

# [ ETUC newsletter ]



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## Figure of the month

### 25 million people unemployed in Europe

According to latest estimations from the EU statistics office, Eurostat, the unemployment rate in the European Union has risen to 10.3% (in the Euro area as a whole it stands at 11.1%). This means that 25 million Europeans are unemployed at the moment. This is the first time since the creation of the Eurozone that the unemployment rate has breached the threshold of 11%, a threshold that was reached for the first time ever in March. (Source: Eurostat)

## Note



Dear Readers,



The European Trade Union Confederation is proposing a [Social Compact for Europe](#). In this very difficult period for workers, it puts forward our vision for the future, our alternatives. Our proposals are strong and courageous. We want this Social Compact to be discussed and implemented. The European Union will not survive without a strong social dimension.

The figures have just been announced: unemployment in Europe continues to climb. Around 25 million Europeans are jobless today, among them 23% young people. In such a situation, our European political leaders have announced a «Compact for Growth» for Europe. But on closer scrutiny, it becomes clear that there is nothing really new in this compact. Apart from an increase in the capital of the European Investment Bank, it merely suggests better use of European funds and the implementation of existing programmes. Structural reforms of the labour market form an integral part of this compact, yet we know perfectly well that growth cannot be expected to result from such measures. It is a fact that this latest European Council has adopted several measures that will help buy time, but serious problems still exist. These measures have the merit of initiating a process that will help decouple bank rescues from the level of sovereign debt, but this system still has to be put in place. It is to be hoped that this emergency measure will work. However, it still represents just one step towards stabilising the currency. Proposals for a banking, fiscal and economic union are on the table. The ETUC will examine them in detail and has already asked to be consulted on developments that affect the future of workers and citizens. We need common instruments and choices that will foster sustainable growth, quality jobs and decent salaries, as proposed in our Social Compact. For the European trade union movement, these choices require cooperation and coordination of economic policies as well as investments in the service of a low-carbon economy. Steered by solidarity, they must be consistent with a democratic political and institutional framework that reflects a common destiny, in particular through the creation of euro-bonds, the strengthening of the role of the European Central Bank in managing the crisis, convergence and harmonisation of taxation policies, the rapid introduction of a financial transaction tax and a far more determined fight against tax fraud and evasion.

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# [ETUC in action]

## ETUC CAMPAIGNS

### A Social Compact for Europe “Engaging in a discussion about a Europe of solidarity and social progress”

06/06/12 – Meeting at the Executive Committee, on 5–6 June, Europe's trade union leaders unanimously adopted the [Social Compact for Europe](#) and [called on the Commission, Council, European Parliament, Heads of State and Government to engage in a discussion about the proposal aimed at putting growth, employment and social justice at the top of the European agenda](#). On the eve of the summit on 28–29 June, the European Trade Union met the Presidents of the European Council, the European Commission, the European Parliament as well as the Eurogroup in order to [present them the alternatives and the solutions proposed in the Social Compact for Europe](#). A [press conference](#) was also organised in Brussels on this issue.

Section of the ETUC web site dedicated to the Social Compact for Europe: <http://www.etuc.org/a/10049>



### REACH: launch of an extensive campaign aimed at companies

26/06/12 – The ETUC and IndustriAll Europe launched an **extensive information campaign aimed at companies that market or use chemicals**. The new campaign kicked off at the 8th annual Trade Union Conference on chemicals and workers' protection (26–27 June, Brussels) in the presence of delegates from across Europe. The two European trade unions **plan to draw on all their member organisations and their thousands of elected representatives in companies all over Europe to raise awareness about employers' obligations under the REACH regulation**. This new campaign has been organised [in cooperation with the European Chemicals Agency \(ECHA\)](#).

