



English for European trade unionists



Level Three

Trade Unions and Europe

Study Guide



The ETUI-REHS is financially supported by the European Commission

Trade Unions & Europe

Study Guide

Quiz

How much do you really know about Europe? (p. 4)

[All answers are given for June 2006 except where otherwise indicated.]

Part One

1. How many trade union members are represented by the ETUC ?
 - a. 60 million
2. How many confederations are affiliated to the ETUC ?
 - c. 81
3. The ETUC has affiliates in how many countries?

39 includes Andorra, Monaco, and observer members (who will be admitted to full membership in due course once certain conditions have been fulfilled) Bosnia Herzegovina + Macedonia, Serbia
4. Which sectors do the following European Industry Federations represent?
 - a. EPSU Public Services
 - b. EFBWW Woodworkers
 - c. EFJ Journalists
5. Which of the following are the European Union social partners?
 - a. UNICE Union des Industries de la Communauté européenne + UEAPME
 - b. UEAPME = European Association of craft, small and medium-sized enterprises
 - c. ETUC
 - e. CEEP = European Centre of Enterprises with public participation and of enterprises of general economic interest (utilities)
6. What is the maximum number of hours in the working week as defined by the European Union Working Time Directive?
 - c. 48 (1993)
7. Which of these EU member states are not signatories to the Schengen agreement? [see note below]
 - a. Ireland
 - d. UK
8. How many countries have signed the Schengen agreement? [see note below]
 - a. 26
9. How many European countries are members of the Eurozone (June 2006)?
 - a. 12 -11 joined in 2000 + Greece 2001

Consult [Wikipedia](http://en.wikipedia.org) for up-to-date information about members after June 2006



10. How many official languages are there in the EU (Jan. 2007)
 - a. 23 includes Bulgarian, Irish and Romanian as of then. But no official language in EU for Cyprus, Belgium, Austria or Luxembourg.
11. What percentage of EU citizens speak English (including mother tongue speakers)?
 - c. 47% (includes 13% mother tongue speakers (L1))
12. What is the second most widely spoken language in the EU today?
 - a. French 23% includes 12% L1
 - b. German 30% includes 18% L1
 - c. Spanish 14% includes 9% L1
 - d. Russian 5%

NOTE:

The 1985 **Schengen Agreement** is an agreement between [European](#) states which allows for common [immigration policies](#) and a [border](#) system. A total of 26 countries – including all [European Union](#) states except the [Republic of Ireland](#) and the [United Kingdom](#), but including non-EU members [Iceland](#), [Norway](#), and [Switzerland](#) – have signed the agreement and 15 have implemented it so far. Border posts and checks have been removed between Schengen countries and a common 'Schengen visa' allows access to the area. However, the agreement does not cover residency or work permits for non-EU nationals.

Part Two (p. 6)

- 1 List the 25 member countries of the EU, plus the two candidate countries who will become members in 2007:

Belgium (BE)	Czech Republic (CZ)	Denmark (DK)
Germany (DE)	Estonia (EE)	Greece (EL)
Spain (ES)	France (FR)	Ireland (IE)
Italy (IT)	Republic of Cyprus (CY)	Latvia (LV)
Lithuania (LT)	Luxembourg (LUX)	Hungary (HU)
Malta (MT)	Netherlands (NL)	Austria (AT)
Poland (PL)	Portugal (PT)	Slovenia (SI)
Slovak Republic (SK)	Finland (FI)	Sweden (SE)
United Kingdom (UK)	Bulgaria (BU) (2007)	Romania (RO) (2007)



2

ANDORRA	CROATIA	TURKEY
MONACO	LIECHENSTEIN	MACEDONIA (Obs)
NORWAY	BOSNIA HERZOGOVINA (Obs)	ICELAND
SWITZERLAND	SAN MARINO	SERBIA

3



3

ADEDY GR	EAKL EST	CISL IT	SAK FI	CC.OO. ES
ASZSZ HU	FTF DK	DISK TU	SEK CY	FGTB BE
DGB DE	FO FR	ICTU IRE	SACO SWE	LDF LT
ÖGB AT	FNV NL	BNS RO	GWU MA	ZSSS SI

Working with words 1

Definitions – European legislation (p. 8)

1. Regulations	c. binding as to the intentions, terms and conditions, but the form and methods of implementing them are within the discretion of national authorities
2. Directives	d. binding and applicable in all Member States and taking precedence over national law
3. Decisions	a. not binding
4. Recommendations, Opinions, Resolutions or Declarations	b. binding on those parties to whom they are addressed: governments, institutions, private enterprises

What kind of decision-making procedure?

