

Working Time
Directive
Page 2

Successful training
seminar in Vilnius
Page 3

Ratification of the
European Constitution
Page 4

ROMA Launching
Conference
Page 5

EU Spring Summit
2005
Page 6

Community Research
Framework
Page 7

Discussions on the
Services Directive in
the European
Parliament
Page 7

Third follow-up report
on Lifelong Learning
Page 8

Calendar 2005
Page 9

New Publications
Page 11

75000 people marched in Brussels in the Euro-demonstration

On Saturday 19 March in Brussels 75 000 trade unionists marched for the defence of employment and social rights with the main message: "European governments, listen to the unions!" Demonstrators from all over Europe sent a clear message ahead of the Spring Summit and showed their opposition to the Bolkenstein directive. The demonstration was aiming at expressing trade unions' vision of Social Europe and asking EU to change its course stating that reforms should promote progress for all. ETUCE participated in the demonstration and several of ETUCE member organisations travelled all the way to Brussels to join the demonstration.



EU Spring Summit 2005

During the European Spring Council on 22 - 23 March 2005, EU Heads of State and Government discussed the approach advocated by President Barroso of the European Commission focusing on two main goals: growth and employment.

[>>> Read more](#)



Calendar

8 - 10 April:

ETUCE ROMA Launching
Conference, Budapest

15 - 17 April:

ETUCO TRACE Project
Conference, Florence

27 April:

ETUCE Quality in
Education Panel, Brussels

[>>> More events in 2005](#)

Draft report by MEP Cercas on the working time directive

The European Parliament has started the process of its response to the Commission's proposals to reorganize the working time directive. Alejandro Cercas, reporter on the directive in the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs of the European Parliament, has drawn up a draft report that was discussed in the committee on 15 March.

ETUCE welcomes the proposals which are realistic and well-reasoned. The Cercas report clearly outlines that:

- On-call work in the workplace should be regarded as working time (as ruled by the European court of Justice in the Jaeger case)
- The individual opt-out should be phased out by 1 January 2010
- The reference period for calculation of average working time should be first and foremost, based on health and safety considerations.

However, ETUCE is still concerned as the directive risks to undermine existing collective agreements and it defeats the purpose of European framework legislation as a safety net. Furthermore, the phasing-out of the opt-out should be accelerated as the 2010 target is too late. ETUCE will follow the further developments in both the Parliament and in the Council very closely and provide member organisations with continuous updates.

[Read the draft report by Cercas](#)

Timetable of the working time directive

Date	Event
15 - 16 March	Debate in the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs of the European Parliament.
19 March	EURO Demonstration in Brussels: "EU working time proposals are surreal!"
31 March	Debate in the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs of the European Parliament, including discussion of amendments.
20 April	Voting in the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs of the European Parliament.
12 - 13 May	Voting in the European Parliament, Strasbourg.
3 June	Discussion in the Council

Successful training seminar in Vilnius: Social Dialogue in Education

The second training seminar on Social Dialogue in Education took place in Vilnius on 5 - 8 March. The seminar underlined that there is not yet a sectoral social dialogue in education and one of the main objectives of the training seminar was to improve internal operations between member organisations.



The Lithuanian Minister of Education, Remigijus Motuzas

About 50 participants from ETUCE member organisations contributed to create a lively and interesting debate and made a great success of the seminar. The Lithuanian Minister of Education, Remigijus Motuzas, represented the Lithuanian education system; he explained how reforms have been carried out together with the trade union community. He emphasised that cooperation with social partners is crucial and that it is not to be underestimated. The press was present at the seminar and an interview with ETUCE General Secretary, Martin Rømer, was broadcasted on Lithuanian television.

The Commission representative, Mr. Ilias Sotirchos from DG Employment and Social Affairs, spoke about the developments on Social Dialogue and the obstacles of creating a real sectoral social dialogue. He explained the different directives, agreements, frameworks, and codes of conduct which have been established over the last ten years between social partners. The Commission welcomes a bilateral dialogue in education and Ilias Sotirchos stressed the importance of social partners as they are creating secondary legislation for the European Union.

Working groups on teachers' working conditions focused on four areas:

- Salary
- Working time

- In-service training
- Dialogue with governments

The work and debate in these working groups will continue, aiming at improving teachers' working conditions. ETUCE will pursue a sectoral social dialogue and continue to integrate the work with the employers' side, to bring forward the discussion with the national employers. A report from the seminar will be available on ETUCE website in the end of April.

