

[ETUC newsletter]



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Figure of the month

1,700 billion dollars

Despite the economic crisis, the hedge funds sector is growing steadily. On 30 September 2010, assets managed by hedge funds exceeded 1,700 billion dollars.

(Source: Les Echos)

Note



Dear Readers,

The economic situation in Europe is getting worse. With a rescue package having just been agreed to save Ireland from bankruptcy, the markets are unyielding and are behaving like vultures on the lookout for new prey. Speculation is rife, since the banks and the investment funds are continuing to charge ever higher interest rates to the countries that they deem to be weakened, such as Portugal, Spain, etc.

Many European trade unions have already taken to the streets in their continued protests against the austerity measures that are in danger of slowing down the recovery and pushing Europe into an infernal spiral, at the very time when some financial institutions are feasting on the crisis and reaping massive profits. The point is that in this context which is anything but reassuring, the profit motive is still alive and well, astronomical bonuses are still being paid out while at the same time, all the social cohesion policies are being pared to the bone. The ETUC denounces this indecent behaviour, which stems from a profound social injustice. Workers will no longer accept it, and are refusing to carry on picking up the tab for the avarice of the few.

Further social protests will be staged between now and the European Action Day on 15 December, and they will certainly continue beyond that date. Among all the players involved at national level, the trade unions are emerging as the viable alternative, rejecting the idea that workers should have to foot the bill for the financial crisis, and proposing solutions leading to social and economic development in everyone's interests. That is why we are continuing our struggle to make our voice heard.

We are also running the risk that this economic and financial crisis might deteriorate into a political crisis, with the States withdrawing into defending their own narrow national interests and broad swathes of the population also pulling up the drawbridge, something which will fuel nationalist and racist movements. Ultimately it is an all too real risk that is hanging over the future of the efforts to construct the European project.

John Monks
General Secretary

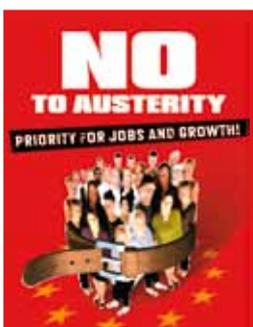


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[ETUC in action]

ETUC develops an **Austerity Watch** and a **Bonus Watch**



30/11/2010 - The ETUC is developing two new tools - an “Austerity Watch” and a “Bonus Watch”. In so doing, the ETUC wants to **highlight an outrageous situation**: on one side, austerity measures which severely affecting millions of citizens, and on the other side, bonuses which are being paid out to a privileged few. The Austerity Watch will track the cuts to public expenditure and services in each Member State illustrating how workers are paying for the crisis and the Bonus Watch will monitor the end of year bonuses paid in the financial

services sector and contrast these with the austerity measures being imposed across the EU generally.

[Link to the Austerity Watch](#)

[Link to the Bonus Watch](#)



No to Austerity for everyone and bonuses for a happy few European Day of Action, on 15 December 2010



330/11/2010 - The ETUC called for a **decentralised day of action on 15 December to protest against austerity measures and against bonuses**. Many countries have already been and continue to be subjected to austerity plans. **Trade union protest actions**, like demonstrations, work stoppages and general strikes, **are being organised across Europe in reaction to these measures**. Not all the actions are scheduled for 15 December, but will be organised in terms of current events and the obligations of the countries concerned. An [interactive map](#), giving an overview of the extent of the trade union reaction that is currently being organised at European level, is available on the ETUC web site. This map is not definitive and will be updated progressively.

[Link to the interactive map](#)

MAJOR MEETINGS - CONFERENCES - PROJECTS

ETUC Steering Committee

18/11/2010 - The ETUC Steering Committee met in Brussels. The campaign against austerity, employment, wages, collective bargaining as well as discussions on “Single Market Act” were the main topics of the meeting.



[ETUC in action]

Domestic workers rights: what is the European contribution to developments at international level?

