

## Priorities for the activities of the ETUC in the Conference on the Future of Europe

*The Conference should be an opportunity for a real and in-depth discussion, with the full involvement of the European and national institutions, social partners, and civil society organisations, on the future of Europe and the need for the recovery from Covid-19 to pave the way for a fairer society. Social Europe should be at the centre of the Conference. The Conference should not be a bureaucratic exercise nor focus only on institutional matters, it should constitute a key moment in the process of construction of the European Union of the future and be based on an ambitious agenda.*

*Greater transparency in the functioning of the EU (in particular the Council); institutional reforms at EU level aimed at reinforcing institutional, social and economic democracy and participation; reinforcing and promoting the communitarian and integration-led approach, which was at the basis of the European project, to counter the renationalisation of the EU decision-making process based on the inter-governmental approach. Depending on the developments, the ETUC will consider in due time the different scenarios for the Conference (including the possibility of Treaties changes) and will update and better define its plans on how to achieve ETUC priorities and objectives where necessary, while maintaining an ambitious and forward-looking approach.*

### Common headline: Trade Unions for a Fairer and More Social Future of Europe

#### By topics of the online platform

##### • Climate change and the environment

*Just transition. The EU should provide for a strong and inclusive governance approach where workers and trade unions are involved in the design and implementation of adaptation policies at all levels. The EU strategy to deal with climate change should include concrete policy measures that maintain jobs and protect workers' health and safety as well as active labour market policies and reskilling and trainings to prevent job losses. Emergency workers and social protection mechanisms will be key to deal with future crises and increase the resilience of our societies. Reforms must also allow the EU to build an effective "open strategic autonomy" to strengthen its industrial value chains.*

##### • Health

*Equal access to affordable and high-quality public services, including health. EU actions should ensure that all in the EU, regardless of their economic situation and place of residence, have access to high-quality public services, including quality health and social care, education, public transport, energy, water and sanitation, internet, good administration... All should enjoy the right to good health and have equal access to affordable and high-quality health and social care services, delivered by resilient, well-staffed and well-equipped public systems with universal coverage.*

##### • A stronger economy, social justice and jobs

*A renewed Social Contract for Europe for a fair recovery. The Conference on the Future of Europe should focus on the necessity of a Renewed Social Contract for Europe, to pave the way to a fairer, more inclusive and sustainable society. The improvement of living and working conditions in Europe and equality between men and women should be at the forefront. The recovery should be based on redistribution and upward convergence, quality job creation in all sectors and reinforced investments in public services and social protection, including ensuring the right to decent pensions. The respect of workers' and trade union rights, social dialogue,*

*stronger collective bargaining and democracy at work constitute the necessary basis for a fair recovery. The specific situation of mobile, cross-border and frontier workers must be taken fully into account. Europe must promote and defend free movement of persons as one of the four main freedoms enshrined in the TFEU.*

*New EU economic model and governance, to be based on going ‘beyond GDP’ and building an inclusive and fair ‘European well-being’. A reform of the EU economic governance, the European Semester, the mandate of the ECB, EU own-resources and to strengthen the EMU is urgent in order to ensure that social justice goes hand-in-hand with economic competitiveness and that people’s well-being is the objective of economic policies.*

*European Pillar of Social Rights for a social market economy. Implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights (EPSR) and link the achievement of the Rights in the Pillar with the Treaty objective of the European Union as a “social market economy, aiming at full employment and social progress”. The aim is to ensure the consistency of EU policies and initiatives with that objective, including by a potential inclusion of the Pillar in the Treaties. The fleshing out of the concept of the social market economy with a reinforcement of the role of the Pillar would also work to ensure a proper rebalancing of the existing EU economic governance instruments, including the Two Pack, Six Pack and Fiscal Compact.*

#### • **Digital transformation**

*Fair digitalisation. To be based on human rights, including labour and trade union rights, improved working conditions, and collective bargaining. Maintain and reinforce workers’ protection, prevent disproportionate and undue surveillance at work, prohibit discriminatory treatments on the basis of biased algorithms, and prevent abuse of data protection and privacy. Strengthen collective bargaining on and workers’ participation in the design, deployment, use and monitoring of AI technology and data strategy.*

