



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

Brussels, 13 May 2009  
JM/TJ/sw

Mr José Manuel Barroso  
President  
European Commission  
Berlaymont  
1049 Brussels

Sent by e-mail: [jose-manuel.barroso@ec.europa.eu](mailto:jose-manuel.barroso@ec.europa.eu)

Dear President,

At a time when the EU is discussing the enhancement of its relations with the United States, an objective that the European Trade Union Confederation strongly supports in particular with a view to strengthening the forces of democracy worldwide, I am writing to bring to your attention the question of the Employee Free Choice Act, EFCA, currently being debated in the US.

For decades, millions of U.S. workers have been deprived of their fundamental right to organise and bargain collectively. The EFCA, which has recently been introduced in the U.S. Congress, will put U.S. labour laws significantly closer to conformity with international and European standards.

The global economic crisis underlines the importance for all of our societies of providing that workers are free to organise and bargain collectively. The rights and ability of workers to defend their wages and working conditions can help prevent a collapse of purchasing power and the market. The Employee Free Choice Act would be an important step in that direction for US workers. It would allow them to have a fairer chance to form unions without being victims of brutal intimidation, often including discharge. Current U.S. anti-union practices serve as a destructive model for industrial relations in other countries and in particular gives succour to those seeking to undermine the European social model and its reliance on social dialogue.

President Obama was a sponsor of the Employee Free Choice Act when he was in the Senate and continues to strongly support the bill. We urge you to communicate the Commission's support on this important issue in your contacts with the US Administration. I am copying this letter to Vice President Verheugen and Commissioners Ashton, Ferrero-Waldner and Spidla who we hope will also take our request into account in their discussions with their US counterparts.

Thanking you in advance.

Yours sincerely

*John Monks.*

John Monks  
General Secretary

*Copy to:* *Mr Vladimir Špidla, Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities,*  
*Mr Verheugen, Commissioner for Enterprise and Industry,*  
*Ms Ferrero-Waldner, Commissioner for External Relations and European Neighbourhood Policy,*  
*Ms Ashton, Commissioner for Trade.*