



CONFEDERATION EUROPEENNE DES SYNDICATS
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May 1st, 2004 an historic moment in the Reunification of Europe

Resolution adopted by the ETUC Executive Committee in their meeting held in Brussels on 17-18 March 2004

The date of May 1st, 2004 constitutes an historic moment in European Integration. It signifies much more than an enlargement of the European Union from 15 to 25 countries with 455 million inhabitants. It is in fact a real reunification of Europe which the Second World War had left divided against the will of its citizens.

The ETUC has already underlined that this integration presents a unique opportunity to bring together all the peoples of Europe on the basis of fundamental democratic values: democracy, peace and freedom. This process must continue to lift the very last remaining obstacles which block the full achievement of this ambitious plan.

The European trade unions find themselves at the forefront of the action for this reunification. When the Solidarnosc Congress, the first free trade union in the communist bloc, launched an appeal to the workers of Eastern Europe in 1981 to create free trade unions, this idea appeared to be a utopia. This dream has now come about. Today, almost all the trade unions of these countries find themselves within the ETUC family. However, there is still work to be done, not only in the East but in the Balkan countries.

Trade union work in the whole of Europe is necessary to guarantee the maintenance of social standards in the areas where they are satisfactory, and to obtain improvements in those areas of the Continent which remain far from having decent living conditions. The rules of the European internal market contribute to economic development, but competition in the global market exposes the European workers to continuous changes and restructurations. To stand up to these challenges, we must act together so that Europe unites its social dimension on a solid basis, of workers rights and of social dialogue, of quality services of general interest which will allow each woman and man to live a decent life.

The present and future member states have many problems in common. Everywhere there are fears linked with enlargement. The experience of European integration has however proved that in this globalised world it is easier to advance by jointly looking for solutions. A lack of solidarity will only hold back social progress in the whole of Europe.

Enlargement signifies investing in the common future of the peoples of Europe. The ETUC is delighted that it can contribute to this historic event. It calls upon its affiliated organisations to continue their efforts so that this even bigger Europe can offer more opportunities to European workers and guarantee that they enjoy fully all their rights as citizens.