time, Europe's citizens regard this problem as very important. The results of the [latest Eurobarometer survey on gender equality](#) clearly show that 50% of the citizens questioned rated the issue of equal pay among their priorities, just behind combating violence against women (62% of the citizens interviewed).

Trade union action

There are several reasons for wage inequalities: women's work is undervalued; the labour market is segmented; it is hard to achieve a work-life balance; and there are stereotypes concerning the role of women in society.

Europe's trade unions have been working for a long time to combat wage inequalities. This was one of the



WOMEN IN TRADE UNIONS – A REPORT BY THE ETUC

At a conference entitled '*From membership to leadership: advancing women in trade unions*', held in Luxembourg on 11 and 12 March 2010, the ETUC unveiled the results of its third survey devoted primarily to the position of women in managerial posts within trade unions. According to the latest statistics, women account for almost 45% of the membership of the organisations affiliated to the ETUC, an

increase of 3% since 2006. However, despite this trend, the study shows that there are very few women in decision-making positions in the unions. Among the 42 presidents of the ETUC member trade unions, four are female. Among the general secretaries, eight posts out of 39 are held by women. Within the trade union organisations, we find a majority of men in the departments dealing with 'Economy',

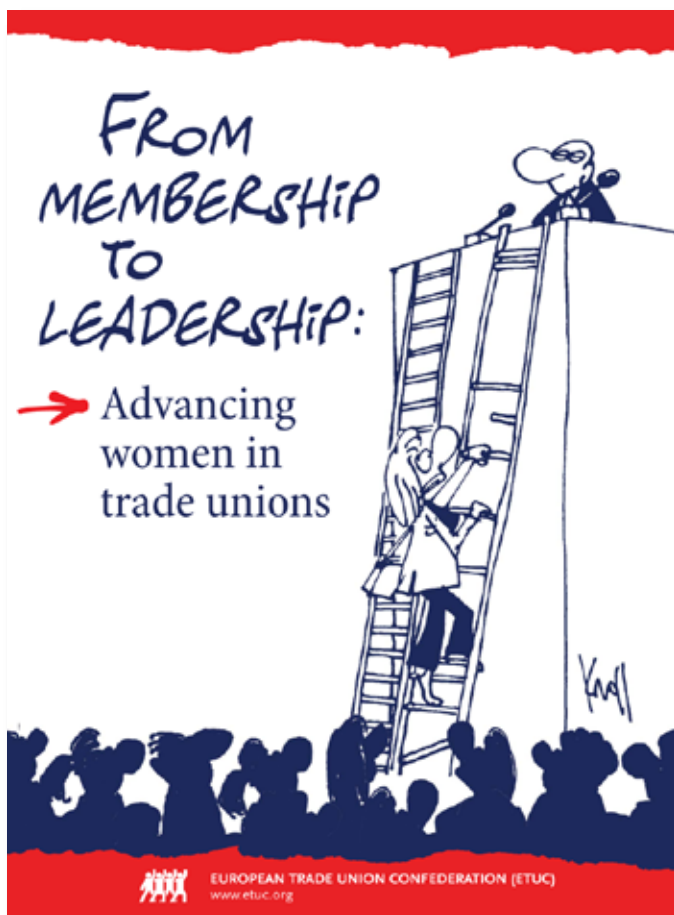
'Organisation', 'Recruitment' and 'Legal Affairs', while more women are present in departments such as 'Europe - International', 'Equality - Women' or 'Training - Education'. The findings of the survey will give us a statistical basis for the debates which will be held at the next ETUC Congress in 2011.

The full findings of the survey can be viewed at: <http://www.etuc.org/r/1368>



[Dossier]

DOSSIER ON GENDER EQUALITY : on the way towards equal pay?



main thrusts of the campaign '[On the offensive for equal pay](#)' launched by the ETUC in 2008.

As part of its action plan, the ETUC is advocating measures designed to narrow the wage gap by combating discrimination, the undervaluing of employment and pigeonholing in jobs with no opportunity for progression, and urging a revision of the professional categories and function evaluation systems, and the promotion of transparency mechanisms in the criteria for setting pay levels with a view to guaranteeing equal treatment.

Other strategies relate mainly to the increase in low wages, something which is easier to bring about in the framework of centralised collective bargaining or in the economically stronger sectors than where flexible working conditions are the norm. Strategies like this are particularly important in those sectors employing a majority of women. Similarly, surveys on wages and equality are useful negotiating tools, because they make it possible to highlight the danger of individualising wages and the need, on the contrary, to have collective agreements.

Collective bargaining is the preferred way to eradicate the pay gap between men and women, because it guarantees, among other things, the participation of women in the process from start to finish, the skills of the negotiators with regard to equal pay, and the availability of data on the pay gap.

Legal action also represents another possibility, although it is used as the last resort because of the length of time it takes, the cost of the proceedings, and the stresses and strains experienced by the workers concerned.

WOMEN IN THE EU-27



To mark International Women's Day, EUROSTAT published [a very interesting statistical perspective on men and women in the EU-27](#). This shows us that in 2008, life expectancy at birth stood at 82.2 years for women and 76.1 years for men. According to the forecasts for 2030, life expectancy should increase across the EU to 85.3 years for women and 80 years for men. Because of this longer life expectancy, the proportion of women over the age of 65 should rise significantly, from 19% (2008) to 26% (2030). Statistics on the unemployment rate are equally telling. For the first time since the launch of the EUROSTAT comparative studies, the rate of unemployment among men has outstripped that among women. In January 2010, it was 9.3% for women and 9.7% for men. The reason for this situation lies in the consequences of the economic crisis, which has been most severe in sectors such as construction, where men form the bulk of the workforce.

