

# [ ETUC newsletter ]



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## Figure of the month

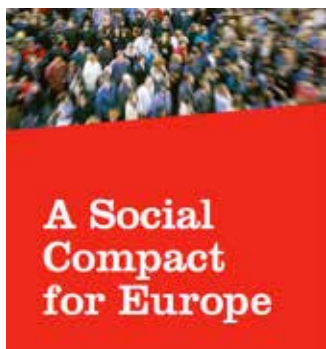
# 119.6 million

## Europeans at risk of poverty

In 2011, 119.6 million people, representing 24.2% of the population, in the European Union were at risk of poverty or social exclusion, compared with 23.4% in 2010.

(Source : Eurofound).

## Note



Dear readers,

The economic picture at the end of 2012 is very gloomy. The latest Eurostat figures show 26 million Europeans unemployed and 24% of the population threatened by poverty. This is the irrefutable proof that Europe's citizens are continuing to pay a heavy price for the economic crisis. This situation is intolerable in both social and human terms. The change of course that we are calling for, namely an end to austerity measures and the creation of a plan for sustainable growth, cannot wait any longer. Despite this socio-economic context, the European Council on 13-14 December has retained some economic approaches which have proved so far to have failed. On top of this, the 27 Member States decided at that Council to put back the important decisions which would have defined the roadmap for a political union until next year. Only the banking union has moved forwards. Overall, there is a lack of political ambition, which we very much regret.

Europe's leaders have confirmed their desire to maintain the European social model, and have decided to present a roadmap on the social dimension of the Economic and Monetary Union (EMU) at the European Council in June 2013. We welcome this. However, we insist that this social dimension should apply to the European Union as a whole, and not just to the EMU. We also insist that the European trade union is involved in the discussions already under way.

2013 will be a year of mobilisation for Europe's trade unions. The European Day of Action and Solidarity on 14 November was the first step in a campaign which will drive our activities until the next European elections. The message from 14 November was strong and clear: we have to put an end to austerity and change course. We shall do our utmost to ensure that this message is translated into concrete measures and thanks to the commitment and support of our members, and Europe's workers, we will succeed.

A Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to you all.

**Bernadette Ségol,**  
ETUC General Secretary





# [ ETUC in action ]

## MAJOR MEETINGS

### ETUC Executive Committee

05-06/12/12 - The Executive Committee of the ETUC met in Brussels. The crisis was the main topic of the discussions. The Committee gave a positive evaluation of the **European Day of Action and Solidarity which took place on 14 November** and discussed the forthcoming steps in the mobilization campaign promoted by the European trade union movement. Indeed, the Committee discussed extensively an interim report on the **progress of negotiations to revise the European**

**directive on working time**. The members of the Committee regretted that the proposals from the employers were not sufficiently balanced, and consequently made it impossible to continue the negotiations as such (See following news). **A declaration on [trade union freedom under threat in Egypt](#), as well as a declaration [on the democratic transition in danger in Tunisia](#)** were also adopted.

## SOCIAL DIALOGUE

### Working Time negotiations: the ETUC regrets that the employers' proposals are very unbalanced

06/12/12 - The Executive Committee of the ETUC discussed extensively an interim report on the progress of negotiations to revise the European directive on working time. **The Committee regretted that the "final offer" from the employers was not sufficiently balanced, and consequently made it impossible to continue the negotiations as such.** For the European trade union, there is an obvious link between long and irregular working hours and health problems related to work. **The protection of the health and safety of workers must therefore remain the prime objective of any revision of the directive.**

ETUC press release: <http://www.etuc.org/a/10658>

## CAMPAIGN

### Seven countries grant rights to domestic workers



12/12/12 - The **'12 by 12' Campaign**, which saw trade unions and activists mobilising thousands of workers in 50 countries to **raise awareness and encourage governments to enact legislation to protect domestic workers, delivers results**. On 12 December, Italy ratified the ILO Convention on Domestic Work. It is the first European country to do so. Thanks to this decision, seven countries have ratified ILO Convention No 189 on Domestic Workers: Uruguay, Philippines, Mauritius, Bolivia, Nicaragua, Paraguay and Italy. The ETUC urges [all EU Member States to not waste time in following the Italian example](#).

ETUC press release: <http://www.etuc.org/a/10641>



# [Trade Union Agenda]

December 2012– January 2013

01–04/12/2012	4th Trade Union Summit EU–Latin America (Santiago)	
05/12/2012	ETUC Steering Committee (Brussels)	
05–06/12/2012	ETUC Executive Committee (Brussels)	
12/12/2012	Meeting of the Group II 'Workers' of the European Economic and Social Committee (Brussels)	
16/01/2012	Meeting of the Group II 'Workers' of the European Economic and Social Committee (Brussels)	
28/01/2012	ETUC high–level conference “Celebrating the past, looking to the future” (Madrid)	

