



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

Brussels, 4 March 2009  
JM/TJ/sw

Mr Günther Verheugen  
Vice-President  
European Commission  
Berlaymont  
B-1049 Brussels

Via e-mail: [guenter.verheugen@ec.europa.eu](mailto:guenter.verheugen@ec.europa.eu)

### **Transatlantic Economic Council**

Dear Mr Verheugen,

I understand that the Council (Competitiveness) tomorrow will discuss progress in the Transatlantic Economic Council in the context of the new US Administration.

I am now writing to reiterate the joint request of the European Trade Union Confederation and the American Federation of Labor-Congress of Industrial Organizations to be included formally as Advisers to the TEC. You may recall that we had first raised the issue with you by letter of 14 November 2007 but that you had not been in a position to pursue the proposal at that time. We well understood the veto of the previous Administration.

As you will know, our cooperation with the AFL-CIO is of long standing and was indeed recognised initially as embodying the Transatlantic Labour Dialogue. We have regularly provided joint recommendations to EU-US Summits and have made joint representations on specific subjects to various DGs. We have undertaken joint project work, including with Commission funding. There are regular conferences jointly organised by our European Trade Union Institute and its US partners that help develop policy. In recent times, the hostility of the former US Administration towards the AFL-CIO was such that it refused to involve them in any formal bilateral meetings, except for the periodic official EU-US meetings on health and safety at work, in connection with which we concerted our positions.

I am enclosing a copy of a speech I am delivering today to the AFL-CIO Executive Council (another example of our close cooperation) which makes our position clear on this point. It is not acceptable for the TEC process to continue to include business but exclude labour. And it cannot be “business as usual” in the current dire economic situation.

We have noted that the Commission considers that the TEC provides not only a high level mechanism to push forward regulatory cooperation, but also provides a forum to work together in tackling issues arising from globalisation and rapid technological change. These issues are of great interest and concern to the trade union Movements in Europe and America and we want to cooperate. The AFL-CIO will be making the

same point to their authorities.

We would ask that the next EU-US meeting, which we understand is to take place in April, should announce the formal entry of the ETUC and AFL-CIO as the components of the Transatlantic Labour Dialogue into the TEC process.

I am copying this letter to Commissioners Ferrero-Waldner and Spidla.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "John Monks".

John Monks  
General Secretary