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Verzonden: donderdag 2 mei 2013 16:51
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Onderwerp: ETUC Press release

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**EU's proposal on application of workers' rights to free movement: Positive signal
from the Commission *both expected and needed***

Brussels, 02/05/2013

In October 1968, the Member States agreed to allow European workers to enter their territory with a view to working, thus opening up the labour markets in the Member States to all EU citizens. This freedom was complemented by the right to equal treatment, an essential corollary to the right to free movement. On 26 April 2013, the European Commission launched a proposal for a new enforcement directive on measures facilitating the exercise of the rights conferred on workers in the context of the freedom of movement of workers. The proposal aims to make it easier for people to exercise their rights in practice, to overcome any obstacles and to help prevent discrimination against workers on the basis of nationality.

"This proposal by the Commission was both expected and needed, all the more given the increase in serious problems linked to discrimination and unequal treatment in Europe notably as a result of the application of transitional measures for the new Member States as well as and the increasing xenophobia in more and more Member States" stated Luca Visentini, ETUC Confederal Secretary.

The ETUC agrees with the analysis of the issue as presented in the proposal as well as with the ways for improving the situation and above all ensuring the enforcement of workers' rights to free movement.

Veronica Nilson, ETUC Confederal Secretary, added “*This is particularly true concerning the key role of the social partners in fighting discrimination and unequal treatment. The social partners must be included and respected in all such activities. It is thus extremely important to strengthen the coordination between social partners’ activities and bodies and the existing as well as future bodies set up by Member States on the basis of the proposed directive with the aim of providing assistance and information*”.

The ETUC reaffirms that free movement and fair mobility are among its top political priorities and that furthermore all four fundamental freedoms of the common market (movement of goods, services, capital and people) should be given equal importance since, in practice, many obstacles still hamper to the free movement of workers.

The ETUC believes that any discussion of mobility for EU citizens must not lose sight of the following aspects: statutory and additional social security, taxation, the recognition of qualifications, access to employment and the conditions of employment.

Finally, on the eve of the EU’s latest enlargement, the ETUC reaffirms its opposition to the application of the third phase of temporary measures against the free movement of workers from Romania and Bulgaria. The ETUC calls on EU Member States to refrain from applying any kind of temporary measures blocking or limiting free movement of Croatian workers within the European Union.

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 [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [YouTube](#) and [Flickr](#).

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