FEM Fédération Européenne des Métallurgistes dans la Communauté

EMB Europäischer Metallgewerkschaftsbund in der Gemeinschaft

EMF European Metalworkers' Federation in the Community

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EMF ACTION PROGRAMME

1. ANALYSIS OF THE SITUATION IN EUROPE

Today, the most characteristic features of the situation in most European Community countries and the rest of Western Europe include massive unemployment, affecting young people, women and older workers in particular, attacks on social and trade union rights, mounting violence and the resurgence of extremist, xenophobic and racialist tendencies, and increased poverty.

The deterioration and destruction of the environment constitute a serious threat to the health and lives of the general population.

The uncontrolled might of the multinational corporations, the forced introduction of new production technologies, whose negative social impact is neither analysed nor taken into account, new forms of organisation of work, increased strain and stress and a deterioration in the working conditions of the majority of workers, the often disgraceful living conditions experienced by migrant workers and their families, the heightening of structural problems as a result of the heavy concentration of industry in major urban areas - all this is an expression of wrong development due to the very nature of the economic system, the lack of democratic regional and inter-regional planning, the lack of involvement by important sectors of society, especially the workers and their unions, and insufficient attention to social aspects in the process of European integration.

Multinational companies continue to take advantage of the weaknesses in national and European social legislation in order to maintain and increase their dominant position and maximize profits at working people's expense. The European employers' associations, as well as a good many national governments, are co-ordinating their anti-worker, anti-trade union strategies and relentlessly intensifying their lobbying of the European institutions.

The common agricultural policy still constitutes an enormous burden for the budget of the European Communities. It must be reformed. More importance should be given to the still largely underdeveloped regional, industrial and social policies, as well as joint research policies for peaceful ends.

Despite all these problems and contradictions, the European metalworkers' unions believe that there is no credible alternative to pursuing the further construction of Europe. They consider it to be their duty to point out the various contradictions and mistakes and put forward constructive proposals to put these right in order to help to construct a democratic, free, social, united and peaceful Europe.

2. ROLE OF THE EMF

The whole trade union movement must react rapidly and energetically and persevere in its efforts in the light of these unsatifactory economic and social developments. The EMF is fully aware of the role that it is called upon to play and of its responsibilities towards European metalworkers.

In its Statutes, it is committed to furthering and defending the economic, social and cultural interests of metalworkers at all levels of the European Community and to promoting a spirit of solidarity over and beyond national frontiers.

In order to achieve these aims, the EMF has set itself a programme of action defining joint short and medium-term goals and the means of action to attain these goals.

This action programme is a follow-up to the one adopted by delegates to the 2nd EMF General Assembly, which took place in Frankfurt/Main on 30th and 31st October 1984.

Looked at in a world-wide context, the EMF action programme is in line with the policies adopted by the International Metalworkers' Federation (IMF) and, in a European context, with those adopted by the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC).

3. JOINT SHORT AND MEDIUM-TERM GOALS

Full employment, better living and working conditions, shorter working time, increased purchasing power and a fairer distribution of incomes, socially-acceptable technological change, social protection and the democratisation of the economy remain the essential goals of the trade union movement.

However, these general goals can only be achieved if the workers are united at all levels of the economy and society at both national and European levels, in powerful trade unions, thus demonstrating their willingness to take up the fight and their solidarity.

The construction of Europe must focus on full employment and improving living and working conditions. If no answer is found to these key questions, the process of European unification will be brought to a halt; there will be no overall improvement in co-ordination of economic and social policies nor completion of the internal market, nor will there be an improvement in the role of Europe vis-à-vis the rest of the world. A prerequisite to the solution of these problems is that the voice of the workers be heard and that national unions pursue joint aims on a European scale.

The EMF will endeavour to contribute in this respect by co-ordinating the action of affiliated organisations, as well as by joint action at European level, wherever this seems to be useful and effective.

The EMF and its affiliates have set themselves the following short and medium-term goals:-

3.1. Reduction of unemployment by developing an active employment policy, implementing job-creating investment programmes and reducing working time:-

- Development of co-ordinated investment programmes at European level in such fields as public transport, telecommunications, housing, health care, education, the rational and environment-conscious use of energy and development of low-risk energy sources, and environmental protection

- Development of sectoral and regional industrial policies, especially for sectors where there is surplus production capacity and for areas of high unemployment, by stimulating policies aimed at reconversion, diversification of production, technological innovation and vocational training

- Creation of a vast internal market and a European social dimension in which the interests of the workers and structurally weak areas would be taken into account

- Development of joint research policies in the industrial fields and any other fields which may contribute to an improvement in social conditions

- Implementation of forward-looking skill and manpower policies for each employment basin and sector of activity to provide workers with a guide to the type of skills required to find employment

3.2. Reduction of working time by:-

- bringing weekly working time down to 35 hours or less without loss of pay
- increasing the annual holiday entitlement
- lowering the retirement age
- restricting overtime and recovering overtime by time off in lieu

