



PARIS MANIFESTO



CONFEDERATION
**SYNDICAT
EUROPÉEN
TRADE UNION**



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**13TH CONGRESS
PARIS**
29/9 - 2/10/2015



STAND UP IN SOLIDARITY FOR QUALITY JOBS, WORKERS' RIGHTS AND A FAIR SOCIETY IN EUROPE

1. The ETUC represents all working people in Europe. It exists to negotiate, campaign and take action for better living and working conditions.
2. The ETUC stands for a better Europe based on solidarity and equality, social justice and cohesion, peace and democracy. Therefore, the ETUC fights for sustainable growth, full employment, quality jobs, fair pay, good public services, education and training, fair taxation, good governance, voluntary and fair mobility, gender equality and respect for fundamental rights. It demands a different economic model in Europe and the world, and a process of development that respects people and the environment.
3. Europe is undergoing protracted stagnation and economic and social upheaval, as a result of the banking and financial crisis. People are suffering across the EU. Flawed policies have increased poverty and social inequality through cuts in wages, social protection and public spending; and created high unemployment, labour market deregulation, and precarious work - especially for women, young and older workers, migrants and low-skilled workers.
4. Structural reforms and the economic policies adopted in the EU's Fiscal Compact - which the ETUC opposed - stifle demand and growth, create the risk of deflation, and undermine the industrial base vital to long-term recovery. Cuts increase public debt, damage public services, and destroy jobs. Workplace and industrial democracy, social dialogue, consultation and collective bargaining are being ignored or undermined in many countries.
5. These policies have widened divergences between citizens and countries. Growing inequality is driving people apart, alienating them from core democratic values and the European project, and fostering support for dangerously extremist ideologies.
6. We call for a different approach, with policies that respect and promote our values and objectives across Europe and around the world. This requires a stronger recognition of the European Trade Union Confederation's right to be involved in EU decision-making.

THE ETUC'S PRIORITIES FOR A BETTER EUROPE ARE:

A. A strong economy that serves the people:

- We demand investment for full employment and quality jobs for all.
- An end to austerity policies.
- We demand better wages to boost internal demand and recovery workers in Europe need a pay rise, in order to reduce inequalities and fight poverty.
- Fundamental social rights must have precedence over economic freedoms.
- We demand policies for green jobs, a sustainable future, strong public services, fair taxation, an end to financial speculation and a revised European governance.

B. Stronger unions for democratic values and democracy at work:

- Social dialogue and collective bargaining must be respected and strengthened across Europe.
- We want greater workplace and industrial democracy, freedom of association and the right to strike.
- We call for ETUC involvement in EU employment, economic and social policy-making.

C. A core of ambitious social standards:

- We demand implementation of a framework of labour and social rights that aims to achieve social progress.
- We demand an end to social dumping and deregulation.
- We want fair and equal treatment for all workers, without discrimination.

