



TOGETHER FOR A FAIR DEAL FOR WORKERS

Address to the Dialogue with Social Partners

16th of October 2024, Brussels

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Brussels, 16 October 2024

[Check against delivery]

Dear President von der Leyen,
Dear Vice-President Dombrovskis,
Dear Commissioner Schmit,
Distinguished colleagues, and friends,

The ETUC, representing 45 million workers and their trade unions, is pleased to contribute to today discussion on “how to enhance the conditions for a productive investment and for quality jobs in Europe.”

There must be meaningful change in Europe for working people that responds to the challenges of our moment. Franklin Roosevelt, when he was elected president of the United States in 1933, gave himself 100 days to take strong action. Since then the first 100 days have become closely associated with the headline priorities for a new political term.

What is needed is for the European Commission and the European Union to **act with decisiveness in the first 100 days to improve lives for working people**. The headline priority that needs to be responded to is the quality jobs and social justice emergency

There were some important elements included in the political guidelines from the President of the European Commission, for example the call for:



- A Quality Jobs Roadmap, developed with the social partners, to support fair wages, good working conditions, training and fair job transitions for workers and self-employed people, notably by increasing collective bargaining coverage
- A new Clean Industrial Deal for competitive industries and quality jobs

And

- A new Pact for European Social Dialogue in early 2025

These are all steps in the right direction but these words must become a reality.

The European Union must now demonstrate that it genuinely intends to deliver a fair deal for working people, their families and communities.

For this reason, it is important to modify the title of the Executive Vice-President for People, Skills and Preparedness to refer explicitly to “Quality Jobs and Social Rights”, and to give a mission to the whole Commission to bring forward concrete actions to deliver a fair deal for working people and their communities.

Because we cannot wait, 1 year, 2 years, 10 years. We need concrete action in these first 100 days. **We need concrete legislative proposals and additional investments and resources to be put forward to deliver quality jobs in all sectors and in all regions in Europe.**

Let’s talk about a word we are hearing a lot lately: “Competitiveness”.



Delivering competitiveness, means being serious about delivering quality jobs in every sector and in every region.

And, colleagues, the discussion on competitiveness all too often ignores people.

It's the homes that workers need to live in, the transport that will bring them to work, the childcare and schools for their children... It's the health care, it's the public services and social protection they can rely on, it's the facilities and services in the communities they live in. It's promoting upward social convergence and territorial cohesion. These are all essential components of European competitiveness and the way to improve living standards.

Being serious about competitiveness means being serious about a strong commitment to infrastructure, to strong public services and public administrations, to social protection, to housing, to transport, to childcare which are all crucial elements for a competitive economy.

We need an **ambitious European industrial policy for quality jobs** with significant investment to support common goods, innovation, and just transitions.

And there can be no blank cheques when supporting companies. Public money and support should come with **social conditionalities** to ensure the creation of quality jobs. These conditionalities should also be included in the revision of the different EU funds and in the state aid framework, including in the next Multiannual Financial Framework.

To underpin this industrial policy, there must be a strong and well-funded public sector, delivering high-quality **public services**. A strong role of the



state and public authorities is needed to proactively drive the shaping of the transformation, intervene in economic affairs, and ensure social progress, high-quality jobs and sustainable economic activities.

It is key to prevent the loss of jobs, and in the absence of a credible industrial plan agreed by the trade unions their call for a moratorium on closures and forced redundancies is more than justified.

We call on the Commission to ensure that the new Clean Industrial Deal will be designed, developed, implemented and monitored through social dialogue and collective bargaining.

We call on the Commission to **convene a dedicated consultation with social partners as a matter of urgency to discuss the upcoming Clean Deal Industrial Deal.**

And, colleagues, we need to look forward, not backward. We can never accept going back to failed austerity policies.

Austerity does not represent savings, it costs more in the long run not to make investments. Austerity damages competitiveness. Austerity hurts workers and must be rejected.

We need progress, the EU must develop ambitious common investment tools, develop progressive taxation policies, and provide member states with the necessary room for manoeuvre to finance the investments needed for quality jobs, an industrial policy, public services, and just transitions.

And to ensure social and territorial cohesion, **investment should be available to support quality jobs in all sectors and all regions.**



And in the first **100 days it is essential also to start putting in place legislative proposals** that will improve worker's lives and contribute to deliver quality jobs in all sectors and in all regions in Europe.

We call on the Commissioners to **commit to deliver the legislative proposals needed to ensure quality jobs**, building upon the **La Hulpe Declaration** on the Future of the European Pillar of Social Rights.

A revision of the EU Public Procurement Directives to ensure that public money goes to organisations that respect workers' and trade union rights, that negotiate with trade unions and whose workers are covered by collective agreements.

A Directive on Just transition in the world of work, through anticipation and management of change, based on the principles of trade union involvement and collective bargaining, and to ensure the right for all to training without cost to the worker and during working time;

A Directive on Telework and the Right to Disconnect, for which the second stage consultation must be sent to the social partners as a matter of urgency;

A Directive to prevent psychosocial risks and online harassment and shaming at work through;

Regulating the role of labour intermediaries and introducing an EU general legal framework limiting subcontracting and ensuring joint and several liability through the subcontracting chain;

A Directive on AI at the workplace to ensure effective regulation of AI with the 'human in control' principle incorporated into EU law;



Reinforcing democracy at work in the first place by strengthening collective bargaining, introducing a comprehensive **EU framework on information, consultation and participation**, and fully safeguarding well-functioning collective bargaining systems.

These are just some of the things we need to ensure that quality jobs are at the heart of the European project and that we improve the lives of workers in the President's first 100 days.

Europeans living through a social justice crisis are asking for one thing: **help to make life better.**

We need the **political will to take strong decisions** right now.

Workers are demanding **meaningful change** that meets the moment.

We need quality jobs, an industrial policy that includes large investments based on social conditionalities right away.

We can do this all -- together.

There are only 100 days to get moving on all these files and time is ticking.

Trade Unions are ready to do our part.

Ends