European Union to put workers' interests first says ETUC



(30 October 2017) A packed ETUC house noted the adoption by the European Employment Council of Ministers of the declaration on the European pillar of social rights. The declaration underlines the importance of social rights for workers and people in the EU. The ministers mandated the Council Presidency to sign the declaration at the forthcoming EU social summit in Gothenburg, 17 November.
ETUC now demands concrete actions from the Commission and governments to make the pillar a reality. Many workers see a growing discrepancy between the fine words and the reality they are living day to day. To underline the growing concerns unions will be organizing demonstrations and other actions on and around 7 November. This will be followed by social media action to #tellJuncker that workers want concrete action.

In EPSU we will focus on the social dialogue. Europe's union leaders adopted a position on the results of the European sectoral and intersectoral social dialogues in

the Executive. The Commission is to respect the results. When the social partners so request and in conformity with the Treaty, it should bring agreements to the Council for adoption. This applies to the agreement on Information and Consultation Rights for central government administration workers. Following negotiations triggered by the social partner consultation earlier in the year, the trade unions and the European employers reached agreement in December 2015. We asked the Commission to implement it through a Directive. There is no clarity as regards the process and transparency is needed.

The ETUC leaders put forward a set of proposals to Fix the social foundation of the EU The most important is to ensure that social rights come first and are not undermined by the economic freedoms. The lack of social dimension needs to be dealt with by Member States and the EU institutions. We do want an EU for workers and people, not for markets and corporations.

The ETUC Executive Committee adopted policies on:

- On industrial policy and the need for Europe to develop its potential
- On line platform workers deserve better. ETUC demands a European law to regulate working conditions for online platforms, and to ensure that online platforms employers take responsibility for those they employ (and who they often unfairly treat as selfemployed). The revision of the Written Statement Directive should cover online platform workers
- On the follow up to the Climate Change Agreement in Paris and COP23. The urgency is high and governments needs to make progress in implementing policies to limit global warming to 2 degrees and better to 1,5. Just transition and financing are key. ETUC, EPSU and others are pushing the EU and European Parliament to agree a right to energy and prevent disconnections of people that can not pay their bill.
- Multiannual Financial Framework, on how the budget of the EU should be funded, and what it should be spent on. The budget should ensure that it contributes to implementing the Paris agreement and prevent promoting fossil fuels. Likewise the funding of the EU should not be used for promoting PPPs etc.

It considered the ETUC finances and what is needed for a robust European trade union organization to keep up the work and influence the European employers and institutions and Member States.

The meeting took place 25-26 October 2017 in the European Economic and Social Committee, Brussels. EPSU vice-president Francoise Geng and EPSU General Secretary participated.

On the pillar of social rights

Press statement of the Employment Council on the Declaration on the Pillar of Social Rights

ETUI study Bridging the gaps or falling short, what the European Pillar of Social Rights can bring to EU policymaking

Pillar of social rights in historical perspective (ETUI blog)

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