

Welcome

Welcome to *In ToUCh* e-bulletin from the TUC, the bite-size round up of our news and views.

This issue features the World Day for Decent Work, the latest on the economic situation and news of a major rally against child poverty.

Let us know what you think about the issues reported here by emailing editor@tuc.org.uk.

Copies of *In ToUCh* are archived at www.tuc.org.uk/intouch

TUC News

Decent work essential in poverty battle

Campaigns to end global poverty will fail unless more attention is paid to getting people into decent jobs, the TUC said ahead of today's World Day for Decent Work.

Around 165 million trade unionists across the world used the event to demand 'decent work for decent life'. The TUC called on governments worldwide to promote trade justice, an environmental 'New Deal', better public services and core labour standards.

More on World Day for Decent Work @

<http://www.tuc.org.uk/international/tuc-15410-f0.cfm>

Jobless warning

As turbulence on the financial markets grew, the TUC has warned that the number of people out of work for at least a year could rise from the current level of 400,000 to 700,000 by the end of 2009.

The TUC added that getting people back into work would be more problematic as a result of the Government's latest welfare reforms. The introduction of 'workfare' and the toughening up of benefits will place yet more pressure on already overstretched welfare services and could push more people onto jobseekers' allowance.

More on this @

<http://www.tuc.org.uk/welfare/tuc-15357-f0.cfm>

Casino capitalism condemned . . .

The current financial crisis must act as a 'turning point' and cause a 'complete change' in the way financial markets work, the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) declared last month.

In its 'London Declaration', the ETUC said the neoliberal model of capitalism, with its focus on privatisation, deregulation and unfettered markets, had reached the end of the road and needed to be replaced by something fairer.

Read the declaration @

<http://www.tuc.org.uk/economy/tuc-15399-f0.cfm>

. . . as case for rate cuts grows

Economic data released during September underlined the need for the Bank of England to cut interest rates, the TUC said in response. With the RPI dipping slightly in August and labour market figures showing an 81,000 increase in unemployment between May and July, the case for action was compelling.

Meanwhile, figures released by the Chartered Institute of Purchasing and Supply at the beginning of October - showing a fall in manufacturing output - also highlighted the case for a rate cut, the TUC said in response.

More on this @

<http://www.tuc.org.uk/economy/tuc-15363-f0.cfm>

<http://www.tuc.org.uk/economy/tuc-15359-f0.cfm>

<http://www.tuc.org.uk/economy/tuc-15412-f0.cfm>

Keeping the promise on child poverty

Thousands descended on central London on 4 October to hold the government to account on its promise to first halve then eliminate child poverty.

TUC general secretary Brendan Barber told the rally in Trafalgar Square that with over half of poor children living in households where at least one parent works, the government needed to do more to end poverty wages.

More on the rally @

<http://www.tuc.org.uk/welfare/tuc-15428-f0.cfm>

More on the campaign to end child poverty @

<http://www.endchildpoverty.org.uk/>

Soaraway super-rich turn the clock back

Meanwhile, a century of progress towards greater equality between rich and poor has been flung into reverse with the recent boom in the number of super rich, TUC research has revealed.

The sharp turnaround is causing immense harm to the rest of the economy and society, according to *Do the super rich matter?*, the fourth title in the TUC's 'Touchstone' series of pamphlets. It shows that the wealthiest few in the UK now own as big a share of national wealth as their predecessors did at the end of the nineteenth century.

Find out more @

<http://www.tuc.org.uk/economy/tuc-15314-f0.cfm?themeaa=touchstone&theme=touchstone>

Million benefit from minimum wage rise

The increase in the national minimum wage to £5.73 an hour on 1 October will benefit approximately one million workers, the TUC said. Two-thirds of those standing to gain are women, reinforcing the positive role played by the statutory pay floor in narrowing the gender pay gap.

Further details @

http://www.tuc.org.uk/em_research/tuc-15389-f0.cfm

Rally for better pensions

The TUC will be joining forces with the National Pensioners Convention to hold a pensions rally and lobby of parliament on 22 October. The aim of the event is to call for an end to pensioner poverty and secure a better deal for current pensioners and workers alike.

