



EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES

SPECIAL EDITION

# **TRADE UNION INFORMATION BULLETIN**

***5th Statutory Congress  
of the European  
Trade Union Confederation***

**Milan / May 1985**

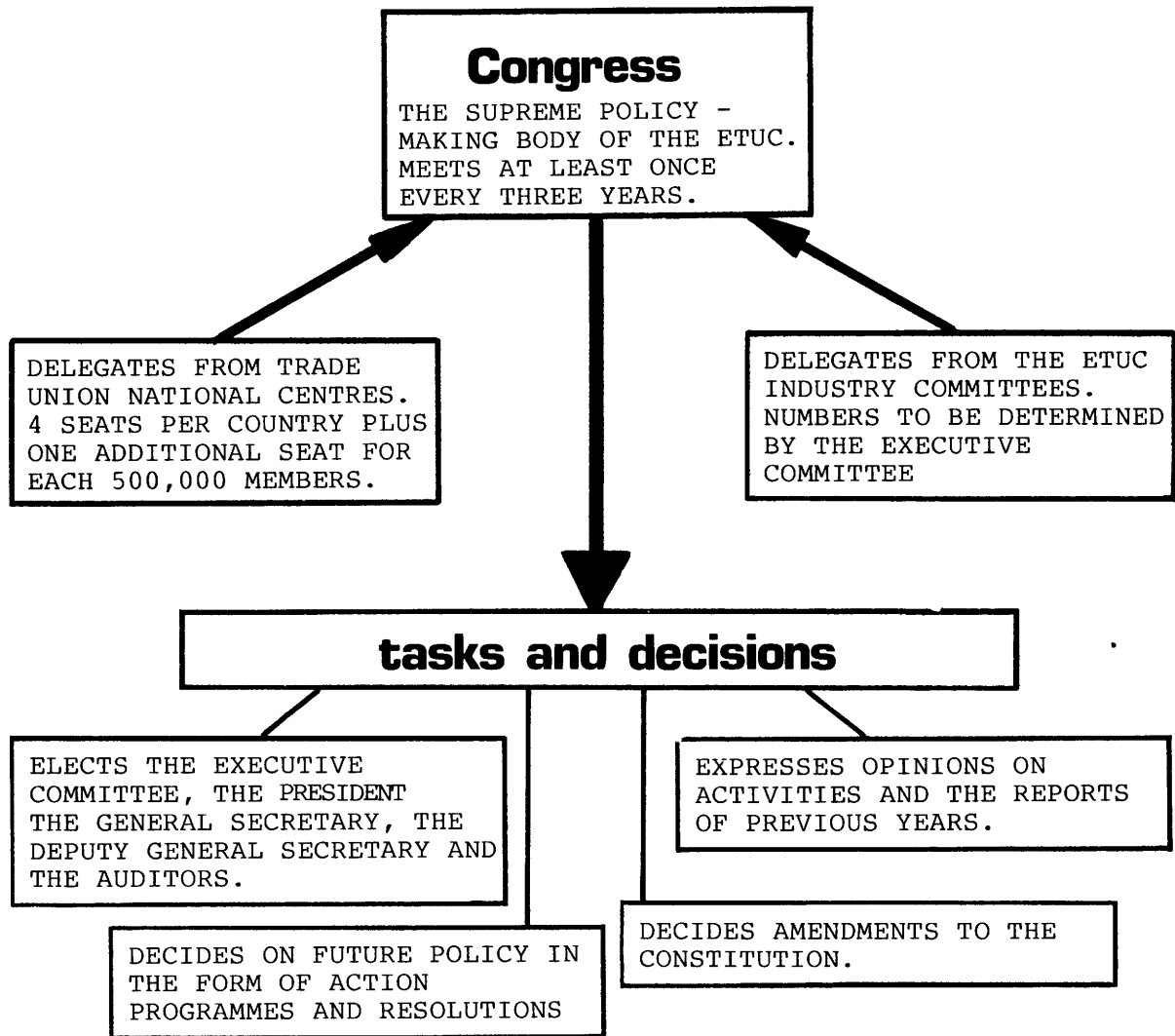
Published by the Trade Union Division of the Directorate-General for Information, Communication and Culture

**COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES (DG X) 200 rue de la Loi, B-1049 Brussels - Belgium**

**Trade Union Information**

# THE CONGRESS OF THE ETUC

The European Trade Union Confederation is the umbrella organisation of national trade union centres at European level, representing over 43 million organised workers from 21 Western European countries. The supreme policy-making body of the ETUC is its Congress which meets at least every three years. Congress is composed of representatives of the national trade union centres and the ETUC Industry Committee.