Joint press release ETUC–IndustriAll Europe:

<http://www.etuc.org/a/10089>

Section of the ETUC web site dedicated to REACH: <http://www.etuc.org/r/830>

## MAJOR MEETINGS

### ETUC Executive Committee

05–06/06/12 – The Executive Committee of the ETUC met in Brussels. At the meeting, European trade unions leaders unanimously adopted the resolution ‘A Social Compact for Europe’ (Read other news). The ‘Employment Package’, the ‘Posting of Workers Directive’, the European Social Dialogue, as well as the gender imbalance in corporate boards in the EU were also discussed.



## [Interview]

### Rio+20 UN Conference and the European trade union movement

**Interview with Judith Kirton-Darling, ETUC Confederal Secretary, in charge of environment and sustainable development.**



***Rio+20”, the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, which took place in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, on June 20–22, has just concluded. What were the main ETUC demands?***

**Judith Kirton-Darling (JKD) :** Since last year, the ETUC has developed its position in collaboration with the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC). In particular, we adopted an exhaustive resolution on sustainable development, where there were demands directly targeted at the Rio+20 Conference, as well as demands targeting, in particular, Europe’s action on the domestic. Basically, we wanted four main themes in Rio. The first one

was that the agreement to be reached in Rio had to include a section on green jobs, decent jobs and a ‘Just Transition’ towards an energy resource efficient economy. The second demand was for a universal commitment on social protection floors, with a clear action to implement the ILO conference recommendation 202 (adopted in early June) dedicated to this crucial issue. The third one was the need for sufficient resources to implement the social dimension of sustainable development, including the introduction of a financial transaction tax (FTT), as an example of innovative financing, in order to tackle climate change and sustainable development. Our fourth demand was for the creation of a World Environmental Organisation, which would upgrade the UN Environmental Programme (UNEP) to a UN Agency, as well as the creation of what we call “The Sustainable Development Council” linked to the General Assembly of the United Nations.

***How would you evaluate the final outcome of the conference?***

JKD: In relation to our demands, we had some positive results in the final declaration. For the first time, we achieved a clear chapter on jobs, and a clear commitment on social protection, with the ILO recommendation explicitly mentioned. Moreover, countries were encouraged to develop green jobs initiatives to promote ‘Just Transition’. This is a major step forward for the trade union movement. In terms of the other demands, despite the fact that there is a section on innovative financing, there is no explicit reference to the FTT. Furthermore, the creation of a World Environmental Organisation has not been approved, but the UNEP has been expanded and extended to all the UN members. This can be considered as a first step in the right direction. However, in order to fully evaluate the final out-





# [Interview]

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## Rio+20: Interview with Judith Kirton-Darling (following)

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come, we must look at it from a broader perspective. In reality, the demands regarding social justice can only really be implemented within the framework of environmental protection. If climate change continues and accelerates, if the resources allocated are reduced, if we do not have a strategy on CO<sub>2</sub>, on greenhouse gasses or on water, etc, our gains on the social side will be seriously undermined. So, we were really disappointed in Rio: there were no new commitments on the environment or new proposals for environmental conventions, unlike in 1992, when there were proposals to start negotiations on greenhouse gasses, on biodiversity, on desertification, and the Kyoto protocol. While we have good concepts and good texts on jobs and social protection, we have very little in terms of implementation in all the agreements. These agreements are “state of play” agreements, not concrete actions. What we need now are concrete actions, and we need them urgently. According to the latest scientific advice, the window of opportunity to tackle climate change is closing fast. We must act before it is too late.

A last, but very significant point, concerns one of the extremely negative decisions taken in Rio. Under pressure from the Vatican, which launched colossal lobbying efforts against gender equality and women's rights, women's sexual and reproductive rights were deleted from the final text. Shamefully, Europe was divided, with some Member States supporting the Vatican. Europe therefore took no position on this issue.