Ratification of the European Constitution

One of the burning questions on the EU's agenda is the ratification of the European Constitution. On 20 February, the first of ten expected referendums on the Constitution across the EU took place in Spain. While 77 percent voted in favour of the Constitution, just 42.3 percent of the Spanish electorate actually went to the polling stations.



Three countries have ratified the constitution without a referendum; Lithuania (11 November 2004), Hungary (20 December 2004) and Slovenia (1 February 2005).

So far, ten of the 25 Member States have declared their intention to consult their citizens on this matter. The exact situation in each of the member state is listed below:

Holding a referendum - 10 countries:

- Spain - 20 February 2005
- France - 29 May 2005
- Netherlands - 1 June 2005
- Luxembourg - 10 July 2005
- Denmark - 27 September 2005
- Czech Republic
- Ireland
- Poland
- Portugal

- United Kingdom

Not holding a referendum - five countries:

- Belgium
- Estonia
- Germany
- Malta
- Sweden

Undecided, seven countries:

- Austria
- Cyprus
- Finland
- Greece
- Italy
- Latvia
- Slovakia

Constitution ratified without referendum, three countries:

- Lithuania - 11 November 2004
- Hungary - 20 December 2004
- Slovenia - 1 February 2005

ROMA Launching Conference in Budapest on 9 April

The implementation phase of the ETUCE's ROMA project ("Developing non-discriminatory quality education for Roma children") will be launched at a conference in Budapest on 9 April. The main objective of the Conference is to present the project and to obtain the commitment of the most relevant authorities.

Issues such as the role of trade unions in Roma children education will be discussed. Among the participants we count with the presence of representatives of local authorities and relevant NGOs.

The Conference will be followed by national legal seminars (9 May in Hungary, 10 June in Slovakia and 8 July in Bulgaria), where the project legal expert, Lilla Farkas, will explain the European Anti-discrimination framework and analyse the transposition of the two relevant Directives into the national legal context of each of the three countries.

[See the draft programme](#)

EU Spring Summit 2005

During the European Spring Council on 22 - 23 March 2005, EU Heads of State and Government discussed the approach advocated by President Barroso of the European Commission focusing on two main goals: growth and employment. The key issue of the Summit was the mid-term review of the Lisbon strategy aiming at employment, competitiveness, sustainable development and social cohesion. Furthermore, the Stability and Growth Pact was on the agenda of the Summit.



Jean-Claude Juncker and José Manuel Barroso

ETTUCE strongly opposes the lack of balance in the mid-term review that clearly gives priority to economic issues and structural reforms at the expense of progressive social and environmental measures. An ETUCE statement on the issue has been sent to the Commission ahead of the Spring Summit.

Social partners: “Put Social Europe at the heart of the Lisbon strategy”

At the Tripartite Social Summit – which took place just before the EU Spring Summit – social partners got their voices heard at the highest level of the EU, helping to monitor policies and progress. Furthermore, all major European trade union federations expressed their concerns of the mid-term review at the Euro-demonstration on 19 March.

Commissions next Community Research Framework

The Commissioner for Science and Research, Janez Potočnik, has presented the Commission's plans for the next Community Research Framework Programme (FP7). The EU's framework programmes for research and technological development are the Commission's main instrument for funding European research.

The underlying principle of the Commission plan is to use the framework programme to achieve the Lisbon goals. In addition:

- FP7 will be proposed for 7 years (instead of the 'normal' 5 years). A mid-term review of the programme is foreseen (Mid-FP7 will coincide with the arrival of the next Commission).
- The Commission will take SMEs fully on board in the FP7 preparatory phase. A 'sounding board' consisting of SMEs and other smaller actors is currently being put together to mirror the FP7 proposal well in advance.
- Co-operation on the FP7 thematic areas will be more industry-driven than in the previous FPs. It seems that a lot is expected from the 'technology platforms', which are expected to act as drivers of more public-private co-operation and as a means to increase the share of private funding for research.
- The Commission will outsource some of the management of the FPs.

In order to encourage private funding for research, Commissioner Potočnik has said that he encourages further EU action on tax incentives, intellectual property rights, and in the domain of venture risk capital. The Commission is expected to present an official proposal on the 7th Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development in April 2005.

