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

29 SEPTEMBER 2010: EUROPEAN TRADE UNION DAY OF ACTION TO SAY "NO" TO AUSTERITY MEASURES

29 September 2010

Some 100,000 people will take to the streets of Brussels today and thousands of others will do the same in many other cities across Europe to express their concerns about the economic and social situation, which will be exacerbated by austerity measures. With this European Day of Action and particularly its key event -the Euro-demonstration in Brussels - the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) intends to give a voice to workers and to make it clear to the European leaders with responsibility for employment and growth that workers are not willing to be sacrificed on the altar of austerity.

John Monks, General Secretary of the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC), commented: "Workers are on the streets today with a clear message to Europe's leaders: there is still time not to choose austerity, still time to change direction. Austerity measures are still in the decision-making stage but their implementation will have a disastrous impact on individuals and on the economy once the effects start being felt, which could be as early as this winter. We realise that governments have deficits that have to be absorbed but we ask them to take their time to pay their debts. There's no urgency, no need for panic! After the Second World War, countries were ruined and took years to pay off their debts. Austerity measures are already in force in Ireland and Greece and it is clear that they are not having any impact on growth and employment. The European trade unions, through which workers speak, urge Europe's policy-makers to direct public spending into investment instead of rushing to absorb deficits by adopting draconian austerity measures. There are alternatives to austerity: invest in jobs for young people, who are particularly affected by unemployment and insecure work. They will be in the front line of the Euro-demonstration in Brussels. Invest in industrial policies, in the green economy, invest in everything that can contribute to sustainable growth. We also need a European tax on financial transactions to raise funds for stimulus measures and to stem purely speculative activities. This is the message that we will deliver to the President-In-Office of the Council of the European Union (EU), Mr Leterme, and to European Commission President Mr Barroso, whom an ETUC delegation will meet after the demonstration."

Protest movements will also take place across Europe: a general strike in Spain, demonstrations in Italy, France, Portugal, Lithuania, Germany Latvia, Cyprus, Serbia, Poland, Finland and Ireland. Demonstrations have already been held in the context of this Day of Action in Bucharest and Prague, where they brought together more than 20,000 and 40,000 people respectively.

The Euro-demonstration in Brussels will be made up of delegations from around 50 trade union organisations representing 30 countries. The European industry federations will also be represented.

On 29 September, all demonstrators will proclaim their concerns in the face of the worsening economic and social situation, which finds expression in rising inequalities and insecure work and which is likely to grow worse if austerity measures are implemented. They will call for the use of other alternatives.

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.

The ETUC is also on [Twitter](#), [YouTube](#) and [Flickr](#). To subscribe to the [ETUC newsletter](#), please [click here](#).

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