

OUR PRIORITIES

ETUC Resolutions 1999



EUROPEAN TRADE UNION CONFEDERATION

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EMPLOYMENT





ETUC STATEMENT TO COLOGNE EUROPEAN COUNCIL

Executive Committee, 21/5/1999

1. The Executive Committee of the ETUC support the proposals made by the German presidency for a European Employment Pact process but - particularly in view of the growing indications that no real recovery is in sight - urge the Cologne European Council to substantially revise the draft 1999-2000 Broad Economic Guidelines so that they underpin, rather than undermine, the pact process. If this were not done, then the pact process could begin against the background of increasing, and not decreasing, employment problems.

2. The Guidelines must reflect post- and not pre-EMU thinking. Stability remains important, but not just as an end in itself. Post-EMU, stability can and must be the foundation on which more jobs and better living standards are built. Counter- rather than pro-cyclical policies must be pursued, with due weight being given to the risks stemming from weak demand at home, and to the EU's responsibilities for the health of the global economy.

3. The Guidelines should set real and not just nominal objectives. Specifically, the macroeconomic policy-mix should be designed to achieve and to sustain not only stability but also growth rates in excess of 3% pa in order to make it possible - together with the pursuit of active labour market policies - to reduce unemployment and to increase the employment rate to 70% and above.

4. With the stability objective under no threat, monetary policy must support the EU's wider objectives for growth and employment. Further interest rate reductions must be made promptly, and not belatedly, if the economic and employment situation require it.

5. The single monetary policy can only do so much however. Active budgetary and structural policies, capable of responding to different situations in different parts of the Union and consistent with real as well as nominal objectives, must also be deployed on a coordinated basis. Thus, to tackle structural problems and to help ensure that the level of demand is sufficient, the Guidelines must provide for much higher levels of investment - particularly in human investment and through speeding up the construction of Trans-European infrastructure networks, and ensure that taxation policies are given a much more significant European dimension.

6. For their part, European trade unions are ready to play their role provided that there is full respect for their autonomy. They are actively engaged in adapting labour markets, including through the reorganisation and reduction of working time, in the context of the Luxembourg employment process. The ETUC is seeking to reinforce the European Social Dialogue, at both the cross-industry and sectoral levels, so that employment and unemployment problems can be more effectively addressed. With a more positive employer contribution, much more could be done. With the launching of the European Employment Pact process, the ETUC looks forward to being much more closely involved in the drawing up and implementation of the Broad Economic Guidelines - and in the newer Cardiff process on the reform of product, services, and capital markets as well.

SOCIAL POLICY





ETUC POSITION ON THE APPLICATION OF THE AMSTERDAM TREATY IN THE FIELD OF HEALTH AND SAFETY AT WORK (SOCIAL POLICY CHAPTER)

Executive Committee, 16-17/9/1999

1. In the Commission's Communication of May 1998 on adapting and promoting the social dialogue at European level, the Commission correctly notes that:

"Once the Amsterdam Treaty enters into force, there will be one legal base for proposals on health and safety at work and the legislative proposals in this field will fall under the process of consultation of the social partners. However, the ACHS [Advisory Committee on Health, Hygiene and Safety at Work] will remain a key body for consultation on health and safety issues and the Commission will consult this body in parallel with the two-stage consultation process."

How the new procedure should be applied in practice still has to be clarified and decided upon as well as what the role of the ACHS will be in the context of the overall social partner consultation/negotiation procedure now integrated in the Treaty (see footnote).

2. The practical solution to be applied should meet the objectives and criteria of:

- guaranteeing the institutionalised role of the European Social Partners (Art. 138-139)
- securing the role of the tripartite ACHS as the key Community body of consultation in the field of health and safety
- avoiding duplication and ensuring efficiency in the European decision-making procedure
- being appropriate to the nature of the issues to be regulated at European level

3. To base the practical application of these principles on a simple distinction between legislative and non-legislative measures, would not be practical. Neither can such a choice be decided upon a priori; the logic of the consultation process with the European social partners is to contribute to such a clarification and experiences show that this is not just a hypothetical question.

