

## The EU in 2015: a new start or political chaos?

It is hard to predict what the New Year may hold in store for 'social Europe'. Although the European Commission's new work programme promises more emphasis on growth, investment and jobs, the deregulation and austerity agenda remains high among Mr Juncker's priorities. Will the EU, on the economic front, avoid deflation – and possibly a new recession – in 2015? And does the New Year herald a political revival of the Left or will Europe stumble into political chaos? The Commission's plan of action for 2015, adopted on 16 December, claims to take its inspiration from the ambition to be '*big on big things, and smaller on small things*'.

For the proponents of a strengthened 'social Europe', the shift of emphasis in the Commission work programme to jobs and investment is welcome, as is the promise to 'reinvigorate social dialogue at all levels'.

That said, the 'Better Regulation' (some would call it 'deregulation') agenda, and the explicit promise to 'lighten the regulatory load', confirm that the 'new start' promised by the Commission might be less concerted than social actors would wish. No less than 80 pending items of legislation have already been withdrawn and 79 existing pieces of EU law are up for 'review'. Important initiatives such as the maternity leave directive and the 'circular economy' package might be stalled or even scrapped and, in the context of REFIT, several social directives are to be evaluated and reviewed, including important directives on health and safety at work.

It is clear, what is more, that 2015 will be a very challenging year for the EU politically. Snap elections in Greece on 25 January could bring to power the left party Syriza which has taken a strong anti-austerity stance, re-opening the debate about Grexit (Eurozone exit for Greece). On 7 May parliamentary elections will be held in the United Kingdom with, possibly, a referendum on this country's place in the EU taking place in their wake. Towards the end of 2015, Spanish elections could represent another big test for traditional parties which, by supporting the EU's austerity drive, have put the left-wing party Podemos in the driver's seat to form a new government.

2015 will be a crucial year also for climate change. With 2014 having been the hottest year on record, world leaders will need to agree on a serious action plan for the reduction of carbon emissions during the Paris summit planned for December.

Philippe Pochet, General Director ETUI

'Je suis Charlie'

## Publications

### Trade union membership retention and workplace representation in Europe



Based on a comparative survey of members of fourteen European trade unions in twelve countries, this working paper tries to answer the question of why people retain their trade union membership in times of declining unionisation. The paper shows that the presence and performance of workplace

## Focus

### HesaMag 10: Occupational health services in need of emergency care

In this special report, the European Trade Union Institute seeks to identify the main factors that are undermining occupational health services in Europe: shortage of specialists, overwork that undermines the quality of services, loss of direct contact with actual working conditions, feeling of being forsaken, commercialism of occupational health and safety services, etc. [Read more about this issue.](#)

*HesaMag* is a magazine all about health and safety at work, published in English and French. It is profusely illustrated, printed in full colour, and designed to appeal to a wide

representatives is the main reason for member retention throughout Europe.

The author concludes that the presence of workplace representation is a prerequisite for any form of trade union renewal and draws other political recommendations from this study.

Author: Jeremy Waddington

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## Healthcare reforms and the crisis



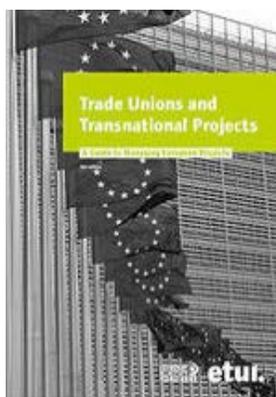
In recent years and more particularly in the wake of the financial crisis, widespread cost-reducing healthcare reforms have been enacted in Europe at national level subject to varying degrees of pressure from the EU. In countries hardest hit by the crisis, these reforms have had detrimental effects on access to care.

This Policy Brief identifies the need for a more consistent healthcare agenda on the part of the EU and for more transparent and accountable procedures for its involvement in this field, taking due account of the basic objectives of healthcare systems.

Authors: Furio Stamati and Rita Baeten

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## Trade unions and transnational projects (9th edition)



The aims of this publication are to introduce some basic skills in developing and managing transnational projects in trade union contexts; to explore the benefits of collaborating on projects with partners in other European countries; and to understand the various kinds of support that the European Commission can offer to transnational projects involving trade unions.

