

## No to austerity and mobilising for alternatives argues EPSU at ETUC MidTerm Conference



Jan Willem Goudriaan, EPSU General Secretary, at ETUC Midterm Conference Lisbon 09.11.21

(12 November 2021) As recovery from the pandemic is taking place several finance ministers have started to argue we have to go back to balanced budgets and reduce state debts. EPSU and many other unions argued at the ETUC mid term conference that we can not go back to austerity. It means our public services will go unfunded, staff shortages like those in health and care will continue, investment in measures to address climate justice and investment in social infrastructure will not happen. It is the extreme right which benefits from austerity, argued EPSU's General Secretary at the ETUC's Mid term conference. ETUC will prioritise the review and reform of the European economic governance rules.

How to deal with the EU's economic policy was one of many debates at the Conference. Other themes reflected on work place democracy and democracy in Europe, the Future of Europe conference, climate change and above all on collective bargaining, wages and growing the unions. The conference discussed a number of possible amendments to the constitution including strengthening the youth representation in Congress delegations. EPSU supported this and the ETUC conference followed the youth committee with overwhelming majority. Delegates also reflected on how to build a stronger ETUC on the basis of the Unity survey.

The conference was one of the first larger physical meetings of the ETUC. Present were EPSU vice-Presidents Francoise Geng and Thomas Kattnig and the EPSU General Secretary. The conference was followed online by EPSU's President Mette Nord, vice President Liz Snape and EPSU Deputy General Secretary Penny Clark. It took place 8-10 November 2021 in Lisboa. EPSU's Tuscany Bell took part in the ETUC's Youth meeting on the 8th. The EPSU General Secretary joined a debate with several confederations on [the extreme-right and trade union action](#).

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