

EIB SPECIAL

THE EUROPEAN TRADE UNION CONFEDERATION

In 1984 the Trade Union Division of the Commission of the European Communities published a pamphlet* describing the structure and functions of the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC). During 1984 the European Information Bulletin published a series of articles summarising the main points of the pamphlet. This special supplement is a collection of these articles.

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**A SPECIAL SUPPLEMENT TO EUROPEAN INFORMATION
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The concept of a European trade union movement is as old as the concept of either an economic or a political union of Western European states and the origins of the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) can be traced back to the very beginning of the European Community itself - back to the early nineteen fifties.

As soon as the European Coal and Steel Community came into being a committee - known as the Committee of 21 - was formed consisting of representatives of the trade union movements of the original six member states. The objective of the Committee of 21 was to represent trade union interests to the High Authority of the Coal and Steel Community. In 1957, with the creation of the European Community, the Committee of 21 was merged into the newly formed European Trade Union Secretariat - again made up of representatives from the trade union movements of the six member states. During the sixties several other groupings of European trade unionists came into being, some confined to the European Community but many embracing trade unions from all European nations.

By 1972, with the expansion of the Community to nine member states, a series of conferences led to the establishment of an entirely new European trade union organisation spanning both the member states of the Community and EFTA, and in February 1973 the first congress of the European Trade Union Confederation was held in Brussels. This new organisation was composed of representatives from the national federations of trade unions of the EEC member countries, EFTA member countries, and the national union federations of Finland, Iceland and Spain.

THE STRUCTURE OF THE ETUC There are three major organisational institutions making up the ETUC - the Congress, the Executive Committee and the Secretariat.

THE CONGRESS: Congress is the source of authority within the ETUC and it is made up of four members of each of the affiliated countries plus one additional seat to confederations for every 500,000 members. Congress meets at least every third year when it reviews the work of the ETUC and formulates future policy. Congress also elects the Executive Committee and the chief officers of the ETUC - the President, the General Secretary and the Deputy General Secretary. All decisions of Congress are made on the basis of a two-thirds majority.

THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE: All national trade union confederations are represented on the Executive Committee with an additional member for organisations with a membership exceeding 5,000,000 members. The Executive Committee meets at least six times a year and it is responsible for implementing the resolutions and programmes adopted by Congress. At least once a year the Executive examines the trade union situation in each of the member countries. As with Congress, decisions are based on a two thirds majority.

THE SECRETARIAT: The Secretariat is made up of the main functional officers of the ETUC - the General Secretary, the Deputy General Secretary both of whom are elected by Congress, and the Secretaries whose number is determined by the Executive Committee. There are currently six Secretaries. The main tasks of the Secretariat consist of preparing and organising the numerous standing committees, working groups, and the Congress; co-ordinating the ETUC activities entrusted to it by Congress; providing the liason between the Executive Committee and the Industry Committees. Members of the Secretariat represent the ETUC at the many conferences, consultations, and committees associated with the institutional life of the European Communities, the EFTA, and the Council of Europe.

STRUCTURE AND MEMBERSHIP: The ETUC has a membership of over 40,000,000 represented by a total of thirty-four national affiliated organisations.

Although the ETUC is not restricted to the countries of the European Community over half of the total membership is based within the confines of the

TABLE 1 : MEMBERSHIP DISTRIBUTION OF ETUC NATIONAL AFFILIATES.

