

# ACTIVITY REPORT 2015-2019

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# INTRODUCTION

It was already clear in 2015 that in order to help restore trust in and support for the European project, trade unions would need to redouble their efforts to move EU policy-making in a different direction, prioritising the interests of working people and promoting their social and economic welfare.

Since the last ETUC Congress, much of Europe has continued to suffer the effects of damaging neoliberal and austerity policies imposed in response to the earlier economic crisis. The resulting surge in unemployment has only fallen back recently in some countries, due to unequal rates of economic recovery, while the rise in employment numbers is often related to the growth of precarious, low paid and insecure jobs. At the same time, inequalities have widened, leading to widespread anger and resentment. The new 2019 ETUI Benchmarking Working Europe report found that income inequality was higher in 2017 than in 2008, when the crisis started, in eight Member States: Bulgaria, Cyprus, Denmark, Estonia, Hungary, Italy, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Slovenia, Spain and Sweden.

Thus, over the last four years, we have thrown all our resources into efforts to strengthen Europe's social dimension, with some significant successes but also much still to be done. The EU itself has faced a series of challenges and set-backs that have threatened its very existence and thrown further obstacles in the path of European integration and social progress. At the same time, after more than a decade of austerity, promising developments have taken place in the social field on the initiative of the European Commission, but also due to increasing awareness of the social crisis facing the EU among many governments and stakeholders.

## European Pillar of Social Rights

When European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker announced before the start of his mandate, in October 2014, that he wanted a "social triple-A rating" for the EU, we saw our opportunity to keep European leaders to their promises and push for real social progress.

The most visible outcome of our efforts has been the **European Pillar of Social Rights** (EPSR). The ETUC fought hard to convince the Commission that – after the damage caused by austerity – it could only reverse the growing dissatisfaction with the EU by doing something concrete to improve people's lives. We were closely involved in defining what the Pillar should include. We helped set up a website that collected more than 15,000 signatures calling for a meaningful initiative that would make a practical difference for European workers.

The EPSR was proclaimed by the European Parliament, Council and Commission on 17 November 2017 in Gothenburg, Sweden. It comprises 20 principles grouped into three categories: Equal opportunities and access to the labour market; fair working conditions; and social protection and inclusion.

Although the final version did not go as far as we – and many of our affiliates – would have liked, it did constitute a new commitment on the part of the Commission to a more Social Europe and a firm base for many EU legislative initiatives in the social field, starting with the revision of the Posting of Workers Directive, a longstanding ETUC demand, which was launched by Presidents Juncker and Hollande at the Paris Congress.

The success of the Pillar also depends heavily on the willingness of Member State governments to implement it, and that is why we have been supporting affiliates in lobbying and monitoring their governments' actions, also through promoting a Social Scoreboard as part of the European Semester process.

For European trade unions, one of the most important pledges to emerge from the Pillar was a commitment to reinforce workers' legal security, combatting precarious working conditions and exploitative 'zero-hour' type contracts. The new **Directive on Transparent and Predictable Working Conditions** and the **Recommendation on universal access to social security** have introduced important labour protections, including for non-standard and platform workers.

In addition to the revision of the **Posting of Workers Directive**, which has finally implemented the principle of equal pay for equal work (although not for all categories of posted workers), significant progress has been made towards fair labour mobility in the EU, particularly through the establishment of the **European Labour Authority**.

Another crucial strand of the EPSR was the pledge to improve **work-life balance**. We welcomed the **new Directive**, and in particular the provision of paid paternity, parental and carers' leave: all long-standing ETUC demands. Nonetheless there is still a long way to go to achieve true equality in the workplace and society, and the gender pay gap across the EU remains stuck at 16%, with an unacceptable 40% gender gap when it comes to pensions.

## Pay Rise Campaign

In 2016, the ETUC launched the flagship **Europe Needs a Pay Rise campaign**, designed to challenge the widely accepted myth that higher wages lose jobs and damage the economy. The campaign focused on different aspects of low pay in Europe, including in-work poverty, inequality, and the east-west pay gap. Through Facebook, it reached 1,400,000 people, with 3,700 page likes, and the Twitter handle #OurPayRise notched up more than 74 million impressions. We know, from the extensive feedback reaching us, that the campaign boosted trade union wage demands and agreements in a number of countries.

The campaign gave a further impetus to the demand for stronger collective bargaining structures and wider collective bargaining coverage in the EU. Research shows that trade union membership leads to higher wages (ETUI) and that trade union density reduces inequality (IMF), by means of collective bargaining.

The external evaluation by Jyrki Raina in December 2018 confirmed that the Pay Rise campaign mobilised a good number of affiliates, especially in Central and Eastern Europe. It clearly caught the attention of the European institutions and prompted a policy rethink. The first changes are evident in the institutional narrative of the Commission and the European Central Bank, reflected in the Semester cycle. Taking into consideration the active participation of a number of affiliates especially in Central and Eastern Europe - but not only there - and tangible results, support and materials provided by the ETUC and ETUI, extensive media coverage, contacts with leaders of EU institutions and numerous Member States prompting the initial change in attitudes, the ETUC has demonstrated that it can organise and lead a European campaign. It culminated in a proposal for a **European Partnership for Collective Bargaining**.

## Relaunching social dialogue and democracy at work

In 2015, the Commission promised a '**new start for social dialogue**'. We saw this initiative as long overdue, given the way established social dialogue systems had been undermined or destroyed by austerity policies following the crisis. We welcomed the Commission's commitment. However, despite paying lip service to the shared objective, the employers' side has done little to make this a reality. In particular, negotiations in a new European Social Partners' autonomous Work Programme for 2019-2021 were long drawn-out. In the interim, we continued to work on the issues covered by the 2015-2017 programme, including skills, apprenticeships and active ageing. Despite the employers' initial unwillingness to talk, in February 2019 we signed a programme covering six priorities which will form the basis of much of the joint activity of the social partners for the next three years. The priorities are digitalisation; improving the performance of labour markets and social systems; skills; addressing psycho-social aspects and risks at work; capacity building and circular economy.

Greater **democracy at work** is not only a question of human rights, it also supports civic democracy and brings economic advantages such as higher productivity and innovation. During this mandate the ETUC has organised a large number of activities to demand stronger workers' participation, for example on company boards.

The ETUC has also demanded a greater commitment from the EU and Member State governments to building and restoring **collective bargaining** mechanisms and expanding coverage. In the coming years, securing a Framework Directive to promote collective bargaining will be a top priority.

## A new migration narrative

Economic hardship in many countries has been exploited by the far-right, leading to the dangerous growth of nationalist, populist and fascist movements that often laid the blame for Europe's problems on minorities and migrants. The war in Syria was the catalyst for a migration crisis that has challenged European solidarity. The ETUC has taken every opportunity to counter the inhumane, populist narrative, opposing the deal with Turkey that has stranded millions of people in degrading conditions, emphasising the many benefits that migrant workers bring to the EU and acting to facilitate their integration into the labour market through initiatives such as **UnionMigrantNet** and the **LABOUR-INT project**. Thanks to ETUC pressure for integration, inclusion and equal treatment of migrants, the Commission's DG Home Affairs and Migration has significantly changed the narrative on migration, and the Commission and social partners together signed an important **European Partnership for Integration of Migrants and Refugees** in December 2017.

## Brexit

Another regrettable development linked to the tide of populism was the result of the British referendum in June 2016 in favour of leaving the EU. The ETUC has supported the position of the UK TUC and the Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU), which both opposed Brexit. Our joint demand has been to protect workers' rights in all the 28 countries concerned and to prohibit social dumping, whatever form the eventual Brexit arrangement takes.

## Sustainable development and international action

Climate change has been one of the greatest challenges facing Europe and the world throughout this period. The ETUC backed the United Nations Paris Accord and has presented the trade union viewpoint in important fora including the Conference of the Parties (COP). We have been especially active in demanding a **just transition** for workers affected by changes towards a greener economy, culminating in the signing by more than 45 countries of a ministerial *Solidarity and Just Transition Declaration* at the Katowice COP 24 in December 2018. We have also supported the EU's implementation of the United Nations Agenda 2030 on Sustainable Development Goals, by participating in the **EU Multi-Stakeholder Platform**.

Since 2015, the ETUC has expanded its **international activities**, in cooperation with the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC), targeting **EU trade and external policies** as a means of promoting fair globalisation, democracy and peace, solidarity and respect for human rights around the world.

We have closely followed EU trade negotiations together with the industrial federations, ITUC and ITUC affiliates. The ETUC has been calling for EU trade agreements to include binding and enforceable labour rights clauses, and for EU institutions to uphold labour rights when working with third countries. We have undertaken multiple acts of solidarity towards trade unions in non-EU countries to support freedom of association and collective bargaining, and we have provided solidarity and support to trade unions in EU accession and EU neighbourhood countries.

## Trade union rights

The last four years have brought more **attacks on trade union organisation**, including the right to strike, with trade unionists facing legal prosecution for exercising their right to take action in some countries. In December 2015 the ETUC agreed on action to protect and promote trade union rights, asking **MEPs to sign a pledge to support respect for trade union rights in Europe**. We also organised an expert briefing in the European Parliament.

At the same time, we continue to face a drop in **union membership**. The ETUC has supported affiliates in confronting this challenge by setting up an ad-hoc working group which has already held two training / political meetings. In March 2019, training on strategic planning and trade union renewal was organised for national organisers. Participants exchanged good practices and analysis and received information about innovative trade union approaches, such as the use of data science.

On the other hand, the ETUC has **strengthened its voice in the EU institutions**. According to the Review of status of the Commission's register of expert groups and their composition, published in November 2018, trade union participation in expert groups has increased massively since 2015, from 6% to 24%.

## Future of Europe and Democracy

Throughout this period, the ETUC has taken an active role in the reflections of the EU institutions and Member States on the **Future of Europe**. We have insisted on the need to inspire Europeans with a new vision of a just and sustainable society.

The ETUC has called for an EU based on unity, cooperation, integration, solidarity and upward convergence, together with a stronger democratic dimension and respect for national collective bargaining models and national decision-making on welfare, taxes and the labour market. The European project can be relaunched and strengthened, and can regain people's trust, only if it returns to **the fundamental concepts and values at the core of the EU Treaty**: a social market economy, based on a fairer wage share, respect for and promotion of collective bargaining, trade union rights, gender equality and non-discrimination, upward convergence on living and working conditions, and just globalisation, trade and international policies.

These are the principles we have worked for over the last four years, believing that together, EU Member States are strong enough to build a peaceful and prosperous society which can be a model for the rest of the world.

## Working together

All our achievements over the last four years would not have been possible without the assistance and dedication of our President Rudi De Leeuw, and the Steering Committee and Executive Committee members. I wish to thank all our affiliates for supporting our work throughout this period.

Equally important has been the commitment of our secretariat, advisers and all the ETUC staff, in implementing the ETUC strategy and action. Additionally, many of them have voluntarily contributed their time and effort over recent months to helping and supporting the hundreds of refugees who assemble every day near our offices in Brussels.

Special thanks must go to Deputy General Secretaries Peter Scherrer and Katja Lehto-Komulainen and Confederal Secretaries Montserrat Mir Roca and Thiébaud Weber, who will be leaving us after Congress to move on to new roles – and to Confederal Secretaries Liina Carr and Esther Lynch, who will share with me and the rest of the new team the responsibility of steering the ETUC in the next mandate.

I look forward to working with our new team over the next four years, to confront with determination the challenges that will undoubtedly face the European trade union movement in its struggle for a Fairer Europe for Workers!

**Luca Visentini**  
General Secretary

Further details of all the ETUC's activities and achievements over the last four years can be found in the pages of this report and the list of successes.

For all resolutions and positions of the ETUC since 2015 please follow this link:  
[www.etuc.org/en/documents](http://www.etuc.org/en/documents)

# ETUC ACHIEVEMENTS 2015 - 2019

- European Pillar of Social Rights
- Work-life Balance Directive
- Transparent & Predictable Working Conditions Directive
- Revision of the Posted Workers Directive
- Whistleblowing Directive
- European Labour Authority
- Recommendation on access to social protection

- New binding occupational exposure limits for 24 cancer-causing substances
- Recommendation on 'A European Framework for Quality Apprenticeships'
- Youth Guarantee safeguarded
- Working Time Directive: no reopening
- Services E-Card: defeated
- European Solidarity Corps: no replacing jobs with unpaid volunteers

- Changed EU economic policy narrative on pay rises, investment and quality jobs
- Trade union proposals partially integrated into 2018 Country Specific Recommendations

- Just Transition in the Paris Agreement
- Ministerial Declaration on Just Transition at Katowice COP
- EU Platform for Coal Regions.

- Investor State Dispute Settlement out of CETA & all future EU trade deals
- No 'Market Economy Status' for China
- Social partners involved in trade defence investigations

- Reform of the European Globalisation Fund to cover digitalisation and resource-efficiency Erasmus + to include workers.

## With European employers

- Agreement on Active Ageing
- Partnership on the integration of refugees
- Statements and joint positions on digitalisation, Brexit, industrial policy and education and training,
- Work programme 2019-21

## European projects and networks, including

- Integration of migrants
- Organising atypical workers
- Tackling workplace harassment & violence against women

## Under getting affiliates involved in

- Pay Rise Campaign
- EU economic-policy making Semester
- National climate plans

## Working with

- ETUI - training, events & promoting research findings
- NGOs and civil society organisations



# 1. MACROECONOMIC POLICY AND ECONOMIC GOVERNANCE

The years following the 2007-2008 crisis should have been marked by a complete revision of the European Union's economic policy. While economies have avoided a complete crash thanks to fiscal stimulus and emergency implementation of ad-hoc mechanisms, the incompleteness of the European Monetary Union, the lack of European sovereignty and the limits of the rules governing economic policy in European Member States allowed the continuation of more rigid austerity policies in Europe. All-round austerity produced – as should have been expected – recession, and Member States engaged in beggar-thy-neighbour export-led policies applied through internal devaluations at the expense of domestic demand. The process of convergence between both eastern and western Member States and between the north and south of Europe has slowed down and even stopped in some areas.

## Macroeconomic policy

### The Stability and Growth Pact

On 13 January 2015, the European Commission published a Communication on 'Making the best use of the flexibility within the existing rules of the Stability and Growth Pact'. The Council endorsed the Communication in February 2016.

In June 2016, the ETUC adopted a position on the flexibilities within the Stability and Growth Pact.

The ETUC welcomed the fact that the Commission had taken account of the criticism of the pro-cyclical character of the Stability and Growth Pact, especially in times of crisis or "modest" recovery. However, the ETUC believed that the flexibilities the Commission suggested, while softening austerity, were still insufficient with regard to conditions in some European Member States, and it reiterated its call for a revision of the Pact. The principle of the sanctity of debt has to be rebalanced with social needs and a rights-based approach.

Estimates of the lack of public and private investment in Europe in 2013 were between €230 billion and €370 billion. By 2017, EU infrastructure investment spending should be no less than €335 billion per year, according to the European Investment Bank.

In this respect the Juncker plan, while being an initial departure from the logic of austerity, is too weak and very much based on public/private partnerships which, according to the European Court of Auditors, "cannot be regarded as an economically viable option for delivering public infrastructure". Since the implementation of the programme in mid-2015, €284 billion of new investment has been launched. This is just 5% of the total investment undertaken in the EU for the years 2016 and 2017 and does not reach even the annual investment increase the EIB is calling for.

The ETUC requested 1) the flexibilities to be enlarged to allow Member States in difficult situations to raise their deficit above the 3% limit for increasing public investment, to fund infrastructure and research, as well as universal and high-quality education, healthcare and social services; 2) that specific public investment in these areas should not be counted when national deficit levels are assessed, especially in economic downturns; 3) the flexibilities provided to Member States under the preventive arm of the Pact to be accessible to Member States under the corrective arm of the Pact; 4) a new indicator to complement the gross public debt position such as the net public debt position, which refers to gross public debt minus financial and other assets owned by public entities.

### Economic governance

The ETUC was highly critical of strict respect for the rules embedded in the Stability and Growth Pact, even after endorsement by the Council, in February 2016, of the Commission's Communication on 'Making the best use of the flexibility within the existing rules of the Stability and Growth Pact'.

The ETUC regretted that public investment has become one of the first targets for adjustment. We demanded far greater public investment in infrastructure and research, as well as in universal and high-quality education, healthcare and social services.

The economic governance regime was unable to provide the guidance to counter the symmetric shock of the 2007-2008 crisis.

Its reinforcement was unable to prevent or diminish the occurrence and the extent of imbalances. As a result, Europe was and still is, in some respects, trapped in a low-growth, low-employment, low-investment, low-inflation situation while monetary policy is supportive of economic recovery. Public investment both in the euro area and the whole EU has been continuously decreasing since 2009. This leaves room for manoeuvre for additional investment. If funded by a European Treasury, this would allow Member States in difficult situations, especially in economic downturn, to avoid cutting public investment.

The Five Presidents' report, 'Completing Europe's Economic and Monetary Union', published in June 2015, calls for "fiscal stabilisation" tools, and suggests the setting up of a European Treasury. On May 2017, the Commission's reflection paper on deepening the economic and monetary union was released. Finally, on 6 December 2017, the Commission issued its package on deepening Europe's Economic and Monetary Union. The Roadmap follows the commitments made since 2015 with the publication of the Five Presidents' report, the Commission's White Paper and the reflection paper.

The ETUC made a number of proposals for strengthening and developing the architecture of the Economic and Monetary Union, which could foster the goals of unity, efficiency and democratic accountability of the governance of the EMU<sup>1</sup>. The ETUC welcomed the initiatives put forward in the Commission's package, but nonetheless considered that the proposals were not answering critical economic and institutional issues. We, indeed, supported the integration of the European Stability Mechanism within European law and the move towards the community method. However, we deplored the missed opportunity to fully use the tools provided by such institutional set-up. In this respect, the package is not ambitious enough. In addition, we considered it problematic, if not unacceptable, that the substance of the Treaty on Stability, Coordination and Governance, and more especially the Fiscal Compact, should be integrated into European law without any additional flexibilities, especially concerning public investment, or social considerations.

As a governance structure, the euro should incorporate both a lender of last resort as global backstop for the euro system and some policy tools to enable the economy to develop while avoiding the conditions for calling on a lender of last resort. In the end, the economic governance system should prevent Member States experiencing refinancing problems, and in the event, provide the policy tools to help them cope with this situation. In this respect, the European Investment Protection Scheme, conceived as a European Treasury, would be the most convenient and best-suited institutional reform proposed in the Commission's paper. The ETUC suggested creating a Treasury as a vehicle to pool future public investment spending in Europe, funded by proper European treasury securities. Member State governments would decide the total volume of public investment needed, and its annual growth rate. To ensure that no debt mutualisation took place, each Member State would be endowed with a grant in proportion to its share of total GDP for investment purposes only. Each Member State would then be free to choose which sectors to invest in. Interest payments made by Member States' National Treasuries would follow the same rule, ensuring a non-mutualisation of debts.

The proposal for a stabilisation function as part of the Multiannual Financial Framework does not meet expectations. First, it could be triggered only in special crisis circumstances and with strong conditionalities on past respect of fiscal rules. Secondly, the total sum available under this scheme is limited to €30 billion, which amounts, for example, to only one-third of the loans granted to Ireland between 2010 and 2013. Finally, while the European Investment Stabilisation Function would enable the EU to borrow on financial markets and to lend to Member States in difficult situations, the total amount of debt that the EU can access is strictly limited. Therefore, the Union could only use this specific scheme at the expense of others.

## Capital Markets Union

The Capital Markets Union Action Plan sets out a programme of 33 actions and related measures designed to establish the building blocks for an integrated capital market in the EU by 2019. By enhancing private risk sharing, it aims to strengthen the European financial system by providing alternative sources of financing and increasing options for retail and institutional investors with a view to increasing investment.

The Capital Markets Union (CMU) initiative is built on the assumption that private businesses, especially SMEs, experience difficulties in gaining access to funding, and that the financing of private investment relies too much on bank lending and not enough on capital markets across Europe. By allowing better access to financial capital markets and providing different kinds of financing, the CMU is intended to be a tool for growth, job creation and financial stability.

The ETUC adopted a position on the Capital Markets Union in 2016, stating that we were not opposed to building a more integrated capital market in the EU, but that we were sceptical about the effects of such a framework on growth and jobs, and raising important concerns regarding financial stability. It built on the following points.

<sup>1</sup> See ETUC position on the flexibilities within the Stability and Growth Pact, 8-9 June 2016; ETUC Position Paper: A European Treasury for Public Investment, 15-16 March 2017; Reflection paper on the Deepening of the Economic and Monetary Union – ETUC assessment (ETUC position), 13-14 June 2017.

In the last four years of the ECB surveys on the access to finance of enterprises in the euro area, “access to finance” was considered the least important concern for euro-area SMEs while ‘finding customers’ remained the dominant concern”. Furthermore, the CMU project intended to re-launch securitisation in a more standardised and secured way. This would incentivise financial actors to re-enter a casino economy by focusing on short-term profits and packaging fees, leaving the real economy aside. In other words, the Commission was rebuilding a crisis-prone model, which is exactly what brought us to where we are today.

Such elements should persuade policy-makers to reshape their policy recommendations for supporting a modest and very fragile recovery. The ETUC therefore called for an increase in public investment and wages as an effective basis for a sound and sustainable recovery.

## Taxation and tax avoidance

### Anti-Tax Avoidance package

On 28 January 2016, the Commission released its Anti-Tax Avoidance Package which aims to prevent aggressive tax planning, to increase tax transparency and create a level playing field for businesses. The package consisted mainly of an Anti-Tax Avoidance Directive, a Recommendation on Tax Treaties, a revision of the Administrative Cooperation Directive and a Communication on the External Strategy.

The ETUC adopted a position on the Commission’s Anti-Tax Avoidance Package in April 2016.

Although the ETUC welcomed the initiative, we still believed that important concerns remained unanswered. The magnitude of tax avoidance made this an urgent issue to address. The European Parliament Research Service estimated that the EU was losing about €70 billion of tax revenue each year as a consequence of tax avoidance practices.

While the ETUC supported the proposal to introduce country-by-country reports to tax authorities by multinationals, we regretted that the Commission did not propose to make them public. The ETUC, together with numerous civil society stakeholders, therefore reacted positively to the Commission’s proposal to modify Directive 2013/34 (Accounting Directive), going further than action 13 of the Base Erosion and Profit Shifting (BEPS) scheme of the OECD, making businesses’ information publicly available. However, the proposal unfortunately only required corporations to publish information on their operations in EU Member States and countries blacklisted by the EU as ‘non-cooperative’ on tax matters.

In the summer of 2017, the European Parliament adopted its position on the issue, and took a more ambitious line than the Commission and Member States by expanding the list of reporting requirements, and by proposing that multinational corporations should report on their activities and tax payments in all countries where they do business. However, while the Parliament previously supported full public country-by-country reporting without restrictions, some parliamentarians, in particular from the Conservative and Liberal groups, introduced a new, problematic “corporate get-out clause”, to allow corporations to ask for exemptions and keep selected parts of their data secret if they felt public disclosure could harm the business. Therefore, even the Parliament’s position included a serious loophole.

Finally, to prevent companies with residence in the EU transferring part of their income to low-tax jurisdictions, the Commission proposed rules to re-attribute the income of a low-taxed subsidiary to its parent company. The ETUC was very concerned about the definition of ‘low-tax jurisdiction’, which was specified in relative terms only. The proposal for a fixed tax-rate limit defining low-tax jurisdictions has since been removed, and the ETUC regrets that EU Member States cannot be considered as low-tax jurisdictions.

### Common Consolidated Corporate Tax Base

In March 2011, the Commission proposed a Directive for a Common Consolidated Corporate Tax Base (CCCTB). The proposal aimed to provide companies with a single set of corporate tax rules for doing business across the internal market. It was designed to simplify the EU’s corporate tax framework and to reduce opportunities for multinational companies to avoid corporate tax.

The ETUC welcomed the Commission’s initiative to relaunch the Common Consolidated Corporate Tax Base (CCCTB) proposal. Enhanced convergence of tax bases within the EU is needed in order to better coordinate economic policies and fight tax avoidance. However, given that tax avoidance uses both tax-base and tax-rate differentials, the ETUC reiterated its call for a minimum corporate tax rate of 25% in Europe, to ensure that companies pay their fair share of tax where profits are generated.

The ETUC considered that the proposed threshold for mandatorily entering the CCCTB scheme was too high and should be set in accordance with the Accounting Directives, and contested the two-step approach put forward as a way to reach a fully functional common consolidated corporate tax base.

On 15 March 2018, Members of the European Parliament voted overwhelmingly in favour of two reports on the Common Corporate Tax Base (CCTB) and the CCCTB. On 21 March 2018, the Commission set out two proposals for taxing digital companies

where value is created. Finally, on 7 March 2018, country reports were released, and the Commission highlighted the problem of aggressive tax planning in seven Member States: Belgium, Cyprus, Hungary, Ireland, Luxembourg, Malta and the Netherlands.

All these initiatives were backed by the ETUC and welcomed as they answered important concerns raised in our positions.

The reports on the corporate tax base both aimed to ensure simultaneous entry into force of the Directive on a Common Corporate Tax Base and the Directive on a Common Consolidated Corporate Tax Base. Once implemented in all Member States, a CCCTB would ensure that taxes are paid where profits are generated and where companies have permanent establishment. If the Council fails to adopt a unanimous decision on the proposal to establish a CCCTB, the Commission could issue a new proposal in accordance with the ordinary legislative procedure. As a last resort, enhanced cooperation could be initiated by Member States. Additionally, the two reports stated that the Directives should apply to a company that is established under the laws of a Member State, including its permanent and digital permanent establishments in other Member States, where the company meets specific conditions, in particular, that it belongs to a consolidated group for financial accounting purposes with a total consolidated group revenue exceeding €750 million during the financial year preceding the relevant financial year. MEPs wanted the €750 million threshold to be reduced to zero after seven years maximum, meaning that eventually all European companies would fall under the CCCTB.

## EUROPEAN SEMESTER

The ETUC received a mandate to draw up and implement a strategy to make the trade union voice stronger in the European Semester, thanks to an improved coordination of ETUC members and enhancing policy coherence in all the policy areas covered by the Semester.

A group of Trade Union Semester Liaison Officers was set up to support the ETUC Secretariat and to coordinate Semester activities at European and national levels. The ETUC has organised three training courses for TUSLOs in cooperation with the ETUI. Some European federations have also appointed liaison officers to add a sectorial point of view to the ETUC work.

The ETUC advocated a stronger involvement of trade unions at the milestones of the Semester at both European and national levels. A definition of trade union involvement in the Semester was developed and adopted by the Executive Committee in December 2016. It upgrades what was established in the Quadripartite Agreement on 'A New Start for Social Dialogue' in August 2016. The ETUC definition became a reference for all as it is largely included in the Annual Growth Surveys 2017 and 2018. The ETUC definition also had an impact on the investigation methodology of Eurofound, where reporting is now better aligned to actual practices in Member States. The ETUC monitors this through the Trade Union Involvement Index which was drawn up in 2016 and implemented in 2017 and 2018. It allows shortfalls in many Member States to be highlighted and supports trade union demands on policy-makers, backed by evidence of inadequate levels of trade union participation in Member States. Such shortages have been addressed by EMCO thanks to a joint exercise with social partners. EMCO conclusions in 2016, 2017 and 2018 identified challenges that selected Member States have to address. This may lead to Country Specific Recommendations (CSRs) aimed at improving social dialogue in the Semester in countries where the most unsatisfactory situations are reported. This was the case in Hungary and Romania in 2018, where the ETUC efforts proved successful.

TUSLOs are involved at milestones of the Semester. One meeting per year takes place to prepare the ETUC annual document for Growth and Social Progress. The latter is then endorsed by the Executive Committee and transmitted to the European Commission every year before the official consultations with social partners scheduled in the last week of September for early-stage discussions on the upcoming Annual Growth Survey and the so-called Autumn Package. Afterwards, the ETUC position is published on the Commission's website along with the policy documents.

In October, TUSLOs deliver their inputs to the Commission for Country Reports. The ETUC collects such inputs in a single report, the 'ETUC Inputs for Country Reports', which is now in its fourth edition. On average, trade union organisations from 20 countries offer contributions every year. The inputs are a crucial source of information to shape common trade union priorities for the Semester and elaborate thematic reports (e.g. Annual Report on Collective Bargaining and Wages).

TUSLOs are also given the opportunity to meet the Country desks in the Commission, along with high-level representatives of DG Employment and DG ECFIN, at an early stage before the Country Reports are issued (four meetings organised in 2015, 2016, 2017 and 2018, first week of December) and after the Country Reports for an ex-post assessment (four meetings in 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018 during the second half of March). During this period, trade unions from at least 16 different countries have participated in these exercises.

In the Semester cycle 2017, thanks also to the impact of the European Pillar of Social Rights and its Social Scoreboard, the ETUC tried out the idea of putting forward proposals for socially-oriented CSRs. In April 2018, 10 countries participated in the action. As a result, almost 50% of trade union inputs were accepted into the CSRs, and 80% taking account of the preambles.

