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The European Trade Union Confederation and
the European industry federations

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Europe, wrote Edo Fimmen, General Secretary of the International Transport Workers' Federation, in 1924, must not be allowed to become "a great enterprise for the exploitation of all means of production, living or dead". The aim was not Europe Inc., but rather a United States of Europe.¹ The unions should "seriously address the problem of building a United States of Europe", the Hamburg Congress of the ITF demanded that same year.² In 1926 Wladimir Woytinski published his own book on the "United States of Europe", in which he argued for a European customs union, a common economic and social policy, a common currency and not least a common government for Europe.³

When the European Economic Community (EEC) was founded in 1958, there was no response from the unions until the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) was finally founded 15 years later. Despite all the ideas developed between the Wars, there was no common voice of the European trade union movement when European unification got under way. There was not even a common position on the EEC itself. Supporters and opponents of the European Community remained at loggerheads long after its foundation. The simple, compellingly obvious step of responding to the foundation of a supra-national institution like the European Economic Community with an equally supra-national trade union structure was not taken, neither by unions within the predominantly socialist ICFTU, nor the Christian IFCTU. Instead, at times there were up to five different organisations formulating European policies in parallel.

Precursors of the ETUC

The oldest, having been founded in 1950, was the European Regional Organisation (ERO) of the ICFTU, with 20 member organisations from 18 European states (plus Saarland and Triest) and headquarters in Brussels. Its general secretary, until his death in 1966, was the former general secretary of the IFTU, Walter Schevenels. The ERO concentrated on drawing up proposals for rebuilding Europe and designed, amongst other things, a public housing programme. The pro-European unions could not agree whether the decisive initiative for unifying the continent would come from the Council of Europe or the Schumann Plan, which laid the foundation for the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC). After the Schumann Plan's publication, the ICFTU organised the Ruhr Conference from 22 to 23 May 1950, which resolved to form a European regional organisation of unions from the Schumann Plan nations. In 1952, within the ECSC context, this became a shared advisory body for national trade union federations and metalworkers' and miners' unions from Germany,

¹ Edo Fimmen: Die Vereinigten Staaten Europas. Jena 1924, p. 124.

² Hamburger Echo, 8 July 1924.

³ Wladimir Woytinski: Die Vereinigten Staaten von Europa. Berlin 1926.

France, the Benelux countries and Italy, and it was called the 21 Committee after the number of members. The actual initiative for its formation came from the metalworkers' and miners' unions, the ICFTU granting reluctant consent. The committee's task was to represent union interests in the ECSC, and it maintained a contact office in Luxemburg (one general secretary plus a staff of two). After the TUC opened its own office in Luxemburg at short notice, it was accepted as an observer by the 21 Committee, whose relations with the ERO remained frosty. The ERO's role in developing trade union structures within the framework of European unification was not particularly important. But neither could the 21 Committee bring much influence to bear on the ECSC, because its members' opinions diverged too widely. After the EEC was founded, the Committee became the Coal & Steel ("Montan") Liaison Office, which was absorbed into the EMF in 1994.

After the Treaty of Rome was ratified and the EEC founded, ICFTU affiliates from the six EEC member states (DGB, FGTB, NVV, CISL, UIL, CGT-L, CGT-FO) convened in Düsseldorf on 16–17 January 1958 to form the European Trade Union Secretariat (ETUS) as an independent body. The ETUS consisted of representatives from each national organisation, the 21 Committee, the ERO and observers from the International Trade Secretariats. The secretariat's task was to represent labour interests in negotiations with the EEC, Euratom and the ECSC. In April 1969 the secretariat adopted a new organisational structure and changed its name to European Confederation of Free Trade Unions (*in the European Community*), but in practice it remained no more than a secretariat. The European Regional Organisation of the ICFTU was disbanded the same year.

Parallel to the ETUS, the ICFTU unions in the European Free Trade Area founded a committee in 1960 and a small secretariat to co-ordinate their activities in 1968. This created an EFTA trade union federation, but its responsibilities were expressly limited to the EFTA states. A liaison committee was set up with the European Confederation of Free Trade Unions and disbanded again in March 1973, after the ETUC's foundation.

