

[ETUC newsletter]



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Figure of the month

14 million

Fourteen years after the adoption of the European Works Councils (EWC) Directive, more than **14 million workers** are represented by EWCs. At the present time, there are more than 800 EWCs active in Europe. (Source: ETUI and SDA databases)

Make a note



Dear readers,



The agreement reached in the United Kingdom between trade unions, employers and the government on equal rights for temporary agency and other workers is an important step forward for the European trade union movement as well. This agreement opens the way for a settlement on the European directive on temporary agency workers, based on the principle of equal treatment. After the setbacks encountered up to now, the ETUC hopes that this directive will be rapidly adopted. It will enable Europe to move forward on a key issue that has been blocked since 2002.

As a counter to this progress, the Working Time Directive is likely to be revised at the same time by the Council of Ministers. This revision is likely to remove the rights of workers to have on call time recorded as working time and allow the indefinite continuation of the UK's opt out from the normal upper weekly limit of 48 hours. This revision is a step back and we are critical of it.

We do expect progress on the revision of Working Time Directive. Proposals for this are scheduled for publication on July 2, just in time for progress to be made under the French Presidency which is supportive of the ETUC on this question. More generally, a social agenda will be published; early indications suggest that European Works Councils apart, this will be lacklustre. Social Europe needs more than is to be proposed.

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[ETUC in action]

On the offensive for stronger European Works Councils

01/05/2008 – In co-operation with the European Industry Federations, the ETUC launched [a campaign for stronger European Works Councils \(EWCs\)](#) and more democracy in multinational companies. **The revision of the EWC Directive is more than eight years overdue.** The ETUC welcomed the European Commission's announcement that the revision of this directive will be included in the framework of the new social agenda, expected on July. For more information about the campaign, see following page.
[ETUC press release](#)



Ljubljana Euro-demonstration – The video

The video of the [Euro-demonstration on wages](#) organised on Saturday 5 April in Ljubljana (Slovenia) is available on the web site. To download it, [please click here](#).

If you would like high definition copies, please send your request to M. Antonio Moreira: amoreira@etuc.org.



[Trade Union Agenda] May 2008 – June 2008

28/05/2008	Meeting of the Group II "Workers" of the European Economic and Social Committee (Brussels)	
31/05–04/06/2008	LO-S Congress (Stockholm)	Congress Programme
09–10/06/2008	ETUC Conference "On the offensive for stronger European Works Councils" (Brussels)	Conference programme
11–13/06/2008	European Mine, Chemical and Energy Workers' Federation (EMCEF) Congress (Prague)	Congress programme
18/06/2008	Meeting of the Group II "Workers" of the European Economic and Social Committee (Brussels)	
24/06/2008	ETUC Steering Committee (Brussels)	
24–25/06/2008	ETUC Executive Committee (Brussels)	



[Dossier]

“ On the offensive for stronger European Works Councils ”



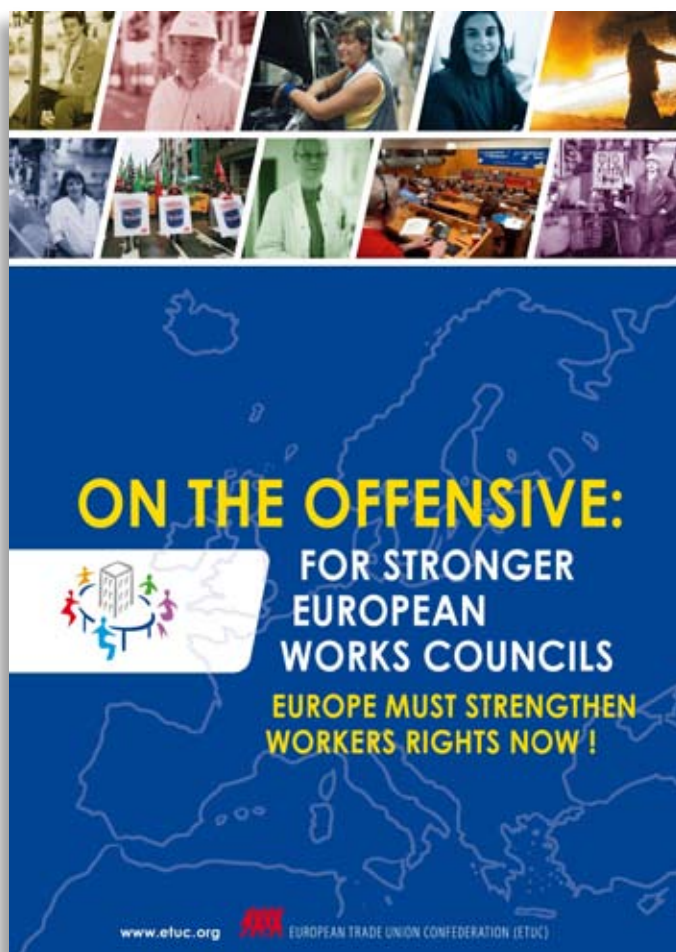
ETUC campaign for revision of the European Works Councils Directive

On 1 May 2008, the ETUC, in cooperation with the European Industry Federations, launched its campaign in favour of **revision of the European Works Councils Directive (EWC)**: [On the offensive for stronger European Works Councils](#).

Works Councils are very important bodies for worker representation in multinational companies. They give millions of European workers the right to be informed and consulted on company decisions.

