



European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC)
Confédération européenne des syndicats (CES)

Brussels, 5 December 2011

BS/sw

[Letter sent by e-mail]

Dear Presidents,
Dear Prime Ministers,
Dear President Barroso,
Dear President Van Rompuy,

Cc to the President of the European Parliament and to Presidents of EP committees.

On behalf of the European Trade Union Confederation we launch an urgent appeal to you, EU leaders, ahead of the European Council.

The current economic and financial situation in the European Union requires urgent action to save millions of people from unemployment and poverty. Austerity measures imposed on weaker countries have not led to the results expected by policy makers; in many cases they have only served to exacerbate the situation.

Given the immediate danger of recession Europe urgently needs investment for sustainable growth, this can only be achieved through far-reaching action by the European Central Bank, mutual support in the form of Eurobonds, a financial transaction tax, fair taxation, concerted action on tax evasion and tax fraud, together with the abolition of tax havens. Bringing public accounts on a sound basis requires a longer term approach.

In current circumstances, changing the Treaty is not an immediate priority. Constructive solutions to meet the existential threat the Union faces can and should be found within the current texts. In any event, if a decision to modify the Treaty is taken, the ETUC insists on being heard in the process. ETUC support for Treaty modifications cannot be taken for granted. We reiterate our demand for a social protocol to be attached to the Treaty. Acceptance of any change will be dependent on the respect of democratic processes and the recognition and handling of social consequences. We do not accept that the changes we understand are being discussed can be disguised as technical amendments.

In all cases collective bargaining rights and the autonomy of the social partners must be respected. EU institutions' demands to depress wages, to flexibilise hiring and firing and working conditions, to weaken social security protection and public services, are only bringing negative messages to European citizens, they are fostering social unrest and anti-European feelings.

We are asking the European Council to act on these proposals and insist on a meeting with the Presidency.



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Yours sincerely,

Bernadette Ségol
ETUC General Secretary

Ignacio Fernández Toxo
ETUC President