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ETUC Press release

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THE EUROPEAN COUNCIL MUST RESPOND TO A SOCIAL EMERGENCY

14 March 2013

The economic and social consequences of the crisis (the explosion of unemployment, the runaway loss of job security, the growing inequalities, etc.) have reached the limits of what is socially acceptable in a number of EU countries. For this reason the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) is organising a European rally in conjunction with the European Council of 14 and 15 March to call for an end to austerity and to focus on employment, particularly for young people. A change of course is needed. The confidence of the markets does not depend on austerity, but on the confidence of citizens and the support of the European Central Bank. Growth and employment are needed to restore confidence in the European Union.

The announcement by the Council of December 2012 to the effect that the European authorities would endeavour to strengthen the social dimension of the Economic and Monetary Union (EMU), including social dialogue, for the Council in June gave rise to legitimate expectations among workers who, increasingly, are starting to think that Europe is part of the problem and not part of the solution.

The austerity measures are plunging some countries into recession. Bernadette Ségol, ETUC general secretary, said: *“Austerity is a failure. It has not succeeded in reducing deficits and is having a devastating social and economic effect. Applied in a deteriorating economic context, this blind austerity has only worsened the situation. It has widened*

inequalities and further increased the loss of job security. The social models are coming under attack because of the crisis. Everywhere in Europe, employment is becoming precarious and wages are being revised downwards. The European trade union rally that we are organising today will concentrate on two priorities: the end of austerity and the fight against youth unemployment."

The Council of 14 and 15 March must therefore respond to the social emergency. The ETUC has drawn up precise proposals in a Social Compact. The European trade union is calling for a change of course with the emphasis on a sustainable recovery with more and better jobs, based on an investment plan equivalent to at least 1% of the European GDP each year. Europe must come out of the crisis stronger than ever.

Based on industrial relations and social dialogue, social protection and public services, the European social model is a source of support and not an obstacle to competitiveness and growth.

Link to the website dedicated to the European trade union action:

<http://www.etuc.org/a/10843>

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 85 trade union organisations in 36 European countries, plus 10 industry-based federations. The ETUC is also on Twitter, YouTube and Flickr.

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