1. cooperation
2. assent
3. co-decision



Working with reading 2

The European Trade Union Confederation (p.13).

- 1**
1. The ETUC was set up to further the interests of workers in Europe and to act as a representative body on their behalf in the EU institutions.
 2. The main objective of the ETUC is to maintain an important social dimension in the EU which protects the interests of all citizens.
 3. Membership of the ETUC consists of its affiliates: 79 national trade union confederations in 35 countries, and 11 European industry federations, making a total of 60 million members in all.
- 2.**
- b. impact
 - c. bargain
 - d. safeguards
 - e. wellbeing
 - f. committed
 - g. affiliates
 - h. recognised
- 3**
- a. organisations that have applied for full membership and are allowed to observe proceedings in the interim period while they wait to fulfil the necessary requirements, and attend meetings without participating fully or voting.
 - b. with the help and support of
 - c. one of the partners recognised to participate in the process of Social Dialogue, entitled to represent the workers (the other social partners represent the employers)

4

co-operate	organise
confederate	legislate



Verb root	Noun	Adjective	Adjective with opposite meaning
organise	organisation	organised; organisational	unorganised disorganised
assist	assistance; assistant	assistant (+ noun) <i>e.g assistant teacher</i>	<i>unhelpful</i>
develop	development	developmental; developing; developed	undeveloped; underdeveloped
encourage	encouragement	encouraging	discouraging
affiliate	affiliation; affiliate	affiliated	disaffiliated

- 5 “Committed to building a unified European trade union movement, it already has a large number of new trade union affiliates...”

By placing this clause first in the sentence, the commitment of the ETUC is emphasised.

Working with video 1

European Industry Federations (p. 16)

- 1
 - 1 The European Public Services Union is the European Industry Federation which brings together all European trade union organisations that represent workers in the public sector. It IS affiliated to the ETUC
 - 2 There are 8 million individual members who have contact with EPSU via their own national trade unions, so there is no direct contact with EPSU.
 - 3 He says it is important because European legislation is more important than national legislation, so it's important to have a voice in influencing that legislation.
 - 4 His work involves conferences, meetings, sometimes with employers' organisations, and lots of travelling.
 - 5 None. This is the work of the national organisations, not EPSU.



- 2 1 European law *replaces* national law (as it is more important).
- 2 That's usually done on *in a more structured, official way*.
- 3 ...European legislation can somehow *have an unforeseen effect* upon the lives of ordinary trade union members.

TRANSCRIPT: **European Industry Federations**

Interview with Brian Synnott, Liaison and Campaign Officer, EPSU

EPSU, my organisation is the European Federation of Public Service Unions and we are what is called a European Industry Federation...now, there are a number of different European industry federations for each different sector....we cover the public service, there is also an industry federation for transport, for the metal sector, for woodworkers, for journalists etc...and all of these industry federations are grouped under what is called the European Trade Union Confederation, the ETUC which is the umbrella group for all trade unions at a European level.

Does EPSU have direct contact with individual trade unionists?

The way the trade union structure works at European level is that we have bodies made up of representatives from different national unions – usually those representatives are the General Secretary or the International Secretary of the national trade union. In EPSU terms, the way we have contact with national trade unions is through our executive committee and our standing committees – where we have the elected official, usually the General Secretary coming to each of our meetings here in Brussels and then going back to their own member state country and reporting to their direct members, so there is a space between EPSU and the ordinary members but we can't really realistically hope to fill that space directly because for example EPSU has 8 million ordinary members.

Why organise at European level?

