



Confédération syndicale des travailleurs des Amériques

Confederación sindical de los trabajadores de las Américas

Trade Union Confederation of the workers of Americas



European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC)  
Confédération européenne des syndicats (CES)

Confédération européenne des Syndicats

Confederación Europea de Sindicatos

European Trade Union Confederation



ITUC CSI IGB

Confédération syndicale internationale

Confederación Sindical Internacional

International Trade Union Confederation

## **LAC-EU Trade Union Summit**

**4th & 5th May 2010**

**Madrid**

### **“Appeal to European Union, Latin American and Caribbean Heads of State and of Government”**

The 5th Latin American and Caribbean – European Union Trade Union Summit, entitled “Towards employment creation, social stability and workers’ rights in relations between Europe and Latin America” was attended by over 100 delegates and national organisations affiliated to the European Trade Union Confederation in Europe and the Trade Union Confederation of Workers of the Americas in Latin America and the Caribbean, as well as to other federations and trade unions invited by the host organisations.

The Trade Union Summit took place in the context of a world which has not yet recovered from the worst economic crisis in recent times, with huge costs for workers in the two regions represented in the meeting. This situation has increased the challenges already faced by our countries ever since Latin America, the Caribbean and the European Union joined together in 1999. In that year the decision to begin a strategic association was taken at the first Summit, in Río de Janeiro, Brazil.

Worldwide, unemployment has risen by over 34 million since the beginning of the crisis, on top of the 150 million people already looking for work. In the European Union unemployment has reached the figure of 23 million, representing an average of 10%, but which reaches nearly 20% in some European countries.

We, the workers, are deeply concerned since we consider that many governments – and some national and international institutions – are preparing to come out of the crisis without bearing in mind that high unemployment levels, the worst consequence of this situation, will last for longer than it will take GDP to recover, and that this state of affairs requires active policies on the part of states and fundamental changes in multilateral bodies (IMF, WB). Likewise, on the part of many governments there is no sign of the political will to move towards another development model that guarantees global economic governability and social justice, with wealth redistribution.

Thanks to union pressure, the G-20 countries’ Jobs and Employment Ministers Meeting

held in Washington between 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> April 2010 included some positive recommendations, and involved the ILO. Nevertheless, this positive action contrasts with the absence of “an aggressive programme to ensure more robust growth, which creates more jobs” as required by the ITUC and the Global Unions Federation, a demand we share.

From the beginning of the bi-regional association processes, and even before, trade union movements in both regions have closely observed, with hope, the steps that have been taken jointly to strengthen with new links a relationship that is deeply rooted in our histories as nations, countries and peoples. However, over the course of these ten years and, apart from inadequate cooperation and political dialogue programmes, there has been no advance towards a balanced development model.

Serious problems of poverty, emigration, health, education, etc. remain in Latin America, which show a lack of social cohesion and highlight the imbalances, inequalities and asymmetries between the two regions. It is there where the initial spirit behind the Association Agreements acquires importance, one that includes dialogue and cooperation as well as trade. It is unthinkable that development can be achieved in the Latin American and Caribbean region unless substantial changes in education take place, since the current educational systems are exclusive, with excessively lower budgets, relative to GDP and with very low coverage, if there is any at all, of national education demands.

The Euro-Latin American trade union movement proposed in their Fourth Trade Union Declaration in Lima that the framework of relations between the EU and the LAC's sub-regions be extended to include the social and labour dimension, environmental questions and migration with the aim of increasing social cohesion in the sub-regions.

Current negotiations to achieve Association Agreements have differing results for the two regions since they move intensely and almost exclusively along commercial lines. And, as well as the traditional trade issues, the liberalisation of service sectors are included in negotiations, overlapping with public services and the possibility of our essential services being extended to the entire population. Financial liberalisation is being applied that is leading in the same direction as that which originated the recent economic crisis. An absolute regulation of the intellectual property sector, including discussions on patents and rules of origin, essentially panders to the pressure exerted by transnational companies to the detriment of social majorities. And a liberalisation and internationalisation of strategic areas of government procurement makes it unviable for use as an instrument for local, regional and national development.

In the case of EU-Central America, not the slightest notice has been taken of the principal questions asked by civil society about considering a social dimension; meanwhile the other EU-Andean Community project has had the heart ripped out of its initial aim of block-to-block negotiation (so abandoning the aim of strengthening the Andean Community) with the promotion of an individual negotiation with Colombia and Peru, which is limited to trade aspects within the neoliberal Free Trade Agreements model.

This is even more unacceptable in the case of Colombia, where numerous violations of workers' rights take place and there is impunity in the face of murders of trade unionists

and of other social leaders and militants. In Guatemala and other countries too, high levels persist of corruption and violence, as well as near-total impunity in the case of the murders of trade unionists.

The international trade union movement calls for trade union freedom in all countries of the world without exception and urges governments to develop effective policies for the free exercise of these rights.

