



European Trade Union
Confederation (ETUC)
Confédération européenne
des syndicats (CES)



The voice of crafts and SMEs in Europe



European Centre of
Employers and Enterprises
providing Public services

Brussels, 29 March 2012

PRESS RELEASE

THE EUROPEAN SOCIAL PARTNERS:

“FOCUSING ON YOUTH AND EMPLOYMENT IS THE TOP PRIORITY FOR THE COMING YEARS”

BUSINESSEUROPE, ETUC (and the liaison committee EUROCADRES/CEC), CEEP and UEAPME, are committed to jointly address youth and employment, as two of the main activities of their new work programme 2012-2014.

The European Union is at a crossroads and is living through the worst crisis of its history. It is time to further encourage a common understanding of what Europe needs, and find solutions to pave the way out of this exceptional situation. With their fourth autonomous work programme, European social partners intend to address the most essential issues at stake in order to foster better functioning labour markets and reach the EU 2020 employment rate target of 75% in order to create more and better jobs.

As their top priority, the European social partners will negotiate a framework of actions on youth employment, and conduct an analysis of the functioning of the European labour markets. In the framework of education and lifelong learning, they will also look at skills' needs in greening economies and the update and upgrade of the skills of older workers in the context of longer working lives. The European social partners will also look at mobility and economic migration issues, gender equality, and the way the new EU economic governance touches their competences.

[The work programme can be downloaded from the social partners' websites.](#)

NB: the European social partners will continue to take actions both at bipartite and tripartite levels in reaction to European Commission proposals and initiatives.

COMMENTS FROM SIGNATORIES

Philippe de Buck, Director General, BUSINESSEUROPE: *"Employers are committed to modernising European labour markets in order to overcome structural weaknesses and achieve more growth and jobs. With this new work programme, the European Social Partners will take action in priority to create more opportunities for young people and to increase employment rates."*

Bernadette Ségol, General Secretary, European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC): *"More than ever, in the context of the current crisis and the challenges Europe has to face, social dialogue at all levels is key. The ETUC is happy to present a targeted but ambitious work programme which will allow addressing, as a top priority, employment in general and quality jobs for young people. We have to bring back hope for European citizens."*

Valeria Ronzitti, Acting General Secretary, European Centre of Employers and Enterprises providing Public services (CEEP): *"Employment and growth is what Europe needs to overcome the crisis. This is all the more true for Public Services Employers. That is why we believe that the new work programme focuses exactly on the right priorities. The text reflects the commitment of European Social Partners to act in time of crisis and shows that cross-industry social partners are ready to engage and deliver, even in difficult times."*

Andrea Benassi, Secretary General, European Association of Craft, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (UEAPME): *"Our new work programme is an ambitious but realistic agenda that rightly focuses on employment and tackles the priorities of SMEs, such as the framework conditions to ensure competitiveness, the challenge of skills and competences but also mobility and economic governance, all of which are fundamental to improve the functioning of labour markets and boost job creation especially in this time of crisis. This shows that the European Social Dialogue is still on the right track."*

NOTE TO THE EDITOR

BUSINESSEUROPE

www.businessseurope.eu

BUSINESSEUROPE represents small, medium and large companies. Active in European affairs since 1958, BUSINESSEUROPE's members are 41 leading industrial and employers' federations from 35 European countries, working together to achieve growth and competitiveness in Europe.

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European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC)

www.etuc.org

The European Trade Union Confederation was set up in 1973 to promote the interests of working people at European level and to represent them in the EU institutions. At present, the ETUC has in membership 85 national trade union confederations from 36 European countries, as well as 12 European industry federations, making a total of 60 million members.

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The European Centre of Employers and Enterprises providing Public services (CEEP)

www.ceep.eu

CEEP gathers enterprises and organisations from across Europe, both public and private, at national, regional and local level, which are public employers or providers of services of general interest. CEEP members employ a quarter of the EU workforce.

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European Association of Craft, Small and Medium Sized Enterprises (UEAPME)

www.ueapme.com

UEAPME is the employers' organisation representing exclusively crafts, trades and SMEs from the EU and accession countries at European level. UEAPME has 84 member organisations covering over 12 million enterprises with 55 million employees.

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