



European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC)
Confédération européenne des syndicats (CES)

Brussels, 16 June 2009
JM/TJ/lw

To the EU Heads of State and Government
Sent by e-mail

Copy to the President of the European Council, Mr Jan Fischer, and to the President of the European Commission, José Manuel Barroso

Declaration on Workers' Rights and Social Policy

Dear Heads of State and Government,

I am writing to express our disappointment at the reported outcome of preparatory discussions on the "Solemn Declaration on Workers' Rights and Social Policy" that will be before the European Council later this week.

Our objective, which we hoped had been understood by the European Council last December, has been to ensure in a binding way that the fundamental rights of workers and their representatives are not be subordinated to market freedoms and competition law.

The draft we have seen falls far short of giving the necessary confidence that this principle is secured. That can only amplify the concerns of working people throughout Europe, already suffering from the consequences of the current economic and financial crisis that was none of their doing. The outcomes of the European elections signal an increase in Europhobic, xenophobic and racist sentiments. Such trends will amplify if the European Council does not act decisively.

Recent ECJ cases have brought into question basic premises for workers' attachment to the European Union. That must be corrected.

We call on the European Council to think again, act boldly in favour of a Social Europe, and in particular revise the Posted Workers Directive so that minimum conditions do not become maximum conditions, to guarantee that its original aims of ensuring fair competition and preventing social dumping are met.

Yours sincerely

John Monks
General Secretary