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Datum: 10/07/2011 01:16 PM

Onderwerp: The European Union must not take punitive action in National policies

THE EUROPEAN UNION MUST NOT TAKE PUNITIVE ACTION IN NATIONAL POLICIES

7 October 2011

**The European Trade Union
Confederation (ETUC) finds
interference by the European**

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

Union in the policies of countries in difficulty unacceptable. The confidential letter from the President of the European Central Bank (ECB) to Italy, recently published in the press, dictated a detailed economic programme to cut social spending and jeopardised the system of collective agreements at national level. The recent visit by the Troika to Greece also imposed demands that are impossible to meet by a country already bled white.

The European Union and the ECB are waging punitive expeditions against countries that have failed to comply with the stability rules. Instead of following the path of solidarity and taking bold measures commensurate with the seriousness of the situation, it's the short-term solution that holds sway. The recent measures imposed on Italy and Greece are oppressive. European decision-makers are persisting along a path that is forcing countries in difficulty down an infernal spiral.

Bernadette Ségal, ETUC General Secretary stated: "We had already reacted in August to the letter sent to Italy by Mr Trichet, the President of the ECB. The recent publication of its content is worse than we could have imagined. It is not up to the ECB to make policy and especially not the policy it intends to impose: a policy of the lowest social bidder. Furthermore, the Troika went to Greece recently. The payment of a new tranche of €8 billion depended on its visit. The Troika imposed terrible "commandments" on an economy on the verge of chaos. Is it by chance that this week's Eurogroup meeting decided to postpone the payment of this aid? Our Greek members organised a general strike yesterday. A new action is planned for 19 October. We have expressed our full solidarity with them. It is an illusion to think that these actions will help countries in difficulty to return to growth. Exactly the opposite is happening."

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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The European Union, the European Central Bank and the International Monetary Fund

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