

Editorial

European integration is subject to a period of great uncertainty. The financial crisis was followed by the euro crisis and the unemployment crisis; now we are faced with the refugee crisis of which no one can accurately predict the outcome. In the midst of the turmoil, one government is demanding a 'half-membership' status that would allow it to hold on to the best of the EU and to jettison the 'worst'. Is the United Kingdom to be taken out of Europe? Is Greece to be taken out of Schengen? Are barbed wire fences to be erected at the Austrian and Danish borders and elsewhere? Are the Visegrad countries to be granted special status? Utter confusion seems to be everywhere.

Those of us who observed completion of the internal market, the launching of the single currency, the fall of the Berlin Wall and the reunification of the continent have in the last few months looked on aghast as the European Union took several unbelievable strides ... backwards. After a protracted and painstaking labour of realisation that we European countries are all in the same boat, this hard achieved insight has been suddenly shattered. Instead of new prospects or ambitions, we are faced with a void.

In this context the European Commission's plan to bring the question of fundamental social rights back on to the agenda is to be welcomed. The initiative may or may not come to something; yet to seek to restore some prospect of social progress for all Europeans, including the right to decent wages, to collective representation, to social inclusion, and to protection against abusive social practices, is indeed a way of helping citizens and workers to regain their bearings and of putting new wind into Europe's sails. Social progress is a sine qua non condition of any endeavour to make European citizenship a meaningful reality. The boldness of this wager is better than the mediocrity of a 'shut-down-the-borders' mentality. It remains to hope that visionary leaders will prove willing to enact such a wager.

Philippe Pochet, General Director ETUI

Publications

Unemployment, internal devaluation and labour market deregulation in Europe



Unemployment rates in the EU rose after the economic crisis of 2008, passing the 10% mark in 2012, but with big variations between countries. The worst afflicted had been subject to so-called 'internal devaluation' policies, aimed at curing unemployment by reducing wage costs. This book provides a comparative study of countries that to varying degrees followed that road (Greece, Spain, Portugal, Ireland) set against others that did not (Germany, UK, Poland).

Editors: Martin Myant, Sotiria Theodoropoulou and Agnieszka Piasna

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Digitalisation of the economy and its impact on labour markets

This working paper gives an overview of the new possibilities opened up by the 4th industrial revolution and tackles some specific questions in relation to its effects on the labour market, including on the status of employees, on working conditions and on training. It examines the role that trade unions can play in the digital economy and the main initiatives

Focus

Call for contributions

Call for contributions to the themed issue of *Transfer: European Review of Labour and Research* **The digital economy and its implications for labour** (edited by Maria Jepsen & Jan Drahokoupil). **Deadline 1 March 2016**

The themed issue addresses the implications of the digital economy on jobs, distribution of productivity gains, the dynamics of job destruction and job creation, and in particular the possible recast of the labour market in the light of the 'gig' or 'sharing' economy. The research on labour aspects of digitalisation is growing rapidly but its findings are by no means unequivocal. Many are predicting a transformative change in the global distribution of jobs and wealth as well as with regard to what jobs will exist. However, the research looking at the place and role of trade unions is embryonic at best. This special issue aims at clarifying what a future labour market might look like and what policy choices are crucial in shaping the outcomes.

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Events

Save the dates

- 24-25/02/2016 : EWPC Conference - [Building bridges: combining information, consultation and board-level employee representation in European multinationals](#).
- 17/03/2016: Monthly Forum - [The social reality of Europe after the crisis](#).
- 21/03/2016: Interest representation and europeanisation of trade unions from EU member states of the Eastern enlargement.
- 23/03/2016: Book launch - Benchmarking working Europe



already proposed at European trade union level in this context.

2016.