This 9th edition has been completely revised. It provides a detailed description of the new EU funding programmes 2014-2020 in areas that are likely to be of interest to trade unions, as

readership. *HesaMag* is published twice a year, and sets out to show that occupational health is not just a matter for specialists but both a highly political issue and a daily concern for millions of workers. [For more information and to subscribe.](#)

*HesaMag* is now also available as digital publication on ISSUU, as well as some other ETUI publications. [Have a look!](#)

## Events

### Save the dates

- 22 January: ETUI Monthly Forum - [Mobilising for change: the first successful European Citizens' Initiative 'Water is a Human Right'](#), Brussels.
- 3 February: Symposium - [The sovereign debt crisis, the EU and welfare state reform](#), Brussels.
- 19 February: [Prague symposium on foreign direct investments](#), Prague, Czech Republic.
- 24 February: ETUI Monthly Forum - [Corporate social responsibility and trade unions: perspectives across Europe](#), Brussels.
- 26-27 February: 2015 EWPC Conference - [Variations on a theme: understanding information, consultation and negotiation at the workplace across Europe](#), Brussels.
- 4-6 March: [International conference on 'Women's health and work. Sharing knowledge and experiences to enhance women's working conditions and gender equality'](#), Brussels.
- 9 March: [ETUI/EPSU Workshop on multinational corporations in the infrastructure sectors: challenges from the perspectives of employees, worker representatives and trade unions](#), Brussels.
- 12 March: ETUI Monthly Forum - [Transformations in EU gender equality: from emergence to dismantling](#), Brussels.

## Recent events

### Chinese investment in the EU: heads they win ...

While recent years have seen investors fleeing a Europe mired in crisis, Chinese inward investment has increased dramatically. Should workers in now-Chinese-owned firms fear worsening employment and working conditions? Are 'European-style' worker representation and collective bargaining under threat? Overall, the speakers at an ETUI seminar on Chinese investment in Europe were upbeat.

well as an overview of some of the key EU and ETUC policies in those fields.

Authors: Silvana Pennella and Derek Stubbs

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## A new climate for the EU's sustainability transition Conference report. ETUI conference cycle - The social-ecological transition

The report of the third conference of the ETUI's cycle on the 'socio-ecological transition', in which three European thought-leaders on sustainability debated the foundations for a bold social-ecological vision for Europe, is now available.

[Read more](#)

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## Training

### ETUI/ETUC workshop

Next week, the Education department, in cooperation with ETUC will organise the workshop: **The enforcement Directive on posting of workers: transposition and its challenges**. This training will bring together participants, from 10 countries, to look into details on the newly adopted enforcement Directive on posting of workers.

With the help of three labour inspectors, participants will identify the key recommendations/new tools for an adequate transposition and implementation of the enforcement Directive, focusing on what will be needed to tackle fraud and abuses when implemented. After outlining the interaction between the enforcement Directive and Directive 96/71 on posted workers, a panel discussion will conclude the training. The panel discussion with experts from DG Employment and trade union lawyers is envisaged to identify the risks of legal challenges (see also the violation of workers' rights) when transposing different articles of the enforcement directive.

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### January 19-22, 2015 Better use of internet

Training for journalists and restricted to EFJ members. The cyberspace is part of private, professional, leisure space. Though the risk is never zero, journalists can improve their capacities to better use communication media and reduce the probability of their security being notched.

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### January 27-29, 2015 European trade union actions to defend labour and

Wolfgang Müller was tasked by IG Metall with surveying German capital goods, motor manufacturing and electronics firms in which there has been investment from China.

[Read more](#)

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## Welfare states in the era of EU austerity: the case of labour market policies

On Wednesday 10 December, an international research workshop entitled *Welfare states in the era of EU austerity - the case of labour market policies* was held in the ETUI. The workshop launched an international network project that will investigate whether the pattern of labour market reform and unemployment policies has been changing in EU member states in the context of EU austerity. The project is coordinated by the ETUI's senior researcher Sotiria Theodoropoulou. Leading academic researchers in the field from 10 EU member states will explore the forms that any retrenchment in the area of labour market policies has been taking and whether there are changes in the nature of activation policies and in the distribution of risks across individuals. The findings of the research will be published later this year in an edited volume, consisting of country case studies.