The European trade union movement has been **calling for revision of the EWC Directive for some time**, in order to improve its content and strengthen workers' rights. Our demands include a **lower threshold for the number of workers** needed to set up EWCs, **harmonisation of the definitions of “information” and “consultation”** corresponding at least to those used in the directive creating the European Company (SE) statute, and **recognition of the role played by European Industry Federations on EWCs**. Recently, [the European Commission announced that it intends to present a proposal for revision of the directive in the context of the new social agenda initially foreseen for 25 June](#) but postponed to July. The aim of this campaign is to urge the Commission to put forward an ambitious revision that will improve the rights of European workers. As part of its campaign, the ETUC has prepared [info sheets](#) and other materials, available at the following address: <http://www.etuc.org/a/4949>.

Also, in cooperation with the [Hans Böckler Foundation](#) and the [European Industry Federations](#), the ETUC will host a [conference on European Works Councils on 9–10 June](#), in Brussels. At this event, workers' representatives on EWCs will share their experiences and highlight the urgent need for revision of the directive. Vladimir Špidla, European Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs and Equality, has confirmed his participation, along with other European decision-makers.



Useful links:

- >> [The campaign section on the ETUC website](#)
- >> [Interview with ETUC Deputy General Secretary Reiner Hoffmann, presenting the campaign in the April 2008 newsletter](#)
- >> [EWC info sheets](#)
- >> [Programme of the conference on 9–10 June](#)



[EU Agenda]

May 2008 – June 2008

05-06/05/2008	Informal Meeting of Transport Ministers (Brdo)	Meeting Agenda
06/05/2008	EU Troika – Turkey	Meeting Agenda
07-08/05/2008	“Mini-Plenary” Session at the European Parliament (Brussels)	
13/05/2008	Eurogroup (Brussels)	Meeting Agenda
14/05/2008	ECOFIN Council (Brussels)	Meeting Agenda
16-17/05/2008	Summit EU – Latin America Countries (Lima)	Summit Agenda
19-22/05/2008	Plenary Session at the European Parliament (Strasbourg)	
21-22/05/2008	Education, Youth and Culture Council (Brussels)	Council Agenda
22/05/2008	EU Troika – Ukraine (Brdo)	Meeting Agenda
26-27/05/2008	General Affairs and External Relations Council (Brussels)	Council Agenda
28-29/05/2008	Plenary Session at the European Economic and Social Committee (Brussels)	
29-30/05/2008	Competitiveness Council (Brussels)	Council Agenda
02/06/2008	Eurogroup (Luxembourg)	Meeting Agenda
03/06/2008	ECOFIN Council (Luxembourg)	Council Agenda
03/06/2008	EU Troika – Republic of South Africa (Brdo)	Meeting Agenda
04-05/06/2008	“Mini-Plenary” Session at the European Parliament (Brussels)	
05/06/2008	Environment Council (Luxembourg)	Council Agenda
05-06/06/2008	Justice and Home Affairs Council (Luxembourg)	Council Agenda
06/06/2008	Transport, Telecommunications and Energy Council (Luxembourg)	Council Agenda
09-10/06/2008	Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council (Luxembourg)	Council Agenda
12-13/06/2008	Transport, Telecommunications and Energy Council (Luxembourg)	Council Agenda
16-17/06/2008	General Affairs and External Relations Council (Luxembourg)	Council Agenda
16-19/06/2008	Plenary Session at the European Parliament (Strasbourg)	
18-19/06/2008	Plenary Session at the European Economic and Social Committee (Brussels)	
19-20/06/2008	European Council (Brussels)	Council Agenda



[Focus on the EU and trade union positions]

A disappointing EU – Latin America Summit



21/05/2008 – [The Fifth Summit of Heads of State and Government of the EU and Latin America took place in Lima on 16 and 17 May](#). The [final declaration](#) approved by the participants does not resolve questions about the aims of agreements to be signed in 2009 with the Andean Community and Central America, or about unblocking negotiations with Mercosur. On the **social side**, there was a commitment to bolster mechanisms for guaranteeing collective bargaining and respect for social rights. **Unfortunately, the trade union demand** for an explicit reference to the International Labour Organisation (ILO) Fundamental Conventions was not taken into account.

[ETUC press release](#)

[EU Slovenian Presidency press release](#)

Publications

European Commission Publications

The following reports are now available:

- >> [Quarterly EU Labour Market Review](#) (19/05);
- >> [Communication “Barcelona Process: Union for the Mediterranean”](#) (21/05).

Temporary agency workers: positive agreement in the UK

21/05/2008 – The [Trades Union Congress \(TUC\)](#), the [Confederation of British Industry \(CBI\)](#) and the British Government have finally reached an **agreement on equality for temporary agency workers**. The ETUC believes **this deal clears the way for a new EU Directive, based on the principle of equal treatment from day one of employment**.

[ETUC press release](#)



Future of collective agreements: the EP takes the initiative

29/05/2008 – The Employment and Social Affairs Commission of the European Parliament yesterday debated a **report on challenges to collective agreements in the European Union**. MEPs of different political persuasions have stressed the need for legislators to react to the recent judgements in the European Court of Justice (ECJ): [the Laval, Viking, Rüffert cases](#).

The European trade union movement is pleased that the MEPs give serious consideration to this issue of major importance to European workers and is looking for measures to rectify the recent rulings by the ECJ.

[ETUC press release](#)

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ON THE OFFENSIVE:

FOR STRONGER EUROPEAN WORKS COUNCILS

**EUROPE MUST STRENGTHEN
WORKERS RIGHTS NOW !**