The International Federation of Christian Trade Unions first set up a liaison office in Luxemburg in 1951, and took another major step towards a supra-national European trade union organisation four years later with the foundation of the Federation of Christian Trade Unions in the ECSC. In 1958 this became the European Organisation of the International Federation of Christian Trade Unions (IFCTU) based in Brussels. Sectoral federations began to join in 1961. From 1969, when the IFCTU was renamed World Confederation of Labour, its European structure became the World Confederation of Labour – European Organisation.

Some member federations (CGT, CGIL, Dutch EVC, Luxemburg's FLA) of the communist World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU) set up a

Common Market Action Committee in 1958, but it was ultimately irrelevant and unable to overcome divisions between Europeans and anti-Europeans. The Italian CGIL formed its own office in Brussels in 1963 and then, two years later, set up a joint liaison office with the CGT. The WFTU Action Committee was disbanded in 1966.

The foundation of the European Economic Community was the first event to initiate the creation of supra-national structures within the European trade union movement. However, these structures were still extremely weak and overlapped one another. Once again, the impetus for further harmonisation came from outside. The 1969 European Summit in The Hague proclaimed the leap from a customs union to economic and currency union, and developed extensive plans to integrate Europe politically. Membership negotiations with Great Britain, Ireland and Denmark were about to begin.

The European Trade Union Confederation

After hefty debates between the ICFTU affiliates in EEC and EFTA states about whether to opt for a narrower or broader European structure (limited to the EEC or extended to the whole of Europe) – with the German DGB supporting the narrow option and the TUC and Danish unions the broad one – a decision was finally reached in favour of the larger scale. The European Trade Union Confederation was founded in 1973 (Foundation Congress: 8–9 February 1973 in Brussels), embracing 17 trade unions from 15 West European states. Since its inception, the ETUC has been an autonomous organisation and not a regional grouping of the ICFTU. The ETUC's constitution identifies its aims as representing and promoting the economic, social and cultural rights of labour at a European level and strengthening democracy in Europe. In 1974 the ETUC was enlarged by 12 Christian trade union federations, and after their admission to the ETUC the World Confederation of Labour – European Organisation was disbanded. In 1975 the CGIL joined the ETUC, which thereby acquired an independent character transcending the political blocs within the labour movement. However, the admission of the communist CCOO from Spain took significantly longer. In 1980 it failed due to resistance by the DGB and did not take place until 1990, this time with DGB support. In the nineties the ETUC significantly expanded its organisational base, with the Portuguese Intersindical joining after the Brussels Congress in 1995 and the French CGT after the Helsinki Congress in 1999. Equally important was the fact that the ETUC cautiously but decisively opened its ranks to trade unions from Central and Eastern Europe after 1989, years ahead of EU enlargement. Today, all representative trade union organisations in Europe are affiliates. Belgium's liberal trade union federation, the CGSLB, was admitted in November 2002, and it is only a matter of time before the Polish OPZZ follows suit.

In terms of organisational structure, from the very beginning the ETUC was more than just a union secretariat. It consists of Congress, an Executive Committee elected by Congress, an administrative-cum-financial committee (later called the Steering Committee) and a Secretariat. Any self-administered union which is independent of parties and governments can join the ETUC. Membership of an international federation must not contradict the principles of free and independent trade union policies. Federations in competition with each other at national level will be admitted on condition that both sides are willing to cooperate on a European level.

In reality, for a long time the ETUC was not a real federation, but rather a cross between a letterbox and an information point. It had no real responsibilities of its own, nor was it intended to. Trade union political models remained firmly linked to the nation-state. The ETUC's member organisations were content with their information centre in Brussels. In any case, European integration was proceeding at snail's pace. It is no surprise that the ETUC did not step out of its shadowy background existence.