The easiest way to explain why trade unions have to organise at a European level is because European legislation is always more powerful than national legislation. In other words, European law supersedes national law. Because of that, any European legislation has the potential to be enormously significant, so therefore trade unions need to have a voice and actual people as part of that system in Brussels, as part of the European infrastructure. So our job is not only to assess European legislation but to make constructive proposals to ensure sure that our ordinary members' values, our ordinary members' concerns and our ordinary members' working lives are improved through the European project.



A typical working week?

Well usually the working week within EPSU would consist probably of a medium or large-scale conference, now that could be just for EPSU representatives, or quite a number of times can be done in conjunction with employer organisations – and that would be a large part of our work in relation to the representative element of EPSU. In relation to the direct contact with the European institutions we tend to have informal meetings, first of all with members of the European Parliament first of all to see what kind of proposals are on the legislative agenda; we also tend to have meetings with the European Commission- that's usually done on a more formal footing and also part of our work in any given week in EPSU involves a lot of travelling – a lot of the political officers within the Secretariat going to different EU member states or the applicant countries and attending conferences giving the general trade union position, giving the EPSU position on different issues in relation to whatever is going on or whatever is planned for that conference

Does EPSU negotiate wages?

At the European level for trade unions there's one golden rule – and that is that we do not have anything to do with wages, salaries, or anything that directly impacts on the pay packets of the ordinary members. That is still and will probably always remain a national concern, and it is done very effectively at the national level. At the European level, what we tend to look at is the general working conditions of ordinary members and how European proposals and legislation can somehow inadvertently impact on the lives of ordinary trade union members; but in relation to wages or salaries, no, that's very much a national concern.

Working with words 2

Prepositions (p.18)

A changing Europe

Against this global background, Europe is itself undergoing radical change **(1)at / on** an economic and political level as it strives **(2) for** greater coordination through the European Union (EU), whilst at the same time witnessing a resurgence of national and cultural identities.

The European Union seeks the development of an economic bloc, transcending traditional national boundaries. It also seeks to stimulate and create the social and political conditions **(3) throughout / across** Europe allowing the single European (economic) market to function, if not **(4)on** a level playing field, then at least with the minimum of distortions **(5) between** EU member states.

This has created a whole new landscape **(6) within** which trade unions must work. The free movement of goods and labour **(7) across** the EU presents challenges, many of which trade unions will be familiar **(8) with**.

As European economic integration proceeds, and the Union itself grows in size with the accession of countries **(9) from** the Mediterranean region and Central and Eastern Europe, trade unions will more and more need to



develop their international consciousness and practice. This will place demands **(10) upon** the ability of trade unionists to “think local and act global”.

There is much to learn and understand **(11) about /from** the industrial and employment practices of other European countries, as well as their trade union practices. There are also questions of language and culture which have to be addressed, in order to arrive at European trade union policies and objectives which mean as much to workers in offices, factories, shops, and hospitals as they do to the trade union leaders who discuss and agree them **(12) during /at** European meetings.

- 2 Note: Only the *most common usage* is given here, but there are other possibilities.

AT/IN Newcastle	AT university	ON the wall
ON the plane	IN hospital	AT/ON the door
AT school	AT my brother's	AT the airport
IN bed	ON the phone	IN a factory
AT the conference	AT home	AT work
IN France	AT the meeting	IN/AT my office
IN/AT a restaurant	ON the train	IN/ON my car
IN my bag	ON the table	ON holiday

Working with language 1

Talking about the future (p.20)

- I am flying to London tonight.
- We normally have dinner at 9 pm. Is that alright?
- A friend of mine is delivering a speech tonight.
- When will we finish? It's almost 6 o'clock already.
- Travel agent: There are no flights left.
Customer: In that case, I will /I'll (have to) cancel my trip.
- Oh! I've broken your pen. I will / I'll buy you another one.
- The earliest train leaves at 6 am.
- Look at the sky. There's going to be a storm.
- The final project review meeting will take place on 16th September.
- During our visit to London next month, we will meet the Mayor of London.



Working with reading 3

New provisions on freedom of movement and residence (p.25)

1. These new measures are intended to cover mobility of citizens within the EU.
2. Because there were a number of laws (including nine Directives) which covered this area before, and so the situation was confusing, and needed updating because of EU enlargement.
3. No. It depends on the requirements of the host country.
4. Citizens living in another EU country are required to 'exercise an economic activity', or work, during the first five years.
5. A national of a third country is someone who comes from a non-EU member state.
6. Should their partner or EU citizen on whom they depend die, they will benefit from better rights.

