

Tripartite Social Summit. Speech Ludovic Voet, ETUC

Dear all,

The situation for workers and households is worrying. Rising energy bills, rising rents, a shopping trolley half full for the same price. Without wage increases in line with inflation, inaction means impoverishment. The cost-of-living crisis makes the most vulnerable even more precarious, like young people on precarious contracts, women in sectors with minimum wages, students without social protection among others.

Wages don't cause inflation, it is speculation, dividends and price increases imposed by big business. With obvious consequences for workers, but also for the whole subcontracting chain and SMEs, strangled by energy bills.

We are calling for a **price cap on all imported gas**, a **price cap on electricity**, and a **reform of the energy market** to decouple gas and electricity prices.

The **tax on excess profits** currently proposed is necessary but the solidarity contribution is insufficient. It must be extended to all surplus profits, also in the agri-food sector. This tax must be raised to 100%, not 33%. A surplus profit is an undue profit. Every euro of excess profit is a euro paid by a household or a company on a bill, it is a euro that impoverishes a family. Every time a gas bill increases by €300, the solidarity contribution mean €100 taken back from the gas company but leave them with €200 quietly in their pockets to pay out in dividends? Sorry, that's not solidarity. It will be either a household that will be impoverished, or a company that will be at risk of closing down, or the public debt that will finance their aid. Taxing all excess profits means justice.

Disconnections must be banned this winter. No family should be left out in the cold. We must guarantee access to energy for all.

Since 8 months, we know that we must prepare for winter. Too little has been done to fight against energy sieves and renovate buildings. Too little has been done to massively develop renewable energies. Every MegaWatt of renewable energy means one liter less of gas to import. Every day lost in providing European answers to people's concrete problems throws more and more people into the arms of the far right.

In addition to this energy and tax shield, we must therefore accelerate social initiatives. Minimum wage for sure. But Europe and the Czech Presidency must show that it is speeding up on the **Directive on Gender Pay Transparency** and finish the dialogues. We need effective measures for work of equal value and to promote collective bargaining to end the gender pay gap. **Platform Work Directive**. This is not the time to make it harder for platform workers be reclassified and access decent working conditions. Hit hard by cost-of-living increases with no increase in their pay, platform workers are waiting with desperation for the results of a Directive that will finally give contracts to workers who have been subordinated for years but also protect truly self-employed from being uberized. Finally, we welcome the Commission's willingness to finally address a **quality framework for traineeships**. This initiative to improve access to fair pay and social protection is essential. It should be legislative and should consult the social partners.

Workers cannot wait any longer. It is time to act. Thank you.