A STRONG ECONOMY THAT SERVES THE PEOPLE

7. EU economic and social policies should underpin decent wages and adequate social benefits as a motor of the economy and should support internal demand and growth. Workers in Europe need a pay rise. The ETUC demands a wage-led recovery policy and an increase in the wage share, with special attention to low-wage workers. The ETUC calls for an end to the gender pay gap.
8. The ETUC demands a New Path for Europe with an investment programme of 2% of GDP per year for the next 10 years, to generate quality jobs and develop sustainable energy systems, meeting social, economic and environmental challenges. We demand public investment in infrastructure and research, as well as in universal and high-quality education, healthcare and social services. Specific public investment in these areas should not be counted when national deficit levels are assessed, especially during economic downturns. Financial stabilisation should take place through economic growth and sale of Eurobonds, with an orderly debt restructuring process where necessary.
9. Trade unions at both European and national level should be consulted on projects selected for funding under the European Commission's new €315 billion Investment Plan. Selection criteria should prioritise quality job creation and include social and environmental goals. The ETUC warns against the use of Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) and calls on the Commission and Member States to evaluate properly the financial risks associated with their use.
10. The ETUC will press for the complete revision of existing economic governance schemes, so as to be fair and balanced and to stop putting pressure on wages and collective bargaining. Deepening European Economic and Monetary Union (EMU) must go hand in hand with strengthening the social dimension. Social and environmental indicators must become a strong and integral feature of economic governance. At national level, trade unions must be involved in formulating and implementing national reform plans, and throughout policy-making structures, with ETUC support and coordination.
11. Countries that are part of the euro zone are particularly interdependent because the single currency has direct consequences on wage developments and social protection. Therefore, economic governance in this area requires stronger coordination, also among trade unions, particularly with regard to fiscal, labour market, social and wage developments. At the same time, policies enacted in the euro zone have implications for the rest of the EU, so a comprehensive trade union response must also take account of the needs of workers across Europe.
12. Economic and social progress requires socially stable societies that respect democratic debate and the rule of law, sustainable economic growth, fair and progressive taxation and well-regulated financial institutions serving the real economy. The European Central Bank should be a lender of last resort with objectives and competencies similar to those in place in the USA's Federal Reserve System. Its mandate should be revised to prioritise full employment and steady and sustainable growth.
13. Higher taxes on the highest revenues and large fortunes are needed to redistribute wealth and to combat growing inequalities in incomes, to expand public budgets and boost domestic demand and recovery.





14. Tax evasion and fraud, tax avoidance, tax competition, preferential tax rates for capital, fiscal dumping and corruption continue to threaten our societies. They are not compatible with a Europe based on mutual trust and solidarity. They lead to a major loss of public funds and must be actively opposed through stronger cooperation at EU and worldwide levels.
15. The ETUC supports the introduction of a comprehensive, EU-wide Financial Transactions Tax (FTT), as a first step towards an international FTT. It urges Member States not to surrender to financial industry lobbying attempts to water down the FTT.
16. The EU should agree on a mandatory common consolidated corporate tax base, with the introduction of a minimum rate of at least 25%.
17. The ETUC opposes, and calls for action to combat precarious (such as zero-hours contracts) and undeclared work, which affects women, migrant workers and young people in particular, bogus self-employment, abusive employment practices, and the weakening of employment protection. We fight and negotiate for quality jobs in the public and private sectors with secure employment contracts, good working conditions and respect for workers' rights, guaranteed through effective sanctions and enforcement, as well as strong labour inspection systems and trade union representation. We demand coordinated labour market policies aimed at improving labour standards for everyone. The European Employment Strategy (EES) must focus on creating good-quality, sustainable jobs across Europe. The ETUC rejects structural reforms aimed at dismantling employment protection legislation and collective bargaining systems.
18. Active labour market measures are necessary to significantly increase employment. They should aim to enhance skills and strengthen prospects for sustainable employment in both the private and public sectors, including for the long-term unemployed. Special attention must be given to increasing female participation in the workforce, as this will increase growth significantly.

19. The ETUC demands action to strengthen the real economy and to foster innovative, competitive and socially sustainable industries and services. The ETUC is opposed to financial-market-driven capitalism. We demand a coordinated EU industrial and services policy, with trade union involvement, to manage the rapid pace of structural change in the economy, accelerated by digitalisation.
20. A well-educated workforce, along with priority to research and innovation are prerequisites for sustainable growth. The ETUC will promote quality education for all, lifelong learning, knowledge, research and innovation in the workplace and society.
21. Intergenerational solidarity and a substantial reduction in youth unemployment is required to build a sustainable future for Europe. Young people across the EU must have the guaranteed right to a quality job or adequate training opportunities within four months of unemployment or completion of education and training ('Youth Guarantee'), to secure a smooth transition to the labour market. Workplaces should be 'age-friendly' and should foster lifelong learning. Unpaid internships, age discrimination and other unfair practices must cease.
22. The ETUC opposes further liberalisation and commercialisation of public services. We call for public provision of high-quality child and elderly care, health and education, training and employment services, transport, water, waste and other vital services. Investment in public services also promotes a more egalitarian workforce by increasing women's participation in the labour market.
23. In order to fight climate change, the EU must adopt ambitious commitments to cut greenhouse gas emissions, and press for their global implementation. The ETUC calls on world governments to agree a binding, international climate protection agreement in Paris in 2015. Europe should work for a just transition towards a sustainable green economy, creating quality jobs and enhancing green skills. It must give priority to investment policies to support sustainable infrastructures and industrial regeneration, innovation, research and development, low-carbon technologies and resource efficiency. Financial support for regions and sectors which depend on carbon-intensive activities will be essential to implementing a just transition in Europe. The impact of the energy transition on these regions and sectors should be better assessed and taken into account. The ETUC demands that measures be taken to secure the future of those workers who will be affected.