TUSLO activities were financially supported by two projects co-financed by the Commission. The ETUC strategy is defined in the ETUC Semester Toolkit 2.0. This toolkit is now backed by a dedicated web portal (<https://est.etuc.org/>) which includes applications to submit and collect inputs for country reports; an application which supports the TU Involvement Index; a resource centre; list of TUSLOs and European Semester Officers of the Commission; and a page with national reports on implementation of Sustainable Development Goals.

There are some gaps in trade union action on the Semester:

- National governments do not involve trade unions at the milestones of the Semester despite the repeated demands/instructions coming from EU level.
- The number of ETUC members who are pro-active in ETUC Semester coordination varies every year. Rotation of TUSLOs and lack of ownership at national level in some countries are considered the main challenges to be addressed.
- The Swedish unions decided not to participate in ETUC activities on the Semester.
- Difficult to keep up the pace of Member States in moving towards stronger coordination of economic and social policies. Internal trade union divisions impede the upgrading of trade union tools (e.g. benchmarks and mutual support instruments) during the Semester, thus limiting the trade union movement's capacity to be united in the struggle to reform the Semester.

## EU BUDGET / ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COHESION

### Multiannual Financial Framework (2014-2020 and 2021-2027)

The mid-term review/revision of the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) was part of the political agreement on the MFF 2014-2020 and is provided for in Art. 2 of Council Regulation N° 1311/2013 laying down the financial framework for the years 2014-2020.

On 14 September 2016, the European Commission presented a compulsory review of the functioning of the MFF, taking account of the economic situation as well as of the latest macroeconomic projections. This review was accompanied by a legislative proposal for the revision of the MFF Regulation.

On 26-27 October 2016, the ETUC Executive Committee adopted a Position as a first analysis of and input into the debate: <https://www.etuc.org/en/document/etuc-position-mid-term-reviewrevision-mff-2014-2020>

The current MFF had already been stretched to its limits in the first two years. The ETUC considered that an ambitious revision of the MFF was essential for tackling the refugee and migration crises, stimulating stagnant economies, reviving the European industrial base and tackling youth unemployment.

Indeed, the economic and political context was quite different when the current MFF was negotiated. Given recent developments, the ETUC considered that a number of issues would need to be taken into account in the MFF revision, namely:

- Financing of the EFSI (European Fund for Strategic Investment) - an Investment Plan for Europe and its impact on the EU budget should be considered;
- The migration and refugee situation has put both national and EU budgets under pressure. Ways to ensure sufficient flexibility and additional budgetary resources during the remaining MFF period should be found;
- The continuation of the Youth Employment Initiative after 2016 should be ensured;
- The measures agreed in the Paris Agreement on climate change, as well as the United Nations Agenda 2030 for sustainable development, should be implemented;
- Dealing with payment backlogs from the previous MFF period and avoiding a similar backlog in the future should be a priority.

Nevertheless, on 7 March 2017, the Council agreed on a light and financially limited review of the MFF which was endorsed by the European Parliament on 29 March 2017.

Considering the need to focus on the MFF from 2020 onwards, on 25-26 October 2017 the ETUC Executive Committee adopted a Position designed to influence the debate on the post-2020 MFF, with an emphasis on the implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights.

<https://www.etuc.org/en/document/etuc-position-multiannual-financial-framework-post-2020>

At the same time, the ETUC adopted an Assessment of the Reflection Paper on the Future of EU Finances published by the Commission on 28 June 2017. It was the last one of the five that the Commission announced when publishing its White Paper on the Future of Europe on 1 March 2017. The Reflection Paper presented five scenarios for the future of European finances.

<https://www.etuc.org/en/document/etuc-assessment-reflection-paper-future-eu-finances>

White Paper on the Future of Europe [https://ec.europa.eu/commission/sites/beta-political/files/white\\_paper\\_on\\_the\\_future\\_of\\_europe\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/sites/beta-political/files/white_paper_on_the_future_of_europe_en.pdf)

On 2 May 2018, the Commission issued a Communication on its proposals for the MFF 2021-2027, followed by the publication of the proposed Regulations on 29-31 May and 1 June 2018.

The ETUC Executive Committee adopted its Position on 25-26 June 2018.

<https://www.etuc.org/en/document/etuc-position-european-commission-proposal-eu-budget-2021-2027>

The ETUC called for an increase in the MFF, whereas the Commission proposal scarcely covered the €15 billion expected to be lost because of Brexit. The proposed global level of the next MFF set at €1.1 trillion, which represents 1.08% of the EU-27 GNI after deducting the European Development Fund, is inferior in real terms to the current MFF.

The ETUC considered this was not sufficient to face current and new challenges and that – as demanded by the European Parliament - the EU budget should be increased to 1.3% of GNI. In addition to that, the proposal was not ambitious in terms of proposals for new sources of financing on the basis of own resources, which should become the primary revenue of the EU budget. Moreover, the ETUC opposed a potential double cut in the European Social Fund Plus (ESF+) spending in the EU budget 2021-2027, as a result of scrapping the existing 23.1% minimum share of Cohesion Policy Funding which has to be spent by the Member States on ESF+ projects.

Investment in our future, fighting social dumping by relaunching wage convergence between east and west, better anticipating technological change and energy transition and supporting workers affected by these changes: in the view of the European trade union movement, these are the important challenges to be tackled by the EU in the future.

These are topics where we need more Europe, where Europe can prove its relevance to issues that matter for EU citizens. Only an increased budget, even after Brexit, can enable the EU to live up to its commitments to implement the UN Sustainable Development Goals and the newly proclaimed European Pillar of Social Rights. Only strong coordination between EU financial capacity and an economic, social and environmental European Semester can guarantee these critical political objectives are reached. Europe must equip itself to develop and consolidate a sustainable economic, social and environmental model.

The ETUC issued the following press releases:

<https://www.etuc.org/en/pressrelease/eu-must-increase-its-effort-social-cohesion-not-cut-it>

<https://www.etuc.org/en/pressrelease/eu-budget-working-people>

When this Activity Report was being finalised, negotiations were still going on and were unlikely to reach an agreement before the 2019 European Parliament elections.



## 2. SOCIAL DIALOGUE, COLLECTIVE BARGAINING AND WORKERS' PARTICIPATION

### EUROPEAN SOCIAL DIALOGUE

#### Introduction

Social dialogue at all levels is part and parcel of the European social model. It is enshrined in the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) and part of the *acquis*. But good industrial relations also have an economic added value. Countries with sound social dialogue are more competitive and it has been proved that they resisted the crisis better. The financial, economic and social crisis that struck the EU in 2008 has also undermined social dialogue, industrial relations and collective bargaining at all levels in recent years. Bi- and/or tripartite social dialogues have been decentralised, dismantled or undermined, directly or indirectly, in several countries.

While, in the past, the European Commission played a proactive role in social policies, its focus has shifted towards deregulation which has also had a negative impact on European social dialogue. Despite the so-called 'Relaunch of Social Dialogue' and the European Pillar of Social Rights, the Commission should do more to support social dialogue in the EU.

The ETUC is currently facing opposition from employers and certain governments to any binding instrument arising from an autonomous, inter-professional agreement, as a matter of principle. In the absence of pressure from the Commission, they are even less keen to negotiate unless it is in the context of a 'partnership for reforms'.

The ETUC and its affiliates do not question the importance and the symbolic role of European social dialogue. But, in the context described below, the ETUC also recognises that it faces many challenges and that its bipartite dimension is more important than ever.

#### Autonomous Work Programme 2015-2017

In the period 2015-2018, most of the work of the European interprofessional social dialogue was carried out in the framework of the fifth Autonomous Work Programme 2015-2017. This work programme was extended for one year because of the outstanding activities (linked to capacity building, active labour market policies and work-life balance).

Official negotiations took place between November 2014 and February 2015. They were much longer – four months instead of one month for the previous work programme – and much more difficult. The discussions with the employers were tough and conflictual. The difficulties especially focused on tools for implementation.

Thanks to the efforts of our delegations, we managed to obtain an agreement on active ageing (employers vetoed paternity and educational leaves) and to agree a focused and balanced work programme including topics such as digitalisation, work-life balance and capacity building.

#### Achievements

##### Active ageing and an intergenerational approach

Responding to the challenges caused by demographic change, the European social partners, BusinessEurope, UEAPME, CEEP and the ETUC (and the liaison committee EUROCADRES/ CEC), negotiated an autonomous framework agreement on active ageing and an intergenerational approach in the context of their 2015-2017 Work Programme.

This framework agreement forms the social partners' contribution to EU policies (including non-discrimination legislation) and actions which have already been developed to support active ageing and the intergenerational approach. The agreement therefore aims to build upon and enhance existing measures and approaches in place in different contexts across Europe.

It outlines tools/measures to be taken into account by social partners and/or HR managers in the context of national demographic and labour market realities, and in accordance with national practices and procedures specific to management and labour. The framework agreement is based on the principle that ensuring active ageing and the intergenerational approach requires a shared commitment on the part of employers, workers and their representatives.

The text of the agreement was successfully adopted on 8 March 2017 by the signatory parties. Negotiations lasted nine months and started on 9 February 2016 with the organisation of a joint fact-finding seminar. The agreement covered the following key aspects: it established a general action-oriented framework with concrete aims; it identified social partners' tools, measures and actions for strategic assessments of workforce demography, health and safety at the workplace, skills and competence management, work organisation and intergenerational approach.

For the first time, it was agreed that in the event of a lack of reporting after four years, the European social partners would encourage their members in the countries concerned to keep them informed about their follow-up activities until actions were undertaken at national level.

The ETUC presented the agreement at a number of EU and national events, at ETUI training sessions and in the context of a trade union project aimed at its promotion (decentralised seminars, guide to interpretation and grid of implementation).

## Mobility and migration

Mobility and migration were partially addressed with mixed outcomes. In the case of mobility, the Commission consulted the social partners on the mobility package, but we could not agree on any specific bipartite action due to strong divergences on the matter, especially with respect to posting. However, we were able to submit a joint amendment in the framework of the discussion on the EURES Regulation 2016/589 which was ultimately taken on board and in which we asked that "*Social partners and other relevant EURES stakeholders shall be consulted on the work programmes at the appropriate level*". As for migration, a joint statement on the refugee crisis was presented at the March 2016 Tripartite Social Summit (TSS). Furthermore, the ETUC, CEEP and other national employers' organisations are carrying out the Labour INT project promoting inclusion of asylum-seekers and refugees in the labour market (<http://www.labour-int.eu/>).

## Industrial policy

Industrial policy was another area where dialogue among cross-industry social partners brought some promising results. First, a joint statement on industrial policy was presented at the March 2016 Tripartite Social Summit. We also addressed a joint letter to Vice-President Timmermans urging him to include an ambitious industrial policy strategy in the Commission Work Programme for 2017. Discussions on the topic have continued since then and we believe that this is an area where further social dialogue results could be achieved in the future.

## Skills needs in digital economies

Skills needs in digital economies was a new area where we decided to undertake joint action. A joint statement on digitalisation was presented at the March 2016 Tripartite Social Summit, followed by the organisation of a joint fact-finding seminar in Berlin on 14 February 2017. During the seminar, social partner representatives, academia and institutional experts presented research on digitalisation in the EU and the Member States and a panel discussion with representatives from the national and sectoral level also took place. The positive outcome of the seminar could pave the way for further joint action in this area.

## Apprenticeships

The issue of apprenticeships has been (and still is) high on the social partners' agenda. Various actions were undertaken which went beyond the commitment to organise a joint conference (which took place on 26-27 May 2016) mentioned in the work programme. At the end of the conference we agreed on a joint statement '*Towards a shared vision of apprenticeships*' where we committed to "*explore the possibility of further joint activities, including with a view to achieving higher levels of mobility of apprentices across Europe*" and "*to help (...) the EU to develop a benchmark to improve apprenticeships across Europe*". This joint statement paved the way for a tripartite opinion by the Advisory Committee on Vocational Training (ACVT): '*A Shared Vision for Quality and Effective Apprenticeships and Work-based Learning*' where we urged the Commission to step up efforts to improve the quality and effectiveness of apprenticeships and work-based learning. Following this joint activity, the social partners took part in two hearings to express their views on a proposal for a Council Recommendation establishing a quality and effective framework for apprenticeships (3 March and 7 June 2017), and this Recommendation was adopted on 15 March 2018. It expressly recognised the work done by the social partners on the issue of apprenticeships.



## Youth employment

With respect to youth employment (an issue that the work programme addresses alongside apprenticeships), the EU social partners adopted their third follow-up report and the final report of their Framework of Actions in September 2016 and September 2017 respectively. A joint stock-taking conference took place in Brussels on 20 June 2017.

## Capacity building

Capacity building and maximising the impact of social dialogue instruments was another key priority of the work programme. A sub-group mandated to look into follow-up and implementation of autonomous European social dialogue instruments was set up. It met eight times in the context of the Social Dialogue Committee (SDC) until the end of its mandate (two years – February 2018). Discussions on several country cases where EU social partner agreements were not (or insufficiently) implemented took place within the subgroup with a view to unblocking dialogue/implementation at the national level. The evaluation among social partners of the work of the subgroup was very positive and it was decided that the subgroup should continue with an updated two-year mandate which continues to focus on the implementation of the EU social dialogue outcomes as well as the capacity-building challenges for social partners at national level.

In addition, an expert report was completed and presented at the joint social dialogue conference '*Promoting and reinforcing the EU social dialogue*' (5-6 July 2016). The report looked at the implementation of autonomous agreements in 10 Member States: Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Malta, Estonia, Greece, Hungary, Lithuania, Romania, and Slovakia and put forward recommendations to national social partners for improvement. The report was completed by a joint overview of the state of implementation of autonomous agreements in the 28 Member States, carried out by the EU social partners' secretariats and presented to the Social Dialogue Committee (December 2016). It was agreed that the overview will be updated annually for the Committee. A new Integrated Joint Programme was also submitted in May 2016 and is currently being implemented. The programme contains a number of joint activities and opportunities to foster social partners' capacity building.

These actions on capacity building have improved knowledge and visibility of EU social partners' agreements implementation, and in some countries have helped to relaunch discussions on implementation of one or more agreements (Bulgaria, Estonia, Poland, etc.). Nevertheless, investment is still needed in developing approaches to achieve better implementation in countries where progress is lacking.

## Childcare and gender pay gap

After long discussions on possible joint activities on work/life balance in the context of the proposals linked to the European Pillar of Social Rights (the employers showed no political will to negotiate on the issue), the European social partners decided to focus on childcare and the gender pay gap and to organise a joint seminar. External organisations were also invited (NGOs and public authorities), which helped social partners to address joint messages. A joint follow-up can be envisaged in the next work programme, including a possible update of the Gender Toolkit.

## Active labour market policies

The European social partners committed themselves to exchange views, inter alia in the context of the Social Dialogue Committee, on the effectiveness and quality of ALMPs to facilitate transitions from unemployment to employment and towards more and better jobs. This discussion took place at the bilateral meeting of the SDC on the basis of concrete national examples.

## European Semester

Finally, the work programme pledged to "develop the social partners' role in the process of the European Semester". This commitment was addressed in two ways. At political level, improving social partners' input into the EU economic governance process was one of the priorities agreed in our joint declaration on a new start for a strong social dialogue. At technical level, we agreed to undertake two joint seminars on social partners' involvement in the European economic governance process and the Semester. The first seminar took place on 15 May 2017 and the second on 14 March 2018.

## Resolution on the future of Social Dialogue

The ETUC organised a workshop with members from national and sectoral level in December 2016 in Bratislava during which the direction of European social dialogue was discussed at length. The implementation of outcomes, the future Work Programme and the added value at all levels coming from the European social dialogue was debated. Following this workshop, a resolution on the future of social dialogue was discussed and adopted by the Executive Committee in December 2016.

## Autonomous Work Programme 2019-2021 (see annex 1 page 78)

The 6<sup>th</sup> autonomous Work Programme of the European Social Partners was officially signed on 6 February 2019. In advance of the negotiations of this Work Programme, the ETUC held a workshop with members from national and sectoral level in December 2016 in Bratislava on the future of European social dialogue, as well as a seminar in April 2017 in Brussels to generate a mandate. Despite the best efforts of the ETUC, the employers were reluctant to engage in any discussion on a new Work Programme throughout 2017, so the decision was taken to freeze negotiations until a future date while focusing on the outstanding issues from the 2015-2017 Work Programme. Due to the persistence from the ETUC, the employers agreed to hold a joint conference in April 2018 to kick off the negotiations on the Work Programme 2019-2021, which was negotiated between May and October 2018.

The Work Programme 2019-2021 covers six priorities which will form the basis of much of the joint activity of the social partners for the next 3 years. The priorities are digitalisation; improving the performance of labour markets and social systems; skills; addressing psycho-social aspects and risks at work; capacity building and circular economy. There is a varied set of tools foreseen to address these priorities, including a framework agreement on digitalisation and joint projects on skills and the circular economy. The negotiation process on the issue of digitalisation was kicked off during a fact-finding seminar which took place on 28 February 2019.

## Integrated projects

Since 2004, the European social partners have undertaken a series of integrated projects (IP) which jointly address defined topics in line with their own work programmes or are the subject of joint activity at European level. The integrated projects include the organisation of seminars, conferences and workshops, as well as providing resources such as a translation fund to translate social dialogue texts into different languages and national seminars, on demand, which address issues identified by national social partners.

Since the Paris Congress, these activities have continued in both the 2014-2016 integrated projects, and the subsequent 2016-2018 projects. The newest integrated projects 2019-2020 commenced in January 2019. Seminars focusing on supporting and promoting social dialogue have taken place in Helsinki, Lisbon, Dublin and Slovakia. Each of these seminars brought together about 40 social partners from four different countries to discuss the condition of bipartite and tripartite social dialogue at national level, as well as the link with European social dialogue.

The role of the social partners in the European Semester process was the subject of two joint seminars which took place in May 2017 and March 2018. Each one brought together national social partners to discuss their experiences and expectations regarding involvement at national level.

The implementation of European social dialogue agreements was the focus of a conference in July 2016 involving more than 120 participants from social partners as well as national governments. This high-level conference discussed, amongst other issues, how to ensure the quadripartite statement on a new start for social dialogue could lead to concrete actions.

How to promote and reinforce social dialogue in candidate countries was the topic of a seminar in October 2018 in Montenegro. Due to the interest and positive evaluation of participants from candidate countries it was decided that such activities will be intensified in future projects. The European Social Dialogue Academy (ESDA) has continued to welcome young trade unionists to Brussels each year, to develop their understanding of the processes and outcomes of European social dialogue. While social dialogue is the main focus, contributors from the European Parliament, the European Economic and Social Committee, the ETUI and Eurofound provide a comprehensive overview to help participants to grasp the issues being discussed at European level.

The translation fund has overseen the translation of texts linked to European social dialogue, with most of the activity over the last four years focusing on the translation of the agreement on active ageing and an intergenerational approach into various languages. So far, the translation fund has covered translation into Bulgarian, Czech, Estonian, Dutch, French, German, Hungarian, Italian and Latvian.

Thematic project activities have taken place on apprenticeships (IP 2014-2016), the European Social Fund (ESF) and capacity building of social partners (IP 2016-2018) and employee training (IP 2016-2018). Each activity consisted of a series of seminars followed by conference, and a report was published. These projects have generated concrete outcomes, such the Council Recommendation on Quality and Effective Apprenticeships, Joint Recommendations on Capacity Building of Social Partners and the European Social Fund, and Joint Recommendations on Promoting Social Partnership in Employee Training. Future Thematic project activities are planned to commence in 2020 addressing the Work Programme priorities of circular economy and skills, innovation, access to and provision of training.

## Other activities

European social partners were able to achieve further significant results through bipartite dialogue.

### Quadripartite statement

The most important was the joint declaration on a new start for a strong social dialogue concluded in January 2016, providing social partners with ETUC recommendations to improve social dialogue in four areas: capacity building, EU policy-making, European economic governance/Semester and the better regulation agenda. Shortly afterwards, the European Council adopted Council Conclusions stemming from the declaration and a quadripartite statement was eventually co-signed by the European Commission, the European Council, CEEP, BusinessEurope, UEAPME and the ETUC in June 2016.

### Other joint statements

On the occasion of the Extraordinary Tripartite Social Summit for the **60th Anniversary of the Rome Treaty**, the social partners presented a joint statement to Presidents Juncker and Tusk, to Commissioners Thyssen and Dombrovskis and to the Prime Ministers of Italy, Malta, Estonia and Sweden " *declaring their full commitment to the European Union and dedication to continuing to contribute to a successful project and united Europe that delivers for its workers and enterprises*".

The European social partners also adopted a joint statement on the **European Pillar of Social Rights** (November 2017), identifying the key challenges facing Europe and making some recommendations.

For the March 2018 TSS, the European Social Partners also adopted a joint declaration on the post-2020 **Multiannual Financial Framework** where they strongly urged all relevant decision-makers to ensure the post-2020 Multiannual Financial Framework would be in place before the European elections.

Finally, for the first time, **social partners in the Euro-Mediterranean region agreed a Declaration on Social Dialogue** (September 2016), designed to make a positive contribution to setting up strong, independent and effective social dialogue in the 43 countries of the Union for the Mediterranean.

## ETUC STRATEGY FOR COORDINATING COLLECTIVE BARGAINING AND WAGES AT EU LEVEL

The ETUC coordinates collective bargaining policies of its members and monitors, collects and exchanges national and European practices. It also has competence for monitoring wage developments and coordinating its affiliates to achieve common goals, especially to avoid competition among workers, and promoting the golden wage rule (wage increases of at least 'inflation plus productivity'). The ETUC builds cross-border solidarity and adds value to national/sector trade union strategies.

During the last four-year mandate (2015-2019), the ETUC has reinforced its policy objectives for stronger collective bargaining in all Member States, adopting:

- A Resolution on a common strategy for low and minimum wages
- A Resolution on priorities for coordination of collective bargaining and wages
- A Resolution to fight gender pay gaps

They cover statutory minimum wages, wage fairness and upward convergence of wages at EU level, the fight against in-work poverty, and ending discrimination and unjustifiable pay gaps. The wage rule according to which national wages should increase on average in line with inflation plus productivity remains a pillar of the ETUC strategy.

The ETUC has put in place several actions to implement its policy priorities.

It conducted a Pay Rise Campaign from 2016 to 2018. The campaign adopted both a macroeconomic approach (advocating real wage growth because of its macroeconomic effect on internal demand) and a micro dimension (supporting free, autonomous and balanced collective bargaining and a more transparent and fair determination of statutory minimum wages). The campaign highlighted a convergence of views among the main European stakeholders which is due to be channelled into a new Alliance or Partnership to promote collective bargaining.

The ETUC demands were transmitted by means of the European Semester and the European Pillar of Social Rights.

Concerning the European Semester, the European Commission was forced to adopt a more balanced narrative on the macro-economic role of wage dynamics, recognising that increasing real wages may be a driver for growth and competitiveness as much as other productive factors. This change of narrative was very important in bringing social dialogue and collective bargaining back to the top of the EU agenda. The ETUC wage demands were set out in the document that the ETUC publishes on an annual basis in preparation for the new Semester cycle. A chapter of the ETUC For Growth and Social Progress is dedicated to wage dynamics and collective bargaining.

The ETUC, when coordinating and gathering inputs for country reports at an early stage, asks its members for input on the state of play on wage developments. Thanks to this exercise, it is possible to have a comprehensive picture on how wage dynamics relate to labour market dynamics, investments, and fiscal policies. National inputs for country reports (delivered each year in November) are now a milestone in the strategy for coordination of wages and collective bargaining.

The ETUC produces a Report on Collective Bargaining and Wages on an annual basis. Using national inputs for country reports, but based also on the work of the ETUC Collective Bargaining and Wages Coordination Committee (CBWCC), the report records each country's progress towards the ETUC policy goals. It also reports on good practices and raises the alert on critical situations.

'Fair wages' is one of the principles of the European Pillar of Social Rights (adopted in November 2017). Collective bargaining and social dialogue are also supported by the EPSR and more in general are recognised as one of the most important vehicles to implement the Pillar. This has been an important achievement. The Pillar is a reason to be more ambitious and provides a policy framework for legislation, when necessary and desired, to reinforce collective bargaining and social dialogue in each country and in each industry.

In order to reinforce mutual cooperation among its affiliates, the ETUC developed a Collective Bargaining and Wages Scoreboard. The Scoreboard uses indicators that are proxy for the policy goals we want to achieve in each country. Together with other tools, the Scoreboard will display, country-by-country, any critical situations that have to be addressed; will encourage trade unions in countries experiencing critical situations to issue an action plan; and in more persistent situations of weakness, will create conditions for reinforced cooperation among European trade unions under ETUC coordination and responsibility.

In this regard, Capacity Building for Collective Bargaining is extremely important. The concept of capacity building has been revived as a main outcome of the ongoing CB4CB project. Capacity building is a process whereby national unions undertake cooperation with the ETUC and other national organisations to produce real change in their home country. It is meant to be a voluntary and result-oriented exercise designed to produce a tangible improvement (measured as progress toward the ETUC objectives). It starts with specific tools that the ETUC has created to help its member organisations detect weaknesses in national systems, identify suitable solutions and transform them in actions plans that can be potentially financed under the European Social Fund.

The ESF should be adapted to become a strategic component of the new capacity building for collective bargaining in Europe. Specific resources should be earmarked for capacity building for collective bargaining, made accessible to trade unions and employers, for the exclusive use of social partners. This request is part of the ETUC demands for the new MFF.

Building on the ETUC proposal for an Optional Legal Framework (OLF) for cross-border negotiations with multinational companies, the ETUC has continued to demand a level playing field for negotiating and implementing TCAs. The joint project with BusinessEurope has produced some advances especially in the mutual recognition of roles played by central management and ETUFs (to the extent that they make agreements more stable and enforceable). In the meantime, two ETUFs adopted procedures to negotiate TCAs. On the one hand, this helps to confirming the leading role of ETUFs in this domain, but on the other, they both diverge from the ETUC guidelines.

The goal of implementing the OLF was missed. A lack of awareness of the effects of TCAs persists especially in certain national organisations. While new and old TCAs look and act more and more like collective agreements, current practices are questioning the trade union prerogative (exclusive entitlement) as (exclusive) negotiating agents. The European trade union movement continues to suffer delays in the capacity to be equipped with legal frameworks that protect national systems from non-union actors signing texts that are applicable in a national legal environment and are potentially harming national collective agreements.

The ETUC strategy for coordination of collective bargaining and wages can be represented thus:

### VISUALISING THE ETUC STRATEGY FOR COORDINATING COLLECTIVE BARGAINING AND WAGES AT EU LEVEL

<b>ETUC policy frameworks:</b>	ETUC Resolution on minimum and low wages ETUC Resolution on coordination of collective bargaining and wages ETUC Resolution on gender pay gaps ETUC golden rule: wages increase in line with inflation and productivity						
<b>Main EU policy frameworks:</b>	European Semester		European Pillar of Social Rights		Cross-border negotiations with MNC		
<b>ETUC Strategic Programmes:</b>	Pay Rise Campaign		Capacity Building for Collective Bargaining		IR/CB Partnership(?)		Coordination of TCAs
<b>ETUC Tools:</b>	TU Inputs for Country Reports in the framework of the European Semester	ETUC for Growth and Social Progress	ETUC annual Report on collective bargaining and wages	Collective Bargaining and Wage Scoreboard.	Training with ETUI on collective bargaining	European Projects on collective bargaining	OLF for TCA

## WORKERS' PARTICIPATION AND DEMOCRACY AT WORK

### Positions and resolutions

In February 2016 the report to the ETUC on 'Revisiting restructuring, anticipation of change and workers' participation in a digitalised world' was published ([https://www.etuc.org/sites/default/files/publication/files/revisiting-restructuring-en\\_new2.pdf](https://www.etuc.org/sites/default/files/publication/files/revisiting-restructuring-en_new2.pdf)) analysing trends and changes in restructuring after the outbreak of the financial crisis of 2008. It reports a lost decade with regard to workers' participation and social dialogue on restructuring. It proposes cornerstones for a fairer model of dealing with restructuring and anticipation of change.

The extraordinary ETUC Executive Committee on 13 April 2016 in The Hague and the ETUC Executive Committee on 9 June 2016 in Brussels adopted a landmark resolution demanding a new EU horizontal framework for information, consultation and board-level representation rights (<https://www.etuc.org/en/document/etuc-position-paper-orientation-new-eu-framework-information-consultation-and-board-level#>).

In May 2016 the ETUC published an assessment of the state of play of the EWC Directive ([https://www.etuc.org/sites/default/files/publication/files/europeanworks\\_councils\\_ces\\_01.pdf](https://www.etuc.org/sites/default/files/publication/files/europeanworks_councils_ces_01.pdf)). The report analyses achievements and setbacks, deficiencies and challenges for EWCs, and points to needs and demands with regard to the review of the EWC Directive.

In July 2016 a special edition of the ETUC newsletter *Workers' participation* was published (<https://www.etuc.org/en/pressrelease/workers-voice-etuc-newsletter-special-edition-workers-participation>; EN, FR, IT, DE). The newsletter focuses on restructuring and anticipation of change, deals with new developments among EWCs, criticises the insufficient European Quality Framework for restructuring and proposes a series of videos on the same topic.