Since its formation the ETUC has had five statutory congresses and one special congress. The Fifth Statutory Congress of the ETUC was held in Milan between 13th and 17th May 1985 and was attended by 184 representatives of the national centres and 58 representatives of the industry committees as well as over three hundred visitors.

Decisions at Congress are taken by a majority of two thirds of the votes cast. Congress also elects the key officers of the ETUC including the President and the General Secretary. The Milan Congress elected Ernst Breit (DGB President) to the position of President to succeed Georges Debunne (FGTB Belgium) who retired after serving in the office for three years. Mathias Hinterscheid was re-elected General Secretary, a position he has held since 1976.

# Jobs for all ..... the only alternative

Some 600 trade unionists from 21 Western European countries gathered together in Milan in May 1985 for the Fifth Statutory Congress of the European Trade Union Confederation. They met at a time when the European economy is being crippled by persistent high levels of unemployment with all the social and economic problems which are produced by economic stagnation. Their discussions reflected the importance of the economic crisis to European trade unionists, the General Resolution advocating a co-ordinated revival of the European economies and a more equitable distribution of the benefits and burdens of European co-operation.

The alternative economic strategy put forward by the ETUC and unanimously supported by the Congress does not differ from the existing policy of the ETUC - there were no fundamental changes in strategy proposed. As Mathias Hinterscheid, the General Secretary of the ETUC, stated in his introduction to the debate on the General Resolution:

"We have been proposing alternatives right from the outset - alternatives which we have improved, supplemented and perfected as the situation has developed. We have reiterated and repeatedly presented these alternatives with a persistency which might sometimes have seemed to be downright obstinacy. But we saw no necessity to change our policy as long as our proposals had not been put to the test and there was nothing to prove that our policy was wrong. And we are now even less inclined to change our policy since it is obvious that the monetarist and at times openly anti-union strategy which is being pursued in most of our countries is driving us further into the rut instead of pulling us out."

Congress considered a wide range of issues - investment, job creation, reduction in working hours, new technology and rights for trade unions and working people. Such key policy issues were included in the General Resolution - the centre-piece of the Congress debate. In addition Specific

Resolutions were adopted on a wide range of domestic and international issues. Congress also gave its support to a specially produced paper on 'The Role of Work, Workers and their Trade Unions in the Society of Tomorrow'.

The Congress was a considerable success. It saw the general recognition of the vital role of active manpower policies and many delegates felt that there was a greater acceptance of a 'political engagement' of the trade union movement. Such a view suggests that increasingly trade unions must become engaged in a dialogue with political authorities and political parties in order to achieve backing for alternative economic policies.

The importance of achieving real economic growth was recognised throughout the Congress debates with an emphasis on creating qualitative growth through improvements in the economic and social infrastructure. Such growth needs to be accompanied by an opening of the Western European market with new rules on competition policy and co-operation. The strengthening of monetary co-operation and the reform of European institutions will help to translate potential growth into real economic growth. Finally new and better conditions of work will ensure that economic expansion brings an increase in jobs and a reduction in unemployment, leading towards the general objective of 'jobs for all'.

# CONGRESS NOTEBOOK

## New ETUI Publications

Congress saw the publication of three new pamphlets from the European Trade Union Institute, as follows:

- \*RESEARCH REPORT: FLEXIBILITY AND JOBS - MYTHS AND REALITIES.
- \*INFO NO. 11: THE TRADE UNION MOVEMENT IN ITALY - CGIL, CISL, UIL.
- \*INFO (Special Edition): PROFILE OF THE ETUC.

The Research Report formed the basis of one of the Congress debates. It examines a number of aspects of 'flexibility' at work - both internal company flexibility and the flexibility of working time. The other two publications are in the excellent Info series. The first gives a concise description of the trade union movement in Italy. It is the fifth report to cover a national trade union movement and further reports are expected in the near future. All such reports are structured along the same lines so that valid comparisons can be made of the situation in different countries. The special edition of the Info series examines the structure and functions of the ETUC itself and it was prepared specifically for the Fifth Statutory Congress. All three publications will be fully reviewed in the next edition of the European Information Bulletin.