STRONGER UNIONS FOR DEMOCRATIC VALUES AND DEMOCRACY AT WORK

24. We call for stronger collective bargaining systems and binding agreements at national level covering workers in both public and private sectors, including workers in SMEs, in order to promote quality employment, equality, decent wages, pay increases and social progress. We demand a strengthening of the European social dialogue, at both inter-professional and sectoral level, through binding agreements that achieve concrete results and a proactive social policy by the European Commission. We demand respect for all agreements concluded in the framework of social dialogue at all levels, in accordance with EU treaties.
25. Workers across Europe need a pay rise. Negotiations between social partners at the relevant level are the best tool to secure good wages and working conditions. Wage-setting should remain a national matter and be dealt with according to national practices and industrial relations systems.
26. Statutory minimum wages, where trade unions want them, should be set with the involvement of social partners. The level of a statutory minimum wage should aim for better standards, as advocated by international organisations. This, together with collective bargaining, will help to combat in-work poverty, social and wage dumping, and will foster internal demand. In this context, it is advisable to start discussions on a common reference for national statutory minimum wages, applicable in countries where trade union want them.
27. The autonomy of the social partners at national and European level must be respected. We reject interference by public authorities in social dialogue, collective bargaining or existing collective agreements. Industrial relations should be strengthened and collective agreements extended to cover as many workers as possible, with support for trade union coordination of collective bargaining
28. Member States and candidate country governments, with Commission support, must establish a genuine, autonomous social dialogue at all levels. Indicators for monitoring and evaluating the state of play and the quality of the national bi/tripartite social dialogue in European countries have to be put in place, where trade unions want them.
29. Greater workplace and industrial democracy should mean full information and consultation rights in areas including restructuring and anticipation of change, according to national practices, and board-level workers' representation in decision-making in European Company forms. The ETUC calls for a directive introducing a new and integrated architecture for workers' involvement. Building on the existing EU acquis, the directive should set high standards for information and consultation, with ambitious minimum standards for board-level representation in European Company forms as an additional source of workers' influence.
30. Both employers and governments must fully respect freedom of association and the right to strike. These fundamental rights must not be undermined and we are resolved to oppose any attack against them.