05/11/2010 - The ETUC, the International Domestic Workers' Network (IDWN) and Justitia & Pax organised a seminar entitled "Domestic Workers' Rights: What is the European contribution to developments at international level?". Its aim was to examine organizing and policy-making initiatives regarding a specific part of the generally informal economy: the provision of domestic work.

In March 2008, the International Labour Organisation (ILO) decided that the issue of "decent work for domestic workers" would be included in the agenda of the International Labour Conferences (ILC) in 2010. This resulted in the adoption of the Proposed Conclusions for a comprehensive standard: a Convention supplemented by a Recommendation. "Decent Work for Domestic Workers" is now scheduled to be on the agenda of the next ILC in 2011 for a second discussion with a view to the adoption of a comprehensive ILO standard for domestic workers. Participants at the ETUC seminar agreed that convincing all European governments to adopt an ILO Convention on domestic work would be a major step in fighting poverty, ending clandestine work and making a significant contribution to valuing this highly feminized occupation. The ETUC will continue to closely monitor developments in this area and supports the [ITUC Campaign Decent work - Decent life for women](#).

More information: <http://www.etuc.org/r/1588>

From membership to leadership: advancing women in trade unions

Towards the ETUC Congress 2011

28/10/2010 - More than 40 trade union representatives gathered at a political workshop- "From membership to leadership: advancing women in trade unions: Towards the ETUC Congress 2011" organised by the ETUC in Berlin. They put forward [10 recommendations](#) to provide guidance for trade union leaders, decision-makers and members to improve gender balance in their respective organisations. Improving gender balance in union leadership and decision-making structures remains a fundamental challenge for the European Trade Union Confederation. Despite the feminisation of the labour market and unions, the representation of women in senior level positions is low in many trade union organisations and in collective bargaining structures. The ETUC believes that gender balance in decision-making needs to be addressed as a key priority and is running a European project to address this challenge.

[Trade Union Agenda]

November - December 2010

18/11/2010	ETUC Steering Committee (Brussels)
01/12/2010	ETUC Steering Committee (Brussels)
01-02/12/2010	ETUC Executive Committee (Brussels)
08/12/2010	Meeting of the Group II 'Workers' of the European Economic and Social Committee (Brussels)
15/12/2010	ETUC Day of Action against austerity



[Focus on EU and trade union positions]

Social partners must be fully fledged players in the financial stability process

16/11/2010 - In the framework of [Macro-economic Dialogue](#), John Monks met the President of the European Central Bank, Jean-Claude Trichet, Eurogroup President Jean-Claude Juncker, and Olli Rehn, European Commissioner for Economic and Financial Affairs, in Brussels. According to John Monks *“the philosophy of the European Financial Stability Facility (EFSF) appears to be cut expenditure, reduce debt, put pressure on wages and social spending and make labour markets more flexible. Established gains by trade unions are widely under attack. A first step would be to involve the social partners from the countries concerned by austerity measures. We cannot be mere spectators”*.

[John Monks's speech at Macro-economic Dialogue](#)

Equality Summit: EU needs to push forward the Equality and social inclusion agenda

16/11/2010 - The ETUC took part in 4th EU Equality Summit where, ETUC representatives expressed the need to push forward the Equality agenda particularly in this context of crisis. According to the European trade union movement, **it is crucial that equality is brought back centre stage to the crisis exit strategies.**

[ETUC press release](#)

The ETUC denounces discrimination against border workers

25/11/2010 - The Interregional Trade Union Council (IRTUC) Coordination Committee of the ETUC noted and denounced an **emerging trend in certain Member States to pass discriminatory laws with regard to border workers**, concerning in particular legal provisions relating to grants and loans for higher education.

[ETUC press release](#)

European Multinational's position on Vietnam wages is totally unacceptable

25/11/2010 - John Monks described as **“totally unacceptable”** the position of the European Chamber of Commerce in Vietnam (EuroCham) which is threatening a withdrawal of European investment in the country if minimum wages are raised. [In a letter to Trade Commissioner Karel De Gucht](#), he requested the Commission to ask EuroCham *“to desist from making such statements which can only undermine the development of proper trade relations with Vietnam”*.

