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**RE: Message from the European Trade Union Confederation ahead of the European Council meeting of 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2020**

Dear Presidents,

The ETUC, representing 45 million workers from across Europe, wants to draw your attention to the unprecedented social emergency following the COVID-19 outbreak.

Over 40 million workers in Europe have either lost their jobs or are in temporary unemployment. This number is forecast to increase up to 60 million before the emergency ends, and in many countries it does not include worst affected categories like non-standard, precarious and undocumented workers, not to mention migrants, mobile and frontier workers.

**This is why we urge you as EU leaders at the Council meeting on 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2020 to adopt the emergency measures proposed by the European Commission and the Eurogroup with no delay and without conditions: workers, companies and public services cannot wait longer.**

While we welcome the EU measures adopted so far, we have to emphasise that they are not sufficient and in some cases are poorly implemented.

Additionally, such EU measures have been adopted without any involvement of Social Partners. This emergency affects first and foremost workers and companies: it is therefore unacceptable that the EU institutions have delivered all their actions without even consulting Social Partners.

**Social Dialogue, collective bargaining, workers' participation and occupational safety and health standards play an essential role in the response to the crisis.**

**We therefore urge you to:**

1. Fully involve Social Partners at all levels in the implementation of the emergency measures, with particular reference to 'SURE'.
2. Fully involve Social Partners at all levels in the implementation of the 'Communication on a European Roadmap towards lifting COVID-19 containment measures. The Roadmap furthermore needs to be complemented with a hazard-based approach, with proper prevention measures regarding health and safety at work.

3. Fully involve Social Partners at all levels in the design and implementation of the Recovery Strategy and related funds and measures.
4. Guarantee full respect of workers' and trade union rights, including of the Charter of fundamental rights of the European Union, the European Pillar of Social Rights, the Sustainable Development Goals of the UN 2030 Agenda, the ILO conventions, the European Convention of Human Rights and the European Social Charter of the Council of Europe.
5. Intervene in the cases of those Member States that are undermining such rights and principles by taking advantage of emergency measures.

**In particular regarding the adoption of the Regulation establishing 'SURE', we ask you to ensure:**

1. That the duration of SURE goes beyond the emergency period, in order to protect employment also during the recovery phase.
2. That the scope of the measure remains focused on employment, and is not broadened to health-related measures.
3. That all Member States provide the necessary guarantees to make 'SURE' operational with no delay.
4. That all Member States urgently put in place short-time work, income compensation or similar measures, based on universal coverage, adequacy and full involvement of Social Partners.

**Finally, we urge you to start immediately to define a clear, ambitious, and coordinated EU recovery plan, building a sustainable, fair and inclusive economic model.**

We need a massive fiscal stimulus underpinned by a European Union able to mobilize resources and investment, in order to address the serious risk of a huge recession and unemployment following the emergency phase.

This means looking at how to further expand and prolong the emergency measures and continue ensuring full flexibility and the suspension of the Stability and Growth Pact for all the time needed.

***For a recovery strategy to be effective, it needs to be accompanied by a rapid agreement on a new and ambitious multi-annual financial framework (MFF), including the possibility of a specific European Recovery Fund.***

***The MFF should be increased to 2% of European GDP, in line with the ambition required. For this to be achieved, the only way is to significantly increase the EU's own resources through a common debt instrument guaranteed by the EU.***

**We urge you to leave all divisions aside and agree as soon as possible on such measures and instruments.**

Europe's democracy, economy and social cohesion are at stake. We need to defend and strengthen the European project by building people's trust and showing that the EU is capable of protecting them in these very difficult times.

I thank you for your attention.

Kind regards



Luca Visentini  
ETUC General Secretary