

Crisis is not an excuse to reduce health and safety protection, says ETUC (13.12.11)

Meeting in Cracow (Poland), over 100 trade unionists within European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) from across Europe have launched a strong call for a new EU strategy on health and safety. Unions also strongly rejected attempts to exempt micro enterprises from EU rules in the name of crisis measures.

"All workers have a right to working conditions respecting their health, safety and dignity regardless of the size of company they work for," reminded Bernadette Ségol, ETUC General Secretary, in opening the conference. "The ETUC will not accept a reversal of the burden of proof for small and medium enterprises (SMEs) on the need for risk assessment when we know that workers are often more at risk in smaller workplaces."

On 7-8 December, the ETUC Executive Committee adopted a resolution on a new European Health and Safety strategy. The ETUC has launched a series of demands for the EU strategy for 2013-2020 based on reinforcing prevention structures, worker participation and addressing the long-term impact on health from chemicals and hazardous substances, musculo-skeletal disorders and psycho-social risks.

"The increased pressure on workers in the crisis and the rise in precarious work demands a new EU strategy, the current strategy is not adequate", stated Judith Kirton-Darling ETUC Confederal Secretary.

The ETUC is calling for MEPs to support these demands as reflected in MEP Karima Delli's European Parliament report due to be adopted in Strasbourg on 14 December:<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=REPORT&mode=XML&reference=A7-2011-0409&language=EN>
