



5TH EMF COLLECTIVE BARGAINING CONFERENCE
“A common demand for a common future”
Roma, 11th & 12th October 2005

EMF RESOLUTION ON PRECARIOUS EMPLOYMENT THE PROMOTION OF DECENT WORK

The EMF is concerned about the dramatically changing composition of the labour market within the European Union. Not only is there a persistently high rate of unemployment in many EU Member States, but there is also an erosion of what are classified as the ‘norm’, ‘standard’ or ‘typical’ forms of employment, which undoubtedly endanger and worsen the opportunity for employees to gain decent employment.

Much of the current predicament has resulted directly from the practice of companies which is to create divisions of labour in a quest to create increased flexibility. Many employers have adopted aggressive strategies, which aim to outsource non-core elements of the business such as maintenance, cleaning, clerical, or computer-programming, and to an increasing degree research and development activities, to specialised service companies. At the same time, these strategies are increasingly accompanied by massive use of diverse forms of precarious employment contracts and of temporary agency companies, which are often able to supply cheaper labour on an ad hoc basis.

Over the past few years, trade unions throughout Europe have been constantly faced with attempts from employers to eradicate workers’ rights, in a quest to gain greater flexibility, resulting in a more de-regulated, vulnerable and unstable labour market where inequalities develop. Governments and employers argue that flexibility is an employment opportunity. Too often this results in precarious employment.

In certain circumstances, EMF affiliates have and will negotiate flexible forms of work organisation. However the EMF rejects precarious forms of employment and any forms of working which are unilaterally imposed on workers and which do not guarantee decent pay and conditions of employment. The EMF unequivocally rejects the current trend to create jobs:

- with little or no job security
- with low and unsecured wages
- without social security (concerning pension, health insurance, unemployment payment)
- without protection against dismissals
- without vocational training
- with little or no health and safety at work
- with no trade union representation.

The unfortunate consequence for the EMF and its affiliates is that precarious forms of employment and the allocation of tasks to sub-contractors frequently undermines collective bargaining, social democracy and the European Social Model by weakening the trade unions.

The EMF believes that the European Social Model is an integral part of the European Economic Model, which promotes the creation of decent work and must therefore be protected. Furthermore, the introduction of minimum employment rules and standards, which protect all workers, must be introduced in order to stop a “race to the bottom” situation and to ensure that the goals of the Lisbon strategy are achieved: ***“to become the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world, capable of sustaining economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion.”***

The fundamental essence of the EMF concept of decent work is the notion of basic security for all:

- in society
- in the workplace
- for the individual worker.

The EMF therefore pursues a proactive strategy aimed at:

- creating new employment opportunities,
- promoting work that guarantees social protection (sickness, retirement and unemployment) and a fair income in order to meet one's needs,
- providing security in the workplace and good working conditions,
- offering opportunities for personal development and social integration, in particular via access to training and the right to reclassification,
- enforcing the individual right to training in the lifelong learning system and its recognition in EU countries,
- enabling people the freedom to express their concerns, and in particular to join and be represented by their trade unions without discrimination,
- allowing for the participation of workers in decisions that affect their lives,
- delivering equality of opportunity and treatment for all women and men,
- and the promotion of collective guarantees for all European workers.

In order to create a society, which welcomes rather than resists change, the role of employment and social protection is crucial. The EMF insists that the implementation and the maintaining of high levels of employment and social protection underpin the aims and objectives of the Lisbon Strategy.

The EMF has a responsibility to develop strategies that combat the erosion of employment and social protection. Furthermore the EMF believes that greater job insecurity is a threat to the European Social Model.

The EMF therefore calls upon:

- **All affiliates:**

- to use collective bargaining as an instrument by which decent work can be promoted and precariousness reduced;
- to formulate new policies aimed at creating decent work, with greater job security;
- to promote EMF policies in areas such as temporary agency work and social policy in order to improve the living and working conditions of workers;
- to monitor changes in the labour market and types of employment contracts;
- to ensure equal treatment for precarious workers through collective agreements.

The EMF also calls on all political and economic actors, at all levels, to ensure that employment and social protection is a fundamental and integral part of their policies. In particular, the EMF calls upon the:

- **EU Commission/EU Council :**

- to give up any strategy of implementing a sector with low pay and without social guarantees;
- to stop the concept for a further de-regulation of labour markets throughout the EU;
- to adopt and implement the Temporary Agency Workers Directive, which guarantees equal rights from day one for temporary workers;
- to immediately adopt a revision of the Working Time Directive, which guarantees greater protection for workers and abolishes the opt-out clause;
- to prevent the privatisation of services, which have a negative social impact;
- to remove the principle of “country of origin” for all types of employment in the planned Services Directive and stipulate that at least the working conditions and social protection clauses of the “country of posting” shall apply;

- **National governments of the EU Member States:**

- to include social and employment protection, including the individual right to training in the lifelong learning system, in their national action programmes and to foster an active labour market policy.

The EMF Executive Committee will regularly assess the situation of workers forced to undertake precarious employment in Europe. When necessary it will propose action to be undertaken in order to attain the objectives established by the EMF.