Working with video 2

Europe United! (p.27)

- 2 1. It supported them – helping the new unions, and helping the old ones become more democratic.
2. What were the three suggestions made by Daniel Vaughan-Whitehead for trade unions to protect their workers prior to membership of the EU?
 - i) to get more involved in the negotiation process
 - ii) to be active in implementing the *acquis communautaire* (body of EU legislation)
 - iii) to prepare for participation in European social dialogue
3. By exerting pressure on their national governments.
4. Austria, because it shared borders with four candidate countries.
5. That relatively few migrant workers want to settle permanently in another country.
6. Lack of language or other skills or qualifications.
7. The decision-making process needs to be reformed now there are 25 members instead of the original 6, the structures need changing if the EU is to work efficiently.



🔊 TRANSCRIPT: Europe United!

Commentary

Ten former communist countries have now applied to join the European Union. They join Cyprus and Malta as candidate countries, while Turkey had its long standing application finally accepted at the Helsinki summit in 1999. This decision opens the way for an enlargement of the European union unprecedented in scope and diversity. The collapse of communism unleashed not just political change but also a radical economic transformation in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe. The trade union movement too found itself facing an entirely new situation

Emilio Gabaglio – Former General Secretary, ETUC

Multi-nationals were coming in to invest, and new types of social relation were materialised - we said what we can not afford is a trade union vacuum so let's support the new unions and help the old ones to transform to be proper democratic independent bona fide trade unions. Then a second phase ... is to help them to be actors in the preparation of their accession to the European Union

Commentary

So how can trade unions best ensure the interests of their members?

Daniel Vaughan-Whitehead – European Commission

I think that there are three main roles for trade unions in candidate countries. The first one is to get much more involved in the negotiations process itself. The second role is to be active also in the implementation of the *acquis communautaire*. And here trade unions should come with a concrete list of activities, action plans and also try to work with the employers on the different elements of the *acquis*. And then the third role is really to prepare themselves to their forthcoming participation in the European social dialogue.

Caption: Social Dialogue

Commentary

Social dialogue is now at the heart of many EU directives and initiatives in the social field. Candidate countries must therefore consider how to implement it.

Daniel Vaughan-Whitehead

Most governments of candidate countries have implemented sort of tripartite structures. But these structures in general remain rather formal so that there is no real impact of social partners in the decision making process.

Commentary

The European Commission's PHARE programme will now fund projects to enhance social dialogue in the former communist countries. But because applications must come from governments there has to date been no great rush.

Daniel Vaughan-Whitehead

Of course governments are not always willing to have projects on social dialogue but there is also a lack of pressure from social partners themselves. Trade unions should go to see their governments. Make pressure saying we have this and that



needs in order to get used to the European social dialogue. And from the European Commission we are also making pressure on the governments so that they would submit projects on social dialogue.

Caption: Free movement of labour

Commentary

Membership of the European Union requires governments to respect four freedoms - of the movement of goods, capital, services and people. This could lead to a huge flow of workers from the East seeking better paid jobs in existing member states. Nowhere is this fear stronger than in Austria which shares borders with no fewer than four candidate countries. With 40,000 east European workers already in its permanent workforce, Austria has already successfully absorbed more than 60,000 refugees from Bosnia.

While those living near the border may seek to commute, on a daily or weekly basis, to better jobs in Austria, research shows that the numbers of people wanting to settle permanently in existing member states will be relatively small.

Martina Lubyova – Slovak Academy of Sciences

Most of this labour force has an obsolete education, they are not good in languages, they are not able simply to take up qualified jobs, so for them this would mean de-skilling; and actually, as a matter of fact, lowering their standard of living because if they want to move over with the whole families they would really maybe even decline in their standard of living compared to what they have at home.

Commentary

In the candidate countries most trade unions are strongly opposed to any concessions on the free movement of people.

