

The Future of the ETUC

Adopted at the ETUC Congress in Vienna 21-24 May 2019

Context and procedure

After adoption by the Executive Committee, this document will be submitted to the Congress for endorsement (no further amendments foreseen), together with all consequent decisions, including Constitutional changes if needed.

Challenges and mission

(This part – which reflects the introduction to the Action Programme submitted to the CPC – will be adapted on the basis of the congress decision on priorities – so no amendments have been taken into account)

In setting its priorities for the next term, the ETUC intends to address the major challenges which the European trade union movement is facing today:

1. Addressing the crisis of democracy, at institutional, economic and social level; shaping the Future of Europe in the interest of workers; building a path towards Treaty reforms where social rights have a prominent role, including through a Social Progress Protocol to be included in the Treaties.
2. Establishing a new economic policy for Europe for sustainable and inclusive growth, based on investment and quality job creation; reshaping EU economic governance, the European Semester, the EMU and EU resources to ensure that social justice goes hand-in-hand with economic competitiveness; combating tax dumping and tax evasion to establish fairer and better coordinated taxation systems in the EU.
3. Radically changing wealth distribution and wage share in the economy, to address inequality and strengthen social justice; reinforcing collective bargaining and industrial relations to achieve upward convergence of wages and working conditions for all; defending and enhancing workers' and trade union rights; advocating human rights and non-discrimination at all levels; achieving full gender equality in society and in the world of work.
4. Managing the transition towards a low-carbon economy, digitalisation and automation, in the context of globalisation, in a just and inclusive manner so as not to leave any worker behind; relaunching European industry policy and ensuring that competition law and company law within the single market do not take precedence over social, workers' and trade union rights; improving workers' participation at the workplace and in the changing and restructuring of the economy.
5. Rebuilding the European social model, by implementing the European Pillar of Social Rights through legislation and sound measures for upward convergence, so that all workers and citizens can benefit equally; achieving fair and inclusive labour markets, labour mobility, social protection and education and training systems; shaping the future of work in a way that reduces precariousness and uncertainty and increases and extends workers' protection; strengthening and promoting social dialogue and tripartite dialogue at all levels.
6. Addressing migration by protecting human and fundamental rights, ensuring full equal treatment at work and in society, preventing and combating exploitation, paving ways for integration and inclusion; reshaping

multilateralism at European and global level through policies that give prominence to social and workers' rights in the context of international institutions and forums where the role of social partners has to be strengthened; advocating a fairer and more inclusive international trade and globalisation agenda, also through international initiatives such as the UN Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development.

The next ETUC term will address these challenges and implement these priorities, through specific actions described in detail in the ETUC Action Programme 2019-2023. The ETUC will keep improving its working methods, by strengthening coordination with national and sectoral affiliates to better connect European and national action, notably targeting EU institutions and governments as key decision-makers in setting the European agenda. To help achieve all this, the ETUC will also launch a process for trade union renewal, to be coordinated with similar actions put in place by its affiliates in countries and sectors.

The strategy for trade union renewal will include initiatives particularly aimed: 1. Protecting workers in traditional sectors who have been/are at risk of losing their jobs, rights and protection; 2. Extending similar rights and protection to precarious and non-standard workers; 3. Better involving specific groups such as youth, women and migrants in trade union life and decision-making processes.

Organising and campaigns

Profound changes in the future of work will have a deep impact also on the future of trade unions. As current rates of membership decline, long-established unions could become history in a matter of decades. The impact even in countries with stronger trade unions would be catastrophic. The need for trade union renewal is paramount.

The ETUC Ad Hoc Organising Committee, set up after the Paris Congress, has brought together those responsible in affiliates for organising and trade union development, and resulted in some progress including closer cooperation between the ETUC and ETUI in this area.

The ETUC, working with the ETUI educational department, will provide training programmes for trade union professionals from all over Europe, to develop their expertise in facilitating analytic and strategic thinking and discussions on renewal and organising. Following this first step, a training offer will be designed to address the needs of trade union professionals, providing them with tools and methods to implement the renewal and organising strategies defined by their unions. ETUI research will also guide and support the ETUC in analysis of the scale of the trade union membership challenge.

