

Editorial

On 8 March 2016, the European Commission launched a public consultation on its '[European Pillar of Social Rights](#)' (EPSR) project. An [ETUI report](#), which came out in June but was finalised this month, provides a detailed legal analysis and critique of the Commission's text. The main fear of its authors is that the exercise may be diverted from its original objective of improving social rights in order to pursue solely economic objectives. The Commission is suspected of using this project to bring about a paradigm shift, substituting 'labour market law' for 'labour law protection'.

Following widespread consultation and debate in the Executive Committee, the ETUC has now also released [its official response](#) to the current phase of the consultation on the EPSR. The ETUC's demands and recommendations focus on seven priority areas: a fairer economy for quality job creation; a pay rise for fairness at work and economic justice; improved enforcement of existing rights and establishing new rights; fair mobility; secure labour market transitions; social protection and strong public services; and institutional change to ensure equal emphasis on promoting Social Europe.

Taking these demands seriously is one of the main recommendations of Maria João Rodrigues, rapporteur of the European Parliament on the EPSR. In the draft report published last month she concludes that the EPSR project is too important to be confined to a small group of EU specialists. She insists on engaging the entire multi-level structure of the EU, including municipal, regional and national governments, and encouraging their cooperation with companies, trade unions and civil society. The ETUI will continue to monitor this process and stay involved.

Philippe Pochet, General Director ETUI

Publications

The European pillar of social rights: critical legal analysis and proposals



The aim of the present paper is to provide a basis for an in-depth discussion of the European Commission's initiative for a 'European Pillar of Social Rights' by briefly examining its context. The main foci are the content of and – in more detail – and an analysis of the rights listed in the Annex of the Communication.

Authors: Klaus Lörcher and Isabelle Schömann

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Takeovers with or without worker voice: workers' rights under the EU Takeover Bids Directive

This book presents the results of

Focus

Reforms watch

The ETUI Reforms Watch is a new online web information service produced by the ETUI starting at the end of this month. This service will provide individual EU country dossiers with fact-based information on the **state of labour market reforms**, the **state of pension reforms**, developments in **legislation on strike action** and **data on strike activity**.

It will allow the reader to understand the fundamental changes that labour markets reforms, pension systems and strike activity have undergone in EU member states in the last ten years. The service will also include an overview per country of the industrial relations system (key facts and institutions), the main trade union confederations and trade-union related research centres.

[Read more](#)

Events

Save the dates

- 25 November: Book presentation - [Labour and social transformation in Central and Eastern Europe](#)



a study of workers' rights during company takeover situations in Europe. The major conclusion of the book is that the EU Takeover Bids Directive needs to be revised, as it does not provide an adequate level of workers' rights in its current form.

Authors: Jan Cremers and Sigurt Vitols

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Read also the [policy recommendations](#).

Unit labour costs: no argument for low wages in eastern and central Europe



This working paper discusses the use of unit labour costs (ULC) by the European Commission as a measure of competitiveness of exports, especially in central and Eastern Europe (CEE). It shows the flawed nature of the European Commission's argument that increasing wages ahead of measured productivity would necessarily represent a threat to export competitiveness.

Author: Martin Myant

[Read more](#)

What role can minimum wages play in overcoming the low-wage model in central and eastern Europe?



This working paper gives an overview of minimum wage policies in Central and Eastern Europe. It shows that minimum wages are an effective tool for reducing inequality by raising the lowest incomes.

Author: Jan Drahokoupil

[Read more](#)

- 8 December: Lunch debate - [From refugees to workers](#)
- 16 December: Monthly Forum - [Occupational cancer in Europe](#)

Recent events

European trade unions' experts evaluate and plan the next steps on health and safety at work

From 8 to 9 September, in Vienna the ETUI organised its annual Strategic Seminar 'Together for Health and Safety'. This thirteenth meeting gathered the members of the Workers' Interest Group (WIG) of the Advisory Committee for Safety and Health at Work (ACSH).

[Read more](#)

Trade unions crucial for the implementation of EU Social Fund programmes for vocational training

Despite the considerable effort made in recent years to increase access to lifelong learning, high levels of inequality persist, said Josua Gräbener, a political science researcher at the Université Grenoble-Alpes, at the ETUI's Monthly Forum of 27 September 2016.

