

## WHAT IS THE ETUC?

**THE EUROPEAN TRADE UNION CONFEDERATION** (ETUC) WAS FOUNDED IN 1973 TO REPRESENT AND PROMOTE WORKERS' INTERESTS AT EUROPEAN LEVEL. IT IS MADE UP OF 85 NATIONAL TRADE UNION FEDERATIONS IN 36 COUNTRIES, PLUS 10 EUROPEAN TRADE UNION FEDERATIONS. THE EUROPEAN UNION, THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE AND THE EUROPEAN FREE TRADE ASSOCIATION ALL RECOGNISE THE ETUC AS THE ONLY CROSS-SECTORAL TRADE UNION ORGANISATION REPRESENTING WORKERS AT EUROPEAN LEVEL. THIS OFFICIAL STATUS IS ENSHRINED IN THE TREATY OF MAASTRICHT (1992).



# ***THE VOICE OF EUROPEAN WORKERS***

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Europe's role has gradually increased in the areas of greatest importance to workers. With that in mind, Europe's trade unions decided to unite and speak with a single voice in the aim of influencing the European Union (EU) decision-making process. The need to work together has been even more pronounced since the economic and financial crisis broke out in 2008.

## **SPEAKING WITH A SINGLE VOICE TO BUILD A SOCIAL EUROPE**

The ETUC aims to make social Europe a key priority in European policy.

The ETUC is working for a Europe with a strong social dimension, which focuses on workers' interests and well-being. It promotes the European social model that enabled Europe to become a prosperous, competitive region.

## **PRIORITISING HIGH-QUALITY JOBS AND A STRONGER EUROPEAN SOCIAL MODEL**

The domains in which the ETUC works are crucial for workers in the EU and further afield. The ETUC defends fundamental social values such as solidarity, equality and cohesion.

- the right to high-quality jobs;
- the right to a high level of social protection;
- gender equality;
- equal opportunities for all;
- social cohesion and inclusion;
- the right to health and safety at work;
- the right to freedom of movement for European workers, coupled with equal treatment and social protection;
- the right to public services of general interest that are accessible to all;
- European standards to harmonise national social legislation upwards;
- proactive policies to overcome challenges linked to the climate change;
- promotion of the principles of the European social model in other parts of the world.

The last ETUC Congress in Athens adopted a manifesto that sets a number of priorities to help Europe emerge from the crisis stronger than ever. In the manifesto, the ETUC expresses its concern about the deteriorating economic and social situation, which has been exacerbated by bailouts of struggling economies and austerity measures. The Athens Manifesto calls on European decision-makers to change their approach without delay to avoid further jeopardising people and countries. <http://www.etuc.org/a/4546>



The ETUC has evolved constantly since its creation in 1973 and now comprises 85 national trade union confederations in 36 countries, plus 10 European trade union federations.

## A DEMOCRATIC ORGANISATION

The ETUC defines its policies completely independently through its Congress and Executive Committee.

- The role of the **Congress** is to determine the organisation's general policy. The Congress convenes every four years and meetings are attended by delegates from national confederations and European trade union federations. It elects the members of the Executive Committee, the President, the General Secretary, the two Deputy General Secretaries and the four Confederal Secretaries. The last Congress took place in Athens in May 2011, against the backdrop of an extremely severe economic and financial crisis. In the manifesto adopted at the Athens Congress, the ETUC restates its opposition to austerity measures, calls for an urgent change in approach and puts forward a number of proposals.
- The **Executive Committee** is made up of representatives of the ETUC's member organisations, the number of which is proportional to number of members they have. It meets four times a year. It can adopt joint positions and agree on actions to take in support of its demands. If necessary, decisions may be taken by a qualified majority of two-thirds of the votes. The Executive Committee also has the power to decide on the mandate and composition of the delegations that negotiate with the European employers' organisations.
- The **Steering Committee** decides on measures for implementing the policies adopted by the Executive Committee. It meets eight times a year.
- The **Secretariat** manages the ETUC's day-to-day activities. It is responsible for relations with the European institutions and employers' organisations. It suggests and plans European trade union actions and is in charge of the ETUC's internal operations.



Bernadette Ségol  
General Secretary



Józef Niemiec  
Deputy General Secretary



Patrick Itschert  
Deputy General Secretary



Judith Kirton-Darling  
Confederal Secretary



Claudia Menne  
Confederal Secretary



Veronica Anna-Maria Nilsson  
Confederal Secretary



Luca Visentini  
Confederal Secretary



## A PLURALIST, UNIFIED ORGANISATION

The ETUC is a united, pluralist organisation and represents all workers at European level.