This is not enough for the scale of the challenge ahead: the ETUC needs to go further. The next step should be to bring together efforts in training, mapping of organising/renewal strategies and research with political commitment and quality communications, into a coherent initiative for trade union renewal, strategically and carefully planned with buy-in from all affiliates for action together for the common good.

An initiative constructed in solidarity for renewal, and built to respect national and sectoral differences, to target women, young workers, migrants, non-standard workers, and other under-represented groups, informed by forces like decarbonisation, digitalisation, robotisation and globalisation that will shape the future of work and employment.

These areas will be considered, when it comes to prioritising for the ETUC Campaign Strategy, to be set for the next term, on the basis of the experience of the Pay Rise Campaign, which will also be further assessed.

The Executive Committee will decide on possible new campaign(s) for the next term, to

be then included in the Congress Action Programme and further developed in detail after the Congress. The Executive Committee is in charge of defining a clear focus, objectives, means, tools and a roadmap for possible future campaign(s).

The ETUC Secretariat will propose the following topics for possible new campaigns, for consideration by the Executive Committee:

- strengthening and promoting collective bargaining, in the framework of the demand for a pay rise for European workers and upward wage convergence;
- strengthening and promoting rights and social protection for non-standard and precarious workers, as part of a strategy for trade union renewal and organising.

Transnational trade union cooperation and assistance to members

Increasing labour mobility and migration require strengthening trade union strategies for integration, equal treatment, and for providing assistance to mobile workers, so preventing and fighting against dumping and exploitation phenomena.

For this to happen, transnational trade union cooperation has to be considered, so as to ensure that mobile trade union members can be assisted across borders by all ETUC affiliates.

Decisions have been taken at previous Congresses (9th ETUC Congress in Helsinki, 29/06 – 2/07/1999) regarding transnational membership.

Resolution: "Towards a European System of Industrial Relations" committed the ETUC to draw up a Charter of mutual recognition of trade union membership among the affiliates of the ETUC:

[12] https://www.etuc.org/sites/default/files/document/files/resoluspec_130799.pdf

Leaders of the Member Organisations signed the Charter "European trade unions without borders":

[13] https://www.etuc.org/sites/default/files/document/files/etuc_congress_1999_chart_en.pdf

The Executive Committee and the Congress are asked to consider actions for more efficient implementation of such decisions, together with some updating if necessary, in strict cooperation with and taking into account the role of the ETUFs and national affiliates.

The ETUC Secretariat will submit a detailed proposal to the Executive Committee after Congress, dealing with modality of implementation, type of assistance to be provided to transnational members, possible legal implications and related costs.

An Ad Hoc Group within the Steering Committee could be set up to prepare such a proposal.

ETUC Communication Strategy

Communications are central to achieving ETUC objectives. There is a marked increase in ETUC visibility in the media and social media since the last Congress. This is the result of the work carried out by the ETUC to implement the Resolution on Communications adopted by the Executive Committee in October 2015.

ETUC communications cover a wide range including:

1. Increasingly successful media coverage (more successful in some countries);
2. Extensive social media outreach (over 17,000 followers on Twitter) using

attractive visual materials, including the 'photo actions' at Executive Committee meetings;

3. A large amount of regularly updated content on the ETUC website;
4. A widely distributed monthly newsletter, and quarterly 'national updates' newsletter;
5. Materials provided in advance and under embargo for six 'International Days' on which affiliates agree to pass a common message, and for the Pay Rise campaign.

There has also been a big increase in collaboration with affiliates' communicators, while support from affiliates can be improved. We estimate that no one communications action is supported by more than 25% of affiliates. Developing and executing a communication strategy needs to take into account specific national circumstances, allowing national affiliates flexibility regarding their active participation.

While there are lessons to be learned and a proper assessment to be finalised, the Pay Rise campaign has shown that a European campaign can be delivered by the ETUC with its affiliates. A campaign should remain a special priority (time-limited) activity, funded separately.