A CORE OF AMBITIOUS SOCIAL STANDARDS

31. We call on Europe to initiate a new, ambitious social agenda with legislation and policies for workers to achieve better living and working conditions, equal treatment and health and safety at work, and to promote quality education, vocational training and lifelong learning, decent public health and pension systems for all, quality public services, stronger social protection systems based on solidarity between generations, less precarious work and a reduction in working time, on a voluntary basis.
32. Europe is still far from achieving gender equality. Further action is required at all levels of society to secure equal pay for work of equal value and equal rights and opportunities at work, and specifically to eliminate the glass ceiling and enable women to reach positions of responsibility, to promote a better balance between professional, family and private life, and to combat all forms of violence and discrimination against women. In particular, more progress is needed to implement the right to equal pay for work of equal value.
33. We demand an end to the trend towards deregulation, for example through the Commission's so-called 'better regulation' agenda and REFIT initiative, which threaten to dismantle workers' protection and attack workers' rights. The ETUC rejects the claim that vital health and safety rules are a 'burden' on companies, and insists that workers in small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) should have the same protection as others. Regulation is necessary to safeguard good social and environmental standards and prevent all occupational health and safety risks, including new and evolving hazards, in a consistent manner.
34. Renationalising policies, creating divisions between people and building artificial barriers would inevitably lead to competition between countries and would destroy Europe's project. However, integration must not be used as a pretext to undermine labour relations, social protection systems, social security or access to public services in any country.
35. We call for the adoption of an EU Social Progress Protocol, annexed to the EU Treaties, to fight social dumping and to affirm that fundamental social rights take precedence over economic freedoms, and must be respected. The Posting of Workers Directive must be revised to ensure the principle of equal treatment. The ETUC will reject treaty changes that do not include the adoption of a Social Progress Protocol.
36. All EU institutions must protect fundamental social rights, in particular those guaranteed by the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights. The EU should adopt and ratify the agreement on accession to the European Convention on Human Rights. The ETUC urges the European institutions to find a way to resolve the problems raised by the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU) opinion in December 2014 and to take all effective measures to ensure a quick accession to the European Convention on Human Rights. The EU should also become a party to the revised European Social Charter.
37. Fighting all forms of discrimination, whether based on gender, ethnic origin, nationality, belief, conviction, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, age, trade union membership or any other grounds, is an ETUC priority. The ETUC will promote tolerance and combat racism and xenophobia, especially towards workers of foreign origin.
38. As part of an overall policy to strengthen social protection systems, the ETUC calls for a European framework directive on an adequate minimum income that establishes common principles, definitions and methods for minimum income schemes in the Member States, combining income support with active inclusion and access to quality services.
39. People with reduced working capacity, illness or disability should be given tailored job opportunities. A holistic approach and appropriate working conditions could enable them to join the workforce.

40. The ETUC supports freedom of movement in the EU. Migrant workers must be treated fairly, protected from exploitation, have access to decent jobs and fair pay. Abuses by employers and/or illegitimate obstacles and infringements to equal treatment set up by governments should be identified and eliminated, including by organising migrants into trade unions and through social dialogue. Free movement within the EU and EFTA should not be used by employers as a means to undercut national standards or increase precarious employment.
41. Breaking up the Schengen Agreement would be a set-back in the construction of Europe, and would fail to resolve problems of undocumented immigration. We demand the adoption of a balanced and fair EU response to migration flows of third-country nationals, based on solidarity and protection of workers' rights, as well as paths for integration and inclusion of migrants in the European labour market, trade unions and society.
42. The ETUC demands a sound European asylum policy that reinforces solidarity and cooperation in welcoming actions, led jointly by the EU and Member States, so as to prevent deaths at sea and land borders and to combat trafficking and inhumane treatment of refugees. A repressive approach has to be replaced by measures to integrate refugees, and the development of external policies on migration, in particular preventive actions carried out in cooperation with countries of origin, to fight trafficking, improve living conditions and end conflict.
43. To contribute to fair globalisation, EU international trade and investment agreements, notably TTIP, must aim at shared prosperity and centre on sustainable economic and social development. They must promote employment, respect democratic decision-making, public interests and cultural identity; protect public services and the environment; contain enforceable labour rights based on International Labour Organisation (ILO) Conventions; and include ambitious chapters aimed at promoting higher labour, environmental and technical standards set by democratically accountable representatives, notably in regard to any regulatory cooperation. They should not include ISDS. All negotiations on such agreements must be carried out in a transparent and democratic way.
44. To achieve these ends, the ETUC will play its full role in representing workers' voices, engaging with employers and EU policy-makers, and in coordinating trade union policies and activities.



The ETUC is the voice of workers and represents 45 million members from 89 trade union organisations in 39 European countries, plus 10 European Trade Union Federations.



WWW.ETUC.ORG

5, Bld du Roi Albert II - B- 1210 Brussels
Tel. 00-32-2/224 04 11
Fax 00-32-2/224 04 54/55