On the other hand, given the national traditions and the technical nature, the classical health and safety issues (such as limit values and technical provisions, for example) are expected to continue to be established primarily via the legislative process in the future and only as an exception by European social partner agreement followed by a Council decision (Art. 139, 2).

It should however also be envisaged, again based on existing and developing national traditions, that new and emerging working environment health issues, often linked to work organisation, working conditions and changes on the labour market, are to be regulated by social partner agreements at either level (or in a combination with legislative provisions). Here, voluntary European social partner agreements to be implemented by the parties themselves (Art. 139, 2) could be a particularly relevant tool. This could also include follow-up supportive measures to established EU regulations.

Further, adding a working environment component to the common European employment policy strategy should likewise be taken into consideration.

4. Having analysed the different options, ETUC invites the other European social partners to explore jointly the possibilities to establish an agreement between the European Social Partners, the Commission, the Council and the EP for the practical application of the procedure in the field of health and safety.

5. The basic structure and elements of such a procedure should be in principle:

- that those health and safety issues which are to be consulted with the (reformed) ACHS (according to a revised Council Decision), are not automatically to be consulted with the

European social partners again when the Commission intends to submit a legislative proposal (according to the Art 138-139 procedure);

- the European social partners, however, retain their full rights to refer an issue to the Art 138-139 social partner procedure, at any stage in the overall preparatory phase;
- but, unless so requested by one of the European social partners and motivated by the interest to explore the possibilities to negotiate a social partner agreement, the concluded consultation of the (reformed) ACHS is considered to fulfil the Art 138 -139 consultation procedure;
- the European social partners, on the other hand, shall receive the relevant legislative proposals introduced into the procedure of the Council and the EP, and they are to be consulted, at least in writing, on their opinion on the different stages of the decision making procedure of the Council and of the EP;
- after the first two years in force, such an agreement on the practical procedure should be reviewed by the parties.

6. It will be an imperative precondition for the proposed practical application of the Amsterdam Treaty procedure that an adequate revision of the ACHS Council Decision is implemented on reforming the ACHS. Key elements will be, in particular:

- to efficiently ensure the possibility for the European social partners to consult their national and sector member organisations in a manner equivalent to the Art. 138-139 procedure; this implies especially:
- a Europeanisation of the social partners' representations with delegations composed of representatives from all Member States (without a reduction in the number of national social partner representatives) and from the sectors (with access for EEA countries)
- a recognition of the role of the interest groups and sufficient opportunities for these to meet and function
- to ensure that the ACHS is consulted not only on specific elements but also on the global issues, as in the case of the Art. 138-139 procedure on the basis of Commission documents
- to ensure that the financial resources for the work of the ACHS are adequate (i.e. improved) as a consequence and, likewise,

- as regards the role of the relevant services of the Commission
- [also to envisage the enlargement of the EU in giving observer status to representatives from the accession countries]

It is expected that the existing division of roles and responsibilities between the Community institutions and bodies will remain unchanged; i.e. Commission (political initiatives), Council and EP (decision-taking), Dublin Foundation (research) and Bilbao Agency (information)

7. ETUC stresses the importance of exploring the possibilities of voluntary social partner agreements too. These issues could be dealt with in the framework of the social dialogue committee and the sectoral social dialogue committees, in particular on the basis of the (reformed) ACHS social partner interest group recommendations.

8. ETUC believes that such a practical application of the Amsterdam Treaty procedure could foster partnership at European level; it recognises the roles and interests of the different parties to such a procedural agreement, it facilitates an appropriate use of the different tools, and - as an outcome - supports the continuous striving for fulfilment of the Treaty objectives of improving health and safety at work.

