

ETUC Contribution at the: At the High-Level Political Forum for Sustainable Development - Side Event hosted by the European Union and the Government of Finland -

DELIVERING THE 2030 AGENDA FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN EUROPE AND THE WORLD - an EU review of progress - 18 July 2019

Goal 8 has been the focus of this year's HLPF. The EU is reporting on the progress of implementing the goal in Europe. Despite the fact that the ETUC has worked on most of the SDGs and considers them to be interlinked and inseparable, the goal 8 is clearly one of the key goals for the trade union movement. **Our experience says that the 2030 Agenda cannot win the support of people if people cannot rely on quality and well-remunerated jobs.**

According to the Eurostat data on goals 1, 5, 3, 10- just to mention few, **Europeans are suffering from degrading working conditions.** We need urgent action to raise minimum wages and give access to full time employment to stem in-work poverty. There is strong evidence that high coverage of collective bargaining and wage convergence cut in-work poverty by the half.

Social dialogue is the added value of the EU but is no longer in good shape. When I refer to social dialogue I refer to three fundamental policy frameworks:

- Tripartite dialogue - to plan, implement and monitor policies, and reinforcing mutual accountability
- Collective bargaining - regulating labour market and working conditions under the rule of autonomy, capacity and balance of power between bargaining partners.
- Employee involvement in company management - in order to reduce social conflict, introduce democracy at work and fairer wealth distribution.

Companies and trade unions have developed a number of different ways to reap the benefit of social dialogue. It is a rich set of possibilities that should be made available to the rest of the world to be reproduced and scaled up.

The economic growth of the EU is fragile and unequal [see Eurostat data on poverty and inequalities because, for 2 decades, short-sighted reforms weakened the 3 dimensions of social dialogue. The Quadripartite Agreement A New Start for Social Dialogue, signed in 2016, still has to produce concrete results, especially at national level. Only revamped collective bargaining will help escape the low wage/low growth trap.

Notwithstanding the difficulties, the EU remains the global benchmark for Goal8. One of the outcomes emerging from the ITUC survey on SDG8 (ETUC supports the campaign Time For 8 of the ITUC) is that integrated economies (such as the EU) perform better in terms of decent work but only if they are strongly anchored to democratic structures. And if you look inside the European development model, you will suddenly realise that what makes the EU different from other regions of the world is social dialogue.

Sustainability, democracy and social dialogue are deeply intertwined. Goal 16 cannot be achieved without all three. Now, it is not surprising to observe that the very moment that

some member states turned their back on to the European integration, the same states started underperforming under the Goal 16. As matter of fact, the European Commission and the European Parliament felt the need to take a strong stand for the rule-of-law in the EU. Having been consulted on this, social partners affirmed that social dialogue reinforces democratic institutions and declared their direct interest that the rule of law is fully enforced. SDG16 highlights the weaknesses of the EU development model.

Surprisingly, the EU cannot boast to be the cradle of human rights any longer.

In some part of the EU, “life” is not protected anymore as an inviolable right (colour of the skin, passport, individual conditions become a reason to live or die). Today there are places in the EU where a person can be discretionally deprived of their right to work, or to live legally, without any evidence of crime, only because this person is a third-country nationals.

The conditions of women in the EU are deteriorating. The EUROSTAT report tells the truth. What is worrying is that populist far-right forces consider discriminations a private matter in which the state should refrain from intervening. **This happens in Europe.** It means that what has made Europe the most performing economy in the world – a lasting project of peace - is today in danger.

We need a Universal Labour Guarantee. There is a red thread linking the European Pillar of Social Rights and the Universal Labour Guarantee. Also, in this the EU showed the way ahead. Implementing the Pillar, we try to recover the trust of people in the EU project. We will measure success in fighting inequalities monitoring outcomes, opportunities and after market inequalities.

We need to win people’s support NOW because we have emergencies to address:

We have the “green” agenda to implement. For that, we need a complete change in production patterns. Trade unions aim to manage such change to ensure a socially **just transition** for workers, creating and maintaining quality jobs through investment and innovation. Just transition means establishing a closer nexus between the person and their jobs. It means introducing

- a right to life-long learning,
- a Child Guarantee,
- universal and fairer social protection systems.
- A new legal framework that ensures continuity of employment, security of income, higher wages and career developments.

European multinational companies have a great responsibility to maintain due diligence and respect workers along cross-border supply chains. In other words, everything that make up the Social Market Economy in the EU.

If the UN2030 Agenda sets global standards throughout the world, and we believe it does so, we urge EU member states to include sustainable development in their primary laws, in their constitutions. Then, it will be up to the EU to develop an overarching strategy to make the EU the frontrunner of sustainable development worldwide.