#### • **Values and rights, rule of law, security**

*Strengthen the enforceability of Human Rights Instruments. The enforceability of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union should be strengthened and the Conference should be an opportunity to reiterate the need for the EU to respect its legal obligation to accede to the ECHR, to introduce a legal obligation in the Treaties for the EU to also accede to the (revised) European Social Charter and its Protocols, as a means to submit the EU legal order to external scrutiny in terms of human rights compliance, and to press the EU to ratify the relevant international, ILO and European human rights instruments, including the Istanbul Convention.*

*Gender equality. Equality between men and women should be at the forefront of the discussions of the Conference. A renewed and ambitious strategy at EU level for achieving gender equality in European labour markets is needed, to be framed coherently with the implementation of the Pillar of Social Rights. The European strategy should contribute to reaching the Agenda 2030 Sustainable Development Goals, and in particular Goal 5.*

#### • **Migration**

*A common migration and asylum policy, based on respect for rights and equal treatment. Ensure fair redistribution of refugees across Europe and ensure better integration of refugees and applicants for international protection into the workplace. More concrete and fairer European policy on economic migration, to establish legal channels for entry and to foster an integration policy based on respect for rights and equal treatment of both local and migrant workers, as a key tool to address the social impact of migration flows.*

#### • **Education, culture, youth and sport**

*The Conference should address the necessity to ensure that lifelong learning and the right to training become a reality for everyone in Europe by implementing the first principle of the European Pillar of Social Rights.*

*Youth. EU cannot fund precarity! All workers and unemployed should have access to social protection, including young people. To prevent precarious conditions, we must put in place quality standards, they must be binding for all jobs created under EU and National recovery plans. Better monitoring and trade union involvement are needed to assess and report youth unemployment and NEET rates. At the moment these numbers hide forced mobility, involuntary part-time employment and work in a grey and informal economy. Urgent measures are needed to fight youth unemployment and precarious working conditions in sectors where young people are overrepresented (tourism; gig economy...).*

#### • EU in the world

*ETUC calls for a reform of EU trade and investment policy and for a relaunch of global multilateralism. Trade and investment policy reform should have at its core: the creation of decent jobs and the protection of fundamental and human rights, including workers' and trade union rights; the preservation of the environment and biodiversity and the conformity with the Paris Agreement on climate change; the safeguarding of high-quality public services; and the strengthening of Europe's industrial basis. The EU should be able to contribute to a relaunch of global multilateralism, through a profound reform based on democracy and peace, solidarity and respect for human, social and environmental rights and a reinforced role for the ILO.*

#### • European democracy

*Social Progress Protocol to guarantee that workers', trade union rights and social rights take precedence over economic freedoms in the event of a conflict. If the Conference on the Future of Europe discusses the possibility of Treaty changes, then it should include the proposal for introducing a Social Progress Protocol to the EU Treaties.*

*Better decision-making for a fairer Europe. Need to ensure improvements to the European Union's decision-making processes with a view to guarantee increased transparency and accountability, reinforce the communitarian approach and strengthen the powers of the European Parliament and the European political dimension. Fully respecting that taxation policy is primarily a national competence, the ETUC in supports the move to Qualified Majority Voting also in the area of corporate, capital and environment taxation and own resources. The EU should proceed with the activation of the 'passerelle clause' in the Social Policy Field but to do so with caution and with full respect for the role of European social partners and their agreements and include in the Council decision implementing the 'passerelle clause' a non-regression clause. Social partners should be involved in the decision to activate the 'passerelle clause' on the case-by-case basis and an incremental approach should be used beginning with the adoption of the 'general passerelle clause in Article 48(7) TEU' in the framework of Article 19 TFEU (non-discrimination).*

*Economic democracy. It is necessary to strengthen democracy in the economy and society, including by recognising and supporting trade unions, by respecting and reinforcing workers' and trade union rights. Necessary to ensure the full respect of trade union rights, including the right to collective bargaining, and to strengthen workers' information, consultation and participation rights. These constitute fundamental tools for economic, social and workplace democracy.*

#### • Other ideas