9. Should such a practical solution along the lines proposed, not be possible, or the preconditions not be met, the ETUC stresses that any practical procedure constituting "consultation in parallel" of the European social partners and the ACHS, must be secured.

Footnote:

Amsterdam Treaty, Social provisions, the two-stage consultation procedure

Art. 138, 2.:(To this end,) before submitting proposals in the social policy field, the Commission shall consult management and labour on the possible direction of Community action.

Art. 138, 3.: If, after such consultation, the Commission considers Community action advisable, it shall consult management and labour on the content of the envisaged proposal. Management and labour shall forward to the Commission an opinion or, where appropriate, a recommendation.

Art. 138, 4.: On the occasion of such consultation, management and labour may inform the Commission of their wish to initiate the process provided for in Art. 139. The duration of the process shall not exceed nine months, unless the management and labour concerned and the Commission decide jointly to extend it. (remark: a six week period is agreed for each of the two stages of consultation)

Art. 139, 1.: Should management and labour so desire, the dialogue between them at Community level may lead to contractual relations, including agreements.

Art. 139, 2.: Agreements concluded at Community level shall be implemented either in accordance with the procedures and practices specific to management and labour and the Member States or, in matters covered by Art. 137, at the joint request of the signatory parties, by a Council decision on a proposal from the Commission. The Council shall act by qualified majority, except where the agreement in question contains one or more provisions relating to one of the areas referred to in Art. 137(3), in which case it shall act unanimously.

3

REVIEW OF THE DIRECTIVE ON EUROPEAN WORKS COUNCILS

Executive Committee, 2-3/12/1999

1. By the end of 1999 there are expected to be over 600 agreements establishing European Works Councils. Negotiations on the formation of further European Works Councils have been arranged. This is sufficient practical experience to show how the Directive should be improved to make European Works Councils more effective.

2. The ETUC calls for this review of the Directive to strengthen the European Works Councils' right to information and consultation. It should also provide employees' representatives in European Works Councils with better working facilities. In addition the Directive needs to recognise the long-standing role of European Industry Federations in establishing European Works Councils and in making them work.

3. For the ETUC there is an inseparable connection between the review of the EWC Directive, the proposed Directive on worker involvement in the SE and the draft Directive on a general framework for information and consultation. The ETUC calls upon the Council to adopt immediately the Directive on workers' involvement in the SE, which is ripe for decision now. The ETUC equally calls upon the Council to adopt the Directive on information and consultation for workers in the year 2000. The ETUC criticises that the Commission has delayed meeting its obligation concerning the review of the EWC Directive. The ETUC urges the Commission to accelerate the review now, together with the ETUC, UNICE and CEEP.

4. Women are still under-represented in European Works Councils. The review of the Directive has to be used in order to help promote gender democracy in European Works Councils. This appeal applies both to the ETUC itself and its member organisations, negotiating on the creation of European Works Councils, and to the legislator.

Strengthening the right to information and consultation

5. The Directive on the establishment of European Works Councils aims to strengthen employees' rights to information and consultation in companies and groups of companies operating on a Community-wide basis. The practice in European Works Councils is too often out of line with the Directive's objectives. Renault-Vilvoorde is only one of many examples, where there is no dialogue with employees' representatives and where an opportunity is lost.

6. Therefore, the ETUC calls for the Directive on the establishment of European Works Councils to strengthen the right to information and consultation. The Directive must make clear that information must be comprehensive, provided in good time and given on an ongoing basis. The timing, form and content of information must enable employees' representatives to examine in detail possible repercussions of a proposed measure, allowing consultations with senior management or another more appropriate management level. The Directive must stipulate that information is provided in writing in all respective languages.

7. The review of the Directive must ensure timely consultation with European Works Councils, i.e. in the planning phase of decisions. This will ensure that employees' views can be taken into account at this stage, when various options for decision remain open. Furthermore the review of the Directive must give the right to European Works Councils to deliver an opinion within a reasonable delay and to be consulted by central management or any other appropriate management level on this opinion.