Employment rates stand at 58.7% for women and 71% for men in the third quarter of 2009. In 2008, the comparable figures were 59.4% and 73%. However, women are more likely to be disadvantaged on the labour market because of the higher proportion of precarious contracts and involuntary part-time work.

REFERENCE:

Section of the ETUC website devoted to gender equality: <http://www.etuc.org/r/48>

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

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[EU Agenda] March – April 2010

02/03/2010	Competitiveness Council (Brussels)	Council Agenda
05–06/03/2010	Informal Meeting of Foreign Affairs Ministers (Cordoba)	Meeting Agenda
07–08/03/2010	EU–Morocco summit (Grenade)	Summit Agenda
08–09/03/2010	Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumers Council (Brussels)	Council Agenda
08–11/03/2010	Plenary Session at the European Parliament (Strasbourg)	
11/03/2010	Transport, Telecommunications and Energy Council (Brussels)	Council Agenda
15/03/2010	Eurogroup Meeting (Brussels)	Meeting Agenda
16/03/2010	ECOFIN Council (Brussels)	Council Agenda
17–18/03/2010	Plenary Session at the European Economic and Social Committee (Brussels)	
22/03/2010	General Affairs and External Relations Council (Brussels)	Council Agenda
24–25/03/2010	Mini–Plenary Session at the European Parliament (Brussels)	
25/03/2010	Informal Equality Ministers meeting (Valencia)	Meeting Agenda
25/03/2010	Tripartite Social Summit (Brussels)	
25–26/03/2010	European Council (Brussels)	Council Agenda
13/04/2010	Informal Education Ministers meeting (Madrid)	Meeting Agenda
16–18/04/2010	Informal Meeting of Economics and Finance Ministers (Madrid)	Meeting Agenda
18–20/04/2010	Informal meeting of Ministers of Telecommunications (Granada)	Meeting Agenda
19–22/04/2010	Plenary Session at the European Parliament (Strasbourg)	
23–24/04/2010	Council of Justice and Home Affairs (Luxembourg)	Council Agenda
26–27/04/2010	General Affairs and External Relations Council (Luxembourg)	Council Agenda
28–29/04/2010	Plenary Session at the European Economic and Social Committee (Brussels)	



[Focus on the EU and trade union positions]

Greek rescue deal: **big questions remain**

29/03/2010 – The European Council found an [agreement on the Greek rescue deal](#). For the ETUC, **important questions remain concerning rescue terms and rates proposed to Greece**. The ETUC supports and will contribute to the study to be conducted by President Van Rompuy on economic government in Europe. The European trade union movement hopes that this can be an effective spur to action to develop common, solidaristic responses to key economic issues.

[ETUC press release](#)

Spring Summit : **priority is employment, not the financial markets!**

25/03/2010 – A European trade union movement delegation, led by John Monks, participated in the Tripartite Social Summit in Brussels. At the Summit, ETUC [delivered its message for the Spring European Council](#): **governments must not rush to tighten their budgetary belts or slash public spending essentially to satisfy the demands of the markets**. Neither must the crisis be used as a pretext for even greater deregulation, greater precariousness and more privatisation of public services.

[ETUC press release](#)

Source : European Council



Revision of the Working Time Directive: **protection of workers' health and safety must be the primary goal**

24/03/2010 – ETUC reacted to the communication from the Commission which has launched a **new round of consultations on the revision of the Working Time Directive**. According to John Monks **“Protection of the health and safety of workers must remain the primary goal of any review of the directive”**. The ETUC and its member organisations will thoroughly examine and discuss the Communication of the Commission, but **expect a further input from the Commission as regards the current implementation of the directive in order to properly judge the need for revision**

[ETUC press release](#)

Financial speculation is holding back economic recovery

23/03/2010 – On the eve of the Spring European Council (see other news), **ETUC met Herman Van Rompuy**, President of the European Council. During this meeting, European trade unions insisted on the need to keep employment at the top of the agenda, to have a robust public sector, to maintain social expenditure, and to fight financial speculation.

[ETUC press release](#)



[Focus on the EU and trade union positions]

ETUC unfolds its proposals for revision of the Posting Directive

17/03/2010 – At a conference organised by the Spanish Presidency of the EU, ETUC expose [its proposals](#) on the revision of the Posting Directive. For the European trade union movement, the Posting Directive is an important EU instrument, **but it should be revised to strengthen it and to allow it to better achieve its aims of guaranteeing fair competition and the respect for workers' rights**, while safeguarding the fundamental social rights of collective bargaining and collective action.

[ETUC press release](#)

More than 500 European Companies are now active: more guarantees are needed

04/03/2010 – According to the database of the European Trade Union Institute (ETUI), **the number of European Companies (SE) active exceeded the total of 500 last February**. Currently, more than 80 workers representatives from some 10 different Member States are board members. However, [the majority of them are SEs without any employees \('empty SEs'\) and/or do not even have a specific business purpose \('shelf SEs'\)](#). *"This is the reason the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) demands that the new Commissioner reflect on this issue in the upcoming review of the SE regulation, and that he pinpoint ways to close this loophole"*, said Catelene Passchier, ETUC Confederal Secretary.

[ETUC press release](#)

EU 2020 Strategy: ETUC is disappointed

03/03/2010 – The European Commission published a communication on 'Europe 2020' strategy. ETUC is disappointed with this communication. According to John Monks, ETUC General Secretary, **the Commission's document does not give an answer to the key issues of the current European political debate**, notably how to deal with the increase of unemployment, in particular youth unemployment, how to regulate financial system avoiding the repetition of the errors, how to overcome short-termism and re-launch real economy.

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

European Commission publications

The following reports are now available:

- [Europe 2020 Strategy](#) (03/03/2010)
- [Consultation on how European Company Statute works](#) (23/03/2010)

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