

Role of the ETUC 2015/2019 – follow up: Communication and Campaigns

Adopted at the ETUC Executive Committee on 28-29 October 2015

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Communicating effectively – Taking ETUC, European and national affiliate cooperation to a new level

1. Communications plays a central role in achieving ETUC objectives.
2. The ETUC must communicate with EU institutions and ‘actors’ that influence EU policy, including the media and should be able to better spread its messages and actions among the affiliates.
3. It must enable affiliates to communicate about the how the EU is impacting on their members’ lives, and to show how the ETUC and its affiliates are working to improve working and living conditions at European as well as national level.
4. The ETUC is able to achieve a limited level of profile through its own social media and website, and its work in Brussels, but without greater engagement by national affiliates, and more effective cooperation in communication between ETUC and its affiliates, trade union members and decision-makers will remain inadequately informed about trade union demands and activities at European level.
5. This applies particularly to national trade union affiliates, but also to the European federations (whose communications capacities are in most cases under-developed).
6. In brief, the decisions and work of the ETUC and the engagement of affiliates in European activities, are not effectively communicated at national level.
7. Through the ETUC Communications Working Group, cooperation and coordination between ETUC Communications Department and national affiliates’ communications staff has improved significantly. There is not a lack of communication and materials from ETUC. Substantial efforts have been, and are being, made to make them more timely, relevant and well-targeted.
8. There is still work to be done at ETUC level to:
 - create clearer, harder-hitting messages: visual as well as verbal;
 - do campaign actions in a more visible and high-profile way that generate more attention to ETUC demands,
 - use plainer language to make ExCo and other ETUC documents more easily understood and communicable to members;
 - modernise the website and further develop its use of social media, including the possibility of a blog/comment section open to affiliates, and a campaigns page/section;
 - develop online campaign activities;
 - promote national and sectoral campaigns and actions including online, and more widely reflect the key demands of national and European member organisations (particularly those that resonate at European level);
 - work with the ETUI to produce relevant statistical data, in attractive visual formats, on subjects of major importance to the trade union movement and for national and EU decision-makers
9. This paper is aimed at taking cooperation between ETUC and affiliates to a higher level by proposing clear decisions to make European-wide communication activity more effective and to reach more members and decision-makers.

10. This paper follows on from the document adopted at ETUC Congress on the role of the ETUC, and in particular paragraphs 33 and 34 of the document which refers to making “Grassroots trade union membersbetter informed about the ETUC and its actions”, including “national and sectoral campaigns and actions in its communication strategy and website” and the fact that “the same should be done by affiliates for ETUC messages and initiatives”.

11. This paper proposes that the Executive Committee

- a) Agrees a number of common dates on which all affiliates should communicate common messages – whether verbal or visual - alongside national or local messages.

These dates could be at least

March 8 – International Women’s Day

April 28 – International Workers Memorial Day / World Day for Safety and Health at Work

May 1 – International Workers Day

October 7 – World day of Decent Work

November 25 - International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women

December 18 – UN International Migrants Day

b)

- Acknowledges that the elected leaders of the ETUC have a role to play at national level, through national affiliates, in communicating European issues that impact on members’ lives and working conditions. This applies particularly to ETUC leaders from those countries/regions or speaking the national language.
 - Resolves to involve, where appropriate and possible, elected ETUC leaders in national communications on European affairs. As a first and minimum requirement, the ETUC’s new leadership team should be announced in all affiliates’ own publications and media.
 - Establishes the principle of holding regular ‘European’ press events in member states – such as to introduce the new leadership team, and like the recent successful press conference in Rome in June 2015 on the humanitarian crisis in the Mediterranean Sea with Italian, French, Spanish and Maltese affiliates.
- c) Sets out a number of regularly occurring events in the EU agenda on which the ETUC will always, without fail, comment, and which national and European affiliates should amplify as appropriate.

These are

- The spring, autumn and winter economic forecasts
- Quarterly employment figures
- Annual European gender pay gap statistics
- Trade union intervention at national and EU level in the annual European semester cycle of economic policy guidance
- EU tri-partite social summits

As well as the joint ETUC/ETUI ‘Benchmarking Working Europe’ publications launch.

- d) Recognises the value of ‘photo actions’ with national and European trade union leaders at ETUC Executive Committee meetings, given that the strength of the ETUC is in its members, and therefore:

- Gives a clear commitment to support such actions through affiliates own social media and media channels; and

- Creates a consultation mechanism for affiliates to propose the theme for each such action. This mechanism should include a request for ideas for the photo action in the agendas of the ExCO sent to delegates (and to the Communications WG) with a deadline not less than 3 weeks before the meeting, with an online space where ideas can be posted and reacted to.
- e) Underlines the importance of sharing information at European level about major national issues and campaigns, especially those that have a bearing on EU policy debates, or that have a wider resonance across Europe, and calls on the ETUC to develop platform(s) on which such information sharing could be done publicly. Such information must relate to agreed ETUC positions, and in countries where more there is more than one affiliate it must represent a united action/position.
- f) Urges the European Trade Union Federations to work more closely with the ETUC, on communications and campaigning in order to raise the profile of the trade union movement as a whole in and around the EU institutions.
- g) Calls on the ETUI, in cooperation with the ETUC Communications Department, to hold regular training sessions, especially for the sharing of best practice, for members of the ETUC Communications WG.
- h) Notes that in order to make an impact the ETUC must be seen to mobilise its national leaders and European federations; and to collaborate with other organisations with similar concerns or demands on particular issues. The ETUC will not to communicate or work solely through its own elected leaders but also seek the participation (and presence) of its national leaders, and to work with NGOs and other lobbies including employers, where possible on common objectives. This applies to communications and campaigning as well as lobbying.
- i) Agrees to adopt an annual statement of European priority issues for the mobilisation of ETUC and national affiliates' staff and to drive the cooperation of European and national communications departments, while retaining flexibility to change priorities as issues arise.

ANNEXE

Photo actions

At each Executive Committee ETUC Communications takes pictures of trade union leaders to promote via social media an issue discussed at the meeting. The ETUC commissions the design, takes the photos, translates the slogan, does post production and tweets all the pictures in the appropriate language. The ExCo and affiliate communicators are informed in advance of the action. Yet some affiliates do not retweet even the pictures of their own leaders!



ETUC Communications in numbers

9,000 monthly unique visitors to website

8,000 followers on twitter, with tweets reaching some 180,000 twitter accounts (open at the time of tweeting)

1600 likes on Facebook

43 average press clippings per month

An example of joint communications on a common agreed theme



With a powerful image shared in advance, a clear demand for action at European level backed up by facts and figures, photos of trade unionists lobbying decision-makers, and coordinated events in at least 3 cities in 3 countries, International Workers' Memorial Day could have been even more visible and impactful had all affiliates communicated about the European as well as national activities.