

ETUC Press release

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**28 April 2012 - Workers'
Memorial Day**

27 April 2012

**European Trade Union Confederation [ETUC]
Confédération européenne des syndicats [CES]****International Workers' Memorial Day**

Memorial Day, remembers and honours those who have been killed, injured, or suffered ill-health due to their working conditions. It is an opportunity to highlight the preventable nature of most workplace accidents and to promote campaigns and union organisations which strive for continuous improvements in workplace health and safety.

According to the ILO at least 167 000 fatalities have been attributed to work-related accidents and diseases in the EU demonstrating a range of bad working practices, poor health and safety conditions at the workplace and a disparaging attitude towards workers' health and lives by those who are primarily responsible for occupational health and safety issues.

The European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) calls for systematic and substantive improvements in health and safety especially in times of economic crises which increase the risk of overlooking the psychosocial aspects due to the pressure of an increasingly heavy workload.

Health and safety prevention systems must be strengthened! To achieve higher standards and better protection for workers at the workplace the ETUC highlights four priority areas which demand action now:

- 1) Workers Health and Safety Representatives: each worker should have a Safety Representative
- 2) Labour inspection: there should be at least one Health and Safety inspector per 10 000 workers to ensure standards are enforced
- 3) Occupational health and safety services: minimum targets, multi-disciplinary, competency and independence must be ensured by law
- 4) Neglected areas in workplace health and safety such as psychosocial risks, musculoskeletal disorders and chemical hazards must be considered top priority issues in any health and safety policy at every level of industry and services

On the occasion of International Workers' Memorial Day, 28 April, the ETUC reaffirms its conviction that health and safety at work at all levels is a fundamental trade union priority. The ETUC will continue to fight for better

health and safety at work and better working condition together with its national and European affiliates.

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 85 trade union organisations in 36 European countries, plus 12 industry-based federations.

The ETUC is also on [Twitter](#), [YouTube](#) and [Flickr](#). If you would like to subscribe to the [ETUC newsletter](#), please [click here](#).

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