[ETUC press release](#)

Social clauses' inclusion in international trade agreements : ETUC welcomes EU Parliament call

26/11/2010 - The ETUC welcomed the call by the European Parliament for **clauses on human rights, social rights and environment standards to be included in all international trade agreements**. This is a strong message to third countries currently negotiating Free Trade Agreements, that the respect of International Labour Organisation standards and the inclusion of Decent Work objectives must be at the centre of such agreements.

[ETUC press release](#)



[EU Agenda] November – December 2010

08-09/11/2010	Justice and Home Affairs Council (Brussels)	Council Agenda
10-11/11/2010	Mini-Plenary Session of the European Parliament (Brussels)	
11/11/2010	Economic and Financial Affairs Council (Brussels)	Council Agenda
16/11/2010	Eurogroup meeting (Brussels)	Meeting Agenda
17/11/2010	Economic and Financial Affairs Council (Brussels)	Council Agenda
18-19/11/2010	Education, Youth, Culture and Sport Council (Brussels)	Council Agenda
22/11/2010	General and Foreign Affairs Council (Brussels)	Council Agenda
22-25/11/2010	Plenary Session of the European Parliament (Strasbourg)	
25-26/11/2010	Competitiveness Council (Brussels)	Council Agenda
29/11- 10/12/2010	16th Meeting of the Parties to the Climate Convention (Cancun)	Meeting Agenda
02/12/2010	Justice and Home Affairs Council (Brussels)	Council Agenda
02/12/2010	Transport, Telecommunications and Energy Council (Brussels)	Council Agenda
06/12/2010	Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council (Brussels)	Council Agenda
06/12/2010	Eurogroup meeting (Brussels)	Meeting Agenda
06/12/2010	Economic and Financial Affairs Council (Brussels)	Council Agenda
09/12/2010	Foreign Affairs Council (Brussels)	Council Agenda
10/12/2010	Competitiveness Council (Brussels)	Council Agenda
13-16/12/2010	Plenary Session of the European Parliament (Strasbourg)	
13/12/2010	Foreign Affairs Council (Brussels)	Council Agenda
14/12/2010	General Affairs Council (Brussels)	Council Agenda



[Interview]

Interview with Joël Decaillon

The 16th meeting of the parties of the Convention on Climate Change (COP 16) will take place from 29 November to 10 December 2010 in Cancun, Mexico. The negotiations will relate mainly to the future climate scheme (post-2012). Joël Decaillon, ETUC Deputy General Secretary, reports on this issue which is of crucial importance to the trade union movement in Europe.

What are the real issues at stake in the negotiations? Is there a risk of a similar failure to the one suffered by the Copenhagen Summit?

Joël Decaillon (JD) : The issue at the meeting in Cancun is the reduction of CO2 emissions to save the planet, while at the same time controlling climate change by limiting the rise in temperatures to no more than two degrees Celsius, in line with the proposals from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). This debate, which follows on from the Kyoto protocol, calls for negotiated solutions. The risk does indeed lie in the possibility that there might be no legally binding agreement at Cancun, as was the case in Copenhagen in 2009. The European trade unions believe that the meeting in Cancun should at least aim to evaluate what can be done today to reduce CO2 emissions. Similarly, the negotiators at Cancun need to draw up a roadmap for a future legal framework, because we cannot sit around the negotiating table indefinitely.

At its Executive Committee in October, the ETUC adopted a resolution ahead of the Cancun summit. Can you give us a brief flavour of what it contains?

JD: Our resolution is a very exhaustive and complete document. We start from the observation that the crisis rocking Europe is extremely serious, but we cannot put off looking at the urgent problems of climate change until things improve. On the contrary, we are in favour of an integrated approach to the fight against climate change, consisting of bringing together the conditions for sustainable growth.