The ETUC will seek commitments from affiliates to:

1. Report on Congress on their social media, website(s), newsletters/magazines;
2. Carry live streaming or video clips on their websites;
3. Ensure highest possible social media visibility across all affiliates' social media platforms for at least one agreed activity at Congress.

Despite important progress in ETUC communications there is still much to be done, including:

1. Improved coordination with ETUI to make better use of their research;
2. Simplify ETUC language to reach beyond the Brussels bubble and union jargon;
3. Continue to improve the ETUC website, particularly access to documents, and in social media to develop the use of LinkedIn and Instagram.

There is a need to increase the capacity of the Communications Department, especially in German, as other major EU languages are already covered to some extent. With additional investment, the Communications Department could:

1. Translate key social media posts and press releases into German and have part of the ETUC website in a third language;
2. Deepen communications with affiliates, giving affiliates more advance warning of actions, and materials under embargo;
3. Use new social media platforms or communications tools, and increase the use of resource-intensive tools such as video;
4. Consider strengthening ETUC action through on-line campaigns;
5. Consider more generic materials to spread the word about trade union activities and celebrate our achievements: broadening ETUC communications beyond EU affairs and solidarity with affiliates in emergencies to be a European voice for trade unionism.

ETUC structure

The ETUC structure must respond to the future challenges and tasks in an efficient

manner, making sure the objectives and mission designed by the Congress can be fully delivered.

The ETUC Executive Committee recommends that Congress adopt the following decisions:

1. A reduction of the elected team from a seven-member to a six-member elected team for the term 2019-2023, while keeping two Deputy General Secretaries, according to the Constitution. Therefore, no changes linked to this are required in the ETUC Constitution.
2. Such a reduction will lead to savings to be reinvested in strengthening the permanent policy staff.
3. Such a reduction will be accompanied by a reform of the current arrangement of the ETUC President/Vice Presidents, in order to keep and even improve the geographical balance and representation among the elected team and President/Vice Presidents. Instead of a number of rotating Vice Presidents, two Vice Presidents will be elected, while rotation of the President's position during the mandate will be possible, if agreed by the Executive Committee. This will require some changes in the ETUC Constitution: introduction of the Vice Presidents' position, to support the President's tasks; Vice Presidents to be elected by the Congress instead of the Executive Committee; introducing a maximum number of Vice Presidents; possible rotation of the President's position. Such internal reform is also aimed at increasing the President/Vice Presidents' involvement in the preparation of the Executive Committee's decisions. The Executive Committee will elect an additional Vice President, among the members of the Steering Committee, in representation of the European Trade Union Federations. Such Vice President will not participate in possible rotation of the President's position.
4. The General Secretary, together with the Secretariat, will consider the distribution of dossiers among the elected team to correspond to the priority policy areas endorsed by Congress, and the permanent policy staff will be organised accordingly. In this respect, the appointment of directors/heads of policy areas will be considered by the General Secretary, together with the Secretariat.
5. The ETUC Secretariat will continue implementing its staff policy, so as to ensure that alongside merit and competence, geographical and gender balance are also considered.

Functioning of the ETUC bodies

More effective functioning of the ETUC bodies (Executive Committee, Steering Committee,

Standing and Ad Hoc Committees) has been discussed for a long time, before and since the Paris Congress.

Some reforms of the existing rules have already been introduced, as can be seen from the list of rules below. Changes in the Constitution have been endorsed by the Mid-term Conference, and others will have to be approved by the 2019 Congress.

Some further changes in the existing rules will be considered by the Executive Committee, for instance:

1. Streamlining the agenda by increasing the tasks and responsibility of the Standing Committees in preparing Executive Committee decisions;

2. Better focusing and shortening the Executive Committee documents, and as far as possible linking the agenda items to documents that require decisions;
3. Encouraging leaders to attend by addressing most important policy discussions and priorities in the first part of the meetings;
4. Delivering documents 10 days in advance of meetings, except in emergencies.

