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**Onderwerp:** Working time: ETUC encourages the Commission to put an end to excessive working hours in Europe

## WORKING TIME: ETUC ENCOURAGES THE COMMISSION TO PUT AN END TO EXCESSIVE WORKING HOURS IN EUROPE

30 September 2011



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

***The European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) welcomes the EU Commission's decision today to launch an infringement procedure against two Member States for serious violation of the European Working Time Directive. There is an urgent need to find a solution to put an end to excessive working hours in Europe.***

According to the Commission, there are numerous cases where junior doctors are regularly obliged to work continuous 36-hour shifts, to work over 100 hours in a single week and 70-75 hours per week on average, and to continue working without adequate breaks for rest or sleep. In the second country, doctors in public hospitals and health centres often have to work a minimum average of 64 hours per week and over 90 hours in some cases, with no legal maximum limit. There is no legal ceiling on the number of continuous hours they can be required to work at the workplace, and they often have to work without adequate intervals for rest or sleep.

The ETUC considers that this situation is unacceptable in a modern world: such excessive working hours constitute an intolerable violation of workers' basic right to decent work and are the source of risks to patients' lives.

Unfortunately, violations of the working time Directive are frequent in the EU. It is essential that the Commission continues investigating the situation in other Member States. .

*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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