8. The directive has to make clear that measures from central or other management levels only become effective if the information and consultation procedure has been carried out correctly. Decisions rea-

ched disregarding the information and consultation procedure are null and void. When reviewing the Directive, Member States must ensure appropriate procedures exist to revoke decisions that are null and void.

9. The ETUC suggests that companies which fail to observe procedures laid down in the Directive will be excluded from financial support they may be entitled to under European measures.

Better working facilities for employees' representatives

10. The right of EWC members to meet local employees' representatives is part of strengthening employees' rights to information and consultation. In the revised Directive, it must be clearly stated that EWC members have the right and must be given the necessary means to meet local employee representatives.

11. Furthermore, the revised Directive must give members of European Works Councils the right to hold preparatory and follow-up meetings, the right to training, the right to time off, to continuation of payment, the right to meet each other at least once a year and the right to communicate with each other.

12. European Works Council and select committee may be assisted by experts of their choice. The review of the EWC Directive shall clarify that this includes the right to call in representatives of European or national trade union organisations as experts. The experts assisting European Works Councils shall be given the right to participate in information and consultation meetings with central management.

Recognition of the role of European industry federations

13. European industry federations have played a co-ordinating role in more than three-quarters of all negotiations over European Works Councils. The review of the Directive should recognise this fact. The appropriate European industry federation should be notified by the company's central management of the application to establish a Special Negotiating Body as well as its composition. A representative of the appropriate European industry federation must be given the right to participate in the negotiations and in the meetings of the EWC.

14. National trade unions have also played a major role in co-ordinating negotiations and in assisting European Works Councils. The review of the EWC Directive should recognise this fact.

Simpler and more efficient negotiations

15. According to the Directive the Special Negotiating Body has the right to be assisted in negotiations by experts of its choice. This right of the SNB has been disregarded too often. The review of the Directive must make absolutely clear that the experts supporting the SNB participate in the negotiations with central management.

16. To operate effectively members of the Special Negotiating Body must be able to hold preparatory meetings before and follow-up meetings after each round of negotiations with central company management. Review of the Directive must establish this right firmly.

17. Negotiations have generally not lasted more than a year. The negotiating period should therefore be reduced from three years to a maximum of one year.

Lowering thresholds

18. The Directive's aim is to strengthen employees' rights to information and consultation in companies and groups of companies operating on a Community-scale. Since the Single Market was established, smaller companies with fewer than 1000 employees have also been operating on a Community-scale. The threshold of 1000 employees provided in the Directive as definition of a company operating on a Community-scale is thus too high. With increasing split-up of undertakings and outsourcing, "smaller" trans-national companies are becoming more important. The threshold must be reduced to 500 employees. For the definition of Community-scale undertakings and Community-scale group of undertakings the same threshold must be used.

Repealing the exemption regulations for "ideological guidance" undertakings and commercial shipping

19. "Ideological guidance" undertakings, for example media groups, have also been subject to rapid change. They simply need to inform and consult employees and their representatives if adaptation to these changes is to be successful. Therefore Article 8.3 of the Directive and the limited exemption regulation for "ideological guidance" undertakings should be deleted and not replaced. This should also apply to the option provided in Article 1.5, which exempts merchant navy crews from the scope of the Directive.

Re-negotiation of the Agreements

20. The directive does not specify the procedure for re-negotiation of agreements in the event of mergers and take-overs. The reviewed directive should clarify that re-negotiations must take place in order to ensure that EWCs are updated according to the new reality of the undertaking.

Workers representatives from accession countries and third countries

21. Many Community-scale undertakings and groups of undertakings have sites and undertakings in Central and Eastern European countries or in countries outside the EU. Transnational information and consultation is effective only if employees from such sites or undertakings are involved. In many agreements concluded according to articles 13 and 6, this has happened already. The review of the EWC Directive should be used in order to give worker representatives from third countries the possibility to participate both in the SNB and the EWC.

