

## ETUC Statement on EU-Swiss partnership agreement

### **"Swiss flanking measures for equal treatment of workers should not be sacrificed on the altar of market dogma!"**

The European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) is pleased to report that the Swiss trade unions (ETUC affiliates Swiss Trade Union Confederation and Travail.Suisse) have so far been successful in their struggle to protect workers' wages, regardless of their origins or whether they have been posted to work in Switzerland. The Swiss government has not yielded to pressure from the EU Commission and has refused to sign the current draft institutional agreement between Switzerland and the EU.

Various representatives of the EU Commission and certain EU member states are displeased that for posting, Swiss wage protection is more socially oriented and hence better than the recently revised Posting of Workers Directive. They place the freedom to provide services on the EU internal market above all else, and regard labour as nothing more than a commodity, especially when it comes to posted workers. By means of a framework agreement, they would like to dismantle the Swiss wage protection measures, the so-called flanking measures, via the back door. The Swiss trade unions are opposed to this and can count on the full support of the ETUC.

Both the Swiss trade unions and the ETUC support the free movement of services, but all employees must be able to benefit from this. The same work performed in the same workplace must be equally remunerated, and the working conditions of the particular country must be observed. After a long battle, the European trade unions have been able to enshrine this principle in the revised Posting of Workers Directive. While the Swiss flanking measures have the same objective, they are much more effective in their practical form than what is currently permitted by the European Court of Justice, the revised Posting of Workers Directive and the Enforcement Directive. For this reason, the Swiss trade unions rightly demand that Switzerland's flanking measures be retained and not made subject to the newly created framework agreement.

These measures protect all employees, posted workers and employees within Switzerland, regardless of nationality. They provide the best protection against xenophobia and right-wing populism. They constitute a non-discriminatory basis for an inclusive and socially fair working environment.

The ETUC, together with its affiliates, the Swiss Trade Union Confederation and Travail.Suisse, is committed to ensuring that the EU Commission and the EU member states respect the flanking measures. The aim must be to adapt European law to meet Swiss levels of protection, i.e. to improve it. The Commission and the member states must accept that the flanking measures will remain outside the framework agreement.