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Onderwerp: European Social cohesion at risk

EUROPEAN SOCIAL COHESION AT RISK

10 October 2011



On 6th October, the European Commission issued a proposal to reduce European aid to the poorest regions so as to oblige governments to control their public spending. The European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) opposes this approach which serves only to punish regions and people who are already in difficulty.

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

Financial sanctions linked to the Stability and Growth Pact would penalize regions and localities. Macroeconomic conditionalities are unacceptable. The result would undoubtedly be the impoverishment of the populations of the European Union and thus contrary to the basic principles of economic, social and territorial cohesion policy as reaffirmed in the Lisbon Treaty.

The Structural Funds are the key instruments for reducing the gap between the development levels of the regions. The European Social Fund (ESF) must be the main instrument for a high-employment economy delivering economic, social and territorial cohesion," as well as the relevant areas and objectives pertaining to employment, skills and the fight against poverty. In very concrete terms, it is a matter of promoting a high-level strategy for more and better quality jobs.

Even if the proposed budget for the European Social Fund is higher than today (84 billion € instead of the current 76 billion €) the total budget for cohesion policy is inferior (336 billion € instead of the current 348 billion €).

The ETUC also considers that measures provided under the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF) must be included in the ESF in order to ensure coherence between "curative" measures due to restructuring covered by the EGF, and "preventive" measures provided by the ESF.

Bernadette Ségol, ETUC General Secretary declared: "I would like to recall what Commissioner Andor said during the Territorial Conference on ESF, in Warsaw. He said, that the Commission would never link the Structural Funds with the Stability and Growth Pact.

Furthermore, ETUC continues to insist that the Social Partners are involved in entire Structural Funds debate."

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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