- **National trade union confederations.**

La CES comprend 85 organisations nationales représentant 36 pays.

- **European trade union federations.**

Ten European trade union federations are affiliated to the ETUC. They represent workers in diverse sectors, ranging from journalism or metalworking to services and the police. Trade union federations are responsible for European social dialogue at sectoral level. The sectoral committees discuss issues relating to their sector and may adopt a wide range of initiatives.

- **Interregional Trade Union Councils (IRTUCs)**

IRTUCs, the first of which was founded in 1976, are structures enabling cross-border cooperation between trade unions in various countries in the aim of defending workers' interests.

- **European Works Councils (EWCs).**

The directive on European Works councils (EWCs), which was adopted on 22 September 1994, gave millions of European Union workers the right to information and consultation on their company's decisions at European level through their representatives on EWCs.

The EWC Directive applies to companies with at least 1,000 workers, of whom a minimum of 150 work in two Member States or more.

There are now over 1,000 EWCs representing thousands of workers across the EU.

EWCs exist in a range of sectors, including metalworking, the chemical industry and the food sector. Database on EWCs: [www.ewdb.eu](http://www.ewdb.eu)

- **Interest groups.**

A number of structures are in place to represent the interests of certain groups of workers. These structures are closely connected to the ETUC's activities.

- Women's Committee

The ETUC Women's Committee consists of representatives of all ETUC affiliates and all organisations with observer status. Its work focuses on gender equality and it is represented both at Congress and within the Executive Committee.

- Youth Committee

The ETUC Youth Committee was created to take account of the specific problems faced by young workers, and is becoming ever more important since unemployment and job insecurity are hitting young people especially hard. The Youth Committee has its own structure and constitution.

- European Federation of Retired and Older People (FERPA)

FERPA is the most representative union of retired and older people in Europe today. Its activities focus on improving social protection, especially pensions and healthcare, and fighting social exclusion and poverty. <http://ferpa.etuc.org/>

– EUROCADRES

EUROCADRES, the Council of European Managerial and Professional Staff, is the organisation that represents such staff in all branches of industry, the public and private sectors and government departments. EUROCADRES takes action on all the issues affecting professional and managerial staff (employment, freedom of movement, equal opportunities, and so on). [www.eurocadres.org/](http://www.eurocadres.org/)

• **The European Trade Union Institute (ETUI)**

The European Trade Union Institute (ETUI) is the ETUC's independent research and training centre. ETUI applies its expertise –acquired through its academic, university and expert networks– to defend the interests of workers at European level and bolster the European Union's social dimension. [www.etui.org](http://www.etui.org)





## ETUC MEMBER ORGANISATIONS

### NATIONAL TRADE UNION CONFEDERATIONS.

| Countries      | Organisations                              |
|----------------|--|
| Andorre        | USDA                                       |
| Austria        | OGB  |
| Belgium        | CSC / FGTB / CGSLB                         |
| Bulgaria       | CITUB / PODKREPA                           |
| Croatia        | SSSH / NHS                                 |
| Cyprus         | TURK-SEN / DEOK / SEK                      |
| Czech Republic | CMKOS                                      |
| Denmark        | LO / AC / FTF                              |
| Estonia        | EAKL / TALO                                |
| Finland        | SSTK / SAK / AKAVA                         |
| France         | CFDT / UNSA / CFTC / FO / CGT              |
| Germany        | DGB  |
| Greece         | GSEE / ADEDY                               |
| Hungary        | LIGA / MszOSz / MOSz / ASZSZ / SZET / ESZT |
| Iceland        | BSRB / ASI                                 |
| Ireland        | ICTU                                       |
| Italy          | CISL / UIL / CGIL                          |
| Latvia         | LBAS                                       |
| Liechtenstein  | LANV                                       |
| Lithuania      | LDF / LDS / LTCU                           |
| Luxembourg     | LCGB / OGBL                                |
| Malta          | CMTU / GWU / For.UM                        |
| Monaco         | USM  |
| Netherlands    | MHP / CNV / FNV                            |
| Norway         | LO / YS / UNIO                             |
| Poland         | NSZZ Solidarnosc / OPZZ / FZZ              |
| Portugal       | UGT / CGTP                                 |
| Romania        | CSDR / BNS / CNSLR FRATIA / CARTEL ALFA    |
| San Marino     | CDLS / CSDL                                |
| Slovakia       | KOZ-SR                                     |
| Slovenia       | ZSSS                                       |
| Spain          | UGT / CCOO / ELA-STV / USO                 |
| Sweden         | SACO / LO / TCO                            |
| Switzerland    | Travail Suisse / SGB-USS                   |
| Turkey         | KESK / DISK / HAK-IS / TURK-IS             |
| United Kingdom | TUC  |

