

ETUC Manifesto 2019-2023

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We are living through a crucial and challenging moment for Europe and the European trade union movement.

The effects of unregulated globalisation, economic crisis and austerity; the changes in the economy and labour market due to climate change, digitalisation and automation; the attacks on workers' and trade union rights and on the European social model; the growth of inequalities within and between countries; the issue of migration and mobility flows, often leading to discrimination and exploitation – the rise of far-right, nationalist, neo-fascist and xenophobic forces threatening human and social rights and putting the democratic values of the European Union at risk – all these raise major concerns for the future of Europe and of European working people.

The trade union movement has a responsibility to defend democracy and the European social model, the most important achievement of the last century, based on peace, human, workers', social and environmental rights, on fair and equal living and working conditions including quality public services and education systems.

To achieve this, the ETUC and its affiliates have designed sound policies for the future of the European economy, society and labour market and will put in place strong and efficient tools and actions to reinforce the role of trade unions in delivering concrete and positive results for workers, particularly focusing on:

A new, progressive and sustainable economic policy; pay rises and upward wage convergence between countries and sectors; employment in quality jobs and a reduction in the working week with no cut in pay and control over working time arrangements; defence and extension of workers' rights, social protection and public services; relaunching social dialogue, strengthening collective bargaining, extending its coverage and promoting workers' participation; just transition, sustainable globalisation and progressive trade; fair mobility and a common migration and asylum policy, based on respect for rights and equal treatment.

This is the best way to improve the working and living conditions of our members and to shape the future of the world of work.

We will build a renewed and stronger trade union movement, able to organise and mobilise, to cope with the challenges we have in front of us, to anticipate and shape the changes ahead; a trade union movement that participates in strengthening democracy and social progress in Europe.

A strong trade union movement for the future, able to change existing economic and labour market policies, and to include those who are now excluded from rights and protection and are not treated equally: women, young and precarious workers, self-employed and platform workers, workers in the informal economy, migrants and mobile workers, people with disabilities or affected by any form of discrimination, including on sexual orientation and gender identity.

The European trade union movement will build ***A Fairer Europe for Workers.***

The social contract underpinning the EU social market economy is under threat, because of austerity measures, cuts and deregulation implemented across Europe as the wrong reaction to the economic crisis and because of social and wage dumping and labour exploitation and abuses. The European Pillar of Social Rights and the new social legislation are important steps to restore the European Social Model, but on their own they will not be enough.

What is needed is a renewed Social Contract for Europe setting out the relationship between three different groups in society: the state, labour and capital. Institutions have to take responsibility for reinforcing the social market economy. Companies should not be able to profit from the single market and at the same time undermine it by exploiting labour or avoiding paying taxes and social contributions.

The ETUC launches its Action Plan for the achievement of a renewed Social Contract for Europe, and will work and negotiate with the European and national institutions and employers' organisations to achieve it, through flagship initiatives including:

1. A Social Progress Protocol, giving workers', trade union and social rights primary status, to be included in the Treaties and implemented through EU legislation and policy.
2. The relaunch of an extraordinary plan for increased public and private investment in quality job creation in all sectors of the economy and public investment in public services, public goods and social protection.
3. Changing the EU economic governance, the European Semester, the European Monetary Union and EU budget to promote social justice, job-friendly investment, sustainable growth, fair and progressive taxation, and people's well-being – all as an objective of EU economic policies.
4. Rebuilding the European social model, by reinforcing and implementing the principles of the European Pillar of Social Rights through policies, legislation, social regulation, collective agreements and sound measures for redistribution and upward convergence.
5. Reinforcing bipartite and tripartite Social Dialogue at European, national and sectoral level, through enhanced legislation, policies, agreements and funding for capacity building.
6. A Partnership for Collective Bargaining, to achieve a general pay rise and upward convergence of wages and working conditions for all. The partnership should lead to Council recommendations and possibly a Framework Directive, to reinforce and build stronger and autonomous national collective bargaining and workers' and trade union rights in each EU Member State.
7. More effort to achieve gender equality at work and in society, with legislation and policies to address all forms of discrimination, particularly the gender pay gap.
8. Urgent action on the climate crisis, digitalisation, automation and globalisation with a just transition that – through EU legislation, policy measures and dedicated funds, social dialogue and collective bargaining – ensures that no one is left behind.
9. A reform of competition law, company law and new legislation on due diligence and supply chains within the single market, in order to ensure full respect for social, workers' and trade union rights.
10. A reform of the EU legislation on information and consultation, board-level representation and European Works Councils, improving workers' participation at the workplace and in the changing and restructuring of the economy.
11. Shaping the future of work with EU legal frameworks to reduce precarious and uncertain employment, extend workers' rights and protection to new forms of work, stop wage and social 'dumping' and build fair worker mobility and equal treatment.
12. Making lifelong learning and the right to training a reality for everyone through an EU legislative initiative.
13. Increased action to build a fair and sustainable European agenda for migration, globalisation, international trade and external and neighbourhood policies, also through the full implementation in Europe of the Agenda 2030 and other UN Treaties and tools, including ILO conventions.