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**Onderwerp:** The ETUC asks the Spanish Presidency of the EU to focus on employment and climate change and to strengthen the European Model

## THE ETUC ASKS THE SPANISH PRESIDENCY OF THE EU TO FOCUS ON EMPLOYMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE AND TO STRENGTHEN THE EUROPEAN SOCIAL MODEL

Brussels, 20 January 2010



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

*A European trade union delegation*

*including John Monks, General Secretary of the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC), Józef Niemiec, Confederal Secretary of the ETUC, Cándido Méndez, Secretary General of the Workers' General Union (UGT) and Ignacio Fernández Toxo, Secretary General of the Workers' Committees (CCOO), will meet the President of the Spanish government, José Luis Zapatero, on 21 January to advance the European trade unions' priorities during the Spanish Presidency of the European Union.*

The first challenge of the Spanish Presidency will be to extricate Europe from the crisis by giving priority to the fight against the rise of unemployment and the development of a precarious labour market. Ever rising unemployment represents the human cost of the crisis, notably youth unemployment which is soaring in some countries of the European Union. It will be a major challenge for the years to come. John Monks warns against any premature measures to exit from the crisis. Public deficits have reached astronomical levels but reducing social spending now would not be a solution at a time when European citizens need it the most. John Monks said: *"We need a real strategy to help us out of the employment crisis and of mass unemployment. The Spanish Presidency must steer Europe on the path of sustainable growth, of more and better jobs and of social inclusion by way of robust industry policies and ambitious policies for research and development and education".*

In order to get Europe out of the crisis for the long term, financial regulations must be implemented to prevent a return of financial market speculation. The question now is how to eradicate this short-termism which is ruining economies.

The climate change challenge must be another priority of this Presidency, especially after the failure of the Copenhagen Summit. The Spanish Presidency must see to it that the ambitious objectives of the European Union in terms of the fight against climate change are back on the agenda and to enforce them. This would also be a way to assert Europe's position on the world scene. The European trade unions will ask the Spanish Presidency to build up a European green economy and a fair social transition as the basis for the change of the production model.

Finally, the European trade unions will highlight the need to improve the European social model by the reinforcement of collective bargaining and of workers' rights as a consequence of the free movement of persons and capital. A social progress protocol to strengthen the European social model, attached to the European treaties, will be discussed.

### Trade Union Memorandum to the Spanish Presidency

*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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