The great awakening came in 1985 with the proclamation of the Single European Act, which made completion of the Single Market a legal obligation and carried with it a firm commitment to fulfil this aim by 1992. The Cecchini Report on the effects of the Single Market was brought to the public's attention with great fanfares. It ignited debates about business location factors in all member states and caused uproar. Everyone was aware of the predictions by Jacques Delors, President of the European Commission, that by the mid-nineties 80% of all regulations affecting the economic and social lives of EC citizens would be decided in Brussels. The shock of the deregulation offensive announced in conjunction with the Single Market dealt a harsh blow to ETUC member organisations and led to a search for common positions towards a hitherto only vaguely articulated "social Europe". At the 1991 Luxemburg congress of the ETUC, far-reaching structural reforms were implemented, notably those admitting the European industry federations as full ETUC members. Politically, the ETUC made significant gains in the nineties, successfully fighting for Directives on important labour rights, such as the European Works Council Directive in 1994 and the Directive on informing and consulting workers in Community undertakings in 2001. The Social Policy Agreement negotiated with the European employer federations UNICE and CEEP in 1991 became a blueprint for the Social Chapter of the Maastricht Treaty. Social dialogue between management and labour took a quantum leap from arbitrary declarations to legally binding framework agreements, most recently, in 2002, on tele-working. Moreover, a series of impressive demonstrations at European Summits, the largest with 100,000 participants in December 2001, has provided evidence of the ETUC's potential to mobilise.

The ETUC has created a structure for cross-border cooperation in the form of the Interregional Trade Union Councils (ITUCs). The first was formed in 1976 in the Saarland-Lorraine-Luxemburg region, and there are now 39 of these councils. A women's committee and a youth group have existed since the ETUC's inception; a co-ordination committee for retired workers was formed in 1988 and renamed the European Federation of Retired and Elderly Persons (FERPA) in 1993. The European Trade Union Institute (ETUI), founded in 1978, supplies the ETUC with research on matters such as the Europeanisation of industrial relations and employment policy; the European Trade Union Technical Bureau for Health and Safety (TUTB) set up in 1989 supports the ETUC with expertise in all areas of standardisation and industrial safety, and finally the European Trade Union Academy (ETUA) was created in 1990 as an educational and training establishment.

The origins of the European industry federations

In the fifties, the International Trade Secretariats expressed little sympathy for the approaching process of European unification. The IMF refused to co-ordinate trade union activities within the ECSC. Similarly, the International Union of Food, Agricultural, Hotel, Restaurant, Catering, Tobacco and Allied Workers' Associations (IUF) saw no grounds for a special structure to co-ordinate trade union activity in the EEC. The momentum to set up regional organisations by industrial sector came from the ETUS rather than the ITS community. Only one European sectoral organisation came into existence before the ETUS: the European Union of Film and Television Workers was founded in 1953, and by 1961 it had 13 member organisations with 14,990 members in 12 European countries. The other regional industry organisations in Europe, most of which initially lacked even a Brussels secretariat, were only formed in the wake of the EEC's foundation, and only in those sectors for which the EEC had a Common Market structure: agriculture, food and steel. The European Federation of Agricultural Workers' Trade Unions (EFA), the Gewerkschaftliche Verkehrsausschuss and Kommission für den Bau- und Holzsektor were founded in 1958. The steel industry actually delayed creating a regional federation until five years after the EEC was born, because the 21 Committee that later became the Coal & Steel Liaison Office already provided a workable reference. The European Advisory Committee of the Communication [Workers'] International was founded in 1965, and 3 years later this became a committee for IPTT affiliates in the European Community. The next spate of foundations took place in the seventies, triggered by the creation of the ETUC: the European Regional Organisation of the International Federation of Commercial, Clerical, Professional and Technical Employees was formed in 1972, the European Trade Union Committee for Education and the Europäischer Ausschuss des Internationalen Sekretariats der Kunstlergewerkschaften (Comité Européen du Secrétariat Internationale des Syndicats du Spectacle)

followed in 1975. Some existing industry federations altered their structure under ETUC influence. The "latecomers" are the European Federation of Journalists (EFJ) founded in 1985, the European Graphical Federation (EGF), and the Europäischer Bergarbeiterverband founded in October 1991.