***The conference slogan was “The future we want”. What future does the European trade union want?***

**JKD:** According to the Athens Manifesto, which guides all the work carried out inside the ETUC, the future that we are pushing for must be sustainable for Europe itself and also globally. This means a transition towards an energy and resource-efficient economic model. Investments in energy and resource efficiency can create employment: we need to make sure that those jobs are quality ones. In this context, the ETUC effort to promote ‘Just Transition’ is essential, because our future depends on real change in

the development model, in particular a change in the way we consume and produce. Therefore, what was agreed in Rio was not ambitious enough to reach the future we are pushing for.

***Why are “Just Transition” and “Decent Work” such crucial principles for the ETUC?***

**JKD:** Just Transition is fundamental to tackling the transformation of our economy, notably in several key sectors, such as energy, transport and other infrastructures, services, industrial production systems, etc. The changes which are under way have a strong impact on employment, whether positive or negative. In the context of the scale of change, our objective is manage those impacts, in particular by the definition and implementation of a policy framework for the anticipation of this change and the transition. This is why, the notion of ‘Just Transition’ is crucial for the trade union movement. ‘Just Transition’ has five main pillars. The first is dialogue and participation, ensuring that there is a place at the table at all levels for workers’ representatives. The second is investment and industrial policy, ensuring job creation through innovation, investment in the transformation of industries and services, as well as promoting green jobs. The markets alone are not able to deliver this: we need regulation which pushes this type of job creation. The third is the skills’ agenda, notably the greening of training and skills in order to equip workers to cope with the changes underway. The fourth is the recognition of trade union rights, human rights. This aspect is strictly linked with the ‘Decent Work’ agenda: it is impossible to have a ‘Just Transition’ without proper industrial democracy. Looking at the crisis in Europe and the austerity programmes which have been put in place, the undermining of social dialogue and basic labour rights are fundamentally opposed to the ‘Just Transition’ that we want. The fifth one is to promote social protection systems capable of supporting and helping those who are negatively affected by the transition, ensuring that people do not fall into long-term unemployment.

***To what extent can the greening of the***



## [Interview]

### Rio+20: Interview with Judith Kirton-Darling (following)

#### *economy feed the sustainable development policies, especially in this time of crisis?*

**JKD:** At the Rio+20 conference, one of the most controversial issues was the notion of the green economy. This point was controversial because it is perceived in the trade union movement in many developing countries as simply a “green wash” of capitalism, rather than actually looking at fundamental changes in the dominant economic model, including the way we consume and produce, quality of life, etc. The point is that having a green GDP is not sufficient: the sustainable development agenda needs indicators going beyond the GDP. This is crucial in order to pursue a sound sustainable development policy. But, certainly, green policies are a fundamental part of pursuing sustainable development. In this context, the definition of a green and sustainable in-

dustrial policy, the promotion of sustainable public procurement, integrating environmental and social commitments, as well as a radical change in the way the financial system works by pursuing long-term investment, not short-term returns, are essential. I would emphasise the role of long-term investments, as they promote a transformation of our infrastructures, and facilitate research and development, as well as innovation. The long-term investment approach is crucial also for tackling the crisis: if we want to avoid a race to the bottom, we need to invest in quality, in people, in innovation, in a future which is sustainable. So, for the ETUC – and that was certainly the message we gave in Rio – sustainable development is actually our response to the crisis. This is the way forward. Sustainable investment and sustainable industrial policies are fundamental pillars of the ETUC’s Social Compact for Europe.



## [Trade Union Agenda]

June – July 2012

|               |  |  |
|---------------|--|--|
| 05-06/06/2012 | ETUC Executive Committee (Brussels)  |  |
| 11/07/2012    | Meeting of the Group II ‘Workers’ of the European Economic and Social Committee (Brussels) |  |



# [Focus on the EU and trade union positions]

## European Summit: advances which will not guarantee an end to the crisis

29/06/12 – The ETUC welcomed the fact that the European Council, which took place on 28 and 29 June, adopted urgent measures to reduce the interest rates of those countries under pressure from the markets. However, **the ETUC is not convinced that these measures are enough to meet the challenges to which the EU must respond in order to regain the confidence of its citizens and workers.** *“The European Council has taken several measures to provide a breathing space but serious problems still persist. The growth pact does not really offer anything new. Other than an increase in the European Investment Bank’s capital (IEB), all that is planned is an improved use of the European funds and the continuation of existing programmes. Unfortunately, there is nothing to give us any hope that the austerity measures will be stopped”* said Bernadette Ségol.

