

**Van:** ETUC - CES MEDIA <media@etuc.org>

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**Onderwerp:** Social dialogue is the cornerstone of the European social model

Brussels, 19/06/2008

*On the occasion of the meeting of the Committee for Social Dialogue on European and International Issues (CDSEI), in Paris on 19 June 2008, the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) drew attention to its priorities.*



**European Trade Union Confederation [ETUC]  
 Confédération européenne des syndicats [CES]**

John Monks, General Secretary of the ETUC, declared: "In the wake of the Irish referendum rejecting the Treaty of Lisbon, we have every right to wonder whether the European Union is moving in the right direction and still responds to citizens' everyday concerns. We are also quite within our rights to wonder about the absence of a strong idea that drives European integration today, in contrast with what the EU has experienced in the not-so-distant past. This lack of inspiration leaves the field clear for rampant ultraliberalism which adds to an eroded socio-economic context and is destabilising an increasing number of workers. By the same token, the European Council of Employment and Social Affairs Ministers, meeting on 9 June, adopted an agreement on working time that represents an unquestionable and unacceptable setback for European social law."

The ETUC, the only social partner representing workers at European level, also highlighted the importance of social dialogue not only for employees but also for democracy. John Monks added: "This is a fundamental element of the European social model. By social dialogue, we mean negotiating capacity and above all respect for commitments. Social dialogue cannot boil down to a proliferation of dead-end meetings. It must lead to real agreements that are enforced. Social dialogue is more important than ever for defining and tackling the problems citizens experience in daily life."

It is time for the European and national authorities to take these indicators and the social partners very seriously, to move at last towards a more social and democratic Europe.

***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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