The ETUC adopted a position paper 'For a modern European Works Council (EWC) Directive in the Digital Era' on 15-16 March 2017 in Malta (<https://www.etuc.org/en/document/etuc-position-paper-for-modern-ewc-directive-digital-era>). Later some additional explanations were added to the position ([http://www.effat.org/sites/default/files/events/14593/1d\\_etuc\\_for\\_a\\_modern\\_directive\\_in\\_digital\\_era\\_rationales\\_and\\_explanations\\_-\\_final.pdf](http://www.effat.org/sites/default/files/events/14593/1d_etuc_for_a_modern_directive_in_digital_era_rationales_and_explanations_-_final.pdf)) which consists mainly of 10 demands.

The ETUC adopted a position paper 'ETUC demands in view of the upcoming company law package' on 13-14 December 2017 (<https://www.etuc.org/en/document/etuc-position-paper-etuc-demands-view-upcoming-company-law-package>)

The ETUC Resolution 'Strategy for more democracy at work' adopted at the Executive Committee on 7-8 March 2018 (<https://www.etuc.org/en/document/etuc-resolution-strategy-more-democracy-work-0>) marked the launch of a campaign in favour of

better visibility for ETUC demands. It was supplemented by a European appeal which is open for signatures (<http://european-appeal.org/>) and was covered in *Le Monde* and other newspapers. The ETUC published a press release: (<https://www.etuc.org/en/pressrelease/european-appeal-companies-and-employees-blazing-new-european-trail>).

The ETUC made representations to the European Commission in advance of the publication of the company law package (<https://www.etuc.org/en/pressrelease/eu-company-law-package-must-end-regime-shopping>) and reacted immediately afterwards (<https://www.etuc.org/en/pressrelease/eu-commissions-company-law-proposals-provide-grounds-progress-clearly-need-improvement>).

In May 2018 the ETUC sent an open letter to Employment Commissioner Marianne Thyssen on the company law package (<https://www.etuc.org/en/document/etuc-letter-proposal-directive-company-law-package-commissioner-thyssen> ; [https://www.etuc.org/sites/default/files/document/files/15052018\\_commissionerthyssen\\_company\\_law\\_package\\_final\\_0.pdf](https://www.etuc.org/sites/default/files/document/files/15052018_commissionerthyssen_company_law_package_final_0.pdf)).

On 25-26 June 2018 the ETUC adopted a position paper on 'The new company law package 2018: A missed opportunity for more democracy at work' (<https://www.etuc.org/en/document/etuc-position-paperthe-new-company-law-package-2018-missed-opportunity-more-democracy-work>)

On 18-19 December 2018 the ETUC Executive Committee discussed a note on 'Action around Democracy at work' (<https://www.etuc.org/system/files/event/file/2018-12/13%20-%20EN%20-%20Action%20for%20more%20democracy%20at%20work%20%20updated%20version.pdf>), describing the state of play on the company law package, on the Commission's assessment of the Quality Framework for restructuring and anticipation of change, which was awaited since 2016 but was finally published in November 2018, and on the invitation to participate in a working group on an EWC handbook.

## Projects and activities

Building on the experiences and insights of a first series of digitalisation meetings in 2015/16, the ETUC submitted a project to gather more information on digitalisation, in particular at shop-floor level, and on the involvement of trade unions.

Kick-off event for the project – 'Workers' Participation: the key to fair digitalisation', 2 March 2017. Focus: Questionnaire to gather information and experiences of good practices, identify key gaps and challenges from a workers' perspective (Eckhard Voss, WMP Consult) - Crowdwork as a challenge for workers' participation (Jeremias Prassl), Planning and organisation of the project events in the form of clusters:

- Copenhagen, 22 June 2017: Denmark, Norway, France, Ireland, Latvia, Croatia
- Tallinn, 19 September 2017: Sweden, Luxembourg, Italy, Malta, Estonia, Romania, Lithuania, Poland
- Madrid, 15 February 2018: Finland, Belgium, Spain, Greece, Cyprus, Slovakia, Bulgaria
- Berlin, 4 June 2018: Germany, Netherlands, Austria, Portugal, United Kingdom, Hungary, Czech Republic, Slovenia

**1<sup>st</sup> Cluster Seminar Workers' Participation: The Key to Fair Digitalisation** – 22 June 2017. LO – Copenhagen. Focus: Danish Government initiative on digitalisation – 'The Disruption Council' (Pernille Harden, Head of Division, Ministry of Employment and Nanna Højlund, Vice-president, LO), Digitalisation in the municipal administration of Copenhagen – a case example (Cecile Christensen), Danish trade unions and the platform economy (Kirstine Baloti, trade union officer, HK Privat), Addressing the transnational impact of digital technology and workers' rights (Aline Hoffmann, ETUI), Challenges from the perspective of national ETUC and ETUF affiliates – First Findings of the Survey (Eckhard Voss, WMP Consult), Crowd working - decent on demand work, first policy ideas (Jeremias Prassl, Magdalen College, Oxford).

**2<sup>nd</sup> Cluster Seminar Tallinn** – 19 September 2017. The e-Estonian showroom: Overview of Estonian e-solutions, e-services and infrastructure (Indrek Õnnik, e-Estonia Showroom Project Manager), Company example of workers' participation and digitalisation from Estonia (Sander Aasna, OMNIVA), Negotiating change: the experience of company agreements in Italy (Chiara Mancini, CGIL), Challenges from the perspective of national ETUC and ETUF affiliates – first findings from the telephone interviews and analysis from the online survey (Eckhard Voss).

**3<sup>rd</sup> cluster seminar Madrid** – 15 February 2018. Welcome, presentation and status quo of the project (Mercedes González, CCOO, Gonzalo Pino, UGT), Strategies and initiatives on digitalisation in Spain (María Pilar Sánchez Nuñez, Advisor of the Office of State Secretary for Digital Information Society), Expectations and thoughts of the Spanish trade unions on the digitalisation strategy of the Spanish government (Jorge Aragón, Advisor to the Economic and Social Council of Spain on behalf of CCOO; José Varela, Advisor on digital economy of UGT), Case studies / company example of workers' participation and digitalisation from Spain (Gonzalo Pino, Confederal secretary for trade union policy of UGT; Mercedes González, Confederal Secretary for trade union action of CCOO), Company example of workers' participation and digitalisation from other countries (Yannick

Daubleu, EWC of AXA and member of CGSLB, Carmelo Liberto, FGTB), Platform certification, platform operation and collective bargaining – three options for the social partners in the gig economy (Jeremias Prassl, Magdalen College, Oxford), What trade unions and employee representatives at company level in Europe think. Results from the ETUC survey (Eckhard Voss WMP Consult Wilke Maack GmbH).

**4<sup>th</sup> Cluster Seminar Berlin** – 4 June 2018. Focus: German trade unions on digitalisation and workers' participation (Thomas Fischer, DGB Michael Fischer, Ver.di), Company example from Germany: The implantation of an online HR application tool at Robert Bosch GmbH (Michael Altenhoevel, works council, Robert-Bosch), Company example from Austria: Digital transformation and automation within the ÖBB Group (Austrian Federal Railways) (Olivia Janisch, ÖGB, Group works councils ÖBB), Digitalisation approach: Birgit Schweer, German Confederation of Skilled Crafts and Small Businesses ZDH & Kai Lindemann, DGB, Company example from the Netherlands: digitalisation in financial services in the Netherlands and at Achmea in particular (Eric Nijst, former secretary of the works council of the insurance company Achmea), Digitalisation and Workers' Participation in Europe - Selected results of the ETUC survey (Eckhard Voss, WMP Consult).

**Final conference Brussels** – 18 September 2018. Video of the Madrid workshop, opening and welcome by Peter Scherrer and first panel on 'Anticipation of change, predicting new business models and future of work' with Wolfgang Schiller, HR Manager and Dragomir Slavoev, EWC Chair: The case of Ideal Standard – Marc Ambiaux, Chairman, European AIRBUS SE-Works Council: The case of Airbus and finally the case of the dockers, Steve Biggs, chair of the Dubai Ports World EWC. The main part of the conference was dedicated to the presentation of the findings of the ETUC survey on digitalisation by Eckhard Voss with comments by Aline Conchon, industriAll and Aileen Koerfer, UNI-E. Panel on transborder regional cooperation on digitalisation: the cases of Danube and the Baltic Sea with explanations by Marie Hejnys, ÖGB (Austria) and José Pérez Johansson, Policy Officer at the Council of Nordic Trade Unions. Followed by two examples from the panel on online platforms and trade unions: the case of Delivery Hero and the Danish Platform Hilfr: by Stefania Radici FILCAMS (Italy) (video) and Thorkild Holmboe-Hay, Policy and Communications advisor at 3F (Denmark), Collective agreement between a digital platform, Hilfr and 3F. The second report was on online platforms: Presentation of the findings on crowdwork by Professor Jeremias Prassl, University of Oxford with comments by Nick Costello, Deputy Head of Unit E1 – Job Creation / European Commission. Final conclusions by Peter Scherrer.

**Project on workers' board-level representation with a special focus on company law and participation in boards.**

**Company mobility and workers on boards 1<sup>st</sup> Workshop** – Frankfurt, 11 April 2018 with a focus on: What is implied in the company law package? Plans, ideas and activities from the European Commission (Sigurt Vitols, ETUI and WZB); State of play – Fact and figures on company mobility (Marcus Meyer, Maastricht University); What could change with the new company law package? What might that imply for me and my work? Related to letterbox companies, board-level representation, taxes, information and consultation; conclusion and way forward. Due to the late publication of the company law package the workshop, instead of analysing it, put together all the available information and discussed how to continue to influence and react to it.

**Second workshop** – Rome, 16 October 2018: Welcome by Italian ETUC affiliates and Wolfgang Kowalsky, followed by MEP Sergio Cofferati - the company law package: conversion, merger, division of companies and digitalisation – state of play in the European Parliament (EP). Comments by Magnus Lundberg (TCO) and additional information from Philine Scholze (Greens), Karola Boger (GUE). After the lunch break Dr.in Eva Fehringer (Deputy Head International and European Social Policy and Labour Law, Austria) gave an overview of the state of play of the company law package in the council working group / Austrian Presidency. Final speaker on workers' participation in Italy – state of discussion, Goffredo Michele di Palma [www.mitbestimmung.it](http://www.mitbestimmung.it). Conclusions by Wolfgang Kowalsky. The second workshop fell in the middle of ongoing discussions in the Parliament on the company law package, with all amendments tabled for the different committees of the EP dealing with it. There was an exchange of views with members of different political groups on possible options and in-depth information supplied by the Presidency on proceedings inside the Council. As the meeting took place in Italy, an overview of current discussions was presented.

**Final conference** – Brussels, 19 March 2019: After a welcome speech by Katja Lehto-Komulainen, ETUC Deputy General Secretary, the first panel discussion was on the company law package, in light of the developments in the legislative process and of the discussions during the workshops organised in the framework of the project. The participants were Peter Scherrer, ETUC Deputy General Secretary; Tiina Astola, Director General DG Justice and Consumers; Dr Gabriela Fierbinteanu, Company Law Attachée, Chair of the Working Party on Company Law, Romanian Presidency; Evelyn Regner, Member of the European Parliament. The next panel gave an update on studies under preparation in the framework of the project and held an open discussion with participants. In the afternoon, after a first panel on key concepts for the future of corporate governance and company law, a discussion took place with MEPs: Claude Rolin – EPP, Jytte Guteland – S&D, Antonio Marinho e Pinto – ALDE, Pascal Durand – Greens on 'More democracy at work beyond the company law package – the future of workers' information, consultation and participation'. Peter Scherrer drew conclusions. The final conference took place just after the trilogue had finalised the discussions on the package. Different views were presented, the ETUC being quite critical, whereas the representatives of all three institutions present thought it a very good outcome. Some information was given on the tendered studies to deepen knowledge of company law related to circumvention of workers' rights and the setting-up of letterbox companies. The final panel with MEPs reached a unanimous position in favour of the need to strengthen information, consultation and board-level representation rights in the near future.

**EWC Conference** – 15-16 September 2015, Keynote speech: EWCs – Looking back at 20 years of practice and into the future (Mr Jordi Curell, Director of Employment and Social Legislation, Social Dialogue, European Commission); Panel: Looking back – what can we learn from the past? Round table session: Into the future – how to shape a successful EWC practice.

**EWC Conference** – 12-13 October 2016 with a focus on EWCs in the Digital Age (Jutta Steinruck MEP); Panel: EWCs – what's your assessment and what are your priorities for the future; Keynote Speech: EWCs – review and looking forward (Michel Servoz, Director General DG Employment, European Commission); EWCs in the digital age: from recast to new digital challenges? (Reiner Hoffmann, President DGB); Round table session: How to shape a successful EWC practice in the digital age; EWCs in the digital age: work organisation, introduction of new technologies, data protection, right to be disconnected, platform crowdwork...

**EWC Conference** – 17-18 October 2017, Welcome address by the conference chair followed by keynote speech (Peter Scherrer, Deputy General Secretary ETUC); Panel with MEPs (Judith Kirton-Darling, Claude Rolin, Thomas Händel); EWC experience – good and less good, comments by European Commission, legal issues.

**EWC Conference** – 10-11 October 2018, on EWCs as a pillar for more democracy at work. Welcome address by the conference chair, Peter Scherrer, Deputy General Secretary ETUC; followed by keynote speech by Stefan Olsson, Director-General of the European Commission. After a Q&A session, the 900 signatures on the European Appeal for more Democracy were handed over to the Director-General. Following a panel on 'Workers' voice in corporate governance: impacts on more democracy at work', the participants joined a rally for more democracy at work at the Esplanade of the European Parliament, with speeches from MEPs from different political parties. On the second day, a panel took place on 'EWC experience – in view of digitalisation challenges' with Robert Textoris, EWC Engie, France; Sabine Kuhlmann, EWC and Member of Supervisory Board, Oerlikon, Germany, Daniel Folgado Risueno, EWC Axa insurance, Spain, Daniel Valtakari EWC coordinator for Nokia, Ideal Standard, Perkin Elmer and Gabriele Guglielmi, CGIL FILCAMS International policies coordinator. There was a second panel on EWCs and Brexit with Gerry McCormack, Deputy General Secretary, SIPTU (Ireland), Stephen Schindler, EFBWW, Barry Firth, EWC Coca Cola UK and Janet Williamson, TUC (UK). At the end, Peter Scherrer highlighted the upcoming European elections: 'Towards the European elections: ETUC priorities for the new European Commission and Parliament 2019-24', before concluding the conference.





### 3. EUROPEAN PILLAR OF SOCIAL RIGHTS (EPSR)

The European Pillar of Social Rights was solemnly proclaimed in November 2017. However, ETUC action in support of the Pillar had already started when the political initiative took its first steps early in 2016. A temporary group of experts was established to support the ETUC Secretariat in defining the scope and main objectives (as well as boundaries and limits) of the EU initiative for a Pillar of Social Rights.

The group was consulted in timely manner, through meetings and email, during the intensive exchange between the ETUC and the European Commission on the definition of the 20 principles that would compose the Pillar. Several positions and resolutions were submitted to the Executive Committee to ensure ownership of the process at national level.

The discussion on the European Pillar of Social Rights was followed by the Labour Legislation and Internal Market Committee and considered from different angles over several years at the Netlex conferences.

The ETUC was directly involved in the organisation of the ceremony of the solemn proclamation of the European Pillar of Social Rights in Gothenburg in November 2017 alongside the extraordinary social summit convened by the Estonian EU Presidency.

ETUC action turned swiftly towards the implementation of the Pillar, through a building block strategy adopted by the Executive Committee in 2018. The ETUC Secretariat and member organisations worked along two main strategic lines: legislative measures at EU level and mainstreaming the Pillar in the European Semester.

The Pillar functions as a legal base (on top of those provided by the EU Treaties) to launch legislative proposals such as a brand new Directive on Work-Life Balance, a Directive on Transparent and Predictable Working Conditions, a Regulation setting up a European Labour Authority, and a Recommendation on Access to Social Protection. The ETUC Secretariat pursued a coordinated approach to follow the legislative progress of these directives in order to preserve the Pillar's role in defining standards in favour of European workers. Legislative initiatives under the Pillar have been adopted in 2019 and represent its most tangible results (see other chapters in this Activity Report).

Concerning the impact of the Social Pillar on the European Semester, the ETUC has adapted its Semester Toolkit to align trade union demands to the priorities it sets out. In particular, it has introduced the Pillar into the training package for TUS-LOs, and launched a new exercise aimed at transforming the Pillar into socially-oriented Country Specific Recommendations (see chapter on the European Semester).

In line with its building block strategy, the ETUC set up alliances to promote the European Pillar of Social Rights. The most tangible result is the Alliance 'Stand Up for the Social Pillar' which includes Social Economy Europe, CECOP, European Movement International and the Social Platform. The Alliance held two events in the European Parliament in November 2017 to support the proclamation of the Pillar and in October 2018 to encourage a concrete plan to implement it.

#### Campaign website

When the Commission opened a public consultation on the EPSR, the ETUC, together with the ÖGB and the Austrian Federal Chamber of Labour (AK) created a website <https://socialrightsfirst.eu/> to put pressure on the Commission to come forward with a meaningful proposal. The website allowed users to forward the ETUC's response to the consultation directly to the Commission.

This action was a huge success. The Commission received 16,500 replies to the public consultation, of which 15,500 came via this website. This, together with the strong report of the European Parliament, which was adopted thanks to joint lobbying efforts by the trade union movement, produced the necessary political pressure for a formal proclamation.

## 4. EMPLOYMENT AND LABOUR MARKET

The ETUC's capacity to pursue policy aimed at alleviating the profound employment and social challenges facing Europe's workers increased significantly after the Paris Congress. A new permanent committee was formed dedicated to employment and labour market policy, with a specific remit to track developments in the European Employment Strategy. This has been achieved by having a standing item on the agenda on the employment aspects of the European Semester and contributing text to ETUC positions in this area. The committee also played a very proactive role in developing the ETUC negotiating strategy during the consultation on the European Pillar of Social Rights. Seven meetings took place throughout the period 2015-19.

### Quality work and a labour market vision

The first half of the mandate was dominated by delivering on the Paris Action Programme commitment to develop an ETUC definition of quality work. The six point definition was adopted by the ETUC Executive Committee in 2017<sup>2</sup> and covered:

- a. Good wages
- b. Work security via standard employment and access to social protection
- c. Lifelong learning opportunities
- d. Good working conditions in safe and healthy workplaces
- e. Reasonable working time with good work-life balance
- f. Trade union representation and bargaining rights

Following the adoption of the quality work definition, the committee started to articulate a vision of what labour market policies and strategies would be needed to create the conditions in which growth of our defined quality jobs could flourish. The ETUC Labour Market Vision resolution was adopted in 2019 and examines how we can achieve more of these jobs in the coming years by outlining four key challenges in European labour markets with a series of clear actions to tackle them:

1. Less work; more workers
2. Technological innovation
3. Labour market segmentation
4. The use of active labour market policies

The 15 priority actions that the resolution identifies will be enacted in the coming mandate (2019-23).

### Beyond flexicurity

A major employment policy confronting the new ETUC Employment and Labour Market Committee was the issue of 'flexicurity', which had proved toxic amongst most national affiliates whose members had been subjected only to the labour market 'flexibility' side of the concept with little in the way of 'security'. However, the ETUC also recognises that in some specific contexts, the approach works and is supported by our affiliates – most notably in Denmark and Sweden. It was therefore clear that a simple 'for or against' policy would be insufficient to address a complex range of policy options.

To advance this debate, the ETUC held a two-day seminar in 2017 at the request of the committee on 'Flexicurity Challenges', where a series of experts led sessions on the inherent problems with the approach in order to map a way forward. The conclusions of the event fed into the quality work resolution before also forming the basis of the ETUC position on the proposed Employment Guidelines revision in 2018.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.etuc.org/en/document/etuc-resolution-defining-quality-work-etuc-action-plan-more-and-better-jobs>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.etuc.org/en/document/etuc-position-proposed-employment-guidelines-revision>

## Atypical employment and self-employed workers

Some self-employed workers and those with atypical contracts encounter specific difficulties in securing rights, decent wages and social protection. The ETUC Congress in Paris agreed that organising and protecting these categories of workers should be a priority.

Exchanges of best practices have taken place throughout the current mandate: Different trade union strategies to organise atypical and self-employed workers have been identified by ETUC affiliates and an ongoing discussion has taken place. A report collecting these strategies has been produced, to enable the trade union movement to be better equipped to organise self-employed workers.

In 2019, the ETUC published the report *New trade union strategies for new forms of employment* which explored options for new legal conceptual frameworks implied by the rise of 'new forms of employment', and in particular the growth of forms of work that fall outside traditional labour and social security protections.

## Protecting self-employed workers

The European Pillar of Social Rights: The ETUC replied to both Commission consultation phases on the proposal for a Council Recommendation on access to social protection for workers and the self-employed. The new legislative framework will give these workers access to additional rights that they were not entitled to before, although the ETUC regretted that it is less ambitious than expected. Self-employed workers in particular will have access to sickness, health care and invalidity benefits; maternity and equivalent paternity benefits; invalidity benefits; pensions; and benefits in respect of accidents at work and occupational diseases.

## The right of self-employed workers to bargain collectively

An ongoing aim of ETUC action is to defend the right of self-employed workers in Europe to collective bargaining. Unions have found it much more difficult to undertake collective bargaining for their self-employed members than to recruit and organise them. EU competition law prevents collective bargaining from benefitting atypical workers and the self-employed. The ETUC is building a political campaign aimed at national and European competition authorities which could provide our national affiliates in all EU Member States with the opportunity to circumvent the existing barriers to this fundamental labour right.

Also, the ETUC has identified a broad definition of 'worker' which is designed to overcome the existing restrictions on self-employed workers exerting their fundamental labour rights: the personal work relationship. This defines a worker as "any person who is engaged by another to provide labour and is not genuinely operating a business on his or her own account". This concept needs further discussion in the relevant ETUC bodies.

## DIGITALISATION AND THE PLATFORM ECONOMY

At the request of the Paris Congress, the ETUC organised a **first series of workshops** on the social dimension of digitalisation:

**1<sup>st</sup> ETUC Workshop on the social dimension of digitalisation** - 2 December 2015, based on the following documents:

- The background document (updated)
- The PowerPoint presentation 'The European digital agenda – transition to work 4.0.'
- The overview of national flagship initiatives on smart factories, industry 4.0, etc.

**2<sup>nd</sup> ETUC workshop on digitalisation** - 23 February 2016: Focus of this workshop: employee data protection, labour law issues related to digitalisation, digital skills, digital standardisation (45 participants)

**3<sup>rd</sup> ETUC workshop on digitalisation** - 20 April 2016: digitalisation and its impact on work (Professor Mark Graham), digitalisation and the environment, research on crowdwork and information on activities of Eurofound.

**4<sup>th</sup> ETUC workshop on digitalisation** – 14 June 2016. Focus: Activities of the Slovak Presidency, (Xenia Malá), 'Towards a digital single market' (Michael Hager, Head of Cabinet of Commissioner Oettinger), company policy related to digitalisation (industriAll, EPSU, ETUC), 'Humans as a Service' - How should we regulate crowdwork? (Professor Jeremias Prassl, University of Oxford) and comments by Esther Lynch (Confederal Secretary, ETUC).

In view of the growing importance of the platform economy, the ETUC decided to organise a discussion between platforms and platform workers and trade unions:

- Starting a dialogue with the operators of the platform economy. With the aim of building bridges between workers, trade unions and platform employers at European level, in January 2018 a meeting was organised in Brussels by the ETUC and the ETUI in collaboration with the French organisations IRES and ASTREES. Some 100 platform company representatives, workers, trade unionists, academics and experts attended this kick-off initiative. This led to a better-established project which is currently ongoing and seeks to replace the often tense industrial relationship by a frank exchange of views, to provide an opportunity for workers and trade unions to get answers to their serious concerns about workers' rights in this growing sector. The project also aims at providing individual support to our members in their attempts to organise and extend fundamental rights to workers in the platform economy.
- The ETUC also contributed in its parliamentary pathway and in the Council negotiations to guaranteeing that the EU Regulation on promoting fairness and transparency for business users of online intermediation services would not damage the application of labour guarantees to workers in the platform economy.

## ETUC resolutions and positions

'The digital agenda of the European Commission: Preliminary ETUC assessment' was endorsed by the Executive Committee at its meeting on 17-18 June 2015 (<https://www.etuc.org/en/document/digital-agenda-european-commission-preliminary-etuc-assessment>)

Following the first series of digitalisation workshops, the ETUC Executive Committee on 8-9 June 2016 adopted a resolution on digitalisation: 'Towards fair digital work' (<https://www.etuc.org/en/document/etuc-resolution-digitalisation-towards-fair-digital-work>). The ETUC demanded in particular:

- an inclusive transition towards good and fair digital work based on good working conditions, a safe and secure work environment and a fair employment relationship;
- avoid digitalisation further splitting society into a few winners and many losers and contributing to an even more unequal distribution of wealth;
- upskill the workforce (including self-employed workers) by upgrading initial and continuous occupational training programmes for the digital era ensuring access to higher education and lifelong learning, digital skills being an important leitmotiv for good and fair digital work;
- a Directive on privacy at work at European level, based on respect for human dignity, privacy and the protection of personal data;
- incorporate the gender perspective into all digital initiatives so that the digital agenda becomes a driving force towards gender equality, to address the severe gender gap within the ICT sector, to foster full integration of women of all ages in science, technology, engineering and mathematics subjects and to strengthen women's participation in decision-making processes in digital companies;
- accompany the deployment of digital technologies with a set of standards which will contribute to the – social, economic and environmental – sustainability of ICT value chains; to ensure that EU action on digitalisation fits with the targets of its climate, energy and environment policies; to address the negative impact of many digital technologies on the environment in terms of waste production and export to poor countries, excessive water and energy consumption, raw material extraction;
- propose an EU framework on crowdworking to prevent the undermining or circumventing of minimum pay rates, working time regulation, social security, pension schemes, taxation, etc., to ensure that national and European regulations and legislation effectively apply to digital crowdworkers in online environments and to ensure the rights of digital workers in online environments; establishing fair rules, ensuring minimum remuneration is paid, giving access to social security; to protect intellectual property rights;
- conduct an assessment of the social impacts of ICT standards on workers, to promote the development of open standards in all identified priority domains, open and accessible to all players in industry through fair, reasonable and non-discriminatory legal and economic conditions and to secure funding for an effective participation of trade unions in relevant global standard-setting organisations;

- to build inclusive and accessible digital public services and to ensure that public administrations support both citizens and workers with digital training and skills;
- digitalisation should not negatively impact on tax revenues and not facilitate a further erosion of the corporate tax base by allowing companies to pay tax in one jurisdiction, even when value is created in another; multinationals must pay tax on profits where the corresponding economy activity takes place;
- strengthen information, consultation and board-level representation to better anticipate and manage change, in particular an inclusive transition towards good and fair digital work;
- trade unions to use all representative bodies to shape fair and inclusive digitisation of companies and services and to organise self-employed workers;
- trade unions to ensure that workers' representatives in general, and in company board-rooms in particular, regularly scrutinise the introduction of new technologies, internal and external outsourcing; and to use collective bargaining to implement new rights related to digitalisation (such as the right to disconnect);
- trade unions to monitor digitalisation strategies more closely; to encourage European Trade Union Federations (ETUFs) to actively explore ways to negotiate Transnational Company Agreements (TCAs) on the different fields of digitalisation.

'ETUC Resolution on tackling new digital challenges to the world of labour, in particular crowdwork' was adopted by the Executive Committee on 25-26 October 2017 (<https://www.etuc.org/en/document/etuc-resolution-tackling-new-digital-challenges-world-labour-particular-crowdwork>). Its focus: the need for knowledge about online platforms and their impact, beyond anecdotal evidence; the need to regulate online platforms at European level; the need for funding to support workers and cushion negative effects of digitalisation; the need for trade union action.

## UNDECLARED WORK

The European Platform tackling undeclared work enhances cooperation between EU countries. It brings together relevant authorities and social partners involved in fighting undeclared work (UDW), to tackle this issue more effectively and efficiently, while fully respecting national competences and procedures.

The ETUC has been very active in the work of the platform, starting as part of the working group establishing the work programme for the activities of the platform over the two-year period 2017-2018. The following topics have been included: bogus self-employment; letterbox companies; a seminar for the construction sector and one specific to the road transport sector; memorandum of understanding for labour inspections; cross-border aspects. The trade union work in the platform was coordinated through meetings with the ETUFs. The ETUC was also involved in preparation of the next work programme 2018-2020 and this time the following issues have been included: specific seminars for the agriculture, aviation and horeca sectors; a seminar as well as a study on the gig economy; a study on migration and exploitation, and another on the tourism sector. The theme of bogus self-employment will again be dealt with.

The European trade union movement is very vocal in the meetings of the platform, helping to ensure that the role trade unions play in the fight against undeclared work is not forgotten and to ensure the usefulness of this platform for workers in Europe.

The Commission's website: <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1299&langId=en>

## 5. HEALTH AND SAFETY

### Introduction

The last four years have seen significant progress in the field of occupational health and safety (OSH) in comparison to the preceding period, with a number of legislative developments and an increase in ETUC resources dedicated to achieving results. More than half a dozen European Directives relating to OSH were revised, while the capacity of the ETUC was enhanced with the establishment of dedicated permanent Committee on Health and Safety at the beginning of the mandate. This committee developed capacity and expertise throughout the mandate before being complemented by a dedicated ETUC advisor on a part-time basis from 2018 onwards.

