



EFFAT

EUROPEAN FEDERATION OF FOOD, AGRICULTURE AND TOURISM TRADE UNIONS

**Meeting of the EFFAT Executive Committee
BRUSSELS, 17 and 18 December 2018**

Agenda item 8:

ETUC PARTNERSHIP ON INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS

Decision: The Executive Committee takes note of the reports and endorses the documents presented.

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ENLARGED STEERING COMMITTEE.

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Agenda item 5

Follow up on the European alliance for Upward Wage Convergence (Discussion Document)

Taking the ETUC Proposals for a Partnership for Collective Bargaining and Upward Wage Convergence Forward

The ETUC Steering Committee is invited to discuss this document.

Confederal Secretary in charge: Esther Lynch.

Follow up on the European alliance for Upward Wage Convergence

Taking the ETUC Proposals for a Partnership for Collective Bargaining and Upward Wage Convergence Forward

Introduction

1. The establishment of a Partnership to promote collective bargaining for increased wages and fair and decent working conditions is one of the key recommendations emerging from the ETUC Wage Alliance Conference held in Sofia in June 2018.
2. This discussion document scopes out initial proposals for the “Partnership” and recommends the establishment of a working group comprised of ETUC Executive Members to develop the ideas and bring forward recommendations in the form of a Resolution for the Establishment of the ‘Partnership’ for the December Executive Committee Meeting.

Aims, Strategic Direction, Priorities and Membership of the “Partnership”

3. The main aim of the “Partnership” is to reinforce union capacity to deliver results for working people by placing the promotion of collective bargaining and wage increases at the heart of EU policy making.
4. The strategy is to build a better understanding and political consensus around a vision of collective bargaining for Europe that firmly recognises the benefits of collective bargaining not only for workers and companies but also for the successful performance of national economies and the EU economy as a whole.
5. Membership of the Partnership will be with the EU Institutions, the EU Commission, ECB and the EU Council (both Ministers of Labour and Finance), EU and national level Employers Associations and lead Employers. It is clear that membership of the Partnership needs to be agreed with the relevant national union affiliates.

Strategic priorities and measurable outcomes

6. The partnership will provide another avenue through which affiliates can discuss, develop and secure the implementation of actions in support of collective bargaining at EU and national level. Securing both political and financial support will be key. Securing a dedicated funding line will be an early priority so that resources are available for capacity building.
7. It is essential that the Partnership is not a ‘talking shop’ or worse a ‘fig leaf’ providing justification for derogatory policies or promoting the type of political wage coordination that limits progress and holds workers back. To avoid this danger, the Resolution will need to set realistic and meaningful targets to be achieved. Indicative examples of the type of targets we can put on the agenda include:
 - a) securing a dedicated funding line so that resources are available for capacity building for collective bargaining;
 - b) changes to EU institutions’ policy so that collective bargaining is properly recognised by them as an essential ingredient of the EU “competitive social market economy” along with active recognition that its promotion is necessary to ensure the continuous improvement in living and working conditions also envisioned by the EU Treaties;
 - c) improved macroeconomic analysis in particular to counteract any perception that collective bargaining or wage growth is detrimental to economic growth or that collective bargaining is a labour market rigidity;
 - d) improved recommendations for the Semester supporting collective bargaining and wage increases;

- e) the adoption of an EU Council Recommendation calling on EU institutions to provide greater support for collective bargaining in their policy responses and in their resource funding;
- f) A political commitment to promote and safeguard the autonomy of social partners and collective bargaining from interference by the EU – especially at sectoral level;
- g) Targets for national action plans concluded with national trade unions aimed at supporting collective bargaining and increasing the number of workers covered by a collective agreement at sectoral and national level;
- h) Improving EU guidance so that the public procurement promotes collective bargaining and respects collective agreements.

Next Steps

8. This idea needs development. The ETUC proposes to establish a working group of Executive Committee Members to scope out the proposal in more detail. This working group will be chaired by the General Secretary, and Esther Lynch, Confederal Secretary will lead the development. The purpose of the working group is to provide focused and specific guidance for the ETUC on the Partnerships terms of reference, aims, objectives and mode of operation. The working group is asked to report back with a draft Resolution to the ETUC Executive in December 2018. Additional supporting discussions will continue with the institutional actors.