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**Datum:** 03/23/2011 03:32 PM

**Onderwerp:** EUROPEAN COUNCIL: THE ETUC IS OPPOSED TO EUROPEAN ECONOMIC GOVERNANCE THAT WOULD JEOPARDISE WAGES AND SOCIAL RIGHTS

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23 March 2011

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

***A delegation from the European Trade***

***Union Confederation (ETUC) will participate in the Tripartite Social Summit<sup>[1]</sup> on 24 March ahead of the European Council, one of the key themes of which will be European economic governance. The European trade unions will defend the idea of responsible economic governance offering social guarantees, unlike the model currently on the table. Protests have been organised across Europe recently to call for an alternative to austerity measures with their disastrous social effects in this period of crisis, with its high unemployment and insecure work.***

The European Commission's annual growth survey and the competitiveness pact proposed by Chancellor Merkel and President Sarkozy present proposals that put dangerous downward pressure on salaries and social rights.

President Van Rompuy and President Barroso have modified the approach but not the substance in their text and their message. But it is still implicit that wage moderation or deflation is to be central to future strategy. Eurozone heads of government want to "review wage setting arrangements, and, where necessary, the degree of centralisation in the bargaining process, and the indexation mechanisms." Additionally, there are to be "labour market reforms to promote flexicurity..." and limits to early retirement schemes.

John Monks ETUC General Secretary declared: *"The European economic governance contains serious omissions. On wages, there is no mention of the rising levels of inequality, the ever widening gap between rich and poor, executives and the rest, or the bankers and their gargantuan appetite for large bonuses; there is an implicit rejection of inflation or comparability in pay bargaining; nor is there recognition of the deterioration of the employment contracts of many workers caused by the growth of precarious work which is discrediting the term "flexicurity". For this reason, we have mobilised in several European cities to demand a Pact for More Fairness and More Equality and against Austerity. We believe in peaceful, democratic protest such as that taking place today in Brussels, and also in Berlin and Paris today and on Saturday in London."*

The ETUC welcomes the interest in pursuing financial transaction taxes, in issuing Euro-bonds to clamp down on speculation and finance a European recovery plan, and in developing dynamic industrial policies.

John Monks added: *"I hope this develops quickly and constructively but more of this kind of positive economic governance, not just austerity governance, is badly needed"*.

ETUC resolution on the European Economic Governance: <http://www.etuc.org/a/8448>

*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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[1] *The Tripartite Social Summit aims to ensure the effective participation of the social partners in implementing the EU's economic and social policies. With the coming into force of the Lisbon Treaty, the role of the European social partners is reinforced, in particular the recognition of the Tripartite Social Summit (article 152 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU):*  
<http://www.etuc.org/a/36>

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