

[ETUC newsletter]



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Figure of the month

**Less than \$1.25
a day for 1.2 billion
workers**

In 2009, 20.7% of workers in the world earned less than \$1.25 a day. In total, the number of workers living under the poverty line was 1.2 billion.

(Source: International Labour Office)

Note



Dear Readers,



The European institutions are meddling in national industrial relations in a way that we believe to be unacceptable and dangerous. The new European economic governance that is being proposed is characterised by a budgetary discipline whose essential aim is to make workers pay and erode their social rights. According to a recent document by the European Commission, the only cure for better budgetary discipline and better competitiveness is to slash public spending associated with social transfers. That needs to be clearly understood. Our Greek, Irish and Romanian organisations have warned us about strong pressure from the Commission aimed at reducing minimum wages and pensions, and easing wage 'rigidity' in their countries. This type of interference is unacceptable and we have registered our strong disapproval to the Commissioner for economic and monetary affairs, Olli Rehn. The ETUC can obviously not back such proposals, and this raises question marks about what kind of Europe we want to see, and the European trade unions' support for the kind of Project Europe that is emerging through such proposals. The implementation of 'rescue plans' drawn up by the European Union and the International Monetary Fund must not be an excuse to undermine the social dialogue and social 'acquis' which have contributed towards economic and social cohesion in Europe. Europe's trade unions must take over the debate on European governance in order to table some fresh proposals, because if we allow free rein to the style of European governance that consists of financial oversight by the States, we must expect negative consequences for industrial relations, which we cannot tolerate. The banks' 'bad' debts and their transfer into the public accounts have not allowed countries to comply with the current rules, and short of an exceptional period of growth, some countries will not be able to meet stricter rules by 2013. The time has come for all those who helped to create the crisis to be made to pay for it. That is why we are pleading, among other measures, for a tax on financial transactions.

John Monks
General Secretary



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[ETUC in action]

ETUC meets its Hungarian affiliates

24/01/2011- John Monks met leaders of the six Hungarian affiliates of the ETUC – LIGA, ASZSZ, SZEZ, ESZT, MszOSz, MOSz, in Budapest – **to discuss the Hungarian Presidency of the EU and trade union responses to the economic crisis**, both in Hungary and the EU., **there was wide agreement on the need to urgently meet the Prime Minister of Hungary and current President of the EU** to discuss the crisis and Europe’s response to it. Further activities in Hungary have been planned.

[ETUC press release](#)

The ETUC denounces attacks against Tunisian Trade Union Organisation (UGTT)

26/01/2011 – **John Monks condemned recent attacks in Tunisia against certain premises of the UGTT** (General Labour Union of Tunisia), orchestrated by individuals with close ties to the former regime. These acts confirm a determination to destabilise the country. The ETUC draws attention to the fact that the Tunisian trade union federation has demonstrated a responsible attitude and that it is one of the main pillars of democratic renewal in Tunisia. **The European trade union movement will continue to stand beside the UGTT** and the Tunisian people who are fighting for a better future, democracy and social justice.

[ETUC press release](#)



[Trade Union Agenda]

January – February 2011

18/01/2011	Meeting of the Group II 'Workers' of the European Economic and Social Committee (Brussels)	
08/02/2011	ETUC Steering Committee (Brussels)	
14-18/02/2011	Force ouvrière Congress (Montpellier)	Congress Agenda
15/02/2011	Meeting of the Group II 'Workers' of the European Economic and Social Committee (Brussels)	



[EU Agenda] January – February 2011

13–14/01/2011	Informal meeting of Foreign Affairs Ministers (Budapest and Gödöllő)	Meeting Agenda
16–17/01/2011	Informal meeting of Social Affairs Ministers (Budapest and Gödöllő)	Meeting Agenda
17/01/2011	Eurogroup meeting (Brussels)	Meeting Agenda
17–20/01/2011	Plenary Session of the European Parliament (Strasbourg)	
18/01/2011	Economic and Financial Affairs Council (Brussels)	Council Agenda
19–20/01/2011	Plenary Session of the European Economic and Social Committee (Brussels)	
19–21/01/2011	Informal meeting of Justice and Internal Affairs Ministers (Budapest and Gödöllő)	Meeting Agenda
31/01/2011	Foreign Affairs and External Relations Council (Brussels)	Council Agenda
01–02/02/2011	Mini-Plenary Session of the European Parliament (Brussels)	
04/02/2011	European Council (Brussels)	Council Agenda
14–17/02/2011	Plenary Session of the European Parliament (Strasbourg)	
14/02/2011	Eurogroup meeting (Brussels)	Meeting Agenda
14/02/2011	Education, Youth and Culture Council (Brussels)	Council Agenda
15/02/2011	Economic and Financial Affairs Council (Brussels)	Council Agenda
16–17/02/2011	Plenary Session of the European Economic and Social Committee (Brussels)	
21/02/2011	Foreign Affairs and External Relations Council (Brussels)	Council Agenda
24–25/02/2011	Justice and Home Affairs Council (Brussels)	Council Agenda
28/02/2011	Energy Council (Brussels)	Council Agenda



