

European Council should prioritise sustainable investment and support a 2nd Kyoto period for Just Transition at Durban (COP17)(25.10.11)

A Just Transition Roadmap for European workers requires a shift beyond business as usual in European climate, resource and energy policies, according to a new resolution adopted by the Executive Committee of the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) in preparation of the EU's position in Durban (COP17) and implementation of the EU's commitments made in Cancun last December. In December 2011, international climate negotiators will converge on Durban (South Africa) for the 17th Conference of the Parties (COP) to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). Trade unions are closely following the negotiations.

With the Kyoto Protocol set to expire in 2012, these international negotiations are crucial to ensuring the future framework for the reduction of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. As stated in the resolution, the ETUC is determined to press for a strong result, based on a Sustainable New Deal in Europe and a strengthened international framework moving towards a binding global deal on climate change.

“European leaders are meeting this week to tackle the economic crisis. Rather than promoting an assault on welfare provisions, social rights and collective bargaining systems, through aggressive austerity and reform programmes, we call on our leaders to take another road – a high road to sustainable growth through active, strong public policies and the promotion of investments in energy- and resource-efficiency, creating and maintaining rather than destroying good quality jobs in Europe”, demanded ETUC Confederal Secretary Judith Kirton-Darling.

According to the ETUC, a step on this road is avoiding a regulatory gap in the international framework on emissions reduction.

Given attempts by certain governments to usher in a ‘voluntary pledge’ system, and in the absence of a global binding agreement, in a new resolution adopted by the Executive Committee, the ETUC calls for the EU to support a second commitment period for the Kyoto Protocol based on strong and ambitious emission reduction targets in line with 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. “The Durban COP should lead to a roadmap designed to bring about a globally binding and ambitious agreement as quickly as possible”, stated Judith Kirton-Darling, following the adoption of the ETUC's resolution on the climate negotiations.

“Working people are deeply concerned about climate change. Opportunities created by tackling energy- and resource-efficiency must be grasped. While the social changes necessary to tackle it must be properly anticipated and managed fairly. We need to see full worker participation and the ILO mandated to ensure the implementation of the commitments made in Cancun on Just Transition and Decent Work,” she stressed.

ETUC Resolution: <http://www.etuc.org/a/9159>

The 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 83 trade union organisations in 36 European countries, plus 12 industry-based federations