### EU OSH strategic framework

In early 2017, the European Commission released a Communication on the modernisation of the EU OSH legislation and policy, largely based on reports written by external consultants. The documents represented a better basis for relaunching OSH policy in the EU after a long period of paralysis and deregulation narratives. The focus on both the evaluation of the 1989 Framework Directive – the cornerstone of EU OSH legislation – and 23 other OSH directives was welcomed by the ETUC<sup>4</sup>, including amendments to the OSH strategy that had been adopted for the period 2013-2020. However, there remained many elements in the Commission approach that fell short of what was required by either being excluded entirely or inadequately addressed. These included the challenges of asbestos, nanoparticles, endocrine disruptors, musculoskeletal disorders, psychosocial risks and the role of labour inspectorates in the enforcement of safety risk management.

### CMD revisions, including reprotoxins

The ETUI published a report<sup>5</sup> in 2016 that identified 70 specific substances that should be brought into the Carcinogens and Mutagens Directive (CMD), and the ETUC has worked to pursue additional substances in a series of revisions to the Directive throughout the last four years. As a result 24 new substances were added to the CMD.

A very important ETUC demand concerning these ongoing revisions of the CMD aimed at bringing substances toxic for reproduction within the scope of the directive. It is estimated that around 2 million workers are exposed to reprotoxic substances in Europe in many work-related activities, whether they are male or female. We find them in sectors such as chemicals, the metallurgical industry, the building industry, farming (especially because of the use of pesticides) as well as in the services sector (cleaning, health, hairdressing and beauty care, in particular). The consequences of using such substances are reduced fertility, miscarriages and congenital malformations. Such substances may also be the source of serious health problems among children (infantile cancers, development disorders, mental retardation, etc.).

The rules are insufficient as far as workplace protection is concerned. Whereas carcinogenic and mutagenic substances are the subject of more stringent prevention requirements by employers under the CMD, reprotoxic substances have a more lenient framework under the Chemical Agents Directive (CAD). A lot is at stake: the inclusion of reprotoxic substances in the application of preventive rules concerning carcinogens would oblige companies to implement preventive measures of the same standard for all substances of high concern. This reform has already been implemented in France, Germany, Czech Republic, Austria, Finland, Sweden, the United Kingdom and, recently, in Belgium.

4 <https://www.etuc.org/en/document/etuc-position-results-ex-post-evaluation-osh-acquis>

5 <https://www.etui.org/Publications2/Reports/Carcinogens-that-should-be-subject-to-binding-limits-on-workers-exposure>

As a result of ETUC/ETUI work with the European Parliament and the Council, Article 18a of Directive 2017/2398 (so-called CMD batch 1) placed an obligation on the Commission to assess, by end of March 2019, a number of options for amending the CMD, including the possibility of extending its scope to cover all reprotoxic 1A/1B substances. In a joint declaration signed on 16 October 2018, the ETUC, IndustriAll Europe, the European Chemical Employers Group (ECEG) and the European Chemical Industry Council (Cefic) proposed their own best option for the extension of CMD scope to reprotoxic substances. This option was integrated in the Commission's study assessing the various possibilities of extending CMD scope and was found to be "the most effective option in terms of reducing reproductive ill health since it is likely to accelerate the introduction of binding limit values for reprotoxic substances". However, these results have not been made public yet and the ETUC work to strengthen the current system of protection of workers' reproductive health will therefore need to be continued with the new European Parliament and the new Commission.

## Work with outside agencies

### EU-OSHA: European Agency for Safety and Health at Work

The ETUC and ETUI continued to coordinate the workers' interest group of the Governing Board of the EU OSHA as well as participation of workers' representatives in the Agency Advisory Groups. This included different activities, projects, working groups and programmes. Initiatives have included a study on handling fumigated containers in ports and a new broad survey on workers' exposure to carcinogens which were strongly advocated by the ETUC despite obstacles and employer resistance.

The ETUC has been an official campaign partner of three EU-OSHA Healthy Workplace Campaigns in four years. These campaigns focused on managing stress at the workplace, healthy ageing in the workplace and dangerous substances. The topics for campaigns are discussed on a tripartite basis and, ideally, agreed by consensus. However, on occasions (including the case of the campaign on managing stress at work), the workers' interest group led voting among the groups resulting in the topic being adopted for the campaign. The workers' interest group was involved in all the main projects of the EU-OSHA in the previous period including ESENER II (European Survey of Enterprises on New and Emerging Risks) and its secondary studies, Foresight projects, OiRA (online interactive risk assessment) tool development, and the widely regarded OSH-Wiki.

After nine years of negotiations, a new founding regulation (EU) 2019/126 of EU-OSHA was adopted in early 2019. During the negotiation process the ETUC fought to defend the tripartite governance of the agency.

### Advisory Committee on Safety and Health at Work

The progress in the field of OSH over the last four years is also visible in the activities and results of the Advisory Committee on Safety and Health at Work (ACSH). The Committee adopted many opinions on the revision of the CMD, as well as an opinion on the modernisation of six OSH Directives to ensure healthier and safer work for all (December 2017), followed by the adoption of three opinions on updates to the annexes of three of these Directives (the Directive on Personal Protective Equipment, 89/656/EEC, the Biological Agents Directive, 2000/54/EC, and the Directive on Medical Treatment on Board Vessels, 92/29/EEC), and the setting up of a working party for the modernisation of a fourth Directive ('Guidelines to the OSH Signs Directive, 92/58/EEC). The fifth and sixth Directive revisions (Display Screen Directive and Workplace Directive) need more detailed work and the preparation of opinions on these will be taken up in 2019 by the ACSH. Other opinions that have been adopted concern, among other issues, the amending of the CAD, and the EU-OSHA Programming Document 2018-2020.

In 2018, the three interest groups of the ACSH also adopted a common statement on the transfer of the important work of SCOEL to RAC, stressing the importance of the continuation of the work, also in the transfer period, and of keeping on board the specific OSH knowledge and expertise as well as the involvement of the stakeholders through ACSH and the ongoing key role of DG EMPL, considering the input of its stakeholders, in priority-setting when advising on OSH. An important new Working Party has been established to address enforcement of OSH legislation. The remit of this WP is to draft an opinion on the impact, effectiveness and efficiency of enforcement activities in the Member States, including appropriate recommendations, based on information gathered on activities and models of enforcement. The WP started its meetings in 2018 and continues its work throughout 2019.

### Developing an ETUC OSH agenda for 2019-23 – PSR, MSD and high work temperatures

The ETUC's investment in OSH throughout the period 2015-19 has meant that several work streams have been delivered that were not previously possible in the absence of a functioning permanent committee and advisor capacity.

One example of this is a strategy to tackle psychosocial risks and stress in the workplace. The ETUC has had a long-standing position that stress is a growing and dangerous workplace hazard but had lacked the capacity to pursue policy any further. In 2017, the ETUC Health and Safety Committee established a dedicated task force to develop such a strategy which resulted in the 2018 resolution on actions for combatting stress and eliminating psychosocial risks in the workplace. This included a two-

part strategy to both put an EU Directive on the agenda and to raise awareness and develop negotiating guidance for trade unions on how to combat work-related stress. These are long-term objectives that will be pursued throughout the forthcoming ETUC mandate (2019-23). The process of using dedicated task forces will be replicated to address musculoskeletal disorders.

Additional capacity was also mobilised to develop policy in the area of high working temperatures and the need for EU action to protect workers. Here too, the ETUC Health and Safety Committee was used to develop and analyse a survey before agreeing a resolution in the Executive Committee in 2018 which called for EU action to protect workers from high temperatures that do respect national borders, in an era of climate change and more extreme weather conditions.

#### Documents approved by ExCo/secretariat:

- <https://www.etuc.org/en/document/etuc-position-results-ex-post-evaluation-osh-acquis>
- [https://www.etuc.org/sites/default/files/page/file/2018-08/ETUC\\_Trade\\_Union\\_Guide%20ISO\\_45001\\_-\\_Using\\_the\\_new\\_health\\_and\\_safety\\_standard\\_in\\_the\\_workplace\\_final\\_version\\_1.0\\_0.pdf](https://www.etuc.org/sites/default/files/page/file/2018-08/ETUC_Trade_Union_Guide%20ISO_45001_-_Using_the_new_health_and_safety_standard_in_the_workplace_final_version_1.0_0.pdf)
- [https://www.etuc.org/sites/default/files/document/files/covenant\\_def.pdf](https://www.etuc.org/sites/default/files/document/files/covenant_def.pdf)
- <https://www.etuc.org/en/document/etuc-resolution-actions-combatting-stress-and-eliminating-psychosocial-risks-workplace>





## 6. LABOUR LAW

### Transparent and Predictable Working Conditions Directive

One of the legislative initiatives under the European Pillar of Social Rights was the revision of the Written Statement Directive. The ETUC had been very actively lobbying the European Commission ever since it became apparent that such a revision was being planned. The ETUC was part of the working group involved in preparing the Commission's impact assessment. Our key message throughout the process was that this Directive was very important in informing workers of their rights, and that there was room for improvement. In December 2017 the Commission presented a draft proposal for a Transparent and Predictable Working Conditions Directive. The ETUC took part in multiple discussions at all levels beforehand. The key points for improvement were:

- securing the broadest possible scope for this Directive to make it future-proof and ensure that e.g. platform workers fall under its protection;
- limiting employers' demands for flexibility through prohibiting zero-hour contracts;
- making this form of precarious work more expensive;
- guaranteeing the right to switch to more secure employment.

The Council adopted its general approach on the Directive at the end of June 2017. The EP Employment Committee voted in mid-October, paving the way for the trilogue.

Following intensive and difficult trilogue negotiations, during which ETUC repeatedly intervened in and with the support of our affiliates to ensure a pro-workers (rights) based Directive, a final agreement was reached on 6 February. Although there are a number of meaningful advances and rights in this Directive that will make a real difference to working people trapped in insecure work (e.g. reasonable notice periods for informing about the work shift, the right to be paid if work assignments are cancelled at short notice, restricting highly exploitative practices such as charging workers for the training they need to do the job and limiting probation periods to six months), the ETUC also suffered some big disappointments such as the failure to prohibit zero-hours contracts, the failure to give workers the right to transfer to a more secure form of employment, the exclusion of some workers from protection such as those who work for less than 12 hours or the possibility for Member States to exclude civil servants, public emergency services, the armed forces, police authorities, judges, prosecutors, investigators and other law enforcement services. The ETUC is now working on different actions to support its affiliates and to ensure they are properly involved in and prepared for the transposition process at national level.

### European Labour Authority

The ETUC has long been warning about poor enforcement of labour law and since March 2007 has called for a stronger role of the EU in promoting more and better coordination between national labour and social inspectorates, by establishing a kind of a European 'Socio-Pol'. In March 2018, the Commission proposed a regulation for the establishment of a European Labour Authority ('the ELA'). According to President Juncker, the purpose of the ELA is to enforce fair rules on labour mobility. The ETUC welcomed this initiative, whilst recognising the need to equip the authority with sufficient tools and powers to permit efficient investigations of violations of workers' rights. The ETUC closely followed the discussions and put pressure on the European institutions to establish an effective Authority and to reach agreement before the end of the term. A taskforce of trade union experts was set up to support the legal work of the ETUC Secretariat in the course of the legislative process. The ETUC proposed several changes to the Regulation in different areas, in particular with regard to social partners' autonomy and the governance of the Authority.

The Employment and Social Affairs Committee of the European Parliament approved its report on 20 November. The mandate to start negotiations was confirmed by the plenary on 11 December. The ETUC put pressure on Member States to ensure that the Council reached a common position. The pressure was effective and the EPSCO Council approved, on 6 December, a general

approach on the proposal. The text approved by the Council still contained problematic elements, in particular with regard to governance, which had not been modified, social partners' autonomy and the possible role of the Authority in cross-border labour market disruptions.

The ETUC engaged with Permanent Representations and with the European Parliament's negotiating team during the trilogue discussions, to insist on its main priorities for the Regulation, aiming for approval before the end of the term. An agreement was reached on 14 February. Positive elements in the final agreement include, inter alia: the possibility for social partners to bring cases to the attention of the Authority, the competence of the ELA in the coordination of social security systems and the clear safeguarding of the autonomy and the role of social partners ('Monti clause'). The Commission proposal for the involvement of social partners in governance has been improved, by introducing the presence of social partners' representatives on the management board and by strengthening the stakeholder group.

In parallel to the legislative process, the Commission established an advisory group to prepare the establishment of the ELA. The ETUC is a full member of this advisory group and has been actively participating in its work, in order to ensure the establishment of an effective Authority which is up and running as soon as possible. The advisory group will be replaced by the Authority's management board.

## Letterbox companies

It is long-standing ETUC policy that free movement in the internal market is not an end in itself but should promote social progress in Europe. This means that businesses cannot be allowed to pick and choose their place of establishment solely to evade applicable obligations. Yet letterbox-type practices are growing and adversely impact on workers' rights and fair taxation throughout the Union.

From February 2015 until February 2017, the ETUC ran a project on letterbox companies. In June 2016, four case studies were published, illustrating the impact of letterbox-type practices on labour rights and public revenue. This report was well publicised in the media. Expert discussions then took place from June 2016 until December 2016. The purpose of these discussions was, on the basis of the concrete illustrations in the case studies, to shape policy recommendations to eradicate letterbox arrangements. Three expert seminars were organised, assembling trade unionists, labour law lawyers, tax experts, labour and social security inspectors and EU officials to exchange views on the best way to address letterbox practices, both from a legal and practical point of view. On the basis of these rich exchanges, legal and tax experts drafted a report containing a series of key recommendations. The report is entitled 'A hunters' game: how policy can change to spot and sink letterbox-type practices' and was published in December 2016. A final conference attended by more than 100 participants took place on 16-17 November 2016.

The letterbox project has become an influential source of information and has, for instance, been referenced in the Commission's impact assessment on the proposed company law package. This package was published in April 2018 and seeks to introduce some rules for company mobility in Europe. The ETUC has actively engaged with the European institutions in the discussions on the package to ensure an outcome which includes, inter alia, effective measures against letterbox companies and artificial arrangements, to guarantee that company mobility cannot be used to evade or circumvent companies' obligations. The European Parliament report introduced very important improvements in this area. The agreement reached in the trilogue negotiations constitutes a step forward compared to the unregulated status quo and to the proposal of the Commission, but it does not contain the most ambitious improvements put forward by the EP. The ETUC will be active in pushing for a correct and effective transposition of the rules.

## Working time

The discussions on the Working time Directive concluded with a Communication published as one part of the EPSR. It sets out the case law of the Court of Justice of the European Union on the Directive, as well as the Commission's interpretation of certain points that have not yet been dealt with by the Court. The ETUC heavily criticised this aspect. Nevertheless, the European trade union movement succeeded in its goal of avoiding a reopening of the Directive in the current political climate.

## Digital economy

The Commission launched a public consultation on the '**Regulatory environment for platforms, online intermediaries, data and cloud computing and the collaborative economy**' in September 2015. Since the perspective of the employment relationship was totally absent from the Commission's approach to the digital economy, this was the starting point for the ETUC to reflect on the issue of the digital economy/economy 4.0/gig economy, including from a labour law perspective.

The ETUC took part in the public consultation, giving input on '**Ensuring the Rights of the Digital Workforce – Responding to the Labour Law Aspects**', indicating that what Europe needs is mandatory operating rules for online platforms, crowd-working and cloudworking. Discussions on how to extend labour law protection to platform workers took place in the Labour Legislation and Internal Market Committee, in the Netlex conference, and in litigation network meetings. Ideas for a Directive on platform work have been developed and discussed with affiliates. The Netlex conference 2017 looked in detail at the link between digitalisation and labour law at a session on the role of labour law in regulating the digital future and defining who is a worker/an employer in the future world of work.

Furthermore, the idea of a report was developed with the AK, the ÖGB and the ETUI. It should reflect on the emergence of new forms of employment that are often in the grey zone between traditional employment and self-employment and the question of the scope of protection of labour and employment law. The report commissioned by the AK on the '**Concept of "worker" in EU law: status quo and potential for change**' was written by Martin Risak and Thomas Dullinger and accompanied the discussion on the digital economy and preparation of the Transparent and Predictable Working Conditions Directive.

## Whistleblowing

Trade unions have long been calling for strong EU-wide protection for those who highlight wrongdoing in the workplace. The ETUC adopted its position on whistleblowing in December 2016. Workers in the public and private sectors need to know that if they raise concerns within the workplace or externally they will be protected from reprisals. Recent scandals show that whistleblowers can play an important role in uncovering unlawful activities. But workers are often afraid to speak up because they fear being demoted, victimised, dismissed, blacklisted, sued, fined or even imprisoned. Often in the wake of a disaster workers report that they have raised concerns, but they were ignored or covered up.

On 17 April 2018, the Commission adopted a draft proposal for a Directive to give workers protection when they come forward to blow the whistle. The ETUC adopted its position on this draft in June 2018, establishing a basis for influencing proceedings in the European Parliament. The main problems with the draft, which needed amendment in the EP, were that the Commission did not refer the proposal for a Directive to the social partners for consultation in accordance with the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) Article 154 and that the proposed Directive provided less protection for workers' rights, safety, health and welfare than it did for animal rights, safety, health and welfare. Nor did the proposed text ensure protection for workers wishing to turn to their trade unions. It created a two-tier system of law with EU employment law in second place.

The Juri Committee in the European Parliament adopted its position in November 2018 and the Council its general approach in January 2019; yet another directive which was rushed through the legislative procedure in order to be finalised before the end of the mandate of the European Parliament.

Given that the risk of a mandatory internal procedure without protection for workers when talking to their trade union was real, the ETUC decided to push during trilogue not to have employment legislation under the scope of the Directive. The text as discussed in trilogue did not ensure that a person wishing to blow the whistle is protected when talking to her/his trade union.

Throughout the trilogue negotiations, the ETUC had identified three main problems. Firstly, the obligation to report internally before reporting to an outside authority. Secondly, the restricted protection for workers seeking the assistance of their trade union. Even the right to be accompanied, included by the Parliament, remained under threat. The third problem related to the (lawful) acquisition of evidence. As texts stood before the final agreement, there was a real risk that the Directive was going to protect the companies reported on rather than the persons/workers reporting on grave violations of fundamental (social) rights. However, the ETUC cautiously welcomed the final agreement reached on 11 March. The main success is that there is no more mandatory obligation for the reporting persons/workers to first use internal reporting channels before going to external channels (public authorities/media) in order to be protected. Nonetheless, there remain several loopholes in particular in relation to the possibility for reporting workers to be represented throughout the whole procedure by a trade union representative. Whether this Directive will now be a game-changer will depend on the transposition process in the Member States and the ETUC will develop different actions to support affiliates in ensuring a proper implementation in their respective countries with a particular focus on the protection of reporting workers and to ensure they can be represented by trade union delegates.

## EU Treaty rights and social dialogue

The TFEU sets out the rights and obligations of the Commission and the European social partners in the framework of negotiations at European level. In the case of the hairdressers' agreement as well as that of central government administration, the Commission – unacceptably – did not follow the procedure as set out in TFEU Article 155 and did not put a proposal to Council. These cases go to the heart of the European social dialogue and the rights of the European social partners as set out in the TFEU. They are therefore crucial for the European trade union movement.

Over many months, from summer 2017 until spring 2018, the European trade union movement debated how to react to this situation. The Litigation Network met ad hoc at the beginning of 2018 to discuss a possible legal case to be taken to the General Court by EPSU and an ETUC Steering Committee was transformed into an extraordinary Executive meeting to reach an ETUC position on the matter. EPSU took its case to court in May 2018, while UNI-Europa decided to discuss how to implement the agreement effectively at national level with the Commission. In the EPSU case, the General Court needs to decide if the Commission has an obligation under TFEU Article 155(2) to forward the social partner agreement to Council for a decision, if jointly requested by the social partners.

## Data protection – General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)

The ETUC assisted its affiliates on how to proceed once the General Data Protection Regulation came into force in May 2018, so as to be able to continue their trade union work in accordance with this new Regulation. The ETUC was in contact with the Commission to ensure that it would not continue to insist on the need for consent when processing data in the trade union context.

The ETUC established a working group to develop a code of conduct for the trade union movement as foreseen under the GDPR.

## Litigation

Twice a year, the ETUC organises meetings of its litigation network (established in response to the Laval and Viking judgments), bringing together lawyers from member organisations with the aim of alerting and informing each another on key cases of potential concern to the entire trade union movement.

The annual Netlex conference helps to update trade union lawyers on the most recent labour and company law developments at European level. This event usually attracts around 100 lawyers. The Netlex network also gathers information on national situations and legislation, which can be requested either by the ETUC or by an affiliate.

Due to an informal agreement between the Commission and the social partners, the ETUC is entitled to give its interpretation on cases pending before the CJEU concerning Directives stemming from European social partner agreements (on fixed-term work, part-time work and parental leave). In the last four years, the ETUC has been able to supply four opinions.

## Revision of the Posted Workers Directive

The adoption of the enforcement Directive on posting in 2014 did not address trade union demands for a revision of the core principles of the Posted Workers Directive (PWD), in particular the principle of equal pay for equal work and the appropriate hierarchy between social rights and economic freedoms. The ETUC therefore continued pressing for a revision of Directive 96/71. In March 2016, the Commission finally presented a proposal for a targeted review.

Soon after its publication, 11 Member States' parliamentary chambers showed a yellow card, questioning respect for the subsidiarity principle and urging the Commission to withdraw its proposal. The ETUC organised a coordinated campaign among its affiliates, in particular from the sending countries, in order to explain why revision is a crucial matter for the future of Europe. After carrying out a subsidiarity review, the Commission decided in June 2016 to maintain the proposal unchanged.

For two years the ETUC led an intensive campaign as well as conducting legal work to influence the legislative process. A significant number of improvements had to be made to the Commission's proposal in order to ensure the principle of equal pay for equal work. At the same time, the prospect of European elections in May 2019 made the window of opportunity very short. The ETUC Secretariat therefore treated the revision of the PWD as a priority. A taskforce of trade union experts was set up to follow the legal discussions. In parallel, campaigning activities took place including numerous meetings at ministry level, public events in the European Parliament, coordinated letter-writing campaigns by affiliates and intense media activities.

In June 2018, the revised PWD was finally adopted with the support of the ETUC. The principle of equal pay has been enshrined in the final text as well as a number of other improvements, including a new provision clarifying that the PWD is solely about protecting workers (and no longer about facilitating the free provision of services by companies), the recognition of all collective agreements, and the mandatory payment of travel, board and lodging expenses on top of remuneration. Unfortunately, the road transport sector is excluded from this revision until a separate agreement is found on the mobility package.

Together with the European Transport Federation (ETF), the ETUC has been intensively lobbying the EU institutions in order to secure a satisfactory solution for the mobility package. The ETF and the ETUC were able to ensure the rejection of a very negative compromise proposal on the package in the European Parliament's plenary in June 2018. On 3 December, the Council agreed on a general approach. The ETUC supported the ETF's efforts to put pressure on governments before the Council meeting. The mobilisation resulted in some improvements in the text, however the general approach is far from acceptable, particularly with regard to the longer reference period, the return to the company operational centre and the derogations from the application of the Posted Workers Directive. A new vote in the EP Plenary took place on Thursday 4 April. The ETUC will continue to engage together with the ETF during the trilogue negotiations to ensure a satisfactory outcome for the package.

Following the adoption of the revision of the PWD, the ETUC has been actively involved in the Commission's work on the transposition process. In particular, the ETUC has been participating in the work of the expert group on posting of workers and has been following the activity of the sub-group on the transposition of the Directive. The objective is to ensure the best implementation of the revision, for instance on the reimbursement of travel, board and lodging expenses.

# 7. GENDER EQUALITY AND NON-DISCRIMINATION

## GENDER EQUALITY AND GENDER MAINSTREAMING

The ETUC Congress 2015 in Paris agreed to launch a new impetus on gender equality. A dual approach combining gender mainstreaming (integrating gender into all policy areas) and specific measures was implemented.

A new [ETUC Action Programme on Gender Equality](#) for the period 2016-2019, building on the Congress commitments and outstanding challenges to achieve gender equality, was adopted. The Action Programme spells out five priorities and specific related measures.

### 1. Implement gender mainstreaming into all policies and address shortcomings where needed

Gender mainstreaming has been implemented in a vast number of policy priorities since 2015, including ETUC positions and lobbying actions on the European Pillar of Social Rights, negotiations on the new Multi Annual Financial Framework post-2019, the European Semester process (e.g. a gender analysis of annual Country Specific Recommendations has been regularly undertaken), the Annual Growth Survey, digitalisation, and especially climate change, including in a panel discussion at the Rome Mid-Term Conference. In 2017, we spoke at the Conference of the Parties (COP 23) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in Bonn at a meeting co-organised by the UN and Cities 40 about cities, climate and gender (With a UN video interview). The same year at the COP we participated in the launch of the Gender Action Plan as part of the development of the Paris Agreement. In 2018, at COP 24 in Katowice, the ILO invited the ETUC to speak at the 'Game changer' conference on the future of work: 'Towards a just transition with Gender Equality'.

In March 2019 an interview with Montserrat Mir Roca on gender and climate was published in [The Environment](#) magazine.

The gender dimension also featured in work on social protection and pensions (e.g. the ETUC reply to the European Commission's open consultation on the 1979 Directive on equal treatment of women and men in statutory social security), trade and gender at the Action Aid conference in 2016, collective bargaining, health and safety (contribution to 'Women, work and cancer' conference in December 2018) and the ETUC Payrise campaign (e.g. highlighting the [gender pay gap](#) in Europe).

Following the Resolution on the role of the ETUC 2015-2019 and the reorganisation of ETUC working groups, Women's Committee representatives were appointed onto all committees in order to enhance gender mainstreaming. The Women's Committee was also represented on the Ad Hoc Committee on organising (set up in December 2015) and on the Ad Hoc Group on sustainable development goals for 2030 (set up in February 2018).

A special gender focus was applied in the areas of education, training and youth. The ETUC [Gender Equality Survey 2018](#) looked at ETUC affiliates' activities for young women in unions and in the labour market while the European Quality Framework for Apprenticeships, drawn up by the ETUC, emphasises the importance of apprenticeship schemes for young women.

### 2. Promote equal economic independence for men and women and fight to eliminate the gender pay and pensions gap

Women's situation in the labour market remains deeply unfair and the EU's aim of achieving 75% of women and men in employment by 2010 is far from reality. The EU gender pay gap stagnates at 16.3%, with wide differences between Member States. The issues of women's quantity and quality of work and gender pay gap remain high on the ETUC agenda.

The ETUC Campaign [Europe needs a pay rise](#) specifically addressed the issue of women's low wages and pay gaps between women and men. On International Women's Day (IWD) 2017, the ETUC focused its action on the undervaluing of women's jobs and the need to overcome horizontal segregation in the labour market (see [She needs a pay rise](#)). An ad hoc event was organised in Brussels on "How can a pay rise make a dent in the persistent gender pay and pensions gaps?" bringing together 30 participants from EU institutions, trade unions and stakeholders. The ETUC [Gender Equality Survey 2017](#) compiled ETUC members' views on the gender pension gap and proposals for further action.

Following the adoption of the 2014 resolution on 'Collective Bargaining – our tools to fight the gender pay gap', the Women's Committee organised an exchange of trade union good practices in April 2017, when the Commission also presented the Action Plan on 'Tackling the gender pay gap 2017-2019'. The ETUC also contributed to assessing the implementation of the Commission's Recommendation on strengthening the principle of equal pay between men and women through transparency (2014/124/EU) by compiling and sharing trade union initiatives addressing the aims of the recommendation.

In addition, in 2017 the ETUC submitted observations in all collective complaints that the University Women of Europe (UWE) brought against all 15 states that ratified the Council of Europe Collective Complaints Procedure Protocol, dealing with the gender pay gap and female representation on boards.

Specific attention was given to overcoming gender segregation in the labour market. The [2016 Gender Equality Survey](#) provides an overview of ETUC members' action to tackle gender occupational segregation. In the same year, the ETUC's IWD action focused on [Breaking the glass walls](#), calling on men and women to break the barriers that segregate the sexes in different occupations at work and to reach more gender equality in the labour market.

ETUC lobby work to fight the gender pay gap also included participating in the Commission's high-level conference on the gender pay gap in November 2016 and in the social partners' consultation in May 2019; providing inputs to the Advisory Committee on equal opportunities opinion on the gender pay gap (adopted in December 2017) and taking part in events organised by national affiliates.

In February 2019, the ETUC took part in a hearing of the European Parliament Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality on the 'Labour and social situation of women in the EU'. And in March 2019 the ETUC was invited to supply the keynote speaker at the International Party of European Socialists (PES) conference in Budapest on Equal Pay for Equal Work.

Finally, the ETUC helps to raise awareness among members on Equal Pay Day, which takes place in November each year.

### 3. Tackle the challenge of work-life balance

The issue of work-life balance has been one of the ETUC's top priorities in the social field. Following the new Commission initiative addressing the challenges of work-life balance faced by working parents and caregivers, launched in 2015, the ETUC replied to the two-phase consultations, in [January](#) and [September](#).