ETUC press release: <http://www.etuc.org/a/10139>

## Solidarity and fairness are a requisite for saving the EU



27/06/12 – On the eve of the European Council (28–29 June), the ETUC called on European leaders to **radically change course.** For the European Trade Union, **Europe needs to break with austerity and go instead for policies that pursue sustainable growth and quality jobs** with fair wages and equal treatment. *“Member States cannot face the crisis on their own. Alone, Member States are powerless in the face of financial markets and they are too quickly tempted to go for solutions that turn out to be disasters, such as social dumping. To get out of the crisis, we need more Europe, not less. We need stronger European common instruments and choices promoting sustainable growth, quality jobs and fair wages, such as the ones proposed in our Social Compact”* said Bernadette Ségol, ETUC General Secretary, at a [press conference](#) organised in Brussels on 27 June.

ETUC press release: <http://www.etuc.org/a/10092>

## Rio+20: Trade unions and civil society organisations call for Concrete actions

18/06/12 – On the eve of the last negotiations before the “Rio+20” United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio de Janeiro, 20–22/06), the [Spring Alliance](#), which brings together trade unions and civil society organisations, called for European leaders to step up to the challenge and provide leadership to ensure a successful result. In this context, **political leaders must commit to a concrete action plan leading to sustainable development and poverty eradication.** For the European trade unions, Rio+20 represents an opportunity to spur fundamental changes [which must not be missed](#).

ETUC press release: <http://www.etuc.org/a/10039>  
Spring Alliance statement on Rio+20: [http://www.etuc.org/IMG/pdf/Spring\\_Alliance\\_Rio\\_20\\_12\\_06\\_2012-2.pdf](http://www.etuc.org/IMG/pdf/Spring_Alliance_Rio_20_12_06_2012-2.pdf)



# [Focus on the EU and trade union positions]

## Musculoskeletal disorders: ETUC demands EU action

19/06/12 – The European survey of 2010 on working conditions once again underlined the importance of **musculoskeletal disorders (MSD)** which affect all industries, and are the **source of a significant proportion of absences due to illness**. In the most severe cases, they can prevent workers from keeping their jobs. In this context, **the ETUC called for the European Commission to assume political responsibility and submit without delay a draft directive** to allow the Parliament and the Council of Ministers to fulfill their role. *“A global Community legislation on musculoskeletal risks would represent added value for the Member States and boost prevention policies in a more effective manner”* said Judith Kirton-Darling, Confederal Secretary of the ETUC.

ETUC press release: <http://www.etuc.org/a/10069>

## The ETUC condemns the signing of the EU-Colombia/Peru Free Trade Agreement

26/06/12 – The ETUC deplored the formal signing of the Free Trade Agreement between the EU Council of Ministers and the Colombian and Peruvian governments. This agreement was signed despite the fact that the reality on the ground remains completely unacceptable for workers of both countries. In this context, some members of the European Parliament have called for a binding action plan on the **improvement of labour and other human rights**. The European Trade Union calls for this action plan to be undertaken before further any steps are taken in haste.