- 22-24/05/2016: Transatlantic Social Dialogue.
- 27-29/06/2016 - SAVE THE DATE - ETUC/ETUI conference **'Mastering the new world of work'**, Hotel Thon EU, Brussels. (find soon more information on the ETUI website)

Author: Christophe Degryse

[Read more](#)

The Court of Justice of the European Union and fixed-term workers: still fixed, but at least equal



This working paper focuses on the impact of the directive on fixed-term work and EU Court of Justice (CJEU) case law concerning fixed-term work from 2007 and 2013. In so doing, it develops an analytical framework to analyse the Europeanisation of labour law with an eye to the literature on labour market dualisation.

Authors: Caroline de la Porte and Patrick Emmenegger

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Extending solidarity rather than bargaining concessions: the IG Metall campaign for agency workers



Concession bargaining at workplace level has been spreading in the US and across Europe. It is often framed as a response to organisational or economic crises and therefore as a useful instrument for dealing with employment restructuring in the short term. This policy brief examines the practice of concession bargaining taking as its starting point a campaign on agency work conducted by the German metalworkers union IG Metall.

Author: Chiara Benassi

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Transfer February 2016: Working life democracy

The freshly published issue of *Transfer* focuses on 'working life democracy' and, more specifically, on the trade union (and political) struggle to expand democracy into the sphere of working life. The issue contains articles that tackle this multi-faceted issue from differing standpoints.

[Read more](#)

Recent events

Social partners and the collaborative approach are key to the green transition of the Ruhr region

During a Monthly Forum held on 1 February, ETUI senior researcher Béla Galgóczi presented the main findings of a recent paper on the economic and industrial restructuring process of the Ruhr areas. 'We are facing a long-term challenge: Europe needs to reach carbon neutrality by 2050, according to COP21. This means that Europe needs to double the effort it made between 1990 and 2020 in order to exit from fossil fuel in 2050', said Béla Galgóczi, presenting a recent paper published in the *Journal of Labour Research* on 'The long and winding road from black to green. Decades of structural change in the Ruhr region'.

[Read more](#)

We need to address the integration challenge to overcome the refugee crisis, says Commission adviser

'Our welfare states, our education systems, our civic cultures, our values, our international politics, our domestic politics, our elections: all this and more will be affected by how we address the integration of those refugees who are already here'. This is the message delivered by Ruby Gropas, social policy adviser to the President of the European Commission, on 28 January at an ETUI Monthly Forum focused on the refugee crisis.

[Read more](#)

[Watch the recorded version of the live webcast](#)

European case law on fixed-term contracts protects workers against discrimination but does not discourage this form of employment practice

European case law helps protect fixed-term workers against discrimination but contributes little to restricting employer recourse to this form of non-standard contract. Such is the principal message of a recent ETUI publication presented on 26 January at a Monthly Forum.

[Read more](#)

Second ETUI seminar on occupational diseases

On 25 January, some thirty researchers, trade unionists and representatives of associations attended a seminar organised jointly by the ETUI, the Belgian association *Santé & Solidarité*, and the Free University of Brussels (ULB). The gathering, held this year for the second time, was intended to present projects in which researchers and workers contribute their joint efforts in pursuit of a common goal, namely to raise visibility of the impact of work on health.

[Read more](#)

Other activities

The guide **'The machinery of occupational safety and health policy in the European Union. History, institutions, actors'** by Laurent Vogel is now available in English.

[Read more](#)

Training

EduDays 2015

[Watch the Video report Education Days \(EDUDays 2015\)](#), Berlin, November 2015.

In 2016 the EduDays will be organised in Gdansk, Poland, from 11 to 13 October.

Introduction to project work, Kiljava (Finland)



From 2 to 5 February 2016 15 trade union trainers from nine European countries meeting in Kiljava (Finland) became acquainted with the concept, methodology and materials necessary to teach the 'Introductory course in Project work' at national level. The final goal, spreading the Project work/management methodology among ETUC members, is helping trade unions to manage their resources more efficiently but also to promote networking and interaction between them and to reinforce a common working culture that helps to enhance trade union cooperation in Europe.

