

Mr Jean-Claude Juncker
President
European Commission
B-1049 Brussels

Via email

Dear President Juncker,

The European Trade Union Confederation hereby expresses its deepest concern about the course of the negotiations in COP 21, not simply about the level of ambition in general, but in particular with respect to the commitment we expect from Parties regarding just transition and decent work. The current draft text does not ensure any space for the social dimension of climate action, except some vague language in the preamble.

We demand to have in the Paris agreement a text which clearly connects long term action to tackle climate change with human and labour rights. What is at stake at COP 21 is framing the future of the planet and accelerating the transformation of societies all around the world. Climate action must be made with people, not against them.

The ETUC expects the EU and its Member States to clearly and actively defend the importance of just transition and decent work – among other key principles – in accordance with the political mandate defined by the EU ministers. The Council Conclusions adopted on 18 September 2015 explicitly stress the importance of just transition for the workforce in climate action. The absence of unambiguous support from the EU negotiators towards proposals, for instance from Canada, to retain references to just transition and decent work in the operational part of the agreement has been extremely disappointing.

The current draft Paris agreement, as proposed by the two ADP co-chairs on Saturday 5/12 (FCCC/ADP/2015/L.6), contains a table in its Annex II presenting textual suggestions made by Parties during previous meetings. We urge the EU to explicitly support the inclusion of the following wording into article 2.2. “just transition of the workforce and creation of decent work and quality jobs in accordance with nationally defined development priorities”, as demanded by several parties.

Earlier this week, heads of state reminded us in Paris that the clock was ticking and that the time of shortsighted egoism was over. This must also apply to the level of ambition. This must also apply to workers' rights. The EU is in Paris to build a better future, not for bargaining away all that defines the core values of the EU. We urge the EU to stand on the side of those who defend climate action which respects our rights!

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Luca Visentini', with a stylized, cursive script.

Luca Visentini
General Secretary

Cc Mr Martin Schulz
Mr Donald Tusk
Mr Miguel Arias Cañete