



European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC)
Confédération européenne des syndicats (CES)

ETUC WANTS TO SEE WORKING TIME DIRECTIVE IMPROVED, NOT WEAKENED

Brussels, 5 June 2008

On the eve of the Council Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs (9 June), the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) expresses its strong concerns about the proposals for revision of the Working Time Directive which will be on the agenda of this meeting.

The ETUC addressed a letter to the Slovenian Minister of Labour expressing its disappointment with the current set of proposals on the table. According to the ETUC, these fall short of protecting workers against the health and safety hazards of long working hours, introduce an overall diminution of protection without proper safeguards, do not in any way provide for a proper balance between flexibility and security, and will create incentives for avoiding and evading collectively agreed solutions to flexibility needs of companies.

If adopted in its current form, the revised Directive will be the first social Directive ever to introduce a **regression in the level of protection** provided, which is incompatible with the European Treaties, while not offering citizens and workers in Europe an acceptable and sustainable deal on modernisation and innovation of the organisation of working time.

ETUC is calling on the Slovenian Presidency and Member States to ensure that the key principles of the Working Time Directive are upheld and that any proposals for revision, developed in the Council of Ministers, are compatible with the European Treaties and the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights. ETUC is also reminding them that the current texts need further improvement to receive the support of workers and citizens around Europe and especially the support of the European Parliament in its second reading.

The ETUC exists to speak with a single voice, on behalf of the common interests of workers, at European level. Founded in 1973, it now represents 82 trade union organisations in 36 European countries, plus 12 industry-based federations.

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