**Taking into account these considerations, the Trade Union Summit submits to the meeting of Heads of State the following demands:**

1. To take ownership of the proposals that the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) has been making to G-20 governments and world financial institution such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank (WB) of stimulating the economy in order to re-launch the creation of decent jobs and full compliance with the ILO's fundamental labour standards. Among these measures we draw particular attention to the ITUC and Global Unions Federation's proposal to reinforce more progressive tax systems, and fight against tax evasion and tax havens. In many countries there is a crying need for reform of regressive tax regimes, in favour of progressive models where income tax is the principal source of revenue and in which indirect taxes are reduced, since they also have a negative impact on consumption. We support the adoption of a Financial Transactions Tax. (FTT). In this same vein, Latin American and Caribbean unions unite with the workers of European countries in their opposition to the already known and failed structural adjustment measures, involving budgetary, salary, pensions, social protection and public service cuts, which will make the economic crisis deeper, especially in its effects on employment and incomes.
2. The promotion of decent jobs should become a priority in the European Union's cooperation policy towards Latin America. The Trade Union Summit considers that this objective, set by the European Commission itself in its Communication of May 2006, should take on concrete commitments of respect for, and compliance with, the ILO's basic conventions, mechanisms of verifying compliance with social and trade union participation in all EU-LAC policies and negotiations, the ILO's Tripartite Declaration on Multinational Companies and Social Policy, and the ILO's Convention 169 on indigenous and tribal populations, as well as other ILO conventions. Likewise, the OECD's Guidelines on Multinational Companies, the Kyoto Protocol and other multilateral agreements on the environment, together with human rights conventions.
3. We call upon governments to seek to recover the role of States in their regulatory capacity over the operations of transnational companies, TNCs. The agreements to be signed should reinforce the regulatory powers of national states. The near-absolute power held today by TNCs should be limited by means of supranational mechanisms, especially in the case of the most fragile

national states. It is essential to reinforce the links of solidarity between workers on both sides of the Atlantic so that, together, by means of solid information interchange and networks and coordinated action, they can re-balance direct negotiation with companies and also establish controls in the area of direct regulation over wages and working conditions.

4. In view of the announcement of the setting up of the Latin American Investment Mechanism (LAIM), we demand that society, using its organisations and in particular the trade union movement, form part of the strategic entities that decide how the investment is spent, given that under no pretext will investment be accepted that endeavours to capture a market or access to natural resources and goods by means of political and economic coercion. These resources must be used on investment projects that guarantee respect for the ILO's basic conventions, professional training and the generation of scientific and technological capabilities, and that contribute to the sustainable development of the region, both economically and environmentally. In the same way access to investment should be regulated in the area of public services, the quality of and access to which should be guaranteed by states.
5. The Summit of Heads of States should agree on mechanisms for dialogue with trade unions for the setting up, or updating, of all decisions of a social nature taken at the Lima Summit (and those decided in Madrid) and which have not yet materialised or are paralysed, viz:
  - Promoting the creation of decent jobs, an increase in employment and the establishment of labour training programmes.
  - Assigning the means necessary for strengthening social protection systems.
  - Stimulating the participation of the proper authorities and all relevant stakeholders, amongst them civil society, in EU-LAC networks for knowledge transfer and information exchange on social policy affairs.
  - Developing more effective labour and employment policies, by means of social dialogue and cooperation between governments, employment providers and workers and the implementation of social responsibility on the part of companies and respect for workers' rights, including collective bargaining, with a view to generating decent jobs, that are worthy and productive for all.
  - Strengthening capacitation programmes for political and social stakeholders.
6. Involving our trade union organisations in the development of EU policy on the progress of bilateral investment treaties and in the ongoing review of Sustainability Impact Assessments, starting with Chile and Mexico.
7. As trade unions, we demand that the scientific, cultural and production innovation issues that are going to be dealt with by the Heads of State in Madrid should be covered from a social perspective and should have as their aim territorial cohesion and be designed to improve living and working

conditions for their citizens. We demand the participation of civil society and workers' representatives.