## NATIONAL TRADE UNION CONFEDERATIONS (WITH OBSERVER STATUS)

| <b>Countries</b>       | <b>Organisations</b> |
|------------------------|----------------------|
| Macedonia (FYROM)      | SSM / KSS            |
| Serbia                 | Nezavisnost / CATUS  |
| Bosnia and Herzegovina | CTUBiH               |
| Montenegro             | CTUM / UFTUM         |

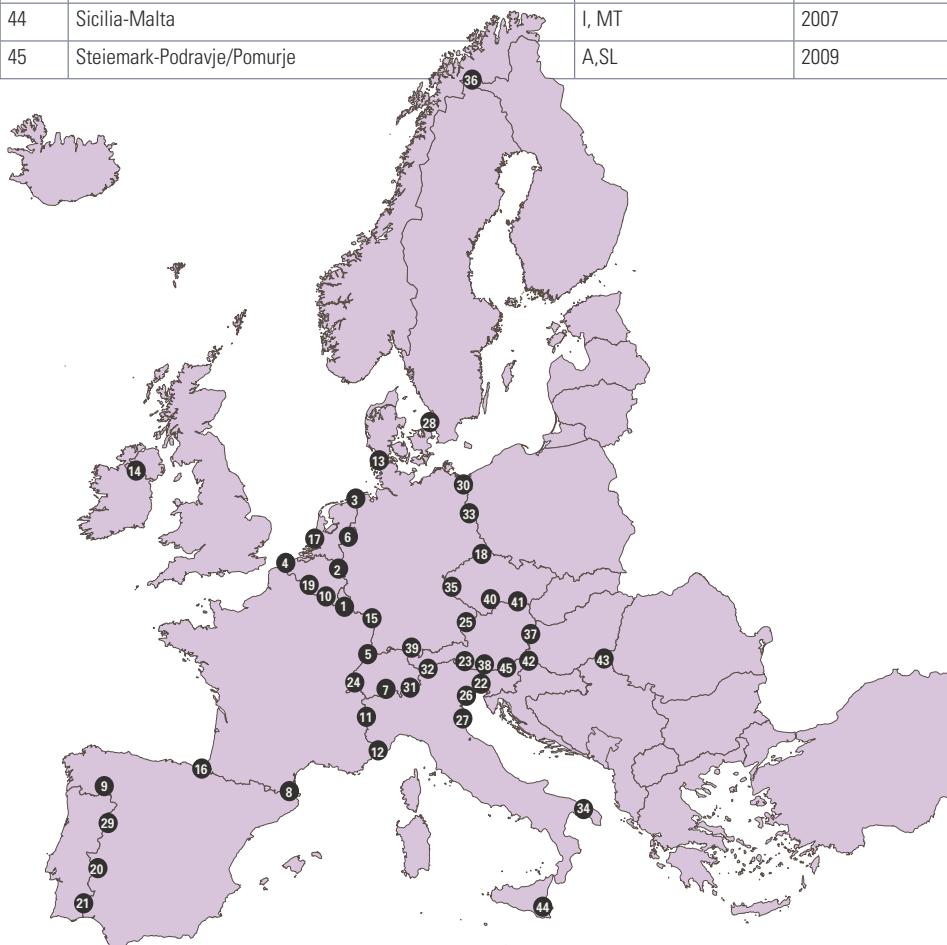
## EUROPEAN TRADE UNION FEDERATIONS

|   |
|---|
| EAEA – European Arts and Entertainment Alliance                             |
| EUROCOP – European Confederation of Police                                  |
| FETBB – European Federation of Building and Woodworkers                     |
| EFFAT – European Federation of Food, Agriculture and Tourism Trade Unions   |
| FEJ – European Federation of Journalists                                    |
| IndustriAll – European Federation for Industry and Manufacturing Workers    |
| EPSU – European Federation of Public Service Unions                         |
| ETF – European Transport Workers' Federation                                |
| CSEE – European Trade Union Committee for Education                         |
| UNI-EUROPA – European Trade Union Federation for Services and Communication |

