

Members of the TUSLOs
Committee

**Subject: addressing new challenges at the start of the European Semester 2021
and The Recovery Plan for Europe**

Dear TUSLO members,

The Recovery Plan for Europe is now reality. It is a huge achievement for the EU and an opportunity for workers across Europe. However, it also poses a number of challenges for the trade union movement.

National governments are already designing their resilience and recovery plans. It is urgent that you establish contact with them immediately. This year, the 'Inputs for Country Reports' will be collected in the month of September.

However, we are all aware that the Recovery Plan for Europe will operate over the coming years and it will have a huge impact on the European Semester, on the implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights and on the UN2030 Agenda in Europe.

The pandemic crisis is unprecedented, it is difficult to predict the impact it will have on the economy and social systems. This instigates us to re-think our capacity to elaborate our positions and deliver our messages.

It also means that the TUSLO committee will carry the responsibility to maintain an appropriate level of involvement in the decision-making and governance process. We must be well-equipped and organised. The ETUC Secretariat will ensure coordination and that new tools are, or will be added, to our toolbox.

Making better use of internal and external expertise

As agreed in Texel last year, we have set up sub-groups to deliver specific tasks when necessary and include extra expertise available in our organisations. The *Ad Hoc Group on SDG* and the *Ad Hoc Group on Recovery & Investments* are already in place. We will, together, assess if more sub-groups are necessary.

We want to reinforce our capacity to engage with practitioners, specialists and other stakeholders. For that reason, we have invited a selected number of economists to support our efforts in analysis and in devising new ways forward. As a result we expect a greater capability of our group to deliver solid policy proposals. A first event, which you are all invited to attend, is on 15 and 16 of September. ([see annex](#)).

Reinforcing our collective work

At the moment, it is important that the trade union movement stands united and works together. During the year we have demonstrated that the active participation of TUSLO in the Semester can improve its democratic tenure. However this is not enough. Quality of involvement is still low but also the capacity of all ETUC members to participate with the same intensity varies.

We continually strive to ensure that our involvement at EU and national level is effective. We should also ensure that all TUSLOs have the right capacity to contribute to the process and all ETUC members draw the same benefits from the work we do at European level.

We know that some organisations have enough resources, but there are others that struggle to have an active and regular participation in TUSLO activities. We should find a solution to this situation, relying on solidarity and exploiting all the resources available at EU level. Upon renewing the TUSLO activities for the next two years, we will be looking to all our members to determine what resources they need and how to support capacity building for their staff. This work will be reflected in the financing of the TUSLO activities.

Improving our monitoring and assessment of EU Policies

We also have to improve our capacity to assess the impact of European policies for the benefit of the workers we represent. The SDG index (#EUSDG8 index) based on economic-wellbeing, employment quality, vulnerability of work and respect for trade unions and collective bargaining, will support our independent capacity to monitor the impact of the Semester and of the Recovery Plan.

We are learning how data at European level can be of insufficient quality. Potentially we could gather data that is more relevant to our objectives. We have developed an Index measuring TU Involvement in the Semester. The ITUC publishes a Global Rights Index. The annual reporting of TU sensitive data can give us a stronger position. We could start collecting data on collective bargaining coverage, which none of the international statistics collect in a proper and reliable way. To get to this we would require that all ETUC organisations commit to participate, potentially following a decision of the executive committee of the ETUC.

I am convinced that these new instruments and patterns of work will give us a new impetus to address the challenges that we have ahead of us. We will deliver as, and even more than, we did in the past.

This September will be a crucial month, both the European Semester 2021 and the Recovery Plan will be at their inception. I therefore invite you to take note of and participate in the following events:

- 1st September: Ad Hoc Group on SDGs
- 10th September Morning: TUSLO meeting
- 10th September Afternoon: TUSLO and Ad Hoc Group Recovery & Investment (second meeting)
- 15th and 16th September: High level economic seminar: **Re-Thinking our social democratic models in an economy with high debt and low interest rates. (Link)**
- End of September (date to be set). Consultation of Social Partners on the broad economic and social guidelines for Semester 2021.

I take this opportunity to thank you all for your sterling work over the last years. It made the TUSLO network one of the most advanced and reliable stakeholders in the sphere of economic and social governance in the EU. I look forward to continue working with you all at the start of the new Semester cycle and the implementation of the Recovery Plan for the EU.

Best regards,

Liina Carr
ETUC Confederal Secretary