Course on informal economy in Sofia



From 26 to 28 January the ETUI, CITUB and KOZ held a course in Sofia on the informal economy. Unionists from six European countries and with professional and union experience in social security and tax administration, in the police and the educational environment, but also in migration and training, worked on a subject that is very present also due to the new challenges generated by European migration and asylum policy. The dynamic character of the course enabled intensive work to take place on the main concepts of informal economy and profiling axes to share and improve existing trade union strategies.

- On 22 January 2016 Christophe Degryse presented his working paper on '[Digitalisation of the economy and its impact on labour markets](#)' at a seminar organised by LBC-NVK in Antwerp. He was also invited to present this paper at the Brussels' parliament on 2 February 2016 on the occasion of the colloquium 'Quelle place pour l'économie du partage dans notre société?'. [Listen also to the interview with Christophe Degryse on RTBF.](#)
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In the media

- 10/02/2016 - [Bulletin 2/2016 - Industrial Relations](#), Adapt International Bulletin.
 - 05/02/2016 - [Unemployment, internal devaluation and labour market deregulation in Europe](#), Polecomix.
 - 04/02/2016 - [Un bilancio della Riforma Fornero. Ipotesi sugli effetti del Jobs Act di Renzi](#), Pensieri Economici.
 - 02/02/2016 - [Can OHS achieve change in a neoliberal world?](#), Safety at Work blog.
 - 02/02/2016 - [The results of Italy's 2012 labour market reforms – no solution to unemployment](#), LSE Blog.
 - 01/02/2016 - [Een dode planeet levert geen jobs, maar welke jobs levert een groene planeet?](#), De Wereld Morgen.
 - 01/02/2016 - [La GRH de demain se devra d'être 'durable'](#), HR Public.
 - 29/01/2016 - [Séminaire sur les maladies liées au travail \(ETUI\)](#), Association des travailleurs designés du Luxembourg.
 - 28/01/2016 - [Italy's labour market reforms of 2012: did they reduce unemployment?](#), Flex Work Research.
 - 25/01/2016 - [Greece reaches Tsipras anniversary with pension battle to face](#), Bloomberg.
 - 23/01/2016 - [La révolution numérique](#), RTBF (article).
 - 23/01/2016 - [La révolution numérique](#), RTBF (radio).
 - 22/01/2016 - [L'Allemagne se réforme pour réparer les dégâts des réformes néolibérales du marché du travail](#), Libération.
 - 21/01/2016 - [Erfolgsmodell Mitbestimmung](#), Hans Böckler Foundation.
 - 18/01/2016 - Digitalisation de l'économie: le conte de fées et sa part d'ombres, Le Soir. [Download the text of the article](#)
 - 15/01/2016 - [Minimum wages in the EU](#), European Parliamentary Research Service.
 - 15/01/2016 - [Zet kortere werkweek niet bij het groot huisvuil](#), De Morgen.
 - 14/01/2016 - [EU's medicin uden virkning](#), EU-fagligt netværk er et initiativ fra Fagbevægelsen mod Unionen.
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Training for European Works Councils

In addition to the annual seminars for board-level employee representatives and English and communication for EWC members, the ETUI Education work programme for 2016-2017 includes four events for individual EWC/SE WC members and trade union officers:

- 2-4/05/2016 coordination of EWCs in the Commerce sector in cooperation with UNI Europa in Florence, Italy.
- 7-9/09/2016 the practice of EWCs for newly elected members in Warsaw, Poland.
- October 2016 (exact date to be determined) coordinating EWCs for local trade union officers in Bratislava, Slovakia.
- 30/11-2/12/2016 Occupational Health & Safety (OSH) as a theme for transnational action in Bilbao, Spain.

Finally, two projects have just started for the development of brand new materials. The first will be an online course on the 'rules of the game', the basics about EWC activities; the second concerns a modulated training kit on understanding financial information. [For more information](#)

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