## INTERREGIONAL TRADE UNION COUNCILS (IRTUCS)

| N° | CSIR/IRTUC   | PAYS/COUNTRIES | CONSTITUTION |
|----|--|----------------|--------------|
| 1  | Saar / Lor / Lux / Trier / Westpfalz                                 | D, F, L        | 1976         |
| 2  | Maas / Rhein   | B, NL, D       | 1978         |
| 3  | Weser-Ems / Noordnederland   | D, NL          | 1979         |
| 4  | Hainaut / Nord-Pas-de-Calais<br>West Vlaanderen / South East England | B, F, UK       | 1979         |
| 5  | Dreiländereck / Haut-Rhin / Nordwestschweiz / Südbaden               | F, D, CH       | 1980         |
| 6  | Rijn / IJssel  | D, NL          | 1980         |
| 7  | Lombardie / Tessin / Piemonte  | I, CH          | 1982         |
| 8  | Pyremed / Piremed  | F, E, AND      | 1983         |
| 9  | Galicia / Norte de Portugal  | E, P           | 1985         |
| 10 | Interrégionale Syndicale des Trois Frontières                        | F, L, B        | 1987         |
| 11 | Piemonte / Valle d'Aosta / Rhône-Alpes / Arc Lémanique               | F, I, CH       | 1990         |
| 12 | Provence / Côte d'Azur / Liguria                                     | F, I           | 1990         |
| 13 | Landesteil Schleswig / Sønderjylland                                 | D, DK          | 1991         |
| 14 | Northern Ireland / Republic of Ireland                               | UK, IRE        | 1991         |
| 15 | Euregio Baden / Bas-Rhin / Südliche Pfalz                            | F, D           | 1991         |
| 16 | Pyrénées Occidentales / Axe Atlantique                               | E, F           | 1992         |
| 17 | Schelde / Kempen   | B, NL          | 1992         |
| 18 | Elbe / Neisse  | D, PL, CZ      | 1993         |
| 19 | Charleroi - Namur - Neuchâteau / Champagne - Ardenne                 | F, B           | 1993         |
| 20 | Extremadura / Alentejo   | E, P           | 1994         |
| 21 | Andalucia / Algarve  | E, P           | 1994         |
| 22 | Friuli - Venezia - Giulia / Slovenia                                 | I, SL          | 1994         |
| 23 | Friuli / Venezia -Giulia / Kärnten                                   | I, A           | 1994         |
| 24 | Arc Jurassien  | F, CH          | 1995         |
| 25 | Interalp   | D, A           | 1995         |
| 26 | Friuli-Venezia-Giulia / Veneto / Croazia Sudoccidentale              | I, Croatie     | 1995         |
| 27 | San Marino / Emilia Romagna / Marche                                 | I, S.Marino    | 1995         |
| 28 | Øresund  | S, DK          | 1995         |
| 29 | Castilla - León / Beira Nordeste                                     | E, P           | 1995         |
| 30 | Pomerania (Mecklenburg-Vorpommern/Zachodnie Pomorze)                 | D,PL           | 1995         |
| 31 | Lombardia-Sondrio-Grigioni   | I,CH           | 1996         |
| 32 | Alpes Centrales  | I, A, CH       | 1996         |

|    |  |                |      |
|----|--|----------------|------|
| 33 | Viadrina (Berlin-Brandenburg/Lubuskie) | D, PL          | 1996 |
| 34 | Pouilles / Patras                      | I, GR          | 1996 |
| 35 | BoBa (Böhmen / Bayern)                 | D,CZ           | 1997 |
| 36 | Circumpolar North                      | FIN,S,N        | 1998 |
| 37 | Burgenland / Westungarn                | A,H            | 1999 |
| 38 | Kärnten/Gorenjska/Koróska              | A, SL          | 2002 |
| 39 | Bodensee                               | D, A, CH, LI   | 2002 |
| 40 | Dunaj / Vltava                         | A, CZ          | 2004 |
| 41 | Jílní Morava / Dolní Rakousko          | A, CZ          | 2006 |
| 42 | HuSloCro                               | H, SL, Croatia | 2006 |
| 43 | DKMT                                   | H,RO,Serbia    | 2007 |
| 44 | Sicilia-Malta                          | I, MT          | 2007 |
| 45 | Steiermark-Podravje/Pomurje            | A,SL           | 2009 |



Rising worker mobility, economic interdependence and climatic and energy developments have radically transformed the context in which trade unions work. The countries of Europe are all facing similar problems and challenges, which is why there is a real need for collective European action. Such joint activities are vital if Europe is to overcome the challenges it faces. The ETUC can take action in a number of ways with a view to influencing discussions and decisions: it can apply political pressure, conduct social dialogue or organise large-scale demonstrations.