Among the first to react to the birth of the EEC were the chemical sector unions: on 24 June 1958 the member unions of the Internationalen Föderation von Industriegewerkschaften und Fabrikarbeiterverbänden in the 6 EEC member states joined together to create a "European co-ordination committee of Chemie- und Fabrikarbeitergewerkschaften in the European Community". However, a Brussels secretariat was not opened until 30 years later. Between 1961 and 1988 the secretariat of the co-ordination committee was run by the administrative headquarters of Germany's sectoral trade union, IG Chemie-Papier-Keramik, in Hanover. In the eighties the European co-ordination committee represented 19 trade unions from all nine Common Market states with a total of 1.4 million members, but all of them were within the ICFTU constituency. Despite ETUC enlargement, the Christian unions were absent from this structure for a long time.

Nine construction and timber unions from the six EC states founded a Gemeinschaftliche europäische Kommission für den Bau- und Holzsektor in 1958, with headquarters in Amsterdam which moved to Frankfurt in 1964 and finally relocated to Brussels in August 1968. The creation of an independent European Federation of Building and Woodworkers in the Community (EFBWWC) was not undertaken until 1974. This European federation, although independent of the International Federation of Building and Woodworkers (IFBWW), confined itself to providing information until, after a debate about reforms, it was granted the option of co-ordinating trade union activity in Europe in 1979. Simultaneously, a permanent secretariat was set up in Brussels, although a full-time general secretary was not installed until 1988. The European Federation of Building and Woodworkers (EFBWW) was admitted to the ETUC in 1983.

The Gewerkschaftlicher Verkehrsausschuss in der Europäischen Gemeinschaft (GVEG) was founded in 1958 by ITF member organisations in the EEC, without the support and against the express will of the ITF. It remained caught in this dual role, being both an organ for representing ITF policy within the EEC and an autonomous body with its own structures, until after the first round of Common Market enlargement in the seventies and the foundation of the ETUC. The Gewerkschaftlicher Verkehrsausschuss was constituted as an independent organisation, and the ITF's 20% contribution to its budget abandoned. The competences of the two organisations were separated but their personnel was interlinked. The ITF general secretary was simultaneously the vice-president of the GVEG, and their secretariats were represented at each other's general assembly and co-ordination committee. After these structural reforms, the

committee was also officially acknowledged by the ETUC. Its membership and activity base thereby expanded, and in 1996 this resulted in the formation of the Verband der Verkehrsgewerkschaften in the EU, which held its first congress in Luxemburg on 10–11 November 1997. The organisation was divided into seven sections (in line with the major fields of transportation). Its statutes were altered to allow the general secretary to represent the Verband in negotiations with the EU. The congress called for a working group to demarcate its responsibilities from those of the ITF, which still maintained a European section. Few trade unions from Central and Eastern Europe were present at the inauguration congress and none of them was a member of the Verband, which three years later became the European Transport Workers' Federation (ETF) when, at its foundation congress in Brussels on 14–15 June 1999, the Verband der Transportarbeitergewerkschaften in the European Union merged with European ITF affiliates. With headquarters in Brussels, the ETF now organises 3 million workers in 34 European countries.

European trade union work in the food, drinks and tobacco industry and the hotel sector was obstructed for many years because two organisations with more or less identical tasks and a largely similar membership existed side by side: the Europäische Gewerkschaftsausschuss Nahrung-Genuss-Gaststätten (EG NGG), founded in 1959, and the EURO-IUF. The EG NGG levied its own membership fees and saw itself as a regional organisation within the ICFTU. The autonomy of the EG NGG was justified by the peculiar structure of the EEC, argued Herbert Stadelmeier, leader of the German NGG, at the IUF congress in Geneva 1973. These tasks could be performed by an IUF regional organisation, came the reply.⁴ In 1975 the IUF created its own regional organisation (foundation conference of the EURO-IUF: 31 January–1 February 1975). The EG NGG and the EURO-IUF both applied for ETUC recognition, but both requests were refused. Cooperation between the two bodies began to materialise in 1976, and was formalised in 1979: the EURO-IUF was to be responsible for multinational corporations, the EG NGG for EEC relations. But in practice both dealt with the same problems, in separate meetings, with almost the same people present, but without co-ordination and not always reaching the same conclusions. This division of labour became utterly obsolete when the European Community began drawing up legislative proposals for employees' information and consulting rights in multinational corporations. The NGG then suggested combining these two European structures, although this did not actually happen until 1983. The new European Federation of Food, Catering and Allied Workers' Unions within the IUF (ECF-IUF) was founded as an IUF regional organisation with more autonomy than usual, and it automatically included all unions that had been members of either the EG NGG or EURO-IUF at the time of its inception. This dichotomy – autonomous organisation within the European Community on the one hand, regional organisation of an ITS on the other,