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## Other activities

- On 8-9 December, the Friedrich Ebert Foundation, in cooperation with the Hans Böckler Foundation, hosted the 13th British-German Trade Union Forum in London. Aline Conchon – researcher in the 'Europeanisation of industrial relations' Unit at the ETUI – presented the spread and variety of (legal) mechanisms which grant workers a voice in corporate governance across Europe. Workers' involvement was indeed the focus of this 2014 edition of the gathering during which the General Secretaries of the TUC and DGB committed to further their cooperation with a view to developing a common narrative of workplace democracy and good governance.  
[Download the full report of the forum](#)
- Enrolling young members and improving their effective participation represents a paramount challenge for the future of the European trade union movement. This issue was the focus of a conference held in Brussels last December. The gathering was the occasion for presenting the results of the project 'YUnion – Union for Youth' initiated by the Association for International and Comparative Studies in Labour and Industrial Relations (ADAPT). Two ETUI researchers, Kurt Vandaele and Margherita Bussi took part in the debate.  
[Read more on the event and watch the ETUI videos](#)

## trade unions' rights

Overview of fundamental human rights violation under austerity, gender perspective, risks related to REFIT, TTIP, TISA and CETA. National, European and international trade unions perspectives and possible strategies to influence the political decision making process.

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## February 18-20, 2015 EU funding for social dialogue

This training, held in Brussels, offers the opportunity to learn more about the EU program EaSI "Employment and Social innovation" and the available funding for social dialogue activities. Participants will take advantage of the contribution of a representative of the European Commission and the expertise of ETUC. In addition, the course will focus on how to improve the quality of project proposals with transnational partnerships submitted by Trade Unions. Participants will work in groups to draft a concrete project proposal, getting support and evaluation during the work.

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## In the media

- AlterEcoPlus: [Le modèle nordique se transforme](#), Philippe Pochet.
  - Social Europe Journal: [The Commission's Investment Plan: A New Narrative or A Faustian Deal?](#), Philippe Pochet.
  - Arbetet (Sweden): [Strejkerna ökar – men färre vill redovisa dem](#).
  - De Standaard: ['O barbaren! Denkt wat jij doet'](#).
  - France Inter: presentation of the book *La science asservie* by Annie Thébaud, [contribution by Laurent Vogel on the EU dimension](#).
  - 'De zevende dag' (VRT): [Fact check – strikes based on ETUI research](#) (You need to accept cookies).
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- Philippe Pochet has been invited to participate in the international high-level conference 'Nouveaux modes de production au niveau mondial. Quelles opportunités et quels enjeux pour l'emploi et le travail ?' which will take place on 20 January in Paris. The conference is organised by the French Ministry of Work, employment, professional training and social dialogue in collaboration with the Research department of ILO and the ILO Bureau for France.  
[Download the programme](#)
  - ETUI researcher Viktor Kempa participated in a workshop for New Independent States organised jointly by the ILO, ITUC and PERC on Health and Safety at Work. The gathering took place on 18-19 November 2014 in Tbilisi. The participants came from 10 former Soviet Union republics, among others Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Moldova or Ukraine, i.e. countries covered by the European Neighbourhood Policy. The main topic was the organisation and role of the Labour Inspectorates and their links with trade unions.
  - On 4 and 5 December the Italian Presidency of the European Union organised, in Rome, a conference on the outlook for health and safety policy. Laurent Vogel, researcher at the ETUI, addressed the gathering and called for a revitalisation of occupational health and safety policy. He stressed the urgency of improving the existing legislation on occupational cancers. [Read Laurent's contribution](#) (in Italian)
  - Laurent Vogel, Isabelle Schoemann and Aïda Ponce – all ETUI researchers – represented the ETUI at the validation seminar, held in Brussels on 9 December 2014, at which stakeholder representatives from EU Member States, the social partners and EU-relevant organisations gathered to discuss the preliminary recommendations made by the consultants currently evaluating the practical implementation of the EU Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) Directives in EU Member States.
  - ETUI researcher Béla Galgóczi took part at three events related to Climate Policy and Jobs in December. At the [final NEUJOBS conference](#), Béla argued that we should not focus on greening jobs but should look rather into the ways in which work itself will necessarily be subject to a thoroughgoing transformation. In the wake of this presentation, he was a member – alongside representatives from DG Research and the European Parliament – of the panel on the climate change priorities of the new European Institutions at the conference ['Making Transitions Happen Event: Perspectives and Opportunities for 2015'](#), organised by the Climate-KIC Hub.  
On 4 December Béla spoke at the gathering ['European and Asian sustainable towns: what are the models of sustainable urban development?'](#) in the framework of the *Conference on sustainable development facing climate change* organized, during the first week of December, by the [China Europa Forum in Paris](#).

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