8. The strengthening of integration processes in Latin America and the Caribbean should be one of the EU-LAC Bi-regional Association's key aims, and one of the routes for promoting economically and socially sustainable development.
9. The Trade Union Summit voices its disagreement with the development of negotiations held between the EU and Peru, Colombia (and initially with the Andean Community) and Central America, since there has been very little publicly available information, whilst participation of civil society has been scarce and mere formality. Replies to the many trade union proposals and joint statements have been absent, ambiguous or have rejected the proposal concerned. The EU's promise to the ETUC to include mechanisms for trade union participation in order to comply with the aspects in the Agreements covering workers' rights has not made it into print in the final texts. The inclusion of a clause unilaterally suspending the Agreement with Peru and Colombia in the event of serious human rights violations has been the result of social pressure exerted on the European Parliament, but leaves to the EU itself the interpretation of when a violation is considered to be "serious".
10. As a result, the Trade Union Summit requests that the Association Agreements with Peru and Colombia should not be signed, because they contradict the strengthening the Andean Community, insofar as that they are free trade agreements, and also because of the continuing violence in Colombia.
11. The Trade Union Summit also rejects the contents divulged to date of the EU-Central America negotiation, because they have not taken on board reiterated proposals by the ETUC and the sub-regional Central American CSACC and CCT based on fair trade, the correcting of asymmetries by means of promoting development in Central America and on a Social Chapter. To that end we join in the statement of rejection issued by the ETUC, CSACC and CCT (which consider that the EU-CA Association Agreement is essentially a free trade treaty), and that of other social organisations and institutions such as the CC-SICA.
12. We request that the Association Agreements with Chile and Mexico be reviewed, since they lack mechanisms for social participation and their contents hardly go beyond trade considerations. Trade unions directly, and by means of social forums, have demanded a dialogue in order to establish the basis for a true association.
13. The Trade Union Summit requests that in the event of a reopening of the EU-Mercosur negotiations, civil society organisations be consulted beforehand and throughout the entire negotiation process, execution and follow-up of its results. The ETUC and the CCSCS (Southern Cone Trade Union Steering Group) gave detailed proposals in the preceding negotiation for a social and labour Chapter.

14. The Summit of Heads of State must take on and include as an integral part of the Bi-regional Association, the implantation of bi-regional cohesion funds, included within an alternative framework of social and environmentally sustainable development model, in order to combat social inequality in LAC and which must therefore be supported by significant economic resources.
15. We are concerned that environmental impact studies on the EU-LAC negotiations have not been conducted with the rigour and transparency that the issue of climate change and other related questions requires. A free trade agreement will always tend to incline in favour of false solutions to climate change, in promoting, for example, a Latin America that is an agro-exporter of raw materials (for ethanol), which leads to the expansion of the agrarian frontier, and therefore to greater deforestation. Likewise, the application of the ILO's Convention 169 on the consultation of indigenous and tribal communities whenever a project affects the original populations of our countries must be enforced. In the same vein the trade union movement calls on this Summit to establish firm foundations for ensuring a just transition, with green jobs, full rights and social guarantees. Finally, we demand binding and strong commitments to reverse the effects of climate change, based on the principle of shared but differentiated responsibilities.
16. Migration requires coherent policies by both the countries of origin and of destination, in order to make sure that migrant workers enjoy labour rights, the same social protection and bi-regional social security agreements, as well as their right to not migrate. The rights of female immigrant workers in domestic service in particular need to be protected. The Summit of LAC-EU Governments should agree to review the Returns Directive and should take measures so that the EU's customs and frontier policies do not present obstacles to the right to asylum. Reception countries should ratify the ILO and UN Conventions guaranteeing access to rights and equal treatment to migrant workers. The Trade Union Summit condemns the outbursts of xenophobia in various EU countries and the plans by extreme right wing parties (which are growing in several European countries) to reduce immigration by means of repression or harassment of immigrants. Extreme examples of repressive measures against migrants, to be condemned by trade unions, governments and employment providers, are to be seen in the law recently approved by the State of Arizona, and in the wall built along the frontier of Mexico and the USA.
17. The Trade Union Summit demands that governments drive forward legislation that promotes decent jobs for young people, that helps achieve gender equality in the workplace, both in wages and in working conditions, as well as encouraging women's access to positions of responsibility in companies, the public sector and institutions. The progress that has been demonstrably made by means of the approval of the Ibero-American Agreement on Social Security has been notable and we urge it to be extended to other non-Iberian European

countries. Likewise we request that the same criterion be adopted with regard to the Ibero-American Strategy on Health and Safety in the Workplace.

18. We ask the Summit of Heads of State that they demand the end of the USA's blockade on Cuba.
19. The Trade Union Summit condemns the coup d'état which caused the toppling of Honduras' legitimate President, and shares the stance of the Rio Group and that of the OAS in not recognising the new President. Trade union organisations require of the States firmer action to respect human rights, the democratic system and institutions in all countries.
20. On the catastrophe suffered by Haiti, we second the call by the ITUC and the Global Unions Federation for all Haiti's debts to be cancelled completely by international financial institutions and creditor organisms. Haiti should be extended substantial international aid in the form of non-returnable grants for the enormous task of national reconstruction and social construction that the country must undertake. We call on the countries of the EU and LAC which have not done so to join in with this type of financial relationship with the Caribbean country. These funds should have the priority aim of generating decent jobs.
21. Likewise, as trade union organisations we express our solidarity with the Chilean people and demand that, in the light of successive natural catastrophes as well as other calamities caused by climate change, the States should establish reciprocal reconstruction mechanisms, which are not limited to individual humanitarian aid.
22. We express our concern at the increase in the arms race worldwide, when governments should be giving priority to their efforts for the application of public policies for the eradication of poverty and social exclusion among our peoples.
23. The Trade Union Summit supports the ETUC's demand to the European Commission that they be consulted on the new EuroSociAL programme. Likewise, we demand that trade unions and other stakeholders be involved in the setting up of the EU-LAC (EUrocLIMA) Foundation.