In April 2017, the Commission issued 'A new start for parents and caregivers', one of the deliverables of the European Pillar for Social Rights. In June 2017, The ETUC adopted a [Position](#) that broadly welcomes the package and the proposed Directive on work-life balance, and in particular the provision of paid (at sick-benefit level) paternity, parental and carers' leave: all long-standing ETUC demands. Strenuous lobbying work has taken place both at EU and national level ever since. This included meetings with national permanent representations to the EU, contributions to European Parliament hearings, inputs to the European Economic and Social Committee opinion and attendance at the Committee of the Region stakeholders' consultation, as well as participation in a large number of EU and national events. An EU-wide action entitled 'Work-life balance Directive, Yes!' was launched by the ETUC in January 2018 and several tools were developed, including banners (in several languages), a [video](#), a '[Brief overview of measures related to work-life balance in the European Union](#)' study (with the European Trade Union Institute) and social media action (#IwantWorkLifeBalance). A Directive on work-life balance was eventually adopted in April 2019.

The project 'REBALANCE: trade unions' and social partners' actions to improve reconciliation of work, family and private life for women and men' was co-financed by the Commission in 2017 and is currently being implemented. The project aims to gather together good practices that have been successful in promoting work-life balance through collective bargaining, so as to assess progress. To meet this aim, the following activities are planned: a study of trade unions/social partners practices; interviews in 10 Member States and in Brussels; two European Conferences in 2019 and 2020.

### 4. Overcome the gender representation gap in trade unions' and companies' decision-making bodies

Since 2007, the ETUC Gender Equality survey (previously known as the '8th March Survey') monitors the proportion of women in the European trade union movement, including in decision-making positions and bodies. The objective is to assess progress in reducing the representation and decision-making gap between women and men in trade unions. The Survey was carried out in 2016, 2017 and 2018 with a special focus on its 10th anniversary, when it was presented at the Executive Committee. Its main findings were also presented at the Mid-term Conference in Rome (May 2017).

Following the Paris Congress Resolution on improving gender balance in the ETUC and as part of the work of the Ad Hoc Group on constitutional changes, the Mid-Term Conference in Rome adopted the Women's Committee and Solidarnosc amendment on gender parity for delegations taking part in ETUC Congress.

Finally, an innovative ETUI-ETUC leadership training programme for future women leaders was designed and organised. Two sessions took place, in Madrid (February 2018) and in Helsinki (June 2018), with more than 20 potential female trade union leaders from all over Europe participating. A video of European women trade unionists in top leadership positions was produced and will be presented for use as a gender empowerment tool.

## 5. Combat harassment and violence at work

As part of a ground-breaking project, 'Safe at home, safe at work: trade union strategies to prevent, manage and eliminate workplace harassment and violence against women', a major conference was organised in Madrid to coincide with the International Day against Violence against women in 2016. The project concluded in June 2017 with the organisation of an event in Brussels. It had a twofold objective: first eliminating violence and harassment in the workplace by looking at the gender dimension and secondly addressing the link between domestic violence and workplace violence. A comparative study (translated into EN, FR, IT, PL, ES and BG) and 11 national reports were published and widely disseminated. A Resolution on Gender-Based Violence at Work and at Home – A Trade Union Issue was adopted by the Executive Committee in December 2017.

The project raised the ETUC's visibility and recognition of trade unions as one of the main actors to prevent, manage and eradicate violence and harassment at work. For example, the ETUC was invited to contribute to the Commission conference on violence against women held in February 2017 and the European Parliament hearing on 'Measures to prevent and combat mobbing and sexual harassment at the workplace, in public spaces, and political life' in June 2017. The ETUC also joined the European Coalition to end violence against women and girls promoting the ratification of the Istanbul Convention.

In the International Labour Organization (ILO), the ETUC is supporting lobbying efforts for a new international labour standard covering all forms of gender-based violence and contributed to International Labour Conference discussions in Geneva in 2017 and 2018, organising a European coordination meeting and adopting a Resolution at the ETUC Executive in December 2017 where the item was discussed.

The ETUC was invited to the 40th anniversary event of the STUNAM Mexican trade union to present the 'Safe at Home Safe at Work' conclusions and gender equality initiatives, as the key topic was 'Gender Equality and the Fight against Gender-based Violence', (a video was recorded). The ETUC was also invited to speak at the PES Congress 2018 in Lisbon on violence against women.

Further to addressing the various priorities of the Action Programme on gender equality, the ETUC has taken action in the following key areas:

- In 2016, the ETUC lobbied for a fully-fledged new European strategy on equality between women and men post-2015, with precise outputs, targets, monitoring mechanisms, timelines, funding and responsibilities.
- The ETUC was active at international level, representing EU trade unions' views on advancing equality between women and men at the United Nations High-level panel on women's economic empowerment (December 2017), the 4th Global Forum on Gender Equality (February 2018), the ILO Gender Academy (November 2017), the Euro-Med meeting dedicated to gender equality (March 2018), and on ETUC Gender Equality initiatives at the University of Tokyo (January 2019).

## ETUC Women's Committee

Finally, the Women's Committee has contributed greatly to shaping gender equality developments since 2015. Committee representatives participated in ETUC Steering and Executive Committees meetings, the EU's Advisory Committee on equal opportunities; the European Women's Lobby; and the European Institute for Gender Equality, through a joint event with EU social partners on 'Promoting gender equality as a strategy for economic independence and professional empowerment: How social partners facilitate women and men's employment and foster greater gender equality', held in November 2015. In July 2018, another joint event was organised by EIGE and the European social partners on 'Finding the way out from segregation in education, training, and employment: Fostering gender equality and the role of the social partners'.



## EQUALITY AND NON-DISCRIMINATION

Taking inspiration from the Paris Manifesto, the ETUC has developed a series of actions aimed at tackling both the overall policy framework at European level and specific areas of intervention identified as priorities by the Congress and the evidence of everyday reality.

ETUC policy advocacy activity has targeted the drafting of the Principles of the European Pillar of Social Rights and the European Commission staff working documents aimed at their implementation. The ETUC has monitored the drafting process, analysing the documents and providing timely comments and recommendations for a more complete and substantial approach to the issues.

The ETUC has supported and contributed to the Commission initiative to update the study on trade union practices on anti-discrimination and diversity. The study, initially drafted in 2010, is currently under revision, with a specific focus on the priority areas identified by the ETUC. At the ETUC's request, the practices under scrutiny will concern LGBTQI people, whose workers' as well as civil rights are often compromised, with a special focus on transsexual and people with disabilities, gender equality, practices tackling the pay and pension gap, discriminations against young people and elderly workers (50+), and discrimination on the grounds of ethnic origin, religion or belief. We have encouraged the identification of unilateral trade union practices as well as those grounded in social dialogue, collective bargaining and activating synergies between different levels (national, [cross]sectorial, company, workplace).

The ETUC takes part in the steering committee responsible for the study, together with the Commission, the contracted research institute and the ETUFs. The ETUC will also participate in the conference and workshops - aimed both at disseminating results and fostering mutual learning among trade unions - accompanying the publication of the study.

Since 2016, the ETUC has concentrated on the Congress priority to give voice to LGBTQI\* workers' rights. The 'LGBTQI\* Rights Trade Union Network' was established in 2016, gathering together the trade union officials active in the field at national level, in order to exchange views, experiences, material and practices among affiliates.

The Secretariat has, since then, promoted and taken part to trade union events specifically organised in the framework of Europride in the Netherlands, Spain and Sweden, with the support of the Network.

Europride in Spain in 2017 saw the launch of the Madrid Declaration on 'The Rights of LGBTQI\* People in the Workplace'.

In early 2017, a two-day training session was organised in collaboration with the ETUI on 'Combating discrimination. Rights for LGBTQI\* workers'. The training was a first opportunity for the ETUC Network to meet and discuss with high-level speakers the political and legislative challenges and opportunities offered by collective bargaining to ensure LGBT+ workers can fully enjoy their rights.

These activities have helped to establish new and strengthen existing synergies with national and European level associations, such as ILGA Europe, as well as with the European Parliament intergroup, active on LGBT+ rights.

The ETUC has reinforced the monitoring of the situation of people with disabilities, contributing to the public consultation on the Accessibility Act, and has worked with the European Disability Forum on the employment outlook of people with disabilities.

In 2018, the ETUC and the ETUI developed a training action specifically tackling racism and xenophobia in the workplace and in society. A project proposal was submitted for funding under a specific Commission budget heading. The still pending proposal, if accepted, will allow further activities at national and workplace level, with the involvement of social economy employers and civil society actors.

The ETUC has continued to call for the so-called 'horizontal' Directive (Directive COM (2008) 426) protecting people from discrimination on several grounds, within and outside the workplace, to be put back on the Council agenda for discussion. We have collaborated with the European Network of Equality Bodies to strengthen this demand.

The ETUC has engaged in analysis of the challenges, collection of data and formulation of policy demands in order to tackle social inequalities. In particular, the European Semester (Annual Growth Survey, country reports, Country Specific Recommendations) has been analysed specifically from this perspective, and targeted inputs have been delivered in the framework of the ETUC's efforts to influence the European Semester itself.

## 8. INTERNAL MARKET, STANDARDISATION AND INDUSTRIAL POLICY

### INTERNAL MARKET

In a position adopted in December 2015, the ETUC outlined its views on a single market strategy for Europe. In this document, the ETUC renewed its opposition to any form of country-of-origin principle and the ongoing trend towards deregulation. In January 2017, the European Commission published the ‘services package’, composed of a proposal for a Services E-card, a services notification procedure, and a proportionality test. The ETUC expressed strong concerns about the adverse impact of these proposals on the enforcement of companies’ obligations and workers’ rights.

The ETUC Secretariat therefore campaigned against the proposed services package, with a particular focus on the Services E-card. Actions were organised including meetings with influential MEPs, participation in hearings at the European Parliament and a public action together with the EFBWW and Uni Europa on 21 June 2017. The Services E-card was finally blocked in the competent EP committee. The proportionality proposal has been adopted, while notification is still under discussion. Both the proposals have been significantly modified with a great number of amendments toning down their deregulatory nature.

In parallel, the ETUC Labour and Internal Market Legislation Committee launched an internal reflection with a view to developing an alternative vision of the single market. Various proposals have been discussed, based on the need to increase corporate liability as well as the enforcement of workers’ rights prior to further initiatives to boost free movement in the single market. As a first step, the ETUC Secretariat applied for a two-year project on subcontracting, which was approved by the Commission, to start in February 2019. This project will help the ETUC to build a case for legislation regulating subcontracting processes at EU level.

### STANDARDISATION

For 30 years, the European trade union movement has been involved in standardisation, mainly focusing on the field of occupational health and safety (OSH) – primarily via the ETUI. However, the (new) European regulation 1025/2012/EC on standardisation provides mechanisms for an enhanced trade union participation in standard-setting activities, beyond OSH. Since 2015, and with the financial support of the European Commission, the ETUC has been able to go further and start to have a real impact on the standards development process in areas which potentially have a significant impact on well-established regulations and collective agreements covering working conditions and the organisation of work.

The ETUC STAND project concerns standardisation activities at both political and technical levels, with trade union experts co-drafting the content of selected standards (i.e. standards which affect workers) with the support and coordination of the ETUC secretariat, governed by the framework of adopted ETUC resolutions<sup>6</sup>.

The primary aim is ETUC involvement in European standard-setting activities, via the European Committee for Standardisation (CEN). At the same time, the ETUC also monitors (and intervenes in, where possible) international standard-setting activities (by ISO). Many standards that have a clear and direct trade union impact are drawn up at international level. These can influence both the European and national levels, as well as sometimes being ‘copied-and-pasted’ wholesale into European and national standard-developing activities.

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6 ETUC resolution on standardisation of *March 1986, 5-6 June 2013, of 12 June 2014 and of 16-17 December 2015*

At both CEN and ISO levels, the ETUC now has observer (partnership or liaison) status and so sits directly at the table, but without voting rights. Voting rights are channelled through national standardisation bodies, set through various arrangements among national stakeholders. A few of them involve ETUC national trade union affiliates, but most do not. Therefore, our ongoing work also focuses on capacity building among these affiliates to increase national influence (including voting rights).<sup>7</sup>

## Achievements

In 2015 and 2016, the ETUC STAND project began with one member of staff (full-time equivalent). The main objective was to set up the ETUC infrastructure on standardisation and then gradually to increase awareness of and active involvement in standard-setting activities amongst affiliates. Since January 2018, the ETUC secretariat has had a stable, dedicated staff to perform this work, wholly financed by the ETUC STAND project. It has so far:

Established infrastructure in the ETUC to deal with standardisation, including:

- Regular permanent Standardisation Committee meetings and consultations.
  - Extending the network of ETUC experts who can actively participate in the standard-writing processes in a number of policy areas of strategic importance for the ETUC.
  - A network of national trade union contact points on standardisation.
  - Provided support to national affiliates on specific national standardisation policy areas.
- Participated, on behalf of the ETUC, in selected management meetings of the European Standardisation Organisations (ESOs), including their general assemblies, as well as in Commission working groups related to standardisation.
- Launched a newsletter to share information on standardisation issues which can affect workers directly (and indirectly) and other publicly available material on the ETUC website.
- Increased awareness via outreach activities with national trade unions and the European Trade Union Federations (ETUFs) on the importance of standards, with a focus on 'new' economic sectors.
- Intensified working relations with the ETUFs on standards activities in their specific fields, in particular with the European Federation of Building and Wood Workers (EFBWW/FETBB), the European Federation of Food, Agriculture and Tourism Trade Unions (EFFAT), IndustriAll, the European Federation of Public Service Unions (EPSU), the European Transport Federation (ETF) and UNI-Europa, by involving/ informing/training/supporting their dedicated standardisation experts.
- In January 2018, held a mid-term review with the ETUFs on the ETUC STAND project to receive feed-back.
- Established a series of national seminars on the impact of standardisation on industrial relations – these have already taken place in Italy, Malta, Latvia, the Netherlands, Lithuania and Cyprus. More are planned.
- Raised awareness amongst affiliates that European standards can:
  - be a policy tool for the European institutions as their voluntary and widely applicable nature is tantamount to 'soft regulation';
  - complement legislation – or in some cases be an alternative to European legislative initiatives.
- Secured stable project funding from the Commission and the European Free Trade Association (EFTA), through a Framework Partnership Agreement (4+2 years).
- Held regular coordination meetings with other societal stakeholders and partners like ANEC (Consumers), ECOS (Environmental citizens), SBS (SMEs), ETUI, International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) etc. dealing with standardisation issues, to increase effective participation and inclusion of social stakeholders in standardisation setting.

The enhanced knowledge of standards that has been fostered, as well as of associated labels, brought further reflection on the potential for establishing a social label (and its underlying criteria). A first discussion on developing a social label took place in the Standardisation Committee, where a lively exchange ensued. This discussion is ongoing. Placing a label on the market

<sup>7</sup> While problematic, this is not an insurmountable challenge, as the ETUC has shown by raising its voice in the Council in recent years, most notably in the EPSCO Council and its relevant advisory committees. A similar situation applies in the sense that the ETUC has no voting rights and must therefore rely on mobilising its resources as a recognised European social partner: political capital, lobbying capacity, expertise etc.

is a complex process and involves skills/knowledge in areas like communication, certification, accreditation, criteria/standards, resources, identifying niche sectors/markets, etc. Therefore, it is essential to launch a wide-ranging and dynamic debate on if and how to approach the challenge. The ETUC STAND project can help to kick-start the launch of a social label on the market, but it has no resources to be actively involved or run a label in the future.

Fostering a better knowledge of standards has resulted, among other things, in:

- a reflection on the potential for establishing a social label (and underlying criteria). A first discussion on a social label took place in the permanent Standardisation Committee in May 2018, where a lively exchange ensued;
- a 2019 Commission proposal<sup>8</sup> to request European standards to enhance the wellbeing of hairdressers. This initiative – which is separate from negotiations on the implementation of the OHS Framework Agreement – is taken up by the social partners and supported by the ETUC STAND project (upon the request of UNI Europa);
- the elaboration of a pre-standard (or CEN Workshop Agreement) on a European Quality Framework for Internships, with the active involvement of the ETUC Youth Committee. Full details at: <https://www.etuc.org/en/issue/standardisation>

## INDUSTRIAL POLICY

The ETUC has been working to persuade the EU to develop an industrial policy that creates and maintains quality jobs while helping to meet the challenges of our time: notably fighting climate change and other sustainability issues, and managing automation and digitalisation. This vision underpinned initiatives in many areas including climate and energy, trade policy and the macroeconomy. The ETUC leadership has emphasised its message in many fora in Europe, and especially on the 'Industry 2030 high-level industrial roundtable' that the European Commission set up to prepare a manifesto and a series of recommendations for Summer 2019.



8 See COM (2018)686 and SWD(2018)434

# 9. EDUCATION AND TRAINING, YOUNG PEOPLE

## EDUCATION AND TRAINING

In 2015, the Paris Manifesto mandated the ETUC to “promote quality education for all, lifelong learning, knowledge, research and innovation in the workplace and society”. The Manifesto also called on Europe to initiate a social agenda with legislation and policies for workers including “to promote quality education, vocational training and lifelong learning”.

### Achievements since Paris

The ETUC’s greatest achievement in this field has been the European Pillar of Social Rights<sup>9</sup> adopted on 17 November 2017, which declares in its first principle that “Everyone has the right to quality and inclusive education, training and lifelong learning in order to maintain and acquire skills that enable them to participate fully in society and manage successfully transitions in the labour market.”

The right to quality and inclusive education and training for people living in the EU is essential, as changing labour markets, energy transition, digitalisation, technological progress, values and critical thinking are among the main challenges to be tackled. Supporting the training of the low-skilled, the socio-economically disadvantaged, and integrating migrants and refugees into the labour market by recognising their skills and supporting their training have been new challenges in this context.

The Commission’s ‘A New Skills Agenda for Europe’ (2016) aims at ensuring higher and more relevant skills for all in the labour market. In response, the ETUC Position on the ‘New Skills Agenda: Improving training opportunities for workers in Europe’<sup>10</sup>, underlined that vocational education and training is the main lever to empower workers as individuals and citizens and foster their employability. It demanded attractive and high-quality initial and continuous vocational education and training provisions for all. The ETUC has been pushing for the effective implementation of the Council Recommendation on ‘Upskilling Pathways: New opportunities for adults’ (2016)<sup>11</sup> which aims at helping low-skilled adults to acquire a minimum level of literacy, numeracy and digital competence and a wider set of skills, knowledge and competences, relevant to the labour market and active participation in society.

Employee training (workplace learning) is essential to provide workers with an opportunity to develop as active citizens, to acquire and update their knowledge, skills and competences and to improve their employability. The European social partners led a project on ‘Promoting Social Partnership on Employee Training’ (2016-2018) to map existing systems in Europe, improve social dialogue and provide capacity building for national social partners. The final report and joint recommendations<sup>12</sup> with the employers stipulate that employee training is not a cost but an investment for employers, and equal access to training should be ensured for all workers.

Enabling vocational students to become employed is one of the ETUC’s aims when demanding quality apprenticeships. As a result of two ETUC projects (2012-2014 and 2014-2016), a trade union proposal for ‘A European Quality Framework for Apprenticeships’<sup>13</sup> was developed and integrated into a ‘Joint statement of the European social partners - Towards a shared vision of apprenticeships’.<sup>14</sup> The 20 quality standards proposed by the ETUC set the criteria for quality and fair apprenticeships in Europe with fair pay and good working conditions. The framework was incorporated into the ‘Tri-partite opinion on quality

9 [https://ec.europa.eu/commission/priorities/deeper-and-fairer-economic-and-monetary-union/european-pillar-social-rights/european-pillar-social-rights-20-principles\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/priorities/deeper-and-fairer-economic-and-monetary-union/european-pillar-social-rights/european-pillar-social-rights-20-principles_en)

10 <https://www.etuc.org/documents/etuc-position-new-skills-agenda-improving-training-opportunities-workers-europe#.WjfATjdukDU>

11 [http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=OJ:JOC\\_2016\\_484\\_R\\_0001](http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=OJ:JOC_2016_484_R_0001)

12 <https://www.etuc.org/en/publication/promoting-social-partnership-employee-training-joint-recommendations-and-report>

13 <https://www.etuc.org/press/trade-union-contribution-quality-apprenticeships-europe#.WjfRQTdukDU>

14 <https://www.etuc.org/documents/towards-shared-vision-apprenticeships-joint-statement-european-social-partners#.WjfRITdukDU>

and effective apprenticeships and work-based learning<sup>15</sup> adopted by the representatives of governments, employers and trade unions. The Commission translated this ETUC demand into a Council Recommendation on a 'European Framework for Quality and Effective Apprenticeships'<sup>16</sup>, which was adopted on 15 March 2018.

The ETUC has been promoting investment in education and training for all, to boost recovery and create jobs. 80% of businesses in Europe cut or froze their expenditure on skills and training during 2016<sup>17</sup> according to a joint ETUC-CEEP<sup>18</sup>-ETUCE-EFEE<sup>19</sup> project report on 'Improving social partners' involvement in EU support for public investments in training and education'<sup>20</sup> (2015-2017). The joint recommendations (2016)<sup>21</sup> underlined that public investment in improving quality of education, and employers' contributions to apprenticeships and employee training is a prerequisite of success in the future.

The ETUC continues to support and contribute to transnational projects undertaken by affiliates. In 2016 a toolkit for trade unions was published on developing workplace learning<sup>22</sup>. The SACADOS project<sup>23</sup> aimed to contribute to a European trade union strategy to support trade union representatives in making better use of information, consultation and participation procedures in the workplace, anticipating change and developing skills. Unions<sup>4</sup>VET<sup>24</sup> (with German, Greek, Italian, Latvian, Portuguese and Slovakian trade unions) sought to increase cooperation among trade unions to facilitate a common European position on VET.

## Tools to achieve the goals

In order to ensure quality vocational education and training for all, the ETUC has been successfully cooperating with ETUCE since 2012 on overlapping issues.

The ETUC's Education and Training Committee meets twice a year to discuss ETUC responses to EU initiatives on vocational education and training.

The ETUC represents the member organisations in the informal Directors-General of Vocational Education and Training meetings twice a year, where EU priorities on VET and adult learning are discussed. The ETUC and member organisations advise the Commission on VET and adult learning developments through the tripartite advisory committee for VET meetings.

The ETUC and member organisations are members of the Cedefop Governing Board, ensuring that the work programme of the tripartite agency reflects the needs of countries concerning research on VET and adult learning and contributing to the smooth running of the agency.

The ETUC has been representing trade unions in various working groups and bodies developing European-level instruments and tools.

The European Qualification Framework (EQF) Advisory Group has been working to ensure the transparency of European education systems via the national ministries' reports on setting up National Reference Frameworks and validation of nonformal and informal learning.

The European Quality Assurance for VET (EQAVET) network is discussing the improvement of quality assurance systems for VET in Europe with the involvement of the ETUC.

The European Credit System for VET (ECVET) helps with recognition of VET learners' mobility and aims at helping countries to define VET via learning outcomes for better visibility and recognition.

The ETUC is also actively involved in the Member States Working Group on creating a taxonomy on European Skills and Occupations (ESCO).

15 <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=89&newsId=2691&furtherNews=yes>

16 [https://www.google.be/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=4&ved=0ahUKewiY1dG95JPYAhXOEVAKHZ9BCdQQFgg-4MAM&url=http%3A%2F%2Fec.europa.eu%2Fsocial%2FblobServlet%3FdocId%3D18330%26langId%3Den&usq=AOvVaw3kk2PpGttQad\\_ElhiCg4y](https://www.google.be/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=4&ved=0ahUKewiY1dG95JPYAhXOEVAKHZ9BCdQQFgg-4MAM&url=http%3A%2F%2Fec.europa.eu%2Fsocial%2FblobServlet%3FdocId%3D18330%26langId%3Den&usq=AOvVaw3kk2PpGttQad_ElhiCg4y)

17 ETUC-CEEP-ETUCE-EFEE: Final Study Report - Investment Education, 2017, using reference to: Accenture 2012: News release - Majority of European Employers Cut Skills and Training Investment. Despite Skills Shortages, Finds Accenture and FEB Survey, 25 April 2012. <https://newsroom.accenture.com/subjects/management-consulting/majority-of-european-employers-cut-skills-and-training-investment-despite-skills-shortages-finds-accenture-and-feb-survey.htm>

18 CEEP, the European Centre of Employers and Enterprises providing Public Services and Services of general interest

19 European Federation of Education Employers (EFEE)

20 [https://www.etuc.org/publications/investment-education-and-training#.WnM\\_cTdulQL](https://www.etuc.org/publications/investment-education-and-training#.WnM_cTdulQL)

21 [https://www.etuc.org/sites/default/files/circular/files/joint\\_recommendations\\_investment\\_in\\_education\\_and\\_training.pdf](https://www.etuc.org/sites/default/files/circular/files/joint_recommendations_investment_in_education_and_training.pdf)

22 <https://www.unionlearn.org.uk/publications/developing-workplace-learning-toolkit-trade-unions>

23 European funded project involving German, Italian, Bulgarian, Latvia and Romanian trade unions.

24 <http://www.unions4vet.de/>

The ETUC, in cooperation with ETUCE, is represented by experts from member organisations on several Commission Open Method of Cooperation working groups, which are platforms to help governments to reach the EU2020 Strategy framework objectives. Since 2014, the ETUC has been involved in the working groups on vocational education and training, adult learning, early school leaving, transversal skills (2014-16), digital skills, modernising higher education, Paris Declaration – equality in education (2016-), graduate tracking (2018-).

## The way forward

The member organisations, in the 'Resolution on EU priorities on Education and Training post 2020 - towards a European right to training for all' (2018)<sup>25</sup> mandated the ETUC to follow a post-2020 education and training strategy:

- I. A European right to training guaranteeing high-quality employee training for all workers, in particular low-skilled ones, including paid educational leave;
- II. A real skills guarantee allowing low-skilled workers to obtain at least certified basic skills and key competences;
- III. Investment in education and training to ensure appropriate funding by the EU (and Member States) in the future Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) post 2020;
- IV. Effective social dialogue on VET to consolidate efficient governance of vocational training at all levels.

The ETUC Mandate on the next European social partners' 2018-2020 Work Programme, adopted at the ETUC Executive Committee on 13-14 June 2017, identified education and training as one possible topic for negotiation at European level. A right to paid educational leave should be introduced (paid leave for both professional and more general training).

## YOUTH

Youth employment has remained a priority for the ETUC during the four years of this mandate. Ten years after the outbreak of the economic crisis, the situation of young people in the labour market still remains difficult, with a significant increase in precarious employment and persistently high rates of young people Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEETs). After completing their education, young people face numerous obstacles to entering the labour market and finding stable employment. Young migrants and young women are particularly vulnerable, and they are over-represented in precarious jobs.

### The Youth Guarantee

- **A principle of the European Pillar of Social Rights.** The ETUC has worked to strengthen European youth employment policies, with specific reference to the Youth Guarantee. When the new European Commission came into office, the duration of this programme was uncertain. ETUC action helped to ensure its continuation. Moreover, the ETUC called for this policy to be included as one of the principles of the European Pillar of Social Rights. This will guarantee that it remains a priority of EU social policy during the coming Commission mandate.
- **Assessing the quality of offers.** In close cooperation with the Youth Committee, we denounced the widespread poor quality of offers to young participants in this programme, which was echoed by a report of the European Court of Auditors in 2016.
- **Partnership approach.** We have monitored the involvement of trade unions in the design, implementation and monitoring of the Youth Guarantee. Whereas there is a slight improvement in the level of trade union engagement in this policy at European level, at other levels there is still ample room for governments and employers' organisations to improve trade union involvement.

<sup>25</sup> [https://www.etuc.org/sites/default/files/document/files/ec226\\_resolution\\_future\\_of\\_vet\\_post-2020\\_en\\_adopted.pdf](https://www.etuc.org/sites/default/files/document/files/ec226_resolution_future_of_vet_post-2020_en_adopted.pdf)

## The Youth Employment Initiative

- **Stability and coherence of the funds.** Following our call for more coherent and stable funding, the Commission's plan for the next Multiannual Financial Framework proposes incorporating this resource into the European Social Fund Plus. The challenge remains to ensure adequate contributions from both national and European funds to implement effective measures to get young people into quality employment.

## The European Solidarity Corps

- The ETUC supported this initiative to provide young people with the opportunity to volunteer or work on projects, in their own country or abroad, that benefit communities and people around Europe. The first proposal combined this aim with the promotion of youth employment. The ETUC succeeded in establishing clear safeguards to ensure that jobs in the solidarity sector should not be replaced by volunteering, and provisions to this effect were included in the legal basis of the European Solidarity Corps.

The ETUC is currently tackling some ongoing challenges relating to the fight against sub-minimum wages for young workers, which currently exist in four European countries: Greece, Ireland, the Netherlands and Belgium.

## ETUC YOUTH COMMITTEE

Since the bureau of the ETUC Youth Committee is elected with a two-year mandate, three teams have held office between the 13th and 14th Congresses. They have been led by Salvatore Marra, Tom Vrijens and Viktória Nagy, respectively.

