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

Solidarity and fairness are a requisite for saving the EU

27 June 2012

The European Summit on 28-29 June will be crucial for the future of Europe. On the eve of this Council, the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) calls on European leaders to radically change course. Europe needs to break up with austerity and go instead for policies that pursue sustainable growth and quality jobs with fair wages and equal treatment.

Three years of austerity and competitive deregulation have resulted in economic stagnation, rocketing unemployment, rising inequalities and social despair. Europe is caught in an austerity/depression cycle and this explosive cocktail is leading Europe to a point of no return. To save the single currency, to save the project of European integration, the Council will have to take a major leap forward.

For the ETUC, this major leap forward must be based on a Social Compact: To save Europe, we urgently need to save the people.

For the European trade unions, Europe will only be able to get out of the crisis if policy radically changes course: Austerity and competition amongst ourselves need to be traded in for the Europe of cooperating and acting together. For the ETUC, the successful policies here are: real and tangible investment measures to kick start growth, a freeze on austerity, creation of Eurobonds, an European Central Bank

effectively fighting the speculation against sovereign bonds, strict respect for the freedom and autonomy of collective bargaining, the promotion of decent wages for all as a factor contributing to demand and growth, harmonisation of corporate tax basis combined with a minimal tax rate, a rapid implementation of the financial transaction tax, and a much more determined fight against tax havens.

"Member states cannot face the crisis on their own. On their own, member states are powerless in the face of financial markets. On their own, they are too quickly tempted to go for solutions that turn out to be disasters, such as a race to the bottom and social dumping. To get out of the crisis, we need more Europe. We need stronger European common instruments and choices promoting sustainable growth, quality jobs and fair wages, such as the ones proposed in our Social Compact" said Bernadette Ségo, ETUC General Secretary.

Without real and tangible choices for sustainable growth, social Europe, indeed Europe itself, is doomed to fail. The ETUC says yes to European rules, but yes to the right rules, also rules on growth and also social rules as well.

This is the main political message that the ETUC has delivered at the meetings with European leaders before the Summit.

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