To deliver a sustainable crisis exit strategy and to guarantee its future, Europe and the world need growth. As can be seen from the study on [‘Climate disturbances, the new industrial policies and ways out of the crisis’, which we presented at Copenhagen last year](#), our needs today are immense. At the moment, far too many people lack access to clean drinking water or waste water treatment systems and electricity, and malnutrition and famine are mercilessly ravaging a very large part of humanity. In addition, before long, the pace of demographic growth will mean that our

planet will have to accommodate nine billion inhabitants instead of the 6.7 billion we have today. Against that background, the issues linked to the response to these needs and to world growth, in order to cope with them, remain fundamental. The problem lies in establishing what will be the nature of this growth: will it be sustainable, protective and shared, and most importantly, what will Europe’s role be? So far, Europe has been at the forefront on issues of climate change and sustainable development: we must always bear in mind that if Europe had not backed the Kyoto protocol, it would not have been able to go ahead, because some developed countries only signed up to it late in the day.

The point today is to show that we all need an integrated policy: the future of growth in Europe, social progress and competitiveness for tomorrow, will be ensured only if that growth is sustainable, because it will be based on the capacity for research and innovation in green technologies, which should generate quality jobs and social progress. Equally, technology



[Interview]

Joël Decaillon *(following)*

will play a key role in driving down CO2 emissions. The conditions for new, sustainable development are intimately bound up with these two aspects. That said, Europe has every interest in continuing to take the lead in its coherence between respect for rights, the drafting of standards, research, innovation, the development of quality projects meeting criteria of social progress, environmental protection and the protection of mankind. That is why the introduction of a just transition clause proposed by the ETUC and the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) in these treaties is pivotal. Anticipating socio-economic transitions, qualifications, professions and their evolution all require employment policies founded upon strong and effective social protection systems, decent work, the quality of jobs, health and safety at work. One example is significant: the measures taken by Europe to reduce CO2 emissions from cars have led to an unprecedented drive by all car manufacturers to innovate while respecting the environment, thereby providing fresh impetus for an industry that was ailing, even though today some of the big manufacturers are still experiencing difficulties.

To what extent will the austerity measures adopted across most of the EU Member States affect Europe's commitment to combat climate change?

JD: The austerity measures may affect the fight against climate change if they reduce the budgets for research, training and education, as well as public investments. Unfortunately, that is just what is happening. We are very worried, because indeed, whether it be in the social arena, in education or in public services, the proposed budget cuts are leading to drastic financial cutbacks and offer little opportunity for development. Let us take the example of energy efficiency: to respond to an environmental improvement plan, it is vital to have public investment at both local and national level, as well as new training to meet the new restoration standards. Another striking example can be found in the public transport sector: setting

up public transport structures with a smaller climate footprint demands large-scale investment and also creates jobs. Without adequate public investments, these improvements would be impossible.

The austerity plans adopted right across Europe run counter to our demand for the creation of growth geared to green technologies which requires major public investments. The point is that for a long time, the ETUC has been urging the creation of a European recovery plan based on new financing of the EU budget relying on a new taxation paradigm. That being so, we support a tax on financial transactions. We also believe that it is necessary to think about a new concept for the European budget, one which cannot simply be the consequence of the national budgets. The European Union has the ability to aggregate in terms of research, innovation, industry, new technologies and major works. For that reason, it needs to make sure that it has more appropriate financial resources. We have mobilised to publicise our demands for this new sustainable growth which needs to rely not only on saving energy, but also on new technologies, new quality jobs and social protection systems worthy of the 21st century.

By way of a conclusion, what is the message that you will be taking to the negotiators in Cancun?

JD: Cancun cannot afford to fail after what happened in Copenhagen. The responsibility on the leaders is to open up a framework that will help to protect the planet while at the same time taking account of the major demographic development that will result in a population of nine billion in the next few years. We need to hammer out an agreement that will make it possible to define how to evaluate the current situation and set up a binding legal framework. There is a very high risk of seeing the confirmation of the inability of the international institutions to find a solution. Failure might worsen the economic and social crisis that we are currently suffering, but it might also precipitate an institutional crisis, which is the very last thing we need.

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