Discussions on the Services Directive in the European Parliament's Committee on Culture and Education

ETUCE has written to the European Parliament's committee on Culture and Education (CULT) on two occasions during its initial examination of the European Commission's proposal for a Directive on services in the internal market. As mentioned in earlier issues of the ETUCE newsletter, ETUCE is very worried about the consequences the directive may have for education, as there is a risk that the directive, which aims at expanding the internal market for a broad range of services sectors, will also facilitate trade in educational services in the EU.

The Committee's first draft report on this Directive, discussed at the committee meeting on 14 March, contains a suggestion for a clarification of what kinds of educational activities the directive does *not* apply to. In

the Commission's directive proposal, it is stated that the directive does not cover activities provided "for no consideration by the State in fulfillment of its social, cultural, educational and legal obligations". The CULT committee suggests to add an exemplification to this paragraph, specifying that the directive thus does not cover courses provided "under the national education system, whether at public or private establishments". The CULT committee justifies this amendment with reference to previous case-laws of the Court of Justice in which the Court has ruled that courses provided under the national education system, including those that entail certain enrolment or teaching fees, do not constitute "services" in the definition given hereof in the EC Treaty, article 50. Only activities that can be defined as "services" in accordance with the Treaty are covered by the Services Directive.

In response, ETUCE has sent a letter to all members of the CULT committee stressing the inadequacy of this proposed amendment. The Court of Justice may rule differently in the future as to what constitutes a "service" and, in the view of ETUCE, it should not be left to the Court of Justice to decide whether a given education activity is covered by the Services Directive or not. ETUCE is calling for a clear exclusion of educational activities *per se* from the Services Directive.

On 15 March, the CULT committee held a hearing on the Services Directive. However, due to the fact that the event was originally intended to be centered on the definition of audiovisual services, it focused exclusively on the impact of the Services Directive on notably television and radio broadcasting and the film industry. Prior to the event, ETUCE wrote to the Chairman of the committee to stress the importance of ensuring in-depth discussions of the impact on education as part of the Committee's examination of this directive.

The CULT committee will discuss the Services Directive further on 20 April and will adopt its opinion report on this issue on 21 April. ETUCE will continue to follow developments closely, and calls upon all member organisations to continue to make contacts with their national MEPs and with governments on this issue.

New ETUC publication: Third follow-up report on Lifelong Learning

ETUC has published its third follow-up report on the "Framework of actions for the lifelong development of competencies and qualifications». In March 2002, the European social partners adopted a framework of actions for the lifelong development of competencies and qualifications, as a contribution to the implementation of the Lisbon strategy.

The member organisations of UNICE/UEAPME, CEEP and ETUC agreed to promote the framework of actions in Member States at all appropriate levels taking account of national practices and to transmit relevant documents to all interested players at European and national levels.

The social partners decided to draw up an annual report on the national actions carried out on the four priorities identified, and this third annual follow-up report includes reports on social partners' activities in the new EU member states. Furthermore, it describes social partners' activities on development of competences and qualifications at cross-industry, sectoral and company level and gives useful examples of good practices. The report testifies on the intensification of dialogue and partnership between social partners and their willingness to find practical solutions to the lifelong learning challenges in Europe.

Finally, European social partners consider this report as a major joint contribution to the Lisbon strategy, which was presented to the European Spring Council 2005.

[Read the report: "Framework of Actions for the Lifelong Development of Competencies and Qualifications», Third Follow-up Report, 2005](#)

Calendar

22 - 23 March:

EU: European Spring Council, Brussels

15 - 17 April:

ETUCO TRACE Project Conference, Florence

27 April:

ETUCE Quality in Education Panel, Brussels

28 April:

EI / ETUCE Bureau, Brussels

19 - 20 May:

Bologna Ministerial Conference, Bergen

6 June:

ETUCE Networks Meeting, Brussels

13 June:

EI / ETUCE Bureau, Brussels

13 - 14 June:

EI Pan-European Committee / ETUCE Executive Board, Brussels

16 - 17 June:

EU: June 2005 Summit of Heads of States, Brussels

2 - 3 July:

ETUCE Social dialogue, regional seminar, Vilnius

New Publications

- [ETUCE Factsheet: Europass](#)
- [Eurydice: Foreign Language learning: a European priority](#)