THE FUTUR OF THE UNION



ETUC Resolution on elections to the EP

Steering Committee, 20/4/1999

Next June the citizens of the Member States of the European Union will elect their representatives to the European Parliament.

Europe stands at a crossroads.

The conflict in Kosovo gives added weight to the need to equip the European Union with institutions and policies which are up to the task of guaranteeing peace, political stability and democracy in Europe.

The introduction of the euro constitutes a fundamental advance but unemployment continues to run riot. There is now an urgent need to move on from monetary stability to lasting growth in order to return to full employment.

With these challenges before us, a new political will is needed to bring back direction and credibility to the European project.

These elections to the European Parliament must allow this to happen as well as building the basis for a European Union which is closer to its citizens.

The European Parliament has proved its commitment and determination to defend and promote the European social model and has proved itself in the implementation of new European initiatives for employment.

Boosted by the strengthening of its co-legislative powers under the Amsterdam Treaty the European Parliament – the only institution direct-

ly elected by citizens – must make itself into the guarantor of a Community that will be built on the basis of economic and social progress, employment for all, social rights, equal opportunities and citizenship.

The new powers of the European Parliament, including its powers vis-à-vis the Commission, can only strengthen the positive measures already achieved to combat social dumping and guarantee workers' rights, such as the European Works Councils. Social progress will also come about through close co-operation between the ETUC and the European Parliament, and the ETUC is keen to enhance this co-operation.

A massive turnout for the for the elections is needed to strengthen the Parliament's institutional legitimacy with a strong popular mandate.

The ETUC would like to see the opportunity offered by the electoral campaign taken to launch a major democratic debate on the stakes and the future of the European integration process, and calls on trade unions to make their own independent contributions, reflecting workers' claims and aspirations.

This debate, and a Parliament supported by a strong popular consensus are all the more necessary in view of the next round of revisions to the Treaty.

The ETUC considers that this revision must tackle the reform of the Institutions before enlargement, in order to adapt them to suit an enlarged EU and make them more effective, transparent and democratic. At the same time the new Treaty must incorporate the transnational dimension of fundamental civic and social rights including trade union rights, in view of the completion of economic and monetary union.

In order to impose a more open, transparent and participative method for revising the Treaty, the European Parliament that will sit as a result of the June elections must be given a major role to play. National parliaments and the organs of civil society, especially the trade unions, must be involved. In this light, the ETUC endorses the need for a genuine Constitution which clearly defines the aims, the jurisdiction and the responsibilities of the Union in relation to those of the Member States.

On the basis of this declaration the Executive Committee of the European Trade Union Confederation calls on workers.

- to turn out in huge numbers to vote in the European elections
- to take account, when they make their free choice of lists and candidates, of the European trade union movement's demands for a Europe of employment, social justice, solidarity and democracy.

5

"THE INCORPORATION OF FUNDAMENTAL CIVIC, SOCIAL AND TRADE UNION RIGHTS INTO THE EUROPEAN UNION TREATIES"

Executive Committee, 16-17/9/1999

1. As a firm promoter of EU Fundamental Rights, ETUC welcomes the decision of the Cologne European Council in June 1999 to initiate a procedure to draw up a concrete proposal on EU Fundamental Rights in the context of the next revision of the Treaty.

2. ETUC agrees with the Cologne Summit Conclusions that the "protection of fundamental rights is a founding principle of the Union and an indispensable prerequisite for her legitimacy", and, likewise, that there exists a clear need "to make their overriding importance and relevance more visible to the Union's citizens".

3. Although the Amsterdam Treaty did bring about some progress (e.g. TEU Art 6 & 7/human rights and TEC Art 13/non-discrimination), important shortcomings still exist.

The social implications of the realisation of EMU and the introduction of the EURO, the realisation of IM and the massive industrial restructuring, underpin the importance of securing fundamental rights at European level too.