Details on the event @

<http://www.npcuk.org/lobby2008.htm>

Laptops for Zimbabwe

The TUC is collaborating with Computer Aid International to provide laptops for affiliates of the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU). The ZCTU has requested laptops for each of its 35 member unions, and the estimated total cost is £4,690.

More on situation facing Zimbabwean unions @

<http://www.wearezctu.org/>

Stand firm on qualifying earnings

Pensions minister Mike O'Brien should resist industry lobbying to water down the test that will be used to decide whether an employer's pension scheme is good enough to qualify as an alternative to the new Personal Accounts scheme, the TUC urged last month.

Further information @

<http://www.tuc.org.uk/pensions/tuc-15350-f0.cfm>

Default disappointment

'Hugely disappointing' was how the TUC responded last month to advice from the Advocate-General, a senior legal adviser to the European Court of Justice, backing default retirement ages in the UK.

The TUC said the announcement would come as a blow to the many employees who want to work beyond retirement age, adding that it 'made no sense' that we had laws in the UK that aim to remove age discrimination, but include a 'get out clause for employers who want to kick people out when they reach 65'.

Full response available @

<http://www.tuc.org.uk/equality/tuc-15381-f0.cfm>

Polish protocol

The TUC has joined forces with two Polish trade union confederations, Solidarnosc and OPZZ, to sign an agreement aimed at supporting Polish workers in the UK.

The protocol was signed on 25 September, and strengthens the ties between British and Polish trade unions. It commits all parties to encouraging the nationals of both countries to join a trade union.

Details @

<http://www.tuc.org.uk/international/tuc-15383-f0.cfm>

Women's National Commission

Sarah Veale, Head of the TUC Equality and Employment Rights Department is one of ten new appointments to the Women's National Commission.

The Commission is the official, independent advisory body representing women and women's organisations to Government. It is chaired by Baroness Joyce Gould.

More on the Commission @

<http://www.thewnc.org.uk/>

Physics review gets top marks

The Wakeham Review of UK physics, published at the beginning of October, received a positive response from the TUC. But the TUC said that UK physics still faced 'major challenges' and needed more students at A-level and beyond.

Read the full response @

<http://www.tuc.org.uk/economy/tuc-15425-f0.cfm>

New man in Wales

The new General Secretary of the Wales TUC, Martin Mansfield, took up his post on 1 October. Martin was Wales TUC *Research Officer in the late 90's and since then has worked for a number of unions, as well as in the Welsh Assembly Government.*

Union changes

The TUC has a new affiliate - the Cheshire Building Society Staff Association (CBSA), which represents around 400 workers. Meanwhile, Elaine Edwards has taken over as general secretary of UCAC.

Events

7 October World Day for Decent Work

14 October Organising for the future conference

15 October IER employment law conference

17 October Poverty conference

22 October Pensions rally and lobby

4 Nov TUC social policy forum

19 Nov Seminar on unions and curriculum

More info on TUC events @

<http://www.tuc.org.uk/events/index.cfm>

New this month

Tax credits: a guide for union representatives - joint guide from TUC and Working Families - available from Economic and Social Affairs department or online at <http://www.tuc.org.uk/welfare/tuc-15312-f0.cfm>

Reforming tax credits - TUC response to government consultation - available from Economic and Social Affairs department or online at <http://www.tuc.org.uk/welfare/tuc-15339-f0.cfm>

Sickness absence and disability discrimination - TUC guide for negotiators on law and good practice - available from Equality and Equal Rights department or online at <http://www.tuc.org.uk/equality/tuc-15361-f0.cfm>

World of work - magazine from the International Labour Organisation - available from European Union and International Relations department.

Details of TUC publications @

<http://www.tuc.org.uk/publications/index.cfm>

Links

Visit the website of the Working Class Movement Library @ www.wcml.org.uk

Please email editor@tuc.org.uk if you wish to suggest a new link for the TUC website.

Tell us what you think

The TUC would like to encourage feedback from this e-bulletin. Email your comments [here](#)

Next issue

The next edition of *In ToUCh* will be emailed directly to you in November.