



People First in the Information Society

FIET's policy for the Information Society

Future Priorities

1. The development of new information and communication technologies, based on the storage and transmission of digitised data, is leading to fundamental changes in the way in which economies and societies operate. FIET pledges itself to work actively to ensure that social issues and concerns are at the heart of any moves towards a global information society.

FIET's Objectives

2. With this overall aim, FIET's objectives are:
 - a) To work to ensure that technological change is used to promote democracy, social justice and human rights, and to meet human needs and aspirations, rather than allowing purely commercial and financial forces to control the way that technology is permitted to develop.
 - b) To support developments which help to bridge the gap between 'information rich' and 'information poor' groups, both within societies and internationally.

- c) To promote international acceptance of the idea that technological development must take place within the principles of sustainable development (i.e. that current generations meet their needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs).
- d) To help build an information society where human, cultural and linguistic diversity is celebrated and given opportunity to develop.
- e) To seek to defend individuals' privacy, both in the workplace and in their private lives. To support international measures to ensure data protection and individual privacy.
- f) To promote full employment. To support trade unions in their defence of their members' interests in times of transformation and restructuring.
- g) To call for a Global Internet Charter, governing the rules, access, and use of the Internet, based on democratic and ethical principles, on defending human rights and free speech, preventing employers or governments from controlling the Internet; and equally to guarantee free access to the Internet and e-mail to employee representatives as claimed by the FIET campaign "on-line rights for on-line workers."
- h) To support moves to protect the copyright and moral rights of creators against attempts by large multinational companies to obtain these digital rights for themselves.
- i) To work to ensure that individuals have the right, whether at work or not, to receive continuing training and education.
- j) To oppose 'social dumping' (unfair competition or transfer of work from countries where workers enjoy high levels of social protection to those where wages and social benefits are lower). To strengthen, at a practical level, international trade union co-operation and networking.
- k) Recognising that more flexible forms of working are challenging the paradigm of the 'normal' working week undertaken by full-time workers in a centralised workplace, to acknowledge that flexible work patterns can sometimes be advantageous to individual workers but to oppose imposed 'flexibility' achieved at the expense of the individuals affected. To oppose any form of "grey" or illicit labour market which undermines collective agreements, tax and/or social security systems, and reject flexibility imposed without negotiation or achieved at the expense of wages.

Implementing the FIET Objectives

FIET World Executive Committee

3. The role of FIET World Executive Committee:
 - a) To monitor and discuss regularly the implications of the developing information society.
 - b) To use international forums wherever possible to publicise and promote FIET's policy. To seek to ensure that FIET's policies are influential in the deliberations of international organisations such as the ILO, OECD and WTO.
 - c) In recognition of the global nature of the information society, to encourage and publicise new methods of solidarity work between better resourced and less-well resourced affiliates.
 - d) In the light of convergence between the ICT, telecoms and multimedia sectors, to ensure that FIET collaborates with other International Trade Secretariats.
 - e) To promote the setting up of global works councils and to encourage the development of trade union structures within multinational companies.
 - f) To oversee the development of FIET's own use of ICT.
 - g) To ensure that FIET's structures and activities adapt to the economic and social transformations of the information society.
 - h) To help unions to develop their own ICT capacity through FIET's solidarity projects.

FIET Trade Sections

4. The role of the FIET Trade Sections:
 - a) To conduct specific research on the implications of the developing information society for their sectors, including the effects on employment and collective bargaining.
 - b) To ensure close communication between individual trade sections where there are developments of common interest (e.g. use of call centres).

- c) To advise affiliates on the implications for recruitment and organisation of members by studying new forms of working (e.g. teleworking).
- d) To ensure that new types of working, and new sectors of the economy, are adequately accommodated within FIET's trade section structures.
- e) To identify new demands for negotiation in collective bargaining, as a consequence of the development of the information society (e.g. trade union access to corporate e-mail systems).

FIET's use of ICT

5. New electronic means of communication greatly enhance the opportunities for effective international liaison and solidarity. FIET's objectives are:
 - a) To maximise the potential in electronic communication and publishing, including e-mail, fax and the World Wide Web, so that FIET will be better placed to ensure that information is disseminated world-wide to and between affiliates, their officers and members.
 - b) To develop FIET's existing World Information Technology strategy (originally established for the years 1996-1998) and to review the existing principles governing this strategy, in the light of experience gained.
 - c) In particular, to continue to develop FIET's web site, as an easily accessible central location for the dissemination of FIET's publications and information resources.
 - d) To discuss further developments with affiliates, with the aim of making FIET increasingly an on-line organisation.

FIET's ICT Forum

6. FIET's objectives are:
 - a) To develop the existing annual ICT Forum (currently organised by Euro-FIET), and to widen the range of sectors represented by delegates at the Forum. To consider making the ICT Forum a world-wide event.
 - b) To ensure that the ICT Forum is adequately funded, so that it becomes a permanent event in FIET's annual programme of activities and events.

- c) To ensure that any research, etc., undertaken or commissioned by FIET on aspects of the information society is fed back into debates held at the Forum.

Action on Key Issues

- 7. FIET has identified particular objectives in the following areas:

Recruitment and membership

- a) To develop strategies for recruitment within newly emerging sectors. To develop strategies for the recruitment of atypical and 'flexible' workers, including the self-employed.
- b) To develop strategies for the recruitment and retention of workers who are subject to outsourcing arrangements.
- c) To explore means of service delivery to individual trade union members using new technologies.
- d) To prioritise work among young people.

Collective bargaining

- a) To continue to emphasise the value of collective bargaining between social partners.
- b) To ensure that FIET affiliates' experience in new areas of collective bargaining (e.g. teleworking) is communicated and shared.
- c) To co-ordinate the approaches of FIET affiliates with respect to collective bargaining in the information society and press for a social dialogue with employers' federations.

Education, training and life-long learning

- a) At a time when the pace of technological change is accelerating fast, to campaign for adequate life-long training and education opportunities for all. To seek to develop a new education and training contract between companies and their workforces.

Health and safety

- a) To campaign energetically on the new health and safety concerns (such as RSI, working hours and stress) which are developing as a consequence of new ways of working.
- b) To disseminate good practice undertaken by affiliates in these areas.

ICT sector giants

- a) To support efforts being made to increase trade union organisation within the multinational ICT giants.
- b) To campaign through international organisations for the development of global works councils.
- c) To identify and oppose any attempt by large multinationals to exploit their market position for monopolistic or anti-competitive actions.

The Role of FIET affiliates

- 8. The FIET World Congress invites and encourages FIET affiliates:
 - a) To monitor and discuss regularly the implications of the developing information society.
 - b) To explore new opportunities for recruitment and organisation, created by new technologies and new ways of working. To share experiences with other affiliates, through FIET.
 - c) To explore uses of new technologies (such as e-mail and the Internet) for internal organisation and for communicating directly with members. To share experiences with other affiliates, through FIET.
 - d) To explore the implications for trade union democracy of new technologies and new ways of working. To consider whether existing union structures and service products will remain appropriate, as the convergence between the ICT, telecoms and multimedia sectors develops further. To share experiences with other affiliates, through FIET.

- e) In the case of better resourced affiliates, to explore imaginative new means of solidarity work with less well resourced trade unions, as a direct practical way of responding to the increasing globalisation of information work.