A recent political initiative (intervention mechanism) and a pending ECJ case (C-67/96 on collective agreements) clearly show the potential pressure upon, and the threat to, vested trade union rights in the wake of the European integration process which will exist as long as fundamental trade union rights are not explicitly recognised at European level.

ETUC considers fundamental rights as an indispensable part, in combination with the development of the social socle, in the building of the Social Union and safeguarding and developing the European social model. Their incorporation will also be important in view of enlargement. The respect of fundamental rights is necessary for a Citizens' Europe to become a reality.

It should also be clear that the global trading partners will expect the European Union and its Member States themselves to secure the respect for fundamental rights when promoting these issues in the global trade agreements (as in the WTO).

4. The Cologne Summit did not conclude on "how the Charter should be integrated into the treaties". A solemn political declaration in the form of a "Charter", however, will not be sufficient to meet the stated objectives. A real "protection of fundamental rights" implies the legally binding incorporation of these rights in the treaties.

Therefore, in the ETUC 9th Congress resolutions, it is stated that: above all, bringing the Union closer to its citizens requires political, civil, social and trade union rights - including cross-border sympathy action, including strikes – to be fully recognised by the Union and enshrined in the Treaty.

As regards specific trade union rights, ETUC calls for the full recognition of such rights in the EU Treaty beginning with the ILO Conventions on Freedom of Association, Collective Bargaining, Right to strike, Child Labour and Forced Labour.

Consequently, the ETUC 9th Congress decided to campaign for full recognition of these rights to be enshrined in the Treaty on the occasion of its next revision.

5. The fundamental political, civil, social and trade union rights to be incorporated into the Treaty should include the rights already laid down in existing international instruments and of EU specific cross border/transnational rights.

First, the rights included in the following instruments should consequently establish the core to be recognised by, and in, the EU:

- Universal Declaration of Human Rights
- European Convention on Human Rights
- ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work
- Community Charter of the Fundamental Social Rights of Workers
- Revised European Social Charter
- UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

These rights should be guaranteed throughout the territory of the European Union.

It goes without saying that these rights constitute a minimum, and a non-regression principle should be applied to existing rights in the EU or its Member States.

Secondly, the EU specific cross-border and transnational related rights should also be included, especially transnational trade union rights, freedom of movement and the European citizenship political rights.

6. As underlined by the ETUC 9th Congress, equal treatment must be extended to all people who are legally resident in the EU, whether or not they are EU citizens. This will be particularly important as regards fundamental rights in the EU.

7. The proposed approach is obvious as regards scope and content, both from a political as well as a practical point of view and should be time-saving. As underlined by the latest Commission expert report (Simitis report), "it is time to act". The issue has already been the subject of lengthy and in-depth political and legal analysis and debate over the last decade at least. The process establishing the 1989 Community Charter or the Commission "Comité des Sages" (Pintasilgo) report, the EP resolution on trade union rights as well as the Amsterdam Colloquium organised by ETUC in the Amsterdam IGC process are just examples of a number of initiatives taken.

There exists no need, therefore, to reopen an analytical debate on the basics, but, on the contrary, to take decisions to pursue and to complete a process which has been progressed upon in the Amsterdam Treaty.

The EU Member States have already all signed and ratified the mentioned international instruments and rights, (or as regards the Council of Europe revised Social Charter, are in the process of ratification). Beyond the inclusion of the European Human Rights Convention, the European treaties now also include a reference to the Community Charter and the Council of Europe Social Charter.

The principal difference to the present situation, when incorporating these rights of the international instruments in the EU Treaty, will therefore be that the Member States become obliged, in a binding manner vis-à-vis the European Union, to respect and adhere to these international instruments (and the compliance procedures of these institutions).

Whether the obligation vis-à-vis the European Union will become legally or politically binding depends on the method of incorporation into the EU Treaty.