Gabaglio

This in principle I understand. But let's see the thing in practical terms. I believe that each negotiation will be coming to a final deal on its own merit and there will be a package, a compromise, and this may include a transitional period for a number of issues.

Caption: Reforming the European Union

Commentary

The candidate countries must clear some formidable hurdles to gain membership of the European Union. But changes no less fundamental are required from the European Union itself if enlargement is to succeed.

John Palmer – European Policy Centre

This Union was created for 6 countries in 1957, we are now 15. And we're in the process of doubling, maybe more, 30 or more countries. This must mean very big changes in the nature of our institutions, the way in which decisions are taken, the democratic control process, some of these changes are very radical and very ambitious. At least some politicians are reluctant to embrace them.



Commentary

It is not unusual for major decisions in the European Union to be blocked by one or other member state on the grounds of national interest. And no issue is more sensitive than the right of veto itself. So how will Europe's leaders respond?

John Palmer

I think we have had a marked lack of political leadership in the last 10 or 15 years. The debate is lamentable in most of our countries. It is embarrassing. And I think the trade unions are one of the few forces, not the only one, but one of the few forces that can seriously raise the level of that debate, by raising the issues of democratic reform. Raising the issues of what kind of model of social policy we want, and what kind of society we want to have in a more united Europe, and what kind of world we want that Europe to form part of.

Working with reading 4

Worker mobility in the EU (p.29)

- 1 In which two of the EU15 is it possible for workers from the ten new Member States to work without restriction? **Sweden and Ireland**
- 2 Which country operates a Worker Registration Scheme? **UK**

Note: From May 1 2004, most nationals of the new member states (except Cyprus and Malta) who wish to work for more than one month for an employer in the UK need to register under the Worker Registration Scheme (WRS).

Once you have been working legally in the UK for 12 months without a break you will have full rights of free movement and will no longer need to register on the Worker Registration Scheme. You can then get a residence permit confirming your right to live and work in the UK.

From the official [Working in the UK](#) website:

- 3 Which four countries decided to maintain a *traditional* work-permit system?
Belgium, Finland, Greece and Spain
- 4 Which of the ten new Member States apply reciprocity to workers from the EU15 that apply restrictions? **Poland, Slovenia and Hungary**



Working with speaking 4

Some workers are more equal than others (p.31)

The action plan could contain some of the following points:

- Find out where the workers are based
- Find out where they live, and transport arrangements etc.
- Find out where they come from
- Find someone who speaks their language(s)
- Offer English language support
- Establish a union presence on the sites where the migrant workers are based- provide an accessible contact point
- Inform workers of their rights - EU and national law concerning contracts, conditions, sick leave and holiday leave etc.
- Hold site meetings
- Inform migrant workers of the role of trade unions, and how they can help
- Find out general and specific problems (questionnaire?)
- Hold meetings for workers from a particular country
- Find a member from that country to speak to the new migrant workers

Working with words 3

Time (p.33)

1 **soft, medium** and **middle** are not usually used as adjectives with *time*.

2. **re-time-** (set something to start at another (later) time

mistime - to miscalculate the time something takes – too long or too short

timeless - something which has an enduring appeal, not limited by time, eternal

timelessly –adverb – in a way that doesn't change

timelessness – the quality of being unlimited by time

timely -a good time for something to happen: e.g. This was a timely reminder

timer –gadget to measure how long something takes



overtime – time worked beyond the normal stipulated – usually (but not always) paid.

- 3.
1. When you have retired, you may find you have too much *time on your hands*
 2. My grand-children think I am *behind the times* because I don't have a mobile phone.
 3. I'll send the file by e-mail – you'll have it *in no time*
 4. If we leave at 5.45, we'll be there *in good time* to check in.
 5. The delegates will have *a good time* at the end-of-conference dinner.
 6. That's enough for *the time being*; we can finish the rest tomorrow.
 7. *At times* I wished we could go back to the good old days.
 8. That's it, *time's up*, stop writing and hand in your papers now.
 9. Her ex-boss was *doing time* for money laundering.
 10. *At the time* it seemed like a good idea, but I'm not so sure now.
 11. *Once upon a time*, there lived a wicked witch called Antiuniononi, and a good fairy called Solidaria.
 12. *Take your time*, there's no rush, the train doesn't leave until 6.15.
 13. Last time I allowed half an hour to park the car, and I was only *just in time* for the meeting.
 14. But if we get there too early, we'll just have to *kill time* at the airport.