## Guest Speakers

During the five day Congress the European Trade Union Confederation was addressed by a number of guest speakers including the following:-

- BETTINO CRAXI..... President of the Council (Italy), President of the Council of Ministers of the EEC.
- JACQUES DELORS..... President of the Commission of the EEC.
- GUISEPPE GUZZETTI.. President of the Lombardy Region.
- PER KLEPPE..... Secretary General of EFTA.
- JAN KULAKOWSKI..... General Secretary, World Confederation of Labour.
- JERMO LAINE..... Vice President of the EFTA Council of Ministers.
- MARCELINO OREJA-AGUIRRF..... Secretary General of the Council of Europe.
- PIERRE PFLIMLIN.... President of the European Parliament.
- NOVELLA SANSONI.... President of Milan Region.
- CARLO TOGNOLI..... Mayor of Milan.
- JOHNNY VANDERVEKEN General Secretary International Confederation of Free Trade Unions.

## Agenda

Some of the key items on the agenda of the Congress were:-

MONDAY 13 MAY 1985

Presentation of Report on Activities.

TUESDAY 14 MAY 1985

Discussion of Report on Activities and the General Resolution.

WEDNESDAY 15 MAY 1985

Discussion of "The role of work, workers and their trade unions in the society of tomorrow"

THURSDAY 16 MAY 1985

Discussion of specific resolutions.

FRIDAY 17 MAY 1985

Adoption of resolutions and conclusions.

Election of President, General Secretary,

Deputy General Secretary and Auditors.



## SPECIFIC RESOLUTIONS

# International Policy, Peace and Disarmament

### **South Africa**

\*The Fifth Statutory Congress of the European Trade Union Confederation, reiterated its strongest condemnation of South African apartheid policy as a crime against humanity and as an imminent threat to world peace, and called upon the European Commission and the Council of Ministers of the European Community and EFTA and on national governments in Europe to take stronger and coordinated action to put economic pressure on the South African apartheid regime.

\*The Congress called for immediate action including the extension and more vigorous monitoring of the existing U.N. mandatory arms embargo and future mandatory embargoes in other fields.

\*The Congress called for a ban on new investment in South Africa and a ban on the import and sale of Krugerrands.

\*Congress requested the ETUC Executive Committee, the affiliated organisations, their unions and their international organisations to put more pressure on Western European governments to speed up coordinated escalation of economic sanctions in line with the above.

### **Nicaragua**

\*Congress expressed its serious concern about the recent trade sanctions imposed by the Reagan Administration on Nicaragua and requested that EEC and EFTA countries take urgent trade and economic initiatives to alleviate the serious consequences that these sanctions are causing the population and the workers of Nicaragua, and which are making economic, democratic, social and political development more difficult.

\*Congress requested all European countries to strongly reiterate their support for the Contadora Group's peace initiative.

### **Peace, Security and Disarmament**

One of the main resolutions to be considered by the Congress was on peace, security and disarmament. Some of the main points included in this resolution are as follows.

\*Congress recognised that peace, economic progress, social justice and the practice of human and trade union rights are interdependent and reaffirmed the attachment of the European trade union movement to promoting detente, disarmament and security.

\*Congress welcomed the study by the ETUI on "Disarmament and the conversion of arms industries to civil production".

\*Congress expressed serious concern at the failure of governments to reach agreement on the control, limitation and reduction of armament development and particularly of strategic, intermediate and nuclear weapons.

\*Congress called on the super powers to commit themselves to abandoning the development of weapons systems in space.

\*Congress supported restricting exports of armaments to make effective international control of the arms trade.

\*The resolution concluded as follows:

"On May 8 1945, forty years ago, the Second World War ended in Europe, but Europe stands divided. New and even more destructive weapons are installed in Europe. Tension and distrust prevail. The peoples of Europe want to live in peace with themselves and with the rest of the world. Trade unions are committed to fostering understanding, confidence and detente and in that way, contributing to peace and security. Congress finally urges the Executive Committee and its affiliated organisations to remain active in our common objective to strive for peace and disarmament."

