

News

ITUC meets the EU Commissioner on Development

21 September 2011: On September 6th 2011 Andris Piebalgs, the EU Commissioner on Development, met with Sharan Burrow, the Secretary General of ITUC. Sharan Burrow took that opportunity to thank the Commissioner for the increased support to trade unions and to discuss the social aspects of European development cooperation policies and in particular the inclusion of the Social Protection Floor in the European development cooperation strategies. Trade unions are active actors of development cooperation, increasingly present also in projects funded by the European Commission (e.g., in the EuropeAid Non-State Actors programme and the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights). They contribute on a regular basis to the various political processes in the domain, including the recently finalised Structured Dialogue on Effective Partnership for Development.

The meeting between the representatives of ITUC and the Development Commissioner focused on the current processes and challenges in the European development policies, including the financing for EU external actions and development cooperation in the new Multiannual Financial Framework and the role of civil society actors. Sharan Burrow addressed a number of issues, including Social Protection Floor schemes, which are supported by a number of international institutions (including the ILO, the World Bank and the G20), but are still missing in the EC instruments. She also raised the issue of the modalities for in-country support to trade union activities often facing unwarranted political interference by governments under the current support systems.

Concluding the meeting, the Commissioner invited the ITUC to bring forward proposals on the issues raised in the upcoming processes, including the forthcoming EC communication documents on the role of Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) in development and on social protection. The ITUC will also continue shaping the process of the Structured Dialogue on Effective Partnership for Development, together with the other CSOs, and deliver a concrete proposal on the involvement of social partners on policy dialogue with the European Commission on specific aspects related to work and the Decent Work Agenda in the context of development cooperation.

The ITUC represents 175 million workers in 151 countries and territories and has 305 national affiliates.