This implies a stronger commitment from the affiliates in nominating appropriate experts and coordinating them, together with enhanced responsibility on the part of the Standing Committee members.

Improvements in the functioning of the Standing Committees should be considered, such as:

1. Meetings to be planned in advance, with relevant information and background documents to be provided in good time;
2. Decisions of the Executive Committee to be prepared by the Standing Committees, through transparent and timely consultation on documents;
3. Distribution of minutes of the meetings, in the simplified format already adopted by the Executive Committee;
4. Use of innovative digital tools, at least for meetings with limited participation and no interpretation requirements;
5. Reshaping the scope and setting of the Standing Committees, in order to increase the number of meetings, could be considered, while preserving the alignment between the Committees and the ETUC dossiers and tasks.

The role, tasks and meetings of the Steering Committee should be improved, by focusing discussion more on policy priorities (in addition to the tasks set by the ETUC Constitution) and by reconsidering the frequency of meetings.

While maintaining the tasks that the ETUC Constitution gives to the Steering Committee (such as finance, affiliation and internal issues), the Committee can also be seen as an internal orientation body involving major leaders in the preparation of relevant decisions, to be then submitted to the Executive Committee

Format and tasks of the Spring/Summer Schools, to be held in the years between Congress and Mid-term Conference, will be considered to see if any updates in the ETUC Constitution/rules are required.

Attention will be paid to reinforcing the ETUC coordination of other networks, like the TUSLOs (Trade Union Semester Liaison Officers), the National Officers, UnionMigrantNet and the ECTUN (European Capitals Trade Union Network).

The language issue, particularly for translation of documents, will be considered, with particular reference to its financial implications.

Existing rules

Constitution - basic rules (on votes, structures)

[1] https://www.etuc.org/sites/www.etuc.org/files/other/files/ces-congrecs_2015- statuts-uk-ld_def_0_0.pdf

Criteria of affiliation of new organisations to the ETUC (Executive Committee 29/30 November 1979)

[2] https://www.etuc.org/sites/www.etuc.org/files/other/files/etuc_affiliation_criteria.pdf

Internal Rules of Procedure governing European cross-sectoral social dialogue negotiations (Executive Committee 1 December 2004)

[3] <https://www.etuc.org/sites/www.etuc.org/files/document/files/06b-irpsdcrosssect-enrev2-ado.pdf>

Women's Committee (Executive Committee 8 July 2009)

[4] <https://www.etuc.org/en/document/internal-rules-procedure-etuc-womens-committee-revised-executive-committee-meeting-8-july#.WstjvlhuaU>

Internal Rules of Procedure for ETUC Youth Committee (Executive Committee 14-15 December 2016)

[5] <https://www.etuc.org/sites/www.etuc.org/files/document/files/adopted-19-en-internal-rules-of-procedure-for-etuc-youth-committee.pdf>

IRTUCs Coordinating Committee revised internal rules of procedure (Executive Committee 13-14 June 2017)

[6] https://www.etuc.org/sites/www.etuc.org/files/document/files/etuc_resolution_internal_rules_procedures_en.pdf

Rules of procedure of Standing Committees (Executive Committee 28-29 October 2015)

[7]

https://www.etuc.org/sites/default/files/other/files/permanent_committees_internal_rules_of_procedure_en.pdf

ETUC/EESC Workers' Group cooperation (Executive Committee 28-29 October 2015)

[8] <https://www.etuc.org/sites/www.etuc.org/files/document/files/en-etuc-eesc-cooperation.pdf>

Constitutional changes

The Mid-term Conference endorsed amendments to the ETUC Constitution on gender balance, according to the mandate received from the Paris Congress.

Further amendments to the Constitution, particularly regarding voting rights, have been discussed and are going to be submitted to Congress.

Other amendments will be considered, if necessary, on the basis of the decisions adopted in the framework of this document (e.g. Vice Presidents, Steering Committee).

A comprehensive list of such amendments will be provided in due time.