# GENERAL

## INTRODUCTION

"When the ETUC Congress was held in the Hague in 1982 there were 13 million in Western Europe. In the General Resolution adopted by that Congress that unless policies were fundamentally changed registered unemployment would be 13 million people - or one worker in nine - by the time of the ETUC's next Congress in Milan. Policies have not changed, and the situation has deteriorated. Despite the demands, pressures and actions by the ETUC and its member organisations, most governments as well as employers have maintained their policies with the result that the number of unemployed has now risen to well over 13 million people in Western Europe".

So starts the General Resolution adopted by the 1985 Congress of the European Union Confederation. The Resolution represents the main policy proposal of the Congress and is divided into two main sections - the proposals and the action to be taken. The following article is a summary of the main points of the General Resolution.

## JOB FOR ALL

\*Every woman and man has a right to gainful employment. Jobs must therefore be created which are of use to society and are also meaningful for the individual worker.

\*Qualitative as well as quantitative growth is required. This growth must be geared primarily to creating jobs and to the production of goods and services which meet society's real needs.

\*Increased public and private investment is essential for recovery. The ETUC stresses the need to develop coordinated investment programmes at the European level.

\*Venture capital should be provided in a better way and the European Investment Bank could play a stimulating role in this respect.

\*A reduction in working time is still essential as a complementary measure to give everyone a job. The objective of the 35-hour working week without loss of wages must be achieved without delay.

\*The unemployment problem cannot be resolved through part-time or temporary work, home work or fixed-term contracts. Where these forms of employment exist, legislation and collective agreements must guarantee the workers concerned rights which are equivalent to those enjoyed by full-time workers.

\*Special measures must be introduced to ensure equality and equal opportunities for women to participate in working life. The division of the labour market on the basis of sex must be eliminated. Additionally, both parents should enjoy the rights and possibilities to take part in the care of their children, through the availability of parental leave.

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## FOR ALL

\*Maintaining and improving living standards and power remains a priority of the ETUC.

\*The adequate remuneration of workers must be guaranteed through collective bargaining.

\*The policy of curbing inflation and social benefits in a crisis runs counter to the very principle of social justice. It is precisely in a crisis that a network of social protection must be extended for those who are most in need.

\*Priority action to raise the lowest paid is urgent both in order to boost demand and to improve the circumstances of the most disadvantaged people.

\*The reduction in inequality of income calls for a policy of social protection which takes account of dependents' needs, and a policy which aims to reduce inequalities between men and women.

\*The ETUC calls for the development of a taxation system which will mobilise the financial resources of the State in order to implement the policies that it is calling for.

\*Such a policy must ensure that the burden of financing such a policy is shared equitably and that there is an effective mechanism for redistribution of income.

\*The ETUC maintains that progressive taxation is one of the most appropriate means of meeting its objectives.

# RESOLUTION

## EDUCATION FOR ALL

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\*It is a public responsibility to ensure access to education and training of the same high standard for everyone.

\*Basic education must be supplemented with vocational training and other types of education providing men and women with qualifications which will genuinely give access to employment of the individual's own free choice.

\*The right to further training and retraining must be laid down in collective agreements or legislative provisions. Workers must furthermore be allowed to take such educational leave with pay.

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## RIGHTS AND CONDITIONS

\*Action must be pursued to protect workers against the effects of noxious agents at work (toxic substances, noise, radiation, etc.)

\*A directive must be adopted without delay introducing occupational health coverage for all workers.

\*The establishment of one single Community market must on no account entail a reduction of safety and health protection at work.

\*Technological change must be geared to and used for improving working conditions and eliminating monotonous, piecemeal and repetitive forms of work organisation.

\*The fundamental right to strike must not be brought into question in either the public or the private sector.

\*Workers and their trade unions must be informed in full on all issues, whether economic, social or technical, and irrespective of the size of the undertaking or department concerned.

\*The trade union movement must put pressure on governments and national parliaments to obtain a real influence on legislation in both the economic and social field.

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## AN ECONOMY IN THE SERVICE OF ALL

\*It is essential to coordinate economic policies at the European level to resolve employment problems; these policies must be designed in particular to achieve industrial recovery and industrial cooperation, especially in strategic sectors, and the creation of more favourable conditions for recovery on the basis of joint programmes.

\*A simultaneous and **coordinated** increase in demand will stimulate economic activity throughout Western Europe and would create a large number of jobs in all countries without actually increasing inflation.

