

Van: Media@etuc.org <Media@etuc.org>

Aan: veerle.solia@amsab.be

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Onderwerp: EU on a "collision course" with Social Europe and the autonomy of collective bargaining

EU ON A "COLLISION COURSE" WITH SOCIAL EUROPE AND THE AUTONOMY OF COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

4 February 2011



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

In reaction to today's European Council launching a discussion on a so-called "Competitiveness Pact", the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) firmly states that it cannot tolerate that competitiveness is being abused as yet another alibi to intervene in collective bargaining systems across Europe.

The ETUC identifies the danger that cutting minimum wages and abolishing wage indexation systems in a few countries will only be the start of a process undermining wage formation systems and the bargaining position of workers and trade unions across the whole of Europe.

The ETUC stresses that wage competition is a zero sum game; what some gain in the short run, others lose and, in the end, the whole of Europe suffers because demand is squeezed out of the internal market.

Said John Monks, General Secretary of the ETUC: *"This is not a pact for competitiveness. It is a perverse pact for lower living standards, more inequality and more precarious work. It is ignoring all the lessons of the recession so far that public deficits and debt are unavoidable, indeed desirable in a slump, to prevent things getting worse. Instead of writing a debt brake into national constitutions, countries would do better to write the autonomy of collective bargaining and social partners into their constitutions, as is the case in Germany. Europe is heading on a collision course with its social model and its core principle of the autonomy of collective bargaining."*

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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For more information :

Patricia Grillo.

ETUC Head of Press and Communications

+ 32 (0)2 224 04 30

+ 32 (0)477 7 7 0 1 64

E-mail : Pgrillo@etuc.org

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