## Fighting against precarious working conditions

- The **ETUC Youth Friendliness** indicator. Pan-European research has been conducted with the support of the Friedrich Ebert Foundation to assess how youth-friendly the different European labour markets are. It was based on a survey to which trade unionists, officials from public employment services, academic researchers and employers' representatives all responded. The research challenges some common assumptions about young people and access to the labour market, like the lack of a positive shift despite a decline in youth unemployment or the lack of sound evidence that young people's basic skills shortages cause low employability.
- In its **European Youth Employment Policy** paper, the ETUC Youth Committee introduced its own criteria for quality jobs, internships and apprenticeships and followed it up with planned guidelines for defending young people's rights at work through trade union action at national level.
- The ETUC Youth Committee supported the collective complaint filed by the European Youth Forum to ban unpaid internships in Belgium.

## Wages

- The ETUC Youth Committee actively participated in the ETUC Pay Rise campaign. In summer 2017, the campaign highlighted youth and called for fair wages for young people.
- The ETUC Youth Committee is fighting wage discrimination on the basis of age and exploring the possibility – if national affiliates give support – of filing a collective complaint against sub-minimum wages for young people in Ireland and the Netherlands.



## Training

- The **ETUC Youth Training Week**. Training young European trade union leaders is a priority for the ETUC and the ETUI, to better protect the rights and interests of working youth in Europe. Three sessions have been organised (2017, 2018 and 2019) exploring topics such as the integration of migrants in the labour market, the organisation of precarious workers in the trade union movement and the European Pillar of Social Rights.
- The ETUC Youth Committee has also worked in partnership with the Youth Centres of the Council of Europe with the aim of making the human rights' approach transversal across trade union action. This training placed special emphasis on the rights of young refugees and migrants and their integration into the labour market.
- The Academy for Young Trade Union Leaders on the Future of Work aims to provide participants with tools and knowledge to understand, forecast and react to the main challenges surrounding the future of work and to better protect the rights of workers throughout this process.

## Follow-up to European youth employment policies

- The **European Youth Guarantee**. The ETUC Youth Committee and its national affiliates have dedicated their efforts to following up the implementation of European youth employment policies at national level, mainly the Youth Guarantee. Special attention has been given to the involvement of social partners in the design, implementation and evaluation of policies, as well as the quality of measures provided to beneficiaries. Three research studies in this area have been conducted since the last Congress.

## Gender

- In line with the ETUC Congress commitment to the empowerment of women in the trade union movement, the ETUC Youth Committee, in collaboration with the Women's Committee, monitored the position of young women in unions and in the labour market in its **Annual Gender Equality Survey** in 2018.
- In 2019 the Youth Committee started a project which aims at better defending young workers in the labour market through collective bargaining and social dialogue practices. Special attention will be given to the situation of young women and young migrant workers.

## Democracy at work

- In its resolution of June 2018, the ETUC Youth Committee highlighted the importance of democracy at work, suggesting that the next **EU Youth Strategy 2019-2027** should also boost young workers' participation in information and decision-making processes at workplace level by encouraging their participation in works council elections and affiliation to trade unions. This position has been used to lobby the various European governing bodies throughout the new youth strategy adoption process.

# 10. MIGRATION, SOCIAL PROTECTION AND SOCIAL INCLUSION

## MIGRATION

At the Paris Congress in 2015, the ETUC committed itself to changing the EU narrative on migration and promoting a more effective common European immigration policy, shifting the attention away from narrow security issues to the contribution migrants make, human rights, equal treatment and integration.

Migration featured high on the ETUC agenda and lobbying action included the publication of several statements, press releases and policy documents aimed at establishing an EU migration policy based on solidarity, integration and inclusiveness for the benefit of all and at dismantling the current approach based on circularity and selectivity. The main ETUC statements included: the [ITUC and ETUC Statement](#) addressed to the European and African governments on the occasion of the Valletta Conference on Migration in November 2015; various [ETUC Statements](#) commenting on EU Council conclusions; [ETUC Statement on the European refugees and asylum-seekers emergency](#) (adopted by the Executive Committee in June 2018). The importance of a fair EU migration policy was raised in all speeches delivered by the ETUC at the Tripartite Social Summits (TSS). In addition, the EU economic and social partners presented a [Joint statement on the refugee crisis](#) at the TSS meeting of March 2016.

Building on Paris Congress commitment, a [medium-term strategy on migration, asylum and inclusion for the period 2016-2019](#) was adopted. The strategy calls for a number of objectives and specific measures, such as coherent policies meeting the reality of migration flows. Unfortunately, progress on new safe and legal channels for migrants and asylum-seekers failed to materialise at EU level. The only exception is the proposal for the revision of the Directive on the conditions of entry and residence of third-country nationals for the purpose of highly skilled employment (the so-called Blue Card Directive) launched by the European Commission on 7 June 2016. The ETUC adopted a [Position](#) together with Eurocadres on 16 October 2016. The European Parliament's report includes several ETUC inputs based on the adopted position, like for instance a better definition of salary thresholds and equal treatment and opportunities for blue card migrants. The new Blue Card Directive is currently being discussed by the Trilogue (Council, Commission and Parliament).

In 2017, the Commission launched a [public consultation](#) on an EU legal framework for regular migration to which the ETUC contributed by highlighting shortfalls in four directives: family reunification, long-term residents, seasonal workers and single permit, and flaws in the equal treatment principle in the Intra-Corporate Transferees (ITC) Directive. The ETUC is also cooperating with the Centre for European Policy Studies (CEPS) on the research project '*Costs of Non-Europe in the area of Migration*' aiming to inform EU-level decision-makers about the EU's current and potential contribution as well as remaining gaps and challenges in the area of legal migration.

ETUC lobby work in the context of the European Pillar of Social Rights also included a specific focus on migrants' rights and the need to ensure the principle of equal treatment. In addition, the ETUC seeks to influence the European Semester process to ensure that migrant challenges are addressed by adequate Country Specific Recommendations (CSRs). Based on the analysis carried out by the ETUC, the Council issued CSRs directly targeting migrant-related policies to three countries in 2016 (AT, BE and FI), in 2017 and in 2018 (AT, BE, FR).

Despite strong trade union and civil society efforts, the reform of a common asylum system has not been agreed by Member States. The ETUC calls for a fair and solidarity-based EU asylum policy harmonising protection standards in all Member States, establishing binding mechanisms to relocate refugees as well as asylum-seekers and establishing European hotspots with quality reception conditions. Several statements were published and a [Mare Nostrum](#) photo action organised. The ETUC also took part in rallies such as [No more walls in Europe #EUWakeUP](#) in March 2016 and organised a public event entitled [Trade Union Action For Refugees](#) in June 2016.

The ETUC opposes exploitation of and unfair competition between migrants and local workers, and fights for full equal treatment in the labour market, in workplaces and in access to social protection systems and benefits. In October 2016, a dialogue with the employers and the Commission aimed at jointly sharing this message was launched and successfully culminated in the signature of a [European Partnership for Integration of Refugees in the labour market](#) in December 2017. The Partnership lays down key principles and commitments to support and strengthen opportunities for refugees and migrants to integrate into the European labour market. Signatories are committed to translate the partnership into concrete actions at national level and follow-up meetings are held regularly.

The principles enshrined in the Partnership for integration were inspired by the project LABOUR-INT, led by the ETUC in partnership with CEEP and EUROCHAMBRES and with the involvement and support of several national, European and international organisations. LABOUR-INT started in 2017 and aims at promoting employment as a key part of the integration process of refugees and asylum-seekers in society. Three pilot actions are being implemented: one in Italy, where 40 asylum-seekers have completed education and professional training and undertaken internships; in Belgium, where 40 asylum-seekers were trained and passed the admission test for accessing VET and in Germany, where 13 vocational trainers and workers' representatives were trained to prepare the workplace for the better integration of asylum-seekers and refugees and a training manual has been developed. Furthermore, an online tool ([AikomPass](#)) has been developed to assess the informal skills and qualifications of asylum-seekers and refugees in the metal and electrical industries. The first dissemination event of LABOUR-INT, organised by EUROCHAMBRES, took place in Vienna on 8 June 2018 attended by 30 economic and social partners. A second dissemination seminar was organised by CITUB in Sofia on 26 September 2018, with more than 60 participants. The third dissemination seminar, organised by CEEP, was held in Stockholm on 7 November 2018 and gathered together 40 social partners. The fourth and final dissemination conference, organised by the ETUC, took place in Brussels on 14 December 2018 and gathered together over 120 participants from across Europe.

The ETUC has continued to fight against undocumented migrant workers' exploitation and unfair treatment, for example setting up a [photo action](#) in support of undocumented migrants. A joint event was organised in Brussels with the Platform for International Cooperation on Undocumented Migrants (PICUM) on 21 October 2016 and a brochure on [Defending Undocumented Workers](#) and a leaflet [Trade unions: Organising and Promoting Undocumented Migrant Workers' Rights](#), were published and translated into several languages. The ETUC continued to coordinate and support the work of UnionMigrantNet (UMN), by holding regular meetings and raising awareness on the positive impact that the network has in fostering inclusion and integration of all migrants in the EU. A new [brochure on UMN](#) was published in 2018. The [UMN portal](#) has 128 registered users, including more than 100 trade unions and contact points in a number of EU Member States (Belgium, Germany, France, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Slovenia and Spain).

ETUC action in development cooperation policies dealing with migration was stepped up. The ETUC is a member of the recently established Multi-stakeholder platform on Sustainable Development Goals, has given support to the Trade Union Network on Migration of Mediterranean and Sub-Saharan countries, and has joined forces with the ITUC to lobby negotiations on the [Global Compact for Migration \(GCM\)](#). [Two statements](#) were issued setting out ITUC-ETUC priorities to be addressed in the GCM.

The role of the ETUC in promoting a new narrative on migration at all levels is nowadays well acknowledged by EU and international institutions. For the first time, the ETUC co-chaired a workshop of the European Migration Forum in March 2018, focusing on a multi-stakeholder approach for integration of refugees. The ETUC also supports various EU and internationally-led initiatives promoting refugees' integration such as the European Citizens' Initiative [#WelcomingEurope](#) calling on the Commission to ban the criminalisation of solidarity in EU Member States; support for European citizens who want to offer safety to people fleeing persecution and guarantee effective access to justice for all victims of exploitation and abuse; the UNHCR [#WithRefugeesCoalition](#) asking leaders to ensure that every refugee can work or learn new skills to support his/her family; that every refugee child gets an education and that every refugee family has somewhere safe to live.

Several European projects are being promoted in the field of migration, and the ETUC is contributing to [ReSOMA](#), aiming at creating a platform for knowledge and good practice exchanges in the fields of migration, asylum and integration, with European policy-makers. The ETUC is also a member of the Technical Advisory Group of the CEDEFOP study [Complementary Pathways for Adult Refugees: the Role of VET, Skills and Qualifications](#) to improve knowledge and understanding of the role of VET, skills and qualifications to expand opportunities for adult refugees to move from a first host country to another country where they may find employment, education and training opportunities and reach long-term solutions to their international protection needs, and is a partner in the [EMEN](#) project supporting migrants' entrepreneurship.

A number of press releases were issued on International Migrant Day:

- <https://www.etuc.org/en/pressrelease/trade-unions-organising-and-promoting-undocumented-migrant-workers-rights> (in December 2017)
- <https://www.etuc.org/en/publication/defending-undocumented-workers-means-defending-all-workers> (publication of the brochure on occasion of IMD in December 2016)
- <https://www.etuc.org/en/pressrelease/trade-unions-inclusion-refugees> (in December 2015)

## SOCIAL PROTECTION AND SOCIAL INCLUSION

The last ETUC mandate launched substantial developments in the field of social protection and social inclusion.

A rationalisation of the work programme on universal, solidarity-based and adequate social protection has been defined in ETUC resolutions, in line with the mandate of the Paris Congress, fixing the direction for policy inputs that the ETUC has mainstreamed internally and to an EU-wide audience.

Social protection is increasingly recognised as relevant at European level. The ETUC has taken part to a series of conferences and public events promoting an integrated approach across all levels and dimensions.

Active ageing, an important theme for social protection in the current scenario of longer working lives, has become a topic for social dialogue. The negotiation of the European social partners' agreement on active ageing and an intergenerational approach generated synergies between the social dialogue and social protection teams within the ETUC, who have coordinated activities with the negotiating trade union delegation. The agreement sets out the approach to many important issues relating to social protection, especially keeping 50+ workers in the labour market.

The ETUC priorities related to longer life expectancy and longer and healthier working lives have been mainstreamed within the framework of the Joint Programme Initiative 'More Years Better Lives' (JPI:MYBL). The JPI:MYBL, funded by several Member States' governmental contributions, aims to finance a research project on active ageing policies and their impact in a number of dimensions. The ETUC is an active member of the Societal Advisory Board of the initiative, and participates in the definition of the research tasks to be funded by the project.

Social protection priorities are mainstreamed through the design and social impact of the European Economic Governance (EEG) framework. The ETUC methodology to provide inputs to the EU Semester (ETUC Semester Toolkit) has furnished timely contributions targeting the main areas of social protection (pension adequacy and reform; healthcare and long-term care needs; reduction of poverty and social exclusion). The analytical and political work of the secretariat has developed in coordination with the team responsible for the Semester and the EEG.

The ETUC permanent Social Protection Committee has been increasingly involved in contributing to the ETUC Semester Toolkit. In February 2017, a specific two-day training on social protection in the EEG took place, in collaboration with the ETUI. It aimed at informing the committee members about the Semester cycle, and the legislative, political and economic rationale behind it. The committee members are better prepared to provide timely and effective trade union inputs on clearly identified social challenges, with relevant data and coherent policy solutions.

The permanent committee took part in all the relevant ETUC policy actions. Following the Paris Congress mandate, the ETUC took steps to assess the functioning of minimum income schemes at national level. Participation in the EMIN Project on the promotion of adequate, effective and highly accessible minimum income schemes (MIS) included research and policy coordination, under the direction of the European Anti-Poverty Network. The ETUC coordinated the involvement of national trade unions in awareness raising campaigns and design of knowledge-based recommendations on national MIS.

### European Pillar of Social Rights

The ETUC actively participated in the conception and the drafting of the European Pillar of Social Rights. Involvement in the high-level debate, lobbying and advocacy has been accompanied by political meetings and analytical work to prepare the principles of the chapter on social protection and the indicators for their implementation as well as the European Commission staff working document. The ETUC has intensively lobbied the Commission unit responsible and contributed to the initiative on access to social protection, providing timely documents and briefing notes identifying ETUC priorities for adequate, accessible, effective and universal social protection for all workers and self-employed.

The ETUC has engaged all affiliates in the two rounds of consultation on the Commission proposal for a Council Recommendation on access to social protection for workers and self-employed. Substantial background work took place in cooperation with the ETUC team responsible for organising self-employed workers, aimed at assessing trade union priorities and strategies to obtain effective social protection. Social Protection Committee members were involved before the ETUC's response to the consultation was submitted to the Executive Committee, and the ETUC position on the Commission's proposal delivered to the Council.

The ETUC actively lobbied Member States (through several rounds of bilateral meetings with EU permanent representations) before and during the debate in the EPSCO on the Council Recommendation, presenting the ETUC priorities supported by solid research-based arguments.

In February 2019 the first ETUC European project on social protection was launched, with Commission funding, raising the profile of social protection as a European topic. The project will assess national conditions on access to pensions for workers and self-employed, in combination with labour market integration and quality of work (action priorities on social protection identified by the Social Protection Committee during the mandate). The project aims at providing knowledge-based trade union recommendations to national and European institutions to ensure adequate and effective protection in old age, and guiding ETUC inputs at European level in the framework of the EEG and overall trends on pension reform.

The ETUC has been active in promoting social priorities and trade union demands in the field of pension policy, as a top priority. Relations and exchanges have been established with the Council's Social Protection Committee and its sub-groups. A dialogue has been established with the Commission unit responsible for European pension policy. The ETUC has forcefully demanded and obtained the involvement of social partners in the drafting of the 2018 pension adequacy report, although the impact on the Commission's approach was limited. The critical analysis of the report addressing the costs of ageing plays a role in ETUC inputs to the EEG framework. The participation of trade union experts has been promoted within the EIOPA sub-groups.

The ETUC has firmly supported public and collective statutory first pillar pensions in institutional fora as well as in debate with national and supranational organisations focusing on the promotion of occupational pensions. Regular exchange and cooperation has developed with such organisations (Pensions Europe, Federation of the Dutch Pension funds) aimed at promoting the ETUC view and a balanced approach to possible trade union paths to ensure adequate pension income to European workers. The ETUC has appointed its representative to the high-level group of experts responsible for drafting the report on the potential of second and third pillar pensions to enhance pension adequacy, and strictly monitors its developments. The ETUC has lobbied the Commission, the European Parliament and the Member States opposing the promotion of Pan-European Personal Pensions (PePP) and the terms of the EU regulation establishing them.

The transnational dimension of social protection and social security rights has been covered through participation in the advisory committee on social security coordination (the ETUC led the trade union delegation) and lobbying the European Parliament during revision of regulation 883.

# 11. ENVIRONMENT, CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENERGY

## Achievements on sustainability / climate and energy

Just transition is part of the Paris Agreement as requested by the ETUC (see: [https://www.etuc.org/documents/etuc-key-demands-climate-cop21#.WQw\\_KdJ96Uk](https://www.etuc.org/documents/etuc-key-demands-climate-cop21#.WQw_KdJ96Uk)).

Monitoring the implementation of the Paris agreement and the upcoming international negotiations in order to increase climate ambition, to scale up climate finance and to implement the principle of just transition has been a clear ETUC objective since 2105 ( see ETUC assessment of the Paris Agreement: <https://www.etuc.org/fr/documents/d%C3%A9claration-de-la-ces-%C3%A0-propos-de-l'accord-de-paris-sur-le-changement-climatique#.WQxAM9J96Uk> ; see also ETUC position for UNFCCC COP 22: <https://www.etuc.org/documents/climate-change-etucs-position-view-cop-22#.WQxBM9J96Uk>). To prepare the UN climate conference 2018, taking place in Katowice, Poland, the ETUC (in close collaboration with ITUC) has promoted a Joint Ministerial Declaration on just transition and decent work. The main objective is to secure and strengthen the political commitment that governments made in the Paris Agreement. The Katowice COP 24 clearly creates a window of opportunity to do that and the ETUC has actively reached out to EU institutions and key Member States to that end.

Just transition has also entered EU climate policy discussions, mainly through the ETUC proposal to set up a just transition fund to support workers who could be negatively affected by decarbonisation (see ETUC position on the revision of the EU Emissions Trading System 2021-2030: <https://www.etuc.org/documents/position-structural-reform-eu-emissions-trading-system#.WQxEctJ96Uk>). In the revised Directive on the EU emissions trading schemes, there are two concrete references to labour transitions. One is in the provision dealing with the way Member States should use the revenues generated by the auctioning of allowances. The other is in the list of possible activities to be financed by the Modernisation Fund which is meant to support Member States with a GDP per capita below 60% of the EU average in modernising their energy systems.

The ETUC has also run a project on just transition towards a low-carbon economy in industrial regions. Based on a questionnaire and seven regional case studies, the project helped to better understand the specific situation in these regions while moving towards a low-carbon economy. The final recommendations stress the need to enhance ownership and policy planning at sub-national level (see full report: <https://www.etuc.org/publications/etuc-project-industrial-regions-and-climate-policies-towards-just-transition#.WQxE7NJ96Uk>; see also case studies: <https://www.etuc.org/documents/industrial-regions-and-climate-change-policies-trade-unions-perspectives-%E2%80%93-detailed-case#.WQxFTJ96Uk>). The main political impact of these demands was the Commission's launch, in December 2017, of a Platform for Coal Regions in Transition, to support regions dependent on coal in moving to a low-carbon economy. Two meetings were organised in 2018 on economic diversification, technological innovation and labour transitions (skills). <https://ec.europa.eu/energy/en/events/coal-regions-transition-platform-working-groups-launch-and-first-meetings>

After a long and intense debate with its members, in 2018-2019 the ETUC adopted two positions on the future of EU climate and energy policy. The first is a response to the consultation on the EU strategy for long-term greenhouse gas emissions reduction <https://www.etuc.org/en/document/etuc-resolution-strategy-long-term-eu-greenhouse-gas-emissions-reduction-etuc-views>. The second identifies the level of ambition and the principles that should guide climate action beyond the next EU elections <https://www.etuc.org/en/document/etuc-position-key-demands-build-just-transition-and-boost-climate-action-after-eu>. Both documents stress the interrelation between the need to increase climate ambition and to ensure social fairness through just transition.

Our positions and project publications have stressed the need to better coordinate the climate/energy agenda with the social/employment agenda. As a result of our outreach activities, the various proposals published by the Commission in November 2016 – the so-called Winter Package of the Energy Union – should strengthen the involvement of social partners in the preparation of national climate and energy plans, encourage Member States to assess and monitor the social impact of their energy policies better and help to tackle energy poverty. More precisely, the draft regulation on governance of the Energy Union contains a mandatory provision that obliges Member States to involve social partners in the preparation of their national plans for climate and energy.

The ETUC has run a project on greater involvement of trade unions in climate action for a just transition. The main deliverable is a guide which aims to enable national trade unions to play a more active role in climate governance adopted in the follow-up to the Paris Agreement. <http://www.etuc.org/en/publication/involving-trade-unions-climate-action-build-just-transition>

The ETUC has been part of the 'Right to energy coalition', set up to fight energy poverty. The 'Clean energy for all Europeans' package offered opportunities and risks as far as energy affordability was concerned. The coalition has tried to mainstream the objective of fighting energy poverty across the various legislative proposals in the package. <https://www.epsu.org/article/public-event-right-energy-coalition-december-5>

## Challenges ahead on sustainable development / climate and energy

Year after year, scientists confirm that climate change is happening. Even though moving towards a "net zero-emissions economy" remains a priority for the ETUC, it seems obvious that climate change will impact on the world of work in many ways. To prepare trade unions to cope with those challenges, the ETUC has submitted a project application on 'Trade Union involvement in adaptation policy'.

Through the follow-up to the decision-making processes related to the implementation of the 2030 climate and energy package, the ETUC will continue to argue for policies that put people's health and the planet first while ensuring that the low-carbon economy will be a positive prospect for all EU citizens. In the same way, the next EU budget will have to reflect the commitment made in Paris and dramatically speed up the decarbonisation process, while creating new opportunities and providing support for those affected.

## 12. COHESION POLICY AND INTER-REGIONAL TRADE UNION COUNCILS

### COHESION POLICY

The ETUC reconfirmed that economic, social and territorial cohesion must continue to be at the core of European Union strategy, ensuring that all energies and capacities are mobilised and focused on implementing this objective.

The ETUC supported the simplification efforts put in place by the Commission, reducing from eleven to five the policy objectives for a smarter, greener, more connected, social and territorial Europe closer to the citizens.

The Commission plans to introduce more coherence between the use of EU funds and the Country Specific Recommendations (CSRs), issued after the annual Semester process, with European Structural and Investment Funds paid out only if Member States implement the reforms recommended in the Semester. The ETUC disagreed with this approach. The timing of CSRs is not compatible with the longer-term planning of the strategic investment funds. Moreover, a conditional approach already exists within the European Semester as *"A failure to implement the recommendations might result in further procedural steps under the relevant EU law and ultimately in sanctions under the SGP and the MIP. These sanctions might include fines and/or suspension of up to five European Funds, namely the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), the European Social Fund (ESF), the Cohesion Fund (CF), the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) and the European Maritime & Fisheries Fund (EMFF)."*

The ETUC insists that the ESIF should be managed and used in a more coherent way and with the full involvement of social partners. The so-called European Code of Conduct on Partnership, as laid down in the proposed Common Provisions Regulation and Delegated Act N° 240/2014 should be strengthened post-2020. In addition to that, in the future Common Provisions Regulation of the ESIF, the Code of Conduct on Partnership has to be added to the enabling conditions (former ex-ante conditionalities) for granting the funds.

### The European Pillar of Social Rights / European Social Fund Plus

In the proposed ESF+, the link with the implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights is clear, but the ETUC expressed disappointment at the level of financial commitment. On the other hand, the link with the European Semester and Country Specific Recommendations has to be clarified.

Even if the proposed ESF+ budget represents 27% of the proposed cohesion envelope, the ETUC deplored the reduction of 6% in real terms in the ESF+ budget and moreover the fact that the 23.1% minimum share of cohesion policy funding which Member States have to spend on ESF+ projects was left out of the proposed Common Provisions Regulation.

The ESF should continue, in the MFF 2021-2027, to play a key role both in supporting the creation of new quality employment and in promoting social inclusion. To achieve these goals, Member States should allocate 30% for the ESF+ to cohesion spending.

In the ESF+ Regulation, the partnership principle has to be strengthened and more detailed. A clear reference to the European Code of Conduct on Partnership is needed.

The ETUC is of the opinion that it is essential to ensure respect for the partnership principle and optimise the full added value of the involvement of social partners in ESF+ implementation. In the spirit of the quadripartite statement on a new start for social dialogue and taking into account the Opinion of the ESF Committee on the future of the fund, ESF+ support for capacity-building of social partners to strengthen social dialogue should be clearly mentioned and reinforced.

To this end, the ETUC reconfirmed its proposal to set up a separate and compulsory fund at EU level, within the ESF+, dedicated exclusively to capacity building, notably capacity building of social partners for social dialogue, industrial relations and collective bargaining. Furthermore, technical assistance to ensure social partners have full access to such funding should be put in place.

The ETUC supported the proposal to merge the ESF+ with the Youth Employment Initiative (YEI), the Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived (FEAD), the Employment and Social Innovation (EaSI) programme and the Health Programme. Nevertheless, the ETUC deplored the fact that this did not bring an increase in the ESF+ budget, but on the contrary a reduction in ESF+ funding estimated at between 3% and 10% in real terms.



Keeping in mind that the ESF remains the main EU instrument for supporting jobs, helping people get better jobs and ensuring fairer job opportunities, the ETUC stressed that the inclusion of new focus areas in ESF+ should complement the overall objective of the ESF, i.e. supporting jobs. In this regard, it is vital that the inclusion of new areas does not weaken efforts to create more and better jobs and a socially inclusive society.

The ETUC welcomed the proposal to include the EURES cross-border partnerships of the EaSI-Strand with direct management in the new ESF+. EURES cross-border partnerships make an important contribution to the promotion of fair and voluntary cross-border mobility. The ETUC demanded that a dedicated and compulsory budget within the ESF+ should be earmarked for existing and future EURES cross-border partnerships. Cross-border partnerships must be established on a permanent basis, with sufficient funding.

The ETUC called for the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF) to be transformed into a European Transition Fund and be better coordinated with ESF+ in order to ensure greater coherence between the two funds and better anticipation and management of restructuring processes. In this respect, the ETUC was satisfied by the acceptance of its demand to enlarge the scope of the EGF to tackle the consequences of structural trends other than globalisation, such as digitalisation, decarbonisation and automation. This should lead to support for initiatives aimed at easing or taking advantage of these transitions (training plans, career guidance, etc.).

The ETUC fully supported the proposed ringfencing of funds for social inclusion and to tackle poverty (25% instead of the current 20%) and 2% for the most deprived; and the YEI earmarking of 10% and age group 15-29 (Member States with a NEETS rate – young people Not in Education, Employment or Training – above the EU average in 2019).

## ESF support to capacity building for social partners

It is clear that in order to be able to develop their role as social partners and enhance social dialogue, some national social partner organisations need financial support.

European and national social partners have underlined these concerns in the ESF Committee as well as on other occasions such as the capacity building activities of the EU social partners as part of integrated projects, notably including a seminar in Riga in March 2015. This has also been highlighted in the thematic group discussions following the 5 March conference on “a new start for social dialogue”. The European social partners also held a seminar on the ESF and capacity building.

Better use of the ESF is essential to support the existence of well-structured bipartite social dialogue at all appropriate levels in the Member States, especially at local and regional levels. It can also play an important role in achieving better implementation of social dialogue outcomes.

In the framework of the integrated projects of the European Social Dialogue 2016-2018, a joint project has been carried out on the ‘Future European Social Fund. Better supporting capacity building of social partners’.

This project had the following goals:

- To build on the implementation of the partnership principle and the role of social partners in the delivery and monitoring of ESF activities by mapping ESF support to capacity building of social partners.
- To explore the extent to which capacity building facilitates, or the contribution that it could make in the future to, social dialogue and the implementation of social dialogue instruments in convergence and transition regions;
- To gather and exchange information on practical examples of projects funded by the ESF at national, regional, and local levels.

The European Social Partners (ETUC, BusinessEurope, CEEP and UEAPME) adopted joint recommendations on how the ESF can support capacity building of social partners. A joint report was also drawn up which looks at how the social partners are involved in the governance as well as the use of the ESF. The recommendations and report were developed following consultation with national members at two seminars (Prague and Rome) and one conference (9 March 2018 in Brussels).

<https://www.etuc.org/en/publication/future-esf-better-support-capacity-building-social-partner-organisations>

## The ESF Committee

The ESF Committee is the tripartite committee established in the Treaty involving public authorities and social partners at European and national levels in managing the ESF.