8. For ETUC, the aim should be to anchor the recognition and respect for the EU fundamental rights visibly and efficiently in the Treaty. Enshrining the rights in the context of the Citizenship Chapter should therefore be considered.

A Charter based alone on a solemn political declaration would fall short of the needs and objectives set out by the Cologne Summit; ETUC (in line with its 9th Congress decisions) is in favour of incorporating in the Treaty in a binding manner a "EU Bill of Rights" based upon already existing core rights of international instruments combined with EU specific cross border and transnational rights. ETUC is actively preparing a proposal based on these principles with the objective of being introduced into the drafting process to be initiated at the Tampere European Council in October 1999.

However, should the EU Member States at present not be prepared to take this logical step in view of the achieved EU integration to integrate fully such a EU Bill of Rights, ETUC considers that the Tampere process, as a first step as a minimum in order to stay credible, should result in the incorporation in the Treaty of:

a). A binding Treaty obligation for the Member States (and the Union) to adhere to (the above mentioned) international instruments combined with a sanction procedure (political and/or legal) and

b). Selected individual and collective universal core rights directly enshrined in the Treaty and with priority to EU-specific cross-border and transnational trade union and workers' rights:

- national and transnational trade union rights of association, collective bargaining and trade union action, including the right to cross-border sympathy action and strike
- national and transnational rights for workers to information, consultation and participation
- the right of equal treatment and equal opportunities for men and women
- prohibition of all forms of discrimination, racism and xenophobia
- ban on child labour
- the right of occupational health and safety protection
- the right to a minimum income including social protection in case of unemployment
- freedom of movement within the EU, including for third country nationals who are legally resident in the EU.

At a later stage, ETUC will submit a specific text on the above mentioned rights to be incorporated into the Treaty.

One outstanding issue to be clarified during the Tampere drafting process will be whether or not the European Union itself should accede to the European Convention on Human Rights and its additional Protocols (Council of Europe)."

9. ETUC believes that the development of the proposal for EU Fundamental Rights must be carried out by way of a transparent and participative procedure, involving, as decided at the Cologne Summit, the European Parliament and other EU institutions as well as national parliaments. ETUC however stresses the importance of fully involving civil society and the trade unions in the process. ETUC is looking forward to being invited to participate actively in the drafting procedure.

10. In view of the preparatory analysis and political clarification already undertaken, it is crucial and also realistic to conclude the Tampere drafting procedure on time to allow the EU Fundamental Rights proposal to be integrated into the next IGC procedure.

11. In July 1998, ETUC and the Platform of European Social NGOs launched a joint campaign for a Bill of Rights. The Cologne Summit decision to draw up a Charter of Fundamental Rights of the EU can be considered a first positive step and outcome. Consequently, ETUC will therefore be intensifying its campaigning, both at European level vis-à-vis the European institutions and - carried by its affiliates - at national level, with the objective of rallying support for a real incorporation of fundamental rights in the Treaty.

Strong cooperation between the European trade union movement and civil society will be important. ETUC will therefore continue the joint campaign activities with the Platform of European Social NGOs, and it calls upon the affiliates to do the same at national level, as is customary. ETUC also calls upon the European Parliament to continue to play an active role as a promoter of fundamental rights and hence a Citizens' Europe.

1. The European Council meeting in Helsinki on 10-11 December 1999 is expected to take a number of decisions which will have a far-reaching impact on the future of the European Union, especially concerning the revision of the Treaty and the enlargement process. ETUC considers that in both areas, much is at stake from the point of view of the trade union movement.

2. On enlargement, the ETUC welcomes the Commission proposal to consider applicant countries as part of a single list and to open negotiations with all of them. This was the ETUC opinion from the very beginning in view of the positive effect of having a concrete perspective for membership, on the reform process in the countries concerned.

Turkey has also to be declared a candidate for accession and a specific strategy put in place to help this country to meet the political and economic criteria laid down in Copenhagen for all future members of the EU.