\*Economic policies must be supported by consumer policies which gear the production of goods and services to satisfying the needs of society.

\*The natural environment must be protected when present and new energy sources are developed.

\*The reform of the Common Agricultural Policy of the European Community is becoming more and more urgent.

\*A policy to restore regional balance in Western Europe must be based on specific programmes to boost the economy in regions of economic underdevelopment or decline.

\*It is essential for Europe's future that the bonds with developing countries be strengthened.

# GENERAL RESOLUTION

## ACTION TO BE TAKEN

### At the institutional level

\*The ETUC calls upon the European Community to experiment in the constitution of a special Fund in ECUs which will be used for implementing European pilot programmes which are negotiated with the ETUC and designed to develop job-creation policies.

\*The ETUC calls for the development of sectoral policies at the Community level. The establishment of Joint Sectoral Committees with competences in not only the social but also the economic and industrial field is absolutely essential for defining the policies to be pursued.

\*EFTA should continue its effort to go beyond purely trade questions and to cover policies in the economic, social and employment fields.

\*By the same token, the Council of Europe must actively contribute through its Special Ministerial Conferences to define policies for Western Europe as a whole.

### At the trade union level

\*Congress reaffirms the need to strengthen and develop the ETUC's means of action to put pressure on employers, governments and the European institutions to adopt policies in line with the ETUC objectives.

\*At the national level, the ETUC affiliates will pursue their action to inform, educate and mobilise their members behind the ETUC's demands.

\*At the regional level, the inter-regional trade union councils will step up their action on practical projects and issues of mutual interest.

\*Congress authorises the ETUC Executive Committee to pursue its efforts with a view to industry committees being recognised.

\*The ETUC will be the instrument for elaborating trade union policies at the European level. It will intensify its coordination of the policies of its affiliated organisations with a view to strengthening national campaigns in support of ETUC policies.

\*The ETUC will approach the European institutions on behalf of its affiliated organisations to urge them to adopt the necessary measures to bring about economic recovery, to fight unemployment and to improve the circumstances of workers and their families.

\*Congress instructs the Executive Committee to examine in greater depth ways and means of strengthening the role and powers of the ETUC on the basis of a mandate of the affiliated confederations.

### Conclusions

\*The ETUC Congress has made concrete proposals for a better distribution of income and wealth, and for fighting unemployment, in Europe.

\*The trade unions united in the ETUC are prepared to negotiate at all levels on the Congress's proposals. They call on employers' organisations to enter into open-minded discussions with them. They will support national legislation and international instruments which are in line with the ETUC demands.

\*However, they will fight with all their strength any measures which aim at weakening the trade union movement, at dividing workers and at calling in question the hard-won guarantees which workers have obtained after years of struggle.

\*The ETUC Congress appeals to the workers of Europe to realise the imperative need to consolidate trade unionism at the European level and to mobilise their strength in line with the demands set out in the resolution. Congress is convinced that the implementation of this programme will achieve more social justice and prosperity in a society of democracy, freedom and peace.



## SPECIFIC RESOLUTIONS

### Agriculture

A major resolution on the development of an agricultural and food policy in the European Community was tabled by two of the ETUC Industry Committees - the European Federation of Agricultural Workers' Unions in the Community (EFA) and the European Committee of Food, Catering and Allied Workers' Unions (ECF).

\*The resolution stressed the importance of the Common Agricultural Policy whilst calling for radical reform in the policy. The reforms proposed by the Agricultural Council of Spring 1984 were rejected for neglecting the regional and sectoral balance and failing to take into account that agricultural policy can only be seen in an overall concept of a Europe of working people.

\*The resolution stated that any CAP reform which was geared solely to monetary aspects would fail to guarantee an economic and social solution to the problems on hand.

\*The resolution concluded by demanding that equal importance must be attached to economic and social aspects in a new agro-food policy, i.e. that the new policy must also be geared to ensuring a high level of employment and adequate working conditions both in agriculture and the food - processing industry.

### Retired Workers

In a Resolution on old and retired workers Congress instructed the Executive Committee to:

\*Give full attention to the problems of pensioners and old people, so as to assist affiliated organisations, particularly through a full flow of information, in determining appropriate policies.

\*Examine the possibilities of achieving a better coordination of the work of affiliated organisations and bodies related to them in this area.