[Read more](#)

Future growth perspectives in the CEE region

An ETUI project workshop on future growth perspectives in the CEE region took place in Budapest on 15-16 September 2016, bringing together senior researchers Jan Drahokoupil and Bela Galgoczi and head of unit Martin Myant from the ETUI, and nine experts from the CEE region. Key questions discussed included: what are the growth prospects after FDI levels have flattened out? What are the prospects of a higher value-added content from incoming multinational companies? What is the role of innovation and what challenges does digitalisation pose to the region? What policies are needed for a new phase of sustained growth?

Other activities

- The Pan-European Trade Union Council (PERC) of the ITUC and the ETUC held its ninth Summer School in Frankfurt am Main on 26-28 of September, with migration as the focus topic. Bela Galgoczi, senior researcher at the ETUI, delivered a keynote speech entitled 'Europe under multiple migration challenges: state of play, what is happening, what is at stake?'

Education Strategy 2015-2019



This strategic document of the Education department proposes the medium-term orientation of the institute's training activities for the ETUC's mandate period of 2015-2019.

It is based on the reflections and feedback of various trainers, training officers and members of the ETUI's Pedagogical Committee and draws inspiration from the discussions held at the ETUI's Education Conference in 2014 and the ETUI EDU Days in November 2015.

[Read more](#)

Activity report ETUI

Read about the activities of the ETUI in 2015-2016 in this activity report published last week. It provides an overview of the main activities carried out by the institute in its mission to support, reinforce and stimulate the European trade union movement.

[Read more](#)

Training

ETUI course on precarious work and trade union renewal

Together with the Italian trade union UIL and the Belgian FGTB/ABVV, the ETUI organised a course on 'Precarious Work and Trade Union Renewal' that took place in Rome from 20th to 22nd September. 19 participants from 12 different countries exchanged their perspectives and strategies about the organisation of precarious workers. The diversity of experiences and approaches that such an especially heterogeneous group of participants brought to the table was a key element contributing to the success of this course.

[Read more](#)

European training for young TU leaders

A new edition of the 'European training for young TU leaders' took place in Warsaw from 3 to 7 October. 25 participants from 15 countries and 18 TU organisations attended the first week of the training. This year the partners are OPZZ Poland and ICTU Ireland. The second week of the course will take place in

- ETUI senior researcher Jan Drahokoupil took part in an EU stakeholder brunch discussion on the European Pillar of Social Rights on 6 October in Bratislava. He also contributed to a plenary discussion at the launch of WEF's Competitiveness Report in Prague on 29 September. Furthermore, he gave a keynote speech on 'dependent capitalism' in Central and Eastern Europe at a European Sociological Association midterm conference in Sibiu on 28 September.
- Christophe Degryse, ETUI senior researcher specialising in the topic of digitalisation, was interviewed in the September issue of the Swiss media and communications trade union magazine [Syndicom](#). He talked about digitalisation and the labour market.
- ETUI health and safety expert Laurent Vogel participated in the Journée d'étude '*Quels liens y a-t-il entre l'égalité entre les hommes et les femmes et le bien-être au travail?*', organised by the Belgian Federal Public Service Employment, Labour and Social Dialogue and the Institute for the Equality of Women and Men. The event took place on 3 October in Brussels. He also gave a presentation titled '*De la loi sur le bien-être au projet Peeters: la santé est-elle en vente dans la négociation du contrat de travail?*' during the conference '*Le bien-être des travailleurs: Les 20 ans de la loi du 4 août 1996*' on 20 October in Charleroi.
- Labour law researcher Zane Rasnača, who has recently joined the ETUI, spoke at the S&D conference 'The Pillar of Social Rights: Shaping the social heart of Europe' on 20 October at the European Parliament. She participated in the panel 'Upgrading labour law and social protection systems to fight labour market inequalities and precariousness'.
- ETUI General Director Philippe Pochet has participated in the Intereconomics anniversary conference 'New Growth for Europe – On Investment, Crisis Management and Growth Potential' on 10 October in Berlin. He was part of a panel entitled 'Post-Crisis Policies – New Opportunities for Growth?' together with Daniel Gross (CEPS) and Mark Blyth (Brown University). He was also invited to speak at an audition at the Conseil économique, social et environnemental on the European Pillar of Social Rights on 19 October in Paris.

