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Datum: 12/22/2010 01:01 PM
Onderwerp: ETUC is sceptical about the viability of the new citizens'initiative

ETUC IS SCEPTICAL ABOUT THE VIABILITY OF THE
NEW CITIZENS'INITIATIVE

22 December 2010



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

The European Parliament and the Council have formally agreed on a new instrument to bring Europe closer to citizens. This idea to collect one million signatures in order to propose new European legislation initially came up in the European Convention which drafted the European Constitution. The European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) welcomed the initiative, but is critical about the cumbersome and bureaucratic character of the instrument now proposed.

It is not understandable that young people will be entitled to sign a European petition from the age of 18 only, instead as from 16 as demanded by the ETUC. The European institutions should also be able to differentiate between the practicalities of organising a petition and a European election. Under the new rules, in 18 Member States, an ID card number is being made obligatory before one can sign; and in all Member States people will be asked to deliver too many details (date and place of birth, nationality). This is far from the reality of collecting signatures in public places. The European Parliament improved the text and added a proper follow-up including a public hearing.

John Monks, General Secretary of the ETUC, said: *"We are disappointed and see the risk that a good idea is spoilt by over-bureaucratic procedures. I very much doubt that in the next years there would be a single new piece of European legislation drafted thanks to this instrument. The procedure should be revised to make it really user friendly and bring it closer to the citizens."*

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 83 trade union organisations in 36 European countries, plus 12 industry-based federations.

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