[Focus on EU and trade union positions]

ETUC denounces EU's and IMF's diktat pressures undermining collective bargaining

11/01/2011 - In a [letter sent to Olli Rehn, European Commissioner for Economic and Monetary Affairs](#), ETUC has denounced the diktat pressures from EU Commission's officials aiming at cutting minimum wages and pensions, reducing wage "rigidities" and making labour markets more flexible in Greece and Ireland. **John Monks**

demanded an emergency meeting with Mr Rehn to clarify such matters. For the ETUC, it will be impossible to support action by the EU along these lines.

[ETUC press release.](#)

New EU Economic Governance risks collision course with democracy

12/01/2011 - By presenting the [Annual Growth Survey](#), the European Commission has officially launched the Economic Governance Process. For the European trade union movement, by following this approach, the EU risks putting itself on a "collision course" with democracy in countries which are not in line with the rules of the Stability and Growth Pact and the proposed additional provision on Economic Governance.

[ETUC press release](#)

Media control in Hungary: ETUC's concerns

06/01/2011 - The ETUC expressed grave concern about the new law passed by the Hungarian Parliament to tighten government control over the media. According to the ETUC, Hungary is in breach of the Charter of Fundamental Rights and Article 11 on media freedom and media pluralism.

[ETUC press release](#)

Situation in Tunisia: the European trade union movement is deeply concerned

13/01/2011 - The ETUC denounced the violent and totally disproportionate use of force by the Tunisian security forces against the broad social protest movement in the country. For the ETUC, this movement has been driven by the desperate social and employment situation, especially among young people. The ETUC supports the appeal of the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) for a broad and sustainable mobilisation of the European and international trade union movement to stop the bloodshed and to find a way for peaceful solutions.

[ETUC press release](#)



[Focus on EU and trade union positions]

Quality jobs, it's time for action

17-18/01/2011 - On the occasion of the [informal meeting of Employment Ministers](#) in Gödöllő (Hungary), the ETUC delegation spoke in favour of a **new employment strategy** aimed at creating more quality jobs, respecting labour standards and social rights. The ETUC supports the “**youth guarantee**” which seeks to ensure that after a maximum period of 6 months, young people are offered a decent job

or training. However, **the European trade union movement warned against repeating the political errors of the past**: these laudable initiatives risk never being put into practice unless an appropriate framework and adequate funding is put in place.

[ETUC press release](#)

Finance ministers should not meddle with wages

18/01/2011 - On the occasion of the ECOFIN Council, the ETUC reminded finance ministers that **labour market flexibility does not create more jobs**. According to the ETUC, precarious work practices got Europe into this crisis, and finance ministers are totally wrong to think that those same practices will get us out of it.

[ETUC press release](#)

Cross-border healthcare: ETUC notes adoption of the Directive

19/01/2011 - The European trade union movement noted the adoption of the directive on cross-border healthcare by European Parliament. **The ETUC welcomed the improvements made to this directive as a result of its discussions and interventions**. However, **this directive does not solve all the problems**: it does not address the requirement of Member States to improve their national systems so as to meet the constantly growing needs in this field.

[ETUC press release](#)

Migrant workers: equal treatment must apply to all

28/01/2011 - In December 2010, the European Parliament rejected, by majority vote, the report of Mrs Mathieu (EPP) on the single residence and work permit for third-country nationals. This majority recommended a new report to be submitted within two months. **The ETUC wishes to stress that the future of the labour market is at stake and it has called on its national member organisations to do their utmost to address this major issue**.

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