Working with writing 2

The Working Time Directive: the UK opt-out (p.38)

From the WorkSmart Leaflet, **Know your rights: Time's up for long hours**, for the TUC's *It's About Time* campaign

Sample letter:

Dear Employer,

I wish to withdraw my opt-out from the working time limit set by the Working Time Regulations as I no longer wish to work more than 48 hours on average each week.

I would ask you to acknowledge this in writing and to let me know when this will come into effect. I look forward to discussing how my hours will be adjusted to take account of this.

Yours sincerely,



Working with words 4

European projects (p. 46)

1. Collocation

There are different possible combinations; these are suggested combinations, with a proposal for the most logical order of actions to take in project planning

1. identify target group
2. conduct a needs assessment
3. define measurable objectives
4. look for, identify *or* decide on potential partners (this could also be regarded as the first action)
5. seek co-financing
6. establish a Project Management Committee
7. draw up a workable schedule
8. decide on performance indicators
9. allocate resources
10. keep to *or* work to agreed deadlines

Working with words 5

Which language should we use? (p. 48)

Word in text	Suggested synonym
(1) issue	question
(2) uncommon	unusual
(3) hindrance	obstacle
(4) outset	start, beginning
(5) uneasily	uncomfortably, awkwardly
(6) misunderstanding	failure to understand something correctly
(7) impact	effect
(8) comprehension	understanding



Working with words 6

Project budgets (p. 50)

1 Explanation of terms (1) – (8)

- (1) **Fixed costs:** These are cost that do not vary in accordance with production. They include items such as the rent of a building, property taxes, insurance and permanent staff. In the context of a project they refer to items, the cost of which that can be predetermined. A definite amount is set aside for very specific payments such as:
- (2) **Administration** covers the office expenses of an assistant in order to be responsible for day to day running of the project.
- (3) **Experts:** this heading covers the cost of employing an advisor or consultant to carry out a specific task within the project (e.g. legal or financial experts)
- (4) **Variable costs:** these costs vary in accordance with levels of business activity. They include items such as raw materials, fuels, energy supplies and other consumable items.

In the context of a project they will include costs that vary according to usage such as:
- (5) **Accommodation:** for example, the cost of hotel accommodation when partners attend meetings, or room hire.
- (6) **Local planning costs:** this includes any local costs such as postage, telephone calls associated with running the project (but often subsumed under **Administration**)
- (7) **Invoices:** these are the official bills issued by the suppliers of goods and services to the partners. The partners will need to provide these as proof of the expenditure they have made in order that this money can be (8) **reimbursed**, that is paid back to them.

Comments on the overall outcome for Year 1 of this project could include reference to the following points:

Obviously it is necessary to have a budget for the entire length of the project and to make adjustments accordingly for under and overspends throughout the term of the project.

However, it appears that the cost of equipment was higher than at first thought but this equipment is needed to get the project underway (e.g. some computer equipment). The preparation of materials and their publication has probably been delayed as the project has not yet reached that stage yet. On the other hand there have clearly been a number of meetings of the partners involved as evidenced by the overspends on travel and accommodation.



Hopefully after the initial overspend on travel and accommodation this can be compensated for by fewer face to face meetings and more communication by e-mail etc as the materials for the project are developed, exchanged and printed.

2.
 1. (b) There was an overspend on equipment
 2. (a) There was a surplus of 200€ on printing.
 3. (c) There was a generous surplus of 600€ on materials preparation.
 4. (f) Experts costs matched estimated costs.
or
(i) Experts costs equalled the estimated costs.
 5. (e) There was an overall underspend on fixed costs.
 6. (j) Travel costs had been seriously underestimated.
 7. (d) Administration costs marginally exceeded the budget estimate.
 8. (f) Local planning costs matched estimated costs.
or
(i) Local planning costs equalled estimated costs.
 9. (h) Overall the project was in the red by 750€.
 10. (g) The total deficit/overspend was carried forward to the following year.

