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Onderwerp: Green paper on pensions: for the ETUC, job creation must be the priority

GREEN PAPER ON PENSIONS: FOR THE ETUC, JOB CREATION MUST BE THE PRIORITY

8 July 2010

The European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) reiterates its concerns with respect to the Green Paper on the future of pensions, published yesterday by the European Commission. The trade union movement urges the employment and social affairs ministers meeting today in Brussels for the Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council (EPSCO) to recognise the principle of solidarity in both public pension schemes and complementary or occupational schemes in order to ensure that pensioners can maintain a decent and independent existence, as guaranteed in the European Union's Charter of Fundamental Rights. The ETUC adds that the Commission is not addressing the real challenge.

The challenge is to guarantee the adequacy and sustainability of pension systems, not to raise the retirement age, as ETUC General Secretary John Monks pointed out yesterday at the informal EPSCO Council, in the wake of the European Commission's proposal. Employers are already not keeping workers on the job until statutory retirement age nor are they creating the conditions for hiring young people.

John Monks commented: "The policies we are seeing implemented today go in the wrong direction, giving tax or social security reductions to businesses on the pretext of promoting employment. What needs to be done is to guarantee existing resources, but also identify new ones by making use of all economic leverage, and in particular financial leverage."

The ETUC also highlighted the fundamental principles of pension systems, namely that the bulk of retirement income must be supported by schemes based on solidarity within and between generations and must be guaranteed by the public authorities, in accordance with Convention 102 of the International Labour Organisation. Indeed, for the ETUC, the purpose of pension schemes is to guarantee a decent living to retired people, not to sustain financial markets.

The European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) speaks 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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