ETUC Executive Committee considers reply to first phase consultation on fair minimum wages



(10 February 2020) The main item on the agenda was the response of the ETUC to the *First Phase Consultation of Social Partners under Article 154 TFEU on a possible action addressing the challenges related to fair minimum wages*. Europe's trade unions have campaigned for higher pay and decent wages. The unions addressed how austerity policies since 2008 have contributed to low pay and to weakening of collective bargaining. The result has been more inequality. Collective bargaining and progressive taxation are among the most effective instruments to address inequality and redistribute wealth. The political parties took this up in their campaign for the European elections and the demand for fair minimum wages found its way into the political priorities of the new Commission. The consultation was opened 14 January. The deadline is 24 February. Europe's trade unions are demanding a strengthening of collective bargaining and no interference in well-functioning bargaining systems. The response will now go to the affiliates of ETUC for their consent. EPSU will send it to the affiliates and Members of the Executive

Committee.

Other items on the agenda included the ETUC budget for 2020. It will be balanced. The work programme of the ETUI (education, research, health and safety) was approved. A statement on the negotiations of the EU with the UK (for the French version) was approved. It demands exclusion of public services of the deal, seeks full involvement of the trade unions and demands a level play field for social and other standards. We want stronger enforcement mechanisms as in current trade agreements. The Executive Committee supported a European demonstration to demand closing the gender pay gap 25 February.

The EPSU General Secretary and vice-Pesidents Francoise Geng and Thomas Kattnig participated in the meeting, 6 February 2020, Brussels.

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