

**ANNUAL CONVENTION  
OF THE EUROPEAN PLATFORM AGAINST POVERTY AND SOCIAL EXCLUSION**

***Side Event: In Work Poverty  
The Contribution of Employment to Poverty Reduction and Inclusion***

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The ETUC has advocated for years against austerity measures and the deterioration of working conditions and wages, but here we are, and little has changed, according to our own researchers, as well as to everybody else. We have 25 million people unemployed, and growing poverty rates, as well as low growth. We are advocating for an additional investment of 1-2% of GDP towards the creation of new jobs in the European Union. For more social Europe, we need more social investment.

When we look at in-work poverty, which is a big concern for trade unions, the extension of low-paid, precarious and more insecure jobs is driven by corporate interest. These jobs were supposed to act as stepping stones to better jobs later on, but the reality is that people still find themselves trapped in low quality jobs after many years. This situation is also putting more pressure on the workers who have slightly better rights and better employment protection, and has a disciplinary effect on all other workers with normal working conditions.

Trade unions are working hard to re-regulate the labour market and to challenge this trend towards mini-jobs and precarious employment, which are destabilizing for the whole workforce. Part-time jobs, from a trade union perspective, are ambiguous, because in a lot of cases they do not provide a living wage, but, on the other hand, we advocated for them during the crisis, when they were part of the solution for keeping people in jobs.

At EU and national level a lot of attention is paid to demographic change, care and health services, through events and documents, including at high level. So this is not about a lack of knowledge. We need to come up with a joint approach to this. Institutional care systems are under pressure now, as more and more are being privatized, so that they are no longer covered by public service collective agreements referring to social services of general interest. As they are moved to another category the working conditions and quality and prices start being different and are very often levelled down. One core question is, how to create a social dialogue for this specific sector? It is a huge challenge, but we agree that this is the only way forward.

I heard a lot about qualifications and training – even today, which we support in principle, but this is also a way to individualize the problem, to lay the responsibility strictly on the individual, while there are people who have a PhD and drive taxis.

The SPC, as well as the EMCO, are very important actors, and their documents and conclusions are very helpful, they have developed some useful concepts along the years. It is rather Finance Ministers and Prime Ministers we have to address. We also need to look at how we see our role in the European Semester, and how we can be better integrated.

We should also look at how to better use the ESF, but a lot of expertise and patience and negotiating is needed to manage and secure funding.

It is problematic for trade unions to back minimum standards on wages defined at EU level, as this is, in our view, a national prerogative, and the competence of the social partners at national or sectoral level. So we are only in a very limited perspective allies with you on the point that the EU should intervene here. But we are very much in favour of joint principles for a minimum income, and we are developing a project on this with EAPN. However we oppose an unconditional basic income. So we need to differentiate between basic income, minimum income and minimum wages, as we have different positions on all of these.