⁴ IUF: 17th Congress, Geneva 23/1-1/2/1973. Documents and Minutes. Geneva, undated, p. 10 [ENGLISCH ODER NICHT? – Übers.#]

remained unresolved when the ECF-IUF merged with the European Federation of Agricultural Workers' Trade Unions (EFA) in 2000 to form the European Federation of Food, Agriculture and Tourism Trade Unions (EFFAT). The statutes describe EFFAT as both an autonomous European trade union federation and a regional organisation of the IUF.

In 1963 the European Metal Committee was founded by seven metalworkers' unions in the EEC (all members of the ICFTU), initially as an informal grouping without a structure or programme. In 1968 the metalworkers in the CFDT joined this Metal Committee, which became the European Metalworkers' Federation (EMF) in 1971. In the early 1980s the EMF had 29 affiliates in 12 countries and a total of 6 million members. The EMF considers its primary purpose to be co-ordinating its affiliates' policies on wages and working hours, supporting a European industrial policy that balances competition against jobs and pursuing the social dialogue between management and labour in the European shipbuilding, metalworking and automobile industries. The secretariat is responsible for three standing committees: collective bargaining, European works councils, and industrial policy. Within the field of industrial policy there are working groups on the automobile industry, steel, shipbuilding, the defence industry, aerospace, and the information and communication technologies.

The European Federation of Public Service Unions (EPSU) was founded in 1978. It is responsible for a multitude of different economic and professional activities in the public sector. It sees its task in improving understanding of the role of the public sector within the process of European integration, as well as the development of suitable structures for industrial relations with public sector employers. A committee for social dialogue in the electricity industry was formed with management represented by the Arbeitgebervereinigung der Elektrizitätsunternehmen. There are similar initiatives for social dialogue with employers' federations in the health sector. Four standing committees address vocational and professional development in national and European administration, local administration, health and social services, and public utilities.

EURO-FIET was founded in 1972 as the European regional organisation of the international white-collar federation FIET (the International Federation of Commercial, Clerical, Professional and Technical Employees). It was the only FIET regional organisation to levy its own fees, but still received subsidies from its international parent body. EURO-FIET and its successor UNI-Europa are less independent of FIET and the international trade secretariat UNI than their European counterparts in other structures. In 1975 EURO-FIET received early ETUC recognition as an industry federation.

The European regional organisation of the textile, garment and leather unions was created in 1975 from an information and research office

established in 1963 to assist the textile and garment sector unions in preparing for a common European market. As this regional organisation refused to admit the Italian sector union FILTEA, a member of the CGIL, until 1987, it was not recognised by the ECTU until 1988. Its first congress took place in 1993, when the European Trade Union Federation – Textiles, Clothing and Leather (ETUF-TCL) was founded. The second congress in Porto in 1997 completed its transformation into a European industrial federation, and the executive committee was granted the mandate to coordinate negotiations with employers. Social dialogue between management and labour in this sector focuses on specific themes, notably the recognition of international social standards by transnational corporations and the social dimension of globalisation.

The European Trade Union Committee for Education was formed in 1975 from ICFTU and WCL affiliates along with some organisations that belonged to none of the (four existing) Internationals. The ETUC hesitated before recognising the committee. In terms of structure, this industrial federation was unique: it had no staff in Brussels, such tasks being performed by the ITS, ICFTU and WCL secretariats. Administrative matters were dealt with by representatives of the International Trade Secretariats, while the European affiliates themselves had no influence. Mobility for academic staff, the vital link between the compulsory education system and vocational training, and the role of education within the development of a European identity were the committee's key political themes. Following the merger between two international federations of teachers' unions, the committee altered its structure, adopting a new statute in 1993 which finally allowed affiliates to elect representatives directly to the executive committee and created the post of full-time general secretary.