\*Take further action on their February 1984 statement on social security problems.

### Community Enlargement

The Secretariat of the ETUC presented a statement to the Congress on Community Enlargement to Spain and Portugal which was adopted.

\*Congress welcomed the fact that the negotiations on the accession of Spain and Portugal to the European Community had been concluded.

\*Congress considered that the relevant decisions which the European Council adopted in March 1985 are in line with the aspirations and democratic ideals of Spanish and Portuguese workers and for the call for and commitment to solidarity which the workers of Europe have been voicing for years.

\*Congress considered that with the accession of Spain and Portugal the Community will be enriched with a new human, political and material dimension.

\*Congress demanded that structural job-creating policies for economic recovery and development be implemented which are designed to restore a fair and legitimate balance between the more developed and the less developed regions and which take precedence over difficulties of a purely monetary nature and the resurgence of nationalist egoism.

\*Congress requested that the ETUC Executive Committee should employ every possible means to ensure that governments and various Community bodies provide the instruments and means which are necessary to the integration process so that the European Community is effectively strengthened on the basis of an appropriate answer to the needs and interests of the populations concerned.

# THE ROLE OF WORK, WORKERS AND THEIR TRADE UNIONS IN THE SOCIETY OF TOMORROW

One of the main items of business of the ETUC Congress was to consider a paper entitled "The Role of Work, Workers and their Trade Unions in the Society of Tomorrow". Following a full debate by Congress the paper was given unanimous support. The paper is too long to summarise effectively, the following are just a selection of some of the main points.

The Paper commences with a review of the current situation in Western Europe, reviewing the main features of the crisis and the high economic and social costs of unemployment. In examining the future prospects of Europe the Paper lists the important challenges facing Western Europe including the following:

- \*to secure freedom and disarmament,
- \*to reduce mass unemployment,
- \*to control the new technologies,
- \*to convert arms production to civil production,
- \*to secure the basis of our existence through environmental protection,
- \*to prevent the polarisation of society.

The Paper examines in detail the views of society of the Conservatives and the Neo-Liberals, concentrating on their economic policies and the dangers of the downward spiral of economic decline and unemployment.

Following from the analysis of the current crisis the Paper goes on to examine the trade union alternatives. Detailed consideration is given to the eight main objectives of the ETUC for full employment:

- \*reduction of working time
- \*maintenance of purchasing power
- \*combating inflation
- \*negotiating technological change

## Introductory address of Mathias Hinterscheid

Mathias Hinterscheid, the General Secretary of the ETUC, introduced the Paper on the role of work. In his address he said the ETUC had not ventured to depict a fantasy of what society will be like in the year 2000, but rather to provide a picture of developments in the next five to ten years. The purpose of the debate, he said, was to exchange information on a broader basis to achieve better coordination. He stated that the ETUC, which was founded before the onset of the crisis in Western Europe, had stood the test. Its unity as an umbrella organisation had not been shaken by the economic crisis. It had made considerable progress in the twelve years it had been operating, but that progress must not cover up its weakness. "We must analyse the situation clearly in order to draw the right conclusions. We must debate the issues frankly to make our experiences clear. We must strive together to find convincing answers which will strengthen our credibility".

The Paper attempts to understand the value of work in tomorrow's society, acknowledging that both the quantity and quality of work will undergo change. Three significant trends are identified which are changing the world of work:

- \*structural changes in the labour market,
- \*the impact of new technologies,
- \*flexibility.

- \*strengthening labour market policies
- \*industrial policy planning
- \*stimulating public investment
- \*helping the developing countries.

The Paper concludes by looking at ways of strengthening the trade union movement including the organisation of new groups of workers. The policy, approaches and actions of the ETUC are examined in the final section of the Paper.

# ETUC OFFICERS

The Fifth Statutory Congress elected the following officials:-

President: ERNST BREIT

Born in Germany, son of a machinist, his career began in 1941 as a member of the Post Office executive staff, and in 1946 he joined the Postal Workers Union (DPG). During the 1950s he served on committees in the DPG and the DGB. Elected DPG President in 1971, President of the PTI 1978, and DGB president in 1982 by an overwhelming majority. Elected ETUC President by 35 affiliates in May 1985.

