



Press release

Construction trade unions urge European Commission and Member States to better protect posted workers

The EFBWW with the support of ETUC sent today an emergency [motion](#) – Enough is Enough! Safe and healthy workplaces for all workers! to the European Commission, European Labour Authority (ELA), the European Parliament and the European Council.

The motion was adopted following the tragic accident in Antwerp on 18 June that killed five construction workers and left nine others severely injured. All workers were posted workers, some of them coming from third countries. All were employed by companies in the subcontracting chain, the main contractor being a Belgian company.

Construction workers demand real and effective change:

- Safe and healthy workplaces for all workers and a European financial support fund to assist posted and migrant workers and their families including third-country nationals in case of fatal accidents, severe injuries, as well as in case of occupational diseases.
- Digital solutions to identify and monitor in real time the presence of workers and self-employed on construction sites and with real-time access to data for labour inspectorates.
- Regulate and limit the subcontracting chain and ban intermediaries in posting.
- Public clients need to set the example. They should have stronger rules for socially responsible and progressive tendering processes.
- New initiatives to promote correct posting practices and ban irregular posting. We call for the urgent adoption of the revised EU Regulation 883/2004 including strong new measures to protect mobile workers and combat cross-border social fraud.
- Increase attractiveness of the industry through direct and quality jobs. Public money that will be made available in the context of the Renovation Wave and the EU Recovery Strategy should go to decent companies, providing decent jobs.

EFBWW and ETUC have requested to meet the European Commissioner for Jobs and Social Rights, Nicolas Schmit, and the European Commissioner for Internal Market, Thierry Breton, to discuss the Antwerp accident and necessary actions to improve protection of posted workers, guarantee equal treatment and combat social fraud in the internal market.

In the last two decades, the European Commission and many national governments have been more concerned about protecting business interests than providing strong tools to fight fraud and protect precarious workers. This must end!

The EFBWW general secretary, Tom Deleu, states: “The time for symbolic actions has long passed. The European Union must deliver for workers. The free movement of services and the free movement of companies can never be more important than the protection of workers’ lives and livelihoods. We need a Social Progress Protocol”.

ETUC Deputy General Secretary Esther Lynch said: “We need stronger rules and proper enforcement to ensure everyone can go to work with confidence they will actually get home safely.”

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The European Federation of Building and Woodworkers (EFBWW) is the European Workers’ Industry Federation for the following sectors: building, woodworking, forestry and allied industries and trades. The EFBWW has 76 affiliated unions in 34 countries and represents a total of 2,000,000 members.

European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) is the voice of workers and represents 45 million members from 90 trade union organisations in 38 European countries, plus 10 European Trade Union Federations.