

ETUC and the European Convention

Adopted by the 10th ETUC Statutory Congress, Prague 26-29 May 2003

As the European Convention enters its final stage, the 10th ETUC Congress considers it indispensable to stress once again the expectations and demands of working women and men for the new Constitution of the European Union.

Making Europe work for the people remains our basic aim.

The 10th ETUC Congress acknowledges that the final draft submitted by the Presidium in the last few days takes into account to some extent the ETUC proposals, for social values and objectives as well as the social partners role and social dialogue to be taken on board.

The draft however is still falling short of convincingly addressing all our demands, and does not exclude the risk that there could be further set-backs particularly in the social field which would be totally unacceptable.

The 10th ETUC Congress is particularly concerned by the lack of:

- A clear and committed decision to integrate the Charter of Fundamental Rights with full legal effects into the Constitution;
- A proper consideration for the place and mission of Services of General Interest with a legal basis to act on them at EU level;
- A full integration of the gender dimension;
- A positive response to the need to establish the tools for economic governance at European level to effectively pursue sustainable development, full employment and social cohesion;
- A recognition of trade union rights at European level.

For the ETUC, these are non-negotiable demands.

Concerning the Institutional architecture and decision-making mechanism, which are also relevant to achieve a Social and Citizens Europe, the Congress confirms ETUC's long standing demands for:

- The community method and the present institutional set-up to be preserved with a strong Commission, representing the European common interest and extended powers to the European Parliament;
- The extension of qualified majority voting generally and especially in the area of social, employment, environmental and taxation policies which have cross-border effects;
- The transparent definition of the open method of coordination including the involvement of the social partners and other relevant actors.

The 10th Congress further stresses the need for the European Union to be able to speak with a single voice at international level to rein in and democratize globalisation as well as contribute to a new world order based on peace, development for all and social justice.

The 10th Congress is fully aware that the coming few weeks will be crucial to ensure a positive outcome of the European Convention and calls upon all affiliates to intensify their campaign and mobilization to bring about a European Constitution which, indeed, lives up to the legitimate aspirations of the working people which the ETUC so largely represents in Europe.