## **INFLUENCING EUROPEAN DECISION-MAKING**

The ETUC has an impact on EU legislation and policies through its work with the European Council, the European Commission and the European Parliament.

**European Council:** since 2001, the ETUC has taken part in the Tripartite Social Summit. This summit brings together the European social partners, the Heads of State and Government from the current and two incoming EU Presidencies and the Commission. This is an opportunity for the trade unions to make their voice heard at the highest level of EU decision-making. The ETUC also holds regular meetings with the Council's members.

**European Commission:** under the EC Treaty, the Commission must consult the European social partners on all proposals on employment and social policy in the EU.

**European Parliament:** the ETUC liaises with MEPs across the political spectrum, specifically through the cross-party Trade Union Intergroup. The Parliament's powers are increasing, so it is crucial that the ETUC makes it aware of the trade unions' point of view and influences the European legislative process.

The ETUC also coordinates trade union involvement in a number of consultative bodies, such as the **European Economic and Social Committee**.

**European Court of Justice:** the ETUC is increasingly interested in the judgments handed down by this EU body, particularly when these relate to workers' mobility and respect for workers' fundamental rights.

## **REPRESENTING WORKERS IN THE FRAMEWORK OF EUROPEAN SOCIAL DIALOGUE**

European social dialogue brings together representatives of the trade unions and the employers' organisations and covers discussions, negotiations and joint actions by the European social partners. European social dialogue is enshrined in the Treaty and is a fundamental component of the European social model.

There is dialogue between the social partners at both sectoral and cross-sectoral level. The participants in cross-sectoral dialogue –that is, the ETUC, BUSINESSEUROPE (private-sector employers), UEAPME (small and medium-sized enterprises) and CEEP (public-sector employers)– have signed a number of Framework Agreements over the years on:

- Parental leave (1996), revised in 2009;
- Part-time work (1997);
- Fixed-term work (1999).

These agreements were ratified by the Council of Ministers and are now part of EU legislation.

The social partners went on to conclude new-generation, 'autonomous' initiative agreements, which the social partners themselves are responsible for implementing at national, sectoral and company level:

- Telework (2002);
- Work-related stress (2004);
- Harassment and violence at work (2007);
- Inclusive labour markets (2010).

They have also adopted Frameworks of action, such as those on lifelong learning (2002) and gender equality (2005).

In March 2012, the social partners adopted their fourth Work Programme (2012-2014), which features youth and employment among its top priorities.

Social dialogue is also conducted in the various industrial sectors and is coordinated on the trade union side by the European trade union federations. The sectoral social dialogue committees deal with issues linked to training, working time and conditions, health and safety, and free movement of workers, to name but a few.

## **ORGANISING LARGE-SCALE EUROPEAN DEMONSTRATIONS**

With a view to giving its actions more clout, the ETUC also mobilises its members by organising European demonstrations and campaigns. European demonstrations bring the European trade union movement into the spotlight and help boost its visibility.

# **« EUROPEAN SOLIDARITY IS THE ONLY WAY OUT OF THE CRISIS »**

Long before Lehman Brothers collapsed in 2008, the ETUC was one of the first actors to flag up how financial capitalism could endanger the economy. Since then, the ETUC has strived to influence discussions and make proposals to ensure that Europe comes out of the crisis stronger than ever. The last ETUC Congress made a firm commitment to this approach.

The ETUC believes that European solidarity is the way out of the crisis. Europe is currently caught in the austerity trap, with budget cuts deepening the recession. So far, political responses to the crisis have largely concentrated on number-crunching and lack long-term political vision.

Moreover, the European social model is in jeopardy. In the face of a dire economic situation, most European leaders have weakened social protection systems, driven down salaries and attacked fundamental rights.

Different political choices must be made urgently to enable Europe to break out of the dangerous spiral in which it is caught. With that in mind, the European Trade Union Confederation suggests opening discussions on a Social Compact for Europe based on collective bargaining, economic governance for long-term growth and employment and economic and social justice. If Europe is to overcome the crisis and face up to globalisation, it needs long-term, sustainable systems of solidarity.

Democracy must not be threatened at a time when right-wing nationalist movements are spreading throughout Europe. At present, European democracy is at a crossroads. The ETUC is calling on all actors on the public stage to take up the economic and political and social challenges we currently face. It is time to start discussions on a Social Compact for Europe.