SIZE	NUMBER OF AFFILIATES	CUMULATIVE NUMBER OF AFFILIATES	CUMULATIVE % OF ETUC MEMBERSHIP
Up to 50,000	7	7	20%
ORGANISATIONS:			
Confederation Generale du Travail de Luxembourg (CGT-L)....LUXEMBOURG			
Letzburger Chestleche Gewerkschaftsbond (LCGB)LUXEMBOURG			
Bandalag Starfsmanna Rikis og Baeja (BSRB).....ICELAND			
General Workers Union (GWU).....MALTA			
Cyprus Workers Confederation.....CYPRUS			
Confederation of Trade UnionsMALTA			
Cyprus Turkish Trade Unions Federation (TURK-SEN).....CYPRUS			
50,000 - 250,000	3	10	29.5%
ORGANISATIONS:			
Althydusamband Islands (ASI).....ICELAND			
Solidaridad de Trabajadores Vascos (STV - ELA)SPAIN			
Christlichnationaler Gewerkschaftsbund der Schweiz(CGS)....SWITZERLAND			
250,000- 2,000,000	20	30	88%
ORGANISATIONS:			
Uniao Geral de Trabalhadores (UGT).....PORTUGAL			
Union General de Trabajadores de Espana (UGT)SPAIN			
Fallesradet for Danske Tjenestemand og Funktionarorganisationer(FTF).....DENMARK			
Toimihenkilö- ja Virkamiesjärjestöjen Keskusliitto (TVK)FINLAND			
Christelijk Nationaal Vakverbond (CNV).....NETHERLANDS			
Greek General Confederation of Labour (GGCL).....GREECE			
Schweizerischer Gewerkschaftsbund (SGB).....SWITZERLAND			
Federation Generale du Travail de Belgique (FGTB).....BELGIUM			
Confederation Generale du Travail-Force Ouvriere(CGT-FO)...FRANCE			
Confederation Francaise Democratique du Travail (CFDT)....FRANCE			
Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU).....IRELAND			
Federatie Nederlandse Vakbeweging (FNV).....NETHERLANDS			
Landsorganisasjonen i Norge (LO).....NORWAY			
Suomen Ammattiliittojen Keskusjärjestö (SAK).....FINLAND			
Tjänstemännens Centralorganisation (TCO).....SWEDEN			
Confederation des Syndicats Chrétiens (CSC).....BELGIUM			
Landsorganisationen i Danmark (LO).....DENMARK			
Unione Italiana del Lavoro (UIL).....ITALY			
Osterreichischer Gewerkschaftsbund (ÖGB)AUSTRIA			
Landsorganisationen i Sverige (LO).....SWEDEN			
2,000,000- 6,000,000	2	32	94%
ORGANISATIONS:			
Confederazione Italiana Sindacati Lavoratori (CISL).....ITALY			
Confederazione Generale Italiana del Lavoro (CGIL).....ITALY			
Over 6,000,000	2	34	100%
ORGANISATIONS:			
Deutscher Gewerkschaftsbund (DGB).....F.R.GERMANY			
Trades Union Congress (TUC).....GT. BRITAIN			

Community. The accompanying table indicates the distribution and size of affiliated organisations.

MEANS OF INFLUENCE: The ETUC exists to promote the interests of trade unions in Europe and as so it has representation on a number of European bodies and both formal and informal ways of attempting to influence other bodies. For example regular meetings take place between the ETUC and Commission officials and the Confederation has contact with both individual Members of the European Parliament and political groups within the Parliament. In addition the ETUC has representation through a variety of standing committees, conferences and steering groups at Community level. Finally, the ETUC works with and attempts to influence such bodies as EFTA, the Council of Europe, the OECD and the major European Employers association - UNICE.

AIMS AND ACTIVITIES OF THE ETUC

In the preamble to the Constitution of the ETUC signed in 1973, the affiliated trade union organisations agreed that their main aims should be to:-

"jointly represent and promote the social, economic and cultural interests of the workers at the European level in general and in particular in respect of all European institutions, including the European Community and the European Free Trade Association"

In addition the ETUC saw as its objective "to work to safeguard and strengthen democracy in Europe" and to act as a counterweight to the European employers' organisations. Again at the founding conference it was declared:-

"instead of a Europe of capitalists the ETUC calls for a new orientation of Europe, based on the social needs of the working people, involving structural reforms in the economy and in society"

The aims of the ETUC have been established by a series of conferences which have reflected the aims of the ETUC in Action Programmes. The conferences have examined issues such as full-employment, the reduction in working time, greater worker participation, equal rights for women and migrant workers and the issue of peace and the arms race. The main themes of the Action Programme adopted by the ETUC in Munich in 1979 are as follows:-

1. Full employment planning.
2. Reduction of working time.
3. Defence and the promotion of living standards.
4. Democratisation of the economy.
5. Improvement in working conditions.
6. Reform of agricultural policy.
7. A comprehensive energy policy.
8. More effective regional policy.
9. An end to discrimination.
10. A fair deal for consumers.
11. Improving the quality of life.
12. A new international economic and social order.
13. Extension of trade union influence and means of action.

INDUSTRY COMMITTEES

Article 4 of the ETUC Constitution makes provision for the establishment of European level Industry Committees. These committees are designed to bring together national level trade union officers and general secretaries to discuss issues of concern to the unions and industries. There are currently eleven recognised Industry Committees amongst which are the following:-

The European Metalworkers Federation in the EEC.
European Teachers Trade Union Committee.
European Federation of Building and Woodworkers.
European Public Services Industry Committee.

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