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FLEXICURITY OR HOW THEORY IS NOT APPLIED IN PRACTICE

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The European social partners met on 31 March and 1 April 2011 for their final conference on flexicurity. The study conducted for this purpose points out the complexity of this concept, not to say the impossibility of generalising it in all European countries.

The work of the social partners also shed light on the diverging approaches of the European Trade Union Confederation and the employers, and the difficulties of having a common message on this subject.

For the ETUC, the emphasis must be put on securing occupational careers. This also implies in particular stable and well protected employment contracts so as to avoid 'bad job traps' from being created.

However, the involvement of the social partners in charting and implementing active policies for the labour market remains a key message for them. The study and the conference confirmed that three partners are involved in this context. The commitment of the States, in particular in the transition phase or the management of short-time working arrangements, is decisive in terms of protecting the unemployed as well as in terms of vocational training policy. However, policies of the austerity imposed by the Europact lead to restrictions in this regard.

Joël Decaillon, Deputy General Secretary of ETUC said "Flexicurity is a concept that is being used in every possible way. Flexibility does not create jobs and to put it at the core of the remedies to the crisis is a mistake. For the most vulnerable employees, young people or example, this approach boils down to making their jobs precarious."

The European Trade Union Confederation (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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