

Put Just Transition at the heart of a European position on climate and on sustainability (11.10.11)

As EU environment ministers meet today to finalise the negotiating positions for the Durban COP17 climate summit and agree the EU's position in advance of the Rio+20 UN event on sustainable development next year, European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) is watching closely to ensure that social concerns are taken on-board.

"Ensuring the implementation of Just Transition in international climate policy, as agreed in Cancun, and putting it centrally in the agenda at Rio+20, is fundamental to worker support for European negotiating positions in these international fora", reminded European Trade Union Confederal Secretary Judith Kirton-Darling.

"The Durban conference should lead to a roadmap designed to bring about a global agreement as quickly as possible, including clear provisions on the implementation of Just Transition and Decent Work through a mandate for the ILO and the climate finance needed to ensure it", added Judith Kirton-Darling.

To avoid a regulatory gap in international emission reduction commitments, the ETUC is supporting calls for strong and ambitious emission reduction targets for the EU based on Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) recommendations, increased transparency and clear monitoring, reporting and verification (MRV). The ETUC supports the EU's insistence on clear targets from the emerging countries to cut their emissions, in-line with IPCC recommendations.

Crucially on climate finance, Economic and finance ministers have failed to agree clear financial commitments for the period 2013-2020, on Fast Start financing and to ensure the framework for the \$100 billion annually by 2020 promised in Cancun. According to the ETUC, Europe should commit funds for this period now, a third of the total amount needed. This should be additional to EU member states responsibilities to provide 0.7% GDP in overseas development aid, and not substitute this earlier commitment. New sources of finance such as a financial transaction tax should support this, the ETUC suggests.

Meanwhile at Rio+20, EU negotiators will have the opportunity to push forward the international sustainable development agenda.

"The Rio+20 summit must be grasped as an opportunity for the EU to revitalise its own sustainable development strategy through a strengthening of the European social and employment dimension, recognising the essential importance for social cohesion played by social dialogue and collective bargaining. It is only through including policies and action to tackle inequalities, and promote safe, decent and sustainable green jobs that trade unions will remain engaged in the process and sustainable development will be achieved", warned Judith Kirton-Darling.