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ETUC Press release

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### **What hope that austerity can save the climate by 2030?**

28/03/2013

*Yesterday, the European Commission published its long anticipated Green Paper setting out proposals for 2030 EU energy and climate targets. While the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) welcomes the Commission's initiative to launch a debate on the future of the EU climate policy framework, we deplore the lack of ambition, notably in terms of investment and objectives, as well as the lack of attention to employment and social issues. For many years, the ETUC has argued for a just transition towards a low-carbon economy that would maximise benefits and engagement, and minimise the hardships for workers and their communities in this transformation.*

Already back in 2006, the Commission began their earlier Green Paper on energy policy with the following sentence: "There is an urgent need for investment." The same document identified "Energy for growth and jobs in Europe" as the first of six priority areas.

Seven years later, with the EU in the midst of a social and economic catastrophe, the ETUC notes with regret that instead of proposing a recovery policy based on ambitious targets linked to a long term investment plan, the Green Paper sets the frame for a timid debate on how to slightly fine tune the existing framework. Yesterday's Green Paper takes stock of the current policy framework and identifies four key issues: "Targets", "Coherence of policy instruments", "Fostering the competitiveness of the EU economy", and "Acknowledging the differing capacity of Member States".

*“In today’s context with over 26 million unemployed, we expected the Commission to put jobs at the core of the EU’s decarbonisation strategy, through investments in energy efficiency, low carbon industrial policies and active social engagement and dialogue”, stated ETUC General Secretary Bernadette Ségol. “While the link between specific targets and sectoral job creation is mentioned occasionally, we are far from the master plan needed to properly address the many labour challenges linked to the decarbonisation of the economy”.*

*“Rather than any attention on organising the just transition towards a low-carbon economy”, she continued, “the Commission has focused entirely on a very narrow definition of competitiveness. This is short-term thinking in an area which needs a long term strategy”.*

The ETUC is preparing its detailed response to the consultation.

***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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