3. For the ETUC, the social acquis and the European social model and their practical implementation are also of paramount importance and must be fully considered in the accession process.

The demanding nature of this process and its social impact in the candidate countries, as well as in the European Union, underlines the importance of involving the trade unions and other social partners in the accession process. ETUC has repeatedly stressed the necessity to

give this higher priority, also in view of reaching social consensus and making the accession process a success. Likewise, the candidate countries and the EU should give increased priority to building social partners' structures and social dialogue frameworks. In this respect, ETUC asks the Commission to find ways of including the candidate countries' social partners in its social policy actions and considers that the Economic and Social Committee could do the same, developing already existing initiatives.

4. ETUC shares the opinion that the enlargement process makes it especially crucial for the EU to address its outstanding institutional reforms, including finding solutions to the issues left over from the last IGC.

In general, ETUC considers that the EU requires institutions, which are more efficient at decision-making, and it supports all initiatives underpinning this objective. In concrete terms, qualified majority voting within the Council of Ministers and correspondent co-decision powers of the European Parliament must be extended and should become the general rule for social policy, the European employment strategy, environmental policy decisions and for decisions on minimum levels for corporate, capital and environment taxation. Consultations with accession countries in the IGC process must also be envisaged.

5. The EU and its institutions must become more democratic and closer to citizens. The recent period has illustrated the need for this in several ways.

One practical element should be that the principle of transparency and of public access to information and documentation must cover all EU institutions. Exceptions must be specified and strictly defined. More extensive involvement of civic society organisations in the EU activities would also be important, complementing the specific role already assigned to the social partners and to social dialogue

6. Above all however, bringing the Union closer to its citizens requires that political, civil, social and trade unions rights are fully recognised by the Union and enshrined in the Treaty. Welcoming the decisions at the Cologne and Tampere summits on drawing up an EU Charter, the ETUC has already adopted and submitted a concrete proposal in this respect. It will be crucial to conclude the Tampere drafting procedure

on time, to allow the EU Fundamental Rights proposal to be integrated into the next IGC procedure.

For the ETUC, an EU Charter would be insufficient since the recognition of fundamental rights is essential for the building of a balanced economic, political and social Union and it therefore belongs to the Treaty reform process.

7. The wish to conclude the next IGC in December 2000 in order to be ready for enlargement by the year 2002, is a positive orientation. However, this should not lead to the disregard of other issues relevant to a stronger EU profile in the areas of foreign- and security policy and in international economic and political fora. More generally, the ETUC supports the European Parliament resolution on the next IGC and looks forward to the European Commission presenting comprehensive proposals for Treaty reform as a basis for the IGC negotiations.

8. The discussion on the structure of the Treaty and on how to cope with future reforms, which has been ongoing since the last IGC and which has now regained momentum, is highly important, especially in the perspective of an enlarged and more diverse Union but also in relation to making the Treaty more understandable for citizens.

The Dehaene Report has made a significant contribution, including the proposal to split the Treaty into two parts: a basic Treaty with the principles, and an operational part with the policies.

This approach reflects the 9th Congress resolution with regard to a more effective and democratic EU and is therefore be looked upon with great interest by the ETUC.

9. The ETUC asks the European Council to approve the Employment Guidelines for the year 2000. Good work has been done on the implementation of the Luxembourg process, but the ETUC stresses once again the need to put the European Employment Pact on a stronger footing by better integrating macro-economic, employment and structural policies, and by devoting more resources to job creation policies.

More effective economic policy coordination is required at the European level to promote non-inflationary growth conducive to creating more and better jobs. The targets, as called for by the ETUC 9th Congress, should be to reduce unemployment to 7% and to increase the employment rate to 70% within the next 5 years.

Finally, the ETUC deplores the lack of progress on the taxation package. This is essential not only to fight inappropriate tax competition and tax evasion, but also to promote employment. The ETUC asks the European Council to take a clear political stand on this issue in order to allow progress to be made.