In the media

- 20/10 - [ΔΕΛΤΙΟ ΤΥΠΟΥ-ΠΡΟΣΦΥΓΗ ΤΗΣ ΓΣΕΕ ΣΤΟ ΣΥΜΒΟΥΛΙΟ ΤΗΣ ΕΥΡΩΠΗΣ: ΑΚΟΥΣΤΗΚΕ ΗΧΗΡΑ Η ΣΥΛΛΟΓΙΚΗ ΦΩΝΗ ΤΩΝ ΕΡΓΑΖΟΜΕΝΩΝ, ΤΩΝ ΑΠΟΛΥΜΕΝΩΝ, ΤΩΝ ΑΠΛΗΡΩΤΩΝ, ΤΩΝ ΑΝΕΡΓΩΝ ΚΑΤΑ ΤΩΝ ΜΝΗΜΟΝΙΩΝ ΚΑΙ ΤΩΝ ΑΝΤΕΡΓΑΤΙΚΩΝ ΜΕΤΡΩΝ, GSEE, Greece.](#)
- 19/10 - ['Chinese' employment practices imported to electronics assembly in Europe](#), GoodElectronics Network.
- 17/10 - [Otázky prínos zahraničných investícií](#), Nazory Pravda, Slovakia.

Brussels on 20-24 February 2017, and the third and final week in Dublin on 12-16 June 2017. Participants will continue to work at a distance during the two intermediate periods to develop joint proposals and contributions for the European and national labour movements.

Annual meeting of the network of TU centres and schools

The network of 28 TU centres and schools had their yearly meeting in Kijava, Finland on 30 September. Representatives shared their experiences of adult learning methods and techniques and how they have been using education technologies. The Finnish trade union school practices were an important part of the programme.

Seminar on 'The practice of European Works Councils'

A seminar on 'The practice of European Works Councils' for recently appointed or elected works council and Special Negotiating Body members took place in Warsaw, Poland from 7 to 9 September 2016. This was the seventh session covering the basics of EWC activities in a series that began three years ago. Once again, the interest was overwhelming, with more than 50 registrations.

[Read more](#)

Trade union coordination of EWCs and SE Works Councils

Seventeen local trade union officers participated in a seminar on 'Trade union coordination of EWCs and SE Works Councils' in Bratislava, Slovakia from 3 to 5 October 2016. Taking a critical view of the legal framework, the programme focused on developing a better understanding of the differences between the EWC and SE regulations. It included a debate about the guidelines from the European Trade Union Federations on the purpose of trade union coordination of EWCs and what practical approaches can be taken, an assessment of the problems that such coordinators may face in their role, and a look at the potential of EWCs as a tool for trade union action.

[Read more](#)

11/10 - [Practical evaluation of the recast EWC Directive](#), EWC news.

- 06/10 - [Únia flirtuje so sociálnymi politikami, naráža na kompetencie](#), Euractiv, Slovakia.
- 05/10 - [Waarom niemand echt wakker lijkt te liggen van de 3.500 ontslagen bij ING](#), Het Nieuwsblad, Belgium.
- 04/10 - [The situation of workers in the collaborative economy](#), European Parliament.
- 04/10 - Two ETUI researchers (Stan de Spiegelaere and Gérard Valenduc) have been interviewed on the ING case. Both interviews also touched upon the impact of digitalization on the employment in the bank sector, [RTBF \(in French\)](#) and [Radio 1 \(in Dutch\)](#), Belgium.
- 01/10 - [A travailleur détaché, droits au rabais](#), *Santé et Travail*, n° 096 - octobre 2016.
- 04/10 - ['Ik geloof in directe participatie waarin je mensen meer betreft bij het beleid'](#), Magazijn, Netherlands.
- 04/10 - [Caterpillar: Chance für ein Umdenken bei Mitbestimmungsrechten?](#), Mitbestimmung, Germany.
- 20/09 - [Caterpillar: an opportunity to rethink European workers participation rights?](#), Social Europe Journal, UK.
- 15/09 - [A European Pillar of Social Rights: first reactions](#), European Parliament.
- 01/09 - [Réponse Syndicale au défi numérique](#), SyndiCom, Switzerland.

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