

# REPORT TUDCN GENERAL MEETING 2020 (PART 1)

## WEBINAR

### “NEXT EU BUDGET FOR DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION: TRADE UNION ASKS”

25 September, 2020

#### **Background**

Since 2018 the ITUC and ETUC have been jointly following the negotiation on the next EU budget for development cooperation (which is included in the proposed “Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI)”), to ensure that EU’s values and principles are preserved, as well as its commitment to an ambitious development cooperation policy. The webinar was held in the context of the final part of the negotiation among the European Commission, the European Parliament and the Council of the EU, as the text must be agreed by December 2020.

#### **Objectives**

- To update EU affiliates involved in development and development cooperation policies about the state of play of the negotiations on the next Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) for 2021-2027 in general and on the NDICI in particular, as the main instrument which will regulate EU development cooperation policies for the years to come;
- To discuss the trade union advocacy strategy from September to December 2020 with EU institutions and Member States in the capitals, to ensure our asks are reflected in the final agreement on the NDICI.

#### **Participants**

The webinar counted with the participation of 30 participants, of which 22 representatives of EU affiliates, 1 representative of the Group of the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats in the European Parliament (S&D), 1 representative of the ETUC and 6 representatives of the ITUC/TUDCN.

#### **Contents of the discussion**

Firstly Liina Carr, Confederal Secretary of the ETUC, presented the overall state of play of the negotiation of the EU Multiannual Financial Framework and the recovery plan for Europe: she focused in particular on the results of the special meeting of the Council of the EU in July 2020, which she considered disappointing due to the lack of ambition on the EU budget, the predominant rhetoric supporting austerity measures linked to the EU COVID-19 Recovery Instrument and the narrowed focus on the rule of law. In terms of trade union priorities, she flagged the opposition of the ETUC to macroeconomic conditionalities to access

recovery plans, as well as the need to ensure social partners participate in their implementation at the national level.

On her side, Giulia Massobrio (ITUC) presented the main features of the NDICI proposal under negotiation as well as the trade union asks and advocacy strategy put in place since the start of the negotiation.

In order to complete the picture on the NDICI, Carlo Bittarelli, Policy Advisor of Group of the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats in the European Parliament (S&D), shared the current state of play of the NDICI negotiation among the European Commission, the European Parliament and the Council of the EU. He highlighted the issues of budget distribution, migration management, blended finance and governance as the most controversial ones of the current trilogue on NDICI. Moreover, he stressed that an active advocacy work from trade unions in European capitals from now to December can be a game changer to secure key trade union and human rights related asks in the final NDICI text.

A debate with participants followed, where they expressed their interest and commitment in supporting the advocacy work of the ITUC/ETUC in the final line of the negotiation.

In terms of key messages for advocacy purposes, Giulia Massobrio (ITUC) presented a proposal of four asks, focused on: 1) an increased budget for thematic programmes; 2) stronger language on decent work; 3) business accountability and SDGs alignment of blended finance; 4) enhanced governance of the NDICI instrument. In their reactions to the proposal, participants validated these points and proposed to include others such as a call for an increased budget for development cooperation as a whole, policy coherence between EU trade and development policies, and a human rights based approach to migration.

In their concluding remarks, both Paola Simonetti (ITUC) and Liina Carr (ETUC) stressed the importance of the joint work of the ITUC and ETUC on the NDICI dossier and more generally on monitoring EU development cooperation policies; in terms of concrete follow up, the ITUC will send a revised version of the key asks to participants and support them in a coordinated advocacy process from now to December.