

**Speech given by Katja Lehto-Komulainen, Deputy General Secretary
EMIN Bus Journey Launch Ceremony**

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Dear all,

Let me address three points on behalf of the European Trade Union Confederation.

1. The ETUC is proud to be part of the EMIN network – and bus tour - promoting adequate minimum income schemes throughout Europe.

- The right to an adequate minimum income is a key demand today: we need to ensure an acceptable and dignified standard of living for all.
- The right to an adequate minimum income represents one of the 20 proclaimed Principles of the European Pillar of Social Rights for which the ETUC strongly advocates ambitious measures to ensure full implementation.
- The Pillar must ensure workers and citizens feel that Europe (and their governments) takes due care of their interests, needs and rights!
- Poverty continues to pervade across Europe.

At-risk of poverty rates have increased both among people at work and people unemployed in many Member States.

- Figures released last month showed the in work at risk of poverty had risen again, affecting almost one in ten. This represents a very serious situation for the future of Europe under the political, economic and social point of view.
- There can be no recovery proclaimed until unemployment, poverty and social fragmentation are tackled. The fear and uncertainty among workers need to be replaced with hope for a better future.

2. Minimum income schemes are NOT a substitute for fair wages. People have right to expect fair pay for the work.

- The future of Europe is linked to more and better employment. We need QUALITY jobs. Being at work must be a guarantee of poverty prevention. We need a clear commitment to building economies rich in quality jobs.

Deregulating labour markets does not create the good jobs of the future that we need. Instead an ambitious investment programme, allied with investment in our people with education, training and skills, is the only way forward.

- Workers' rights must be protected and promoted. Decent minimum wages must be guaranteed everywhere.

- As social partner, we call European Union and Member States to promote collective bargaining and reverse the damage already done. Workers have the right to fair wages, collectively agreed.

3. People should be provided with adequate and sound social protection

- In case of job loss, everyone should feel secure, be able to take care of his/her family, continue planning the future, look ahead.
- Everyone must be protected against the downturns of long-term unemployment, poor social protection entitlements and weak safety nets
- Everyone must be ensured the means to take up new job opportunities. Therefore, minimum income schemes should be accompanied with well-funded active labour market policies that involve social partners in design, delivery and evaluation. All of course backed by investment.
- No one should be left behind!

The ETUC wishes the bus tour every success! We hope it creates lively discussions and progress on Minimum Income Schemes everywhere it goes!