Rules under discussion

Election of the Steering Committee (to be formally adopted by the October Executive Committee) – ETUC Constitution:

[9] https://www.etuc.org/system/files/event/private-files/annex_3_to_the_report_of_the_ad_hoc_committee_on_constitution_review.pdf

Revision of the Congress Rules (to be up-dated and adopted by the Executive Committee in March 2019) – ETUC Constitution:

[10] https://www.etuc.org/system/files/event/private-files/congress_rules_and_procedure.pdf

Interpretation of the voting rules (adopted by the Mid-Term conference)

[11] https://www.etuc.org/system/files/event/private-files/04b-en-mid-term-conference-rules-and-procedures_0.pdf

Cooperation with the ETUI

Formal Interaction between ETUI and ETUC members

The interactions are mainly through the General Assembly and the Management Committee. They approve the work programme and the budget (session of February and March). They approve the discharge of the budget and the work programme of the previous year in the October session.

For the last six years there has also been a specific item on the ETUI on the October ETUC Executive Committee agenda, mainly presenting and discussing the ETUI priorities, as well as providing room to make proposals for topics to be included or new ways of dissemination. Often the time for exchange is rather limited due to the constraint of the ETUC agenda and debates.

Additionally, there is an exchange from June to September with ETUC member organisations to prepare the education work programme and an education conference takes place in September/October.

Proposals for improvement

The priorities of the work programme will be presented on the first day of the October Executive Committee meeting, with at least a one-hour slot for a first discussion with leaders about the ETUI general priorities for the next year(s). Additionally, in the afternoon of the second day of the ExCo there will be an opportunity for a more in-depth discussion of selected activities where the ETUI will introduce draft ideas for the coming year's work programme.

There will be a 'Spring open debate' on TU priorities. This extra workshop for ETUC members and ETUI directors will be chaired by the ETUC Confederal in charge of the ETUI. To reduce the costs, it can be organised alongside the June Executive Committee.

The close and very fruitful cooperation between the ETUI and the ETUC Secretariat, the ETUC Constitutional Committees (Women, Youth, IRTUCs) and Standing Committees, both on evidence-based inputs and educational and training activities, will be further strengthened and improved.

Concerning translations, the ETUI will provide a note presenting its policy. So far it is done on an ad-hoc basis, with cost/benefit analysis, given the strong and clear interest from the national TUs and the opportunity for wide dissemination in the countries involved.

The ETUI also receives quite a lot of visitors' groups from the affiliates, where they discuss ETUI activities, how the ETUI operates and especially how they can access what the ETUI produces. The directors regularly visit member organisations.

Cooperation with the ETUFs and the EESC Workers' Group

The ETUC and the ETUFs have always cooperated closely, and they should develop a further dimension to their cooperation by linking activities more strategically – without interfering in their respective autonomy.

Regular meetings of the ETUC secretariat and the ETUFs' general secretaries will be organised. The aim will be the exchange of information and strategic planning for joint activities.

The ETUC and ETUFs strive to strengthen their mutual coordination on dossiers of common interest, regularly consult on strategies and actions linked to them and, when possible, use available resources more efficiently.

Taking inspiration from the Council of Global Unions, the ETUC and the ETUFs could arrange a joint meeting of their leaderships on a topical issue each year.

The ETUC will open a discussion with the leadership of the EESC Workers' Group, in order to relaunch and strengthen the mutual cooperation and, where necessary, review and update the existing cooperation agreement.

ETUC Finances

The Secretariat has deployed over the mandate 2015-2019 a comprehensive strategy to make the ETUC finances sustainable in the long run, while addressing urgent short-term problems.

The Executive Committee will (be asked to) re-establish a Finance Committee, within the Steering Committee, to be chaired by the President, that will be mandated to:

1. Analyse medium-term trends in membership, other revenues, and spending;
2. Consider and recommend to the Secretariat increases in revenues, possible savings, structural changes and efficiency measures, aimed at coping with the challenges the ETUC is facing, including additional tasks and declining membership;
3. Consider and recommend to the Executive Committee any necessary reform of the affiliation fees mechanism, in order to achieve a stable budget in the medium and long term.