For the ETUC, the ESF Committee's key role is being consulted and delivering Opinions. During debate on the future cohesion policy, the ETUC insisted on having in-depth discussions as well as on the adoption of ESF Committee Opinions on the future regulations, and in particular on the proposed ESF+.

The ESF Committee is also the place to monitor the implementation of the European Code of Conduct on Partnership, and in particular the involvement of social partners. This item is systematically on the agenda of the ESF Committee. In 2018, together with BusinessEurope, UAPME and CEEP, the ETUC presented and discussed the above-mentioned joint report and the joint recommendations, addressing how the ESF can support capacity building of social partners.

## The ETUC Permanent Committee on economic and social cohesion and regional policies

The items on the agenda of the Permanent Committee related to discussions on cohesion policy and the implementation of the Operational Programmes. Special attention was paid to the implementation of the European Code of Conduct on Partnership.

The Permanent Committee has also discussed and prepared the abovementioned ETUC Positions on the mid-term review of the MFF 2014-2020, as well as the MFF post-2020.

In addition, it has discussed issues on the Commission agenda, and in particular the ESF Committee organised by DG Employment and the 'Structured Dialogue with European Structural and Investment Funds partners group of experts (ESIF-SD)' organised by DG Regio.

## INTERREGIONAL TRADE UNION COUNCILS – IRTUCS

The IRTUCs assemble the regional trade union organisations of the national confederations affiliated to the ETUC in cross-border regions, to support the local, often cross-border mobile workers in defending and pursuing their social and economic interests and to promote direct cross-border links between sectorial structures and companies.

Following the 13<sup>th</sup> ETUC Congress, the IRTUCs Coordinating Committee Rules of Internal Procedure were revised and updated. <https://www.etuc.org/en/document/etuc-resolution-interregional-trade-union-councils-irtucs-coordinating-committee-revised>

Over the last four years, two IRTUCs have merged (to set up the IRTUC of the *Grande Région* – FR/D/B/LUX), and in July 2017 the youngest IRTUC was born, covering Gibraltar and Andalucía (IRTUC South). The IRTUCs Coordinating Committee has met biannually in Brussels, hosted by the ETUC.

In line with the IRTUCs Coordinating Committee work programme 2016-2020, the following strategic trade union priorities have been set:

- To improve the quality of cross-border mobility, to identify existing obstacles and to guarantee that workers' rights and in particular the right to equal treatment are respected.
- To act in the interests of trade unions in regional labour markets and in the framework of EURES Cross-Border Partnerships.
- To integrate workers' voices more strongly in interregional social dialogue.
- To ensure real and full involvement of IRTUCs as recognised actors in cohesion policy and in European territorial cooperation policy at all levels. [https://www.etuc.org/sites/default/files/circular/files/irtucs\\_2016-2020\\_work\\_programme.pdf](https://www.etuc.org/sites/default/files/circular/files/irtucs_2016-2020_work_programme.pdf)

In pursuit of the IRTUCs' priorities, the following activities have been carried out:

1. Following the adoption of the 'ETUC's recommendations to the national governments and to the European Union on how to overcome obstacles to the mobility of frontier workers in Europe' (ETUC Executive Committee, 10-11 March 2015), and its dissemination at regional, national and European level, follow-up has been essential. The aim was to influence legal proposals as well as European Commission recommendations and communications which, as in the case of the so-called 'mobility package', could have an impact on the quality of cross-border mobility. Our main reference has been Directive 2014/54 on measures facilitating the exercise of rights conferred to workers in the context of freedom of movement for workers that had to be transposed into Member States' national legislation by May 2016.  
<https://www.etuc.org/en/document/etucs-recommendations-how-overcome-obstacles-mobility-frontier-workers-europe>
2. During this period, the ETUC secretariat coordinated a project with two main objectives. On the one hand, to define how IRTUCs can help draw up proposals to develop interregional, euro-regional and/or macro-regional economies. On the other, to define ways, bodies and tools to match job offers and demands. Four seminars have been organised, in Brussels, Vigo, Budapest and Barcelona.
3. The final conference, in Brussels, provided a successful conclusion to the project. It stressed the importance of border regions, which cover 40% of EU territory, where 30% of EU citizens live and that produce 30% of EU GDP. There are 1.3 million cross-border workers (without counting posted workers). The Commission Communication on 'Boosting growth and cohesion in EU border regions' was part of the discussions, showing interesting experiences and good practices but with no mention of the role of the IRTUCs despite 40 years working for social, economic and territorial cohesion in Europe. It highlighted the crucial but often invisible work that the IRTUCs do and the importance of activating IRTUCs in the employment market, in monitoring, assisting, and orienting (social security, employment services, taxes) and as actors for social cohesion. It showed the benefits of strengthening existing IRTUCs through training, financing and communication and creating new ones such as the IRTUC South (Gibraltar) and a possible council spanning Ukraine and Poland.
4. The new EURES Regulation has to ensure the retention and expansion of the role of social partners, IRTUCs and EURES trade union advisers within existing and future EURES Cross-Border Partnerships in close collaboration with public employment services. Consequently, actions have been taken to ensure that trade union confederations and IRTUCs are recognised as key actors. In addition to the annual seminar of trade union EURES advisers, the secretariat organised two seminars on EURES Cross-Border Partnerships and also updated the '*Guide for mobile European workers*'.  
<https://www.etuc.org/en/publication/guide-mobile-european-workers-0>
5. The very specific identity of IRTUCs, embodying cultural diversity, moving among different legal frameworks, and bringing together diverse union traditions, requires specific attention and training. This made it necessary to produce a training guide, developed in close cooperation between the ETUI, ETUC and IRTUCs Coordinating Committee. Its central aim is to enhance IRTUC work, to increase and upgrade assistance to frontier workers, to overcome unfair competition and to improve the involvement of trade unions in the framework of cross-border social dialogue. In collaboration with the ETUI, the ETUC also organised a pilot seminar focusing on the IRTUC South (Gibraltar).
6. Two working groups have been set up, to improve the IRTUCs' internal and external communication, and enhance the functioning and financing of current and future IRTUCs.

## 13. EXTERNAL RELATIONS

Since the Paris Congress, the ETUC has developed its international activities, in cooperation with the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC), to build fair globalisation and to use the EU trade and external policies for democracy and peace, solidarity and respect for human rights in the world.

The ETUC has been actively following EU external policies in recent years, advocating for labour rights to be upheld by the EU institutions when operating with third countries. The ETUC has engaged in multiple solidarity activities towards trade unions of non-EU countries to support freedom of association and collective bargaining.

The ETUC has continued to cooperate with the EU institutions, in line with provisions of the Paris Action Programme, pressing them to promote EU values and the European social model, multilateral governance, and respect for the UN Charter and Human Rights Conventions.

The ETUC has raised a wide range of human and trade union rights issues over this period with the European External Action Service (EEAS) and DG Employment in particular. Those approaches have been increasingly linked to trade relationships that the EU has been developing, notably in the EU's neighbourhood policy that covers the Eastern Partnership and the Mediterranean area, relations with countries in the African, Caribbean and Pacific areas, and Latin America.

### EU enlargement

EU enlargement policy of the EU has witnessed a decrease in activities in recent years due to "enlargement fatigue". However, the ETUC has been in close contact with the Commission (DG NEAR) to advance labour rights and social dialogue both in the Balkan region and the Euro-Med. In line with the position agreed at the Paris Congress, the ETUC has assisted the EU enlargement process with a view to ensuring that candidate countries fully meet the EU *acquis* and implement International Labour Organisation standards. Work has been developed to promote regional trade union integration in the Western Balkans and continued with our affiliates in Turkey.

#### Western Balkans

At institutional level, there has been slow progress in the enlargement process. On the one hand, in February 2018, the European Commission reaffirmed the prospect of EU membership for the Western Balkans in its communication 'A credible enlargement perspective for and enhanced EU engagement with the Western Balkans', presented as a sign of the EU's commitment to their European future. But on the other, it also stated that the EU must be stronger and more solid before it can grow bigger, reflecting evident enlargement fatigue perceived in many EU Member States.

The ETUC has focused activities on the European integration process, based on the conviction that regional cooperation and good neighbourly relations are essential for progress on the European path. It supported affiliates in the candidate countries (Serbia, Montenegro and North Macedonia (previously FYROM), with the objective of strengthening regional cooperation among trade unions in the Balkans. A regional project 'On the way to the EU', supported by the European Union, was carried out until December 2018, in cooperation with a regional cooperation network Solidarnost comprising affiliates from Croatia, Slovenia, Serbia, Montenegro, North Macedonia, and Bosnia-Herzegovina. The project was coordinated by a project office in Belgrade and supervised by a steering committee including the ETUC and coordinated with the ITUC Pan-European Regional Council (PERC).

The project dealt with institutional capacity building, expertise and knowledge building within trade union organisations in the region. It aimed at promoting experience exchange in the main areas through working groups on trade union activities, policies and internal reform processes, in order to empower unions as strong actors in society and as recognised partners in the social dialogue. Its programme focused on trade union reform, social dialogue and industrial relations, health and safety, the economy and labour market, migration, media communication, youth and women. The issue of women's rights was further developed, and a Women's Committee was established. The participation in the Western Balkans Civil Forum (European Economic and Social Committee/EESC) in Sarajevo facilitated the development of until now relatively weak relations between NGOs and trade unions.

The regional network made some progress in getting better visibility among national governments and in the framework of the process of the Western Balkan Summit cooperation started in Berlin in 2014 (so-called Berlin Process). The Youth Committee of Solidarnost has established cooperation through the Regional Youth Cooperation Office (RYCO). The organisations from the region have used the priorities of the Bulgarian presidency such as the 'European perspective of the Western Balkans' to draw up, in cooperation with Bulgarian trade unions, a document on the social dimension and social dialogue and to deliver it to the governments participating of the EU-Western Balkans Summit in Sofia in May 2018.

A follow-up project aimed at stabilising regional cooperation is under discussion with the members of the regional network and the Commission. Its objective would be to start a joint project in 2020 with the regional employers, to improve and extend social dialogue competences. Contacts were made with the Montenegrin employers (recently coordinating a specific project with the employers' associations in the respective countries).

## Turkey

During the period 2015-2019, the ETUC continued to denounce – to the Turkish government, the European authorities and the International Labour Organization (ILO) – the massive violations of the trade union and democratic rights of men and women in Turkey. Confronted with a rapid deterioration in the situation after the failed coup of 15 July 2016 and the imposition of the state of emergency, with more than 150,000 public servants and workers suspended or dismissed, and several arrested and imprisoned without any prior investigation or evidence – the ETUC and International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) sent three joint missions to Ankara (2016-2017-2018). In the statement adopted by the ETUC-ITUC as well as the four affiliated organisations (Turk-is, Hak-is, Disk and Kesk) after the second visit (3-5 May 2017), all the confederations urged the Turkish authorities immediately to put in place the necessary conditions to lift the state of emergency and ensure a return to the rule of law, as well as calling on the EU to send a clear, powerful but constructive message to Turkey to that effect.

Meanwhile, an important joint two-year project on youth was implemented with Turkish members, in order to foster bilateral and multilateral cooperation between unions from the EU and Turkey. The ETUC also supported the ITUC in its request to the ILO to postpone the European Regional Meeting (October 2017, Istanbul) until democracy and justice were reinstated in the country. A joint ETUC-ITUC solidarity fund was created to support members most in need.

Although, following these events, negotiations on Turkish accession to the EU have been *de facto* blocked, discussions on the modernisation/extension of the customs union (1996) could be launched in the coming year and could constitute a form of leverage.

## Euro-Med area

The Arab revolutions, which began in December 2010 in Tunisia and rapidly spread, sparked hopes that these popular movements would bring democracy, respect for human rights and greater economic equity in the region. The EU recognised the central role played by the unions in some countries, as did the award of the Nobel Peace Prize to the Tunisian National Dialogue Quartet and the Tunisian General Labour Union (UGTT) in 2015. Sadly, wars, humanitarian crises, the difficult economic environment, autocratic regimes and disillusionment have destroyed progress in some of those countries.

In light of this situation, the ETUC set up an informal Euro-Med working party, which has strengthened cooperation with the Arabic Trade Union Confederation. It meets every three months in order to monitor, *inter alia*, the situation of the trade unions on the southern shore of the Mediterranean.

In parallel, the ETUC continued the work already carried out in the framework of the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM), created in Paris in 2008, even if this has lost some political clout. For the first time, a joint ETUC/ATUC/BusinessEurope/BusinessMed Declaration was adopted, on the initiative of the ETUC, on the eve of the UfM ministerial meeting which took place in Jordan (September 2016). Another joint text was adopted in Portugal (April 2019) in the framework of the last UfM ministerial, where – a new development – the social partners were invited to participate fully and address the conference.

Finally, anticipating the next 'Summit of the two shores' announced by the French Presidency for next June, a joint trade union/NGO vision setting out the necessary reforms in European neighbourhood policy for the Med region was drawn up in Marseilles in April.

## Egypt

The ETUC supported from the very beginning the foundation of new and independent trade unions in Egypt, and closely followed the constitutional, political and social developments there. But, although the 2015 report of the ILO Committee on Freedom of Association requested that "the draft labour law be adopted as a matter of priority, giving clear legislative protection to the numerous newly formed independent trade unions and ensuring full respect for freedom of association rights", the attacks against them increased. Today, the situation is probably worse than before 2011.

It is in this context that, in December 2018, the ETUC, together with the ATUC, regional and international NGOs, presented an assessment of developments in the country, showing a serious deterioration in the human rights situation (freedom of the press and of expression are restricted; dissidents and human rights organisations are repressed; torture, forced disappearances and summary executions carried out with complete impunity are increasing, as are death sentences and mass trials). In addition, state repression against independent trade unions intensified in 2018, as witnessed by arbitrary attacks and arrests, as well as by the implementation of Trade Union Law no. 2013/2017, which violates the ILO Conventions on the rights of trade unions and freedom of association. The ETUC specifically intervened via the EU High Representative and Commissioners, seeking their support in advance of the eighth meeting of the EU-Egypt Association Council.

## Tunisia

The ETUC has continued its close cooperation with the UGTT in Tunisia, recognising its central importance for democratic development and the preservation of basic human rights. The General Secretary welcomed a specific mission from the UGTT in July 2017, leading to the first bilateral activities on migration and negotiations on the 'modernisation' of the free trade agreement. An ETUC delegation should in return visit the UGTT after this Congress. The ETUC was represented at the 23rd UGTT Congress in Tunis, in January 2017.

The ETUC also participated in several meetings of the RSMMS – the Mediterranean Sub-Saharan Migration Trade Union Network – created in 2014 with the support of the FES and the UGTT. It currently has 24 trade union members, covering 14 countries in three regions, which unite with the aim of developing joint and coordinated approaches between trade unions in the sending and receiving countries to implement trade union solidarity and to harmonise the actions of the member unions in the field.

## The Eastern Partnership

The ETUC has followed developments in the region closely, and in particular the implementation of Association Agreements (AAs) between the EU and Ukraine, Georgia and Moldova, together with the ITUC PERC, of which Luca Visentini is also General Secretary. The scope of this collaboration is large, covering – in addition to human and workers' rights, democracy and social dialogue - multinational companies, wages, migration, health and safety, economic policies (including taxation and social protection) and building trade union capacities for reaching out and mobilising workers (education, organising, communication, campaigning), also with ETUI support and the involvement of Youth and Women's Committees.

Jointly with the PERC, the ETUC made an assessment of the EU Eastern Partnership and EU neighbourhood policies, criticising the absence of social dialogue and general workers' rights in these political processes. Furthermore, the ETUC is taking part in the Steering Committee of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum. However, interest in this body among social partners has been declining due to its domination by NGOs.

The EU association processes and their evolution in Georgia, Ukraine and Moldova, while recognising the role of civil society and social partners, are still failing to deliver. Urgent measures should be taken, with the support of the European Commission, to improve the social and economic situation in the countries, and to increase the effectiveness of social dialogue and adherence to the fundamental ILO Conventions. The ETUC takes part in the respective bilateral civil society platforms under the Association Agreements and Domestic Advisory Groups under Deep Comprehensive Free Trade Area (DCFTA) agreements. In Georgia, the work on EU association led to the re-establishment of autonomous labour inspections.

The ETUC-PERC mission to Ukraine took place in February 2019, to show solidarity with Ukrainian unions which face human and trade union rights violations, growing poverty, the lowest wages in Europe and wage arrears. Ukraine announced its EU aspirations and the majority of the population supports this European choice. Yet while the country achieved some progress in bringing its regulatory framework into line with the EU *acquis* as required by the EU-Ukraine Association Agreement and DCFTA, it fails to ensure respect for the rights of its citizens.

Together with the PERC and IndustriAll, the ETUC acted in support of democratic unions in Belarus, expressing serious concern to the EEAS, which negotiates the EU-Belarus cooperation agreement, about the country's failure to implement ILO Commission of Inquiry recommendations, and in particular to ensure registration and access to collective bargaining for independent unions, to stop trade union discrimination and to respect fundamental freedoms in the country.

## Central Asia

The ETUC, through PERC, acted in support of freedom of association in Kazakhstan, by contacting the Commission, EEAS and European Parliament and expressing serious concerns about the destruction of the Confederation of Free Trade Unions of Kazakhstan by the authorities, and the harassment and imprisonment of its leaders. These concerns were duly registered and raised by EU officials in bilateral dialogues and the European Parliament resolution on the EU-Kazakhstan agreement included specific reference to freedom of association and trade union rights in the country.

More generally, representations on workers' rights in Central Asia were included in the EESC contribution to the development of the EU Central Asia strategy.

## ASEM

The ETUC, together with the ITUC and the ITUC-Asia Pacific, participated in the Asia - Europe Labour Forum (AELF) in preparation for the 5th ASEM Labour and Employment Ministers' Conference 'Towards Sustainable Social Development in Asia and Europe: A joint vision for Decent Work and Social Protection' in Bulgaria (Sofia, December 2015). For the first time, the social partners presented a coordinated message to the ministers. Since then, the ETUC contributed to the 10<sup>th</sup> AELF (Mongolia, July 2016) and the 11th AELF (Brussels, October 2018) and the messages which were presented to ministers. At the last summit, the ASEM leaders finally granted some form of institutional recognition to the Labour Forum (next to the Business and Civil Society Fora), acknowledging the long-standing commitment of trade unions to ASEM and their contribution to the ASEM Labour and Employment Ministers' Conference and ASEM labour projects.

## ILO International Labour Conference

Since 2016, the ETUC has participated in the annual ILO International Labour Conference, and each year organised one coordination meeting with the affiliates present in Geneva. The European Commission coordinates the work of EU Member States at the conference but does not have a tripartite delegation. Therefore, the ETUC considers it essential to be present at the conference, to interact with the Commission and the affiliates, specifically in the Committee on Application of Standards when EU cases are on the list. The ETUC General Secretary spoke each year during the plenary session.

## Council of Europe

During 2015-2019, the ETUC, as a leading Human Rights Defender organisation, has continued and enhanced its activities and cooperation with the Council of Europe by actively participating in several bodies, structures and (quasi-)judicial monitoring/enforcement systems.

### European Court of Human Rights

As the case law of this court has become more and more important for defending fundamental social rights, the ETUC submitted, in cooperation with relevant affiliates, third party observations in several important 'social' cases. The court admitted ETUC observations concerning several countries (for example, Hungary, Latvia and Romania) mainly dealing with trade union rights but also other issues like private life (privacy at work) and property (social benefits/remuneration). Furthermore, the ETUC has also been cooperating with ITUC and Turkish affiliates in exploring the filing of cases before the court following the massive wave of dismissals and imprisonment of, in particular, public service workers and their representatives under so-called emergency laws enacted following the coup of July 2016 in Turkey.

### Steering Committee on Human Rights (CDDH)

The CDDH's principal role, under the auspices of the Committee of Ministers, is to set up standards commonly accepted by the 47 Member States with the aim of developing and promoting human rights in Europe and improving the effectiveness of the control mechanism established by the European Convention on Human Rights.

Since the unanimous decision of the CDDH in June 2014 to grant the ETUC official and permanent observer status, the ETUC has provided a considerable and increasing expert input into the activities and reports of the CDDH and its respective subgroups on issues like the reform of the Court and Convention system, the place of the Convention in the international/European legal order, and the Council of Europe legal framework for the protection of social rights. Furthermore, via the CDDH (subgroups), it has actively contributed to the elaboration, implementation and review of important Committee of Ministers Recommendations

in the area of business and human rights, human rights of older persons (in areas like care, social protection and employment) and combatting discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation or gender identity.

### The (Revised) European Social Charter

The ETUC also continued its active role in the monitoring bodies to this main fundamental social rights Charter. Within the Governmental Committee, the ETUC consistently urged the rigorous implementation of the commitments entered into by the increasing number of Member States to have signed and/or ratified the Social Charter.

In addition, the ETUC continued to play its role in the so-called collective complaints procedure. In 2015-2019, the ETUC submitted observations in relation to no less than 22 collective complaints brought against all 15 states that have ratified the Collective Complaints Procedure Protocol on issues related to trade union rights, fair remuneration, the gender pay gap, dismissal protection and (female) board-level participation. In October 2016, the ETUC also intervened alongside and in support of our Greek affiliate GSEE at a hearing organised in response to its collective complaint, where it successfully alleged that several pieces of new legislation enacted under the austerity measures adopted in Greece during the economic and financial crisis violated workers' rights in a manner that is contrary to the Charter.

### European Code of Social Security

Following the Committee of Ministers decision in 2012 to entrust the monitoring of implementation and application of the European Code of Social Security to the Governmental Committee (see above), the ETUC, based on its privileged observer status within that Committee, continued to ensure and call for effective implementation by the states that ratified this important social rights instrument.

### European Platform for Social Cohesion

Created as an intergovernmental ad-hoc committee in 2016, the European Social Cohesion Platform's objective is to reinforce the intergovernmental component of the Council of Europe Secretary General's strategy to enhance the Council's work in the area of social cohesion, in particular through the promotion of the European Social Charter and its collective complaints procedure, in order to ensure equal and effective access to social rights (see above). The ETUC has participated in and contributed actively to several of the Platform's annual meetings and activities.

### Other activities

In relation to Turkey (see above), the ETUC has continuously and successfully pressed high-level Council of Europe offices, like the Secretary General, the Commissioner for Human Rights and the Parliamentary Assembly, to condemn and closely monitor the impact on workers' rights of the manifold emergency laws enacted following the July 2016 coup. The ETUC has also worked closely with the Secretary General, the Charter department and the assigned Council of Europe focal points in the framework of the discussions on the European Pillar of Social Rights, to ensure that the Charter would be recognised by the EU institutions as a main source and reference instrument for the 20 principles enshrined in the Pillar.

In conclusion, and despite the ongoing budgetary cutbacks within the Council of Europe, which have consequences for the functioning and effectiveness of all its monitoring bodies, the ETUC will – also taking into account its own human and financial resources – continue, and where possible and relevant enhance, its efforts to strengthen the impact of fundamental social rights in the framework of Council of Europe's general human rights policy. The protection of fundamental rights and the use of available litigation/monitoring mechanisms will thus remain high on the ETUC's agenda, and in particular that of the ETUC Fundamental Rights and Litigation Advisory Group, set up in 2015 specifically for this important purpose. It will also continue to cooperate with and rely on the valuable expertise offered by the ETUI, and in particular the ETUI Transnational Trade Union Rights (TTUR) Network.





# 14. TRADE AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

## TRADE

One of the main pillars of action has been EU trade policy. The ETUC has been following EU trade policy closely and has interacted with affiliates through the ETUC International Matters, Trade and International Development Committee. We have closely coordinated with ETUC federations, ITUC and ITUC affiliates that are affected by these negotiations. The ETUC has been calling for EU trade agreements to include binding and enforceable labour clauses. Our priority in this area has been to advocate for truly enforceable and binding provisions on labour rights in 'Trade and Sustainable Development' chapters of EU trade agreements. The Commission has acknowledged that its current approach presents serious shortcomings and has put forward a 15-point plan to improve the implementation of labour and environmental provisions. This is a small step forward but falls short of our request to introduce an effective dispute settlement mechanism able to resolve labour violations.

The ETUC has followed all the EU trade negotiations with third countries. Among others, it has focused extensively on the TTIP negotiations and has contributed forcefully to the heated debate around those negotiations. The ETUC has also monitored the negotiations between the EU and Canada on CETA. It has been actively involved in the civil society monitoring mechanism governing the trade agreement between the EU and South Korea, demanding better labour rights in the country. The negotiations with Mercosur have also been important due to the size and influence of the region. Intense cooperation has taken place between the ETUC and the Southern Cone trade union coordinating body, composed of the trade unions of the Mercosur, to monitor the trade negotiations between the two blocks.

## INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION AND TRADE UNION DEVELOPMENT AND COOPERATION NETWORK (TUDCN)

Cooperation and coordination between the ETUC and ITUC has increased in order to foster links between the two organisations. Numerous joint approaches have been made to the European institutions. The ETUC, together with the ITUC, has denounced the gaps in labour standards in global supply chains in various fora like the G7, G20 and the OECD. We have urged the integration of binding labour provisions, including core labour standards, in EU trade agreements and EU trading schemes, like the EU Generalised System of Preferences (GSP). We have also supported the inclusion of legislation on responsibility throughout the chain and the adoption of an international binding treaty on business and human rights.

The ETUC has been actively involved in the Trade Union Development and Cooperation Network of the ITUC and has chaired its European working group. Through this working group we have stressed the importance of linking EU development and trade policies in a coherent way. TUDCN closely follows the implementation of the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development at global, regional and national level.

During the discussion of the EU's Multiannual Financial Framework the ETUC has advocated for a strong and coherent Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI) that contributes to the eradication of poverty and the creation of decent jobs, promotes the implementation of the UN Sustainable Development Goals, and respects and strengthens social dialogue. The ETUC participated in the Regional Forums to put forward trade union views on development and to emphasise that trade unions are development actors and need to be consulted on EU policy for development cooperation.

## UNITED NATIONS AGENDA 2030 AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS IN EUROPE

In the aftermath of the adoption of the UN Agenda 2030, the ETUC started designing a strategy to implement the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Europe.

The ETUC reinforced its cooperation with the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) and the Trade Union Development Cooperation Network, which were at the forefront of trade union action for the SDGs worldwide.

An Ad Hoc Group on the implementation of SDGs and the UN2030 Agenda in Europe was set up as well. It met twice in April 2018 and January 2019. An ETUC Resolution for a Sustainable Europe by 2030 was adopted in June 2018.

In the meantime, the ETUC was admitted to the Multi-stakeholder Platform on SDGs set up by the European Commission with the main objective of gathering inputs for a Reflection Paper on the implementation of the UN2030 Agenda in Europe. The ETUC contributed to the definition of thematic papers on the impact of SDGs in different policy areas (MFF, reporting and monitoring, corporate social responsibility, decent work, external dimension, etc.). The ETUC actively contributed to the main output of the Multi-stakeholder Platform which is a comprehensive document on the implementation of SDGs in Europe, signed and transmitted to the Commission in September 2018.

The ETUC also took the first steps to setting up a wider strategy to increase the impact of SDGs in all relevant policy areas. It included a debate on financing SDGs and the role of public and private actors that started during the second meeting of the Ad Hoc Group in January 2019.

The ETUC, especially through its Ad Hoc Group, contributed to the monitoring of implementation of the SDGs at national level, with special focus on the role of social dialogue. At the time of writing, seven European countries had submitted their reports. The monitoring integrates the Semester Toolkit of the ETUC.

Altogether, these activities fed into the ETUC response to the Reflection Paper 'Toward a Sustainable Europe by 2030' that was submitted to and adopted by the ETUC Executive Committee in March 2019.

## CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

The European Commission's last Communication on Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) dates back to 2011, while the most recent Council Conclusions on Responsible Value Chains were agreed in May 2016. They recommended a number of key measures to step up joint efforts to support sustainability in global value chains and promote CSR principles.

Since 2016, following the Commission Communication on the 'Next Steps for a Sustainable European Future', the UN Sustainable Development Goals 2030 Agenda and the SDGs Multi-Stakeholder Platform, the Commission has switched its focus relating to CSR initiatives in this direction.

The ETUC proposed to the Commission a project on 'Securing Workers Rights in subcontracting chains' (due diligence) which is due to start in 2019. We have also participated in different European Corporate Social Responsibility projects with affiliates and external organisations including trade union institutes. They include:

**Project SCORE:** Proposals and best practices for dialogue and trade union participation in Corporate Social Responsibility launched by Pro, CFDT, CCOO and ISTAS.

**Project DimasoLab** on the Directive 2014/95EU - Impact Assessment on Labour Relations. Under the Directive on non-financial reporting, for the first time large entities are obliged to disclose more than just financial data on their performance. With DGB, Arbeit und Leben CFDT, CGIL, CISL, ISTAS, ACV, CSC, LPSK.

The ETUC is an active member of the OECD/TUAC Working Group on Corporate Disclosure, Due Diligence and Responsible Business Conduct. We participated in the launch of the OECD Guidelines for multinational enterprises and the Due Diligence Guidance for Responsible Business Conduct. The ETUC took part in the OECD Global Forum on Responsible Business Conduct, the European Coalition for Corporate Justice General Assembly as a Friend of ECCJ, and Coordination Meeting with CSR Europe.

