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**Onderwerp:** EPSCO Council: European Trade Unions appeal to the Ministers of Employment and Social Affairs to promote quality employment and support the real economy



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

## EPSCO COUNCIL: EUROPEAN TRADE UNIONS APPEAL TO THE MINISTERS OF EMPLOYMENT AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS TO PROMOTE QUALITY EMPLOYMENT AND SUPPORT THE REAL ECONOMY

7 July 2010

*The European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) is participating in the Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council (EPSO) taking place from the 7<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> of July. The trade union delegation led by John Monks, General Secretary of the ETUC, called on the Belgian Presidency to lead a growth policy coordinated at European level and to support quality employment. The ETUC warned against the current tendency of European governments to consider that the only way to generate competitiveness and growth is to reduce public spending and social benefits.*

The European social partners have been invited to join the EPSO Council starting on 7 July under Belgian Presidency. The European Trade Union Confederation reminded the Council of the priorities of the European trade union movement: *"The current debate of employment ministers seems to be mainly about increasing the 'supply' side of labour on the one hand and raising the retirement age to address the ageing problem on the other hand. There is little regard for the fact that, right now, there is excess labour supply and a massive lack of demand for labour. This does not demonstrate a clear perception of today's economic and social realities such as high unemployment, increased precarity, wage cuts and freezes, and reductions in social spending for pensions, unemployment benefits etc. Moreover, limiting social policies or making the labour law more flexible will not create jobs or generate growth"* said John Monks, General Secretary of the ETUC.

The trade union delegation deplored the fact that the notion of 'quality of labour' has disappeared from the EPSO agenda. John Monks added: *"The Council gives the impression of an agenda hostile to the interests of the workers. And the Commission has quite recently declared it is in favour of a higher retirement age which will undoubtedly deepen Euroscepticism. We should recall however that the previous Belgian Presidency of 2001 played a leading role in favour of the 'quality employment'. That priority should not be forgotten today."*

The ETUC also warned that it will never support the deregulation and flexibilisation of the labour market presented as remedies for the return to competitiveness and growth. Instead it promotes active coordinated stimulation initiatives at European level, low carbon industrial policies and investments in research and development to support growth.

The European trade unions also expressed their deep concern following the withdrawal of the stimulus packages and the simultaneous implementation at European level of austerity measures supported by the Commission. A warning against the austerity measures will be the slogan of the Euro-demonstration that the ETUC will organise in Brussels on the 29<sup>th</sup> of September.

[Link to John Monks' speech at EPSO Council](#)

*The European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) speaks with a single voice on behalf and in the common interest of workers in Europe. It was founded in 1973 and today represents 82 trade union organizations in 36 European countries as well as 12 sector federations.*

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