GENERAL SECRETARY:

Mathias HINTERSCHIED. Responsible for the General Secretariat, ETUC budget, Executive Committee, Co-ordination of all sectors, European Trade Union Institute, Industry Committees, Relations with affiliates, and general representation/public relations.

DEPUTY GENERAL SECRETARY

Bjorn PETERSSON Assists the General Secretary, responsible for Energy Policy, Womens Affairs, Youth, Labour Market, Peace and Disarmament, TUAC-OECD coordination, European institutions.

SECRETARIES:

Peter COLDRICK..... Economic, monetary and trade policy, global Industrial policy, Agricultural policy, Industrial research, E.F.T.A. and the EEC budget.

Antonio MINIUTTI..... Migration, Mediterranean policy 3rd World/Development policy, co-ordination of funds, Regional Policy, Industry Committees.

Fritz RATH..... Economic democracy, Workers rights, Company law, Social Fund, Vocational Training Centre Berlin, Education and Training, regional union councils, Economic and Social Committee, Social Security.

Francois STAEDLIN..... Working conditions and the Dublin Foundation, Working time, Safety and Health, Radioprotection, Standing Committee for Employment, Collective Bargaining, Council of Europe, and the European Parliament

# SPEECHES

## Georges Debunne

Extracts from the inaugural address to Congress by Georges Debunne, retiring President of the ETUC.

"The prevailing liberal and conservative trend is causing society to disintegrate and is leading us to chaos, which is harmful and dangerous - not only for workers in general and Europeans in particular, but for mankind as a whole. We must take up the challenge. Every possible means must be employed to organise a Europe of employment, a Europe of freedoms, justice and peace. The attitude of "every man for himself" - the nationalist, regionalist, corporatist, racialist and egoistic approach - is leading us all, one after the other, to impoverishment and decadence in Europe. Europe must take its destiny in hand now. What is needed is joint action.

"Every man for himself" is a destructive attitude. We must not compete with one another over wages and social benefits. It is by acting together in solidarity that working people will have their say. And it is through that solidarity that the ETUC will be able to put an end to the dangers of the crisis and return to the road to progress"

# SPEECHES

## Ernst Breit

Extracts from the Closing Address to Congress by Ernst Breit, President of the ETUC and DGB President.

"It has been confirmed once again at this Congress that the economic and social challenges which are facing the trade union movement today cannot be met within the national framework alone. What is needed is a coordinated European policy, joint European action. But we cannot merely demand this from governments and parties; we must be prepared to work together ourselves.

We already stated emphatically that we are prepared to work together when we founded this European Trade Union Confederation twelve years ago. And we have demonstrated once again at this Congress that we mean it when we declare our loyalty to Europe. I hope that where there were doubts our frank debate has strengthened the awareness that there is no other alternative for society in Europe, and thus no other alternative for the ETUC.

In almost all of our countries the trade unions are the target of stereotype accusations which are made to influence public opinion by those parties in whose interest it is to do so, and which are untrue. Nor do they gain in accuracy through constant repetition. It is said for instance that the trade unions only represent the interests of those who have a job. But we are forced to state that in actual fact those who blame the unions are mostly the very parties who take advantage of mass unemployment in order to attack the interests and rights of working people. But the trade unions work and fight for all workers, for those who have a job and for those who are jobless. And this has been demonstrated precisely by the collective agreements concluded over the last few years. The battle which we are waging throughout Europe for the reduction of working time aims primarily at safeguarding existing jobs and creating new ones. This is active solidarity with the unemployed."

## Jacques Delors

Extracts from the speech to Congress of Jacques Delors, President of the European Commission.

In his speech to Congress the President of the Commission, Jacques Delors, emphasised the commitment of the EEC to reducing unemployment. "European workers have paid heavily for their right to work", stated Delors. "The privatisation of profit and collectivisation of loss is not the role that we assign to the state. We support a state which is more rigorous and selective in its interventions, that is as regards organisation, consultation and collective negotiation. The day when the balance between the state, the management and the trade unions disappears is the day that democracy is in danger."

Jacques Delors called for an increase in jobs for young people in the short term, stressing that large work programmes are more economically viable than reductions in taxation. The President of the Commission also voiced his conviction that the reduction of the working week is at the basis of a new social contract. "The importance is not whether one is for or against a shorter working week", said Delors, "but to decide whether its implementation will be chaotic or concerted and controlled. The Commission undertakes not to ignore its responsibilities."