ETUC press release: <http://www.etuc.org/a/10093>

## Deregulation is not the solution to EU unemployment

28/06/12 – The European Commission's June 2012 Quarterly Review of labour market and social conditions in the EU confirms the **ever-deteriorating employment and social situation facing Europe's workers and their families**. According to the report, two million more people have joined the ranks of the unemployed over the last year and **the Commission itself admits that there is “little hope” of any significant improvement over the next 18 months**. Confronted by a such situation, the ETUC continues to warn against the pursuit of policies which the evidence clearly shows are destroying jobs, reducing living standards and taking us further away from the Europe 2020 targets on employment and poverty reduction. *“Deregulated finance and an increasingly deregulated labour market played a significant part in getting us into this mess. Europe needs to grow, not cut, its way out of the crisis. We need policies that will result in a sustainable economic model, which serve the interests of people not markets, and which guarantee social progress and the protection of the environment”* said Józef Niemiec, ETUC Deputy General Secretary.

ETUC press release: <http://www.etuc.org/a/10102>

## Health and safety: the ETUC calls for a new European strategy

28/06/12 – At the Danish Presidency's conference to review the EU's current occupational health and safety strategy, **the European trade union movement has called for an ambitious European agenda on workplace health and safety**. *“The crisis cannot be used as an excuse to deregulate health and safety rules or delay action on hazardous substances that kill tens of thousands of workers a year in Europe”*, stated Judith Kirton-Darling.

ETUC press release: <http://www.etuc.org/a/10113>





## [EU Agenda] June – July 2012

|               |   |                                  |
|---------------|---|----------------------------------|
| 30–31/05/2012 | Competitiveness Council (Brussels)  | <a href="#">More information</a> |
| 07–08/06/2012 | Transport, Telecommunications and Energy Council (Luxembourg)                     | <a href="#">More information</a> |
| 07–08/06/2012 | Justice and Home Affairs Council (Luxembourg)                                     | <a href="#">More information</a> |
| 10–11/06/2012 | Informal Meeting of Ministers for European Affairs (Horsens)                      | <a href="#">More information</a> |
| 11/06/2012    | Environnement Council (Luxembourg)  | <a href="#">More information</a> |
| 11–14/06/2012 | Plenary Session of the European Parliament (Strasbourg)                           |                                  |
| 15/06/2012    | Transport, Telecommunications and Energy Council (Luxembourg)                     | <a href="#">More information</a> |
| 21/06/2012    | Eurogroup Meeting (Brussels)  | <a href="#">More information</a> |
| 21–22/06/2012 | Employment and Social Affairs Council (Luxembourg)                                | <a href="#">More information</a> |
| 22/06/2012    | ECOFIN Council (Brussels)   | <a href="#">More information</a> |
| 25/06/2012    | Foreign Affairs Council (Luxembourg)  | <a href="#">More information</a> |
| 26/06/2012    | General Affairs Council (Luxembourg)  | <a href="#">More information</a> |
| 28–29/06/2012 | European Council (Brussels)   | <a href="#">More information</a> |
| 02–05/07/2012 | Plenary Session of the European Parliament (Strasbourg)                           |                                  |
| 07–08/07/2012 | Informal meeting of Ministers for Environment (Nicosia)                           | <a href="#">More information</a> |
| 09/07/2012    | Eurogroup Meeting (Brussels)  | <a href="#">More information</a> |
| 10/07/2012    | ECOFIN Council (Brussels)   | <a href="#">More information</a> |
| 10–13/07/2012 | Informal meeting of Ministers for Health, Employment and Social Affairs (Nicosia) | <a href="#">More information</a> |
| 11–12/07/2012 | Plenary Session of the European Economic and Social Committee (Brussels)          |                                  |
| 19–20/07/2012 | Informal meeting of Ministers for Competitiveness (Nicosia)                       | <a href="#">More information</a> |
| 23/07/2012    | Foreign Affairs Council (Brussels)  | <a href="#">More information</a> |
| 23–24/07/2012 | Informal meeting of Ministers for Justice and Home Affairs (Brussels)             | <a href="#">More information</a> |
| 24/07/2012    | General Affairs Council (Brussels)  | <a href="#">More information</a> |

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