

## EPSU Congress 2009

### E.R.2. Emergency resolution on Supporting Trade Union Rights – No to Free Trade with Columbia

---

1. This Conference notes that at the beginning of May 2009 the European Union held a third round of trade negotiations on the Free Trade Agreement with Colombia. . These discussions are continuing and are to be concluded by end 2009.
2. This Conference deplores the fact that Colombia remains the most dangerous place in the world to be a trade unionist. Displacement, murder and repression are everyday fears for trade unionists in Colombia and thousands of trade union members and leaders have been killed by paramilitaries and even the Colombian army and police over the last decade.
3. We regret that the regime in Colombia remains a stain on the continent. This conference demands that the international community act to ensure that the right to life, freedom of association and ability to carry out normal trade union activities are respected in Colombia.
4. In particular the Colombian trade union movement has specifically asked for solidarity at this time to ensure that the proposed EU-Colombia free trade agreement, currently being negotiated, is blocked. It is abhorrent, that the European Union should be considering engaging in free trade with a regime condemned around the world for human rights abuses and particularly the targeting of trade unions.
5. It is particularly disgraceful that the EU is considering signing such an agreement at a time when even the proposed trade agreement between the USA and Colombia has been effectively blocked through in particular, the actions of the US labour movement. Conference further notes that Norway has suspended talks on free trade with Colombia whilst it investigates the human rights situation there.
6. In recognition of the recent declarations by the major trade union confederations in Colombia, this congress calls on EPSU and all its affiliates to:
  - ✓ Use all avenues of influence to campaign against the proposed free trade agreement with Colombia.
  - ✓ Raise awareness of the struggle of the Colombian trade union movement and investigate any opportunities for solidarity activities.
  - ✓ Formally request the ETUC to co-ordinate activities of the European Trade union movement to ensure that no free trade agreement is signed with the regime.

*Adopted 10 June 2009*