The smallest European industry federation and the last to be founded was the Europäische Gewerkschaftsbund der Diamant- und Edelsteinarbeiter. It was established and admitted to the ETUC in 1995, but has since ceased all activities.

In 1993 the Council of European Professional and Managerial Staff (EUROCADRES) was founded, with a secretariat initially provided by EURO-FIET. Since 2001 EUROCADRES has had its own secretariat on ETUC premises. Formally EUROCADRES is not an independent European industry federation, but de facto the council is increasingly growing into this role. It represents almost 5 million employees in managerial positions.

Structure and policy of the European industry federations

The structure of most European industry (i.e. sectoral) federations is similar to that of the ETUC. There is a congress which assembles every four years, an executive committee that meets at least twice a year, a

steering committee to prepare the executive committee's meetings, a secretariat and a number of standing committees and ad hoc working groups. Instead of an executive committee, the European Mine, Chemical and Energy Workers' Federation (EMCEF) has an annual general assembly. Each organisation is headed by a president (as well as vice-presidents from affiliates of various sizes), a general secretary and a deputy general secretary, all of whom are elected by congress. Most European industry federations have considerably enlarged their secretariats over time. The EMCEF secretariat, for example, now has a staff of nine.

Enhancing social dialogue between management and labour in their respective sectors is the key pursuit of all European industry federations. At the level of the umbrella organisation, the ETUC, dialogue began in 1985 based on simple meetings with employers' federations and has since led to four European framework agreements. The industry federations, by contrast, are only just setting off down this road. Granted, in 1998 there were nine committees with equal management and labour representation in, for example, the transport and telecommunication sectors, and a further nine informal working groups, not to mention eight rounds of informal discussions between unions and employers to address economic and social problems in their respective sectors. But out of almost 100 joint statements, not one is binding. On 20 May 1998 the European Commission decided to dissolve the former Branchenausschüsse zum Sozialen Dialog and – due entirely to joint requests from the unions and employers – create new Branchenausschüsse instead. This has now been implemented in 14 cases. So far only two agreements have been reached: one between the ETF and the Schiffseignervereinigung covering working hours, and another between the EFA and the European agricultural employers' organisation, the Comité Professionel Agricole (COPA), limiting annual working hours to 1,800.

All European industrial federations consider co-ordinating the European works councils (there are already more than 700) and developing working relations at European level a key aim. Most have followed the example of the EMF and its Task Force on European Works Councils, setting up bodies to co-ordinate their work with and for European works councils more effectively and appointing co-ordinators to support European works councils in key multinational corporations. However, most industrial federations do not have enough staff to support all European works councils effectively. This dilemma will be exacerbated by renegotiations on workers' participation rights in Community undertakings, in existence since 1994.

Only four out of fourteen European industrial federations currently have a committee to co-ordinate collective bargaining negotiations. Except for the EMF, which has had such a committee since its inception, they were not

set up by other federations until the nineties: 1995 (EGF), 1996 (EMCEF), 1997 (ETUF-TCL). The EPSU and EFBWW have working groups to discuss and exchange information. Co-ordinating collective bargaining negotiations is now a key issue in the EFBWW action programme for 2001-2003. The ECF-IUF and EURO-FIET have held European conferences on the matter of co-ordinating collective bargaining negotiations, an indication that they are aware of the importance of the subject, but this does not mean that anything is actually being done in practice. At its third conference on collective bargaining policy on 9–12 December 1998 in Frankfurt, the EMF passed a resolution recommending a “formula” for co-ordinating policy: inflation should be compensated and workers paid an appropriate share for productivity gains. The resolution passed by the EMF congress the year after provided orientation that other industry federations are attempting to follow. The Informationsnetzwerk über Tarifverhandlungen disseminates an annual report of negotiated outcomes in the metalworking sector. In 1998 the ETUF-TCL adopted a protocol on working hours that committed all affiliates to introducing a 35-hour week or equivalent throughout the sector. A year later, a framework was defined for wage demands: wages must rise faster than inflation and ensure that workers are paid a fair share of profits from increased productivity. The Toledo congress in 2001 called for Europe-wide negotiations with employers on reducing and restructuring hours of work.