3.3. Rendering technological change socially acceptable via a policy of:-

- prior information, consultation and negotiation
- improving working and living conditions
- rearranging the organisation of work in order to improve job content and job satisfaction
- further vocational training for all, also during working hours

3.4. Better defence of workers' interests vis-à-vis the European institutions:-

- Increased consultation and negotiation rights in respect of preparation of all relevant EEC policy proposals of interest to employees in the metalworking industries
- Creation of permanent trade union consultative bodies for all important branches of the metalworking industry
- Inclusion of guarantees with regard to social and employment policies in all Community legislation
- Maintaining contacts with the Economic and Social Committee's "workers' group" and increasing contacts with the European Parliament

3.5. Contacts and negotiations with European employer organisations in the metalworking industry

- Creation of a permanent committee between the EMF and the West European Metal Trades Employers' Organisation, WEM
- Continuation of contacts with employer federations for individual sectors of the metalworking industry where these already exist and establishment of necessary new contacts with a view to having detailed discussions with European employers on the strategies they intend to pursue in relation to industrial policy and company restructuring

- Negotiations between the EMF and the European employer federations in the metalworking industry on employment guarantees, further vocational training and intervention of the European structural Funds in favour of workers in individual branches of the metalworking industry

3.6. Intensification of action with regard to multinational companies in Europe

- Extension of trade union co-ordinating committees on multinational companies (in co-operation with the IMF) and multinational production groups

- Continuation and intensification of the exchange of information between unions and development of joint claims and mutual support in the event of action undertaken within multinational companies

- Setting-up of information and consultation bodies at European level for workers' representatives and their unions in multinational companies, by law or collective agreement

- Talks with the top management of European multinational companies with the aim of securing agreements and reaching an understanding on optimum employment guarantees and fringe benefits for their employees

- Drawing-up of a binding Code of Practice for the operation of multinational companies in Europe by the European Commission

3.7. Elimination of discrimination against women, young people and migrant workers

- Elimination of discrimination and guarantee of equal opportunities for women. Recognition of women's rights to employment and guarantee of equal treatment for men and women, without this being used as a pretext for deregulating labour law

- Right to vocational training for all young people with the aim of guranteeing them stable, skilled and properly remunerated employment

- Elimination of discrimination, and efforts to secure or maintain equal rights for migrant workers and their families

3.8. Co-ordination of national trade union policies of common interest

- Rejection of any national or European incomes policy which seeks by means of wage control to restrict the collective bargaining freedom of the unions and reduce real wages

- Increased trade union involvement in industrial restructuring, mergers and concentration processes in order to safeguard workers' interests

- Encouragement of all trade union initiatives aimed at increasing employee influence on the decision-making process within firms

- Opposition to neo-liberal ideas and practices aimed at privatising public services, restricting trade union rights, reducing social security protection and fragmenting collective bargaining by separate negotiations on individual issues

- Encouragement of trade union initiatives in favour of environmental protection and health and safety at the workplace

- Support for policies of co-operation to promote the independent economic and social development of the developing countries

- Promotion of trade union initiatives in favour of peace and disarmament and the respect of human and trade union rights

- Appropriate worker training and information means to encourage European awareness

3.9. Development and co-ordination of metalworkers' joint demands for future negotiations

- Rejection of all employer and government attempts to restrict collective bargaining freedom and the right to strike

- Abolition of lock-out practices and removal of legal barriers to sympathy strikes on an international scale

- Development of joint claims platforms in respect of shorter working time, vocational training, skills, purchasing power, socially-acceptable technological change, equal professional treatment for men and women, the humanisation of work and worker status

4. MEANS OF ACTION

In order to attain these short and medium-term goals, the metalworkers' unions affiliated to the EMF will utilise all appropriate trade union means of action in their respective countries. The General Assembly instructs the EMF Executive Committee to decide what concrete measures should be taken to achieve these goals.

The following means of action could serve as a guide:-

- Utilisation of all possibilities provided by collective bargaining policy and the law in each country

- Intensification of the exchange of information, views and experiences within EMF working parties for individual sectors and multinational companies and development of joint claims platforms in the industrial and social fields

- Continuation of comparison of national collective bargaining policy and definition of joint goals to be simultaneously achieved at national and European level by the EMF Collective Bargaining Committee

- Simultaneous presentation of common demands in the different countries

- Setting-up of specific working parties to work out concrete solutions in response to particular demands

- Solidarity action over and beyond frontiers in the case of labour disputes and strikes

- Joint demands put forward to the European institutions and development of contacts with the same

- Popularisation among working people of joint EMF goals and claims platforms through more press work

- Encouragement of the exchange of young trade unionists in the metalworking sectors with a view to furthering trade union education on a European level

- Efforts to interest new classes of employees in trade union objectives, especially clerical, technical and supervisory staff and employees in small and medium-sized enterprises

- EMF organisation and co-ordination of effective action and pressure, including demonstrations and work stoppages, in co-operation with all its affiliates, to change policies pursued by governments and employers at national and European level.
