Affiliates meet to debate Commission initiative on minimum wages



(4 February 2020) Thirty-five participants from 18 countries met in Brussels on 30 January to discuss the European Commission's consultation document on fair minimum wages and the ETUC's draft response.

The proposal has generated intense debate across the European trade union movement. There are different trade union traditions and a variety of industrial relations. All agree that persistent low pay needs to be tackled and that workers should get their fair share. We want a strengthening of collective bargaining. Workers need a decent income. Many get poverty wages.

These views were aired at EPSU's working group along with a wide range of comments about specific details of the ETUC draft response covering:

- potential benefits of tougher procurement rules;
- concern about the treatment of travelling time in pay, particularly for home

care staff;
- coverage of the self-employed by minimum wages;
- effective enforcement of any EU legislation, particularly on collective bargaining; and
- need for clarification about Article 155 of the Treaty and possible negotiations with employers in the light of the Commission blocking the agreement in Central Government Administrations and arguing it can decide whatever it wants.

EPSU took part in the ETUC Collective Bargaining Committee on 31 January where many of these issues were taken up and a number of amendments to the ETUC draft response were discussed. The draft response will be further considered at the ETUC Executive Committee on 6 February and then submitted to all ETUC affiliates for a formal vote.

The next meeting of the EPSU working group will be on 14 April, anticipating that the European Commission will launch the second phase consultation earlier that month.

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