Mergers between industry federations

The nineties witnessed mergers of various European industry federations from closely related sectors. The ECF-IUF and EFA took the basic decision to amalgamate in 1993, and this intention was confirmed by later congresses until the process was initiated in practice in 1998. The new organisation was finally conceived in the form of EFFAT at the Luxemburg congress on 11–12 December 2000. The impetus for this merger was a desire to unite all trade unions concerned with food, from growing it to eating it, in a single European structure. In this case, the European federation has no equivalent at national levels: in Germany, for example, farm workers belong to IG-BAU (Construction, Agriculture and the Environment), while food workers remain members of the sector’s NGG. Merger processes often follow one pattern at national level and another at European level: Germany’s IG BAU is affiliated to two different European industry federations, EFFAT and the EFBWW, while IG Metall actually belongs to three federations: the EMF, EFBWW and ETUF-TCL.

The Europäische Föderation der Chemiegewerkschaften and the Europäischer Bergarbeiterverband united in 1996 to form EMCEF. When the fusion between FIET, Communication International, the International Graphical Federation and the Media and Entertainment International (MEI) was sealed on 1 January 2000, giving rise to Union Network International

(UNI), their respective European regional structures also joined forces. The new organisation was named UNI-Europa. Like EURO-FIET and FIET before them, UNI-Europa and UNI continue to be linked by a common secretariat, and the UNI-Europa secretariat in Brussels is headed by a director, not a general secretary like other industry federations. Furthermore EURO-MEI has joined with two other international organisations, the Internationalen Schauspielerverband (FIA) and the Internationalen Musiker-Föderation (FIM) to found a European federation: the European Arts and Entertainment Alliance (EEA), its aim being to co-ordinate wage negotiations for workers in the arts in Europe.

Relations between European industry federations and the ETUC

When the European Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ECFTU) was founded in 1969, the European sectoral committees acquired an advisory voice within its organs. When the ETUC was founded, the matter of relations between European trade unions and the ETUC needed to be redefined. In June 1973 the ETUC's executive committee defined the conditions under which these sectoral committees would be officially recognised by the ETUC. They had to organise throughout the European Community, they had to be open to all unions in their industrial sector that were members of an umbrella organisation affiliated to the ETUC, and they had to be independent bodies with a number of permanent structures.

The first of these industry federations to be recognised by the ETUC were: the EMF, EFA, EURO-FIET, EGAKU, the Coal & Steel Committee and the IPTT's European committee. By the end of the seventies these had been joined by the Gewerkschaftliche Verkehrsausschuss in the EC, EPSU and EC NGG/ECF-IUF. In 1983 the EFBWW followed, then in 1988 the ETUF-TCL and EFCG. Conflicts have repeatedly taken place between the ETUC and some of its industry federations on the matter of membership – according to the ETUC statutes, all European industry federations must accept any union that is a member of an ETUC affiliate. However, this rule has not always been respected in practice.

The Luxemburg congress in May 1991 decided that the European industry federations should be full members of the ETUC, with a seat and a vote in all its organs, from congress via the executive and steering committees to the various working groups and negotiating delegations. They were excluded only from financial decisions, as they did not pay any fees to the ETUC. Another decision was taken at Luxemburg to restructure the ETUC and it now rests on two pillars, the national affiliates and the European industry federations. With that, an idea first expressed by Edo Fimmen in the twenties finally came to fruition.

European industry federations

	Affiliates	Countries	Members (in millions)
EMF	60	26	6.0
EPSU	191	32	7.8
EMCEF	119	33	2.4
UNI -Europa	282	33	6.0
EFFAT	120	35	1.8
ETF	199	34	2.4
EFBWW	49	17	2.3
EFJ	56	32	0.3
ETUF-TCL			1.1
ETUCE	81	19	2.1
EEA			0.3

Status: 2002

Members within the territory covered by ETUC organisation