# 15. COMMUNICATIONS, CAMPAIGNS AND ORGANISING

## Communications

Communications plays a central role in achieving ETUC objectives. The ETUC must communicate with EU institutions directly and via media and social media, and enable affiliates to communicate ETUC demands to national policy-makers and show members how unions are working at EU as well as national level for a better deal for working people.

Since the Paris Congress the ETUC has

- More than doubled the number of followers on twitter (from 8K to 20k).
- Almost tripled the number of likes on Facebook (from 1.6k to 5.4k).
- Substantially increased media coverage (from average 43 to 202 clippings per month during pay rise campaign).
- At least maintained (and possibly increased) the number of website visitors (google changed the way it calculates visits: ETUC site has gone from around 9k unique visitors per month to over 15K users per month), made the site more attractive, updated more often and taken many steps to ease finding documents.
- Written or edited some 70 original articles in the name of ETUC leaders, published in trade union and external publications, including at least 24 on the influential Social Europe website – many translated into different languages and republished.

In line with the resolution on Communications and Campaigns adopted in October 2015, the ETUC Communications Department has

- Firmly established common dates on which affiliates communicate a common message, with many affiliates using the slogans and visuals provided in advance by the ETUC;
- Improved photo actions at the Executive Committee with more compelling images and the use of slogans in more languages, whenever possible;
- Held twice-yearly meetings with national affiliates' communicators and three to four times a year with European Trade Union Federation (ETUF) communicators;
- Created a quarterly 'National Updates' newsletter to share information about national and European sectoral trade union successes and innovative actions;
- Sought to create harder-hitting messages: using better visuals as well as more direct language.

In addition, the ETUC Communications Department played a major role in planning and running the Pay Rise campaign.

## Pay Rise campaign

The Pay Rise campaign, approved by the ETUC Executive in December 2016, ran from February 2017 to June 2018 and was successful in its principle objective to "Push wages up the agenda: change EU political discourse and economic policy in favour of pay increases for workers". This is evident from the Annual Growth Survey and Country Specific Recommendations 2018, and from the European Pillar of Social Rights.

The campaign showed that the ETUC was able to organise a European campaign and to support national affiliates in their demands for pay rises.

EU leaders and national prime ministers and ministers were directly exposed to the campaign in numerous meetings, and indirectly via extensive media coverage and social media. Ministers took part in the launch in February 2017, a conference in

Bratislava in September 2017 and a Wage Alliance Conference in Sofia in June 2018, as well as various bilateral meetings and summits in which the campaign was addressed.

The campaign was followed by moves to set up a European Partnership for Collective Bargaining.

## Organising

The ETUC established an Ad Hoc Organising Committee following the Paris Congress to bring together officers responsible within affiliates for organising and trade union development. The Committee met in May 2016 and April 2017.

The Executive Committee adopted a resolution on organising in October 2016.

The results included:

- Sharing of good practices between national affiliates;
- An annual debate in the ETUC Executive Committee on organising;
- At least one exchange of organising activities between the ETUC, ITUC and ETUFs, and closer cooperation on organising between ETUC and ETUI;
- Increased engagement by ETUI on training in organising.

The ETUC Executive Committee, in its discussion on 'Organising and trade union recruitment' in December 2017, agreed a new ETUI training strategy for 60 people to initiate analysis and strategic decision-making by trade union leaderships on recruitment/retention of members.

Organising is also a priority for the ETUC Youth Committee. In 2015, a report produced jointly with the Pan-European Regional Council compiled best practices for organising young workers from all over Europe. In the framework of the collaboration strategy on youth with our Turkish affiliates, a toolbox to get young people closer to unions and vice versa was published and widely distributed in early 2017. The Youth Committee adopted guidelines to strengthen efforts to integrate young migrants in the trade union movement in December 2017.

Mapping of practices for organising atypical workers (with a special focus on the self-employed) and workers in the platform economy has also been conducted during this mandate.

## TRADE UNION RIGHTS

Starting in spring 2016, the ETUC ran a trade union rights campaign in the European Parliament. Two events with Parliamentarians took place: one in Brussels and one in Strasbourg. The aim of the campaign was to get MEPs to sign a pledge for the defence of trade union rights. This pledge declared that trade union rights are human rights and committed the MEPs to respect and promote trade union rights in all future work on EU legislation and policy initiatives. The campaign collected 160 signatures, which were handed to the then EP President Martin Schulz. A dedicated website was created for this campaign: <https://www.etuc.org/en/campaign/trade-union-rights-are-human-rights-turights>

The ETUC led the trade union movement in the fight-back against the violation of trade union rights at national level, for example in Spain, Greece and Croatia. At European level, the ETUC supported the European Transport Federation (ETF) in its battle with the Commission against restrictions on air traffic controllers' right to strike.

# 16. AFFILIATES AND ORGANISATIONS

## AFFILIATES AND MEMBERSHIP

In 2019 the ETUC comprised 90 national trade union confederations in 38 countries – plus 10 European trade union federations.

### New affiliations and disaffiliations

- **KSS, North Macedonia** - obtained observer status in March 2012, became a full member in December 2016
- **FH, Denmark** - merger between the two LO and FTF trade union confederations in 2018
- **BHM, Iceland** – accepted as an ETUC member in June 2018
- **USM, San Marino** - accepted as an ETUC member in March 2019
- **USM, Monaco** - disaffiliated in June 2018

## EUROPEAN FEDERATION OF RETIRED AND ELDERLY PEOPLE (FERPA)

FERPA is the voice of the 10 million pensioners and older people within its 42 member organisations from 25 countries of the European Union. It works in cooperation with the ETUC, with a specific focus on the concerns of the elderly and pensioners, which it raises during the ETUC statutory meetings (Executive Committees and Steering Committees) in which it participates.

During the period since the Paris Congress, FERPA has had two different General Secretaries (Carla Cantone, from CGIL, and Agostino Siciliano, from UIL, since October 2018).

In its special area of activity and trade union involvement, FERPA champions an approach that it considers to be fundamental: all European citizens, whether young or old, must understand that defending the rights of the elderly is an investment in their own future. After all, the rights of today's pensioners and older people will also be theirs one day.

If the rights we have today are destroyed, there will be no guaranteed rights tomorrow. For this reason, FERPA is calling, with and within the ETUC, for a social Europe based on social justice and democratic values that are essential to creating the unity and solidarity required between Member States. These values that are also key to combatting social divisions and the resurgence of dangerous nationalism.

FERPA has therefore conducted an awareness raising campaign to increase the social and political attention paid to the 100 million individuals over the age of 65 living today in all European countries, and whose numbers are set to rise as a result of increasing life expectancy. To this end, it has distributed a Charter of the Rights of Elderly and Retired Persons in Europe, built around three fundamental rights:

- the right to dignity
- the right to well-being
- the right to security

At the same time, within the context of intergenerational solidarity, the ETUC Youth Committee and FERPA are investing in building a better Europe based on the principles of solidarity, equality, justice and social cohesion, peace and solidarity, and are also playing a role in an intergenerational approach at all levels. These two organisations have, to this end, signed a Protocol in which they undertake to work jointly to create a real bridge between the generations in the different countries and throughout Europe. It aims at:

- ensuring that the interests of young workers, elderly people and pensioners are properly represented within the ETUC;
- enhancing collaboration with the European sectoral federations;
- representing to the greatest extent possible, within the context of an intergenerational approach, the interests of young people, pensioners and elderly people with regard to institutions at all levels;
- representing the interests of young people and pensioners at all levels within the framework of social dialogue and, in particular, negotiations on a framework agreement between the European social partners on active ageing and intergenerational solidarity.

With its Women's Committee, FERPA has been involved in ETUC campaigns, in particular concerning violence against women. Abuse of elderly people, whether in institutions or in their own homes, is a painful reality. FERPA continues to mobilise its organisations to denounce this phenomenon and to provide solutions to resolve the problem.

Finally, under the aegis and impetus of its General Secretary, Agostino Siciliano, in keeping with the ETUC approach and in preparation for elections to the European Parliament, FERPA has launched a campaign to send 'postcards' to all candidates calling on them to support three fundamental demands:

- the right to a decent guaranteed public pension for women and men;
- the right to quality public healthcare, which guarantees independence;
- the right to active ageing for elderly people and pensioners, guaranteeing their role as citizens in society, without discrimination.

For FERPA, advancing age is the beginning of a new stage in life. An ageing democratic society will not flourish in decline but in a climate of serenity, dignity and well-being based on social justice and solidarity.

This is why all European citizens, young or old, must understand that respect for the rights of elderly people means an investment in their own future.

With the ETUC, FERPA aims to be an actor and a spokesperson recognised by trade unions and in society and in social life by promoting access to leisure, culture, etc. Elderly people want to be seen not as a burden or an expense, but as a resource, now and for the future.

## EUROCADRES

Eurocadres, the Council of European Professional and Managerial Staff, is the structure representing professionals and managers associated to the ETUC. Eurocadres participates with all except voting rights in ETUC committees and other bodies. It is one of the six recognised autonomous social partners at European cross-sectoral level and participates in the ETUC delegation through the liaison committee of Eurocadres and CEC European managers. A formal agreement between Eurocadres, CEC and ETUC lays the ground for the ETUC coordination of the cross-sectoral social dialogue on the employee side.

The share of professionals and managers among European workers continues to grow. For European trade unions, organising these groups is both an opportunity and challenge. ETUC member organisations that organise professional and managerial staff are part of the Eurocadres membership and Eurocadres represents these groups in the social dialogue, as well as in advocacy and lobbying towards the European institutions.

## Policy developments

The flagship demand of Eurocadres over the past few years has been the call for EU-wide whistleblower protection. Professionals and managers, being in positions of power and responsibility, are often those who come across wrongdoing which must be disclosed in the public interest.

The call for legal EU-wide whistleblower protection has been part of Eurocadres' policy since 2013, but it started actively pushing for it following developments in the trade secrets directive adoption process in 2015. In early 2016, Eurocadres initiated the platform WhistleblowerProtection.EU which consists of 87 organisations.

Around half of the platform members are trade union organisations. Working together with groups in the European Parliament, it put pressure on the European Commission to propose a Directive in 2018, which was adopted by the Parliament in April 2019. Following successful advocacy work, important improvements were achieved in the text and the Directive will strengthen protection in a large majority of Member States.

A stronger emphasis on policy and advocacy has improved visibility, and focusing on priority issues for advocacy work has made a difference. Trade secrets and whistleblower protection have been the two topics that have done most to raise Eurocadres' profile in recent years.

Eurocadres has been advocating for clearer legislation on psychosocial risks. Following the review of the Directives on Occupational Health and Safety, when the framework Directive was left untouched, Eurocadres started demanding a directive on psychosocial risks. Having engaged in discussion with the ETUC and participated in the work of the ETUC and ETUI on this issue, Eurocadres is very pleased that the European trade union movement is now united in demanding a Directive on psychosocial risks. Planning is underway for a campaign on the issue to be launched in the autumn.

The third key issue in Eurocadres' advocacy work has been up- and re-skilling in just transition: underlining the need for greater investment in higher education and training, strengthening the role of social partners in transition support and ensuring that higher education institutions are better equipped to accommodate needs of working people taking up studies, e.g. offering part-time studies and shorter courses.

In 2017, the Eurocadres Congress gathered under the slogan 'European Union Unity'. A new policy programme was adopted with three thematic priorities: A stronger knowledge-based Europe, Real freedom of mobility and Quality in working life. An action plan focused on developing policy, advocacy and communication as well as a stronger engagement of member organisations in Eurocadres activities. Resolutions were adopted with the titles 'European Union Unity', 'EU-wide whistleblower protection urgently needed' and 'Work-life balance for gender-equal career development of professionals and managers'.

## Organisation and projects

Measures to strengthen Eurocadres' financial situation have included a reform of the membership fee system, identifying additional sources of funding outside the Commission and establishing clearer links between project applications and core policy and advocacy work to improve the chance of receiving Commission funding.

Action to reach out to ETUC affiliates who organise professionals and managers but are not actively engaging in Eurocadres has been initiated. With Eurocadres' improved visibility, interest has increased and several new Eurocadres affiliates have become active.

In 2015-2019, Eurocadres has run its own projects on psychosocial health risks and whistleblower protection, financed by the Commission. Additionally, one project on whistleblower protection was financed by Open Society Initiative for Europe. Eurocadres has been involved in several other projects as a partner. Among these were Atypical work (ETUC), Work-life-balance / work-life management & CSR (FIRST-CISL, Italy), Professional associations in social dialogue and collective bargaining and Skills (ETUI).

## Social dialogue and networks

As a recognised European cross-sectoral partner, participating in the social dialogue through the ETUC delegation, Eurocadres continues to focus on the groups it represents. It placed the issue of psychosocial risks as a priority for the social partners' work programme and is pleased that it is included in the text.

Coordination with CEC European managers through the joint liaison committee of Eurocadres and CEC and the Protocol of Eurocadres-CEC and ETUC requires continuous dialogue. Several meetings have taken place during recent years, including meetings with the ETUC.

Earlier Eurocadres networks were closed down during the last Congress term. The campaign platform, WhistleblowerProtection.EU, set up by Eurocadres in April 2016 and launched in October the same year, now involves 87 organisations and has the potential to become an important resource when the transposition process for the new Directive starts.



**WHISTLEBLOWER  
PROTECTION.EU**

## EUROPEAN TRADE UNION INSTITUTE (ETUI)

As an independent research and training centre serving the ETUC and its national and European affiliated organisations, the central mission of the European Trade Union Institute (ETUI) is to contribute to the strengthening of the social dimension of European integration by means of research, training, information, events and technical assistance.

During this period of economic, social, political and environmental turmoil, this role has been, more than ever, to place the ETUI's expertise and experience at the service of the ETUC and its affiliates.

To this end, the ETUI structures its activities around five main priorities: 1) Policies and tools for the future of Europe; 2) Worker participation and industrial relations; 3) Sustainable development and industrial policies; 4) Working conditions and job quality; 5) Trade union renewal. The issue of social dialogue, the *raison d'être* of the ETUI, is mainstreamed into all five priorities.

### Policies and tools for the future of Europe

During the four-year period of this report, economic growth has returned to the European economy and unemployment has begun to fall. Nevertheless, the unprecedented economic, social and budgetary crisis unleashed by the financial sector in 2008 had a deep and inevitably long-term impact on national industrial relations systems, leading, in some countries, to regression in terms of wage levels, working conditions and job security. The economic crisis also raised serious questions about the sustainability of the policy and institutional mix.

The EU's new economic governance system (European Semester) and its impact on social policy has become one of the main topics of research and training for the institute. In 2017, the European Commission published a new White Paper on the future of Europe which presented five possible scenarios for a future EU, accompanied by five 'reflection' papers. Later that year the European Pillar of Social Rights was launched. These actions, and the policy initiatives that have followed, have transformed the debate over European governance and the policy mix and are thus a major preoccupation of the ETUI. The institute is monitoring these developments in real time so as to make available tools that will offer a better grasp of their consequences.

Training sessions and public debates, bringing together trade unionists, academics, policy-makers and non-governmental organisations, have enabled the dysfunctional aspects of our present growth model and the reforms needed for a genuinely fair and equitable alternative version to be identified. With this in mind, each year, on the eve of the spring European Council in March, the ETUI presents its Benchmarking Working Europe report to the EU heads of state and government. In addition, in order to examine the changing fortunes of the European social model, the institute publishes, in partnership with the European Social Observatory (OSE), an annual report entitled Social Developments in the European Union.

A range of events and publications dealt with subjects such as the evolution of collective bargaining after the crisis, labour market developments and the role of institutions, wage divergence, the future of supplementary pension systems and cuts in public services and the need for reform of the EU's macroeconomic policy tools.

### Workers' participation

The European integration process includes a commitment to provide employees in Europe with the right to be involved in company decision-making. Workers' participation serves two purposes: implementing social rights so as to strengthen workplace democracy; and supporting companies, Member States and the EU in their efforts to combine economic competitiveness with social progress.

With a view to promoting activities linked to workers' participation, the Institute runs a European Worker Participation Competence Centre (EWPPC) and a European Worker Participation Fund (EWPF), as well as specific tools to provide information in these areas. Another active network of trade union and academic experts on corporate governance (GoodCorp) looks at alternatives to the shareholder value model of corporate governance.

The ETUI is currently running several comparative research projects in the field of labour market, employment and social policy. The projects look at quantitative and qualitative labour market developments taking account of the institutional configurations specific to the different welfare regimes. To assess not only quantitative but also qualitative labour market issues, the ETUI has developed a multi-faceted job quality index to compare developments in terms of job quality within Europe and over time. Another project on labour mobility focuses on skills mismatches and the impact of the economic crisis. The ETUI also closely follows employment law, including progress on the Framework Directive on Information and Consultation.

The ETUI maintains several topical websites and databases complementing its research activities. These include a database of EWC and SE works council agreements and a web portal containing comprehensive information on various themes linked to workers' representation, including information on national industrial relations. Our 'Reformswatch' news services offers up-to-



date reporting and background analysis on reforms to industrial relations, labour markets and social security systems in Member States. A host of publications and events deals with the role of workers' representatives, their current and future prospects.

Moreover, the ETUI offers training to members of European and SE works councils. Tailor-made training courses and expertise are offered to European Works Councils, Special Negotiation Bodies (SNB), and SE Representative Bodies (SE RB), in close cooperation with the relevant trade union organisations at national and European level.

## Sustainable development and industrial policies

The four 'megatrends' of climate and demographic change, globalisation and digitalisation form a set of long-term trends, with potentially enormous impact, which frame debate over Europe's future economic development and workers' rights.

A major focus of the ETUI's work in this area is the role of the social partners in the transition towards a low-carbon society, with the emphasis on the social aspects of climate change, energy and resource policies. The ETUI places emphasis on the social aspects of climate change and the necessary energy transformation. In this context, it has carried out a series of research and training activities with a multidisciplinary focus. Research covers green jobs, the implications of climate change on employment and the green energy transition.

Two major conferences, organised jointly in Brussels with the ETUC, examined (in 2016) the impact of digitalisation on the labour market and (in 2018) the joint and mutually-reinforcing impact of the four megatrends on the economy and society.

## Trade union renewal

ETUI activities have focused on trade union membership as one of the many dimensions of trade union revitalisation. Research studies cover the organisation of specific workforce groups such as young workers, 'gig workers' and other precarious or non-standard workers. The ETUI also examines strategies for membership recruitment and retention and the transferability of the 'organising model' across Europe, and trends in industrial disputes in Europe since the 1990s, particularly the impact of the recent recession on strike activity.

The ETUI offers several training courses to trade union organisers across Europe, covering recruitment methods and trade union revitalisation in general through the exchange of experiences or best practices. In this way, the ETUI seeks to raise awareness of different aspects of union revitalisation, which in turn can counter the downturn in trade union membership rates evident in many sectors and countries.

Educational seminars for young trade union leaders are also held to develop participants' capacity to work in a multicultural environment and to integrate both European and national perspectives into day-to-day trade union work. The ETUI engages in strategic corporate research, investigating the possibility of developing coordinated organising initiatives within specific companies, across several countries. It also supervises publications on the historical development of trade union organisations at the European level.

## Publications, web and social media

The ETUI has developed a publication strategy designed to serve a range of purposes and reach different target audiences. Its publications fall into the following main categories or series:

1. Thematic newsletters designed for a specialised and clearly identified audience covering collective bargaining; health and safety at work; workers' participation. A general newsletter provides regular alerts on activities and publications to over 10,000 contacts.
2. Policy Briefs introduce a key issue in a policy-oriented manner but always on the basis of in-depth analysis. Policy Briefs are read by a large non-specialised audience as well as by decision-makers and members of European think tanks.
3. Working papers presenting research that is either still ongoing or recently concluded. These papers are aimed above all at academics, think tanks, European institutions, trade union organisations and non-governmental organisations.
4. Books, depending on the topic and goal, are aimed at a specialised audience or a larger reading public. They provide an opportunity to focus on work conducted by our research networks. They demonstrate academic quality and its dependability in relation to issues of priority importance for the labour movement. The content of books may be the findings of internal ETUI research projects, the results of external research network projects, or regular annual publications on specific issues, e.g. Social Developments in Europe and Benchmarking Working Europe.

5. Guides covering documents designed for trainers to support their work, or that aim to explain an issue in a clear and simple manner.
6. Reports covering more technical documents aimed at an audience already in possession of specialised knowledge of the area in question. In some cases, they report the results of conferences.
7. Journals: HesaMag, a twice-yearly journal on occupational health and safety matters; Transfer, a quarterly publication with a focus on industrial relations, employment, and economic and social policies; and SEER devoted to regional developments in eastern and south-east Europe.
8. Background analysis supplying background to recent EU policies (e.g. the Country Specific Recommendations in the context of the new European governance). They are online products that can be downloaded from the ETUI website.
9. Foresight Briefs (since 2016) feature articles intended for a wide audience within the European trade union movement, including social actors and NGOs, as well as think tanks and European decision-makers. The themes of this publication are linked to the Foresight Unit's priority areas of work: climate change and new technologies.

In addition, the ETUI website is a rich source of information for those wishing to keep track of current trade union developments. On it can be found, alongside our publications, programmes and reports of conferences and seminars, the documentation centre's online catalogue, as well as the databases on European Works Councils, European Companies, etc. The ETUI continued to improve its thematic websites on workers' participation.

The ETUI has been an intensive user of social media (Twitter, LinkedIn, Facebook, YouTube) to alert different audiences to our publications, events, trainings and other activities. Some of our researchers also regularly contributed to external blogs such as Social Europe or the various LSE blogs.

## Training courses

The ETUI's Education Department carried out annual work programmes. Our courses are based on the main objectives of the ETUC Action Plan and are developed in conjunction with the ETUC as well as the European Trade Union Federations (ETUFs) and national trade unions.

Over the four years we have delivered about 100 courses per year for more than 2,000 participants. Our training courses are delivered by the ETUI's education officers who, as a rule, work in tutor teams with national trainers. In addition, ETUI Education relies on seven thematic networks of trainers with around 100 members from affiliated organisations.

Our courses are aimed at trade union officers, as well as members of EWCs, SE works councils and Special Negotiation Bodies (SNBs), or company-level employee representatives. ETUI Education offered courses on 'young trade union leaders', 'project management', 'training of Eurotrainers', 'languages training for trade unionists', and 'seminars for individual EWC and SE-WC members'. Our activities allowed European trade union officers to compare situations in different countries, to better understand the latest developments in European trade unionism and industrial relations, and to plan future union activities at national and European level.

The training of Eurotrainers (ETT training) is designed to develop the individual teaching skills of trainers from member organisations who fit the defined profile and who have already acquired experience at national or sector level, as an investment in the future of the teaching strategies of their organisations.

The main objective of this training has been to extend the scope of the learning programmes beyond national level and to give them a European dimension, putting the priority on a European trade union identity and promoting greater visibility for the ETUC and the ETUI. The training of Eurotrainers stands out as an important training programme, unique in its essence at the European level and now accredited and transferable within the European Qualifications Framework (EQF).

## TURI network

The Trade Union related Research Institutes (TURI) network is a structural, non-thematic and long-term platform for formal contacts between the institutes supporting the trade union movement across Europe. It aims at establishing more and better collaboration and knowledge-sharing between them, integrating the European dimension in their research work. TURI facilitates the emergence of common projects; it is a tool for mapping expertise and aims at helping trade union related institutes to engage in comparative research.

The TURI network currently has 32 full members and 11 associated members. The TURI institutes are heterogeneous in terms of size, financing and areas of expertise, but they all have a well-established link to trade unions. The network members meet at least once a year at an annual conference hosted by one of the members. Recent annual conferences took place in London, Sesimbra and Amsterdam, with the most recent – TURI's 10th – on 16-18 May 2018 in Berlin.

## OTHER ORGANISATIONS

### European Trade Union Federations (ETUFs)

Cooperation between the ETUC secretariat and the ETUFs has intensified since the Paris Congress. An ETUC representative has participated regularly in the coordination meetings of the ETUFs. In December 2017, the ETUC organised a joint conference in Bratislava on the European cross-border and sectoral social dialogue. In-depth cooperation took place when the European Public Services Union (EPSU) and UNI-Europa were calling for the transposition of the agreements on hairdressers.

### European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (Eurofound)

As in previous years, the ETUC/Workers' Delegation acted to keep a clear and visible trade union footprint in the research work undertaken by Eurofound. The introduction of new founding regulations was a major challenge. The reform of the regulations initially proposed a considerable reduction in the influence of the social partners. This did not happen, but still the growing influence of the Commission is reflected in the new regulations. In future, it is clear that the ETUC has to remain vigilant in this respect.

### European Economic and Social Committee

The ETUC continues to enjoy a fruitful collaboration with the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC). For the ETUC, it is important that the positions taken by the EESC, in its capacity as consultative institution to the European Union, are close to trade union positions or, at least, that they ensure a balance with the other groups that make up the Committee (employers and various interest groups).

The ETUC welcomes the good working relationship between the ETUC secretariat and the EESC Workers' Group (Group II), in particular with the Group Presidency. On many occasions, members of the ETUC secretariat have participated as experts in formulating important EESC socioeconomic-related opinions. Moreover, the Workers' Group has, through several resolutions, supported ETUC trade union activities.

# FINANCIAL REPORT

## 2015 - 2018

This financial report covers the 2015-2018 financial trends of the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC).

The auditors appointed by the XIII<sup>th</sup> Statutory Congress of the ETUC performed their annual audits. The ETUC also called upon the services of registered auditors.

As set out in article 31 of the ETUC Constitution, the annual accounts for 2015, 2016 and 2017, together with the auditors' reports were adopted each year by the Executive Committee, which granted discharge to the General Secretary. The annual accounts for year 2018 will be presented to the Executive Committee during the October 2019 meeting.

The basis of calculation of the affiliation fees changed from year 2016. For the years 2017 and 2018, the affiliates have paid a supplementary affiliation fee for the campaign fund. The affiliation fees fixed for the period 2015-2018 were as follows (per 1,000 members):

### For group I:

Number of members	2015	2016	2017		2018	
	Fees	Fees	Fees	Campaign fund	Fees	Campaign fund
up to 1,000,000	€ 178.00	€ 178.25	€ 179.75	€ 3.60	€ 186.50	as 2017
from 1,000,001 to 3,000,000	€ 170.50	€ 170.75	€ 172.25	€ 3.45	€ 178.75	as 2017
from 3,000,001 to 5,000,000	€ 166.50	€ 166.75	€ 168.25	€ 3.37	€ 174.50	as 2017
from 5,000,001 to 7,000,000	€ 159.00	€ 159.25	€ 160.75	€ 3.22	€ 166.75	as 2017
above 7,000,000	€ 153.25	€ 153.50	€ 154.75	€ 3.10	€ 160.50	as 2017

### For group II:

Number of members	2015	2016	2017		2018	
	Fees	Fees	Fees	Campaign fund	Fees	Campaign fund
up to 1,000,000	€ 71.25	€ 71.25	€ 72.00	€ 1.44	€ 74.50	as 2017
from 1,000,001 to 3,000,000	€ 68.25	€ 68.25	€ 69.00	€ 1.38	€ 71.50	as 2017
from 3,000,001 to 5,000,000	€ 66.50	€ 66.75	€ 67.25	€ 1.35	€ 69.75	as 2017
from 5,000,001 to 7,000,000	€ 63.50	€ 63.75	€ 64.25	€ 1.29	€ 66.75	as 2017
above 7,000,000	€ 61.25	€ 61.50	€ 62.00	€ 1.24	€ 64.25	as 2017

## For group III:

Number of members	2015	2016	2017		2018	
	Fees	Fees	Fees	Campaign fund	Fees	Campaign fund
up to 1,000,000	€ 44.50	€ 44.50	€ 45.00	€ 0.90	€ 46.75	as 2017
from 1,000,001 to 3,000,000	€ 42.75	€ 42.75	€ 43.00	€ 0.86	€ 44.75	as 2017
from 3,000,001 to 5,000,000	€ 41.75	€ 41.75	€ 42.00	€ 0.84	€ 43.75	as 2017
from 5,000,001 to 7,000,000	€ 39.75	€ 39.75	€ 40.25	€ 0.81	€ 41.75	as 2017

## Extract annual accounts:

Year	Balance total	Expenses	Receipts	Result	Investment fund	Final result
2015	9,308,954.97	7,904,426.23	7,753,344.08	-151,082.15	96,261.90	-54,820.25
2016	9,409,389.80	7,928,730.49	7,972,202.12	43,471.63	97,411.43	140,883.06
2017	9,694,015.87	8,157,120.65	8,111,413.24	-45,707.41	92,254.02	46,546.61

During this period, the funds of the ETUC raised, thanks to the yield of investments made by the Foundation ETUC Fund, from 7,579,929 EUR (01/01/2015) to 7,712,539 EUR (01/01/2018).

A part of ETUC activities is also financed using extrabudgetary resources in the form of grant agreements concluded with the European Commission. The accounting relating to these activities is separate from the normal management of ETUC finances. These accounts are submitted for verification to the statutory auditors and the registered auditors.

During the period 2015-2018, most affiliated organisations have strictly met the obligations set out in the constitution regarding the payment of affiliation fees. We would like to congratulate them for this effort.

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General Secretary



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