# [EU Agenda]

December 2012– January 2013

03/12/2012	Eurogroup Meeting (Brussels)	<a href="#">More information</a>
03/12/2012	Energy Council (Brussels)	<a href="#">More information</a>
04/12/2012	ECOFIN Council (Brussels)	<a href="#">More information</a>
06–07/12/2012	Justice and Home Affairs Council (Brussels)	<a href="#">More information</a>
06–07/12/2012	Employment and Social Affairs Council (Brussels)	<a href="#">More information</a>
10/12/2012	Foreign Affairs Council (Brussels)	<a href="#">More information</a>
10–13/12/2012	Plenary Session of the European Parliament (Strasbourg)	
10–11/12/2012	Competitiveness Council (Brussels)	<a href="#">More information</a>
11/12/2012	General Affairs Council (Brussels)	<a href="#">More information</a>
12–13/12/2012	Plenary Session of the European Economic and Social Committee (Brussels)	
13–14/12/2012	European Council (Brussels)	<a href="#">More information</a>
17/12/2012	Environment Council (Brussels)	<a href="#">More information</a>
14–17/01/2013	Plenary Session of the European Parliament (Strasbourg)	
16–17/01/2013	Plenary Session of the European Economic and Social Committee (Brussels)	
17–18/01/2013	Informal Meeting of Ministers for Justice and Home Affairs (Dublin)	<a href="#">More information</a>
20–21/01/2013	Informal Meeting of Minister for European Affairs (Dublin)	<a href="#">More information</a>
21/01/2013	Eurogroup Meeting (Brussels)	<a href="#">More information</a>
22/01/2013	ECOFIN Council (Brussels)	<a href="#">More information</a>
23–24/01/2013	Informal Meeting of Ministers for Development Cooperation (Dublin)	<a href="#">More information</a>
31/01/2013	Meeting of Foreign Affairs Council (Brussels)	<a href="#">More information</a>



# [Focus on the EU and trade union positions]

## A European Council with no political ambition

17/12/12 - The ETUC regrets that the European Council of 13 and 14 December showed **no political ambition when it came to defining the future of the European Union**. The 27 States have postponed until 2013 important decisions which should have defined the roadmap for political union. Only on banking union has it moved forwards. On the other hand, **the ETUC welcomes the Council's confirmation of its desire to maintain the European social model**. *"The 27 Member States have decided to present a roadmap on the social dimension of Economic and Monetary Union (EMU), including social dialogue, at the European Council in June 2013. The ETUC believes that this decision is a step in the right direction, but the unions insist that this social dimension should apply to the European Union and not just to the EMU"* said Bernadette Ségol.

ETUC press release: <http://www.etuc.org/a/10670>

## Youth employment package: a positive commitment that requires further action

05/12/12 - The ETUC welcomed the new youth employment package recently unveiled by the European Commission. **In particular, the ETUC has welcomed proposals such as the Youth Guarantee, a measure that should be continued and should be considered as an investment**. This measure is even more important due to the fact that 5.5 million young Europeans are unemployed. **In view of the urgency of the situation, this commitment should be backed by appropriate resources, in particular from the European Social Fund and other structural funds**.

ETUC press release: <http://www.etuc.org/a/10620>

## The ETUC attended the Ceremony to award the Nobel Peace Prize to the European Union

10/12/12 - Bernadette Ségol attended the official ceremony in Oslo of the presentation of the Nobel Peace Prize to the European Union. **The awarding of this prize last October was hailed by the ETUC**. On that occasion, the ETUC [reiterated](#) the need to guarantee social stability in the Union. **Social concerns must be an integral part of EU policies and the first clear signal to that end must be the abandoning of austerity policies**. The European trade union proposes a [social compact](#) based on social justice.

ETUC press release: <http://www.etuc.org/a/10629>

## Climate change negotiations in Doha: a mediocre agreement

10/12/12 - At the 18th UN [Conference on climate change](#) (COP 18) in Doha, in spite of an accumulation of alarming messages, **the governments managed to come up with a mediocre agreement**. In light of this development, **the ETUC denounced the inertia of the international negotiations on climate change and the conservative stance of many governments**. For the European trade union, although a global effort is needed to cut emissions by 50% by 2050 in order to keep global warming below two degrees centigrade, **the current promises will inexorably lead to a global warming level of four degrees**. Facing this situation, the ETUC is calling on governments to adopt more ambitious domestic policies and **put the common good and the Just Transition at the centre of their work**.

ETUC press release: <http://www.etuc.org/a/10636>



# [Focus on the EU and trade union positions]

## Efficient use of natural resources: a priority for the ETUC

14/12/12 – The rise in the price of raw materials as well as their increasing scarcity illustrates the need to direct the European economy towards modes of production and consumption that are based more on sustainability. **European trade unions are keen to play a driving role in pushing resource efficiency at all levels**, including in the new European Platform for Resource Efficiency. *“If we want to talk about jobs and sustainable growth in Europe, we need to make serious commitments on resource efficiency today, reducing our dependence on imported energy and raw materials, and promoting effective sustainable consumption and production policies in companies and in society at large”* said Bernadette Ségol at the meeting launching the European Platform for Resource Efficiency.

ETUC press release: <http://www.etuc.org/a/10657>

## Put an end to the violence against the UGTT

14/12/12 – After initially attempting to play down the incident, **the Tunisian authorities have agreed to officially recognize the acts of violence staged at the headquarters of the UGTT trade union centre on 4 December, to condemn them, and to identify those responsible**. These violent acts were perpetrated by militias acting under the protection of the ruling Ennahdha party. Until the latest attack on the UGTT headquarters, these militias have committed their crimes with total impunity. For the ETUC and the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC), **it is vital that the Tunisian government respect the pledge it has made to put an end to the violent acts of these militias**. The ITUC and the ETUC undertake, along with all their affiliates, to alert their respective governments as well as the European and international institutions about the situation in Tunisia and the threat these armed militias represent, not only to trade unions but to the future of democracy in the country.

Joint ETUC–ITUC press release:  
<http://www.etuc.org/a/10655>

## Migrants: the EU must ensure equal rights and equal treatment

18/12/12 – On the occasion of **International Migrants Day**, the ETUC reiterated the commitment of all the European trade unions to respect for the human dignity and rights of all migrants. **The ETUC also called for a speedy ratification of the International Labour Organisation’s Convention 189 on Domestic Work** which would contribute concretely to improving the working and living conditions of thousands of migrants in Europe.

ETUC press release: <http://www.etuc.org/a/10650>

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